

INFLUENCE OF LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS ON COMMITMENT OF NURSES IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS IN KENYA

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the influence of leave arrangement on commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya. The results of descriptive analysis suggest that the staff leave arrangements for nurses in public hospitals in Kenya was inadequate. Correlation analysis reported a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.627, significant at 5% level of significance. The study further established a coefficient of determination (R square) = 0.391 suggesting that 39.1% of the variation in level of nurses' commitment for the sample of 309 nurses can be explained by the variations in the adequacy of staff leave arrangement. t -test and the f -test values for the adequacy of staff leave arrangements were; ($t = 14.09, p < 0.05$); ($f = 198.524, p < 0.05$) respectively suggests that adequacy of leave arrangements can significantly predict the level of commitment of nurses in public hospitals. The results suggest that adequacy of staff leave arrangement has a statistically significant influence on the level of commitment of nurses. It is recommended that leave arrangements adequacy be enhanced in order to significantly improve the level of commitment of nurses in public hospitals.

Keywords: *Influence, Staff Leave Arrangements, Commitment, Nurses, Public Hospitals*

1.0 Introduction

Contemporary organizations are facing new and increased challenges regarding creating and sustaining a committed human resource. Public and private organizations can only be assured of being a going concern only if it provides highest quality products or services and this can be guaranteed unless each and every employee is committed to the organizations goals and objectives (Dixit & Bhati, 2012). Therefore, it is imperative to note that for organizations to build efficiency, effectiveness and experience sustained growth it must invest in management practices that enhance commitment of employees (Lissy & Ventakash, 2014). The level of employee's commitment is influenced by the association between employee behavioural practices and the organizational desired outcomes (Meyer & Allen, 1997). A committed employee is willing to stay with the organization through thick and thin, attends work regularly, puts in a full day's work, protects company's assets, shares company's goals among other tasks (Fabiene & Kachchhap, 2016). Therefore, commitment may entail both performance and behaviors befitting to an organization's way of life. Thus commitment could be referred to as glue that binds a person towards an object, a goal or a role (Armstrong, 2009). The great interest in commitment in private as well as public organizations is due to increase in strained relationships between employees and their organizations as well as the desire to enhance quality service delivery. Staff leave arrangements were introduced in response to the challenges employees experience when they try to balance demands within and outside the work environment. The staff leave arrangements concept is of the view that

most individuals perform multiple roles to the extent that the notion of work-life balance is crucial to achieving balance in all spheres or at least minimising the work and non-work conflict (Enemu, 2016). In addition, staff leave arrangements as one of the components of work-life balance initiatives provides a great opportunity for a wider understanding of 'non-work' aspects of life, focusing on workers with varied family commitments, including all diverse categories of workforce within the work place, and also providing for spill over and differences between work and other areas of life (Gregory and Milner, 2009). Staff leave arrangements are institutionalized structural and procedural arrangements as well as formal and informal practices that enable individuals to easily manage the conflicting worlds of work and family/personal (Osterman, 1995). For this study staff leave arrangements are policies and programmes of the organization aimed at assisting employees to better balance their work and family responsibilities, gain improvements in well-being, and provide organizational benefits.

1.1: Statement of the problem

Realizing an optimum balance between work and personal or family life has for a long time been one of the challenges experienced by nurses in public hospitals (Chankova, Muchiri & Kombe, 2009). When nurses are involved more on their job to the extent that they do not address personal and/or family demands work-life conflict sets in resulting in reduced employee commitment. Work-life balance is especially important because imbalance in work-life causes negative impact on employee's health which consequently reduces their commitment and eventually results in poor quality service provision eventually threatening the very survival of an organization.

