



NON STANDARD WORK PRACTICES AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN DEVELOPMENT, FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS IN A 24/7 ECONOMY

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Abstract:

This main purpose of the study is to investigate upon the impact of non-standard work practices on children development, family functioning and employees' health and safety concerns in a 24/7 Economy. This paper reviews the concept of 24/7 economy and explores the impact of non-standard work practices. A survey instrument is administered to 400 householders of Mauritius and the questionnaires were further processed and analysed with the statistical programme SPSS 20, by using descriptive and inferential analysis. The results of the findings have demonstrated that changes in children development and family functioning and employees' health and safety concerns highly impact on the householders. The evidence of numerous associations from the present research have shown that 24/7 economy will give rise to pollution. Indeed, children will be affected by lack of parental time and employees might suffer from health issues with the 24/7 culture. The present research fills the significant gaps in the literature review by generating an integrative functioning framework of the 24/7 economy for island economies.

Key words: *work practices, children development, health and safety*

1. Introduction

A deliberate effort to study non-standard work practices in the 24/7 economy has urged many research scholars since 24/7 culture, non-standard work practices and

its impact on the 24/7 economy have been under-researched. The importance of the 24/7 concept has acquired substantial momentum in the recent years and existing research has demonstrated that the 24/7 society is becoming an emerging concept since many economies such as the United State of America (USA) , Canada, Australia, Europe and Asia are moving towards a 24/7 culture (Fast and Frederick, 1998; Garhammer, 1998; Baker *et al.*, 2003; Hamermesh and Lee, 2007; Crompton, 1999; De Grauwe, 2003; Presser, 2003, 2005; Hicks, 2006). Based on the above views, the pervasiveness of late shifts and weekend employment among Mauritian families calls for answers to various questions on lifestyles. Non-standard work schedules are significant, albeit often neglected, social phenomenon, with important implications for the health and well-being of workers and their families. The Mauritian economy today is at the cross roads of major international economic challenges. The newly emerging sectors of the economy require a 24/7 operation and empirical research has demonstrated that many of the enterprises find it very difficult to recruit workers to operate on the 24/7 basis. Given international trends and competitiveness from emerging low cost economies, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Mauritius to compete with traditional sectors such as textile and clothing and adopt a service-oriented approach. It is therefore imperative for a change in mindset and attitude towards the 24/7 concept in the developing economy. In this respect, the Government has recently approved the National Sensitisation Campaign on the 24/7 Economic Model aimed at converting Mauritius into a 24/7 economy (Le Defi Media Group, 2013). The Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) had emphasized on the necessary mechanisms and the campaign pertaining to '24/7 Festival: Port Louis will not sleep' organised in July 2009. The campaign had enlightened the citizens on how the 24/7 economy will not only enable the various emerging sectors to operate fully but will equally help to improve overall living standards by creating more jobs, relatively higher incomes and greater business activity in Mauritius. To the authors' best knowledge, no academic study has yet focused on the emerging phenomenon of 24/7 economy for developing economies so far. This paper investigates the impact of non-standard work practices on children development, family functioning and employees' health and safety concerns in a 24/7 Economy.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

The 24/7 Economy and Non Standard Work Practices

The academic literature has demonstrated that nonstandard work practices are becoming an important trend and employees have their own interest in such part-time employment (Woods and Head, 1996; Sheridan and Conway, 2001; Schneider *et al.*, 2006). Numerous studies have highlighted that there can be strong social and psychological impacts as a result of flexible working conditions (Elbing *et al.*, 1975; Haas and Hwang, 1995; Thomas and Ganster, 1995; Lewis, 1997; Thompson *et al.*, 1999). Moreover, supermarkets are now operating on 24 hours a day in the United Kingdom (UK) and 24-hour retailing of groceries by hypermarket groups are seen as

one of the consequences of the emergence of a 24-hour society (Moore-Ede, 1993; Presser, 2003; Groucutt, 2005). In USA, customers have enjoyed 24-hour shopping since 1980s but "Europe is only just waking up to the prospect and the UK is leading the way" through late night opening and Sunday trading (Freathy and Sparks, 1995; Cochrane, 1999). Empirical research have estimated that around 7 million people are active between 6pm to 9am in the UK and the effect of a 24/7 economy is mainly felt on service sectors (Keh and Park (1997) and Eroglu (2005) Crompton, 1999; De Gauwe, 2003; Hicks, 2006). Several studies have shown that flexible work arrangements have become interwoven with concepts such as work-life balance, family friendly practices, workplace equality, alternate work patterns, ability to concentrate and be productive and creative on the job and gender equality (Morley *et al.*, 1995; Lewis and Cooper, 1995; Tregaskis *et al.*, 1998; Thompson *et al.*, 1999; Lewis, 2001; Cooper 2000; Sheridan and Conway, 2001; Drew and Murtagh, 2005).

