



Effect of Time-Based Conflict on Employee Productivity: Does Altruism Matter? A Reflection from star-rated Hotels in Kenya

Barsulai C. Stella

Department of Hotel and Hospitality Management, University of Eldoret
Address: 1125-30100 Eldoret, Kenya

Email address: sbarsulai@gmail.com

Abstract

The current study sought to assess the influence of altruism on the relationship between time-based conflict and employee productivity in star-rated hotels in Nairobi-Kenya. The study adopted explanatory design. A total of 4725 employees from 30 star rated hotels were targeted. Nassiuma formula (2000) was used to sample 214 employees to answer questionnaires. Stratified sampling was employed to select employees from the departments chosen. Bias Corrected Bootstrapping of SEM, using AMOS version 5, in SPSS version 23 was used to test the hypotheses. The results showed that for each unit increase in time-based conflict, there was a decrease in employee productivity. These findings illustrated that the conflict experienced by employees negatively affects employee productivity. The results further showed that when Altruism is exhibited, it reduces the influence of time-based conflict on employee productivity. This shows the importance of employees exhibiting altruism to reduce the effect of the conflict for employee productivity to be achieved. The study findings will be insightful to management in the hotels to develop guidelines to help hotel managers and supervisors improve employee productivity through the use of altruistic behavior.

Keywords: Time-based conflict, Altruism, Hotel Employees, Employee Productivity, Star -rated hotels

INTRODUCTION

Organizations and individuals alike regard employee productivity as of high relevance. The overall economic development worldwide has largely grown from the Hotel Industry. Economies today have also had several businesses shift from those in manufacturing to those that offer services. The hotel industry falls under the service industry, where its' core product is intangible, unlike other industries whose products are tangible in nature. Thus, it relies upon the performance and efficiency of its employees, as the main contributor to outperform and remain above their competitors, (Karatepe & Sokman, 2016). The hotel industry should therefore take employee productivity as a starting point to create customer satisfaction, which leads to customer loyalty (Bienstock, Demoranville & Smith, 2003), and finally the overall productivity. However, the industry remains one of the sectors that experiences several problems in terms of working conditions, (Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2016). The industry has limited resources like time. Employees work for long and irregular hours, which may lead to lack of enough time for their families, (Deery, 2002). This can happen for example, if a parent at work absconds attending a meeting in school to attend one at work. This raises the challenge of dividing this resource (time) between the two areas, which are both important in an employees' life. This may lead to conflict between their work demands and family responsibilities, known as time-based conflict, (Zhao & Mattilla, 2013). As Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defines, time-based conflict occurs when an

employee does not have enough time between work and family demands. This can finally affect employee productivity in the long run.

Further, there is an extensive change in the business environment today, mostly in the hotel industry. This has forced managers and organizations to be more sensitive on matters concerning increase in performance of employees. As found by Gholipour and Sadat (2008), organizations need employees who perform extra duties than what is defined in their job description, those with a positive attitude, and who help fellow colleagues with unfinished tasks. Such extra behaviors are what researchers consider as altruism, (Zareieman et al., 2010).

The nature and characteristics of work in the hotel industry may prevent the achievement of employee productivity for competitive advantage. In Kenya, there is a lot of change in the setup of families and the working class. There is an increase of couples who are both in formal employment, and the rise in numbers of employed women with families. Findings from previous studies are that due to demands on an individuals' constrained resources like time, (that lead to time-based conflict), employees may find it hard to perform all their responsibilities between work and family successfully, which may lead to low productivity. This has led to the need for management to get strategies to mediate and weaken the time-based conflict to improve employee productivity. Therefore, the need for this study. The current study therefore sought to investigate the effect of altruism on the relationship between time-based conflict and employee productivity, in star-rated hotels in Nairobi-Kenya. The study came up with the following objectives;

1. To assess the effect of time-based conflict on employee productivity.
2. To determine the mediating effect of altruism on the relationship between time-based conflict and employee productivity.

