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Abstract

The level of satisfaction among employees profoundly impacts their dedication, morale, and effectiveness in achieving organizational goals. Striking a harmonious balance between professional commitments and personal life activities significantly enhances overall employee satisfaction. Thus, the study examined the relationship between flexible working arrangements and employee satisfaction in private hospitals in Nairobi County with a moderating effect of organizational culture. This investigation was underpinned by the theoretical principles of border theory, emphasizing how individuals manage and negotiate their work and non-work domains. The target audience for the research was 19 hospitals. The observational unit was made up of support staff and managers at the medium and high management levels. The study found that flexible working arrangements are positively and significantly related to employee satisfaction (p=0.000; =.288). The study recommended the private hospitals in Nairobi City County should ensure there is a flexible working arrangement. This can lead to increased job resources, such as reduced stress levels and improved work-life balance, which can positively impact employee satisfaction and productivity. Therefore, organizations should prioritize variable flexible working arrangements to promote employee wellbeing and satisfaction. It is suggested that a study be conducted to examine the effect of employee competency, leadership style, teamwork and work complexity on employee satisfaction. In addition to this, subsequent studies could be conducted in other counties, broadening the scope to include public hospitals, thereby providing a more comprehensive perspective on the subject matter.

Keywords: Flexible working arrangements, employee satisfaction, private hospitals, Nairobi City County, Kenya



1.0 Introduction

Employee satisfaction can be contended as an employee's overall attitude towards their working conditions, promotions, recognition and relations (Chatterjee, Wadhwa & Patel, 2018). Other factors that could lead to the employees' satisfaction can include achievement, growth and other matters associated with the individual's motivation in the job (Okemwa, Atambo & Muturi, 2019). The employees' satisfaction can be measured through their attitudes, performance, absenteeism, unpunctuality, turnover rate, grievances, among others. Employee satisfaction determines their morale in meeting the organization's objectives (Kangogo & Wanambiro, 2019). The organization spends less resources on the supervision process of the satisfied employees since the commitment and determination is high and employees are focused on continuing to work in the organization (Chatterjee, Wadhwa & Patel, 2018; Musyoka, 2021; Bibi, 2019). Dousin, Collins and KaurKler (2019) state that flexibility in working hours and supportive supervision increases the morale of the doctors and nurses in Malaysia, which translates to higher commitments, thus increasing individual performance.

Wadhawan (2019) argues that the employees' satisfaction could be highly influenced by dimensions such as psychological wellbeing, social relationship and physical health. Chatterjee, Wadhwa and Patel (2018) report that welfare policies such as employee satisfaction welfare schemes, medical insurance, house allowance, salary increment and promotions are critical. Further, Mokhtar, Ruslan and Abdullah (2021) state that family conflict significantly affects employees' satisfaction. Moreover, Fabiene and Kachchhap (2016) report that the employees' commitment could be determined by leave policies, organizational climate, job satisfaction and training and development. Kipkoech (2018) states that flexible working strategies significantly determine employee performance at Kericho county referral hospitals. Further, Kangogo and Wanambiro (2019) state that flexible working schedules increase the employees' commitment within the hospitals in Nakuru. Wamunyu (2016) indicates that factors that influence the employees' satisfaction in public hospitals in Kiambu County include remunerations, working conditions, job description and career advancement.