Fabiene and Kachchhap (2016) observed that healthcare organizations are constrained by low commitment from among health professionals. Al-Hassumi (2008) reported that the level of commitment of healthcare professionals affects patients' care quality, employees' productivity, and effectiveness. Akacho (2014) observed that there is poor service delivery in public hospitals in Kenya. It can be observed that service delivery in public hospitals may be attributed to in part to commitment levels of health professionals. It is understood that staff leave arrangements play a phenomenal role in combining work and non-work demands (Muchiti & Gachunga, 2015). Furthermore, little research has been done the influence of staff leave arrangements on commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya. The study therefore was set out to investigate the influence of staff leave arrangements on commitment of nurses in public hospitals Kenya.

1.2: Hypothesis of the study

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of staff leave arrangement on commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya.

1.3: Scope of the study

The study focused on the influence of staff leave arrangements on commitment of nurses in level 4 and 5 public hospitals in Kenya. Nursing working force plays a vital role in health service delivery providing the bulk of direct patient care in public health care in Kenya (Chankova, Muchiri & Kombe, 2009). 67.9% of the nursing working force is deployed in public hospitals while 17.7% are deployed in dispensaries across the country (M.O.H, 2012). In this study, staff leave arrangements which include; annual leave arrangements, maternity leave arrangements and compassionate leave arrangements as independent variables Employee commitment on the other hand is the dependent variable and focused on the following three thematic areas: affective, normative and continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). A total of 364 respondents from 7 public

hospitals in 5 counties in Kenya were sought for the study. Questionnaires were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data for the study.

1.4: Influence of Leave Arrangements on Commitment

Leave is the number of hours /days employees of an organization are permitted to be away from their employment position within a period of time without consequences. This time off is paid by the company and employees are allowed to request the time for any reason they wish to be off work (Muchiti & Gachunga, 2015).

Kamau, Muleke, Mokaya & Wagoki (2013) conducted a study on work-life balance practices on employee job performance at Eco bank Kenya. One of the objectives of the study was to examine the influence of leave policies on job satisfaction and performance. The study employed an exploratory, cross-sectional survey. Three hundred and thirty (330) participants were selected randomly from ten banks. The researchers utilized descriptive statistics of graphs, tables, simple percentage, and spearman's rank order correlation co-efficient to analyse the data. The finding revealed a strong and significant correlation between annual leaves and job satisfaction. Employees who have gone for leave reported significantly better performance immediately after. Employees felt motivated after going for leave, their performance was improved. The researchers concluded that leave from work created a change of environment and a break from the daily working environment. This has a significant impact on employees' satisfaction, psychosocial well-being, eliminating fatigue, and work-related stress which translated to positive organization outcomes after the leave.

Njoroge (2014) Examined work-life balance in Kenya: an analysis of the legislative framework and perceptions of young advocates in Nairobi. The target population composed of young advocates aged between 25 and 30 years working in Nairobi law firms. Simple random sampling was used to select 100 respondents. Questionnaires formed the primary data collection tool for the study. The researcher revealed that various staff leave arrangements give workers a chance to release themselves from work stress by change of environment and break from daily working environment and thus strike balance between work and their family activities.

Kisilu (2015) in the study on influence of work life balance policies on employee satisfaction among government of Makueni county headquarters. One of the objectives was to determine the influence of leave options on job satisfaction of employees in the county of Makueni. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The target population was 240 employees in the county headquarters of Makueni. Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample size of 72 respondents. Interview guides and questionnaires formed the primary data collection tools. The study revealed that there is a significant and positive relationship between employee leave arrangement and job satisfaction of employee at Makueni County Government. The researcher further found out that leave arrangements helps employees to perform other duties outside work, which creates a balancing effect between work activities and life activities.

Orogbu, Onyeizugbe and Chukwuemeke (2015) examined the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance in selected commercial banks in Lagos state. The specific objective of the study was to determine the extent to which leave policy affects service delivery. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 759 and a sample of 262 using Taro Yamane's formula. Questionnaire formed the primary data collection tool. Pearson product moment correlation and regression were used to test the hypothesis while Cronbach alpha was used to test reliability of the questionnaire. The researchers observed that there is a significant positive relationship between leave policy and service delivery. The study revealed that leave arrangements provide employees an opportunity to relax for an extended period

and return to the job with renewed interest and vitality to deliver services efficiently and effectively. The findings reveal that leave policy motivate employee’s ability to deliver services efficiently and effectively. The study concluded that work-life balance is an important factor in increasing employee performance. The researchers recommended that managers of commercial banks should prioritize creating different work-life balance incentives that was improve employee performance.

