

EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMMES ON PERFORMANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL NON- GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Non-governmental organisations especially those in the environmental spectrum have often posted poor performance especially on employee retention, efficacy of their programmes, low budget efficiency where their projects often exceed their initial budgets or face financing challenges which delay project completion or collapse. Further, environmental non-governmental organisations have also failed to deliver in preservation of the ecosystem. Human resource is a major source of a company's competitive advantages and value creation. However, over the years, human resource has conventionally been identified as a cost to companies as opposed to strategic resources. However, modern scholars view human resource management and particularly employee wellness as a key determinant of organizational performance. As a result, aim of the study was to determine the effect of employee wellness programmes on performance of environmental non-governmental organizations in Kenya. The study was anchored on social exchange theory. Descriptive research design was adopted. Target population of the study comprised

216 employees in human resources and administration, finance department operations department and research and development department. Sample size was 140 respondents selected using stratified random sampling technique. Primary data collected via a structured questionnaire was used in data analysis. Collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and standard deviation. Linear regression analysis was also used to determine the relationship between employee wellness programmes and performance. The study determined that there was high level emphasis on employee wellness programs for enhancing employees' physical, mental, and financial well-being. The study also determined that employee wellness programs have a significant positive effect on performance of environmental non-governmental organizations. It was thus concluded that employee wellness programs significantly affect performance of environmental non-governmental organizations.

Keywords: Employee Wellness Programmes; Organizational Performance, Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations.

INTRODUCTION

The role Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in society cannot be over emphasised because of the critical role they play in dealing with some of the strands overlooked by state agencies (Djan & Mersland, 2021). NGOs typically focus on social, humanitarian, environmental, or advocacy-related objectives and their performance (Alola & Alafeshat, 2021). Performance of an NGO is assessed based on a combination of how well it achieves its mission, manages its resources, governs its operations, and maintains transparency and

accountability to its stakeholders. A high-performing NGO shows measurable impact, efficient use of resources, strong leadership, and sustainable practices that ensure long-term success and continued relevance (Cordery et al., 2023). Currently, due to globalization and intense rivalry among NGOs, managers face pressure to boost financial performance by improving staff productivity, necessitating the adoption of strategic human resource management (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019).

In most business organization, especially profit-making firms, performance is measured by profit, growth, business continuity and innovation (Ionita 2013). However, these measures may not be applicable in non-profit making organizations which calls for more nonprofit oriented measures. Cazenave and Morales (2021) advocated for measures such as donor retention, efficiency, effectiveness of project implementation and achievement of organizational goals. Traxler et al. (2020) relied on cost management, employee retention rate, stakeholder engagement and annual revenues. Other measures used in measuring NGO performance include ability to attract donors, ability to attract volunteers, donor lifetime value, email engagement, recurring donors, satisfaction rating, social media engagement, impact on beneficiaries and staff satisfaction (Odhiambo & Njuguna, 2021): Zarzycka & Krasodomska, 2022). In this study performance was measured using employee retention, budgetary efficiency and working capital management.

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is an approach to managing an organization's human resources in a way that aligns with its overall business strategy and goals. It involves integrating human resource management (HRM) practices and functions with the strategic objectives of the organization (Wassell & Bouchard, 2020). The primary aim of SHRM is to enhance organizational performance, effectiveness, and competitiveness by effectively leveraging the capabilities and potential of the workforce (Gupta, 2020). SHRM ensures that HR practices and policies are designed and implemented in a way that supports the broader strategic goals of the organization. SHRM emphasizes long-term planning and development of HR strategies that consider the evolving needs of the organization and the workforce (Tawfig & Kamarudin, 2021). SHRM promotes the integration of various HR functions, such as recruitment, training, performance management, compensation, and employee relations, to ensure they work cohesively towards achieving strategic goals (Alfawaire & Atan, 2021).

Strategic HRM provides a framework that links people management and development practices to long-term business goals and outcomes (Greer, 2021). The strategic HRM is a coherent planned framework that manages and develops human resources in such a way that it supports the long-term goals of an organisation in a strategic way (Bailey et al., 2018). Also, strategic HRM is concerned with the implementation of strategy and the strategic behaviour of HR professionals who work with their line management colleagues daily to ensure that the organization's business goals are accomplished and its values are implemented (Boon et al., 2018). Cooke, Schuler and Varma (2020) refers to strategic HRM as a process that integrates human resource activities across different policy areas and hierarchies as per the strategic needs of the organization and it ensures the effective utilisation of human resources. In China, Al-Khaled and Fenn (2020) noted that strategic human resource management plays a crucial role

in managing the organization as the human resource is the heart of any organization. Further, strategic human resource practices affect organizational performance. Companies that adopt good SHRM practices are definitely able to attain their goals in the long run, to sustain their company in the industry. Having good SHRM practices will be a key competitive advantage for the company overall.

