

# **INFLUENCE OF CONTEMPORARY HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN KISII COUNTY ASSEMBLY, KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explored the impact of contemporary human resource practices on employee performance at the Kisii County Assembly in Kenya. As workplaces evolve due to globalization, changing workforce needs, and emerging trends, organizations are shifting from traditional administrative HR roles to more strategic and employee-centered approaches. The study focused specifically on flexible work arrangements and wellness programs as key HR practices. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 106 respondents through structured questionnaires. The sample was drawn from a target population of 145 using stratified sampling, with a pilot study conducted at Nyamira County Assembly. The results indicated a strong positive relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee performance ( $r = 0.792$ ,  $p < .01$ ), as well as between employee wellness programs and

performance ( $r = 0.804$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These findings suggest that contemporary HR practices, especially those that promote work-life balance and employee well-being, significantly enhance employee performance. The study concludes that implementing flexible work models and comprehensive wellness initiatives can positively influence workforce productivity. It recommends that Kisii County Assembly expand flexible work options and strengthen wellness programs to further boost employee outcomes. Future studies should examine the impact of contemporary HR practices on employee performance across various public sectors over time.

**Keywords:** : Contemporary Human Resource Practices, Employee Performance, Flexible Work Arrangements, Wellness Programs, Employee Well-Being, Kisii County Assembly.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background to the study**

Contemporary Human Resource Practices are all about the modern and strategic ways that organizations manage their workforce in today's ever-changing work environment. These practices focus on boosting employee performance, engagement, and overall productivity within the organization (Wilkinson and Yates 2025). Some major practices include performance management systems that establish clear goals and provide regular feedback, continuous training and development to keep employees' skills sharp, and strategic methods for attracting and retaining top talent. Other vital practices involve enhancing employee well-being and engagement through wellness programs and flexible work arrangements, as well as creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace. Leveraging HR technology, like HR information systems and analytics tools helps decision-making. Contemporary HR closely

aligns with business strategy to ensure that human capital plays a direct role in achieving organizational goals.

Globally, Contemporary Human Resource Practices is all about driving strategic initiatives that really matter, like talent management, keeping employees engaged, fostering continuous learning, offering performance-based rewards, and creating flexible work arrangements. Take global giants such as Google and Microsoft, for instance they leverage self-driven performance evaluations, ongoing feedback systems, and tailored learning platforms to enhance productivity and job satisfaction. In USA, these approaches have been instrumental in aligning personal goals with the broader objectives of the organization, boosting morale, cutting down on turnover, and sparking innovation across different sectors (Sharma 2024).

Human resource practices have been shown to significantly influence employee performance, and the effectiveness of these strategies can differ depending on geographical context. Modern HR practices such as flexibility, employee driven initiatives, and mental health support have been acknowledged for their positive impact on employee performance. In Australia, Damato & Herzfeldt (2020) defines human resource as a practice of offering flexible work arrangements and empowering employees with autonomy significantly increased job satisfaction and performance across international settings. Similarly, providing comprehensive mental health support and competitive compensation schemes were identified as the elements for creating a supportive work environment that fosters employee productivity (Wegge et al., 2021).

The importance of human resource management is based when adapting to labor shortages in the United States. The response to talent shortages by organizations has been focused on enhancing employee engagement, adopting workforce upskilling programs, and aligning compensation to retain top talent. Furthermore, the importance of keeping up with labor regulations and compliance is critical in ensuring that employee performance is not hindered by legal challenges (Vandenberg et al., 2020).

In Ethiopia, human resource practice have been evolving with the aim of improving employee performance in both public and private sectors. The major strategies which include training and development, employee motivation, and performance-based rewards have been pivotal in enhancing worker productivity (Assegid, 2019). However, the country faces significant challenges in employee performance, including limited access to training, inadequate resources for employee development, and the impact of political instability on job security. Additionally, the lack of clear career progression pathways and weak performance management systems hinder employee motivation and performance. An improvement particularly in the areas of fair compensation and creating a conducive work environment can foster employee performance (Mulugeta & Gebremariam, 2020).

Human resource management strategies in Ghana have been integral to improving employee performance, particularly in the public sector. Organizations have adopted performance management systems, employee involvement initiatives, and talent management programs to

align employee goals with organizational objectives (Aduagyem, 2020). However, major challenges in Ghana include high employee turnover, poor work-life balance, and the limited adoption of advanced HRM technologies, which impact employee performance. The use of traditional management practices, especially in government institutions, has also acted as a barrier to enhancing performance (Osei & Worlu, 2021). To improve employee performance, managers suggest to adopt more modern HRM practices, such as the implementation of flexible work arrangements and better communication between employers and employees, should be prioritized in Ghana.