Kim and Ryu (2017) investigated employee satisfaction with work-life balance policies and organizational commitment: A Philippines study, revealed that employees who have gone on leave report significantly better performance and enhanced commitment immediately after due to among others improved attendance and emotional health. The study indicated that leave from work had good effects on employees’ emotional health and thus reduces work related stress and enhanced their commitment. The researcher observed that systematic effort should be undertaken to enhance work-life balance through leave arrangement in order to achieve better organization performance.

Studies reviewed; Kim and Ryu (2017); Orogbu, Onyeizugbe and Chukwuemeke (2015); Kisilu (2015); Njoroge (2014) focused on the influence of staff leave arrangements on job satisfaction or performance of employees. Therefore, there is need to hold a study on the influence of staff leave arrangements on commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya to fill this research void.

1.5: Conceptual Framework

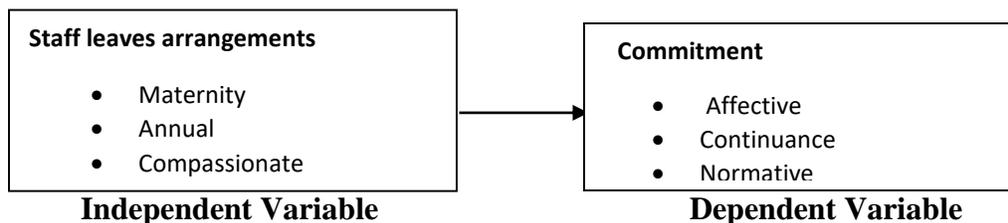


Figure 1a: Influence of Leave Arrangements on Commitment.

1.6: Research Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional survey design is used when the focus of the study is on description of characteristics of variables under investigation occurs at a single point in time (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). 364 nurses selected through proportionate simple random sampling formed the sample. Reliability analysis carried out to ascertain the internal consistency of the data items using the Cronbach’s alpha. The reliability coefficients of staff leave arrangements and commitment obtained were 0.788 and 0.733 respectively. Validity was ascertained by seeking the comments of supervisors, lecturers and peers on the presentation, clarity and length of the instrument, spacing and adequacy of items for the study in the questionnaire. The recommendations from the Human resource experts, lecturers and peers was used to refine and improve the questionnaire. A simple linear regression and Pearson correlation were used to test the null hypothesis that staff leave arrangement has no significant influence on commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya.

1.7: Research Findings

1.7.1: Descriptive Statistics

To determine the adequacy of staff, leave arrangements amongst nurses in public hospitals in Kenya, respondents were asked to rate on a 5-point-Likert scale based on given statements. These were analysed using weighted averages and are presented in table 1a.

Table 1a: Staff Leave Arrangements

Statement	SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5	Mean
I return to the job with renewed interest and vitality to deliver services.	36 11.7%	39 12.6%	58 18.8%	80 25.9%	96 31.1%	3.52
Annual leave arrangements enable me to relax for an extended period.	64 20.7%	15 4.9%	25 8.1%	75 24.3%	130 42.1%	3.62
Immediately after annual leave my absenteeism significantly decreases.	54 17.5%	21 6.8%	26 8.4%	90 29.1%	118 38.2%	3.64
Maternity leave arrangements give me a chance to attend to my new born child.	61 19.7%	27 8.7%	11 3.6%	107 34.6%	103 33.3%	3.53
While on maternity leave am not expected to respond to job related functions.	127 41.1%	46 14.9%	28 9.1%	36 11.7%	72 23.3%	2.61
After exhausting my maternity leave days, am allowed to take annual leave.	47 15.2%	63 20.4%	97 31.4%	39 12.6%	63 20.4%	3.03