As seen earlier, one of the challenges of time-based conflict is that of dividing one's time – between the demands of work and family. Therefore, by employees exhibiting altruism, it may extend beyond the betterment of either the organization, or another individual, as they extend beyond their required job obligations. The antecedents of altruism will apply depending on the level of commitment to the organization from employees, their attitude, subjective norms and the perceived organizational behavior. An employee with a positive attitude will have the intention to assist a fellow colleague who is experiencing time-based conflict. The more an employee experiences a strong feeling to engage in a behavior, the more likely that they perform the behavior. This will also depend on the pressure from colleagues to either perform the behavior or not. A fellow colleague with the right attitude will act upon this social pressure (subjective norm) to complete the tasks of a colleague who needs help. This is an act of altruism. So, with the right skill, (since the willing employee may be working in the same department as that who needs help), the task will be completed. As a result, this act will help to improve productivity and resolve time-based conflict issues. This makes the theory more applicable in the hotel industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Productivity

Employee Productivity refers to the amount of output produced from a given number of inputs or resources. If the organization can achieve employee productivity, it becomes more productive and more efficient, as productivity is a measure of efficiency, (Samnanim & Singh, 2014). Employee productivity is important to the organization because it can improve its competitiveness in the market place, and further lead to more valuable income. This implies that the firm can satisfy its shareholders to a great extent, (Chen et.al, 2015). In a nutshell, levels of high productivity to lower unit costs are met, and this is why productivity remains one of the major determinants of organizational success, (Onyije, 2015). This

improves employees and the employers' level of satisfaction, which improves growth of the business. For employees to achieve productivity, they need to achieve targets of production according to the company standards. This requires employees to produce high quality services and products that meet customer satisfaction. Employee productivity can be affected if they experience time-based conflict.

The working population priority has changed, which has resulted in personal and family time reduction. As Ajala, (2012) asserts, some of the causes for this is change in values in personal life and family life, and the workforce that is aging. Employees are therefore sometimes required to work extra hours, which may take up their personal time.

The economy in Kenya has improved because of income from the hotel industry. This is the case because tourism is one of the sectors leading in the countries' economy, of which the hotel industry is among its' pillar. (Kenya Tourism Report, 2013). Whereas the performance of hotels is depended on provision of quality service to customers, the challenge remains on improvement of performance in employees, in order to realize this dream. Kenya's vision 2030 has the hotel industry as one of the areas that will contribute greatly to industrialization (Schulz, 2012). Since the industry is facing several challenges in the country, which may prevent this realization, the industry needs to strategize on ways to manage the conflict, so that employee productivity can be achieved, hence, performance of hotels.

Time-based Conflict in the hotel industry

Time-based conflict occurs when time demanded at work is not compatible with time required for family responsibilities, (Greenhaus & Beutel, 1985). In today's society, more women are joining formal employment, whereby both men and women are now contributing in earning two salaries. Both genders are required to spend more of their time at work. There is also a trend of more single parents, and the middle-aged employees required to take care of the elderly parents. This demands more time on an employee to be present at home. These roles, both at work and family, result in time-based conflict, (Moon & Roh, 2010). Women mostly experience time-based conflict when they work for more hours leaving their family responsibilities unattended to (Ohkubo, 2010). This is because, in the African culture, a woman's role is to take care of family duties. Such demands have led to employees not devoting enough time to the organization. This increases time-based conflict experienced by employees, who cannot balance their time between demands at work and family.

In his scarcity model, Casper et. al., (2011), brought out the time-based conflict concept as human time being limited. Female employees who work fulltime are more concerned about their family responsibilities, and they desire to be allocated flexible time at work, (Barney, 2011). Fong and Cheung (2013) found that employees, who could not sacrifice their time to fulfill their family needs, would experience disruption, not only at the office but also at home. Since work and family life are important areas for individuals, especially for adults, these conflicts experienced will finally produce negative consequences, either in their family or work contentment (Fong & Cheung, 2013).

Similarly, Deery and Jago (2015) concluded that employees in the hotel industry experience confusion on the priority of roles to perform, since all of are equally important. Yıldız (2011) stressed that the motivation and the level of cheerfulness in employees working in the hospitality industry, will be decreased because of people working under stressful conditions, working situations that are poor, performing duties for long periods of time, and being on duty on weekends and on public holidays. Yanardağ and Avcı (2012) further concluded that, these conditions lead to problems at the place of work. As Magnini (2009) found, hotel workers experience time-based conflict. Work schedules in the hotel industry are very different from those of other industries, where employees take breaks from work during meal times, weekends and on holidays. Such times in hotels and restaurants is when

business is at its peak. This makes employees in such kind of work environments vulnerable to the conflict. More still, employees in this set up are caught up between the increasing demands of the family to take care of their children, care of parents advanced in age, and increasing demands from their employer to perform perfectly as workers, and also give extra services beyond their job description. These expectations from one individual causes the conflict, (Neal & Hammer, 2007), which is a result of the mixture of the demands on their time from both areas. There is lack of time to satisfy responsibilities in both domains. Research by Casper et al. (2011) shows that female employees in formal employment experience more time-based conflict, leading to more stress in females than men. In Kenya, there are different social roles between men and women, which may affect their family and work life. As per the African culture, women's responsibility is to be in charge of family upkeep while men work so that a salary is earned to help them cater for their families. (Casper et al., 2011). In this case, women will experience more of the conflicts on their time.

