



## **EFFECT OF PROJECT SUPERVISION ON WORK LIFE BALANCE ON STATE CORPORATIONS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA POWER**

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### **Abstract**

*Kenya Power, a Kenyan national utility dealing with distribution and retail of electricity, has been experiencing work-family conflicts among employees during project implementation. The industry is labor intensive, and currently the company has a total staff establishment of over 10,000 employees. The company has developed policies to enable employees work efficiently as well as integrate work and private life. However, the management of the company has realized that employees work for long hours as revealed by high overtime payouts and high number of leave days balance per year. Some employees for instance, take home as high as 60% of their basic pay as overtime, meaning that some work for about 16 hours or even more per day. In addition, the leave balances experienced every year exceed 40 days on average for a high number of employees, meaning that employees do not go on leave when they are supposed to. The study sought to analyze the effect of project supervision on work life balance in the performance of state corporations in Kenya, a case of Kenya Power. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study targeted 645 KP employees. The data collected with the use of questionnaire was analyzed by use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. It is recommended that managers will need to be trained to lead, direct, delegate and hold the course of the action or opinion of others. Training in information management will be essential if organizations want to have effective management of small, gradual and large non continuous changes. Supervisors must improve knowledge and skills of information gathering.*

Keywords: State Corporations, Project Supervision, Supervisor, Work life balance

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Clark (2000) defines work-family balance as “satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict” “Work” and “Life” have been rather loosely defined in literature (Guest 2002) where work is paid employment and life is everything outside of the formal employment but is usually used to connote

the realm of family or home life (Ransome, 2007). The concept is loosely defined and is seen to derive from sexual/gender division of labor and this renders WLB its narrow focus (Ransome, 2007). Kossek and Ozeki (1998) highlighted that WLB is equally important for both men and women, and that men are equally burdened by the work and family responsibilities. His conceptualization still

remains narrow in that though the earlier rhetoric of WLB for working mothers has been criticized, it still remains in the purview of work and family.

Professional dedication is professional dedication (at all levels). As the Project supervisor, one has the influence upon that work-family balance for your entire team. By planning properly you can ensure that your team is not sacrificing that work-family balance for the project or the program. Furthermore, by communicating and setting the correct expectations with the team and the stakeholders, one can protect that work-family balance for the team.

It can be a difficult thing to achieve work life balance, but it's not impossible. In all careers and all roles of responsibility, we have to understand that management has expectations. In a project, the primary expectation is successful delivery of the project within certain parameters--time, scope, budget etc. Management wants to operate within those parameters too but not at the risk of the project manager or his team's sanity. As in all jobs, there will be overtime, there will sacrifices, etc. But the idea is to plan to avoid what we call the over-runs. The core of project management is – people – around which all other processes revolve and interact.

### **Global Perspective**

In the current global work environment, there is intense competition for talented employees and for market share based on higher product quality and lower prices. Competition requires organizations to take into account the diversity of employees' needs and values, the cultural influences in the areas where the companies operate, as well as the diversity of working relationships (e.g., cross-national teams) in order to attract, retain, and fully engage their employees (Graeme *et al.*, 2008).

The experience in western countries indicates that responsiveness to the work and family life needs of employees in the growing number of multinational enterprises (MNE) is likely to be a key factor in

ensuring effective local and global business outcomes. Yet, as is pointed out by Bardoel and DeCieri (2006) there has been little serious analysis of work-life needs and approaches to policies / practices in the context of MNEs and a global workforce. This is despite the fact that others report that employees from different parts of the world identify three overriding barriers to work-life harmony / integration: a lack of workplace flexibility; access to and affordability of dependent care; and issues associated with work demands and long hours of work (Graeme *et al.*, 2008).

### **Rationale for Work Life Balance**

Work Life Balance, simply defined, means the presence of a satisfactory level of involvement in the multiple roles of a person. This satisfactory level of involvement gives the person a sense of harmony. The multiple roles are three: professional / occupational work, family and personal life (Kinuthia *et al.*, 2011). There is an increased interest in balancing work and family life among government, academics, projects and the media, which stems from rapid changes in the labour market and family structures. For instance, the increase in the number of dual earner households and increased participation of mothers in the labour market (Dex & Scheibl, 1999) has led to multiple roles among employees and thus increased stress (Cinamon & Rich, 2002).

A lot of changes have been taking place in the social cultural environment which has witnessed a shift from single bread earner to dual career couples (DCC), where both husband and the wife are pursuing their careers. This has given rise to a shift where women used to remain at home attending to the family affairs while the man worked. These demographic shifts have put considerable pressure on both men and women to concurrently manage their work and family obligations (Higgins *et al.*, 2000). An increase in work demands and longer working hours has become a reality for many employees. Technological advancements (computers, internet and telecommunications) have

helped project employees remain connected with clients and employers even after office hours. However, this has further compromised the work-life boundaries taking up the little time left for the employees (Agrawal & Thite 2003).

Organizations and individuals are making efforts to strike a crucial balance between work and family life by reducing the incompatibilities between the two, i.e. “work-family conflict” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Psychological research has identified a number of negative outcomes arising from work-life conflict; decreased psychological well-being and increased sickness (Evans & Steptoe, 2002), marital problems, psychological and physical health of employees partners (Westman & Etzion, 2005), job and life satisfaction and heavy alcohol use (Frone et al., 1997).