The flexible working arrangement includes the manner of working that suits the needs and necessities of the employees (Musyoka, 2021). The welfare policies include programs that provide financial or other aid to the employees in an organization (Waititu, Kihara & Senaji, 2017). Welfare policy ensures the benefits and facilities for the employees are conducive to working in a better environment (Talukder, Vickers & Khan, 2018). The welfare policies within an organization are considered important. However, in many instances, working in hospitals involves working for long hours without rest and sometimes with poor remunerations or allowances (Dousin, Collins & KaurKler, 2019). It is indicated by Kipkoech (2018) that employee satisfaction in hospitals in Kenya has not been adequate with rampant strikes and a high turnover rate. In Kenya, private hospitals have almost 70% control of all the doctors and approximately 45% of all the nurses available in the market (Apinde, 2018). However, the performance of employees within some private hospitals in Kenya has been wanting (Gioko & Njuguna, 2019). For instance, in 2020, MP Shah Hospitals was fined Sh3 million for negligence that caused the death of a patient (Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, 2020). Thus, the study examined the effect of flexible working arrangements on employee satisfaction in private hospitals in Nairobi.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The satisfaction of the employees influences their commitment and enthusiasm for meeting the objectives of an organization (Auka & Nyangau, 2020). Nonetheless, the employee satisfaction in some private hospitals in Kenya has been wanting, which could have attributed to some negligence (Gioko & Njuguna, 2019). For instance, in 2020, MP Shah Hospitals was fined Sh3 million for negligence that caused the death of a patient (Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, 2020). In addition, in 2021, it was reported that the negligence of employees at Nairobi West Hospitals led to the death of a patient in its facilities. Moreover, in 2021, Nairobi Hospitals laid off more than 200 workers citing involvement in unethical practices (Igadwah, 2021). Further, it was reported by Kiplagat (2017) that some private hospitals have delays in service delivery, especially the ones in critical conditions. The work-related problems, such as stress being one of the most common problems that bedevil most employees, could have led to low employee satisfaction (Auka & Nyangau, 2020; Abdirahman, 2018; Kasau, 2017; Wolor, Solikhah, Fidhyallah & Lestari, 2020). In many instances, working in hospitals involves working long hours without rest and sometimes with poor remunerations or allowances (Dousin, Collins & KaurKler, 2019).

It is indicated by Kipkoech (2018) that employee satisfaction in hospitals in Kenya has not been adequate with rampant strikes and a high turnover rate. At present, we have limited knowledge about the actual state of flexible working arrangements in private hospitals in Nairobi City County, owing to the scarcity of existing literature. For example, Kipkoech (2018) carried out a study to explore the impact of flexible working schedules on employee performance at referral hospitals in Kericho County. Similarly, Chepkemo (2020) investigated the factors contributing to job satisfaction among nurses in various public hospitals in Kericho County. Thus, it was deemed valuable to conduct this study. The research specifically analyzed the impact of flexible working practices on employee satisfaction in private hospitals in Nairobi.

1.2 Research Objective

To determine the effect of flexible working arrangements on employee satisfaction in private hospitals in Nairobi

1.3 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrated the framework.

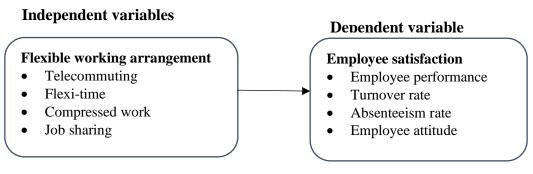


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

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2.0 Literature Review

The study was anchored on border theory. It was in the year 2000 when Clark first conceived of the idea. The notion focuses mostly on constraints one faces in the course of one's activity. According to the findings, a flexible work environment may help preserve, maintain, and even increase efficiency and production (Haberkern, Schmid & Szydlik, 2015). Workplace productivity may be increased by allowing employees some leeway in setting their own work hours. One way to look at flexible work schedules is as a method to give employees more freedom over when they clock in and exit each day. The ability to adjust work hours according to personal needs may help workers maintain a healthy work-life balance (Delecta, 2011). It is hypothesised that providing employees with some discretion over when and how they finish their job would have a significant impact on productivity, which will in turn benefit the company's bottom line. Some research suggests that job sharing might reduce tension at work. A corporation that gives its workers some say over how and when they accomplish their work will earn the loyalty of its staff members. When given the option between generating their own timetables and sticking to a set schedule, employees often choose to make their own (Sarker, Ahuja & Sarker, 2018).