Human resource in an organization refers to the employees working in an organization. These organizations include public funded organization, for profit or non-profit making organization. The work force in public organizations have a duty to deliver public service effectively. Human resource in public organizations thrives on the tenets of transparency, accountability and fidelity to the rule of law and norms in service. (Pynes,2021) Human resource also refers to the department in charge with handling of employee matters from identification of talent, recruitment, training and development of the workforce, performance management, compensation and reward, employee welfare, organizational culture adherence to labour laws and workforce strategies and planning. In doing this this department makes sure that it is able to attract the best talents and retain them in a pleasant work environment.

Human resource strategies focuses on environmental sustainability and inclusivity have contributed to enhanced employee performance in Kenya. The strategies emphasize on the role of Green HRM practices, such as eco-friendly training and resource management initiatives, in improving employee performance and overall goal (Kiraithe 2022). HR strategy may not only contributed to the individual employee growth, but also promoted an organizational culture, responsibility enhancing inclusivity in all areas. Human Resource management in public institutions refers to the strategic and administrative practices involved in managing personnel within government and public sectors while ensuring efficiency, fairness and compliance with legal and ethical standard (Mugambi, 2023).

HR strategies that address the diverse needs of employees and align them with organizational goals are crucial in improving employee performance in Kenyan counties. Whether at a global, regional, local, or county level, HR practices focusing on flexibility, empowerment, upskilling, sustainability, and diversity have demonstrated their positive influence on employee productivity and organizational success. HR strategies that align with local governance goals and provide continuous training have had a substantial impact on employee performance. HR practices focusing on recruitment strategies, performance management, and leadership development contributed significantly to service delivery. These practices led to more efficient public administration and positively impacted local economic development (Njiru & Muturi 2023).

Flexibility is highly dynamic and competitive business environment, organizations are increasingly recognizing the critical role of Human Resource (HR) strategies in shaping employee performance and overall organizational success. As businesses strive to enhance

their productivity and remain competitive. Flexibility in the workplace refers to the ability of employees to manage their work schedules and work environments to accommodate their personal needs, while still fulfilling organizational goals. Flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting, flexible working hours, or job-sharing, have been shown to improve employee job satisfaction, reduce stress, and increase motivation. Employees who experience greater autonomy and control over their work schedules tend to show improved performance, as they can balance work-life commitments more effectively (Allen et al., 2021). In a rapidly evolving world where work environments are becoming more remote and decentralized, flexibility has emerged as a critical HR strategy that enhances not only employee well-being but also their productivity

Empowerment and wellness fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility, motivating employees to contribute their best to the organization. It involves creating a culture where employees are encouraged to take initiatives, make decisions, and take accountability for their work. Research indicates that employees who feel empowered tend to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and performance. Empowerment fosters trust and aligns employees' personal goals with organizational objectives, leading to enhanced motivation and innovation (Barker & Smothers, 2023).

Organizations that invest in wellness programs are not only improving employee satisfaction but also fostering a healthier, more productive workforce. Wellness programs focus on the holistic well-being of employees, addressing both physical and mental health. These programs often include initiatives such as fitness programs, mental health support, stress management, and promoting work-life balance. Then a focus on wellness can reduce absenteeism, improve employee morale, and enhance performance by addressing the root causes of burnout and stress. Employees who feel supported in their health and well-being are more likely to be engaged and productive (Nielsen et al., 2020).

Employee performance is the alignment of individual goals with organizational objectives. When employees understand how their roles contribute to the broader mission of the organization, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated. Clear communication of expectations and regular performance appraisals help employees stay on track and identify areas for improvement. In turn, employees who are motivated to achieve personal and organizational goals tend to demonstrate higher levels of productivity and commitment. This provides an overview of performance management systems and how strategic HR practices, such as goal-setting, feedback, and performance appraisals, enhance employee performance (Tannenbaum and Yukl 2021).

At the county level, like in the Kisii County Assembly, CHRP has played a key role in boosting employee performance through well-structured training programs, fair hiring practices, and consistent performance evaluations. More and more counties are embracing Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), clear promotion criteria, and employee wellness initiatives, all of which have inspired staff and improved accountability. These efforts enable local governments to deliver better public services, keep staff motivated, and foster a culture of

ongoing improvement and ethical behavior. In both scenarios, CHRP makes sure that the workforce is well-supported, treated fairly, and equipped with the skills necessary to thrive in a fast-paced work environment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Effective employee performance is crucial for the success of county assemblies in Kenya, as it directly impacts service delivery and governance. However, challenges persist in optimizing this performance, often linked to the implementation and effectiveness of Human Resource (HR). The Auditor-General's report for the 2023/2024 financial year reveals widespread corruption and mismanagement in county assemblies. Issues such as illegal payments to Members of the County Assembly (MCAs), speakers, and senior officials, as well as failure to remit statutory deductions, have been documented. Vihiga, Migori, and Nairobi received adverse opinions due to these irregularities. Nairobi County Assembly could not account for over KSh 905M including unsupported salary advances and travel expenses (Auditor-General's report 2024) On the other hand, 72.1% of the employee performance could be attributed to these HR strategies. Attractive compensation packages were associated with employee performance.