Changes in Child and Parental Care and Acceptance of 24/7 Economy

Specific studies have shown that there is an increasing burden of poor health and developmental outcomes among children and youth such as obesity, problems with emotional, attentional, social regulation, unsafe behaviours despite economic growth and prosperity from the 24/7 culture in many developed countries (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000; Cohen *et al.*, 2002; Bunting, 2004; Coats and Max, 2005; Speiser *et al.*, 2005; Maggi *et al.*, 2005; Anderson and Butcher, 2006; Jabs and Devin, 2006; Barnett *et al.*, 2008; Li *et al.*, 2008). In addition, several researchers have documented those children have demonstrated poorer cognitive development and expressive language skills and mothers report less involvement with their children's educational and other important activities (Han, 2005; Wight, 2007; Rapoport and Le Bourdais, 2007; Brooks-Gunn *et al.*, 2010). It is also estimated that worldwide, between 10% and 20% of children have one or more mental health's or behavioural problems, emotional, attentional, cognitive and social regulation (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000; Hofferth and Sandberg, 2001; World Health Organisation, 2003; Maggi *et al.*, 2005; Hughes, 2007). It has been found that parents working in the evenings experience a greater reduction in time spent with their children, a reduction in leisure and social activities (Staines and Pleck, 1986; Pate *et al.*, 1995; Rapoport and Le Bourdais, 2007). In addition, many researchers have documented those children whose mothers work nonstandard schedules during their first 3 years of life show poorer cognitive development, expressive language skills this may further aggravate a child risky behaviour (Crouter *et al.*, 2004; Han, 2005; Brooks-Gunn *et al.*, 2010). Various studies negatively affirmed that nonstandard schedules make it difficult for parents to monitor and discipline their children (Staines and Pleck, 1986; Presser, 1998, 2003). One downside of parental nonstandard work schedules in a 24/7 economy is that mothers of school-aged children report less involvement in their children's educational activities (Bianchi, 2000) but agued by Cooksey and Fondell (1996).

Hence, the first hypothesis has been formulated as:

H₁: There is a significant relationship between children development and 24/7 economy

Changes In Family Functioning and 24/7 Economy

Several researchers found that couples in which one spouse works a late shift report having substantially less quality time together, more marital unhappiness, instability, dissatisfaction, work-family conflict and eventually to marital discontent and divorce (Blair, 1993; Deutsch, 1999; Grosswald, 2004; Presser, 2004, 2005; Schneider and Waite, 2005; Barnett *et al.*, 2008; Davis *et al.*, 2008; Kalil *et al.*, 2010; Liu *et al.*, 2011) although Locksley (1980) find it contrarily. In a 24/7 society, women are not at home enough hours to carry out all the traditional homemaking responsibilities, thus marriage stress and conflict are generated and thus put them at greater risk for poor health (Frone *et al.*, 1996; Fenwick and Tausig, 2000; Daly, 2001; Galinsky *et al.*, 2004; Jamal, 2004; Han, 2004; Jacobs and Gerson, 2004). Female spouses tend to spend more hours on traditionally female tasks when at home and these women report more psychological distress, fewer career opportunities, and less work success (Barnett and Shen, 1997; Presser, 2004; Hill *et al.*, 2004; Hook's, 2010). Several studies have also reported that long working hours are associated with more work-family conflict, fatigue, worrying, and irritability (Geurts *et al.*, 1999; Grzywacz and Marks, 2000; Crouter *et al.*, 2001; Major *et al.*, 2002; Galinsky *et al.*, 2005). Employment at nonstandard hour's challenges family daytime and everyday demands and can give rise to family conflict (Allen, 2000; La Valle *et al.*, 2002; Schneider and Waite, 2005; Galinsky *et al.*, 2005). In a 24/7 society, it is found that there is much more difficulty for spouses to manage work and family obligations than those working standard schedules and will report work-family conflicts since working marriage partners enjoy less time alone with their spouse which may cause serious disruption to family life in a 24/7 economy (Moen and Yu, 2000; La Valle, *et al.*, 2002; Jarvis, 2005; Presser, 2005; McDowell *et al.*, 2006; Schwanen, 2007; Barnett *et al.*, 2008 and Liu *et al.*, 2011). Fathers who work late hours have also been found to have problems with scheduling sleep, work, home and leisure activities (Bianchi, 2000; Presser, 2003, 2005; McDowell *et al.*, 2006; Schwanen, 2007).

Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H₂: There is a significant relationship between family functioning and 24/7 economy

Health And Safety Issues of Employees and 24/7 Economy

Increasing work demands during all hours of the day are an emerging reality of the move towards a "24-7" economy. Working above 48 hours weekly is among the most unfavorable of modern working conditions because of the substantial disruptions it creates in individuals' lives (Golden, 2003; Tucker and Rutherford, 2005) and employees run higher risk of contracting musculoskeletal disorders, both acute and cumulative shoulder pain, back and neck pain, (Aiken *et al.*, 2002; Dembe *et al.*, 2005; Caruso *et al.*, 2006; Gadrey *et al.*, 2006; Trinkoff *et al.*, 2006; Johnson and Lipscomb, 2006; Raediker *et al.*, 2006). The increase in men's working hours, contributed

indirectly to hypertension, reduced time for sleep, physical activity, and job dissatisfaction (Gadrey *et al.*, 2006; Artazcoz *et al.*, 2009; Courtemanche, 2009). Working long hours has been associated with more errors and accidents, adverse health effects (Gander *et al.*, 2000; Nachreiner *et al.*, 2000; Harrington 2001; Loomis, 2005). More specifically, long work hours have been found to be associated with poor psychological health, excessive fatigue and burnout (Rosa, 1995; Barnett *et al.*, 1999; Deery, 2000; Kirkcaldy *et al.*, 2000). Long-term effects include an increased incidence of cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal and reproductive disorders, musculoskeletal disorders, chronic infections, and mental illnesses (Aiken *et al.*, 2002; Spurgeon, 2003; Dembe *et al.*, 2005; Caruso *et al.*, 2004, 2006; Gadrey *et al.*, 2006; Trinkoff *et al.*, 2006; Johnson and Lipscomb, 2006; Raediker *et al.*, 2006). Nonstandard hours disturb the body circadian rhythms and potentially lead to chronic health conditions, anxiety, neurotic disorders, depressions, chronic sleep deprivation, fatigue and it was also associated with greater depressive symptoms among parents (Caruso *et al.*, 2004, 2006; Totterdell, 2005; Ulker, 2006; Perry *et al.*, 2007; Barnett, 2007).

Various authors mentioned that working non-standard hours can also affect employees' health and sleep and thus they are more susceptible to a range of illnesses, including stress, cardiovascular disorders and gastroenteritis (Costa, 1996; Totterdell, 2005; Han, 2005; Ulker, 2006; Barnett, 2007; The International Labour Office, 2009). The increase in men's working hours, contributed indirectly to hypertension, reduced time for sleep, physical activity, and job dissatisfaction (Gadrey *et al.*, 2006; Artazcoz *et al.*, 2009; Courtemanche, 2009). Employees run a higher risk of contracting musculoskeletal disorders, both acute and cumulative, shoulder pain, back and neck pain (Aiken *et al.*, 2002; Caruso *et al.*, 2004, 2006; Trinkoff *et al.*, 2006; Johnson and Lipscomb, 2006; Raediker *et al.*, 2006). It is predicted that the occupational diseases in a 24/7 economy will be heart attacks, strokes, suicide, cardiovascular disease, disability retirement, self-reported health and fatigue (Pelfrene *et al.*, 2001; Van der Hulst, 2003; Geurts and Sonnentag, 2006).

The following hypothesis is posited:

H₃: There is a significant relationship between health and safety issues of employees and 24/7 economy

The above literature has provided a comprehensive review and it further presents the research model for the present study as illustrated clearly in Figure 1.

