



## **Influence of Flexible Work Practices on Employee Performance in Institutions of Higher Learning in Kenya: A Case of Selected Universities in Nyeri County**

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### **Abstract**

*Work flexibility offers employees a balance between their professional and personal lives, leading to job satisfaction and high performance and an overall improvement of the organization as a whole. Work flexibility is very important, and with digital advancements and improved technology, employees are able to continue their work anywhere they wish, provided they have an internet connection. The general objective was to examine the influence of flexible work practices on employee performance in institutions of higher learning in Nyeri County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Self-determination theory, Three Stage Model for Talent Management and Spill Over Theory. This study employed a descriptive research design. The target population for the study was 1300 staff of Karatina University and Dedan Kimathi University. The study applied stratified random sampling to sample 260 staff. The study used questionnaires to collect data. A pilot was conducted with 10% of the sample size hence 26 staff. Content validity was tested using factor loadings. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient method was used to check reliability. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean,) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression) with the help of SPSS version 28. Data was tabulated and presented in tables. Ethics were observed before, during, and after data collection. Findings show that; there is a strong significant relationship between flexi time and employee performance ( $r=0.467$ ,  $p=0.005$ ), a moderate significant relationship between leave and employee performance ( $r=0.348$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), a weak significant relationship between tele-working and employee performance ( $r=0.240$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), and a strong significant relationship between job sharing and employee performance ( $r=0.511$ ,  $p=0.022$ ). The study recommends that; the institutions should embrace flexibility in relation to the work schedules of the staff, the institutions should come up with policies that will guide on how to compensate staff who are recalled to work while on leave, the institutions should organize training for the staff especially on use of technology, the management should also establish a culture that promotes sharing and have proper plans for conducting orientations and inductions to ensure effective onboarding of new personnel.*

**Keywords:** Employee performance, Flexi time, Job sharing, Staff leave, Tele-working

### **INTRODUCTION**

Flexibility is the opportunity to customize work in different manners which is attractive for most employees. The most common flexible working practices are flexible working location and hours (Weideman & Hofmeyr, 2020). Work flexibility offers employees a balance between their professional and personal lives, leading to job satisfaction and high performance and an overall improvement of the organization as a whole. Its alsois very important, and with digital advancements and improved technology, employees are able to continue their work anywhere they wish, provided they have an internet connection (White, 2021). Neto (2020) noted a growth of flexible working practices in organizations in Brazil. However, there is no official law regarding remote working or flexible working hours in

Brazil, which may generate uncertainty for organizations implementing those practices. Germany have a well-established short-term work schedule and hence the staff were not affected by the COVID 19 crisis (Betcherman et al., 2020). Workers who worked from home worked for longer hours and the companies saved on operations costs which had a significant effect on profitability. The staff also saved on commuting costs and were satisfied with salaries paid while working from home (Adams-Prassl, Boneva, Golin & Rauh, 2020). Chen (2015) noted that most employers in China allow for flexible work arrangement in the work place. The staff are allowed to suggest their suitable work location and work hours to balance work and life. Flexible work arrangements in China help employees who have demanding family responsibilities such as taking care of children or an elderly parent. The staff are able to work and look after their loved ones.

Essentially, the idea of flexible work arrangements is a phenomenon that has become trendy in Africa. Jasmine, Nasina and Muhammad (2016) noted that availability of flexible working options is more in demand because there are more dual-earner couples, women and single-parent families, as well as those who have geriatric care responsibilities, in the workplace. In Zimbabwe, due to Covid-19 pandemic, higher and tertiary education were encouraged to change their labour deployment traditions to embrace the flexible work arrangements strategy. The Covid-19 situation compelled the government to direct employers to operate on a skeletal staff and encourage staff to work from home as a measure to reduce the spread of the virus (Muchowe, Mawonde, & Pande, 2021). Akom, Obeng-Sarpong, Aflakpui, and Sarpong (2021) noted that the approval of leave for the administrative staff in universities does not conform to established policies in Ghana. The practice does not ensure that adequate human resources are available for the daily smooth running of the University.

