

INFLUENCE OF FLEXIBILITY WORK PRACTICE AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR IN KENYA

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Abstract: *Employees go through various work-related problems. Stress is a problem that affects most of the employees. When there is no balance between work responsibilities and home responsibilities, there is usually a conflict between the two, which when not handled properly causes stress and even depression. A number of challenges and conflicts continue to be witnessed within the health sector at county level, deteriorating quality of organization performance and achievements made in the sector over years and years. The problems are as a result work life conflicts, which affects individual employees socially, economically, psychologically as well as their mental wellbeing. The study sought to evaluate work-life balance practices and employee performance in public health sector in Rangwe sub-county hospital, Homa Bay county and was centered on the specific objective to establish the influence of flexibility work practice. Research design was a descriptive approach. Target population was all 258 employees in Rangwe Sub- County Hospital. A random sample of the population was chosen for the study. According to the chart, the number of participants needed for this study was 155. A pilot test was carried out to establish the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. Using questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale and both open ended and closed-ended questions. The study involved self-administered questionnaires to ensure the validity and reliability of the questions, a validation, and reliability check was conducted. The data was analyzed descriptively using the means and standard deviation. Inferential statistics was analyzed by correlation and multiple regression analysis. The study established that there exists a positive correlation between employee performance and flexible work practices. Therefore, based on this study, once flexible work practice is increased, employees' performance would increase tremendously.*

Keywords: *flexibility work practice, organization performance, public health sector, work-life balance*

Work- Life Balance Practices and Employee Performance

Some flexible alternatives led to positive outcomes, while others led to negative ones, according to studies by Stravrou (2005), Brewster, Mayhofer, and Morley (2004), and Glass and Finley (2002). According to Batt and Valcour, FWAs positively affect employee performance, which in turn has a positive effect on employee satisfaction. In order to balance the demands of their personal and professional lives and the expectations of their employer, employees with flexible work practices (FWAs) affect mobility, as Peters, Tijdens, and Wetzels (2004) explain. Continuous rescheduling of routine daily tasks, on the other hand, may result in a decrease in the number of productive hours worked by employees, ultimately lowering productivity. Employee productivity may be affected by the methods used to create work flexibility inside an organization and reduce the incidence of time conflicts, according to Kelly et al., (2008). Employee performance has been linked to flexible working arrangements in empirical studies, however the evidence was mixed, individual employee performance and FWAs are positively correlated by Menezes and Kelliher (2011) however, organizational

performance was found to be unrelated by Bloom and Van Reenen (2006). 70% of respondents stated no correlation between FWAs and employee performance whereas just 31% stated. The decreased costs of working from home have been shown to improve employee effectiveness (Menezes and Kelliher, 2011). As a result of their research, Menezes and Kelliher (2011) discovered no link between flexible and non-flexible work arrangements in the workforce.

In Suhendro's (2018) a study looked into the relationship between work-life balance and employee motivation in Indonesia. The researcher studied the health sector using a descriptive research approach with a total sample size of 120 and 86 Jakarta Local Government respondents. According to studies, family and personal duties impact employees' motivation to work and their ability to focus on their task. The majority of respondents chose flexible work options, such as working from home, because of family responsibilities. Female workers were more enthusiastic about this than male workers were.

A study conducted by Kadaga and Mwebi (2015) sought to assess the impact of flexible work schedules and domestic obligations on the performance of employees in Nairobi CBD Commercial Banks. The study's descriptive survey design was employed to collect data from 1074 Commercial Bank employees in Nairobi's central business district. The concept of a ratio of Some 291 people from various levels of the organization were selected for the study, which used a stratified sampling method.

Ngari and Mukururi (2014) studied commercial banks in Nairobi County, who compared their findings to those of Mwebi and Kadaga (2015). A descriptive research approach was utilized to gather data from the 240 participants in the study. They discovered that each work-life balancing practice was detrimental to job happiness, and that there are insufficient work-life balance regulations. According to the findings of the research, family responsibilities were found to have a substantial impact on employee performance. According to the results of the study, bank managers should make it more difficult for their employees to break the work-life balance standards they set up for them. Due to the method used, the cause-effect relationship was not properly investigated.

