

Employee Welfare and Organisational Performance: A Study of Maternity leave Policy in Covenant University, Nigeria

Ayankoya Abimbola Rachel¹, Goddy Uwa Osimen²

Abstract

Objective: Employees are organisations resources because without them, an organisation cannot function, employees are thereby dependent on their employers for both a place to work and the execution of their own disciplined practices to guarantee their welfare. One of the components of the welfare in an organisation is the provision of maternity leave policy for female employees. Maternity leave policy was established to help women juggle both their productive and reproductive life. Covenant University maternity leave policy is one that allows their female employee a three month leave with a 50% pay. To ensure organisational performance, employee welfare is essential. The study adopted the Social Construct theory. This study therefore examines maternity leave policy in Covenant University to critically examine employee welfare on organisational performance.

Method: Hence, both primary and secondary data were collected using literature search, questionnaire, and interview. Data gathered were analysed using frequency, percentage, and correlation analysis.

Results: The research revealed that maternity leave policy has a statistically significant weak and positive relationship with organisational performance, that an increase in maternity leave policy will lead to a low increase in organisational performance. The study therefore recommends that the pay of the Maternity leave in Covenant University should be reviewed and increased back to a full pay.

Conclusion: The study concludes that employee welfare, as enhanced by the maternity leave policy, has a direct correlation with organisational performance.

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

1. Introduction

Employees are organisations resources because without them, an organisation cannot function, employees are thereby dependent on their employers for both a place to work and the execution of their own disciplined practices to guarantee their welfare (Karim, 2022). According to Akintoye and Ofobruku (2022), 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 content employee brings value to her firm and speaks highly of her. Keeping employees from leaving the organisation, boosting morale and inspiration, and increasing

¹ Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University, Nigeria, abimbola.ayankoyags@stu.cu.edu.ng

² Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University, Nigeria, goddy.osimen@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

retention of employees are all reasons why employee welfare is important. Regmi, Krishn, Wang and Le (2022), stated that to safeguard working class mothers and encourage their children's growth, providing maternity leave is now being prioritized. All nations, regardless of how developed they are, have statutory maternity leave laws for pregnancy and birth (Udoh, Folarin & Isumonah, 2020).

Regulations governing maternity leave have a long history that dates back more than a century (Regmi, Krishn, Wang & Le, 2022). A maternity leave policy is a time when women are excused from work for their pregnancies, deliveries, and postpartum periods. Obstacles to maternity leave coverage in the United States stem in part from detractors' claims that it may have negative effects on women's careers and at work, particularly small, scaled businesses. For instance, maternity leave policies may reduce women performance in an organisation, which could cause them to put off returning to the workforce or even become unwilling to do so, which would result in a loss of experience (Regmi et al., 2022). The most important goal and challenge for every organisation, whether charitable or for profit, large, or little, private, or public, has been how to maintain and enhance achieved performance. Due to this, organisational performance is now a common concept in management and is of great interest to both academic researchers and working managers (Evwierhurhoma & Oga, 2020). Globalization-related technological improvements have had an impact on business settings over the years and continue to do so now. As a result, businesses everywhere face the dilemma of how to increase their performance (Oghuvbu, Gberevbie & Oni, 2022).

In organisational behaviour and human resource management, there has been extensive research on the link between employee welfare and organisational performance. Work-life balance, training and development, and other employee welfare measures have a favourable impact on organisational performance (Li, Liu, Y, & Zhang, 2021). Additionally, organisations that put an emphasis on employee welfare and foster a positive atmosphere at work typically have lower absenteeism and turnover rates, more employee satisfaction, and superior organisational performance (Nwachukwu, Ezejiofor, & Amaeshi, 2020). Hence, this study therefore examines maternity leave policy in Covenant University to critically examines employee welfare on organisational performance.