As a function of employee wellness programme in organizations is a programme organized, designed, and funded by the employer to support employees and sometimes their families, which accepts and maintains behaviours that reduce health risks, increase personal efficiency, improve quality of life, and basically provide benefit to the entire organization (Bailey, et al., 2018). In practice, wellness programmes include annual basic systematic examinations (internist examination, laboratory analysis, ECG, cardiovascular ultrasound) and gym membership. However, wellness programmes are much more than that, and in addition to physical health (workout programmes), they include care for the mental and emotional state of employees (advanced screening tests), education programmes on healthy eating, supplementation, diet programmes, training on protection and improvement of health. As a result, wellness programmes are becoming increasingly important in today's organization' (Boon et al., 2018).

Concerns about the environment are growing around the world as governments, scientists, and activists are witnessing first-hand the devastating effects of climate change. With increasing threats to the climate come dangers for us humans, too. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are taking proactive steps to help protect and heal natural areas and us with it. An NGO is a non-profit organization that is citizen-lead and unaffiliated with the government. These groups dedicate their time and resources to social, political and environmental responsibilities, and many times, the three overlap (NGOs Co-ordination Board, 2024). Some of the latest initiatives by environmental NGOs to combat climate change include advocating for renewable energy policies, promoting sustainable transportation options, supporting reforestation efforts, and raising awareness of climate change.

Further, environmental NGOs with their skilful and knowledgeable personnel can influence decision-makers towards environmentally friendly solutions and also inspire and motivate society to act and demand meaningful environmental protection. There are 68 environmental non-government organizations in Kenya. They include Greenpeace Kenya, African Conservation Centre, East African Wildlife Society, Green Belt Movement, Ishaqbini Hirola Conservancy, Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, Solar Cookers International, Tsavo Trust, Wildlife Direct, William Holden Wildlife Foundation and The Youth Café (NGOs Co-ordination Board, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Organizational performance is highly dependent on the employees and their ability to serve the organization both effectively and efficiently (Holbeche, 2022). To this end, non-governmental organizations especially those in the environmental spectrum have often posted poor performance especially on employee retention and efficacy of their programs (Edwards &

Hulme, 2024; Kariega, 2020; Thairu, 2020; Kimani, 2021). Often, the projects they undertake exceed their initial budgets or they are faced with financing challenges which delay their completion or collapse all together. Further, environmental non-governmental organizations have also failed to deliver in preservation of the ecosystem. For instance, they have failed to successfully prevent cutting down of indigenous trees leading to destruction of forests and stop government projects such as standard gauge railway and Mau Mau Road from interfering with national parks and reserves. Through SHRM, human capital is aligned with the long-term goals of an organization leading to improved performance. Consequently, there is need to take a strategic angle in management of human resources by improving on employee wellness programs otherwise, NGOs will continue facing challenges and finally collapse.

There exists extant literature on strategic human resource management practices, employee wellness programs and performance. For instance, Naitore (2019) researched on strategic human resource management practices and performance of selected public universities in Kenya. It was concluded that employee wellness programs significantly influence performance. However, the study was based on selected public universities while the current study is based on environmental Non-governmental Organisation (NGO). Further, Ondari (2019) studied the effect of selected strategic human resource management practices on employee performance at equator bottlers limited in Kisumu and concluded that strategic human resource management practices affect employee performance. This study was based on a manufacturing company while the current study will be based on an environmental NGO.

In another study Karanja et al. (2024) conducted a study on employee wellness programmes and service delivery in faith-based hospitals in Nairobi metropolitan, Kenya. The study concluded that employee wellness programmes have a significant effect of service delivery in faith-based hospitals in Nairobi metropolitan, Kenya. However, the study was conducted among faith-based hospitals while the current study was conducted on NGOs. Besides the study's dependent variable was service delivery while in the current study was on organizational performance. In another study on effect of strategic planning factors on the non-financial performance of nongovernmental organizations in Kenya, Thairu (2020) adopted correlational research design and factor. However, there is a methodological gap since the study relied on correlational research design and factor analysis while this study will adopt a descriptive research design and linear regression analysis.

