

INFLUENCE OF FLEXIBLE WORKING SCHEDULES ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT OF EMPLOYEES IN HOSPITALS IN NAKURU TOWN, KENYA

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Abstract: Work-life balance policies define how the organization intends to allow employees greater flexibility in their working patterns so that they can balance what they do at work with the responsibilities and interests they have outside work. The study examined the influence of flexible working schedules on organizational commitment of employees in the department of health services in Nakuru, Kenya. Theory underpinning this study was Tri-Dimensional Organizational Commitment Theory. The study employed a descriptive research design. The targeted population of this study was 652 employees from 15 hospitals in Nakuru town. A sampling technique was used where 86 employees were selected to serve as the target population of the study. Questionnaires constructed on a five point likert scale format were used for data collection. The questionnaires were tested for validity and reliability where Cronbach's coefficient Alpha was computed for the instrument. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the collected data. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which included frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics which included regression and correlation analysis. The analyzed data was presented in form of tables accompanied by relevant discussions. The findings indicated that flexible work schedules have a weak positive significant ($r=.237, p=.039$) relationship with organizational commitment. The study concluded that flexible work schedules significantly influence the organizational commitment of employees in public hospitals in Nakuru town. The study recommended the management of the public hospitals should come up with work structures that allow for flexible work schedules. This would enhance the working efficiency of workers since they will be able to plan their time to meet their individual commitments and work commitments.

Keywords: Flex-time, Flexible Career Paths, Flexible Work Schedules, Hospitals, Organizational Commitment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employees are perceived to be among the most important resources for the effective and efficient organization and without the personal efforts and commitment of the human resources; organizations cannot succeed (Messo, 2011). Quality of work life (QWL) is perceived to be critical to retain and attract well qualified personnel and further, people are interested to work in. Work-life balance is especially important when organization has to manage highly technical professional because their high commitment and loyalty is needed for the success of the organization (Azeem & Akhtar, 2014). Employees' work-life balance and their commitment influence the performance and productivity of the organization they work in (Sakthivel & Kamalanabhan, 2011; Sakthivel & Jayakrishnan, 2012).

Work life balance practices are organizational changes designed to reduce work family conflict. These work life balance practices enable employees to be effective in both work and personal roles. The more control an employee has on their lives the more able they are to balance work and family. Iqan lazar (2010) concluded that, a successful balance between work and non work roles are beneficial for both employee and employer. And this balance in work and life domains enhances quality of personal relationship and organizational outcomes.

For the last few decades, employees have been struggling with a growing number of competing demands between their work and private lives. These demands are caused by globalization, technological advances, workplace changes, and demographic changes (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Gregory & Milner, 2009; Kinnunen, Rantanen, Mauno, & Peeters, 2014). The European Working Conditions Survey of 1991 to 2010 showed that in Europe about 20% of the employees had difficulty balancing their paid work and private lives (Stichting, Arbeidsmarkt & Ziekenhuizen, 2014). This leads to high costs for individual employees as well as for organizations (Ahmad, Che & Jamal, 2010). The Netherlands achieved a more positive score compared to Europe since the Netherlands was appointed as the third best country regarding work-life balance (Business Culture, 2014).

Employees' attitudes toward their organizations and life are affected by work-life balance. Work-life balance is especially important when organization has to manage highly technical professional because their high commitment and loyalty is needed for the success of the organization (Azeem & Akhtar, 2014). In case of hospital employees, work-life balance and their commitment influence the performance and productivity of the hospital (Sakthivel & Kamalanabhan, 2011; Sakthivel & Jayakrishnan, 2012). Social exchange theory clearly explains the relationship between work life balance and commitment. This theory supports the possibility that work life balance policies promote employee participation in the organization to the extent that the employees feel obligated to exert "extra effort" in return for these "extra benefits". These are extra role activities that employees perform and are not mandated to do, but are beneficial towards the organization, is a further indication of their organizational commitment (Wijewantha & Sangarandeniya, 2014).

Work-life balance policies define how the organization intends to allow employees greater flexibility in their working patterns so that they can balance what they do at work with the responsibilities and interests they have outside work. The policy indicates how flexible work practices can be developed and implemented. It emphasizes that the number of hours worked must not be treated as a criterion for assessing performance. It sets out guidelines on specific arrangements that can be made such as flexible hours, compressed working week, term-time working contracts, working at home, special leave for parents and carers, career breaks and various kinds of child care Pamellah (2010).