This call for balance is supported by the theory of work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), rather than work-life balance, which implies an either/or mind set. According to this theory, participation in roles at work and at home can have positive additive effects on physical and psychological well-being. Individuals who participate in satisfying work and family roles have been known to experience greater well-being than those who participate in only one of the roles or who are dissatisfied with one or more of their roles. In much the same way that a diverse financial portfolio protects an individual’s financial well-being from poor performance in a particular type of investment, participation in multiple social roles can buffer people from distress that may originate from one particular role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

### **Project Supervisor Support**

Project supervisor support is a work-domain resource that operates in several ways to facilitate the successful integration of a project and family role demands. Project supervisors may assist their employees’ efforts to integrate work and family roles by providing instrumental support, such as

allowing them to schedule their working hours or to take leave when there is a family exigency. This is particularly important in projects that do not have many formal policies in place to support the integration of work and family (Poster, 2005; Wang *et al.*, & Piao, 2008).

Support is also socio-emotional in nature. By expressing concern and empathy for employees’ work-family challenges, and by affirming that employees’ family responsibilities will not be held against them, supportive project supervisors may increase employees’ confidence and help prevent the tensions and strains that can result from juggling between work and family demands. Thus, having a supportive project supervisor and helping co-workers may lead to a more positive effect (Marks, 1977) and confidence from work that may carry over and enhance the functioning in the family.

For project supervisors to be effective they need adequate managerial skills which are interpersonal, technical and conceptual in nature (Graham & Bennet, 1998). Interpersonal skills include communication, leadership and role modelling. Technical skills include functional knowledge, work scheduling and delegation while conceptual skills include decision-making, attitude and problem-solving (Saleemi, 1994).

### **Kenya Power**

Kenya Power (KP) is a limited liability company which transmits, distributes and retails electricity to customers throughout Kenya. KP is a public company and is listed at the Nairobi Stock Exchange. KP is responsible for ensuring that there is adequate line capacity to maintain supply and quality of electricity across the country. The interconnected network of transmission and distribution lines covers about 47,035 kilometers ([www.KPLC.org](http://www.KPLC.org)).

KP has a staff complement of over 10,000 employees. The company recruits and aims at retaining highly motivated professional staff in

order to meet its corporate goals. Great importance is attached to ensuring that employees have requisite competencies to perform their project work as well as realize their potential through regular staff training and development programmes. On-the-job training is the foundation upon which all other training must depend, and the company acknowledges the role played by their experienced employees in training their colleagues ([www.kplc.org](http://www.kplc.org)).

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Family and work are the most important domains of life for most adults. Yet the characteristics of today's economy and the related social changes, have led to new realms of experiencing work and family. For instance, the technological advancement and massive entrance of women into the work force, leading to increase in the number of dual-earner families has presented pressure on harmonizing personal, family and work life (Evans & Steptoe, 2002). This has resulted to work-family conflicts in that individuals participating in multiple roles inevitably experience conflict and stress hindering their quality of life and productivity.

In addition, for majority of project workers, life and work are not distinct spheres of life any more (Mariotti, 1998). Organizations are expected to develop policies to enable employees work efficiently, as well as integrate work and private life (Friedman, 2006). However, several studies have revealed that implementation of policies does not guarantee their actual utilization, because the supervisor may not be supportive. Currently, creation of family-friendly work cultures is one of the most pressing concerns for both academics and practitioners.

KP has developed policies to enable employees work efficiently as well as integrate work and private life. However, the company management has realized that employees work for long hours as revealed by high overtime payouts. For instance,

some project employees take home as high as 60% of their basic pay as overtime, meaning that some work for about 16 hours or even more per day.

In addition, the leave balances experienced every year exceed 40 days on average for a high number of project employees, meaning that employees do not go on leave when they are supposed to. This has resulted to low productivity despite the high number of hours spent in the project. This also means that employees are spending less time with their families resulting in work-family conflicts. There is therefore an urgent need for KP to establish effective work life balance programs. This is not possible without involvement and participation of the supervisors who retain contacts and allocate jobs to employees on day-to-day basis. Implementation of work life balance programs has been proven to have the following benefits; reduced absenteeism, higher productivity, improved employee health, increased efficiency and employee engagement.

In summary, there is lack of clarity as to how project supervisor's interpersonal skills, project supervisor's technical skills, project supervisor's conceptual skills and project supervisor's human skills affect work-life balance of state corporations in Kenya. This study therefore aims at filling this gap by conducting a thorough study on the effect of project supervision on work life balance in the performance of state corporations in Kenya.

### **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The General objective of the study was to establish the effects of the project supervisor on work life balance in Kenya Power.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

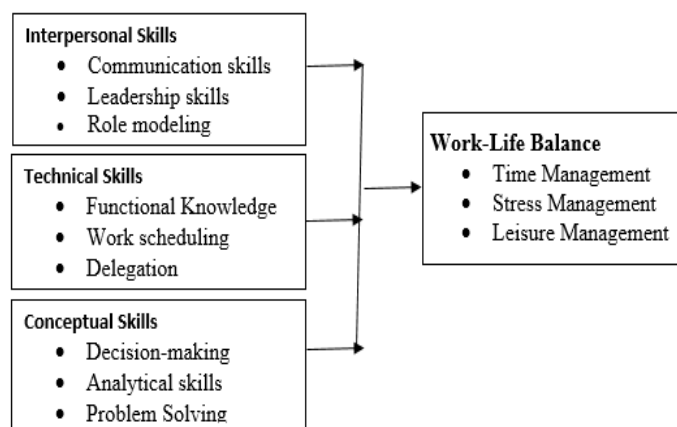
1. To evaluate the relationship between the project supervisor's interpersonal skills and work-life balance.
2. To establish the relationship between the project supervisor's technical skills and work life balance.

