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Assessing the Impact of Maternity Leave Policy on Organisational Performance in Covenant University, Nigeria

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Abstract

Workers are an organization's most asset since without them, it cannot function. As a result, workers are dependent on their employers for both a place to work and the implementation of their own disciplined practices to ensure their welfare. One aspect of an organization's welfare is the maternity leave policy that Covenant University offers its female employees, which is three months of paid leave designed to help women balance their reproductive and productive lives. Employee wellbeing is crucial to ensuring the operation of the organization. The Social Construct theory was used in the investigation. Thus, to critically analyse the impact of employee wellbeing on organizational performance, this study looks at Covenant University's maternity leave policy. As a result, literature searches, questionnaires, and interviews were used to gather both primary and secondary data. Analysis of the collected data was done using correlation, frequency, and percentage. According to the research, there is a small but statistically significant positive correlation between maternity leave policy and organizational performance, and a higher maternity leave policy will result in a modest improvement in organizational performance. Accordingly, the report suggests that Covenant University's maternity leave compensation be examined and raised to full pay once again. The study concludes that there is a direct relationship between organizational success and employee welfare, which is improved by the maternity leave policy.

Keywords: Employee Welfare, Maternity leave, Policy, organisational performance, Covenant University.

Introduction

Employees are an organization's most asset as without them, it cannot operate. As a result, workers rely on their employers to provide them with a place to work as well as to ensure their welfare through the implementation of their own disciplined practices [1]. According to [2], they stated that to increase performance and eliminate any sort of bias or inequity that may exist in the organisation, leaders are recommended to establish tactics for inspiring and gratifying their workforce. A happy worker adds value to her company and is praised by others. Employee welfare is crucial for preventing employees from quitting the company, enhancing motivation and morale, and improving employee retention. [3], stated that to safeguard working class mothers and encourage their children's growth, providing maternity leave is now being prioritized. Every country, regardless of its level of development, has laws requiring maternity leave during pregnancy and childbirth [4].

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The laws pertaining to maternity leave have been in place for almost a century [3]. Women are exempt from employment throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period under a maternity leave policy. Maternity leave coverage in the US is hampered in part by critics who argue that it could harm women's careers and workplaces, especially small, sized firms. Maternity leave regulations, for example, may lower women's performance in an organization, which may lead them to postpone or even refuse to return to work, which would result in a loss of experience [3]. How to sustain and improve accomplished performance has been the most crucial objective and problem for all organizations, whether they are for-profit or nonprofit, big or little, private or public. As a result, the idea of organizational performance has been widely accepted in management and is highly valued by both working managers and academic scholars [5]. Technology advancements brought about by globalization have affected corporate environments over time and still do. Consequently, companies worldwide are faced with the challenge of improving their performance [6].

The relationship between employee welfare and organizational performance has been the subject of much research in the fields of organizational behaviour and human resource management. Organizational performance is positively impacted by work-life balance, training and development, and other employee welfare initiatives [7]. Additionally, companies that prioritize employee welfare and create a happy work environment tend to have higher employee satisfaction, reduced absenteeism and turnover rates, and better organizational performance [8]. Therefore, to critically analyse the impact of employee wellbeing on organizational performance, this study looks at Covenant University's maternity leave policy.

The concept of employee welfare

The phrase "Employee Welfare" is vague, and changes widely based on the time, region, industry, country, level of modernization, cultural beliefs and customs, general social and economic development of the population, and political ideologies that were prevalent at the time. Employee welfare refers to any initiative taken by the company to raise the standard of living for its workers. The terms "labour," "worker," "workman," and "employee" are frequently used to refer to the compensation of human agents in various industries and organizations [9]. "Employee welfare" is a general term used to describe a wide range of benefits, services, and facilities that companies offer to their workers; welfare benefits do not necessarily have to be monetary; they can also take the form of in-kind benefits, transportation, stipends, health insurance, necessary leaves, and food. Employee welfare also includes monitoring working conditions, fostering peace through the establishment of a healthcare system, trade unionism, and insurance for workers' family members against illnesses, accidents, and unemployment. By offering incentives, benefits, and facilities that enhance workers' quality of life, the company raises employee performance. Employee wellbeing is a crucial aspect of human resource management (HRM) in both commercial and public sector organizations since it affects commitment to goal achievement [10].