It was noted that these studies used different methodologies in arriving at their conclusions leaving methodological gaps. Moreover, none of the studies reviewed has focused on the effect of strategic human resource management on organizational performance in environmental NGOs suggesting there is an empirical gap. The current study therefore aims to address this gap by determining the effect of strategic human resource management on organizational performance in Kenya based on environmental NGOs in Nairobi City County in Kenya.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to assess the effect of employee wellness programmes on organizational performance in environmental NGOs Nairobi City County in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on social exchange theory formulated by Homans in 1958. This theory is a social psychology and sociological framework that elucidates social development and stability as a process of negotiated trades between entities. Social exchange theory asserts that all human connections are established by a subjective cost-benefit analysis and the evaluation of alternatives (Gould-Williams & Davies, 2012). The theory posits that people manage their relationships with others by evaluating the costs and rewards based on self-interest. It contends that excellent workplace interactions provide advantages for the business. The theory has been used to explain the employee's attitudinal commitment to the company (Ahmad et al., 2023). Consequently, workers identify with the company, give loyalty and attachment to the company in exchange for incentives provided by the organization (Xu et al., 2022). This indicates that employee's performance is influenced by their assessment of organizational incentives and their contributions. This theory is relevant in this study because employee wellness programs enable employees to evaluate the benefits that they gain from the company in exchange for their input. This informs their attachment to the organization. Also, the theory suggests that organizations that invest in the well-being of their employees can expect reciprocal benefits, such as improved job performance, higher levels of engagement, and better overall organizational performance.

Empirical Review

There exist numerous studies on the study constructs which have been reviewed with the objective of identifying research gaps. For instance, Richemond and Needham (2020) examined the effect of wellness initiatives on employee job satisfaction within higher education institutions. This research investigated the effect of wellness programs on employee job satisfaction in higher education institutions. This correlational research, including full-time and part-time faculty members from for-profit and traditional colleges in the United States, found no predictive relationship between participation in wellness programs and work satisfaction among employees. Furthermore, interaction studies revealed a correlation between gender and work satisfaction. Females had a greater propensity for elevated levels of work happiness, with more years of experience and job satisfaction. This research focuses on environmental NGOs in Kenya, while the previous study examined colleges and institutions in the USA. The previous study used a correlational research strategy, but the present study utilized a descriptive approach.

Mungania (2016) examined the impact of wellness programs on the performance of the banking sector in Kenya. The purpose of the research was to determine the impact of wellness programs on the performance of the banking sector in Kenya. This study used a survey research design using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The target demographic included 36,212 workers from all 43 commercial banks in Kenya, specifically concentrating on branches located in Nairobi. Primary data was gathered using questionnaires including both structured and unstructured questions. The researcher used descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution tables, percentages, and measures of central tendency, such as the mean. Furthermore, advanced statistical methods, including measures of variation such as standard

deviation and regression analysis, were used to ascertain correlations among variables. The research indicated a significant correlation between wellness initiatives and the success of the banking sector. This was achieved via preventative care, education, and training about the significance of employee wellbeing, with the backing of management. This research focused on the banking sector in Kenya, while the following study was conducted among environmental NGOs in Kenya. The previous research used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, but the present study employed a quantitative approach.

Kitali (2021) examined the impact of employee wellness initiatives on staff commitment at KCB Bank Kenya. The primary aim of the research is to determine the impact of employee wellness initiatives on employee commitment at KCB Bank Kenya. This research used a descriptive cross-sectional design, targeting respondents employed by the firm under either contractual or permanent terms, and utilized closed-ended questionnaires for data collection. The selected factors to elucidate employee wellness programs were health and nutrition, employee support initiatives, emotional and physical health, and working circumstances. The research determined that the first two variables were not statistically significant in elucidating the link, however the latter two were statistically significant in clarifying the association. The analysis revealed that KCB Bank must enhance certain areas to bolster employee devotion inside the firm. An initiative derived from the research is the need to enhance information about healthy living across multiple channels and to increase participation in health activities. Moreover, the investigation indicated that workers saw their responsibilities as unrealistic, and the resultant stress adversely impacted their personal connections with family and friends. This research concentrated on the banking sector in Kenya, while the present study was conducted inside environmental NGOs in Kenya. The previous study used a cross-sectional approach, but the present study employed a descriptive research methodology.