3. To examine how the individual project supervisor’s conceptual skills affect work life balance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework adopted by the research study. In the conceptual framework, the independent variables are; Interpersonal skills, Technical skills and conceptual skills while the dependent variable is Work-life balance.



Independent Variable                      Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Despina and Louise (2006) conducted a study on Personal and interpersonal skills: The process of prescribing definitions in an accounting degree. The definition of individual generic skills is problematic, despite the pressure for the development of such skills during accounting degrees coming from government and employers. This study aimed to present definitions to allow academics to establish a point of reference when designing accounting curricula to encompass such skills. The results show that not all 22 personal and interpersonal skills which should be developed during an accounting degree, according to the

Australian professional accounting bodies, are in fact developed. The higher order and difficult skills of: think creatively and innovatively; handle conflict; handle challenges; handle change and empathy are not present in either the explicit or implicit curricula.

Bénédicte and Pierre-Yves (2017) conducted a research on from technical to non-technical skills among information systems suppliers. Existing research infers that in the information systems (IS) and information technology (IT) fields, a shift may occur between technical and non-technical skills. However, relatively little research has focused on going changes in terms of key skills in the IS suppliers sector. The purpose of this paper was to address this gap by investigating these skills evolution in the IS suppliers domain and discusses their impacts on IS and IT curricula. This study identified, for the IS suppliers, the critical skills, which are basically non-technical, and peripheral skills, which are primarily technical. It then considers the consequences of this change and the necessary adaptations it requires for businesses and training for this field.

Elías and John (2011) on the other hand conducted a survey on Technical skills for new digital librarians. The study indicated that libraries, museums, and research institutions continue to work on historical digital collections for their digital repositories, there is always a need to either hire or train digital librarians and they are expected to bring or learn a set of technical skills that can help these institutions keep up with the current trends of web technology. The purpose of this paper was to analyze the current technical skills being sought for digital librarian positions, as well as provide a basic exploration of the list of technical courses offered by major library school programs in 2010. This study revealed that current students and practicing librarians need to seek out additional non-curricular opportunities to build competency in the technical areas represented in the study. Fortunately, the areas where the greatest

disparity exists are also areas where significant opportunities for independent learning are available.

Alam *et al.*, (2010) emphasized on the importance of human skills in project management professional development. The purpose of this paper was to provide insights into the importance of human skills in project management success and the apparent emphasis placed on this within the context of university education. An investigation into the effectiveness of a British Project Management Professional Development Program (PMPDP) case study was reported. Using as a benchmark, the core behavioral competencies outlined in the International Project Management Association (IPMA) International Competence Baseline version 3, the paper investigates the extent to which the knowledge gained from the PMPDP effects the behaviors of delegates and graduates. The soft skills of a control group are also explored. The results deal with certain improvements in most of the behavioral competencies of delegates and graduates which the control group could not develop in the same way.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study targeted 645 KP employees. A pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted on 10 purposively selected respondents. Data collected from the questionnaires was coded by a code book prepared for this study. The data collected with the use of questionnaire was analyzed by use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Quantitative data was analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics where the frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation of the responses was established and the results then presented in form of tables/figures

A multiple regression analysis was used to determine the nature of the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. The

Regression Model that was tested was summarized as follows;

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

Where:

Y = Work Life Balance

X<sub>1</sub> = interpersonal skills

X<sub>2</sub> = Technical skills

X<sub>3</sub> = Conceptual Skills

β<sub>0</sub> = constant of regression

ε = Error term

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Interpersonal Skills

These are the skills used by any person to interact with others properly. In the business world, it refers to an employee's ability to get along with others while getting the job at hand done. It includes everything from communication and listening skills to attitude and deportment. Good interpersonal skills are attributes prerequisite for many positions in the organization. According to this study, interpersonal skills are found to be closely related to the knowledge of social expectations and customs within an organization. The researcher posed various statements related to interpersonal skills to the respondents to ascertain the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with them in enhancing performance, and the results are shown on table 1.

Table 1 Interpersonal Skills

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		TOTAL	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	I am usually open to getting to know people personally within my organization and establishing relationship with them	22	19	69	60	16	14	8	7	-	-	115
I usually focus my conversation on the interests of the parties involved	20	17	67	58	18	16	10	8	-	-	115	100
I try to ask relevant questions to encourage the speaker when I am listening	20	17	64	56	20	17	11	10	-	-	115	100
I have an ability to assess, identify and manage the emotions of myself	18	16	67	58	22	19	8	7	-	-	115	100
I am comfortable working with others	27	23	61	53	17	15	10	8	-	-	115	100
When speaking, is it easy for me to recognize how others are reacting	31	27	60	52	12	10	12	10	-	-	115	100
I ask the other people questions when I don't understand what they've said	30	26	59	51	16	14	10	8	-	-	115	100

Results from table 1 indicated the various responses according to the statements regarding interpersonal skills. When asked if the respondent is usually open to getting to know people personally within the organization and has the ability to establishing relationships with them, 60% of the respondents agreed which represented the majority. This was followed by 19% of the respondents who strongly agreed. The rest 14% were neutral while 7% disagreed. None of the respondents strongly disagreed. This response had an indication that most of the respondents in a bid to develop work life balance in the organization, they had to do lot of interaction within themselves and develop good working relations.