In the study by *Wanjiru, M. & Njiru, L. (2023) examined Human Resource Strategies and Employee Performance in County Assemblies in Kenya*. The researchers examined the relationship between various human resource strategies (training, empowerment, compensation,) and employee performance (productivity, job satisfaction, engagement, retention) in Kenyan county assemblies. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative surveys among county assembly staff and qualitative interviews with HR managers. Despite its contributions, the study faced limitations such as a small sample size, focusing on only a few counties, and the lack of a descriptive design to track changes over time. Moreover, it did not fully consider contextual differences across counties, which could influence the effectiveness of HR strategies. This research addressed these gaps by expanding the sample size and incorporating employee performance metrics to enhance the robustness. Kamau and Karanja (2024) examined the impact of HR strategies like recognition, career development, and work-life balance on employee motivation and performance in Kenyan county assemblies. They used a quantitative design with 300 employees and regression analysis. The study's limitation was its focus on county employees, not considering broader sector influences or contextual factors like upskilling, flexibility, wellness, and recruitment. This research could expand it for better understanding of the impact of these practices.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study sought to establish the influence of contemporary human resources practices on employee performance of Kisii County Assembly in Kenya

### **Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study were

- i. To examine the influence of flexible work arrangement on employee performance of Kisii County Assembly in Kenya

- ii. To determine the influence of wellness program on employee performance of Kisii County Assembly in Kenya.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical review**

#### **Human Capital Theory**

This is the main theory. initially advanced by economists such as Becker (1964), posits that individuals and organizations can invest in employees' knowledge, skills, abilities, and health (collectively known as "human capital") to enhance productivity and performance. In the context of human resource management this theory provides a foundational framework for understanding why strategic HR practices such as training and development, recruitment, career advancement, and wellness programs are crucial in driving employee performance (Nyongesa and Otieno 2023).

From an HRM perspective, investing in human capital through upskilling, continuous learning and talent development is directly aligned with improving individual and organizational productivity. Training enhances employees' competencies, making them more effective in their roles, while recruitment processes focused on talent acquisition ensure the organization hires individuals with the highest potential to contribute meaningfully. Wellness initiatives and flexible work arrangements further preserve and enhance employee well-being, ensuring sustained performance.

The human capital theory posits that resilient organizations prioritize on their employee's wellbeing to maintain their productivity. They offer counselling and other mental support during times of stress. This prevents burn outs and retains talent. With strong HR polices such organizations do not lose out on unique from attrition or layoffs. Instead, they priorities on mentoring and information sharing and are able to survive change overs in leadership. Well trained workforce is adept o make agile decisions making it easier to move forward when need arises (Karani and Kariuki 2022).

### **Empirical Literature Review**

#### **Flexible Work Arrangement**

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) have increasingly been recognized as a significant contributor to employee performance across different organizational settings. These arrangements include telecommuting, flextime, compressed workweeks, and part-time work options. They provide employees with greater autonomy over when and where they work, which in turn can lead to higher job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved performance. In a study conducted in South Africa Nel and Du Plessis (2023) found that employees who had access to flexible work schedules demonstrated improved productivity and better work-life balance. The study, which surveyed 280 employees in the financial services sector, concluded that FWAs significantly reduced burnout and increased task performance.

Wekesa and Omondi (2022) investigated the impact of flexible work arrangements on employee performance in Nairobi County Government. Their findings indicated that flexitime and remote work had a positive effect on employee morale, attendance, and output. The research used a descriptive survey design and collected data from 200 respondents, suggesting that flexible scheduling directly correlates with better performance outcomes.

A study by Ahmad and Omar (2021) in Malaysia found that flexibility in work hours significantly contributed to employee engagement and performance among employees in the telecommunication sector. Their mixed-method study emphasized that flexibility promotes a sense of control and accountability, leading to enhanced efficiency. However, some challenges remain. Kim and Park (2020) in South Korea cautioned that without proper management systems and clear communication, flexible work arrangements may lead to reduced coordination, lower team cohesion, and inconsistent performance, particularly in collaborative work environments. The study supports the notion that flexible work arrangements, when effectively implemented, are a strategic HR tool that enhances employee performance by promoting autonomy, reducing stress, and fostering work-life balance.

A study by Kosgei and Maende (2024) investigated the effect of flexible work programs on employee performance in public hospitals in Kenya. The study found that flexible arrangements such as flexitime, telecommuting, and job sharing significantly enhanced employee productivity, job satisfaction, and service delivery. Bett, Sang, and Chepkwony (2022) explored flexible work arrangements in agricultural co-operatives in Kericho County, revealing that such practices reduced absenteeism and enhanced role adaptability, leading to better employee outcomes.