The Conceptual Framework

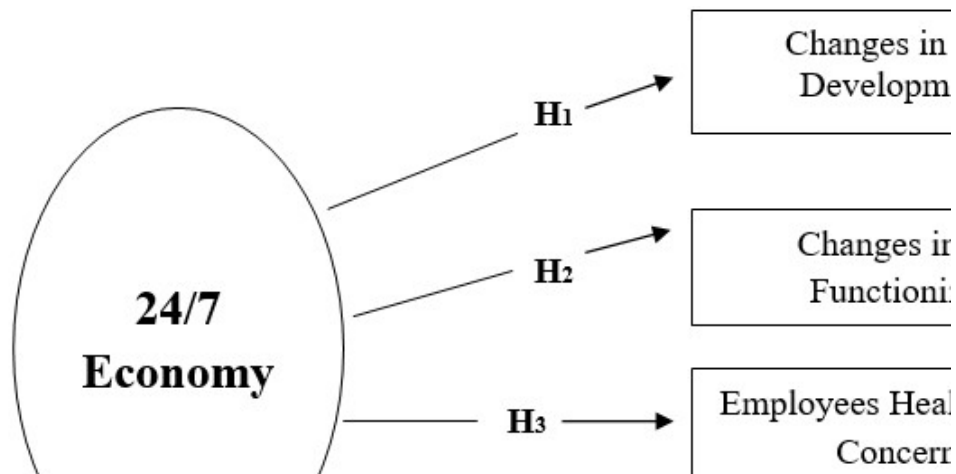


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

3. Research Methodology

Research method and sampling

A questionnaire comprising of several sections was developed. The questionnaire items were constructed and adapted from the existing intensive literature review and the list of sources has been included in the list of references. The last part of the questionnaire has addressed the demographic characteristics of respondents. In this study, householders' perceptions on 'health and development of children', 'children implications', and 'family life' were measured on a five-point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) and finally, 'gender' has been measured on a categorical measure (1=Male and 2=Female). Prior to data collection for the survey, a pilot test was conducted among 10 householders to ensure comprehensiveness, clarity and reliability of the questionnaire. Some minor modifications of wordings were made to avoid unnecessary confusion for the respondents.

Internal Consistency of Questionnaire

Internal consistency and reliability of the scale was measured by the use of Cronbach's Alpha (Hair *et al.*, 2000). The Cronbach's Alpha overall value for the entire questionnaire was 0.784 and such a high figure designates that the questionnaire was a good indicator of what the researchers wanted to investigate. According to Hair *et al.* (1995), a coefficient of less than 0.6 indicates marginal to low internal consistency and a value of 0.60 or more indicates satisfactory internal consistency reliability (Churchill, 1979).

Sampling Population

The target population consisted of the number of Mauritian households above 18 years and information was obtained from the CSO (Central Statistics of Mauritius) of Mauritius, and the number of households that are above 18 years consist of 1170126 as at 2011 (CSO, 2011). The sampled population were householders across the nine districts of Mauritius to ensure adequate geographical coverage. Respondents were drawn from 9 districts across Mauritius and they were interviewed. Below is the tabular layout of the sampling process of respondents covering the geographical representation of Mauritian households' district wise.

Sampling Size and Method

Owing to the need for a relatively large sample size while at the same time keeping the research costs down, the sample size of this study amounted to 400 customers through the stratified sampling technique. Stratified sampling was applied for householders and district wise as it could be a viable design in situations where the population can be divided into distinct strata due to the heterogeneity of the population. The stratification helps to ensure representativeness of the sample and at the same time increases the precision of the sample (Bauer *et al.*, 2007). All other variable will be based on the probability sampling and each household will be chosen as each three houses in a street.

Allocation of Questionnaire

Table 1: Allocation of questionnaire for Gender

Gender	No. of Questionnaire allocated
Male	197
Female	203
Total	400

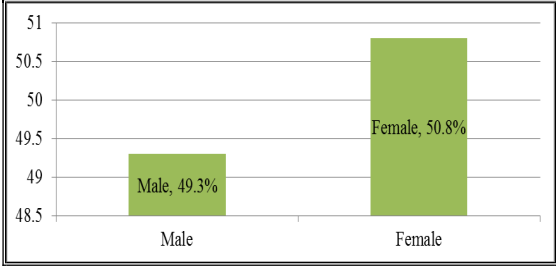
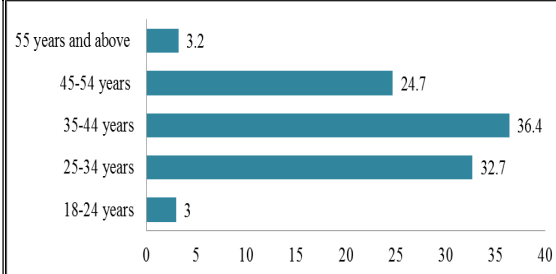
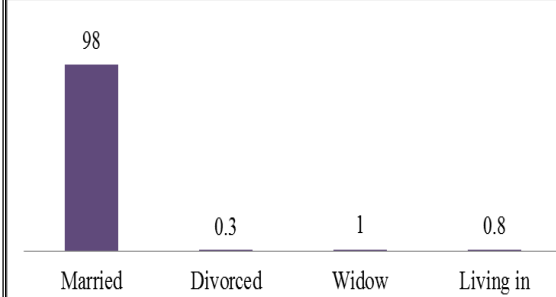
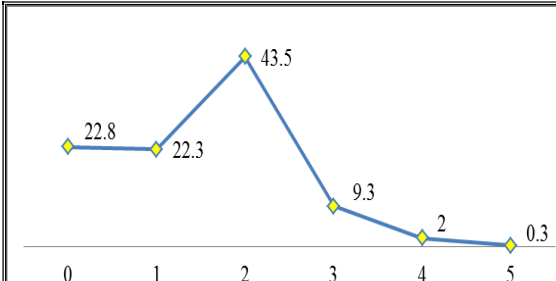
Table 2: Allocation of Questionnaire District-Wise