The concept of organisational performance

The assumption that management sciences are characterized by a variety of viewpoints is unquestionably responsible for all these differences, which also implies a lack of scholarly consensus [11]. [12], noted that performance is still an ongoing debate among organisational researchers, and they disagree on several points. According to [13], The ability of an organization to achieve its goals while making the best use of its resources is known as

organizational performance [14]. [14], organisational performance is the ability of the organisation to fulfil its purposes. [15], described organisational performance is the ability of a company to achieve its long-term goals through efficient resource management. The effectiveness with which an organization fulfils its mission is known as organizational performance. He went on to remark that companies may be seen to be performing if their primary purpose is to boost return on equity on investment; similarly, companies that prioritize operating financial benefits while meeting service objectives are regarded as successful. Organizational performance serves as a gauge for the efficacy and efficiency of organizational decisions [16].

Theoretical Framework

The Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory, a well-known social psychology theory, explains how social relationships work by comparing the costs and benefits that people or groups exchange. The concept is often attributed to George Homans, who first proposed it in the 1950s and 1960s. The behaviour and interactions of individuals in various contexts, such as families, communities, and groups, were examined by American sociologist Homans [17]. The Social Exchange Theory states that interactions between individuals take place in social contexts where resources or advantages are traded. According to this theory, if workers feel their employer appreciates their contributions and demonstrates this by providing them with adequate incentives and support, they will be more determined and driven to perform better in the workplace. One application of SET is the analysis of how Covenant University's maternity leave policies affect worker wellbeing and organizational effectiveness. Weighing the benefits and drawbacks of the maternity leave policy for both the company and the employee is crucial in this case. The ability to take time off work to care for their child without endangering their job security, the ability to develop a bond with their child, and reduced stress during the transition to motherhood are all benefits of a maternity leave policy from the perspective of the employee. Employers benefit from maternity leave policies in that they increase staff morale, loyalty, and retention and are seen by the public as a family-friendly company [18]. The expenses of implementing a maternity leave policy for the business include the cost of providing paid leave, the potential for lost productivity during the employee's absence, and the need to hire temporary replacement staff. For the maternity leave policy to be viewed as equitable and beneficial for both parties, the costs and benefits must be balanced. This can be achieved by carefully drafting a policy that minimizes expenses for the company while providing the employee with adequate benefits. Furthermore, effective communication of the benefits of the strategy can increase staff morale and mitigate any potential negative effects. Overall, the examination of Covenant University's maternity leave policy using Social Exchange Theory can help to improve organizational performance and employee welfare by making sure that policies are designed to satisfy the demands of both sides.

Methodology

Participants

Four hundred seven (407) female Covenant University employees make up the study's population, according to a formal report from the university's human resources department (2023). For this study, 198 female Covenant University employees were chosen through a purposive sampling technique.

The sample size for the study is determined using a standard formula. In his book "Statistical

Methods for Research Workers," published in 1925, Ronald A. Fisher initially presented the standard formula" [19].

The standard formula for calculating the sample size is: $[z^2 * p(1-p)] / e^2 / 1 + [z^2 * p(1-p)] / e^2 * N]$

Where,

- N is the population size
- z is the z-score
- e is the margin of error
- p is the standard of deviation

Given: Z = 1.960, P = 0.5, M = 0.05

Using the formular above:

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 (1-0.5) / 0.05^2}{1 + (1.96^2 \times 0.5 (1-0.5) / 0.05^2 \times 407)}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25 / 0.0025}{1 + (3.8416 \times 0.25 / 0.0025 \times 407)}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604 / 0.0025}{1 + (0.9604 / 1.0175)}$$

$$n = \frac{384.16}{1 + 0.943}$$

$$n = \frac{384.16}{1.943}$$

$$n = 197.7$$

Therefore n = 198

The formula for estimating sample size for each division is as follows:

Number of population size X Sample size

Total number of population size

| S/N | Division | Population | Sample Size |
|-----|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Academic female employees | $\frac{156 \times 198}{407}$ | 122.10 |
| 2 | Non-academic female employees | $\frac{251 \times 198}{407}$ | 75.89 |
| | TOTAL | | 198 |

Table 1

To determine responses from the study population, a systematic distribution of one hundred and

ninety-eight (198) copies of the questionnaire was made. We were able to collect 177 copies of the usable questionnaire. Based on the quantity of viable copies of the survey that were found, 89.3% of respondents answered. The 76.2% response rate is considered suitable for this study, as stated by [20], since a response rate of 50% or above is considered excellent. Of those surveyed, 19.8% are in the 20–29 age range, 35% are in the 30–39 age range, 35% are in the 40–49 age range, 9% are in the 50–59 age range, and 1.1% are senior citizens. The study respondents are divided as follows: 2.3 percent are divorced, 0.6 percent are widowed, 16.4 percent are single, and 80.8 percent are married. This suggests that married people make up the great majority of those polled. This suggests that the age range of the individuals was between 30 and 39, 40, and 49. The following are the demographics of the respondents: Faculty make up 33.9 percent, administrative staff make up 42.4 percent, technical staff make up 14.9 percent, and 9 percent chose another option. Most responders are employed in administration, according to this.