As found by Deery (2018), the cause of work overload in the hotel industry is the unrealistic job demands and deliberate understaffing. It is not surprising to note that high emotional exhaustion is displayed by employees who perform heavy workloads and experience high levels of time-based conflict, (O'Neill & Xiao, 2010). It is against this backdrop that the study hypothesized that;

H₁: Time-based conflict has a significant influence on employee productivity

Altruism in the hotel industry

Altruism is a helping behavior, consisting of actions that are voluntary, which contribute to increase in employee productivity (Boxal et al., 2018). According to the researcher, what improves productivity is a combination of the selflessness of an employee towards his organization, and the willingness of an employee to help the co-worker. This helps fellow workers to go beyond what the job requires thus helping to improve employee productivity (Redman & Snape, 2015).

As found by Sonnentag (2017), employees need to perform extra roles at work, other than the formal requirements stipulated by the organization. The researcher further adds that the extra role behavior indirectly contributes to the social, organizational and psychological environment, although it does not directly contribute to organizational performance. This extra role behavior is what is termed altruism. Employees who engage in altruism receive a sense of accomplishment, feelings of growth and a sense of helping others (Stoner et al., 2011).

However, Frese (2012) found that initially, it was not a requirement for employees to have behavior that is adaptive for productivity to be achieved. But due to changing times, there has been an increasing need for this kind of behavior, (Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, & Plamondon, 2010). Therefore, there is need for altruism, as an adaptive behavior, to be exhibited by employees. Altruism studies have found that the behavior can benefit organizations by increasing efficiency, enhancing productivity and creating social capital, which might reduce time-based conflict. There is need for this framework because the service industry has its' employees offering intangible services, and they have direct communication with customers. As Mulvaney (2016) found, there is little literature in organizational research in hospitality and tourism addressing issues on problems caused by time conflict, between work and family.

Altruistic behaviors are encouraged more by values that affect groups and teams, other than those benefiting individuals. Naturally, altruism and warm feelings may arise as a consequence of experiences of connecting with one another and coming together, (Nawaz & Anjali, 2017). Altruism, or assisting fellow workers causes efficiency as workers assist each

other on more urgent tasks. (Neihoff & Yen, 2004). The researchers found that altruism involves organizational tasks being relieved of specific individuals. Rush and Allen (2001) states that, a lot of social psychological research explains that there is a difference in regard to helping behavior and altruism. Employees who were allowed to work alone (i.e., not working in groups) were much more likely to engage in altruism, (Kumani & Shavani, 2018).

Altruism is similar to behavior directed towards a fellow colleague, (benefiting the organization) as found by Brennan & Skarlicki (2004). It allows employees to increase the pool of available knowledge, thus encouraging cooperation, and teamwork, (Neihoff & Yen, 2004). As the researcher put it, altruism affirms that organizational tasks are achieved by helping specific individuals.

For many years, altruism has been considered an important factor to understand the relationships between the employer and the employee, (LePine, Erez & Johnson, 2002). When employees exhibit altruism, it brings out the positive attitude they have towards the organization, therefore increasing their commitment at work, and finally positively improving employee productivity.

Robbins (2000) stated that, in addition to being altruistic, supportive and friendly co-workers lead to job productivity increase. Employees enjoy honest, fair, competent and considerate supervisors. Employees also want to be rewarded and recognized for good productivity, and also participate in making decisions. When decision making is participative, it leads to increased job satisfaction, although there may be some exceptions such as differences amongst individuals, (Robbins, 2000). Employees expect the management to respect them and their values, and be managed effectively.