Muriuki (2021) investigated the perceived impact of corporate wellness initiatives on staff productivity at Radisson Blu Hotel, Nairobi Upper Hill. The study aimed to determine the perceived impact of corporate wellness initiatives on staff productivity at Radisson Blu Hotel. The research used a descriptive design. The research used structured questionnaires designed as a five-point Likert scale, which were evaluated and disseminated to the participants. The gathered data was acquired and analysed by regression analysis. The research indicated that Corporate Wellness Programs, including Screening Programs, Health and Safety Programs, Wellness Risk Awareness Programs, and Preventive Programs, positively influenced employee productivity. Wellness Communication Programs and Fitness Programs did not influence employee productivity. The research indicated a significant correlation between business wellness initiatives and employee productivity. The study's results demonstrate that well executed business wellness initiatives may enhance employee productivity. The research reveals a robust positive association between corporate wellness programs and employee productivity, thereby advocating for their implementation in workplaces to enhance profitability.' This research concentrated on the hotel sector in Kenya, while the present study examined environmental NGOs in Nairobi City County Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive design. Creswell (2013) defines descriptive research as a method used to "describe" a situation, topic, behaviour, or phenomena. It is used to address inquiries on who, what, when, where, and how related to a certain study topic or phenomenon. The study population comprised of employees in human resources and administration departments, finance departments, project coordinators and research and development departments in environmental NGOs in Kenya. From the selected population, stratified sampling technique was used to select a sample of 140 respondents. Primary data was utilised in the study collected via questionnaire. The questionnaire was used due to its ability to access a substantial population with relative ease and cost-effectiveness. The study was quantitative in nature. Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Descriptive statistical analysis techniques including frequencies, mean scores and standard deviations were used to analyse data. In addition, simple linear regression analysis was used in the analysis to determine the nature of the relationship between employee wellness programs and organizational performance. In the study, R^2 helped to determine the model's goodness of fit. Beta coefficients were used to determine the magnitude of changes in performance as a result of a change in Employee wellness programmes. Significance of the variables was assessed by examining the p-values of each beta factor against the set 0.05 level of significance. The F-statistic was utilized to ascertain the overall robustness of the analytical model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study targeted 140 respondents, out of which 135 successfully completed and returned the questionnaires. Resulting in a response rate of 96.5%. This high response rate is considered sufficient for analysis, as it exceeds the 70% threshold recommended for survey research (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The response rate is therefore considered sufficient for meaningful statistical analysis. Data analysis was conducted via both descriptive analysis and simple linear regression analysis.

Descriptive Results

Employee wellness programs play a critical role in enhancing employees' physical, mental, and financial well-being, leading to increased job satisfaction and productivity. The findings on employee wellness initiatives are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Employee Wellness Programs

Statement	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Our organization provide employee wellness programmes	135	4.032	0.689
Fitness centres ensure employees' physical well-being	135	4.058	0.765
Emotional support in the organization promotes mental well-being	135	4.082	0.752
Financial education enhances employees' financial literacy	135	4.032	0.771
Flexible working hours assist in reducing employee work stress	135	4.099	0.745
Through wellness initiatives, employees learn to take ownership of their health and boost their self-esteem	135	4.123	0.710
Aggregate Score		4.079	0.749

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The findings from Table 1 above indicate that employee wellness programs are perceived as beneficial in enhancing employees' physical, mental, and financial well-being, as reflected in the aggregate mean score of 4.079 and a standard deviation of 0.749. The low standard deviation depicts that there was agreement among respondents on the adoption of employee wellness programs in the organization. These findings align with Mungania (2016), who examined the impact of wellness programs on performance in Kenya's banking sector. Mungania's study found a significant correlation between wellness initiatives and organizational success, particularly through preventative care, employee education, and management support. Similarly, the present study shows that employees value wellness initiatives, particularly those that promote mental well-being, flexibility, and self-empowerment, which ultimately enhance workplace productivity.