On the other hand, the researcher asked the respondents if they are usually focused in their conversation with the interest of the other parties involved. Majority of the respondents (58%) agreed while 17% of them strongly agreed. About 16% of

the respondents were neutral while the rest 8% disagrees. None of the respondents strongly disagreed. This indicated that in a bid also to develop work life balance within an organization, conversation between individuals is paramount. It helps to understand what other parties are thinking as regards to some aspects that may build the organization. The researcher on the other hand discovered that different parties have different opinions as far as a certain phenomenon is concerned and therefore encourages lots of conversations within an organization.

I try to ask relevant questions to encourage the speaker when I am listening was another statement that the researcher wanted to know how respondents agree or disagree about. Again majority of the respondents (56%) agreed with it while about 17% strongly agreed. Another 17% was neutral while the rest 10% disagreed. Equally, none of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. On the other hand the researcher asked if the respondents has an ability to assess, identify and manage the emotions of himself and others around them. Work life balance of employees in an organization required them to be able to control their emotions and even accommodate the rest of the employees in the organization. Majority (58%) of the respondents agreed while 16% strongly agreed. About 19% of the respondents were neutral while only 7% disagreed. Equally, one of the respondents strongly disagreed.

The researcher also wanted to determine if the respondent was comfortable working with others and had efficiency of the work completed during such tasks as work life balance dictates. Majority (53%) of the respondents agreed while 23% strongly agreed. This again made the researcher want to know if when speaking, it was easy for respondents to recognize how others were reacting. Majority of the respondents (52%) agreed. Most of these statements posed to respondents creates work life balance within an organization and results indicated that most of them were developed. These

findings concurred with Diane & Douglas (2011) who also did a study on the interpersonal skills of recent entrants to the field of healthcare management. The survey was constructed based on leadership interpersonal competencies and competency-based career development programs. The findings also indicated that interpersonal skills have a positive impact to work life balance. In a bid to identify the relationship between Interpersonal skills and work life balance in the organization, the researcher conducted a correlation test and the results were shown in table 2.

**Table 2 Relationship between Interpersonal skills and Work life balance**

Control Variables		Interpersonal Skills	Work Life Balance Policies
<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>	Correlation	1.000	.713
	Significance (2-tailed)	.	.001
	N	0	115
<b>Work Life Balance Policies</b>	Correlation	.713	1.000
	Significance (2-tailed)	.001	.
	N	115	0

Correlation analysis is used to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the Interpersonal skills and work life balance policies in Kenya Power. The correlation reported in the Table 4.5 is positive and the value of 0.713 is significantly different from 0 because the p-value of 0.001 is more than 0.05. This indicates that interpersonal skills is significant at 95% significance level and therefore means that interpersonal skills always have a strong impact on work life balance in an organization.

**Technical Skills**

Technical skills can be said to be the abilities and knowledge needed to perform specific tasks. They are practical, and often relate to mechanical or scientific tasks. Some examples include knowledge of programming languages, mechanical equipment, or tools. While technical skills are often most

important for jobs related to information technology and other fields in the sciences, many other industries also want employees with at least some technical skills. Those with technical skills are often referred to as technicians. Technical skills can also refer to the ability of a certain type of stock trader who uses technical analysis to buy and sell stocks. Technical skills can refer to the ability to perform tasks that require the use of certain tools, whether tangible or intangible, and technology to complete them. In this regard, the knowledge in a technical skills area is seen as practical in nature as it allows a person to complete a designated task in a real, not theoretical, way. Given the growth of technology within the economy, the need for technical skills is likely to continue to grow. Therefore, technical skills enhances work life balance in an organization. This corroborates findings by Lu *et al*, (2009); Wadsworth & Owen, (2007) that supervisor support enhances employee engagement with the work-team and the organization as well. Using the technical skills, the researcher gave statements to the respondents to understand to what extent they agreed to them or disagreed and the results were summarized in table.



**Table 3 Technical Skills**

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		TOTAL	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I am knowledgeable of the duties that are assigned to me on a timely basis	31	27	55	49	15	13	14	12	-	-	115	100
I usually focus my attention to duties that are allocated to me on a first come first served basis	27	23	63	55	14	12	11	10	-	-	115	100
I usually perform my duties better due to the in job trainings and seminars that the company allows us to attend	20	17	61	53	20	17	14	12	-	-	115	100
I have a work plan that I adhere to due to the coaching that my supervisor has sensitized	25	22	75	65	11	10	4	3	-	-	115	100
I have an attachment with my supervisor for duties are allocated with respect to competencies of individuals	29	25	64	56	14	12	8	7	-	-	115	100
I usually have a good working environment because I understand the duties that my colleagues undertake	25	22	66	57	10	8	14	12	-	-	115	100

Work life balance entails individuals to be knowledgeable to the duties that are assigned to them on a daily or timely basis. In this case, majority (49%) of the respondents agreed while 27% of them strongly agreed. Knowledge work can be differentiated from other forms of work by its emphasis on non-routine problem solving that requires a combination of convergent, divergent, and creative thinking. Employees who do not have a clear understanding of how their jobs fit into the overall work picture of their organization are more likely to exhibit carelessness and the inability to make clear distinctions on which aspects of their job are most important. How workers perceive the requirements associated with their jobs and the value of performing those jobs can provide key information to human resource practitioners. Such knowledge can aid in several human resource

functions, including job redesign, job evaluation, training needs and performance management.