Fong and Cheung (2011) state that altruism positively relates to performance from an individual and team work. More study results by Sonnentag (2007) found a relationship between altruism with such kind of employee performance. The researchers found that when individuals exhibit altruism, there will be a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Likewise, Cheng et al., (2012) further states that altruism has an effect on employee performance. However, none of these studies have examined the interaction of altruism and time-based conflict with performance, which provide opportunities to develop this research. Another major factor concerned in this research is how to measure altruism role on relationship between time-based conflict and employee productivity. Employees who have good work habits (altruism) will have great will to help their colleagues hence expectations for high achievement. In spite of the increasing importance of altruism in organizations, few studies have attempted to explore its use in the hotel industry. The study therefore hypothesized that;

H₂: Altruism has a significant influence on the relationship between time-based conflict and employee productivity

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (1988) was applied in this study. The Theory brings out the varying behaviors and situations, brought about by attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. The Theory gives a description of how attitudes and beliefs determine behavior. It is about predicting about plans and actions that one intent to execute. (Mukanzi & Senaji, 2017). The proximal predictor of one's behavior is his/her intention to engage in the behavior. This is when behavior is termed as planned. Although it may not be accurate, beliefs lead to peoples' attitude and their intentions and behavior matching these beliefs, (Mukanzi & Senaji, 2017). Beliefs in behavior could influence an individuals' attitude affecting their behavior, normative belief would result in individual subjective norm, and locus of control would form individual perceived behavioral control, (Wang, 1998).

METHODOLOGY

The study used explanatory design, which is used in real life setting. The research design is directed towards exploring the relationships between concepts and phenomena and exploring the interdependency between them, (Riley, Hansen, Gürses, Davis, Miller, & Priester, 2001).

Target Population

The target number of employees was 4725, drawn from thirty hotels in '2' to '5' star category, within Nairobi County (Tourism and Regulatory Authority, 2016). The researcher contacted the Human Resource (HR) managers of the thirty hotels two weeks before collection of data, requesting for permission to visit the hotels for data collection from their employees. The letter was attached with the research permit and a sample of the questionnaire. The HR managers of all the hotels allowed the researcher to carry out the research on their employees.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 214 employees from the thirty hotels was obtained using Nassiuma (2000) formula;

$$Nc^2 / c^2 + (N - 1)e^2 = n$$

Where, n=Sample size, N=Population, c=covariance, e=standard error
 $4725(0.3)^2 / 0.3^2 + (4725 - 1)0.2^2 = 214$ as the desired sample size.

Proportionate sampling was used to get the specific number of respondents from each hotel. It was important to keep the sizes of the samples from different strata proportionate to the sizes of the strata. Stratified sampling was employed to sample employees in departments that work in shifts. These are front office, housekeeping and food and beverage service and production. Working in shifts exposes employees to time-based conflicts. Lottery method was used to select the employees to give the structured questionnaires to answer. The researcher visited the hotels personally on the day of collecting data. Permission from the management was obtained for the questionnaires to be administered. With the HR managers and departmental supervisors' assistance, the researcher put ballot papers in a lottery box containing a 'yes' or 'no' in different bags for every department selected. The sample size for each hotel ranged from 5 and 10. As the employees reported to work, they were requested to pick a ballot paper. If one picked a 'yes', they were given the questionnaire to answer. The questionnaires were on a 5-point Likert scale. The employees were given two weeks to answer the questionnaires. The questionnaires asked about time related conflicts that affect employee performance, and whether they helped each other on unfinished tasks. Each employee dropped the answered questionnaire in a sealed box at the HR office. They were then collected by the researcher from the human resource officers. They were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Variable Measurements

The measures for time-based conflict were adapted from Boles *et al.*, (2001). Twelve statements were concerned with time-based conflict. The employee performance measures were derived from Babin & Boles (1998), while the employee efficiency and employee productivity were derived from Karatepe & Sokman, (2016). Two statements were concerned with employee productivity, two statements related with employee efficiency, while one statement was concerned with customer satisfaction. Altruism scales were adapted from Podaskof, (2013). Five statements were concerned with altruism.

Reliability and Validity Test

Reliability was measured using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient at >0.70 . The values ranged from 0.8 to 0.9 (Employee productivity = 0.9, Time-based conflict = 0.8, Altruism = 0.9). The values all exceeding 0.7, which is the accepted level according to Malhorta, (2004).

The measurement model was validated using confirmatory factor analysis. The following were the Model fit coefficients used to determine the acceptance or rejection of the measurements and the structural model (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). Hair Jr., et al., (2010) proposed the criteria for acceptable fit as shown in the Table 1 below;

The significant Chi-square, 83.175, $p < 0.001$, here indicates that the fit between the over identified model and the data is significantly worse than the fit between the just-identified model and the data. While one might argue that significance of this Chi-square indicates that the reduced model does not fit the data well, even a well-fitting reduced model will not be significantly different from the full model if the sample size is sufficiently large. A good fitting model is one that can reproduce the original variance-covariance matrix (or correlation matrix) from the path coefficients, in much the same way that a good factor analytic solution can reproduce the original correlation matrix with little error.

