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Influence of Work-Life Balance on Employee's Performance in Tanzania Private Health Sector

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Abstract

Purpose: This study was aimed at examining the influence of work-life balance on employees' performance in private hospitals of Tanzania. The motive behind this study is the increase in employees' complexity to balance the time an employee spends at work and that he/she spend on personal welfare like family, religious, and social concerns. The study intended to achieve three specific objectives focusing on examining; the effect of supervisory support on employees' performance, the effect of task autonomy on employee's performance, and the influence of work schedule flexibility on employee's performance.

Methodology: Data was collected using structured questionnaire from 113 respondents who were randomly selected from the selected private hospital in Rorya district, Mara region of Tanzania. The categories of respondents include; Doctors, nurses, dentists, laboratory technicians, physicians, and administration. Data were analyzed using linear regression analysis.

Findings: the findings revealed that; supervisory support, task autonomy, and work schedule flexibility significantly and positively influence employees' performance. This is to say that, work-life balance has a significant contribution to employee's performance.

Originality: the study found that although employment life and personal life are separate, factors in one aspect can affect the other. This is in line with spillover theory that underscores the reciprocal relationship between work-related demands and family roles, where excessive work demands can strain family life and vice versa

Keywords - work-life balance, supervisory support, task autonomy, work schedule flexibility, and employee performance.

Introduction

Work-life balance is a situation whereby employees need to equally balance the demands of work and demands for their personal affairs (Hebbar, et al., 2019). It entails the extent of control to which employees balance their working hours compared to the number of hours spent beyond the office. The performance of health sectors depends on the well-being of health workers, which in turn depends on numerous other factors ((Austin-Egole, 2019). For example, if health workers such as doctors cannot have enough time with their families, it may lead to poor performance at work. The employers therefore should ensure work-life balance for health professional by giving them working shifts so that they can be able to have additional time to deal with their personal affairs out of work (Thangamalai, 2022). The economic capacity of a nation does not guarantee a better work-life balance. For instance, although the United States ranks the highest in terms of GDP, it's among countries with poor work-life balance ranking 29th out of 36 advanced nations (Doerer, 2018). A comfortable employee has a greater chance to work efficiently compared to a restless worker. Hence, good work-life balance is essential to increase efficiency (Shivakumar & Pujar, 2020).

Numerous African nations grapple with inadequate work-life balance, particularly evident within sectors like healthcare. For example, economic hardships compel employees to exert themselves extensively in pursuit of higher earnings, supporting both immediate families and extended kin. Additionally, the inclination towards refraining from leisure activities, such as vacations, leads to prolonged working hours denying an enjoyment on the family side (Okafor, 2022).



Despite the formidable challenges impeding the advancement of work-life balance in African countries, it remains imperative for governments to confront these issues. By doing so, governments can meaningfully contribute to the betterment of the lives of individuals residing within these regions (Hebbar et al., 2019).

In Tanzania, a concept for work-life balance has become popular due to awareness of general public in recent years in response to change of lifestyle and company's involvement into its employee's family and personal affairs. Some health institutions are applying this inform of shifts, on-call duties, and job sharing. This has been a relief to employees to some extent and has mostly been evident among health personnel (Hooja, 2018). Despite the number of research work concerning WLB, individual still struggle to balance work and life (Mwangi, Boinett, Tumwet, & Bowen, 2016). Therefore, the current study aspires to investigate on the influence of employee's performance in Tanzania Private health sector.

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Literature Review

Theoretical Literature Review

The Spill-over theory was deliberately adopted due to its comprehensive elucidation of the variables central to the current study, namely supervisory support, task autonomy, and work schedule flexibility. The Spill-over theory intricately expounds the connections between work-life balance and employee performance. Bello & Ibrahim (2020) established that, although employment life and personal life are separate, factors in one aspect can affect the other. The effects can either be negative or positive. Effects are termed negative when experience from one aspect for instance employment life affects the other aspect that is personal life in negative way and vice versa. Thus, family and work are two fields that cannot be separated because what happens at home, affect what happens in the office. Individuals have a tendency to transform attitudes and emotions from one area to another. Hence, when a person experiences bad emotions, especially from the family, it may affect his work performance in the office, in case he failed to manage those emotions (Nortje, 2021). In relation to this study, it's clear that work-life balance plays an integral role to influence performance of health workers in Tanzania's private health sector. Hence, it is important for respective employers to create conducive environment for health workers such as giving them enough time to spend with their families so that they can have positive emotions to significantly improve performance. The spillover