Respondents were equally asked if they usually focus their attention to duties that are allocated to them on a first come first served basis. Majority (55%) of the respondents agreed while 23% of them strongly agreed. This indicated that most of the respondents in the organization were focused on the duties they undertook. It is very important that all members of the organization understand the role and duties assigned to them. I usually perform my duties better due to in job trainings and seminars that the company allows us to attend and provide mentorship according to the job descriptions was another statement given to the respondents. Majority of the respondents (53%) agreed while 17% of them strongly agreed. 17% of them were neutral while the rest 12% disagreed. On the other hand, the researcher asked if the respondents had work plan that they adhered to base on their departmental goals. Majority of the respondents (65%) agreed while 22% of them strongly agreed. According to Sarah (2012), work life balance cannot be achieved without a proper establishment of the technical and important skills to the employees in an organization. This study therefore agrees with my study and explains that technical skills are added on to other skills to build up work life balance of employees.

The implications of these findings was checked on the basis of the level of correlation between technical skills and work life balance policies. Table 4.7 points towards dependence between Technical skills and work life balance policies. This implies that Technical skills trends in an organization and work life balance can be evaluated dependent of each other. In a nutshell, changes in technical skills largely creates an impact on the work life balance of employees in an organization. Being a good project supervisor means being a good leader, delegating tasks, and measuring the success of each project. Being a good project supervisor on the other hand means more successful

projects, which employers always want. The results corroborates with the findings of Farh *et al*, (2007), which indicated that supervisor support influence work life balance and employee engagement. Further studies by Aryee *et al*, (2005); Hill, (2005); Thompson & Prottas (2005); Wadsworth & Owen, (2007) argue that supervisor support is a potential predictor of work-family enrichment leading to enhanced employee engagement in the workplace Table 4 therefore indicated the correlation relationship between the technical skills and work life balance.

**Table 4 Correlation between Technical Skills and Work life balance**

Control Variables		Technical Skills	Work Life Balance Policies
Technical Skills	Correlation	1.000	.621
	Significance (2-tailed)	.	.051
	N	0	115
Work Life Balance Policies	Correlation	.621	1.000
	Significance (2-tailed)	.051	.
	N	115	0

The bivariate Pearson Correlation conducted produced a sample correlation coefficient, *r*, which measured the strength and direction of linear relationships between the technical skills and work life balance policies. By extension, the Pearson Correlation evaluates whether there is statistical evidence for a linear relationship among the same pairs of variables in the population. The relationship between technical skills and work life balance had a positive correlation coefficient of 0.621 indicating that for work life balance to be effected in organizations, technical skills must be embraced.

**Conceptual Skills**

Conceptual skills help employees see the forest through the trees, as the saying goes. These skills help an individual see how all the parts of an organization work together to achieve the organization’s goals. People with conceptual skills are creative, and can work through abstract concepts and ideas. Conceptual skills are extremely

important for leadership and supervisory positions, particularly upper- and middle-management jobs. Managers need to make sure everyone working for them is helping to achieve the company’s larger goals. Rather than just getting bogged down in the details of day-to-day operations, upper- and middle-managers also need to keep the company’s big pictures aims in mind. However, conceptual skills are useful for almost every position. Even when you have a very specific list of duties, it is always helpful to know how your part fits into the larger goals of your organization.

Within a corporate organization, top managers and supervisors differ with respect to function, authority and responsibility. Top managers need to be conceptual thinkers because they are responsible for entire divisions, whereas supervisors are responsible for particular groups within the division. The manager's job is developing strategies, methods and tactics, then conveying that vision and associated objectives to supervisors. The supervisor is to implement the strategies and ensure that employees efficiently execute and achieve objectives. The manager is responsible for profitability and productivity of divisions within the company. Managers must plan, staff and organize the division, using people with the skills, ability and desire to make the division successful.

Delegating authority is an important function of the manager to ensure objects are implemented by supervisors as intended. Failure of the supervisor and employees to successfully execute the plan and achieve specified goals is ultimately borne by the manager. Supervisors, who rank below and are under the direction of managers, have direct responsibility for small groups but generally lack authority to hire or fire employees. Generally, the study shows that supervisors have experience in specific tasks or jobs, overseeing employees to ensure productivity and quality standards set forth by the company. For an organization to be successful, managers need to have greater conceptual competence than do supervisors,

because the manager is responsible for overseeing operations of an entire division and the functioning of small teams. For the division to be successful the manager must be capable of envisioning and understanding the primary objectives of each team within the division and how those teams function together to produce the end product or service. Table 5 indicates the strength through which respondents agreed or disagreed with statements regarding conceptual skills.