Research on dynamic forms of workplace flexibility may benefit from this approach. Flexible work hours might help employees feel less pressure and be more productive at work. Private hospital workers in Nairobi City may be eligible for more flexible work schedules if they are able to reach an arrangement with their employers along these lines. It is the obligation of private hospital employers to offer a safe working environment for its employees and a variety of perks, including flexible working hours. As a result, the concept may be applied to the study's fluid work environments. Kipkoech (2018) utilized a descriptive design and collected data through a questionnaire and indicated that flexible work strategies, including work shifts, reporting time, and job sharing, significantly influence employee performance. Another study by Okemwa (2016) showed that flexible work arrangements positively and significantly impact nurses' commitment. Nonetheless, the study had a conceptual gap, focusing on flexible work arrangements and commitment. Furthermore, Wadhawan (2019) indicated that flexible working arrangements significantly and positively influence employee satisfaction. The study found that psychological wellbeing, social relationships, and physical health can affect employees' satisfaction.

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researchers advised hospitals to implement systems to increase the flexibility of their work schedules so that personnel could successfully combine work, relaxation, and personal activities.

3.0 Research Methodology

A positivist philosophy was employed in the study. Besides, a descriptive research design was embraced in the study. This design incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data to mitigate the limitations of employing just one type of method. The study was centered on 19 private hospitals in Nairobi City County, specifically those classified as level 4 and 5 hospitals, and included both management and support personnel. Data were collected through questionnaires for the support staff and interviews for the upper management. A sample size of 332 respondents, calculated using Yamane's formula, was distributed proportionally across the categories of management and support personnel. The procedure for data collection in this study incorporated the use of questionnaires, guided interviews, and the application of SPSS version 27 for data analysis. To foster candid responses, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly upheld throughout the study.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Response Rate

The number of questionnaires administered to the support staff was 259, out of which 248 were dully filled. In addition, the study interviewed 64 employees out of 73 from the top and middle level management.

Response	Returned	Unreturned	Percentage
Support Staff	248	11	95.37
Management (top and middle level management)	64	9	87.67
Total	312	20	93.98

Table 1: Response rate

The response rate from the support staff was 95.37% and 87.67% for the management (top and middle level management. Ahmad and Halim (2017) reports that a response rates of above 60% of the sample size is sufficient for the analysis and making of inferences. Thus, the resulting analysis and inferences drawn from this study are deemed robust and reliable, offering valuable insights into the relationship between welfare policies and employee satisfaction.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics do not involve making inferences about a population from a sample, unlike inferential statistics. They help to see the big picture of the data and see trends and patterns. They are useful for discovering patterns and trends in data, as well as spotting outliers and abnormalities. The analytical findings are presented in the following areas according to the aims of the research.

								Skev	vness
Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Statistic	Std. Error
The employees in the	U	U		0	C				
hospital are allowed to									
share duties with their colleagues.	24.20%	57.30%	5.20%	10.10%	3.20%	2.11	0.99	1.218	0.155
Telecommuting is	24.20%	57.50%	5.20%	10.10%	3.20%	2.11	0.99	1.210	0.155
allowed in the hospital									
for the employees to do									
their duties outside the									
offices.	49.50%	38.30%	2.60%	5.20%	4.40%	1.85	1.03	1.573	0.155
Employees in the organization are									
allowed to report earlier									
and leave earlier or									
report late and leave									
late.	30.60%	51.80%	6.90%	4.70%	6.00%	2.00	0.98	1.397	0.155
The hospital allows									
employees to have a local arrangement with									
fellow workers when									
they cannot work full									
time.	13.70%	60.90%	3.60%	18.90%	2.90%	2.26	0.93	0.995	0.155
The compressed work									
schedules are allowed in the hospitals.	32.70%	49.60%	2.00%	6.80%	8.90%	2.10	1.19	1.338	0.155
The hospital allows	52.1070	42.0070	2.0070	0.0070	0.7070	2.10	1.17	1.550	0.155
employees to choose									
their workday's start and									
end times.	28.60%	50.80%	4.50%	10.10%	6.00%	2.14	1.12	1.185	0.155
Average						2.08	1.04		

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Flexible Working Arrangements