The Normed Fit Index (NFI) is simply the difference between the two models' chi-squares divided by the chi-square for the independence model. For this data, that is $(1126.237) - 83.175 / 1126.237 = .926$. Values of .9 or higher (say .95 or higher) indicate a good fit. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) uses a similar approach (with a non-central chi-square) and is said to be a good index for use even with small samples. It ranges from 0 to 1, like the NFI, and .95 (or .9 or higher) indicates good fit. The Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) is conceptually similar to the NFI, but varies in that it is actually a comparison of the Normed chi-square values for the null and specified model, which to some degree takes into account model complexity. Models with good fit have values that approach one (Hu & Bentler, 1999), and a model with a higher value suggests a better fit than a model with a lower value which in this case is 0.947 that is close to 1 indicating a better fit.

Model Measurement

Table 1: Model Measurement (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)

| Fit Index | Test Value | Std. Value | Result |
|------------|------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Chi Square | 83.17 | $P\text{-value} \leq 001$ | Good fit |
| NFI | .926 | 0.9 | Good fit |
| CFI | 1 | ≥ 0.9 | Good fit |
| TLI | 0.947 | 1 | Good fit |

Model specification

The best method of Structural Equation Modeling, (SEM) framework for testing indirect effects is Bias-Corrected Bootstrapping, Shrout & Bolger, (2002). The study used the method to analyze the data. The structural model was fitted through path analysis with latent variables using AMOS version 5.

RESULTS

This entails the analysis, presentation and interpretation of the mediating effect of altruism on the relationship between time-based conflict and employee productivity in star-rated hotels in Kenya. Out of the 214 questionnaires given to respondents, 172 were retrieved. This makes the response rate of 80.32%. However, only 158 were found to be useful for further analysis, because 14 questionnaires were not analyzed due to data that was missing

and outlier problems. This accounted for 73% valid response rate. The response was considered appropriate as recommended by Sekaran (2008), who argues that any response rate above 70% is classified as best.

Sample Characteristics

The study sought to establish the characteristics of the employees in the star-rated hotels such as, departments, number of children per employee, gender, marital status, job tenure and positions held. The findings presented in Tables 2 indicate that female employees dominate in number (49% males and 52% females), 77% of the employees are married, while 15.8% are either divorced or single parents, and majority of them (88%) have worked for between 5 and 10 years. The above results indicate that women have equally joined formal employment, and form the majority of the workforce in the hotel industry in Kenya.

The findings on job tenure could imply that there is high turnover of employees in the hotel industry. This may be caused by the fact that employees may find that their career goals, personal values, and skills do not fit well with the demands of organizational culture. Further results show that out of the 158 employees, 28.5% work in the kitchen, 30.4% work in the food and beverage service department, 24.7% work in the front office department, while 16.5% work in the housekeeping department. The distribution of the employees in the various departments has the advantage of having rich and heterogeneous information regarding time-based conflict experience and employee productivity, given their experiences in the different departments. These are departments that require employees to work in shifts for long and irregular hours. The following Table 2 shows the sample characteristics of the study;

Sample Characteristics

Table 2: Sample Characteristics

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| Gender | Female | 82 | 1.9 |
| | Male | 76 | 48.1 |
| | Total | 158 | 100 |
| Marital status | Married | 122 | 77.2 |
| | Separated | 11 | 7 |
| | Divorced | 9 | 5.7 |
| | Single parent | 16 | 10.1 |
| | Total | 158 | 100 |
| Job tenure | 5 years or less | 111 | 70.3 |
| | 6 - 10 years | 28 | 17.7 |
| | 11- 15 years | 16 | 10.1 |
| | 16-20 years | 2 | 1.3 |
| | More than 20 years | 1 | 0.6 |
| | Total | 158 | 100 |
| Departments | Kitchen | 45 | 28.5 |
| | Food and beverage service | 48 | 30.4 |
| | Front office | 39 | 24.7 |
| | Housekeeping | 26 | 16.5 |
| | Total | 158 | 100 |
| No. Children | 0-3 | 59 | 37.3 |
| | 4 and above | 99 | 62.7 |
| | Total | 158 | 100 |
| Position | Employees | 136 | 86.1 |
| | Supervisor/Managers | 22 | 13.9 |
| | Total | 158 | 100 |

Source: Human Resource (2019)