Buerhaus et al. (2015) has identified that excessive working hours within clinical settings for nurses can cause severe depression and imbalance hormones. As a result, the nurses tend to consume more food, smoke frequently and drink alcoholic beverages to eradicate fatigue, stress and sleepiness from their life (Antunes et al., 2010; Spiegel et al., 2009). Different studies have shown that nurses tend to make more errors during work like needle stick injuries and medication errors, which may also cause patient dissatisfaction (Stimpfel et al., 2012; Kunaviktikul et al., 2015; Trinkoff et al., 2011). A study conducted by Sakthivel & Jayakrishnan (2012) has indicated that the work-life balance among nurses is an important phenomenon because of providing healthcare to the patients. Focusing on the work-life balance as the main variable, it has been evaluated from the recent research that job satisfaction and work-life balance in the nursing profession are important factors for the delivery of quality healthcare among patients (Azeem & Altalhi, 2015; Azeem & Akhtar, 2014).

Global Perspectives

Due to the privatization in healthcare sector in India, hospitals are confronting great competition. Hospital employees are also affected by workforce changes due to technological advancement and high rate of competition in the sector. Changes in the work style, work culture, family needs, work demands, are rapidly taking place which eventually increased the population of dual earner couples, single parent families and eldercare responsibilities. Increased pressure at workplace negatively affects the work-life balance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Syed and Nadeem (2014) on their research on the influence of work life balance and job satisfaction on organizational commitment of healthcare employees in India, they noted that respondents have moderate level of perceived work-life balance, job satisfaction and commitment. Work life balance and job satisfaction are important for developing and enhancing organizational commitment among healthcare workers. Healthcare workers are considered to be the image builders for the hospitals whether they are doctors, nurses and other staff. The job of healthcare workers is undoubtedly very challenging and demanding too. Organizations must realize these facts and take necessary steps toward developing work life balance policies in order to enhance job satisfaction and commitment among workers.

A study on employee engagement on Sri Lankan employees by Amarakoon & Wickramasinghe (2010) found that work-life balance has a positive influence on employee engagement. They argue that a proper balance between work and life demands is an antecedent for employee engagement since work-life factors such as caring about employees, placing

employees interests first and flexibility are predictors of engagement. Therefore, within Work-to-Family (WFE), the instrumental path proposes that resources built up in one role foster high performance in the other role (Erdem & Karkose, 2008).

Pocock and Charlesworth (2015) studied the influence of workplace culture on quality employment that supports employees to resolve work and family over the life course in Australia. This study revealed three WLB interventions. Firstly, macro social and economic initiatives for employees that include provision for childcare, aged care, disability care, healthcare, transport, housing, education, social infrastructure, taxation and social security payments. Secondly, the regulation of work which consists of the nature of the employment contract, salary, working hours regulations and leave, the opportunity for an individual and collective voice. Finally, critical interventions occur at the workplace where local enterprise and workplace culture and immediate supervision are the filters through which regulation takes or fails to take effect. This study also revealed that workplace cultures are essential as a determinant in ensuring employee quality that accommodates care. In regard to the flexibility in working hours, the study discovered that intense workloads and long working hours impedes flexibility. Employees with a higher level of skills and more senior positions are also challenged by this situation. Interestingly, this study also revealed that an organisational culture could assist employees to have flexible working hours. It requires organisational practices that carefully manage workloads, staffing levels and job design. A culture that supports flexibility is important because even when flexibility has been officially implemented, access is frequently obstructed when workloads become excessive.

Furthermore, Lawson et al. (2013) examined the work-family spill over among hotel managers in the US. The study revealed that work conditions which demanded employees to work longer hours with higher organisational expectations resulted in engaging a highly intense emotional labour and put employees at risk of experiencing more negative work-family spill over. Moreover, the study also found that women, employees with children at home and younger adults reported less stressful work conditions. This suggested that these groups of employees may be choosing work with minimal demands to balance time work and non-work activities. It also suggested that parents with children at home preferred to work in a department with standard working hours and women preferred work with less contact with clients to reduce emotional burden.

Deery and Jago (2015) studied the concepts of talent management, WLB and retention strategies in the hospitality industry. It revealed that WLB practices in organisations are a significant predictor in effectively managing and retaining employees. High workload intensity and role overload can lead to emotional imbalance, stress, exhaustion, burnout as well as work and family conflict. A culture that promotes WLB could increase job commitment, job satisfaction and decrease turnover intentions. Several retention strategies also discovered include, the image of the organisation and industry, pay level, as well as career development and management opportunities. In regard to gender preferences in employment opportunity: women prefer to work in an organisation with less work-life conflict and higher job promotion opportunities, whereas men prefer a career with higher job clarity.

Jamieson et al. (2013), who studied nurse perceptions of WLB in New Zealand. The study suggested that work shifts and rosters are needed for nurses to establish and maintain balanced lifestyles. Most respondents to the study stated that high workloads sometimes caused exhaustion and they need non-work days to recover before returning to work. They also identified the importance of both work and life, balanced time with family and friends and time for leisure activities and study. The nurses further stated that fulfilling family responsibilities and accomplishing work goals at the same time was the key for job satisfaction and overall happiness.