theory serves as a lens through which to assess the ramifications of the work domain upon the home domain. This theory particularly delves into the transfer of work-induced emotions from employees to individuals within their home environment, with a specific focus on partners. The conveyance of employee well-being can be explicated through two primary mechanisms: spillover and crossover (Shi & Wang, 2020).

The practical implications of applying the spillover theory to this study are noteworthy. Employers should adopt interventions not only aimed at alleviating conflicts between family demands and work roles, such as implementing child care programs or offering flexible work schedules, but also focus on practices that impact the working conditions including job demands and resources. Striking a harmonious work-life balance between the two domains, work and family is an increasingly significant concern in contemporary times. Henceforth, research efforts have been directed towards comprehending the detrimental effects of an imbalanced work-life equation on employees' health and well-being, as well as its repercussions for their families (Lakshmypriya & Krishna, 2016).

The endeavor to balance responsibilities at both work and in personal life is particularly pronounced. This holds true, especially for women, who don't perceive their professional commitments as a justification to compromise their engagement in family responsibilities, household chores, and social activities (Khalid, 2023). This premise underpins the investigation into the influence of supervisory support, task autonomy, and work schedule flexibility. These variables exhibit a positive relationship with enhanced efficiency, timely service delivery, improved service quality, and a reduction in client complaints. Collectively, these aspects contribute to the overall enhancement of employee performance (Lee & Yun, 2021). In particular, this holds significance for health workers, including women, who resist allowing their professional responsibilities to hinder their engagement in familial, household, and societal obligations.

Empirical Literature Review

Supervisory Support and Employee Performance

Supervisory support can be in different form including coaching, creating motivating environment for employees, and ability to retain employees (Zafar, 2019). Supervisory support occurs when supervisors take responsibilities to support their employees to assign them with tasks that do not deny them their right to handle personal affairs (Zahra & Hamid, 2019). Supervisors, who dedicate time to provide coaching and trainings to workers, motivate them to learn with a desire to contribute into the prosperity of the organization. However, some organizations hastate to offer expensive training fearing that the trained personnel might leave the organization and seek green pasture elsewhere (Park & Kim, 2018). Despite this exit fear, hospitals must play a significant role to coordinate trainings to health personnel so that they can be able to deliver at required standard.

Supervisory support in work-family/life is a sign that employers are concern with the employees not only because they work for their offices, but because they are also sympathetic with their personal affair, and once this is positively perceived, employees' morale to perform increase (Nabyonga et al, 2019). Providing robust supervisory support, particularly by enabling employees to engage in career development through diverse training initiatives, holds the potential to markedly enhance employee performance and bolster their competitive edge within the health sector (Kumar & Msuya, 2022). This proactive approach not only contributes to improved organizational performance but also fortifies their position relative to other service providers. Moreover, employee training initiatives yield the capacity to substantially augment a company's revenue generation. For instance, as highlighted by Rodriguez & Walters, (2017), organizations that annually allocate an average of \$1,575 per employee towards training and development witnessed a notable 24% growth in gross profit and an impressive 218% surge in revenue per employee. The author further contends that fostering a positive work-life balance among employees not only amplifies their commitment but also enhances the organization's capacity to retain its workforce, thereby ensuring their optimal effectiveness within the competitive market landscape.

According to Haas (2019), the support of supervisors towards personal affairs of employees can take numerous forms including; paying attention to the families of employees, commit to support personal desires of employees, display a sense of respect to the efforts made by employees in the office, desire to create mutual understanding with employees, showing sympathy and sensitivity upon personal challenges facing employees. For instance, if employees appear to have family conflict that distract his/her ability to perform, employers should take appropriate measures to support them towards such moments, maybe by giving them time off to deal with their personal affairs on provide them with psychological support, especially through consultation services (Haas, 2019). Moreover, McIlroy, Parker & McKimmie (2021), remarked that supervisor support is relevant when employees are able to receive response to their questions on time. Unanswered questions reduce employees' psychological motivation to work as well as their effectiveness to perform work. More so, Sein, Mugo & Kiama (2018), argued that, if supervisor communicates with their employees on non-work issues, it can help to encounter challenges at workplace to influence positive performance of employees (Sein, Mugo, & Kiama, 2018).