A movement for a 24/7 economy was underway in Kenya. As a result, greater adaptability was required to handle peak loads throughout the clock. An increasing amount of evidence points to an increase in labor intensity, which was related to increased stress levels in the workplace. Workload, pressure, long hours, and lack of personal time were all determined to be contributing factors to employees' anxiety (Holbeche, 2017). Workers who have had these kinds of encounters are likely to reconsider their values. Furthermore, there was evidence that younger workers are less inclined to give up their personal lives to devote themselves to their jobs. There appears to be a shift in values and expectations.

More than half of firms in Kenya lack practices that support their employees' well-being, according to a survey conducted by Strathmore Business School in 2016. This was a more common problem for the public sector and notably the county governments. Because of a lack of good Work-Life Balance Practices, county government employees have been shown to work longer hours and with more complexity and intensity. Because of this, most of these people are under a lot of stress at work, leading to a culture of poor work-life balance.

The Hawthorne studies of the 1920s made a significant contribution to employee performance research. These investigations demonstrated that introducing new working circumstances could boost output. Organizational success and productivity are directly linked to employee performance and task completion rate of its workforce. Personal and professional lives are inextricably intertwined in the lives of most employees. An organization's personnel must be satisfied and content to improve production, utilization rate, and performance. To benefit

both the employee and the company, it was critical to acknowledge and respect the individual's right to a balanced existence both inside and outside of the workplace. In Kenya, some large private organizations have established work life balance facilities to reduce the work family conflicts that may negatively affect the employee's performance. Some of the facilities include day care facilities, health facilities for men and women, prayer rooms, and Flexi time for lactating mother. Some organizations like ECO Bank, Britam, and the standard chartered bank have instituted work life balance facilities to mitigate employee stress, and enhance their performance. This was crucial for performance in the modern competitive business environment Kasau, M. G. (2017). Frese (2002) observed that Organizations need high performance of their employees to meet their goals and attain a competitive advantage.

Profile of Homa Bay County Public Hospital

Homa Bay County public Hospital plays an important role in the day-to-day operation of public sector that enables the concrete development and management of the country's economy. County departments of health are taking charge and managing the operation of health services (Kenya Health Policy 2012-2030). The study considered evaluating Work-Life Balance Practices and Employee Performance in Public Health Sector In Rangwe Sub-County Hospital, Homa Bay, because of it has homogenous characteristics and therefore share several similarities in their management, level of staffing, structures, training, hours of operations, and jurisdictions of work and organizational values. In this study, Homa Bay County public Hospital represented Kenya's Health Care Sector. Golden (2008) work-life balance practices are not new ideas and have been practiced by other organizations. This has been achieved because of global technological promotion. A number of the work-life balance indicators cooperated in organizations performance currently include; flexi-time, telework, job-sharing and compressed workweek. Lonnie (2011), in his study, revealed that more emphasis has been delegated to Job Design practice. Baral & Bhargava (2011) on their study of Human Resource interventions for work-life balance, evidence from organizations in India, and a conceptual study concluded that work-life balance practices should be implemented in the organization. The prevailing organizational culture props up to utilize the work-life balance practices that in turn it should ensure employees' performance as well as productivity. The study also suggests that before the adoption of work-life balance the similarity between the organizational values and employees' needs should be considered

A Profile of Rangwe sub-County Hospital

Employee performance indicators in Rangwe Sub- County Hospital show that absenteeism, low performances, and plans to leave the organization are common. This was dependent on the balance that had already been achieved. As can be seen, a large percentage of employees are not happy with their jobs. The impact of work-life balance on employee job happiness is yet to be experimentally investigated, despite efforts to discover the cause of high employee job discontent. Orwa, P. A., & Nyangau, A. (2020). Work life balance practices and employee performance in Rangwe Sub County Hospital, Homa Bay County, Kenya are now being researched to remedy this gap in knowledge.