The study results presented in Table 2 shows that 81.50% (24.20% + 57.30%) of the respondents disagreed that employees in the hospitals are allowed to share duties with their colleagues, while 13.30% (10.10% + 3.20%) agreed and 5.20% remained neutral. The study also found that 87.80% of respondents were against allowing hospital personnel to utilise telecommuting, while 9.60% were in favour of this and 2.60 were undecided. The results showed that just 10.70% of respondents were in favour of giving workers the flexibility to come in early and leave late, while 82.40% were strongly opposed to this idea. 74.60% were not in favour of hospitals allowing staff to make local arrangements with coworkers when they are unable to work full time, while 21.80% were in favour, 3.60% were unsure, and 3.60% were firmly in favour. The research also showed that 82.30 percent of participants did not believe that compacted work schedules are allowed in the hospitals, while 15.70% agreed and 2.00% remained neutral. It was found that 79.40% disagreed that the hospitals allow employees to choose their workday's start and end times while 16.10% agreed and 4.50% remained neutral. The values of skewness statistics were positive. A positive skewness statistic suggests that the responses to the survey questions about flexible working arrangements were negatively skewed, with most respondents disagreeing with the statements.

	64				64		Standard	Skewness	Std.
Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Deviation	Statistic	Sta. Error
The turnover rate of the employees in the hospital has been low.	30.60%	41.10%	7.70%	12.50%	8.10%	2.26	1.24	0.905	0.155
The completion rate of the duties set for the employees has been	30.0076	41.10%	7.7076	12.30%	8.10%	2.20	1.24	0.905	0.155
satisfactory There is a low absenteeism rate of the	28.60%	39.90%	3.30%	15.30%	12.90%	2.44	1.38	0.717	0.155
employees in the hospital. The attitude of the employees in the hospital	14.50%	65.30%	5.20%	9.40%	5.60%	2.26	1.01	1.355	0.155
has been positive. The performance of the employees has been determined by the implementation of work- life practices such as	29.10%	52.40%	6.00%	9.30%	3.20%	2.05	1.01	1.215	0.155
leave policies Employees stay in this hospital for long because	37.10%	49.70%	2.80%	5.60%	4.80%	1.92	1.03	1.567	0.155
they are valued well.	29.40%	45.60%	8.90%	12.90%	3.20%	2.15	1.08	0.935	0.155
Average						2.18	1.12		

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Employee Satisfaction

The study found that 71.70% (30.60%+41.10%) of the respondents disagreed that the turnover rate of the employees in the hospitals has been low while 20.60% agreed and 7.70% remained neutral. The study found 68.50% disagreed that the completion rate of the duties set for the employees has been satisfactory, while 28.20% and 3.30% remained neutral. In addition, it was found that 79.80% disagreed there is a low absenteeism rate of the employees in the hospitals, while 15% agreed and 5.20% remained neutral. Further, the study found that 81.50% disagreed that the attitude of the employees in the hospitals has been positive, while 12.50% agreed and 6.00% remained neutral. Furthermore, the study found that 86.80% disagreed that the performance of the employees had been determined by the implementation of work-life practices while 10.40% agreed and 2.80% remained neutral. The study results established that 75% disagreed that employees stay in these hospitals for long because they are valued well, while 16.10% agreed and 8.90% remained neutral. A positive skewness statistic in this study suggests that the responses to the survey questions about employee satisfaction were negatively skewed, with most respondents disagreeing with the statements.

4.3 Diagnostic Tests

The variables were checked for normality, multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity to ensure the regression assumptions were met.

Table 4: Normality Test

	Kolmog	Kolmogorov–Smirnov test.				
Variables	Statistic	df	Sig.			
Flexible working arrangements	0.098	248	0.104			
Employee satisfaction	0.101	248	0.179			

The p-values indicated in Table 4 surpass the standard threshold of 0.05, signifying that the collected data adheres to a normal distribution, which is a key factor in many statistical procedures. In essence, a normal distribution ensures that values are symmetrically spread around the mean, reducing skewness and the influence of extreme values. This balanced dispersion reinforces the reliability, validity, and consistency of the results, providing a layer of confidence in the findings. Thus, this adherence to a normal distribution underscores the robustness of the study's outcomes, ensuring they are neither skewed nor distorted by outliers or extreme data points, providing an accurate representation of the overall population.

Table 5: Multicollinearity Test

Variables	VIF
Flexible working arrangements	1.452

Table 5 demonstrates the absence of multicollinearity, as indicated by a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value less than ten for the variables under consideration. This lack of multicollinearity signifies that the assumptions underlying the linear regression model were not violated, thereby ensuring that the results derived from the model are unbiased, efficient, and consistent. This is a critical aspect, as it affirms the statistical validity of the findings and enhances the reliability of the predictions made by the model.