Multivariate analysis

The study sought to find the mediating effect of altruism on the relationship between time-based conflict and employee productivity in star rated hotels in Kenya. Bias-Corrected Bootstrapping of Structural Equation Modeling, as shown in Fig. 1 was used to conduct the test and examine the significance of the direct effect, the independent variable and mediator 'path a', direct effect of mediator and dependent variable 'path b', and indirect effect 'a*b'. Assuming that paths 'a' and 'b' are significant, the mediation effect is confirmed if the results of the bootstrapping test showed that the value of the indirect effect 'a*b' is different from zero and the p-value is significant. If 'c' is closer to zero compared to c and non-significant, one can conclude that the mediating variable completely mediates the effect between independent variable and dependent variable. On the other hand, if 'c' is still significant, the researcher concludes that there is partial mediation of the independent variable on the dependent variable. This is as shown in Table 3 below;

Table 3: Estimates of Mediating Effect of Altruism on the Relationship between Time Based Conflict and Employee Productivity

| Structural Paths | Estimate | S. E | C.R | P |
|---|----------|------|--------|------|
| Direct Model | | | | |
| Employee productivity <--- Time-based WFC | -.285 | .090 | 0.391 | .000 |
| Indirect Model | | | | |
| Altruism <---Time based WFC | -.244 | .052 | 13.718 | .000 |
| Employee productivity <--- Time-based WFC | -.132 | .089 | 11.045 | .000 |
| Employee productivity ← Altruism | .542 | .047 | 7.647 | .000 |
| Performance←Innovation← Organization | -.417 | .076 | 9.213 | .012 |

The study findings indicate that the Hypothesis, which predicted the significant influence of time-based conflict on employee productivity, was tested using Structural Equation Modeling via AMOS version 5. The direct effect of time-based conflict on employee productivity had an inner loading coefficient value of -.285, (-.285, $p < .05$). This shows that the direct effect was significant between the two variables. As the inner loading coefficient is negative, it means that there is a negative relationship. This implies that an increase in time-based conflict is likely to reduce employee productivity. This indicates that there is a significant direct negative effect between time-based conflict and employee productivity. The regression weights findings in the default model show that all the parameter estimates are highly significant and different from zero. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis that;

H₁: Time-based conflict has a significant influence on employee productivity

The study also hypothesized that altruism has a significant influence on the relationship between time-based conflict and employee productivity. The direct relationship between time-based conflict and altruism is significant at (-.244, $\rho = 0.000$) this means that an increase in time-based conflict reduces altruism. Further, results showed that altruism had a positive significant influence on employee productivity (.542, $\rho = 0.000$). This shows that an increase in altruism increases employee productivity. More findings showed that the effect of time-based conflict on employee productivity via altruism reduces to -.132 from -.285 indicating a possible partial mediating effect of altruism on the relationship between time-based conflict and employee productivity. This means that, when altruism is exhibited, time-based conflict reduces by -.132, as the standardized beta value show. Based on the results of the SEM analysis, it is shown that altruism met the criteria as a partial mediating variable. In order to verify the above results, the study conducted Bias Corrected bootstrapping as per the Table 3 and Figure 1. The indirect effect, through altruism, is computed as the product of the path coefficient from time-based conflict to altruism, and the path coefficient from altruism to employee productivity. The regression weight estimates for the indirect effect (.244*.542) is -.132 as shown in Fig 1, and the direct effect before altruism was introduced was only-.285

and significant. This means that increasing altruism will reduce the negative effect of time-based conflict on employee productivity. We therefore accept the hypothesis that;

H₂: Altruism has a significant influence on the relationship between time-based conflict and employee productivity.

Figure 1 below illustrates the measurement model of time-based conflict, altruism and employee productivity;