Statement of the Problem

Inability to manage heavy workload is a problem that affects employee performance since it is a major cause of stress (Feng 2019). A study by Kithuci and Nyariki (2017) reported that majority of public health employees (74%) had trouble in balancing multiple roles and responsibilities while 41% reported inability to get leave or off duty to attend to essential non-work responsibilities. Previous studies have classified stress factors, which affects employee performance into four: Working conditions that include weekend duty, shift problems, long working hours, inadequate pay, safety issues, and discriminations, Stress factor is relationship at work and

ambiguity in responsibility and authority. Organizational structure and climate such as change in the workplace, communication practices, and lack of participation in decision-making is a stress factor that affect employee performance. This depicts below-average performance by the employees in many institutions (Pradhan, 2017).

There was a clear correlation between declining employee performance and employees' physical and mental health, especially in government agencies like Rangwe Sub- County, (Charoenarpornwattana, 2017). A study conducted by Flora, S. (2022) at Eco Bank Kenya indicated that recreational practice improved employee performance. Job Design practice have all altered how employees view what constitutes a good organization. Having a healthy work-life balance, ethical behaviour, and overall job happiness are now commonly seen as essential indicators of a company's long-term success.

However, this was not the case for the majority of county government employees, who have been shown to be isolated and dissatisfied in their work. The current study aims to close this gap by evaluating Work-Life Balance Practices and Employee Performance in Public Health Sector in Rangwe Sub-County Hospital, Homa Bay.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to establish the influence of work life balance practices on employee performance with a specific objective establish the influence of flexibility work practice and employee performance in public health sector in Homa Bay County.

Research Methodology

The study's research design was a descriptive approach. In the present study, the target population were all the employees of public Health Rangwe Sub- County Hospital. According to the human resource department of Rangwe Sub- County Hospital, there are 258 employees of in Rangwe Sub- County Hospital. The employees are categorised into top management, middle management, and low cadre. Information available indicates that there are 36 employees in top management, 84 at middle management and 138 lower cadre employees. This study will involve self-administered questionnaires. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of each of the questions, a validation and reliability check was conducted.

Results Findings and Discussions

Pilot Study Results

This pilot study was conducted before the commencement of the actual study. The pilot study was carried out using 16 respondents from the 155 employees of Rangwe Sub-County. Questionnaires were delivered to each of the respondents and collected at an agreed time. The pilot study obtained a response rate of 100% whereby all the 16 respondents dully filled the questionnaires and gave them back for analysis. The pilot results were used to test the instruments for reliability and validity. These tests are explained in the sections below.

Reliability of the Data Collection Instrument

The first test carried out for the collected data after the pilot study was the test for reliability. Instrument reliability refers to the consistency of scores or answers from one administration of an instrument to another, and from one set of items to another (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). For this study, Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used to test for the instrument reliability. Cronbach (α) was the measure of the extent to which all the variables in the scale are positively related to each other. A reliable coefficient should be between 0.00 and 1.00. A coefficient of 0.00 means the measurement was not consistency while a coefficient of 1.00 means the

instrument was perfectly consistent. However, those items with Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.7 are adequate, while those with alpha of 0.8 are good, and those with 0.9 are extraordinary and they should be picked for analysis while those items with Cronbach's coefficient alpha 0.1, 0.2, 0.3, 0.4, 0.5 and 0.6 are neither not adequate, good nor extraordinary therefore they should be dropped. (Saunders et al., 2016).

Reliability Analysis for Flexibility Practices

The first independent variable of the study was Flexibility Practices. This variable was measured by 6 items. The items were subjected to Cronbach's alpha analysis. The results for the analysis are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis Summary

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Reliability
Flexibility work practice	.835	6	Reliable