1.1 The concept of employee welfare

The term "Employee Welfare" is ambiguous and varies greatly depending on the era, area, sector, nation, cultural beliefs and practices, level of modernization, overall social and economic growth of the populace, and political philosophies in force at the time. Any effort made in the organisation to increase the bar of living for employees is known as employee welfare. The common terms for the salary human agents in different businesses and organisations are labour, worker, workman, or employee (Rao, Patro & Raghunath, 2015). A broad term used to describe a multitude of rewards, services, and facilities that businesses provide to their employees is "employee welfare." Welfare benefits may not always have to be financial. They may be in the form of benefits in kind or in other ways. These consist of things like stipends, accommodation, transportation, health insurance, necessary leaves, and food. Employee welfare additionally incorporates keeping a watch on employment circumstances, promoting peace by creating a healthcare system, trade unionism, and insurance for employees' relatives from illnesses, mishaps, and joblessness. The employer improves employee performance by providing rewards, services, and amenities that make life enjoyable for employees. In both commercial and public service organisations, the welfare of employees is a key component of human resource management (HRM), as it influences dedication to the achievement of goals (Makanjuola, Shaibu & Isijola, 2021).

1.2 The concept of organisational performance

Organisational performance has been viewed and measured in different ways from both theoretical and practical viewpoints in relation to personal performance (Olawale & Garwe, 2021). Undoubtedly, the idea of the diverse views by which management sciences are characterized is generally credited with all these disparities, which also suggests a lack of scholarly unanimity (Mustapha, Olaleye, Yetunde, Olanike, et al., 2023). Akpa et al., (2021), noted that performance is still an ongoing debate among organisational researchers, and they disagree on several points. According to Daft (2000), Organisational performance is the strength of the organisation to accomplish its objectives from maximizing the use of its resources (Hien, Huyen & Hoang, 2023). Richardo (2001), organisational performance is the ability of the organisation to fulfil its purposes. Adeyemi and Aremu (2021), describe Organisational performance is the ability of a company to achieve its long-term goals through efficient resource management. Organisational performance is the efficiency with which an organisation carries out its mission. He continued by saying organizations might be said to be performing if their main objective is to increase the return on equity on investment; similarly, organizations that focus on running-financial benefits while achieving service goals are seen as successful. The effectiveness and efficiency of organizational decisions are evaluated by organizational performance (Mishra, & Shah, 2022).

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The Social Exchange Theory

A well-known social psychology theory called the social exchange theory describes the dynamics of social interactions in terms of the costs and rewards that individuals or groups exchange. George Homans, who initially presented the hypothesis in the 1950s and 1960s, is frequently given credit for it. American sociologist Homans investigated how people behaved and interacted with one another in a range of settings, including groups, communities, and families (Ahmad, Nawaz, Ishaq & Ashraf, 2023). According to the Social Exchange Theory, people interact with one another in social settings where resources or benefits are exchanged. This idea states that in the setting of an organisation, employees will be more resolute and motivated to perform better if they believe their employer values their contributions and shows appreciation by giving them enough rewards and support. Analysis of the effects of Covenant University's maternity leave policies on employee welfare and organisational performance is one area in which SET can be used. In this situation, it is vital to weigh the merits and demerits of the maternity leave policy for the employee and the business. The advantages of a maternity leave policy from the viewpoint of the employee include the capacity to take time off work to care for their child without jeopardizing their employment security, the capacity to form bonds with their child, and less stress during the adjustment to motherhood. A maternity leave policy has advantages for the employer from the standpoint of enhanced employee loyalty, retention, and morale as well as a positive public perception as a family-friendly business (Oyeyemi, Gberevbie & Ibietan, 2021). The expense of offering paid leave, the possibility of lost productivity while the employee is gone, and the requirement to acquire temporary replacement workers are all costs associated with a maternity leave policy for the company. The expenses and benefits must be balanced for the maternity leave policy to be seen as fair and advantageous for both parties. This can be done by carefully crafting a policy that offers the employee enough benefits while keeping the employer's costs to a minimum. Additionally, good communication about the policy's advantages can boost employee morale and lessen any potential drawbacks. Overall, by ensuring that policies are created to meet the needs of both parties, the application of Social Exchange Theory to the analysis of Covenant University's maternity leave policy can aid in enhancing employee welfare and organizational performance.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between maternity leave policy in Covenant University and organisational performance.

3. Methodology

Participants

The population of this study includes four hundred and seven (407) female employees of Covenant University, based on an official report from Covenant University's human resource unit (2023). A purposive sampling of 198 female employees from Covenant University were recruited for this study.

The study the standard formula is used to arrive at a sample size. The standard formular was first published in the year 1925 by Ronald A. Fisher in his book "Statistical Methods for Research Workers" (Panayotova, 2020).