Regional Perspectives

Work-life balance is a harmonious or satisfying arrangement between an individual's work obligations and his/her personal life. Work-life balance is a key concern for the 21st century employees due to the increasing complexity of modern life (Amarakoon & Wickramasinghe, 2010). Orogbu et.al, (2015) investigated work life balance and employee performance in selected commercial banks in Lagos state. The problem identified in this study is poor working organizational culture in the commercial banks which may not encourage various types of work life balance practices. He found out that work life balance philosophy is associated with real benefits for an organization. This is because the social and psychological life of every employee needs to be rightly put in check for them to be an asset and not just an employee that is used to carry out day to day operations of the organization. He also established that employees are happier when they are able to balance their work life demands. Management also experience improve relationship with employees.

Management support for employees work life balance fosters a good relationship between the work force and management which improve effective communication in the organization. Therefore it is important for employer to look for better ways in improving employee performance. This can be done by helping them prioritize their work and life activities. When this is achieved, employee is motivated to render their service efficiently and effectively.

In Ghana, work-life balance at Zenith Bank is bedevilled with a lot of challenges which threaten the effectiveness of such programmes. For instance benefits from work-life balance programmes are not evenly distributed among employees, some employees indeed complained about favouritism. Another significant challenge is the slow response rate to requests for certain reliefs by employees. The approval process for requests by employees is unduly long and time consuming; threatening the effectiveness of work-life balance programmes at Zenith Bank. The study revealed that employees are not involved in designing work-life balance programmes at Zenith Bank and from this it was found that there is no direct relationship between work-life balance and productivity at Zenith Bank. The study recommended that employees should be given the opportunity to enjoy some flexibility in order to reduce excessive stress. A reduced stress will boost employee productivity (Opoku, 2012).

Ojo, Salau and Falola (2014) investigated the concept of work-life balance policies and practices in three sectors of the Nigerian Economy namely the Banking, Educational and Power Sector. The types of Work Life Balance initiatives available in the three sectors were explored and the barriers to implementation of the Work Life Balance initiatives were identified. The findings reveal that there is diversity in terms of how respondents perceive the concept of Work-Life Balance. Also there was a wide gap between corporate Work Life Balance practices and employees' understanding of the concept; the paper suggests some policy implications which would aid the implementation of Work Life Balance policies in the studied sectors.

Local Perspectives

Work life balance is a very important phenomenon that is of great concern to various employees in both private and public sector. It goes beyond prioritizing the work role and one's personal life. It also affects the social, psychological, economical and mental well being of the individual. All these is been reflected in the output of the individual, which affects his or her performance in the work place on the long run. Work life balance has implication on employee attitudes, behaviours, wellbeing as well as organizational effectiveness (Signh, 2013).

On the relationship between flexible work arrangement and commitment of nurses in public hospital in Kenya, Okemwa (2016) established that despite availability of flexible work arrangements in the public hospitals to enhance nurses' commitment, the quality of services in most public hospitals remains wanting. He revealed that nurses who experience higher levels of work arrangement tend to have higher commitment. Also, employees with greater control over work schedules are more likely to show increased engagement, commitment, retention and job satisfaction. He argued that flexible work arrangements enable employees to manage their work and family responsibilities harmoniously and that work arrangements where employees' participation is incorporated shows higher levels of concentration, and performance. It is therefore evident that flexible work arrangement is very significant in enhancing employees' commitment, quality service delivery in the public hospitals and thus client satisfaction. The study concludes that there is a strong relationship between work arrangement and commitment of nurses in public hospitals in Kenya. The study therefore recommends that management in public hospitals in Kenya to develop flexible work arrangements practices that suit individual needs of the nurses and implement them in order to greatly enhance their commitment.

Ng'ang'a (2010) carried out a study on international non-governmental organizations in the health sector in Kenya which recommends the adoption of quality WLB practices. The proposed WLB initiatives include compressed work schedules, alternative work schedules, job sharing, childcare facilities, wellness programmes and telecommuting. The study noted an increase in employee motivation and productivity in the organizations that adopted these WLB initiatives. Findings from the study concluded that organizations mainly provide the temporary part-time, compressed work schedules such as, employees an extra hour every day in order to have one afternoon off and phased return from maternity leave for special reasons such as multiple births or a child with birth. This shows commitment to enhance employee well-being by encouraging and enabling them to balance their work and personal lives by using "best practice".