Additionally, the findings are consistent with Muriuki (2021), who investigated the impact of corporate wellness programs on staff productivity at Radisson Blu Hotel in Nairobi. His study found that structured health and wellness initiatives significantly contribute to employee motivation and productivity. The present study confirms this by highlighting the role of emotional and psychological support, flexible work schedules, and financial education in enhancing employee well-being, which translates into better performance and retention. Furthermore, the findings support Kitali (2021), who studied the effect of employee wellness initiatives on staff commitment at KCB Bank Kenya. Kitali's study concluded that emotional and physical wellness programs were statistically significant in improving employee commitment. This is consistent with the present study's emphasis on emotional support and

self-esteem enhancement through wellness programs as critical factors in improving organizational performance.

The findings therefore affirm that employee wellness programs play a crucial role in fostering a productive and satisfied workforce. When organizations invest in initiatives that enhance physical, emotional, and financial well-being, they create a positive work environment that improves job satisfaction, reduces stress, and boosts employee retention. The consistency between the present study and previous research confirms that wellness initiatives are a critical component of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM), contributing to both individual and organizational success.

Regression Analysis

This section presents the findings of the regression analysis, which was conducted to determine the relationship between employee wellness programs and performance of environmental NGOs.

Table 2: Regression Analysis Results

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error of the Estimate		
1	0.888 ^a	0.789	0.778	0.482		
Model	Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F-Statistic	p-Value
Regression	46.213		1	46.213	499.823	0.000 ^b
Residual	12.297		133	0.092		
Total	58.51		134			
Independent Variable	Unstandardized Beta Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	Standardized Beta (β)	t	Sig.	
Constant	0.074	0.021		3.524	0.000	
Employee Wellness Programs	0.278	0.052	0.294	5.34	0.004	

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of environmental NGOs

b Predictors: (Constant), employee training and development, employee wellness programs, employee engagement, and employee dispute resolution.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.789, indicating that 78.9% of the variation in performance of environmental NGOs is explained by employee wellness programs. The remaining 21.1% of the variance is attributed to factors not included in this model. The F-statistic of 499.823 ($p = 0.000$) indicates that the overall model is statistically significant at the

0.05 level. This confirms that employee wellness programs contribute to organizational performance in a meaningful way. The low p-value (0.000) further supports the reliability of the model, confirming that the observed effects did not occur by chance. These findings align with Nkosi (2015), who found that employee wellness programs have a significant impact on staff retention, leading to improved performance and commitment to organizational goals.

Beta coefficient results showed that, the constant had a coefficient of 0.074 suggesting that in absence of employee wellness programs, performance of environmental NGOs would be 0.074. this relationship was significant ($P=0.000$). Employee wellness programs had a beta coefficient of 0.278 ($p = 0.004$), meaning that a one-unit increase in wellness initiatives leads to a 0.278 increase in performance of environmental NGOs. This suggests that organizations that prioritize employee well-being experience lower absenteeism, reduced workplace stress, and increased job satisfaction, ultimately enhancing performance. These findings align with Mungania (2016), who concluded that workplace wellness initiatives contribute to employee morale and financial stability. The results indicate that providing financial literacy programs, mental health support, and flexible work arrangements can positively impact employees' productivity and overall company efficiency.

Conclusions

The study concluded that employee wellness programs have a significant effect on performance of environmental NGOs in Nairobi City County. Employee wellness programs are essential in promoting job satisfaction, reducing stress, and improving overall employee well-being, which directly influences organizational performance. The study determined that initiatives such as mental health support, flexible working hours, and financial literacy programs contribute to workforce stability by reducing absenteeism and increasing motivation. Organizations that prioritize wellness programs create a healthy and engaged workforce, leading to higher retention and productivity.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Environmental NGOs should adopt a more holistic approach to employee wellness by implementing policies that promote mental, financial, and physical well-being. Organizations should integrate mental health awareness programs, stress management initiatives, and confidential counselling services to support employees' emotional well-being. Policies that allow for flexible work arrangements, remote working opportunities, and workload balancing should be developed to reduce burnout and improve work-life balance. Financial wellness should also be emphasized by incorporating financial literacy training, savings and investment programs, and debt management support, ensuring employees are equipped with essential financial management skills.

Contribution of the Study to the Body of Knowledge

The study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the role of employee wellness programs on fostering organizational performance. Further the study contributes by validating the effectiveness of structured wellness programs and training initiatives in fostering job satisfaction, reducing turnover, and improving financial efficiency.

The study also adds to the existing body of literature by demonstrating that effectiveness of wellness programs plays a significant role in maintaining workplace stability and collaboration.

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