Source: Survey data, 2022

Validity of the Data Collection Instrument

According to Foss and Saebi (2017) validity was the degree by which the sample of test items represents the content the test was designed to measure. There are four types of validities: face, content, construct, and criterion. In this study, three types of validities were tested; face, content and construct validities. According to Kothari (2009), face validity ensures that there was a logical link between research objectives and research questions, i.e., to test whether the content of the questionnaire appears suitable to its aims. Content validity, on the other hand, measures the extent to which underlying constructs are represented in the research instrument, i.e., if the instrument measures knowledge of the content domain of which it was designed to measure (Wilson, 2010). It was a measure of the degree to which data collected using a particular instrument represents a specific domain or content of a particular concept. In this study, both face validity and content validities were tested using expert judgment. To first test for face validity, two Human Resource experts (lecturers) were used to evaluate the appearance of the questions in terms of feasibility, readability, consistency of style and formatting and the clarity of the language used. The experts confirmed that based on these metrics, the research questionnaire was valid. Content validity was measured using the Content Validity Index (CVI). As observed by Waltz, Strickland and Lenz (2010), at least two or three experts in the area of the content to be measured can evaluate the validity of the items, and when only two or three experts are employed, content validity index (CVI) was used to measure the level of agreement between the experts. A formula suggested by Mason (2010) was used to calculate the Content Validity Index (CVI); $CVI = (\text{Relevant Items} / \text{Total Items})$ after the two experts had rated the items in the questionnaire as relevant or irrelevant in terms of the content domain of which they were designed to measure. The average CVI obtained was 0.877, indicating that the instrument was valid in terms of content validity. Mason (2010) observes that a CVI of greater than 0.7 was acceptable. Construct validity, which was the degree to which a test measures what it claims to measure (Boudreau et al., 2004), was assessed using convergent and divergent validities. According to Waltz, Strickland and Lenz (2010), convergent validity defines the degree to which two measures of constructs that theoretically should be related are actually related, while tests whether the measurements that are supposed to be unrelated are actually unrelated.

Factor loadings of constructs estimations by use of Principal Factor Analysis (PCA) were used to assess convergent validity of each of the constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Factor analysis was mainly concerned about the internal-correlations among the items under investigations to ensure that there was consistent correlation

among the items under investigation as illustrated by Mugenda and Mugenda (2010). According to (Hair *et al.*, 2010), the ideal standardized loading estimates should be 0.7 or higher, but that factor loadings with score of 0.5 or higher are very significant, and the items which were below 0.5 were deemed not fit for the study and were dropped.

Based on the findings in Table 2 below, with factor loadings of more than 0.5, it was concluded that the constructs were valid in terms of convergence validity.

Table 2: Factor Loadings Summary

Construct	Average Factor Loadings
Flexibility Practices	0.855
Employee Performance	0.840

Source: Survey data, 2022

Descriptive Analysis

From Table 3 shown below majority disagreed that they have experienced conflicts in schedule when it comes to family events and work with 3.8% strongly disagreed and 56.6% disagreed. Only 15.1% agreed while 24.5% neither agreed nor agreed (M=2.906 SD=1.260). 45.3% agreed and 45.3% disagreed that their work was very labour intensive and promotes conflicts between work and my family (M=3.000 SD=0.981). The results shows that long daily and weekly working hours causes conflicts between work and relationships with their family as 1.9% agreed and 5.7% strongly agreed that could be such flexible (M=1.849 SD=1.027). On the other hand, 26.4% strongly disagreed and 45.3% disagreed that do not have the possibility to personally decide over their starting and finishing time (M=2.509 SD=1.489). 49.1% strongly disagreed and 30.2% disagreed that their workplace does not provide technological resources that allow them to work from home if they have family affairs to attend to (M=1.962 SD=1.240). Finally, none strongly disagreed and 56.6 % disagreed that excessive demands of the clients interfere with their work and family (M=2.981 SD=1.168). There is slightly low aggregate mean score of 2.534 and standard deviation of 1.194 therefore this means that there is high variation in employee responses, indicating the disparity between subordinates and staff in Management.