Inadequate work life balance is a problem that poses a big risk to workers well being, their performance as well as the organizational performance. Many employees often have difficulties in attempting to balance employment responsibilities with their social life. Given the benefits of work-life balance practices and the potential to help improve employee job

performance in terms of increased organizational commitment, job satisfaction, reduction on the turnover rate, ECO Bank has introduced programs to assist the employees in achieving a balanced work life which include; flexible working hours, employee assistance programs and leave programs. However there is no study which has been carried out to determine the success of the work-life balance programs at the bank. It is against this background that the study sought to determine the effects of organizational work-life balance programs on employee job performance at ECO Bank Kenya. (Kamau, et al. 2013).

Further, Wambui et.al (2017) on their research paper on effects of work life balance on employees' performance in institutions of higher learning: A case study of Kabarak University, they investigated that work family priorities conflict affected the performance of employees. Employees of Kabarak University opined that work and family priorities conflicted and this affected their performance. The employees generally felt work life/family conflict was an important source of stress and family conflict, work-family conflicts is linked to labour market decisions, work outcomes like labour dissatisfaction, high turnover intention and low productivity and lack of commitment are related to misplaced work family priorities, balanced work–family priorities leads to a motivated workforce and high employees morale, work life conflict was major source of stress, work life/work family conflict impaired their overall well being and productivity and lack of commitment being related to misplaced work family priorities. The study, therefore, concluded that work life balance is an important aspect of work and family which should be embraced to improve employees' performance. The study therefore recommended that organization should come up with ways of balancing what employees do in their jobs and how they cater for their family needs to reduce the imbalance and thus improve their performance.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In today's competitive environment, it is imperative that all organizations create a work environment that fosters growth and development (Umer & Akram, 2011). Experience has shown that the performance of health care organisations depend on the knowledge, skills, and motivation of individual employees. However improving the productivity and service delivery of the health care workers in order to enhance efficiency in health interventions remain a challenge in the health care organisations. Cases of industrial actions or medical strikes have become a major occurrence in today's medical world. Industrial actions in Kenya have become a common place by health workers raising grievances about their working conditions. Amidst this actions, the question of employee commitment among health workers come to the fore. According to Nnabuiife (2009), organizations have life and it is the employees in the organization that breathe life into organizations, therefore, every organization must endeavour to take the welfare of its human resources very serious. Lubna (2013) found that the merger of professional life with the personal life resulted to both positive and negative impact. Lubna maintains further that, employees lack in concentration because of the personal responsibilities and official duties. Similarly, in the personal life, they are worried about their job duties and as a result they neither enjoy their personal life nor can have excellence in their professional life, therefore, to maintain the balance is quite a problem but unavoidable necessity. This study seeks to establish how work life balance issues influence the organizational commitment of employees.

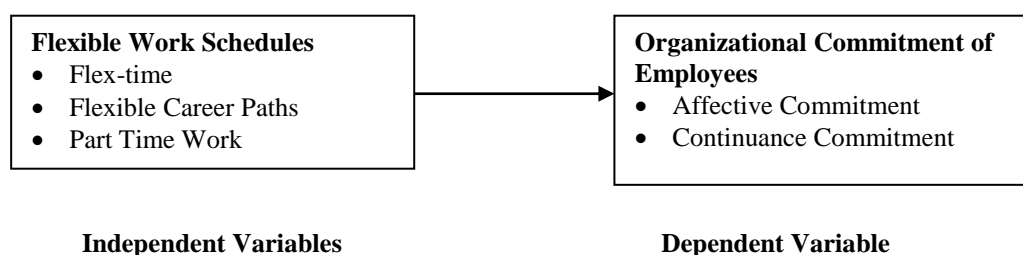
III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to examine the influence of flexible working schedules on organizational commitment of employees in hospitals in Nakuru Town, Kenya.

IV. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Flexible work schedules have no significant influence on organizational commitment of employees in Hospitals in Nakuru Town, Kenya.

V. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



VI. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Tri-Dimensional Organizational Commitment Theory

Tri-dimensional theory was fronted by Meyer and Allen (1997) to conceptualize organizational commitment in three dimensions namely, affective, continuance and normative commitments. These dimensions describe the different ways of organizational commitment development and the implications for employees' behaviour. This theory of commitment has been used by researchers to predict important employee outcomes, including turnover and citizenship behaviours, job performance, absenteeism and tardiness (Meyer et al, 2002). Studies on Tri-Dimensional Organizational Commitment Theory have provided strong evidence that affective and normative commitment is positively related and continuance commitment is negatively connected with organizational outcomes such as performance and citizenship behavior (Hackett, Bycio, and Handsdoff, 1994; Shore and Wayne, 1993). Further research also provides evidence that, employees with higher levels of affective commitment to their work, their job and career exhibit higher levels of continuance and normative commitments (Cohen, 1996).