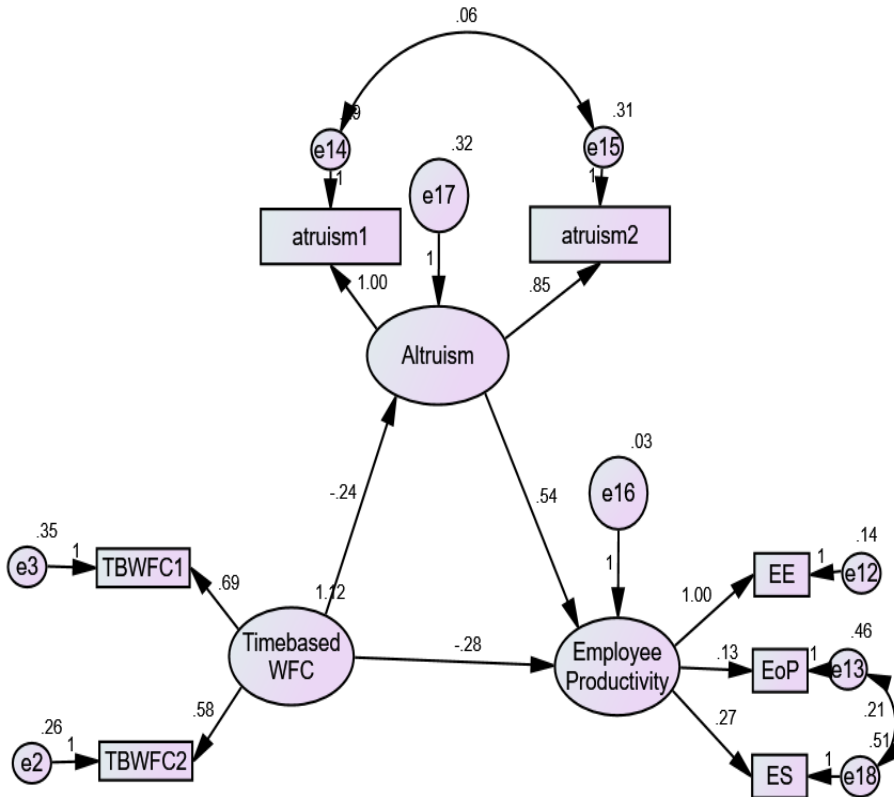


Figure 1: Measurement Model of Time-based conflict, Altruism and Employee Productivity

Source: Researcher (2020)

DISCUSSION

The study findings imply that an increase in time-based conflict is likely to reduce employee productivity. This indicates that employees have to leave their families before they wake, because they have to get to work on time. Also, the employees work schedules clash with their family schedules, as they have to work in shift schedules set by the organization. This indicates that the time-based conflict has an eventual negative effect on their level of productivity because of the low levels of time balance.

It is expected that each employee has a different role to play in their daily lives, between their work and family. Each employee may have a role to play as an employee, either as a parent, a husband or wife or have other family roles. Each of these duties may conflict each other. This conflict may be more for employees who are married and with families. This brings out the importance of balancing work and family responsibilities at the work place.

This does not affect only one individual, but as the results of this study indicate, it is a problem that affects productivity at work.

The study found two categories of the employees' life that the conflict affects. The first conflict is the time demanded by their work affecting their family life. As a result, they have to adjust their work-related duties, caused by their family activities. The second type of conflict is their time at work affecting their personal life. When they work overtime and on public holidays it prevents them from having time for their personal duties. This is supported by Buck et. al., (2000), who, in their scarcity model, suggested that the time-based conflict concept suggests that human time is in limited quantity. There is not enough time for both roles in the two domains.

As found earlier, most of the employees are females (51.9%) with families. This finding indicates that, in the family unit, women and young mothers with children have joined the formal employment. This has resulted in many couples in Kenya playing two roles, as opposed to previously when the males alone were required to go to work, while the females remained to take care of the family duties. This is what the African culture expects of them. These changes have influenced how employees perceive work time and family time, and other leisure activities. For most of the hotel industry employees, working round the clock 24 /7 becomes difficult to maintain a balance between the two roles. This is in agreement with findings by Casper et al., (2011), that because women with families have more family responsibilities than men, they are bound to experience more time-based conflict, therefore needing altruistic behavior more.

Employees' altruistic behavior help them to have the willingness to assist one another when there is need. This may enhance cooperation and motivation in employees to get work done, take personal interest in the well- being of fellow colleagues and help to improve the relationship between them, thus improving employee productivity. Employees spend half of their time at the work place, where interaction with colleagues take place. This makes the working place an important social environment. This fact raises the importance of maintaining good relationships at work, as this can affect an individuals' attitude and behavior towards work. One can therefore argue that, promoting and supporting altruistic employees in organizations stand to enhance the overall productivity at the work place. While training employees, for example during refresher courses, part of the training content should address the importance of altruism.

This study found that there is partial mediation of altruism on the relationship between time-based conflict and employee productivity. This is in agreement with findings by Karatepe and Sokman (2016) who established that a combination of the selflessness an employee has towards his organization, and the willingness of an employee to help the co-worker with their work improves job productivity. The results further are in agreement with findings by Redman and Snape (2015), who stated that when workers go beyond what the job requires, it helps to improve job productivity. This further support findings by Neihoff and Yen (2004) that assisting fellow workers cause efficiency as workers assist each other on more urgent tasks. However, employees end up with less time for their families, if they continue to give more of their time to the organization.