KEY: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N- Neutral, D- Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

The study sought to establish whether annual leave enables nurses to return to the job with renewed interest and vitality to deliver services, 36 respondents strongly disagreed, 39 disagreed, 58 were neutral 80 agreed while 96 strongly agreed. This indicates that 57% of the respondents agree to the view annual leave enables nurses to return to the job with renewed interest and vitality to deliver services (score of 4 and 5 and aggregate mean of 3.52) while 24.3% disagreed (score 1 and 2 on scale). The results indicate that annual leave uptake significantly improves the commitment of nurses given that it leads to renewed interest and vitality to deliver services. This result is supported by Kinyili (2015) who revealed that employees who have gone on leave reported significantly better performance immediately after leave due improved presenteeism.

On the question whether annual leave provides an opportunity to relax for an extended period, 130 respondents strongly agreed,75 agreed,25 neutral, 15 disagreed while 64 strongly disagreed. This indicates that 66.3% of the respondents agree that annual leave provides an opportunity to relax for an extended period (on score of 4 and 5 on scale) while 25.6% of the respondents disagreed (score 1 and 2 on scale). This study established that annual leave helps nurses to relax for an extended period and return to work energized. The finding is consistent with Orugbu, Onyeizugbe and Chukwuemeke (2015) that leave arrangements provide employees an opportunity to relax for an extended period and return to the job with renewed interest and vitality to deliver services efficiently and effectively.

The researcher sought to establish from the respondents whether immediately after annual leave absenteeism of nurses significantly decreases, 118 respondents strongly agreed, 90 agreed,26 neutral,21 disagreed while 54 strongly disagreed. This indicates that 67.3% of the respondents agreed to the statement that immediately after

annual leave absenteeism of nurses' significantly decreases (score of 4 and 5 on the scale) while 24.3% disagreed (score of 1 and 2 on the scale), twenty -six respondents representing 8.4% % were neutral. The weighted average of 3.64 suggests that on the average the nurses agreed that immediately after annual leave absenteeism of nurses' significantly decreases. This could be attributed to the opportunity leave arrangement to release work stress. The results are in tandem with Njoroge (2014) finding that staff leave allows workers to release themselves from work stress. The findings are further strengthened by Kim and Ryu (2017) results that leave from work has good effect on employees' emotional health and reduces work related stress and enhanced their commitment.

On the question whether maternity leave arrangements give nurses' a chance to attend to the new born child. 103 respondents representing 33.3% strongly agreed, 107 representing 34.6% agreed, 11 representing 3.6% neutral, 27 representing 8.7% disagreed while 19.7% strongly disagreed. The weighted mean of 3.53 suggesting that on average the nurses agreed that maternity leave accords them an opportunity to attend to the newborn child. The finding is consistent with the employment Act of 2007 which makes it explicit to employers that female employees are entitled to maternity leave in order to attend to the new born and to recover from maternity related complications.

On whether the nurses are not expected to respond to job functions while on maternity leave, 98 respondents representing 31.7% agreed (score 4 and 5 on scale) while 173 representing 56% disagreed (score of 1 and 2 on the scale). 28 respondents representing 9.1% were neutral. The weighted average of 2.61 suggests that on the average the nurses were indifferent on whether they were not expected to respond to job functions while on leave. This implies that the nurses are supposed to respond on their job functions whenever it demands even when on leave.

On question whether nurses are allowed to take annual leave after exhausting maternity leave days, 63 respondents representing 20.4% strongly agreed, 39 respondents representing 12.6% agreed, 97 respondents representing 31.4% neutral, 63 representing 20.4% disagreed, 47 representing 15.2% strongly disagreed. The weighted mean of 3.03 suggests that on average the nurses are indifferent on whether nurses are allowed to take annual leave after exhausting maternity leave days. This suggests that the policy on uptake of annual leave days after exhausting maternity leave is not clear. However, when annual leave is requested after maternity leave, it may indicate that maternity leave is inadequate. On the question of other leave arrangements provided the respondents indicated that compassionate leave is always approved when requested and that it gives them a chance to attend to urgent non-work-related commitments. However, the respondents voiced a concern that compassionate leave is inadequate. On the question of the measures to improve leave arrangements, the nurses revealed that there is need to improve on adequacy of leave days, coming up in advance with a leave schedule for the nurses in the station, continuously reviewing aspects of leave arrangement to conform with the current labour best practices and lastly involving nurses on decisions regarding leave arrangements.