According to Ayeni and Phopoola (2007), Continuance commitment - costs associated with leaving the organization; and normative commitment – perceived obligation to remain with the organization have implications for the continuing participation of the individual in the organization. Kim (2005) found that Public employees' commitment is primarily based on their emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in their public organizations. Similarly, Romzek (1990) found that employee commitment is based on affective attachment to the work organization.

VII. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Flexible Working Schedules

Flexible schedules are perceived to help reduce the chronic pressures imposed on workers by time and role conflicts that arise when work and non-work responsibilities overlap in the same block of time. Flexible work schedules are being implemented by organizations in certain sectors as either or both a prized employee benefit to promote employee retention and as a device to curb forms of employee withdrawal, such as absenteeism, tardiness, quits and on-the job leisure. Flexibility is thus becoming an ever more important tool for improving individual, organizational and national productivity, including indirectly by attempting to curb various employee misbehaviours (Lonnie, 2012).

Flexible work arrangements usually comprehends to organizational initiatives which enhance employees' flexibility on the time and place where work has to be accomplished, and also various policies exerting influence on the number of hours worked. Economic, technological, social and family changes have encouraged the introduction of flexible working arrangements. The flexibility arrangements includes; flex-time, absence autonomy, compressed work weeks, reduced schedule, tele-work, extra vacation days, limited schedule of meetings (meetings cannot be scheduled too late at the end of the day), flexible holidays and keeping with the schedule (employees work the mandatory 8 hours /day and do not extend their schedules longer) (Sandra, 2015). Mungania et al., (2016) investigated the extent to which flexible hours and flex place arrangements resulted in benefits for individuals (more satisfactory work family balance) and organizations (longer work hours). They reported that given a reasonable work week which they considered to be between 40 and 50 hours) per week, employees who perceived flexibility in the timing and location of their work, had less difficulty with work-family balance.

Moreover, Mungania et al., (2016) reported that employees with perceived flexibility in the timing and location of work could work longer hours be for work- family balance was perceived to be a problem. From a business perspective, Mungania et al., (2016) results suggested that given a heavy workload perceived flexibility in the timing of work enables employees to work an extra day a week i.e. 60 hour a week, compared to 52 hours without flexible hours. The extent to which individuals have control and flexibility is a critical factor in the reduction of work family conflict. Flexible work arrangements are connected to a number of positive outcomes for employees who access them including better mental health and reductions in stress, burnout, turnover and absenteeism and increases in retention, loyalty, job satisfaction, innovation, creativity and productivity (Galinsky, Bond, Sakai, Kim & Giuntoli, 2008).

Organizations often offer flexible work arrangements with the goal of facilitating positive outcomes for both organizations and employees; examining whether they actually do result in positive outcomes is important (Casper & Harris, 2008). As a result, scholars have also become interested in flexible work arrangements and a number of researches concerning outcomes of flexible work arrangements have been conducted. For example, academics provided strong

evidence that usage of flexible work arrangements leads to higher organizational commitment, job satisfaction, enhanced group dynamics, higher performance, higher organizational citizenship behaviour, and lower intent to leave the organization (Warner & Hausdorf, 2009).

According to Jasmine, Nasina and Muhammad (2016), the availability of flexible working options are more in demand because there are more dual-earner couples, women and single-parent families, as well as those who have geriatric care responsibilities, in the workplace. Under flexible working conditions, employees are assisted in their control of how they can work in order to mitigate the effects of work stress over their work. Waithira (2015) perceived flexibility in working policies, which includes the ability to manage the demand of work and family matters, were strongly related to higher levels of organizational commitment. Meanwhile, other studies found that the availability of the flexibility working arrangements was differentially related to outcomes of affective commitment as well as work-to-family conflict (Yu & Wang, 2017). Amy et.al, (2008) also concluded that flexible work practices and policies are an indicator of greater employee commitment with lower intentions to leave the company

According to Hill et al., (2010), flex-time assists employees to manage their work and family responsibilities by allowing them to reduce work-family conflict and to improve functioning and performance at work and at home. Similarly, according to Dalcos and Daley, (2009), flex time allows employees to choose when, where and for how long they engage in work-related tasks. Flextime usually means that each working day has a core of six hours surrounded by a 'flexibility band' in which employees may exercise their discretion (Muchiti, 2015). Ng'ang'a (2010) carried out a study on international non-governmental organizations in the health sector in Kenya which recommends the adoption of quality WLB practices. The proposed WLB initiatives include compressed work schedules, alternative work schedules, job sharing, childcare facilities, wellness programmes and telecommuting. The study noted an increase in employee motivation and productivity in the organizations that adopted these WLB initiatives. Flexible working schedules positively influence employee productivity at the Judiciary.