Table 6: Heteroscedasticity Test

Ho: Constant variance		
Variable: Employee satisfaction		
chi2(1)	=	4.09
Prob > chi2	=	0.312

Given that the p-value (0.312) exceeds the commonly used threshold of 0.05, the research determines that the data do not exhibit heteroscedasticity. The absence of heteroscedasticity - a situation in which the variability of the error term of a model is not constant - indicates that the linear regression model was correctly applied. As a result, the study generated reliable and

objective findings. This non-existence of heteroscedasticity confirms the robustness of the model and assures that the correlations observed in the data accurately represent the true relationships.

4.4 Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis, also known as statistical inference, is a fundamental process in data analysis that allows researchers to draw meaningful conclusions and make predictions about a larger population based on a smaller sample of data. By employing statistical techniques, inferential analysis helps uncover patterns, relationships, and trends within the data, enabling researchers to make informed decisions and generate insights beyond the specific observations at hand. Through hypothesis testing, confidence intervals, and regression analysis, among other methods, inferential analysis provides a framework for estimating population parameters and assessing the statistical significance of findings. It is an essential tool used across diverse fields to support decision-making, validate hypotheses, and gain a deeper understanding of the underlying population from limited data samples.

Table 7: Correlation Results

		Employee	Flexible working
		satisfaction	arrangements
	Pearson		
Employee satisfaction	Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Flexible working	Pearson		
arrangements	Correlation	.649**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

Table 7 illustrates a positive and statistically significant correlation between the variables in question. The beta values represent the magnitude and direction of the relationship between these variables. A higher beta value signifies a stronger association between the variables. In this case, all beta values are positive, indicating a direct relationship between the independent variables and employee satisfaction. Furthermore, all p-values are less than 0.05, which signifies that these relationships are statistically significant. These results substantiate the influence of the independent variables on employee satisfaction.

Table 8: Regressions of Coefficients

		andardized efficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	В	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.159	0.103		1.539	0.125
Flexible working arrangements	0.288	0.035	0.366	8.357	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Employee satisfaction

Y = 0.159 + 0.288X

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Where: -

Y= Employee satisfaction

 X_1 = Flexible working arrangements

According to Table 8 data, there is a significant and significant relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee satisfaction (r=.288, p=0.000). The null hypothesis was thus rejected. Hence, flexible working arrangements has a significant effect on employee satisfaction in private hospitals in Nairobi. Kipkoech (2018) claims that flexible working schedules have a significant effect on how effectively workers perform. The devotion of nurses is positively and significantly impacted by flexible work hours, according to Okemwa (2016). Programs for flexible work arrangements are said to boost employee happiness by Jane, Simon, and Amos (2020). Odengo and Kiiru's research demonstrates that the number of working hours, job sharing, family-friendly leave, and programmes all have a significant and positive influence on service delivery (2019). **5.0 Conclusion**

The findings from this study reveal a positive and significant relationship between flexible work schedules and employee satisfaction. The research suggests that a unit increase in flexible working conditions could enhance employee satisfaction in private hospitals in Nairobi City County by 0.288 units, assuming all other factors remain constant. The study further indicates that options such as flexible work arrangements and telecommuting have a positive impact on employee contentment. Flexible scheduling boosts employee satisfaction by fostering a sense of autonomy and reducing stress. Furthermore, these adaptable working conditions promote increased employee engagement and motivation, thus improving overall job satisfaction.

6.0 Recommendations

Private hospitals in Nairobi City County should ensure there is a flexible working arrangement. This can lead to increased job resources, such as reduced stress levels and improved work-life balance, which can positively impact employee satisfaction and productivity. Therefore, organizations should prioritize variable flexible working arrangements to promote employee wellbeing and satisfaction. It is suggested that a study be conducted to examine the effect of employee competency, leadership style, teamwork and work complexity on employee satisfaction. Likewise, another study can be conducted in other counties and also consider including public hospitals.

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