**Table 5 Conceptual Skills**

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		TOTAL	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I am knowledgeable of the policies and procedures of my work unit	17	15	67	58	23	20	8	7	-	-	115	100
I usually feel that the time I spend doing official duties and time spent with family and friends is apportioned satisfactorily	25	22	63	55	21	18	6	5	-	-	115	100
I usually perform my duties better due to the time allocated to complete tasks, availability of resources and knowledge that I have acquired in my unit.	14	12	72	63	15	13	14	12	-	-	115	100

Respondents were put to task on if they are knowledgeable of the policies and procedures of their work unit. Majority (58%) of the respondents agreed, 15% of them strongly agreed while 20% of them were neutral. Only 7% of the respondents disagreed while none of them strongly disagreed. On the other hand, the researcher asked if respondents usually felt the time they spend doing official duties and time spent with family and friends was apportioned satisfactorily. Majority (55%) of the respondents agreed, 22% of them strongly agreed while 18% of the respondents were neutral. About 5% of the respondents disagreed and as usual no one strongly disagreed. Finally, the researcher asked if the respondents usually performed their duties better due to the time

allocated to complete tasks, availability of resources and knowledge that they have acquired in their units. Majority (63%) of the respondents agreed, 12% of the respondents strongly agreed while 13% were neutral. About 12 % disagreed and no one strongly disagreed.

This study agrees with Northouse, (2010) who asserts that conceptual skills allow an employee to think through and work with ideas. He also says that leaders with higher levels of conceptual skills are good at thinking through the ideas that form an organization and its vision for the future, expressing these ideas in verbal and written forms, and understanding and expressing the economic principles underlying their organization’s effectiveness. On the other hand, Northouse, (2010) continues to allude that conceptual skills allow leaders to give abstract ideas meaning and to make sense of abstract ideas for their superiors, peers, and subordinates. This skill is most important for top managers, less important for middle managers, and least important for supervisory managers.

It was therefore interesting to test the relationship between conceptual skills and work life balance within Kenya Power. This involved a correlation test between the two variables and the results were represented in table 6.

**Table 6 Correlation between Conceptual Skills and Work Life Balance**

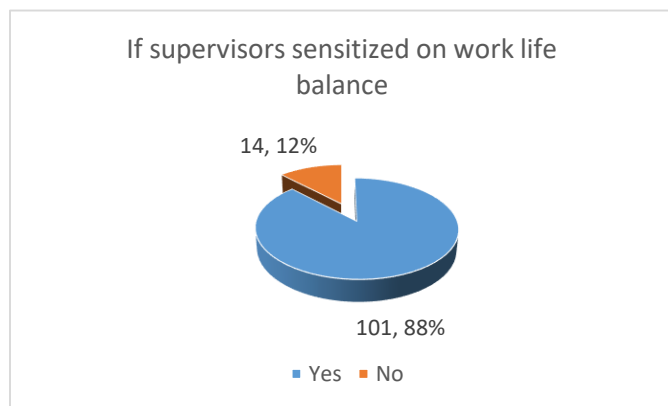
Control Variables		Conceptual Skills	Work Life Balance Policies
Conceptual Skills	Correlation	1.000	.852
	Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	0	115
Work Life Balance Policies	Correlation	.852	1.000
	Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	115	0

Conceptual skills and work life balance are strong positively correlated. This can be shown from table 6 which indicated a correlation coefficient of 0.852. On the other hand, conceptual skills is significant in the contribution it creates to work life balance of employees in an organization. It therefore depicts

that without conceptual skills, work life balance may not be attained in organizations.

**Work Life Balance**

A comfortable state of equilibrium achieved between an employee's primary priorities of their employment position and their private lifestyle. Most psychologists would agree that the demands of an employee's career should not overwhelm the individual's ability to enjoy a satisfying personal life outside of the business environment. Work life balance describes the relationship between your work and the commitments in the rest of your life, and how they impact on one another. The researcher sought to determine if the respondents had sensitization on work life balance by their supervisors. Figure 2 had a summary of the results.



**Figure 2 If supervisors are sensitized on work life balance**

Figure 2 indicated that majority (88%) of the respondents agreed that supervisors sensitized them on work life balance while the remaining 12% had a contrary opinion. For those who agreed that they had received sensitization on work life balance, the researcher asked them to explain the type of sensitization they received and results were summarized in table 7.

**Table 7 What type of sensitization they receive**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
They have a unique role in helping companies and employees work together to accomplish a reasonable work-life balance	20	17.4	17.4	
Maintain Structural Consistency	29	25.2	25.2	17.4
Offer Community Engagement Opportunities	11	9.6	9.6	42.6
Create a Designated Quiet Space	28	24.3	24.3	52.2
Allows Schedule Flexibility	15	13.0	13.0	76.5
N/A	12	10.4	10.4	89.6
Total	115	100.0	100.0	100.0

Results from table 7 indicated that 17.4% of the respondents were of the opinion that supervisors have a unique role in helping companies and employees work together to accomplish a reasonable work-life balance. These professionals are often tasked with the responsibility of supporting team development and challenging industry working condition standards. Ultimately, these are tasks that are crucial to individual and organizational productivity in the workplace. About 25.2% of the respondents indicated that supervisors maintained structural consistency. It was important to maintain a sense of consistency and organization in the company structure because employees generally feel less anxiety if they know what to expect day-to-day as often as possible. Supervisors should ensure that employees are afraid to shake things up from time to time, but a steady and reliable work environment that can counteract stresses that employees feel at home. The other 9.6% of the respondents indicated that supervisors offered community engagement opportunities. This was another great way to connect the dots between work time and out-of-work time is to offer community engagement activities that are meaningful and beneficial.