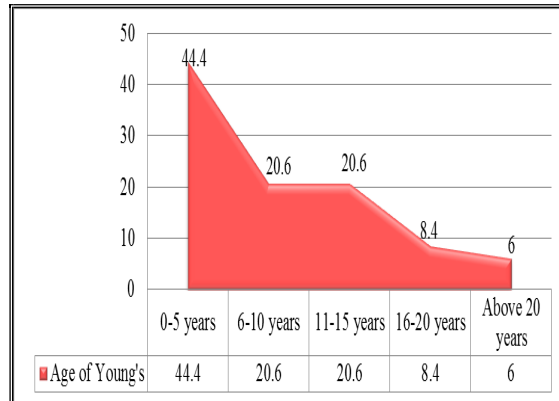
Districts & Percentage (%) of Household Population	Male	Female	No. of Household Respondents
Port-Louis (10%)	19	21	40
Pamplemousses (11%)	21	23	44
Riviere-du-Rempart (9%)	18	18	36
Flacq (12%)	24	24	48
Grand-Port (9%)	18	18	36
Savanne (6%)	12	12	24
Plaine Wilhems (30%)	59	61	120
Moka (7%)	14	14	28
Black River (6%)	12	12	24
Total	197	203	400

Empirical Findings

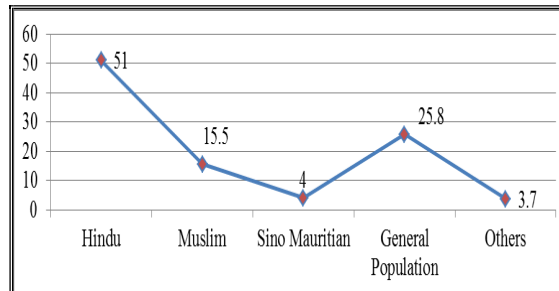
Part A: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 3: Demographic Profile of Sample

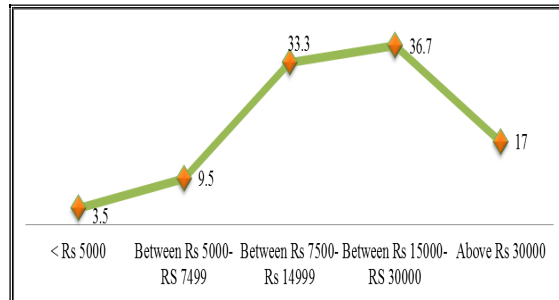
<p>Gender Distribution</p>  <p>The percentage of male respondents (49.3%) and female (50.8%) participated in the survey.</p>	
<p>Age Distribution</p>  <p>Age-wise, it is noted that the highest age group for both men and women is between 35-44 years and the two smallest groups consists people of 18-24 years and 55 years and above. Hence it can be said that the respondents of 40 years seem to be professionally established, thereby constituting an attractive target market for the 24/7 culture in Mauritius.</p>	
<p>Marital Status</p>  <p>Among the respondents, 98% are married, 0.3% who are divorced, 1% is widow and 0.8% represent the living in. Those who are married are the major and future market 24/7 culture and are very likely to be affected both positively and negatively from the 24/7 concept.</p>	
<p>Number of Children</p>  <p>It can be noted from that among the married couples 22.8% have no children, those having one child represent 22.3%, those having 2 children represent 43.5%, 3 children (9.3%), 2% for 4 children and 0.3% for 5 children.</p>	

Age of Young's

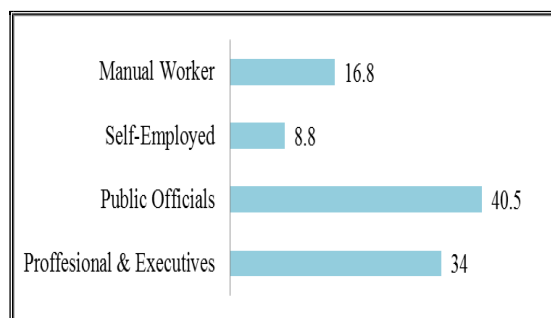
Among the respondents, couples with children of 0-5 years represents 44.4% and is the highest age group. It is also noted that 20.6% of the children age group are highlighted between 6-10 years and 11-15 years. In a family children age between 16-20 years represent 8.4% and above 20 years is only 6.0%