Flexible work hours are designed to keep employee's motivated in a competitive business environment. The flexible schedules permits workers to vary their start and finish times provided a certain number of hours are worked. This can allow them to meet family or personal commitments/emergencies (enable employees to respond to both predictable and unpredictable circumstances), during the day or to reduce their commuting time by starting and ending work before or after the rush hour. When implemented with both employer and employee interests in mind, flexible works schedules can increase efficiency, work focus, and empower individuals to self-manage work time (Wulfert, 2010).

Njiru (2016), on his study on the influence of flexible work practices on employee performance in Public sector: A case of ministry of interior and coordination of National Government, Embu County. The study established that the institution did have flexible work practices policy in place. The study further revealed that compressed work hours influenced employee performance, job satisfaction and enhanced staff morale in a very small percentage. However, job sharing and flexi time were being used by majority and influenced employee performance, job satisfaction, staff morale, reduced absenteeism and contributed to cost effectiveness and efficiency in a big percentage. The study recommends that the Institution should provide other forms of flexible practices, for instance, shift, part-time and weekend work.

On his study on influence of flexible work arrangement on organization performance in the banking industry in Kenya, Mungania, Waiganjo and Kihoro (2016) found out that, work place flexibility initiatives are increasingly seen as a critical component of a result-driven workplace. More and more organizations are recognizing how flexible work arrangements can be used to meet their business objectives and facilitate employee effectiveness on and off the job. The study concluded that consideration of flexible work arrangement aspects that pertains to employees can greatly influence organizational performance in banks in Kenya. Child care issues, dependent care and employees having more time with the family had a positive and significant linear relationship on the measures of organizational performance which were customer satisfaction, target standards, employee satisfaction. The study recommends that managers should provide flexible work arrangements considerations such as giving employees flexibility on when to begin and end work as long as they meet the target since this influences organizational performance.

Organizational Commitment of Employees

Organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. It is willingness remain in the organization due to feelings like attachment or loyalty. It consists of three factors namely; a belief in and acceptance of the values of the organization, a strong willingness to put in effort for the organization and the desire to remain with the organization (Kahugu, 2013). Employees who are committed to their jobs

and organizations exhibit positive attitudes, and are ready to contribute ideas, are innovative and ready to go an extra mile in their contribution to the organizations' goals achievement. Most of the time when these employees move, they migrate to competing organizations with the knowledge and trade secrets acquired from their former employers thereby creating an even more critical situation for the latter Kyule (2013).

Commitment occurs when individuals identify with and extend effort towards organizational goals and values. Mullins (2009) view employee commitment as encapsulating by giving all of one-self while at work. They also state that employee commitment entails using time constructively, attention to detail and making that extra effort. Employees today are increasingly self-assured of their value to employers, and would consciously choose to work for those organizations that meet the above workplace expectations. Organizations that demonstrate commitment to employees will attract and retain the desired workforce and will ultimately win the battle for the workforce share (Madigan et al., 2009). Dixit and Bhati (2012) stated that the commitment of employees is an important issue because it may be used to predict employee's performance, absenteeism and other behaviour.

Organizational commitment plays an important role in its influence on employee's attitudes and behaviours in the workplace. High organizational commitment reduces employees' intention to leave the organization, improves employee punctuality, and promotes organizational citizenship behaviours and attitudes towards organizational change and performance (Mququlwa, 2008). Employees with higher levels of organizational commitment internalize strategic goals and values of the organization and direct their efforts towards organizational objectives (Meyer et al., 2010). With changing times, firms are faced with need to maximize on organizational integration, flexibility and quality service. Employee competence and commitment is therefore of decisive importance for any organization to be able to compete in quality and go along with changing times by adapting to these changes. The firm therefore must attract, select, train and retain qualified people to meet these changing needs (Amadi, 2014).

Organizational commitment has resulted in three dimensions, namely: affective commitment, which is related to emotional attachment of employees with their organization and is more or less related to the demographic characteristics and work experience (Tahere, Zahra, Fateme, & Asma, 2012); normative commitment relates to the employees' feeling of obligation towards their organization or in other words, value of loyalty shown by employees to the organization; while continuance commitment is related to the costs – direct and indirect – perceived by an employee for leaving the organization (Akhtar et.al, 2013).

A study by Norton (2009) examined the relationship between work life balance and the components of organizational commitment. The study concluded that there is positive correlation between affective commitment and perceived work life balance and the strongest correlation found to work life balance perceptions was that of worker identification with the goals of the organization. The study showed that the individual's goals should be clear and suggested to encourage workers to align personal goals with career related goals. Deery and Jago (2009) examined the key issues related to work life balance in relation to the tourism industry. Tourism industry is a labour intensive industry that usually faces problems of long and unsocial hours. Low pay and low status are higher in hospitality industry than in any other industry due to which skill shortages, labour turnover are common in this industry.