For example, supervisors could consider offering eight hours per year of paid volunteer time to their employees as an incentive to get involved in

important community causes. Another 24.3% of the respondents were of the opinion that supervisors created designated quiet space. Every employee has a bad day from time to time, so it's nice to have a space for employees to go to when they just need to step away for a moment. Create a designed quiet space in your office where employees can take a mental break when they need to. This space should be uncluttered and free of all company materials. Instead, fill it with lush plants and flowers, comfortable seating, some light reading material, and perhaps some soft music. Establish a precedent that this space is not an employee lounge that welcomes chatter, laughter, venting, or meetings. This should be a calming space for silent reflection that respects solitude and peace. Finally, the other 13.0% of the respondents indicated that supervisors allowed schedule flexibility.

Not every business is well-suited for a virtual workforce, so don't compromise the productivity of your company if you need your employees to arrive at work in-person. The results supports the argument by Ebrahimi, (2005), that supervisors assist employees engage with the team to which they belong and by extension the organization in which they work. On the other hand, Sahibza, *et al*, 2005, argue that work life balance supportive supervisor cultures have been associated with an increase in the use of work-life balance practices leading to high employee engagement. However, it is another thing entirely to give your employees the option to work remotely when they really need to because of an emergency that requires them to make up time later. For example, if your employee's child is sick, consider offering her the opportunity to work from home that day or come into the office over time weekend to make up for lost time. This way your employee doesn't have to worry about missing work and wages from taking the time off and your company's deadlines can still be met.

### Regression Analysis

The researcher used a multiple linear regression to find out the influence of the independent variables on the targeted revenue and found out as follows.

**Table 8 Model Summary and ANOVA**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.842 <sup>a</sup>	.708	.166	2.51386	1.719

a. Predictors: (Constant), Technical, Interpersonal, Conceptual  
 b. Dependent Variable: work life balance

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	168.718	4	42.179	6.674	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	695.143	110	6.319		
	Total	863.861	114			

a. Dependent Variable: work life balance  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Technical, Interpersonal, conceptual

Table 8 indicated the model summary and he analysis of variance. The R value represents the simple correlation and is 0.842 which indicates a high degree of correlation between the dependent and independent variables. The R Square indicates how much the total variation in the dependent variable. Can be explained by the independent variable. It is also called the coefficient of determination. In this case, it is 0.708 which means the independent variables determines 70.8% of the dependent variable. Studies by (Elroy & James, 2001) agree that supervisors who create cultures that assist employees to achieve work life balance are rewarded with highly engaged employees. In addition, Ilies, Wilson, & Wagner, (2009) argue that employee perceptions that the supervisors culture is family supportive are related to high employee engagement.

Furthermore, such support facilitates the use of any formal policies that the organization might have for harmonizing work life balance and personal life (Blair- Loy & Wharton, 2002; Casper et al., 2004; Kelly & Kalev, 2006; Farh, Hackett, & Liang, 2007).

The next table is the analysis of variance (ANOVA) table, which reports how well the regression equation fits the data (predicts the dependent variable). This table indicates that the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly well. The sig of .000 indicates the statistical significance of the regression model that was run. Here,  $p < 0.0005$ , which is less than 0.05, and indicates that, overall, the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable (it is a good fit for the data).

**Table 9 Regression Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	5.819	3.003		1.938	.055
	Interpersonal	-.074	.114	-.056	-.646	.001
	Technical	.099	.112	.077	.886	.051
	Conceptual	-.097	.240	-.036	-.403	.000

a. Dependent Variable: work life balance

$$Y = 5.819 + 0.074X_1 + 0.099X_2 - 0.097X_3 + 0.758X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y = Work Life Balance

X<sub>1</sub> = interpersonal skills

X<sub>2</sub> = Technical skills

X<sub>3</sub> = Conceptual Skills

ε = Error term

**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this study was to determine effect of project supervision on work life balance of state

corporations in Kenya. In summary, interpersonal skills is significant at 95% significance level and therefore means that interpersonal skills always have a strong impact on work life balance in an organization. The relationship between technical skills and work life balance had a positive correlation coefficient of 0.621 indicating that for work life balance to be effected in organizations, technical skills must be embraced. On the other hand, conceptual skills is significant in the contribution it creates to work life balance of employees in an organization. It therefore depicts that without conceptual skills, work life balance may not be attained in organizations. The following are the findings of the study in summary and order of the Objectives.

**Interpersonal skills and work life balance**

On the effect of interpersonal skills on work life balance of supervisors, the study found that good interpersonal skills are attributes prerequisite for many positions in the organization. According to this study, interpersonal skills are found to be closely related to the knowledge of social expectations and customs within an organization. Most of the respondents in a bid to develop work life balance in the organization, they had to do lot of interaction within themselves and develop good working relations. On the fact that they are usually focused in their conversation with the interest of the other parties involved, majority of the respondents agreed.

This indicated that in a bid also to develop work life balance within an organization, conversation between individuals is paramount. It helps to understand what other parties are thinking as regards to some aspects that may build the organization. The study on the other hand discovered that different parties have different opinions as far as a certain phenomenon is concerned and therefore encourages lots of conversations within an organization. Correlation analysis was used to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. A

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the Interpersonal skills and work life balance policies in Kenya Power. The correlation a positive value of 0.713 which is significantly different from 0 because the p-value of 0.001 is more than 0.05. This indicated that interpersonal skills is significant at 95% significance level and therefore means that interpersonal skills always have a strong impact on work life balance in an organization.