Ethnic Group

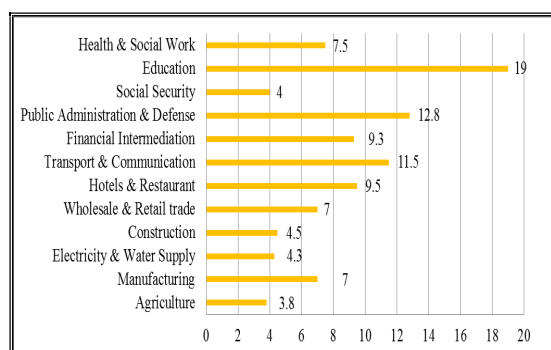
Based on the population of Mauritius, Hindu forms part of the largest group (51%), followed by 25.8% for the general population, 15.5% for Muslim and 4% for Sino Mauritian and 3.7% for others.

Income Level

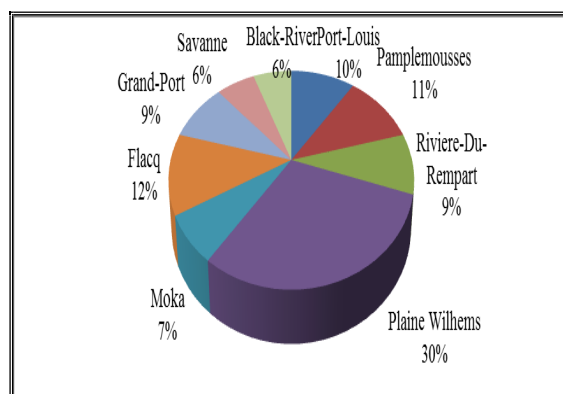
The above figures indicate that people having income between the range Rs 15000 - Rs 30000 represent 36.7% of the sample surveyed. Income group between the ranges Rs 7500 - Rs 14999 represent 33.3% and 17% for more than Rs 30000. People earning between 5000 - Rs 7499 is 9.5% and the remaining 3.5% goes for people earning less than Rs 5000.

Occupational Group

The empirical findings have shown that people occupying the post of public officials have been the highest number of respondents with 40.5%. The professionals and executives represent 34% and manual worker 16.8%. The self-employed represent 8.8% of respondent surveyed.

Sector of Employment

From the above figure, it is noted that the highest number of people surveyed were in the education sector of employment (19%). Second comes the public administration and defense with 12.8% sector of the sample. For the lowest rank it is in the sector of agriculture (3.8%), followed by social security (4%), electricity and water supply (4.3%) and construction (4.5%).

Area of Residence

It is noted that 30.0% respondents came from Plaine Wilhems. The least one is Savanne (6.0%), and Black River (6%). Port Louis has 10% of the sample surveyed and Pamplemousses is (11%). Geographical regions do make a difference since many facilities are provided in urban areas like Shoprite, Jumbo and big shopping malls as compared to rural regions.

Part B: Empirical Survey Findings

The proposed conceptual model (Figure 1.0) was tested by using inferential analysis such as Pearson Correlation. The empirical estimates for the main-effects model are shown in Figure 2.0. The results indicated that, from a statistical point of view, the data fit the conceptual model acceptably.

Changes in Child and Parental Care and Acceptance of 24/7 Economy

H₁: There is a significant relationship between children development and 24/7 economy

Table 4: Pearson Bivariate Correlation Between Changes in Child and Parental Care and 24/7 Economy

Changes in Child and Parental Care	24/7 Economy	
Teenage Behavioural Problems	0.274**	0.000
Health and Development of Children	0.271**	0.000
Lack of Parental Time	0.172**	0.001
Presence of Parental Time	-0.224**	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Results in the above table show key insights between child development and the 24/7 economy. Pearson correlation was used to test the intention of householders on changes in child and parental in a 24/7 economy. It was found that there is a positive relationship between the teenage behavioral problems ($r = 0.274$, $p < 0.01$) and the 24/7 economy. A positive relationship also exists between health and development of children ($r = 0.271$, $p < 0.01$) and 24/7 economy. There is also a weak positive relationship between lack of parental time ($r = 0.172$, $p = 0.01$) and 24/7 economy. However, there is a negative relationship between presence of parental time ($r = -0.224$, $p < 0.01$) and 24/7 economy. This negative result indicate that the presence of parental time will not affect children in a 24/7 economy but contrarily lack of parental time will make a difference. In turn, teenage behavioral problems and health and development of children are likely to get deteriorated in the 24/7 economy. These results can be linked to the views of Presser (2003); (2005); Anderson and Butcher (2006); Jabs and Devine (2006); Barnett *et al.*, (2008) and Li *et al.*, (2008). Hence, these results validate H₁.