Career development has also been shown to play a vital role in enhancing performance. A study by Muthumbi and Kamau (2021) at Deloitte Kenya established that career development initiatives including training, mentorship, and career mobility programs—significantly influenced employee performance. These findings support the view that investment in human capital development leads to improved organizational outcomes. Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of integrating strategic HR practices such as flexible work and career development to foster higher employee performance in Kenyan institutions.

### **Wellness programs**

Wellness programs in the workplace are designed to enhance employees' physical, mental, and emotional well-being, aiming to improve overall productivity and job satisfaction. A systematic review by Marin-Farrona et al. (2023) analyzed the effectiveness of worksite wellness programs focused on physical activity. The study found that these programs positively **influenced workers' health and productivity, with certain types of physical activities yielding** more significant benefits. However, not all wellness initiatives have achieved the desired outcomes. A randomized controlled trial involving over 30,000 U.S. workers revealed minimal effects of workplace well-being programs on employee health and productivity. This suggests that the design and implementation of these programs are crucial to their success. The accessibility and organizational support for work-family policies also play significant roles in

employee well-being and performance. Studies have shown that when employees can easily access work-family policies, it leads to improved emotional well-being, which in turn enhances job performance. Moreover, organizational support for work-life balance has been linked to increased job satisfaction and reduced absenteeism.

A study by Nyakomittah and Omwenga (2023) examined the effects of financial, environmental, social, and drug and substance abuse cessation wellness programs on employee performance within the Kisii County Government in Kenya. The findings indicated positive and statistically significant correlations between these wellness initiatives and employee performance, suggesting that comprehensive wellness programs can enhance employee efficiency and effectiveness

Karori (2023) explored the influence of employee assistance programs, physical fitness programs, and flexible working schemes on employee engagement at Old Mutual Kenya. The study revealed that all three wellness initiatives had significant positive effects on employee engagement, highlighting the importance of supporting employees' mental and physical well-being to foster a committed and productive workforce.

A study by Wasike and Wabala (2024) examined the influence of employee wellness programs on workforce productivity within community health non-governmental organizations. The research found that both employee flexible working arrangements and physical fitness programs significantly enhanced workforce productivity, emphasizing the importance of supporting employees' work-life balance and physical health.

Kariuki and Wamwayi (2023) investigated how employee wellness programs affect employee performance in banks listed on the National Stock Exchange in Nairobi County. The findings indicated that social connections and health and safety initiatives within wellness programs had a significant positive impact on employee performance, underscoring the role of a supportive work environment and health-conscious policies in enhancing job performance. These studies collectively reinforce the notion that comprehensive wellness programs, encompassing flexible work arrangements, physical fitness initiatives, and a focus on social and safety aspects, are instrumental in improving employee performance across various organizational contexts in Kenya.

A study by Musau (2016) examined the relationship between corporate wellness programs and employee efficiency and job performance among middle-level executives at Standard Group Limited in Nairobi, Kenya. The research found a strong correlation between corporate wellness programs and employee efficiency, suggesting that such initiatives can enhance employees' effectiveness in their roles. However, the study did not find a significant correlation between wellness programs and job performance, indicating that while wellness initiatives may improve efficiency, they do not necessarily translate to increased job performance. These findings highlight the importance of implementing corporate wellness programs to enhance employee efficiency. However, organizations should consider that improvements in efficiency may not always directly lead to enhanced job performance.

Flexible work schedules such as remote working and reduced staffing are now the most viable options to ensure business continuity. The pandemic has taught leaders to show empathy, practice ability to understand and share feelings of employees, and listen without judgement. Leaders need to appreciate concerns raised by employees and engage them in working towards solutions. Prioritize health and safety in their workplaces. The employee is the most important asset to organizational productivity.

Employees with compassionate leaders develop a strong sense of job ownership and confidence with their work. To enable these interventions, there is a then a compelling need for redefining policies and implementing suitable support mechanisms. A strong emphasis should be placed on health, wellbeing, safety, digital preparedness and active engagement of the workforce. There are certain emerging specific approaches that are now deemed key for reimagining the workplace after COVID-19 and how to improve it. (Rožman and Štrukelj, 2020a). These policies can be summarized as redesigning the physical space of the workplace, work flexibility, family reconciliation, and health security.

### Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is essentially a visual or narrative tool that lays out the variables being examined and the expected relationships among them. It serves as a guide for how the researcher perceives the issue at hand, tying together different concepts and theories to help explain or forecast results. In this study, the conceptual framework connects contemporary human resource practices, which act as independent variables, to employee performance, the dependent variable.