1.7.2: Inferential Statistics

1.7.2.1: Correlation Analysis Results

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to measure the nature and strength of the relationship between leave arrangement and Commitment among the nurses in public hospitals. The results show that there is a moderate positive correlation between staff leave arrangement and commitment among the nurses in public hospitals as indicated by the positive value of the Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.627. The positive correlation

implies that if Leave arrangements are adequate, levels of commitment amongst the nurses will improve significantly. The results are reported in Table 1b

Table 1b: Correlations results between Staff Leave arrangement and Commitment.

		Leave	Commitment
Leave	Pearson Correlation	1	0.627**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	309	309
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.627**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	309	309

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

1.7.2.2: Regression Analysis

To establish the relationship between staff, leave arrangement and Nurses’ level of commitment, a simple linear regression analysis was used. The regression model was of the form:

$$Y = a + bX + \epsilon, \quad \epsilon \sim N(0,1)$$

Where, *Y* is the Nurses’ level of commitment; *X* is the staff leave arrangement, *a* is the constant of the regression equation, *b* is the regression coefficient and ϵ is the error component. The results in Table 1c indicates that the *t*-test values for the adequacy of staff leave arrangements ($t= 14.09, p < 0.05$) and the constant of the regression model is significant at 0.05 level of significance ($t=11.288, p < 0.05$). The results suggest that adequacy of staff leave arrangement has a statistically significant effect on nurses’ level of commitment hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Based on the regression coefficients in Table 1c, the regression model for the influence of inadequacy of leave arrangement on Nurses’ level of commitment is therefore;

$$\text{Nurses' level of Commitment} = 16.854 + 1.062 * (\text{Staff Leave Arrangement})$$

The model indicates that a unit improvement in adequacy of leave arrangements results in 1.062 increase in the level of commitment of nurses. Showing that there is a positive relationship between leave arrangement and commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya.

Table 1c: Regression coefficients.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized t Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
1	(Constant)	16.854	1.493	11.288 .000
	Leave	1.062	.075	.627 14.090 .000

a. Dependent Variable: commitment

1.7.2.3: ANOVA Results

Further, f-test was carried out to test the null hypothesis that leave arrangement has no significant influence commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya. The ANOVA test ($f_{(1,307)} = 198.524, p < 0.05$), shows that they are significant at 0.05 level of significance. This result suggests that the adequacy of staff leave arrangements significantly predict the level of commitment among the nurses in public hospitals in Kenya hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 1d: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	ofDf	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9616.279	1	9616.279	198.524	.000 ^b
	Residual	14870.737	307	48.439		
	Total	24487.016	308			

a. Dependent Variable: commitment b. Predictors: (Constant), leave

1.7.2.4: Model Summary

To test the goodness of the model on the influence of leave arrangements on commitment R^2 was determined. The results presented in Table 1e indicate a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.627. This implies a moderate and positive relationship between nurses’ level of commitment and adequacy of staff leave arrangement. A coefficient of determination (R^2) = 0.391 suggesting that 39.1% of the variation in level of nurses’ commitment for the sample of 309 nurses can be explained by the variations in the adequacy of staff leave arrangement while 60.9% is explained by other factors. Results in table 1e suggests that there is a significant positive influence of staff leave arrangements on nurses’ level of commitment in public hospitals in Kenya. Indicating that if the nurses’ leave arrangement were made adequate, then the level of commitment of nurses’ will significantly improve. For an employee to remain committed, the organization must continue to improve on the adequacy of leave arrangements. This will produce an employee who is more effective and efficient in delivery of health services to the clients. This study has shown that leave arrangement is an important factor that brings about employee commitment.