Changes in Family Functioning and 24/7 Economy

H₂: There is a significant relationship between family functioning and 24/7 economy

Table 5.0: Pearson Bivariate Correlation Between Changes in Family Functioning and 24/7 Economy

Changes in Family Functioning	24/7 Economy	
Family Functioning	0.174**	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As observed, the correlations reported in the above table demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between family functioning ($r = 0.174$, $p = 0.01$) and 24/7 economy. It can be deduced that spouses will have less quality time together and there will be more tensions and conflicts between couples when working in a 24/7 economy and this can result in marital discontent and divorce. This result was also observed in the studies reported by Presser (2000), (2003), (2005); Allen (2000); La Valle *et al.*, (2002); Schneider and Waite (2005); Galinsky *et al.*, (2005); McDowell *et al.*, (2006) and Schwanen (2007). These results reinforce the theoretical framework, therefore, H₂ is supported.

Health and Safety Issues of Employees and 24/7 Economy

H₃: There is a significant relationship between health and safety issues of employees and 24/7 economy

Table 6: Pearson Bivariate Correlation Between Health and Safety Issues of Employees and 24/7 Economy

Health and Safety Issues of Employees	24/7 Economy	
Stress Issues	0.153**	0.002
Associated Diseases	0.136**	0.006
Fatigue Concern	0.125*	0.013
Injury and Accidents	0.125*	0.012

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Survey findings have illustrated that there are changes in health and safety issues of employees when operating in a 24/7 economy. It is noted that there is a positive relationship between stress issues ($r = 0.153$, $p < 0.01$) and 24/7 economy. Moreover, a weak positive relationship exists between associated diseases ($r = 0.136$, $p < 0.01$) and 24/7 economy. Concerning fatigue ($r = 0.125$, $p < 0.05$) and injury and accidents ($r = 0.125$, $p < 0.05$) it holds a positive relationship with 24/7 economy. In line with these findings, the literature points out that working non-standard hours can also affect employees' health and sleep and thus they are more susceptible to a range of illnesses, including stress, cardiovascular disorders, fatigue, injury and accidents as several (Costa, 1996; Totterdell, 2005; Han, 2005; Ulker, 2006; Goldenhar, 2006; Barnett, 2007; The International Labour Office, 2009). Although the results of previous literature references are generally in line with the findings of this analysis, hence, H_3 is supported.

The Conceptual Framework For a 24/7 Economy

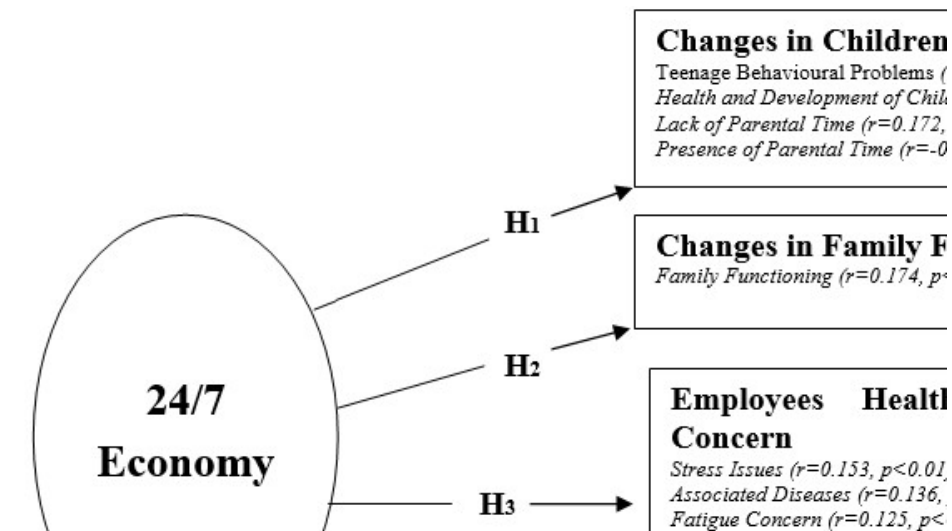


Figure 2. Proposed Research Model for 24/7 Economy Functioning

The Tested Hypothesis**Table 7: The Results of the Tested Hypothesis**

Hypothesis	Findings					Results
H ₁ (Changes in Child Development)	0.274	0.271	0.172	-0.224	-	Supported
H ₂ (Changes in Family Functioning)	0.174	-	-	-	-	Supported
H ₃ (Employees Health and Safety Concern)	0.153	0.136	0.125	0.125	-	Supported

Managerial Implications of the Study

The subject of 24/7 economy is introduced into mainstream literatures through this study. This may be of particular value to scholars concerned with understanding more about this emerging topic. The paper also provides theoretical foundations for our results pertaining to 24/7 economy. The implications of this paper for policy makers, practitioners and scholars are stated as follows.