### **Technical skills and work life balance**

Technical skills were also used to determine the work life balance of the respondents. They were said to be the abilities and knowledge needed to perform specific tasks. They are practical, and often relate to mechanical or scientific tasks. Some examples include knowledge of programming languages, mechanical equipment, or tools. While technical skills are often most important for jobs related to information technology and other fields in the sciences, many other industries also want employees with at least some technical skills. Technical skills also referred to the ability of a certain type of stock trader who uses technical analysis to buy and sell stocks. Technical skills were also found to be the ability to perform tasks that require the use of certain tools, whether tangible or intangible, and technology to complete them. In this regard, the knowledge in a technical skills area is seen as practical in nature as it allows a person to complete a designated task in a real, not theoretical, way.

Given the growth of technology within the economy, the need for technical skills is likely to continue to grow. Employees who do not have a clear understanding of how their jobs fit into the overall work picture of their organization are more likely to exhibit carelessness and the inability to make clear distinctions on which aspects of their job are most important. How workers perceive the requirements associated with their jobs and the value of performing those jobs can provide key information to human resource practitioners. Such

knowledge can aid in several human resource functions, including job redesign, job evaluation, training needs and performance management.

Technical skills trends in an organization and work life balance can be evaluated dependent of each other. In a nutshell, changes in technical skills largely creates an impact on the work life balance of employees in an organization. Being a good project supervisor means being a good leader, delegating tasks, and measuring the success of each project. Being a good project supervisor on the other hand means more successful projects, which employers always want. The bivariate Pearson Correlation conducted produced a sample correlation coefficient,  $r$ , which measured the strength and direction of linear relationships between the technical skills and work life balance policies. By extension, the Pearson Correlation evaluates whether there is statistical evidence for a linear relationship among the same pairs of variables in the population. The relationship between technical skills and work life balance had a positive correlation coefficient of 0.621 indicating that for work life balance to be effected in organizations, technical skills must be embraced.

### **Conceptual Skills and work life balance**

Conceptual skills help an individual see how all the parts of an organization work together to achieve the organization's goals. People with conceptual skills are creative, and can work through abstract concepts and ideas. Conceptual skills are extremely important for leadership and supervisory positions, particularly upper- and middle-management jobs. Managers need to make sure everyone working for them is helping to achieve the company's larger goals. Rather than just getting bogged down in the details of day-to-day operations, upper- and middle-managers also need to keep the company's big pictures aims in mind.

Top managers need to be conceptual thinkers because they are responsible for entire divisions, whereas supervisors are responsible for particular

groups within the division. The manager's job is developing strategies, methods and tactics, then conveying that vision and associated objectives to supervisors. For an organization to be successful, managers need to have greater conceptual competence than do supervisors, because the manager is responsible for overseeing operations of an entire division and the functioning of small teams.

For the division to be successful the manager must be capable of envisioning and understanding the primary objectives of each team within the division and how those teams function together to produce the end product or service. Conceptual skills and work life balance are strong positively correlated which indicated a correlation coefficient of 0.852. On the other hand, conceptual skills is significant in the contribution it creates to work life balance of employees in an organization. It therefore depicts that without conceptual skills, work life balance may not be attained in organizations.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that the success of any decision depends on the conceptual skill of the people who make the decision and those who put it into action. When, for example, an important change in marketing policy is made, it is critical that the effects on production, control, finance, research, and the people involved be considered. And it remains critical right down to the last executive who must implement the new policy. If each executive recognizes the over-all relationships and significance of the change, he is almost certain to be more effective in administering it. Consequently the chances for succeeding are greatly increased.

On the other hand, the technical skill is perhaps the most familiar because it is the most concrete, and because, in our age of specialization, it is the skill required of the greatest number of people. Most of our vocational and on-the-job training programs are largely concerned with developing this specialized

technical skill. It involves specialized knowledge, analytical ability within that specialty, and facility in the use of the tools and techniques of the specific discipline.

The study also concludes that that interpersonal skills have, especially considering the significance which will in future have the leaders of organizations, the conclusion is unavoidable that there should be additional training in related skills. The researcher on the other hand concluded that different parties have different opinions as far as a certain phenomenon is concerned and therefore encourages lots of conversations within an organization.

### **Recommendations**

From the above findings, the researcher recommends the following:

Managers will need to be trained to lead, direct, delegate and hold the course of the action or opinion of others. Essential to this is a skill that involves people and ideas, and the manager must create the necessary attitude of sincere interest in people, for their work and shared goals of the organization.

Training in information management will be essential if organizations want to have effective management of small, gradual and large non continuous changes. Managers will need to have skills and abilities such as flexibility, adaptability and creativity for development of new solutions, new ideas, processes, products or services.

Supervisors must improve knowledge and skills of information gathering. It is easier to establish information channels in the organization and develop integrative relationships for the transmission of information across organizational boundaries and have a better sense of political information on the existing shares in an issue.



### Areas for further research

Despite the contributions made by this study, it highlights a few aspects to be considered by future researchers.

Apart from interpersonal skills, technical skills and the conceptual skills, there are other skills that contribute to work life balance. Studies should be conducted on these skills and thus a conclusion should be reached on which skills contribute most to work life balance of employees in an organization.

The research was conducted on employees of State Corporation who are subjected to some kind of work environment. A similar study can be done on private firms to compare if the results could be the same.

On the same note, the study was conducted to determine the effect of supervisor's characteristics and skills on work life balance. A similar study can be conducted to determine if these skills has an influence on the organizational performance.

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