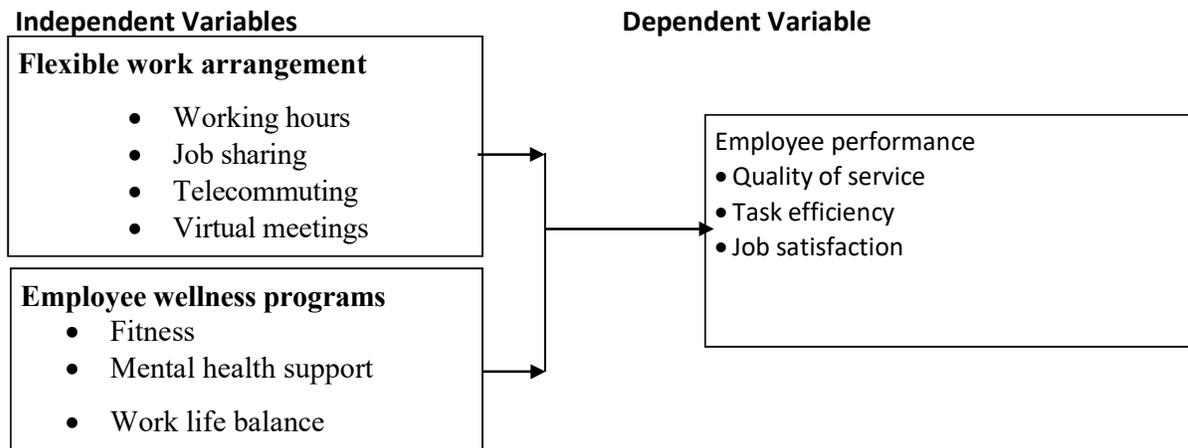


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive research design. According to Cooper and Shindler (2003), a descriptive survey typically sought to ascertain perspectives of specified subject since it is intended to study existing conditions, practices, beliefs and attitudes that are being held, processes that are ongoing and trends that are developing.

The target population for this study consists of 145 employees drawn from various departments within the Kisii County Assembly. As shown in Table 3.1, the Administration department accounts for the largest portion, with 34 employees (23.4%), followed by the Hansard and Communications and Chamber and Committee departments, each with 18 employees (12.4%). The ICT and Library department contributes 14 employees (9.7%), while the Sergeant at Arms department has 10 employees (7.0%). Other departments such as Finance Services, Human Resource, Internal Audit, and Supply Chain Services each contribute 8 employees (5.5%), and the Offices of the Speaker and Clerk have 7 (4.9%) and 6 (4.1%) employees, respectively. Legal Services also contributes 6 employees (4.1%).

The table 3.1 is showing the approximate distribution of the target population of 145 employees across the various departments within the Kisii County Assembly:

*Table 3.1 Target population*

| <b>Department</b>          | <b>Number of Employees</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Office of the clerk        | 6                          | 4.1        |
| Office of the speaker      | 7                          | 4.9        |
| Finance services           | 8                          | 5.5        |
| Human resource             | 8                          | 5.5        |
| Internal Audit             | 8                          | 5.5        |
| ICT and library            | 14                         | 9.7        |
| Administration             | 34                         | 23.4       |
| Legal services             | 6                          | 4.1        |
| Supply chain services      | 8                          | 5.5        |
| Hansard and communications | 18                         | 12.4       |
| Chamber and committee      | 18                         | 12.4       |
| Sergeant at arms           | 10                         | 7.0        |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>145</b>                 | <b>106</b> |

*Source: HR (2025)*

The study used stratified sampling method to make sure that the researcher get responses from employees in different departments fairly and accurately. For this study, the sample size calculated using a formula designed for categorical data, based on the method by Yamane (1969) and adopted Maranga (2025) as;

Given the N=145 as the target population and p given as 5% level of precision confidence interval at 95%, then the sample size formula (n) was calculated are as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(P^2)}$$

n = 145/ (1+ 145(0.05)<sup>2</sup>)= 106.444 resulting 106 respondents

The sample size was distributed using the following units of analysis in table 3.2

*Table 3.2 Sample size*

| <b>Department</b>     | <b>Number of Employees</b> | <b>Sample size</b> |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Office of the clerk   | 6                          | 4                  |
| Office of the speaker | 7                          | 5                  |
| Finance services      | 8                          | 6                  |
| Human resource        | 8                          | 6                  |

| <b>Department</b>          | <b>Number of Employees</b> | <b>Sample size</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Internal Audit             | 8                          | 6                  |
| ICT and library            | 14                         | 10                 |
| Administration             | 34                         | 25                 |
| Legal services             | 6                          | 4                  |
| Supply chain services      | 8                          | 6                  |
| Hansard and communications | 18                         | 13                 |
| Chamber and committee      | 18                         | 13                 |
| Sergeant at arms           | 10                         | 8                  |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>145</b>                 | <b>106</b>         |

*Source( Researcher 2025)*

Primary data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires, which are preferred due to their practicality, cost-effectiveness, and ability to gather large volumes of data within a short period (Kazdin, 2003).

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The general objective of this study established the influence of contemporary human resources practices on employee performance of Kisii County Assembly in Kenya. The specific objectives of this study was; to examine the influence of flexible work arrangement on employee performance of Kisii County Assembly in Kenya, to determine the influence of employees wellness program on performance of Kisii County Assembly in Kenya.