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

Table 1 Total number of population size

S/N	Division	Population	Sample Size
1	Academic female employees	156 X 198 407	122.10

2	Non-academic female employees	251 X 198 407	75.89
	TOTAL		198

To deduce responses from the population of the study, one hundred and ninety-eight (198) copies of the questionnaire were systematically administered. One hundred and seventy-seven (177) copies of the useable questionnaire were retrieved. The total copies of the useable questionnaire retrieved show that the response rate was 89.3%. According to Yousef (2020), a response rate of 50% or more is considered excellent, this, therefore, justifies that the response rate of 76.2% is deemed suitable for this study.

19.8 percent of respondents are between ages 20-29, 35 percent of respondents are between ages 30-39, 35 percent of respondents are between ages 40-49, 9 percent of respondents are between ages 50-59 and 1.1 percent of respondents are between ages 60 and above. 80.8 percent of respondents are married, 16.4 percent of respondents are single, 2.3 percent of respondents are divorced, and 0.6 percent of respondents are widowed. This shows that majority of the respondents are married. This shows that respondents between ages 30-39 and 40-49 participated. 33.9 percent of the respondents are faculty members, 42.4 percent of the respondents are administrative staffs, 14.9 percent of the respondents are technical staffs and 9 percent of the respondents chose others option. This shows that majority of the respondent are administrative staffs.

Materials and Measures

The cross-sectional survey design is used in this study to thoroughly examine maternity leave policy in Covenant University. The cross-sectional survey design collects information from respondents at a single point in time (Oyeniyi, Abiodun, Obamiro, Moses & Osinbajo, 2016). The Cross-sectional Survey research design gives the researcher the chance to collect data from respondent at a single point in time on employee welfare and organisational performance as well as data to assess the adequacy of maternity leave policy in Covenant University. The method aims to collect data on personal views, opinions, and sentiments that would typically be challenging to determine directly.

For this study, Covenant University is identified to be appropriate because it is a relatively new university, having been established in 2002. As such, it can adopt more modern and progressive policies on employee welfare, particularly with regards to maternity leave. Studying the university's policy provided insights into how newer organisations can adopt more employee-friendly policies and can serve as a model for other organisations to follow. Therefore, the individuals chosen for the study gives the information needed to determine employee welfare on organisational performance with regards to maternity leave policy in Covenant University. This investigation was done with the inclusion of Covenant University's female employees, nursing mothers, or mothers that have at some point had to go on maternity leave. The exclusion was those that are not employees of Covenant University, and both male and casual employees were also excluded.

To collect data, questionnaires are collections of written questions that respondents must fill in and submit to the researcher. Usually, while answering structured questionnaires, respondents select from a list of alternatives that the researcher has given (Tan, 2019). The questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first portion focused on the respondents' personal information, while the second section asked for feedback on the university's maternity leave policy, which aims to examine employee welfare on organisational performance. A Likert-style rating questionnaire has the benefit of allowing circumstances to be assigned numerical values, which makes quantitative analysis easier (Amidei, Piwek & Willis, 2019).

Textbooks, journals, government reports, official documents, newspapers, seminar/workshop papers, the internet, and other sources were used to collect secondary data.

Statistical tools for descriptive and inferential analysis are used to examine the data collected for the study. First, primary data verification was performed on the questionnaire copies that have been received to look for errors, such as the separation of questionnaires that had not been completed by the respondents. Following that, respondents' completed data was coded. Correlation Analysis was employed to evaluate the null hypotheses of this study. This allowed the researcher to assess whether (Maternity leave policy), in Covenant University, could explain the dependent variable (organisational performance). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was adopted in the study. To supplement the findings from the question triangulation, one-on-one interview data were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis.

4. Results and discussion

Q1 Maternity leave policy affects organisational performance in Covenant University?

3.4 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that maternity leave policy affects organizational performance in Covenant University, 10.7 percent of the respondents disagreed, 5.6 percent of the respondents were undecided, 47.5 percent of the respondent agreed, and 32.8 percent of the respondents strongly agreed. This means that majority of the respondent agreed that maternity leave policy affects organizational performance in Covenant University.

Q2 Maternity leave policy affects the morale and productivity of female employees at Covenant University?