The first implication of the study that emerged relates to the impact of child development with the 24/7 culture. Data analysis found a good fit for the model demonstrating that the 24/7 economy can influence children development in an unfavourable manner, thus, leading to teenage behavioural problems ($r=0.274$, $p<0.05$) and deterioration of the health and development of children ($r=0.271$, $p<0.05$) in Mauritius. In this respect, parents should have a balance with their work life and the responsibility towards proper development of their children. Parents should be present for their child to have a proper childhood development which relates to emotional, attentional, cognitive and social regulation as suggested by research scholars (Hofferth and Sandberg, 2001; World Health Organisation, 2003; Maggi *et al.*, 2005). Thus, there should be greater participation from parents in the activities of children such educational activities, leisure activities, homeworking, extracurricular activities such as sports, music amongst others as outlined by researchers who have observed a strong association between child development and parental participation (Lareau, 2003; Blau and Curruie, 2006; Waldfogel, 2006; Hughes, 2007; Ramey and Ramey, 2010).

The present study has demonstrated that should be greater participation from parents in childcare activities, since the 24/7 economy impacts negatively on children health and eventually result in teenage behavioural problems. These results correspond with Bryant and Zick (1996) and Hoffert (2006) as they found that parent participation in children activities have positive outcomes. These parental activities include educational activities, leisure activities, homeworking, extracurricular activities such as sports, music, and lessons of various kinds (Lareau, 2003; Blau and Curruie, 2006; Waldfogel, 2006; Hughes, 2007; Ramey and Ramey, 2010).

Another implication of the study relates to poor dynamics of family functioning associated with the 24/7 economy ($r=0.174$, $p<0.05$) whereby several marital problems and imbalances can crop up. Hence, it is imperative for organisations operating in the 24/7 economy to be positioned as a work-life balance friendly company. The 24/7

companies should plan and implement comprehensive work-life balance policies whereby employees can be provided with more vacation leaves as highlighted by several academic researchers (Huws *et al.*, 1990; Woodland *et al.*, 2003; BERR, 2009).

From the empirical estimates, it has been also observed that the 24/7 economy will give rise to several health and safety issues among employees. The research has highlighted that long working hours will lead to higher level of stress, fatigue, diseases, injury and accidents ($r=0.125-0.153$, $p<0.01,0.05$). Therefore, it is crucial to protect employees against excessive long working hours in the 24/7 economy. In this respect, appropriate government policies to protect workers against excessively long working hours should be implemented in order to establish a necessary condition for achieving the goal of decent working time. This is because, the reduction of regular long working hours include positive impacts on workers' physical and mental health, improved workplace safety, and increased labour productivity due to reduced fatigue and stress; higher levels of employee job satisfaction and motivation; and lower rates of absenteeism (Cooper, 2000; MacInnes, 2005; Booth and Van Ours, 2005; Marting and Pixley, 2005). Therefore, organisations adopting the 24/7 culture should ensure that employees work in favourable working conditions in order to reduce the substantial health disruptions in their lives associated with long working hours as outlined by various scholars (Golden, 2003; Tucker and Rutherford, 2005; Gadrey *et al.*, 2006; Artazcoz *et al.*, 2009; Courtemanche, 2009).

4. Conclusions, Limitations and Directions for Future Research

We concluded that child development, family functioning, health and safety concerns of employees significantly impact on householders of a 24/7 economy society. Still, the theoretical framework developed in this paper could be useful for further research devoted to the 24/7 economy and its varying effects on organisational, employee and student performance in general. The study has some potential limitations, since it was limited only to the working householders and the underlying perceptions of business executives; governmental bodies and other stakeholders have not yet been tapped. Hence, the study has also some serious conceptual limitations, it has considered only a predefined set of determinants in the model has only been validated among customers from an emerging country like Mauritius. In this respect, a thorough investigation that includes all categories of people would be more desirable including working and non-working individuals whereby a more expansive study would possibly generate more implications of a 24/7 economy. Hence, future studies could also emphasise on factors such as social anxiety, school and university implications created by the presence 24/7 economy. Likewise, a more integrated conceptual model relating to other determinants for the expansion of the 24/7 economy can be proposed and validated in order to overcome the conceptual limitations of the present study and the research can be extended to other emerging countries such as the Seychelles and Rodrigues.

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