Table 1e: Model Summary.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.627 ^a	.393	.391	6.960

a. Predictors: (Constant), leave

1.8: Discussion of the findings

The study was set to test the null hypothesis “there is no significant influence of staff leave arrangement on commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya”. The study established an $r = 0.627, r^2 = 0.391, (t = 14.09, p < 0.05)$ and ($f = 198.524, p < 0.05$), suggesting that adequacy of staff leave arrangements significantly and positively influence commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya thus the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding indicate that the adequacy of leave arrangements significantly and positively influences the level of commitment of nurses in public hospitals. The finding of this study consent with study by Orugbu, Onyeizugbe and Chukwuemeke (2015) results that there is a significant and positive relationship between leave

policy and service delivery. The researchers observed that leave arrangements provide employees an opportunity to relax for an extended period and return to the job with renewed interest and vitality to deliver services efficiently and effectively. Further, Kinyili (2015) agrees with the study results and observed that leave options has a significant and positive relationship with employee morale and retention. The researcher further observed that employee on leave get an opportunity to release stress and create a balance between work and family activities.

Njoroge (2014) observed that staff leaves options give workers a chance to release themselves from work stress by change of environment and break from daily working environment.

1.9: Summary of the Findings

The results of the descriptive analysis indicated that staff leaves arrangement mean index was 15.518 with the scores deviating by 6.61442 from the mean score and the cut off mark of 18. Since the mean (15.518) was less than the average score of 18, the result suggest that the staff leave arrangements amongst nurses in public hospitals in Kenya were inadequate.

The researcher also established that there is a moderate significant positive correlation between staff leave arrangement and commitment among the nurses in public hospitals as indicated by the positive value of the Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.627. The positive correlation implies that as the adequacy of leave arrangements are enhanced, levels of commitment amongst the nurses will significantly increase.

The study established an adjusted $R^2 = 0.391$, indicating that 39.1% of the variation in level of nurses' commitment for the sample of 309 nurses can be explained by the variations in the adequacy of staff leave arrangement while other factors are held constant. This suggests that the adequacy of leave arrangements significantly predict the level of commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive direct relationship between adequacy of leave arrangements and level of commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya.

The researcher established the *t*-test values, constant of the regression model and ANOVA test results for the adequacy of staff leave arrangements as ($t = 14.09, p < 0.05$), likewise, the constant of the regression model as ($t = 11.288, p < 0.05$) and $F_{(1,307)} = 198.524, p < 0.05$) significant at 0.05 level of significance. These results indicate that the adequacy of staff leave arrangements can significantly predict the level of commitment among the nurses in public hospitals in Kenya. Thus, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that staff leave arrangement has no significant influence on commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya and adopted the alternative hypothesis that staff leave arrangements has a significant influence on commitment of nurses in public hospital in Kenya.

1.10: Conclusion

From the findings the researcher concludes that adequacy of leave arrangements play a significant positive influence on the level of commitment of nurses' in public hospitals in Kenya. This indicates that adequacy of leave arrangements significantly influence the level of commitment of nurses.

1.11: Contribution to theory

The study revealed that leave arrangement has a significant influence on commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya. The findings converged with the hypothesized model.

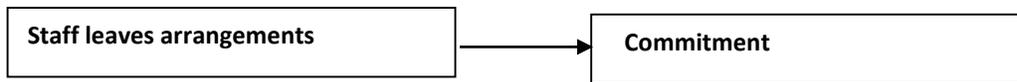


Figure 1b: Influence of adequacy of leave arrangement on level of commitment of nurses

1.12: Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusion of this study, the researcher recommends that the ministry of health at the national government and the county department of health to improve leave arrangements in terms of adequacy in order to increase the level of commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya.

1.13: Suggestion for further research

Examine the influence of staff leave arrangements on commitment of nurses in faith-based health and private hospitals in Kenya.

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