2.3 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that maternity leave policy affects the morale and productivity of female employees at Covenant University, 15.8 percent of the respondents disagreed, 10.7 percent of the respondents were undecided, 46.9 percent of the respondent agreed, and 24.3 percent of the respondents strongly agreed. This means that majority of the respondent agreed that maternity leave policy affects the morale and productivity of female employees at Covenant University.

Q3 The maternity leave policy in Covenant University is highly effective and efficient.

4.5 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that the maternity leave policy in Covenant University is highly effective and efficient, 9 percent of the respondents disagreed, 28.8 percent of the respondents were undecided, 45.8 percent of the respondent agreed, and 11.9 percent of the respondents strongly agreed. This means that majority of the respondent agreed that the maternity leave policy in Covenant University is highly effective and efficient.

Q4 The maternity leave policy in Covenant University is beneficial to its female employees.

11.9 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that the maternity leave policy in Covenant University is beneficial to its female employees, 18.1 percent of the respondents disagreed, 16.4 percent of the respondents were undecided, 40.1 percent of the respondent agreed, and 13.6 percent of the respondents 60 strongly agreed. This means that majority of the respondent agreed that the maternity leave policy in Covenant University is beneficial to its female employees.

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 is comprehensive enough for attracting and retaining female talent in Covenant University.

9 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that the maternity leave policy is comprehensive enough for attracting and retaining female talent in Covenant University, 22.6 percent of the respondents disagreed, 26 percent of the respondents were undecided, 36.7 percent of the respondent agreed, and 5.6 percent of the respondents strongly agreed. This means that majority of the respondent agreed that the maternity leave policy is comprehensive enough for attracting and retaining female talent in Covenant University.

Discussion

The Relationship between Maternity leave policy and organisational performance

Maternity leave policies are essential for assisting working women as they adjust to parenthood and have a big impact on how well organisations operate. To assist and encourage work-life balance for its female workers, Covenant University, a prestigious private university in Nigeria, has developed a maternity leave policy. In accordance with the policy, female employees are entitled to a set amount of paid time off to recuperate from childbirth, look after their infant, and get used to their expanded family obligations.

This study revealed that maternity leave policy has a statistically significant weak and positive relationship with organisational performance, that an increase in maternity leave policy will lead to a low increase in organisational performance. Harkness and Waldfoegel (2020) 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 Kwang and Gigeun (2017) 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, Mangalore and Knies (2018), observed that it is becoming more widely acknowledged that the relationship between maternity leave regulations and organisational performance is a crucial component of contemporary workplace dynamics. Supportive maternity leave policies appear to have a favourable impact on diversity, employee engagement, and business reputation. Organisations may build a more inclusive work environment, attract, and retain top personnel, and ultimately improve their overall performance by investing in comprehensive and flexible maternity leave policies.

Hypothesis Testing

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

Table 2

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.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The main objective of this study was to examine employee welfare on organisational performance through maternity leave policy in Covenant University. Through a comprehensive analysis of the maternity leave policy in Covenant University, it was observed that the institution's maternity leave policy influenced employee welfare, with female employees needing changes to the policy. The study further revealed that employee welfare, as enhanced by the maternity leave policy, had a direct correlation with organisational performance. This paper therefore recommends the following:

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the study:

- a) The pay of the Maternity leave in Covenant University should be reviewed back to full pay, as this would go a long way for new mothers, especially mothers that are the bread winners in their household.
- b) Covenant University should make sure maternity leave does not impede advancement in the organisation. Employees who have taken maternity leave should be given training, opportunities for professional development, and clear paths for progress. Employees' passion and dedication to the company may increase as a result, helping them to continue their career paths.
- c) To help employees with childcare duties, Covenant University should consider developing childcare facilities nearby or on-site. The stress and logistical difficulties experienced by working women can be greatly reduced by easily accessible and reasonably priced childcare options, allowing them to concentrate more effectively on their professional obligations.
- d) Covenant University should continually evaluate the maternity leave policy's effectiveness and impact. To assess the effectiveness of the policy, get input from the

workforce and consider measures like staff retention rates, productivity levels, and employee satisfaction surveys. Regular review and monitoring will assist pinpoint areas that need improvement and guarantee that the policy remains applicable and efficient.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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