CONCLUSION

There is evidence of time-based conflict affecting employee productivity. Prior research has offered limited theory regarding this effect. This paper addresses this gap by examining the effect of time-based conflict on employee productivity. In relation to objective 1, this study reports a significant and negative effect of time-based conflict on employee productivity. When employees experience conflict related to their time in the hotel industry, it lowers

their productivity. Majority of the employees have work-schedules that clash with their family schedules. Their family duties are affected by the time their work demands, and they do not have enough time for their families, which finally have a negative impact on their level of productivity.

Moving to objective 2, the findings also showed that when altruism is exhibited by employees, it reduces the negative effect of time-based conflict on employee productivity. This indicates that as employees' exhibit altruism towards their colleagues, their fellow colleagues' time-based conflict is reduced. However, these employees exhibiting altruism may also experience the conflict as a result of working to complete tasks for their colleagues. Employees positive attitude help them to have the willingness to assist one another when there is need. Such a positive attitude may motivate employees to work in cooperation to get the work done, take personal interest in the well-being of fellow colleagues and help to improve the relationship between them, thus improving employee productivity. Through this, they are able to build good relationships amongst themselves, so that they can empathize with colleagues who need to be assisted by fellow colleagues.

As work has become very interdependent due to organizations frequently implementing teamwork, it is essential that working relationships are supportive and collaborative to achieve organizational performance. Previous findings by Du Plooy and Roodt (2010) are in agreement with these findings that satisfying employees using motivational techniques, providing flexible time, and fostering work-family programs may help employees be committed to the organization. These researchers also found support from studies by Sun et al. (2017), that employees' behavior is controlled by their devotion to their job and it is believed that their discretionary behavior will be helpful to the progress of the organization.

Implication of the findings

Based on this study, the researcher offers practical implications for hotel managers. The study signifies the importance of altruism as a mediator between time-based conflicts to improve employee productivity. It is important for hotel managers to understand the relationship between altruism and time-based conflict, so that they can provide a strategy to encourage the use of altruism by employees with the aim of achieving employee productivity in the hotel industry.

Further, hotel management should ensure that their supervisors are well trained and have empathy, and can be easily approached by employees who experience time-based conflict. This will enable them to allow affected employees to be out from work whenever their demands from family require them to. Hotel management should also focus on providing employees with sufficient opportunities to share their opinions on management activities like planning of work schedules, therefore enhancing employee motivation, which further contributes to the achievement of employee productivity. Employees who perceive that the organization cares about them, are willing to perform better at work, thus improving employee productivity. In this regard, the literature suggests such time-based conflict reducing tactics like introducing flexible work time models, especially for female employees who are more affected. In addition to this, more employees should be hired during peak seasons to reduce the effect of time-based conflict. It is also important for management/supervisors to understand the situations that provoke positive behaviors, such as helpfulness and working in teams amongst employees.

Management needs to give incentives to employees when they work overtime and on public holidays. Giving them extra time off from work is not enough. This will motivate them to work with more energy when they have to work for long hours, to maintain employee productivity.

The Kenya Association of Hotel Keepers and Caterers should device hotel policies and procedures to be implemented to hire employees with a positive attitude, who will exhibit altruism to meet needs of the hotel industry. During an employees' probation period, they can be observed to detect their helpfulness behavior, so that those with the behavior are given full employment.

The study findings will further be a key contribution to literature and knowledge in the hospitality field, both internationally and locally. The study will therefore be resourceful to future researchers as a reference material in fields related to the use of altruistic behavior in relationship to the study variables. The study also identified further research gaps that more studies can be done to carry out research and increase knowledge in the area.

Study Limitations and Further Research Recommendations

The sample comprised employees who work in shift schedules, raising the issue of generalizability. Future studies should use a larger sample including employees from all the other departments, to test whether their experience of time-based conflict affect their productivity.

The current study used hotels as the service sector. Future studies could test more service settings like hospitals, airlines, banks and restaurants. Further studies could also be carried out on employees in different sectors and business set ups like in schools and universities, on teachers and lecturers, to establish the extent to which time-based conflict affect their performance, and whether they can also introduce altruistic behavior to reduce the conflict.

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Declaration of interest

The authors of this paper, declare that there is no conflict of interest in this study.

All the authors contributed to the conception and design of the work submitted. The authors too have revised and critically approved of the version to be published and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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