In their previous research, Deery and Jago (2009) found that there are three key areas that relate to employee turnover in the tourism industry. First was employee job attitude where the debate was whether organizational commitment or job satisfaction has the greatest influence on employee turnover. Second was employee's attitude to leave the organization that includes job burnout and exhaustion. In conclusion it was found that long and unsocial hours, level of stress, insecurity, role ambiguity, job autonomy and time pressures with home life pressures and psycho symptoms are the variables that negatively influence work life balance. Sakthivel and Jayakrishnan (2013) conducted a study on the work life balance and organizational commitment for nurses. For the study 328 nurses from public and private hospitals were selected and with the use of descriptive statistics and correlation analysis it was concluded that work life interferes with family at very high level where as family life interfered less with work life. The study also showed that nurses experienced that better work life balance motivated them to more organizational commitment and better performance.

According to Brown, et al (2011) high employee commitment towards organization increases the job satisfaction among employees, job performance, overall productivity, sales and also high employee commitment decreases employee turnover, intention to leave and absenteeism. Igella (2014) study reveals that organizational factors like dependability,

social processes and organizational climate enhance individual factors to employee commitment. Bashir and Ramay (2008) stated substantial positive association among work-life policies, career opportunities and organizational commitment in IT professionals which means that organizational policies with more family friendly environment leads toward organizational commitment and career development.

VIII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted a descriptive research design that was unrestricted which as defined by (Devin, 2015) is an attempt to explore a topic which has not been fully researched. A suitable research design for a study is one that minimizes bias, maximizes the reliability of data to be collected and in line with the purpose of the study. The target population of this study consisted of nurses working in hospitals in Nakuru town. There are fifteen (15) hospitals in Nakuru town with a total of 652 (Nakuru County Ministry of Health 2018) nurses. These formed the target population for the study. Simple random sampling was applied where employees were selected as respondents of the study. The study used structured questionnaires to gather data. Questionnaires were tested for validity and reliability. The findings were coded based on the variables under study. Tables and other graphical presentations as appropriate were used to present the data collected for ease of understanding and analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analysis, with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) IBM software. Descriptive statistics included the mean, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages. Regression analysis was used to establish the influence of work life balance on organizational commitment of employees in public hospitals at 95% level of significance.

IX. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

A total of 86 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents for them to fill. Out of the 86 questionnaires, 76 of them were properly filled and returned. This represented a response rate of 88.4%. A response rate below 51% is considered inadequate in social sciences (Pinsonneault & Kraemer, 1993). Babbie (1990) suggested that a response rate of 60% is good; 70% is very good.

Descriptive statistics

Flexible Work Schedule

The researcher sought to establish the perceptions of respondents regarding flexible work schedules in hospitals. The percentages, means and standard deviations were computed to provide insight in this respect. The findings were as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Flexible Work Schedules

	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
My hospital has introduced flex time to balance family work and organization's long work hours	27.6	51.3	14.5	6.6	0	4.00	.833
Working part time has enabled me to easily have work life balance	43.4	35.5	11.8	7.9	1.3	4.12	.993
My hospital has introduced flexible working time which has helped me reduce work stress	27.6	51.3	14.5	5.3	1.3	3.99	.872
Flexible work schedules have enabled me to improve my performance in the hospital	32.9	50.0	5.3	10.5	1.3	4.03	.966
I have managed my work and family responsibility due to flex time	23.7	59.2	11.8	3.9	1.3	4.00	.800
Flexible work schedules has helped me increase my working efficiency and focus in management of time	30.3	52.6	9.2	7.9	0	4.05	.847
Am rarely absent from work as a result of flexible working schedules	27.6	55.3	5.3	6.6	5.3	3.93	1.037
Valid N (listwise)	76						

Findings indicated that majority of the respondents comprising of 78.9% strongly and/or agreed that the hospital has introduced flex time to balance family work and organization's long work hours. This had a mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of .833. Further, respondents agreed that working part time has enabled them to easily have work life balance where 43.4% of the respondents strongly agreed while 35.5% of them agreed. This registered a mean of 4.12 and a standard deviation of .993. In addition, a mean of 3.99 and a standard deviation of .872 were recorded where respondents

agreed that the hospital has introduced flexible working time which has helped them reduce work stress. 51.3% and 27.6% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively. 50.0% of the respondents agreed while 32.9% of them strongly agreed that flexible work schedules have enabled them to improve their performance in the hospital. This aspect had a mean of 4.03 and a standard deviation of .966. Additionally, respondents agreed that (M=4.00, SD=.800) they have managed their work and family responsibility due to flex time. 59.2% and 23.7% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively. Respondents agreed that flexible work schedules have helped them increase their working efficiency and focus in management of time. 52.6% and 30.3% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively registering a mean of 4.05 and a standard deviation of .847. Finally, respondents agreed that they are rarely absent from work as a result of flexible working schedules. 82.9% of the respondents strongly and/or agreed recording a mean of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 1.037.