Additionally, Baloyi & Waveren (2021), supposed that, if it happens that employees become dissatisfied with their job but have positive support from their supervisor, they can still be committed to work to deliver effective performance in the office as a method to reciprocate kindness received from their supervisors (Baloyi & Waveren, 2021).

Task Autonomy and Employee Performance

Task autonomy refers to when employer offer freedom to employees to make independent decisions to dictate approaches to take their tasks in a manner that makes them comfortable (Alavi & Khoshnaw, 2020). For instance, when work autonomy exists, employers can allow their employees to choose a suitable working hour for them and determine a deadline for their given tasks. Task autonomy particularly autonomy significantly impacts decision-making an organization's growth trajectory, while also influencing employee performance. However, providing job autonomy to employees does not guarantees commitment of employees to the organization, thus after providing autonomy to employees, organizations should find a way to develop a system of engagement with their employees to make a monitoring and evaluation for their performance (Alavi & Khoshnaw, 2020). For instance, even if employees can have job autonomy, they should adhere to organizational culture and policies. Also, there should be limitation to job autonomy (Alavi & Khoshnaw, 2020). Employees therefore should not be given a full autonomy to execute their tasks because other employees can take that autonomy for granted to look for other opportunities outside the office to earn extra salaries, resulting to low productivity in the office (Phaik-Lin & Ping, 2018).

According to Muhammad and Fard (2019), work-life balance plays a pivotal role in enhancing productivity within an organization. Task autonomy granted to employees a valuable opportunity for them to proficiently grasp their job roles, leading to heightened competence. Consequently, this not only boosts employee productivity but also contributes to the organization's overall productivity. Task autonomy, by influencing employee behavior and refining their working skills, results in improved employee performance and generates constructive changes that benefit the organization (Muhammad & Fard, 2019). Obuobisa-Darko (2020) argues that job autonomy fosters heightened job interest and motivation among employees. Employees perceive their skills valued assets when granted autonomy, and empowered to innovate for the organization's benefit. This dynamism is advantageous for both the organization and employees, as it amplifies productivity within the organization and fosters job satisfaction among employees. Furthermore, increased job autonomy facilitates active participation in organizational activities, thus elevating employee motivation and their preparedness to tackle future challenges within the organization (Mworia, Wachira, & Mwaura, 2021).

Job autonomy facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and skills, enabling employees to execute organizational tasks more effectively. Encouraging job autonomy becomes paramount for organizations, as it empowers employees to employ diverse methods to accomplish tasks to the organization's advantage (Mbise, 2019). Furthermore, job autonomy fuels a diligent work ethos among employees, as it offers them the freedom to infuse creativity into their tasks, motivating them to strive for recognition through their innovative contributions (Masalu, 2019).

Work Schedule Flexibility and Employee Performance

Work schedule flexibility is a formal or informal arrangement between employer and employees that provide employees

with flexible schedule of work (Omondi & Obonyo, 2018). Employees with flexible time arrangement may be able to work in remoteness environment and work a hybrid schedule. Various sectors across the globe promote working sessions around the clock to drive continuous production Golden (2022). Working sessions play a vital role in facilitating effective employee output by providing them ample time to build the necessary energy for sustained hard work behavior (Golden, 2022). Many employees seek flexible working arrangements, including opportunities to work from home, to avoid the hassles of commuting and traffic (Nasir & Raihan, 2019). The provision of flexible schedules can help alleviate the pressure of overlapping work and non-work responsibilities, which can lead to improved employee's performance. Organizations that implement flexible work policies can retain their employees more effectively and prevent burnout, hence increasing productivity. Flexibility in work hours has proven to be a valuable tool in enhancing individual employee performance within the office environment (Golden1, 2020). Flexible scheduling eases work pressure and contributes to better job satisfaction.