Materials and Measures

This study uses a cross-sectional survey design to investigate Covenant University's maternity leave policy in detail. Information from respondents is gathered once using the cross-sectional survey design [20]. The researcher can gather information on employee wellbeing, organizational performance, and the effectiveness of Covenant University's maternity leave policy at one time by using the Cross-sectional Survey study methodology. The technique seeks to gather information about subjective beliefs, attitudes, and opinions that are generally difficult to ascertain directly [21].

Covenant University was chosen for this study due to its recent establishment in 2002, making it a suitable candidate. As a result, it can implement more progressive and contemporary employee welfare policies, especially those pertaining to maternity leave. Insights into how newer organizations might implement more employee-friendly rules and act as an example for other organizations were gained from studying the university's policy. Thus, the participants in the study provide the data required to assess the impact of organizational performance on employee welfare in relation to Covenant University's maternity leave policy. Covenant University's female employees, nursing moms, and mothers who have had to take maternity leave at any point were all included in this study. Individuals who are not Covenant University employees were excluded, as were men and temporary workers. To gather information, respondents are required to complete and submit written questionnaires to the researcher [22]. When responding to structured questionnaires, participants often choose from a list of options provided by the researcher [23]. The survey was split into two sections: the first inquired about the respondents' personal information, and the second sought their opinions on the university's maternity leave policy, which looks at the impact of employee wellbeing on organizational performance. One advantage of a Likert-style rating questionnaire is that it makes quantitative analysis simpler by enabling circumstances to be assigned numerical values [24].

Secondary data was gathered from a variety of sources, including textbooks, journals, government publications, official documents, newspapers, seminar/workshop papers, and the internet.

The data gathered for the study is examined using statistical tools for both descriptive and inferential analysis. To check for errors, such as the separation of questionnaires that the respondents had not completed, primary data verification was first done on the copies of the questionnaires that were received. The completed data from the respondents was then coded.

The study's null hypotheses were assessed using correlation analysis. This made it possible for the researcher to determine if Covenant University's maternity leave policy could account for the dependent variable, organizational performance. The study used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data from one-on-one interviews were transcribed and then thematically analysed to support the conclusions drawn from the question triangulation.

Results and Discussion

Q1 Does Covenant University's maternity leave policy impact organizational performance?

Of the respondents, 3.4 percent strongly disagreed, 10.7 percent disagreed, 5.6 percent were undecided, 47.5 percent agreed, and 32.8 percent strongly agreed that Covenant University's maternity leave policy has an impact on organizational performance. The maternity leave policy has an impact on Covenant University's organizational performance, according to most respondents.

Q2 Does Covenant University's maternity leave policy have an impact on the productivity and morale of its female employees?

10.7 percent of respondents were undecided, 46.9 percent agreed, 24.3 percent strongly agreed, and 2.3 percent strongly disagreed that Covenant University's maternity leave policy has an impact on the morale and productivity of its female employees. This indicates that maternity leave policy has an impact on Covenant University's female employees' morale and productivity, as agreed upon by most respondents.

Q3 Covenant University has a very successful and efficient maternity leave policy.

Among respondents, 4.5 percent strongly disagreed, 9 percent disagreed, 28.8 percent were undecided, 45.8 percent agreed, and 11.9 percent strongly agreed that Covenant University's maternity leave policy is very effective and efficient. This indicates that most respondents concurred that Covenant University's maternity leave program is very successful and efficient.

Q4 Covenant University's maternity leave policy helps staff members maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Thirty-seven percent of respondents agreed, 8.5 percent strongly agreed, 23.2 percent disagreed, and 20.9 percent were indecisive. This indicates that most respondents concurred that Covenant University's maternity leave policy helps staff members maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Q5 There are positive effects on Covenant University's performance because of the maternity leave policy.

7.9 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that there are positive effects on Covenant University's performance because of the maternity leave policy, 21.5 percent of the respondents disagreed, 27.1 percent of the respondents were undecided, 28.2 percent of the respondent agreed, and 15.3 percent of the respondents strongly agreed. This means that majority of the respondent agreed that there are positive effects on Covenant University's performance because of the maternity leave policy.

Q6 The maternity leave policy in Covenant University has a positive impact on job satisfaction.

9 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that the maternity leave policy in Covenant University has a positive impact on job satisfaction, 19.8 percent of the respondents disagreed, 21.5 percent of the respondents were undecided, 29.9 percent of the respondent agreed, and 19.8 percent of the respondents strongly agreed. This means that majority of the respondent agreed that the maternity leave policy in Covenant University has a positive impact on job satisfaction.