### **Response rate**

This refers to the proportion of the total number of questionnaires distributed that were successfully completed and returned by the respondents. It is an important indicator of the reliability and validity of the data collected, as a high response rate increases the confidence that the findings are representative of the target population.

This response rate demonstrates strong participation from the targeted respondents, which enhances the credibility of the findings and conclusions drawn in this study.

The table 4.1 presents the nature of responses received from the distributed questionnaires

*Table 4.1 response rate*

| Nature of response | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| Response           | 88        | 83.03   |
| No response        | 18        | 16.97   |
| Total              | 106       | 100.0   |

In this study, 106 questionnaires were distributed to employees of the Kisii County Assembly. Out of these, 88 were fully completed and returned, representing a response rate of approximately 83.03%. This high response rate is considered adequate for data analysis and ensures that the results obtained are both reliable and reflective of the views of the majority of the target respondents. On the other hand, 18 questionnaires, accounting for 16.97%, were not returned or were incomplete, possibly due to reasons such as unavailability of respondents, lack of interest, or time constraints.

## Demographic characteristics

### Gender

Refer to the statistical attributes of a population used to describe and analyze specific groups within a study. These characteristics typically include gender, age, education level, work experience, and other relevant personal details. In the context of this study, demographic data helps provide a clearer understanding of the background of the respondents, allowing for more accurate analysis of how various contemporary human resource practices influence employee performance. It also helps to identify patterns or differences in perceptions and experiences based on demographic variables.

The gender distribution of the respondents is presented in Table 4.2.

*Table 4.2 Gender characteristics*

|       |        | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Male   | 43        | 48.9    | 48.9          | 48.9               |
|       | Female | 45        | 51.1    | 51.1          | 100.0              |
|       | Total  | 88        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

Out of the 88 employees who participated in the study, 43(48.9%) were male while 45(51.1%) were female. This indicates a nearly equal representation of both genders, with a slight female majority. The balanced gender representation enhances the credibility of the findings by ensuring that insights on human resource practices and their impact on performance reflect both male and female perspectives. This diversity is important in human resource research, as gender dynamics can influence how employees experience workplace practices such as flexible work arrangements, wellness programs, and upskilling opportunities.

### Level of Position

This is a key demographic variable that helps categorize respondents based on their roles and responsibilities within the organizational hierarchy. Understanding the distribution of respondents across different management levels is crucial for interpreting how human resource practices perceived and experienced by employees at various levels of authority and influence within the Kisii County Assembly.

*Table 4.3 Level of position*

|       |                  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Tom management   | 16        | 18.2    | 18.2          | 18.2               |
|       | Middle level     | 24        | 27.3    | 27.3          | 45.5               |
|       | Lower management | 48        | 54.5    | 54.5          | 100.0              |
|       | Total            | 88        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

As shown in Table 4.3, the majority of the respondents, 48 employees 54.5% were from lower management positions. This was followed by 24 respondents from the middle level management, while 16 respondents 16(18.2%) belonged to top management. This distribution suggests that most perceptions collected in this study reflect the views and experiences of

employees in lower management roles, who are often directly affected by day-to-day human resource practices. However, the inclusion of responses from both middle and top-level management ensures a comprehensive understanding of how different managerial levels perceive and are influenced by contemporary HR practices.

### Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics summarize the basic features of data collected in a study, offering insights into the central tendency, variability, and overall patterns in responses.

### Flexible Work Arrangements

This objective focused on employees' perceptions of flexible work arrangements and their influence on performance at the Kisii County Assembly.

Table 4.4 Flexible Work Arrangements

|   | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|---|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| I am allowed to adjust my working hours to suit my personal or family needs                   | 88 | 2.00    | 5.00    | 4.3636 | 1.07406        |
| Flexible working hours have improved my productivity at the workplace                         | 88 | 2.00    | 5.00    | 4.4545 | .99318         |
| I have the option to share job responsibilities with a colleague when necessary               | 88 | 1.00    | 5.00    | 4.1818 | 1.41051        |
| Job sharing enhances collaboration and reduces workload pressure in my department             | 88 | 3.00    | 5.00    | 4.5455 | .78651         |
| I am provided with the option to work from home when appropriate                              | 88 | 3.00    | 5.00    | 4.6364 | .64651         |
| Telecommuting has increased my job satisfaction and efficiency                                | 88 | 2.00    | 5.00    | 4.4545 | .99318         |
| Most of our meetings are conducted virtually, allowing for better time management             | 88 | 1.00    | 5.00    | 4.3636 | 1.23346        |
| Virtual meetings help maintain effective communication among employees regardless of location | 88 | 2.00    | 5.00    | 4.2727 | 1.05838        |
| Valid N (listwise)  | 88 |         |         |        |                |

Table 4.4 presents the descriptive statistics for various aspects of flexible work arrangements. The mean values indicate a generally positive perception among employees. The item *"I am provided with the option to work from home when appropriate"* recorded the highest mean of 4.6364 (SD = 0.64651), suggesting strong agreement among respondents that remote work options are available and appreciated. This is closely followed by *"Job sharing enhances collaboration and reduces workload pressure in my department"* with a mean of 4.5455 (SD = 0.78651), highlighting the perceived benefits of shared responsibilities in promoting teamwork and alleviating stress. Additionally, statements such as *"Flexible working hours have improved my productivity"* (mean = 4.4545) and *"Telecommuting has increased my job satisfaction and efficiency"* (mean = 4.4545) also received high ratings, reinforcing the notion that flexible work arrangements positively influence both productivity and job satisfaction.