Table 3: Flexibility work practice

Statement	(SD) %	(D) %	(N) %	(A) %	(SA) %	MEAN	STD
i. I have experienced conflicts in schedule when it comes to family events and work	3.8	56.6	24.5	15.1	0	2.906	1.260
ii. I believe that my work was very labour intensive and promotes conflicts between my work and my family.	0	45.3	9.4	45.3	0	3.000	0.981
iii. I believe that long daily and weekly working hours causes conflicts between my work and my relationships with my family	41.5	45.3	5.7	1.9	5.7	1.849	1.027
iv. I don't have the possibility to personally decide over my starting and finishing time	26.4	45.3	0	7.5	20.8	2.509	1.489

v.	My workplace does not provide technological resources that allow me to work from home if i have family affairs to attend to.	49.1	30.2	0	17.0	3.8	1.962	1.240
vi.	I believe that the excessive demands of the clients interfere with my work and family	0	56.6	32.1	0	11.3	2.981	1.168
Aggregate Scores							2.534	1.194

Source: Survey data, 2022

Where SD=Strongly, Disagree, D=Disagree, N=neither Disagree nor Agree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree.

From Table 4 shown below the results to structured questions, 125 respondents said yes while 21 said No that organisation have conflicts especially on family issues and work.142 disagreed while 4 agreed that labour intensive that enhances conflicts amongst workers and their family,136 disagreed while 10 agreed that daily and weekly serving hours result to conflict between work ,Relationships and family.138 disagreed while 8 agreed that employees decide on work starting time and finishing time,100 disagreed while 46 agreed that there technological resources, which can facilitate working from home Especially when employees have family affairs the needs urgent address. 90 disagreed while 56 agreed that Workplace affects demand at the employee work and family. Therefore, this means that there is high variation in employee responses, indicating the disparity between subordinates and staff in Management.

Table 4: Flexibility work practice

NO	STATEMENT	YES	NO	TOTAL
(i)	Does your organisation have conflicts especially on family issues and work?	21	125	146
(ii)	Is there labour intensive that enhances conflicts amongst workers and Their family?	4	142	146
(iii)	Does daily and weekly serving hours result to conflict between work, Relationships and family?	10	136	146
(iv)	Do employees decide on work starting time and finishing time?	8	138	146
(v)	Are there technological resources, which can facilitate working from home Especially when employees have family affairs the needs urgent address?	46	100	146
(vi)	Workplace affects demand at the employee work and family?	56	90	146

Source: Survey data, 2022**Employee Performance**

From Table 5 shown below 32% of the respondents agreed and 14% strongly agreed that flexible work practices influence performance, but 50% disagreed (M=3.060 SD=1.202). 44% agreed and 4% strongly, and 46% disagreed that their performance is affected by trying to balance work and family responsibilities (M=3.060 SD=1.038). On the other hand, 64% agreed while 20% strongly agreed that leave provision have a positive impact on their performance (M=3.920 SD=0.853), 66% agreed,10 strongly agreed that Recreational practices have a positive impact on their performance(M=3.860 SD=0.572) .44% disagreed that Job Design practice affects their performance(M=2.780 SD=1.075).38% disagreed, 18% agreed that there is a direct correlation between employees performance and the work life balance practices in the organisation (M=2.780 SD=1.144) The aggregate mean score is 3.46 and the standard deviation was 0.676. Aggregate mean score of 3.223 and a standard deviation of 0.981, therefore this show there is less variation in responses.

Table 5: Employee performance

Statement	(SD) %	(D) %	(N) %	(A) %	(SA) %	MEAN	STD
(i) Flexible work Practices influence my performance.	4	50	0	32	14	3.060	1.202
(ii) My performance is affected by trying to balance work and family responsibilities	0	46	6	44	4	3.060	1.038
(iii) Leave Provision practice have a positive impact on my performance.	0	12	4	64	20	3.920	0.853
(iv) Recreational practice have a positive impact on my performance	0	0	2	66	10	3.860	0.572
(v) Job Design practice affects my performance	6	44	24	18	8	2.780	1.075
(vi) There is a direct correlation between employees' performance and the work life balance Practices in the Organisation.	12	38	24	18	8	2.780	1.144
Aggregate Scores						3.233	0.981

Source: Survey data, 2022

Where SD=Strongly, Disagree, D=Disagree, N=neither Disagree nor Agree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

From Table 5 shown below the results as follows: 98 said yes, 48 said No that employees assigned tasks help them to build on their skills. 78 said yes while 68 said No that employees have opportunity to improve at the workplace on daily basis. 89 said yes while 57 said No that supervisors encourage employees on career development. 75 said yes while 71 said No that some employees are willing to work with the current employer until retirement. 116 said No while 30 said No that employees receive praise and recognition after every seven days for job well done 125 said yes while 21 said No that employees enjoy serving customers and clients. Therefore, this shows there is less variation in responses.