The availability of work schedule flexibility varies across institutions in Africa and depends on their ability to recruit, retain, and ensure employee job satisfaction. Organizations that offer flexible work schedules tend to attract individuals who are more inclined to exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors within the organization (Omondi & Obonyo, 2018). However, it's noteworthy that organizations with overly flexible work arrangements might face challenges in maintaining employee commitment as too much flexibility might encourage employees to explore opportunities outside of their current workplace. Nonetheless, flexible work arrangements have become increasingly important in the 21st century, contributing to work-life balance and enhancing overall employee performance (Chinedu & Austin-Egole, 2020). Organizations that provide flexible work schedules are likely to reap benefits in terms of employee morale, including heightened enthusiasm, adherence to regulations, and collaborative efforts toward organizational goals (Linge, 2019). However, as explained earlier, the introduction of flexible work options brings both positive and negative consequences for workers, their families, employers, and society as a whole. While it enables employees to allocate their resources more effectively between work and personal life, it also has the potential to blur the boundaries between the two domains, leading to conflicts and stress.

With societal changes, particularly the increasing presence of women in various roles, solutions to balance work and family responsibilities have gained importance (Nanyaki et al, 2018). Hence, finding ways to balance work and family responsibilities is now inevitable. It should be noted that when an individual's efforts to excel at work interferes with his/her family obligations, work-family conflict is likely to arise. These conflicts occur when work and family responsibilities clash, impacting both work and family roles.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative methodology that relies upon empirical analysis and provides mathematical proofs. The targeted population was 207 hospital employees out of which a sample of 136 employees was selected (table 1). This population is made up of employees from seven departments namely; medical, nursing, dental, and radiology. Other departments are pharmacy, laboratory, and administration. The sample size for each category was computed on proportional basis with exception of those categories with small number of population where the entire population was taken on board. Inferential data analysis was done using linear regression analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), specifically Version 25.

Table 1: Respondents' categories				
Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)		
Medical	10	8.8		
Nursing	61	54.0		
Dental	2	1.8		
Radiology	2	1.8		
Pharmacy	5	4.4		
Laboratory	5	4.4		
Administration	28	24.8		
Total	113	100		

Source: Field data, 2023

Findings

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was carried out to test whether the variable items meet the threshold of 0.7 as per Tabachnick and Fidell, (2013). It was found that 13 items out of 20 passed the test (table 2). Of the items that were found to load 0.7 and above 4 were from supervisory support, 3 task autonomy, 3 work schedule flexibility, and 3 items from employee's performance. All items passed the threshold of 0.7 except SS2 that load 0 .658 which is approximated to 0.7 hence it was included.

Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis					
	1	2	3	4	
SS1	.798				
SS2	.658				
SS3	.886				
SS4	.786				
TA1		.806			
TA2		.804			
TA3		.817			
WSF1			.868		

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WSF2	.809	
WSF3	.795	
EP1		.768
EP2		.708
EP3		.784

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was run to examine the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. The independent variables are supervisory support (SS), task autonomy (TA), and work schedule flexibility (WSF) while the dependent variable is employee performance (EP). The results are as shown in Table 3.

	Table 3: Regression coefficients							
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standard ized Coefficie nts	Т	Sig.		
		В	Std. Error	Beta				
	(Cons tant)	4.09 1	1.319		4.60 0			
1	SS	.443	.150	.626	2.95 3	.002		
1	ТА	.412	.176	.791	2.34 1	.001		
	WSF	.531	.147	.220	2.41 3	.001		

a. Dependent Variable: EP

Keywords: SS= Supervisory Support, TA = Task Autonomy, WSF= Work Schedule Flexibility & EP= Employee's Performance

The model suggests that the three independent variables (SS, TA, and WSF) significantly and positively influence the dependent variable (EP). The relationship is significant because the sig value for all three variables ranges between 0.001 and 0.002. This implies that all independent variables positively and significantly influence employee performance at 5 percent confidence interval.