While most responses were favorable, the item *"I have the option to share job responsibilities with a colleague when necessary"* recorded a slightly lower mean of 4.1818 (SD = 1.41051), with the highest standard deviation, indicating more varied opinions on the availability or practicality of job sharing.

The findings recommends that flexible work arrangements, including remote work, virtual meetings, and adjustable schedules, are well-implemented and positively perceived by employees, significantly contributing to enhanced performance and workplace satisfaction at the Kisii County Assembly.

**Employee wellness**

**Objective Two: To Determine the Influence of Employee Wellness on Employee Performance**

Employee wellness refers to programs and initiatives aimed at improving the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of employees. Organizations that invest in wellness programs often experience improved employee morale, reduced absenteeism, and enhanced overall performance. This section presents the perceptions of Kisii County Assembly employees regarding wellness initiatives and their impact on performance.

**Table 4.5** presents the descriptive statistics for the second objective. The highest-rated item was *"The county assembly provides mental health support services such as counseling or therapy"*, with a mean of 4.5341 and a low standard deviation of 0.66000, indicating strong agreement and consistency among respondents. Similarly, the statement *"I feel that mental health is treated as a priority by the human resource department"* recorded a high mean of 4.4318, reinforcing the perceived commitment of the organization to mental well-being.

*Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics of Employee Wellness*

|  | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|--|----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| The organization promotes physical fitness through initiatives like gym access or fitness challenges | 88 | 1.00    | 5.00    | 4.2386 | 1.16456        |
| Participation in fitness programs has positively impacted my energy levels and work performance      | 88 | 1.00    | 5.00    | 4.1364 | 1.24274        |
| The county assembly provides mental health support services such as counseling or therapy            | 88 | 3.00    | 5.00    | 4.5341 | .66000         |
| I feel that mental health is treated as a priority by the human resource department                  | 88 | 2.00    | 5.00    | 4.4318 | .90713         |
| I am encouraged to maintain a healthy balance between work responsibilities and personal life        | 88 | 1.00    | 5.00    | 3.3523 | 1.68864        |
| The wellness programs in place have helped me reduce stress and maintain work-life balance           | 88 | 2.00    | 5.00    | 3.8977 | 1.24143        |
| Valid N (listwise)   | 88 |         |         |        |                |

On the physical wellness front, the item *"The organization promotes physical fitness through initiatives like gym access or fitness challenges"* had a mean score of **4.2386**, while *"Participation in fitness programs has positively impacted my energy levels and work performance"* followed closely with a mean of **4.1364**. These findings suggest that the physical wellness initiatives in place are relatively well-received and are considered beneficial to employee performance.

However, the statement *"I am encouraged to maintain a healthy balance between work responsibilities and personal life"* recorded the lowest mean of **3.3523** with the highest standard deviation of **1.68864**, indicating mixed opinions and greater variability in responses. This suggests that work-life balance may be an area needing further attention and improvement.

The results imply that wellness programs particularly those related to mental health are positively influencing employee performance at the Kisii County Assembly. However, more structured efforts may be needed to promote work-life balance and ensure all employees benefit equally from the wellness initiatives.

### Regression Analysis

The regression analysis aimed to determine the extent to which contemporary human resource practices specifically, Flexible Work Arrangements, Employee Wellness predict employee performance in the Kisii County Assembly.

As shown in **Table 4.6: Model Summary**, the model yielded a high **R value of 0.910**, indicating a strong positive correlation between the independent variables and employee performance. The **R Square (R<sup>2</sup>) value is 0.829**, which means that approximately **82.9%** of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the combined effect of the four HR practices. This suggests a very good model fit.

*Table 4.6 Model Summary*

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .910 <sup>a</sup> | .829     | .820              | .27978                     |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Upskilling, Re-Imagining Recruitment, Flexible Work Arrangements, Employee Wellness

The **Adjusted R Square** value is **0.820**, which adjusts for the number of predictors in the model. The minimal difference between R<sup>2</sup> and Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> confirms that the model is not overfitted and remains robust even when accounting for the number of predictors.

The **Standard Error of the Estimate**, which is **0.27978**, represents the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line. A lower standard error indicates that the data points are closely clustered around the predicted values, implying good predictive accuracy of the model. The regression results demonstrate that contemporary HR practices collectively have a substantial and statistically significant influence on employee performance within the Kisii County Assembly.