Table 6: Employee performance

NO	STATEMENT	YES	NO	TOTAL
(i)	Do employees assigned tasks help them to build on their skills?	98	48	146
(ii)	Do employees have opportunity to improve at the workplace on daily basis?	78	68	146
(iii)	Do supervisors encourage employees on career development?	89	57	146
(iv)	Are some employees willing to work with the current employer Until retirement?	75	71	146
(v)	Do employees receive praise and recognition after every seven days for job well done?	116	30	146
(vi)	Are employees enjoying serving customers and clients?	125	21	146

Source: Survey data, 2022

Test for Multi-co linearity

Multi-collinearity is said to occur in a situation where two or more independent variables in a multiple regression model are highly correlated (Robert, 2007). Multicollinearity test is carried out to isolate and collapse the study variables that measure the same construct thus eliminate redundancy (Robert, 2007). This suggests that one or more independent variables can linearly be predicted from the other independent variable(s) with a non-trivial degree of accuracy when multi-collinearity exists. The situation where the

correlations among the independent variables are strong is 59 unacceptable because it Multicollinearity is a problem because it undermines the statistical significance of an independent variable (Muthoka, 2016). Before the regression procedure was carried out, the basic assumption of multi-collinearity was tested by observing the levels of correlation between the independent variables subject to the rule of thumb that the statistical index should be less than 0.8 (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Multi-collinearity test was carried out so as to determine whether the independent variables (flexible work arrangements, leave arrangements and employee assistance programs) are inter-related or not

This implies that correlation index between all the independent variables: Flexibility work practice Leave Provision practice, Recreational practice and job design were not more than 0.8 therefore Collinearity did not exist as shown in table 7 below:

Table 7: Inter-Construct Correlation matrix

		Employee Performance	Flexibility Work
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed) (P)		
	N	146	
Flexibility Work	Pearson Correlation (r)	.088	1
	Sig. (2-tailed) (P)	.004	
	N	146	146

Regression of Coefficients

The Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between employees' performance and the study variable flexibility work practice.

Table 8: Regression of Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
1	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	72.703	1.304		55.765	.000
Flexibility work practice	.408	.075	.302	5.433	.000

As per the SPSS generated table 8 above, the equation:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon \text{ become:}$$

$$Y = 72.703 + 0.408 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Based on the regression equation established, when flexibility work practice, are held constant at zero, employees' performance would be **72.703**. The data findings analyzed also indicates that when all other independent variables are held at zero, a unit increase in Flexibility work practice will lead to **0.408** decrease in employees 'performance.

Summary of the study

The majority disagreed that they have experienced conflicts in schedule when it comes to family events and work with 3.8% strongly disagreed and 56.6% disagreed. Only 15.1% agreed while 24.5% neither agreed nor agreed. 45.3% agreed and 45.3% disagreed that their work was very labour intensive and promotes conflicts between work and my family. The results shows that long daily and weekly working hours causes conflicts between work and relationships with their family as 5.7% agreed and 1.7% strongly agreed that could be such flexible. On the other hand, 26.4% strongly disagreed and 45.3% disagreed that do not have the possibility to personally decide over their starting and finishing time. 49.1% strongly disagreed and 30.2% disagreed that their workplace does not provide technological resources that allow them to work from home if they have family affairs to attend to. Finally, none strongly disagreed and 56.6 % disagreed that excessive demands of the clients interfere with their work and family.

The study established that there exist a positive correlation between employee performance and flexible work practices. This goes against Bloom and Van Reenen (2006) observations that FWP's are not related to employees' performance, but is in agreement with a longitudinal study by Menezes and Kelliher (2011) that found that there exists a positive correlation between FWP's and individual employee performance. Therefore, based on this study, once flexible work practice is increased, employees' performance would increase tremendously.

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