Q7 The maternity leave policy in Covenant University breeds a healthy workplace environment between the employer and employee

, 15.8 percent of the respondents disagreed, 23.7 percent of the respondents were undecided, 41.8 percent of the respondent agreed, and 10.7 percent of the respondents strongly agreed. This means that majority of the respondent agreed that the maternity leave policy in Covenant University breeds a healthy workplace environment between the employer and employee.

Discussion

The Correlation between Maternity leave policy and organisational performance

Maternity leave regulations have a significant influence on how well business's function and are crucial for helping working women transition to parenting. Covenant University, a prominent private university in Nigeria, has created a maternity leave policy to support and promote work-life balance for its female employees. According to the policy, female employees are entitled to a certain amount of paid time off to care for their infant, recover from childbirth, and adjust to their increased responsibilities to their families [25].

According to this study, there is a small but statistically significant positive correlation between maternity leave policy and organizational performance, and a higher maternity leave policy will result in a modest improvement in organizational performance. [26] demonstrated that employee performance was higher in organisations with adaptable and extensive maternity leave policies. With sufficient leave policies, it is possible to balance work and family obligations, which can boost commitment and job satisfaction and boost output. A study by [27] found that organisations with family-friendly policies, including maternity leave, were more likely to be seen as socially responsible and attractive to potential employees. A strong organizational reputation can positively impact performance by attracting high-quality candidates and increasing employee loyalty. Similarly, [28], noted that the connection between organizational performance and maternity leave laws is increasingly being recognized as a significant aspect of modern workplace dynamics. Diversity, employee engagement, and company reputation all seem to benefit from supportive maternity leave policies. By investing in comprehensive and flexible maternity leave policies, organizations can recruit and retain top talent, create a more inclusive work environment, and ultimately boost employee performance [29].

Hypothesis Testing

H₀: There is no significant relationship between maternity leave policy in Covenant University and organisational performance

| Correlations analysis of the relationship between maternity leave policy and organisational performance | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----|--------|
| | | MLP | OP |
| MLP | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .227** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .002 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|-----|
| | N | 177 | 177 |
| OP | Pearson Correlation | .227** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .002 | |
| | N | 177 | 177 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

Table 2 shows the summary result of the relationship between maternity leave policy and organisational performance. From the result in table 4.30 above, maternity leave policy has a statistically significant weak and positive correlation with organisational performance ($r = .227$, $p < .01$), this indicates that an increase in maternity leave policy will lead to a low increase in organisational performance. Hence the null hypothesis one is rejected because there is a significant relationship between maternity leave policy and organisational performance.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study's primary goal was to investigate the impact of Covenant University's maternity leave policy on employee wellbeing and organizational performance. After a thorough examination of Covenant University's maternity leave policy, it was determined that the policy had an impact on employee wellbeing and that modifications were necessary for female employees. The study also showed a direct relationship between organizational performance and employee welfare, which was improved by the maternity leave policy. Therefore, this paper suggests the following:

- Covenant University should reinstate full pay for maternity leave, as this will greatly benefit new moms, particularly those who are the primary provider for their families.
- Covenant University should ensure that maternity leave does not prevent employees from advancing within the company. Clear career routes, professional growth opportunities, and training should be provided to staff members who have taken maternity leave. As a result, workers may become more passionate and committed to the organization, which will support them in advancing their careers.
- Covenant University should consider building childcare facilities close by or on-site to assist staff with childcare responsibilities. Childcare choices that are freely available and reasonably priced can significantly lessen the stress and logistical challenges faced by working women, enabling them to focus more effectively on their professional responsibilities.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

This research is not free from limitations. Firstly, the study is only limited to Covenant university, and limited by gender. Secondly, the study is also limited to one aspect of employee welfare which is maternity leave and not the other components that makes up employee welfare. Finally, the study is also limited in scope which is from 2019-2024

Due to the limitations encountered in carrying out this study, the research suggests the following for further studies:

- A comparative analysis of maternity leave policies in other organizations or universities could be conducted to understand best practices and identify areas for improvement.
- Conducting a longitudinal study to observe the long-term effects of the maternity leave policy on employee welfare and organizational performance at Covenant University. This would

involve tracking the outcomes over an extended period, such as several years, to capture any changes and trends.

c) Conducting a focus group with employees, supervisors, and HR personnel to discuss the impact of the maternity leave policy and gather suggestions for improvement. This interactive approach can provide valuable insights and encourage collaboration among different stakeholders

Declaration of competing interest

The authors do not have any conflicting interests.

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