The **ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)** results presented in **Table 4.7** evaluate the overall significance of the regression model used to predict **employee performance** based on the four

independent variables: Upskilling, Re-Imagining Recruitment, Flexible Work Arrangements, Employee Wellness

**Table 4.7 ANOVA**

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F       | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 31.401         | 4  | 7.850       | 100.291 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 6.497          | 83 | .078        |         |                   |
|       | Total      | 37.898         | 87 |             |         |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Upskilling, Re-Imagining Recruitment, Flexible Work Arrangements, Employee Wellness

The F= 100.291 with a p=.000, which is well below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and that the independent variables, when taken together, provide a good fit for predicting employee performance. In other words, there is a very low probability that the observed relationship occurred by chance.

The Regression Sum of Squares 31.401 represents the portion of the total variation in employee performance explained by the model, while the Sum of Squares Residual 6.497 indicates the variation not explained by the model. The total Sum of Squares 37.898 is the sum of both, confirming that a large proportion of the variance in the dependent variable is accounted for by the model. The ANOVA results support the conclusion that the regression model is highly significant and that the selected contemporary HR practices collectively influence employee performance in Kisii County Assembly.

The regression coefficients presented in **Table 4.8** illustrate the individual contribution of each contemporary human resource practice to employee performance in Kisii County Assembly.

**Table 4.8 Regression coefficients**

| Model |                            | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|-------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|       |                            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      |
| 1     | (Constant)                 | .828                        | .195       |                           | 4.258 | .000 |
|       | Flexible work arrangements | .395                        | .050       | .451                      | 7.840 | .000 |
|       | Employee wellness          | .145                        | .079       | .200                      | 1.839 | .069 |

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The regression analysis revealed that the constant term was 0.828 and statistically significant (p = .000), indicating a strong baseline level of employee performance when all predictors are held constant. Among the independent variables, Flexible Work Arrangements showed the most significant positive influence on employee performance, with a coefficient of 0.395 (p = .000), suggesting that enhancing flexibility at work can lead to improved outcomes. On the other hand, Employee Wellness had a positive but statistically marginal effect (coefficient = 0.145, p = .069), implying that while wellness initiatives may contribute to performance, their effect was not strong enough to be deemed significant in this study. The regression model derived was:  $Y = 0.828 + 0.395X_1 + 0.145X_2$ .

## **CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on these findings, the study concludes that flexible work arrangements and upskilling are critical drivers of employee performance at Kisii County Assembly. They not only foster better work-life balance and employee autonomy but also enhance skills and productivity. The result has shown that when employees are granted autonomy and flexibility, they tend to be more motivated, committed, and productive. Flexible work environments also help attract and retain top talent, especially among younger generations who prioritize work-life balance and technological adaptability.

Adopting such progressive human resource practices, the county assembly can foster a more supportive and inclusive workplace culture that enhances overall organizational performance. Although, employee wellness programs show potential, their current implementation may not be robust enough to yield significant outcomes. The dynamic nature of quality service, driven by rapid technological advancements, changing policy environments, and growing public expectations, demands a workforce that is continuously learning and adapting.

In light of these conclusions, recommendations are proposed. First, the county assembly should enhance and institutionalize flexible work arrangements to support employee autonomy, engagement, and well-being. This entails developing and implementing comprehensive policies that allow employees to adjust their work schedules or work remotely, based on the nature of their tasks and individual needs. Flexible work arrangements may include options such as telecommuting, compressed workweeks, flextime, and job sharing. These arrangements not only empower employees with greater control over how and when they work but also contribute significantly to reducing stress and improving work-life balance.

Third, wellness initiatives should be expanded and monitored to ensure that they effectively address employee needs and contribute to performance. Employee wellness goes beyond physical health to include mental, emotional, and social well-being, all of which are critical for sustained engagement and productivity.

Expanding wellness initiatives means moving beyond occasional health check-ups or fitness campaigns to implementing comprehensive wellness programs that are proactive, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of employees. Such programs could include mental health support services (counseling and stress management workshops), access to recreational and fitness facilities, work-life balance support (family leave and childcare assistance), and regular health screenings.

To achieve this, the county assembly should adopt a competency-based recruitment framework that assesses candidates based on critical skills, behavioral attributes, and alignment with organizational values. The use of digital tools and data analytics in recruitment can also improve efficiency and objectivity by streamlining candidate screening, predicting job performance, and reducing unconscious bias. By re-imagining recruitment in this way, the county assembly can build a more capable, future-ready workforce one that drives innovation, accountability, and high performance.

Future research should consider exploring additional variables that might mediate the relationship between HR practices and performance, such as leadership style or organizational culture. The same study could also be done help assess the long-term impact of HR initiatives. Additionally, qualitative methods may offer deeper perceptions into employee perceptions and experiences, providing a more nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of human resource practices in county governments.

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