Organizational Commitment of Employees

Descriptive statistics regarding organizational commitment of employees were established. The findings were as presented in table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Organizational Commitment of Employees

	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
I strongly ascribe to the goals and values of our hospital	42.1	35.5	17.1	5.3	0	4.14	.890
I feel motivated to exert more effort for the betterment of our hospital services	32.9	43.4	14.5	5.3	3.9	3.96	1.026
I feel that I should leave the hospital job	13.2	10.5	23.7	18.4	34.2	2.50	1.400
This hospital is the best place I have ever worked	26.3	27.6	25.0	13.2	7.9	3.51	1.238
Given an opportunity I would take another job away from the hospital job	18.4	10.5	25.0	26.3	19.7	2.82	1.373
I feel that members of this hospital are like a family to me	27.6	32.9	27.6	6.6	5.3	3.71	1.105
Am always searching for a better job opportunity than the one I have	28.9	17.1	13.2	19.7	21.1	3.13	1.544
Valid N (listwise)	76						

Findings established that respondents agreed that they strongly ascribe to the goals and values of their hospital. 77.6% of the respondents strongly and/or agreed registering a mean of 4.14 and a standard deviation of .890. Further, respondents agreed that they feel motivated to exert more effort for the betterment of their hospital services where 43.4% of the respondents agreed and 32.9% of them strongly agreed recording a mean of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 1.026. On the other hand, respondents disagreed with the statement that they feel that they should leave the hospital job. 34.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed while 18.4% of them disagreed. This aspect had a mean of 2.50 and a standard deviation of 1.400. Further, 53.9% of the respondents strongly and/or agreed that their hospital is the best place they have ever worked. This registered a mean of 3.51 and a standard deviation of 1.238. Also respondents disagreed that (M=2.82, SD=1.373) given an opportunity they would take another job away from the hospital job. 26.3% and 19.7% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. In addition, majority of them agreed that they feel that members of the hospital are like a family to them where 32.9% of the respondents agreed while 27.6% of them strongly disagreed registering a mean of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 1.105. On the other hand, respondents were undecided whether they are always searching for a better job opportunity than the one they have. 46.0% of the respondents strongly and/or agreed, 13.2% of them were undecided while 40.8% of the respondents strongly and/or disagreed. This had a mean of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 1.544.

Correlation Analysis

The Relationship between Flexible Work Schedules and Organizational Commitment of Employees

The study sought to establish the relationship between flexible work schedules and organizational commitment of employees. The composite means of flexible work schedules were correlated with the composite means of organizational commitment of employees. The findings from the analysis were as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlations between Flexible Work Schedules and Organizational Commitment

		Flexible Work Schedules
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.237*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.039
	N	76

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

It was observed that there existed a weak positive but significant ($r=.237$, $P=.039$) relationship between flexible work schedules and organizational commitment. The study therefore observed that flexible work schedules were important in determining organizational commitment of employees. The findings were in tandem with Ng'ang'a (2010) who in his study on international non-governmental organizations in the health sector in Kenya recommended the adoption of quality work life balance practices. The proposed work life balance initiatives include compressed work schedules, alternative work schedules, job sharing, childcare facilities, wellness programs and telecommuting. The study noted an increase in employee motivation and productivity in the organizations that adopted these work life balance initiatives. Flexible working schedules positively influence employee productivity at the health sector.

X. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions of the Study

The study concluded that flexible work schedule significantly influences the organizational commitment of employees in Nakuru town Kenya. Findings indicated that flexible work schedules were positively correlated with employees' organizational commitment. Respondents indicated that flexible work schedules enable employees achieve work life balance and also reduce work stress. They also observed that flexible work schedules enables the workers to increase their working efficiency and focus in management of time. Hence, flexible work schedules play a significant role in determining the commitment of employees in hospitals in Nakuru, Kenya.

Recommendations of the Study

It was recommended that the hospital management should work out a structure of working that would provide for flexible work schedules within the hospitals. This will in turn help employees to balance their time between their individual commitment and work commitment. Findings demonstrated that flexible work schedules play a key role in determining the commitment of employees in public hospitals in Nakuru town. Thus the study recommends that the hospitals focus on improving the working schedules to make them more flexible as these increases the commitment of the employees. Flexible schedules help an organization to improve the working efficiency since the employees are able to properly plan for their time to accomplish all their obligations.

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