That is to say, if other variables are held constant, SS influence performance of employees by 44.3% which is significant at .001 (p<0.005) and t value of 2.953. Similarly, when other factors are held constant, TA influence employee performance by 41.2%, and the relationship is strong for t-value is 2.341 with sig value of 0.001. Finally, other factors being constant, WSF influences employee performance by 53.1%. The effect of WSF is significant because the t value is 2.413 and sig value of 0.001.

Discussion

The current study aimed at investigating the influence of work-life balance on employee's performance. The inferential analysis confirmed a significant and positive relationship between work-life balance and employee performance. These findings are in line with the spillover theory, which emphasizes the integral role of employee well-being in enhancing performance. The spillover theory underscores the reciprocal relationship between work-related demands and family roles, where excessive work demands can strain family life and vice versa (Shi & Wang, 2022). These findings are also congruent with studies conducted in various countries. For instance, Ballantine et al. (2019) in Malaysia discovered a positive correlation between supervisory support, employee performance, and career motivation. Likewise, in a study conducted in Kenya, Singh (2018) found that an enabling work environment that promotes robust supervisory support significantly enhances employee productivity.

The spillover theory insists that, since people have limited number of resources like energy and time, different performance challenges may arise when different roles draw on these same resources ignoring employee's autonomy on better ways to utilize these limited resources. This finding is important as it confirms the critical role of task autonomy to the medical expertise in the hospital settings. Specifically, the findings suggest that hospital employees' value to be trusted to make decisions within their reach in their areas of work. These findings are in line with previous studies including Alavi & Khoshnaw (2020) in Estonia and Chinedu & Austin-Egole (2020) in Nigeria. All these findings revealed that task anatomy significantly influence the performance of employees.

A flexible work schedule allows employees to vary the times they begin and end their work day (Michel, 2017). Flexible work schedule reduces the work demand pressure from compressed tight work schedule giving employee time to attend personal matters like family, religious, and social ones. According to spillover theory, the work domain if not flexible enough it may consequently transfer the work-related emotions from an employee to others at home particularly the partner causing the work-family conflict (WFC). Likewise, the home domain if not flexible and friendly may end up causing stresses to employees that consequently affect his/her performance that is family-work conflict (FWC). These findings are supported by other studies including; Alqahtani (2020) and Lee & Yun (2021). These studies concluded that works schedule flexibility is directly related to employee productivity.

Conclusions

The concept of work-life balance remains one of the most important agenda particularly among employees in the hospital setting for it deals with life. Managers therefore should handle their subordinates bearing in mind that apart from employer's job demand, employees have personal life demand. Employees need time to attend matters pertaining to family, social concerns as well as religious matters. If these

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matters are not given an adequate consideration, employees are likely to underperform regardless of tight supervision the organization has in place. Hence, the three independent variables; supervisory support, task autonomy and work schedule flexibility need to be considered if the organization wishes to remain competitive in today's dynamic environment.

Implications of the Study

The present study contributes to the existing literature, particularly on the three variables of the study; supervisory support (SS), task autonomy (TA), and work schedule flexibility (WSF). The study puts a foundation to future studies and hence it fosters new studies in extension of knowledge in this area.

The findings of the present study bring new insights to the policymakers, that while strategizing for performance improvement, they should strike a balance between work demand and the life demand of the employee. This can easily be attained by taking on board the variables such as supervisory support, task autonomy, and work schedule flexibility for they greatly influence employee performance.

Practically, the study informs management of hospitals and owners of health institutions on the importance of supervisory support, task autonomy, and work schedule flexibility. Thus, employers should not only concentrate on salary increase as a sole factor to promote performance but should also consider these three non-financial variables (SS, TA, and WSF).

Limitations and Future Study Areas

Firstly, the study focused on Mara region only out of 26 regions of Tanzania main land; hence it is difficult to generalize the findings. Thus, it is suggested that the future studies on similar topic should consider widening this geographical scope to other regions so as to validate the current results. Secondly, the present study deployed quantitative research design limiting the findings to shallow information; it is the suggestion of the study that future studies consider the use either case study design or mixed design in order to seek detailed information on the same topic. This is because quantitative design usually studies large sample size but it falls short of not listening from the respondents to know what their perception regarding the topic under the study.

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