The Kenyan Employment Act of 2007 enforces statutory leaves such as 3 month paid maternity leave (Section 29) and 21 day paid annual leave (Section 28) and at least one day off each week (section 27). This is not enough as some situations may require employees to take time off in order to take care of non-work issues. The provision of flexible working arrangements and work place facilities are left at the discretion of the employer (Muasya, 2016). Mungania (2017) described a flexible work arrangement as an activity that allows staff to choose the time and place so far as their responsibilities are met. This usually depends on the organization's policies to enhance workers' flexibility in terms of time and place where tasks can be performed. The standard flexible work programs in Kenya include flexi-time, job sharing, constricted workweeks, flexible shift work, part-time work, telecommute, and controlled schedule meetings (Mwangi, Theuri & Sang, 2018). Public universities in Nyeri County provides its staff members with different flexible work arrangements. Flexible work options for the universities employee are teleworking, working on shifts, and flexitime options. The flexible work arrangements are flexible lunch time, working early and leaving early particularly for the staff studying after work, and off days when there is low work pressure and overtime when work pressure is high like during first year admission.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to the Commission for University Education in Kenya, universities have grown tremendously and have several academic programs with enrollments recording over 50% in growth which has called for more teaching staff. Nonetheless, the public universities have a shortage of teaching staff leading to work load (Julie et al., 2018). The staff are hence unable to attend to all students that need their attention. The public universities have more part-time lecturers and 60% of these lecturers commit little time to their job and may also lack adequate information about the courses. This disrupts teaching programs and leads to lower performance. The use of part-timers has raised serious concerns on their commitment and performance. Some universities in Kenya have therefore embraced e-Learning with a view

to bridge this gap while at the same time improve learning flexibility especially for the employed learners. Eight state sponsored and five private sponsored universities have e-Learning programs although 85.6% of the e-tutors are demotivated in executing their e-Learning responsibilities (Mutisya & Makokha, 2016).

According to the Commission of Higher Education in Kenya, more than 60% of public universities adopted flexible working practices for operations continuity and safety measure for both teaching and non-teaching tasks (Okemasisi, 2016). The universities commenced on staff training on online lecturing and exams which was successfully implemented by nearly 50% of public universities particularly those in high network coverage areas (Wanzala, 2017). Other universities faced several challenges as the staff were reluctant to accept teleworking. A study conducted by Mwangi (2020) on customer satisfaction within public universities in Kenya found out that more than 50% of the students were not satisfied with the services provided especially in the library administration. The services by the librarians were ranked very low and the services of the security personnel were ranked very low. Majority of the students 66% complained of slow response from the supervisors when carrying out research projects. This proves that there is low performance of both teaching and non-teaching staff in public universities. Empirical studies show that public universities in Kenya are faced with challenges of increased workloads, and difficulty in attracting and retaining qualified staff culminating into low institutional loyalty and productivity, loss of knowledge and experience, and limited time for research and development activities for employees. Most public universities face the challenge of high staff turnover, dissatisfaction among customers (students), and a lack of commitment among employees (Mutisya & Makokha, 2016; Maende, 2021; Ng'ethe, 2014; Tarus et al., 2015). In addition, flexibility of staff in Kenyan universities is becoming a challenge. The study sought to bridge this research gap by examining the flexible work practices that may affect employee performance in public universities in Nyeri County.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Flexi Time and Employee Performance**

Deery, Walsh, Zatzick, and Hayes (2016) explored the relationship between compressed work hours and absenteeism in front-line service work in UK. Results showed that compressed work hours were significantly related to lower absenteeism and that this relationship was mediated sequentially through emotional exhaustion and physical health. Sabiha and Daro (2017) focused on the impact of flexible working hours on employees' performance in Pakistan. It was noted that flexible working hours are beneficial to the staff as it helps them to plan their schedule after work hence work life balance and staff who work with flexible working hours are more satisfied at work. Flexi-hours strategy reduced job stress and general well-being of a staff. It enables employees to make changes according to situation at hand. Odunayo, Obomanu, and Oluwatosin (2020) assessed influence of flexible working hours on employee productivity of logistics companies in Rivers state, Nigeria. Results showed that there exists a positive correlation between flexible working hours and employee productivity. Bazillai (2021) conducted a study that explored the impact of work overload and work hours on employee performance. According to the findings of this research, work overload and work hours have a significant influence on the quality of the employee's family life which in turn influence and affect an employee's commitment on their job.

Mungania, Wangithi, and Kihoro (2016) studied influence of flexible work arrangement on performance of the banking sector in Kenya. Findings showed a strong significant relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee productivity. Employees who perceived flexibility in the timing and location of their work, had less difficulty with work-family balance.

### **Leave Policies and Employee Performance**

Hammer and Palmgren (2019) sought to determine influence of parental leave on employee commitment in Sweden and the United States. Findings showed that parental leave influenced employee engagement and retention in four main ways; relationship with the management, salary and career opportunities, values alignment, and general staff well-being. Nisar and Siddiqui (2019) investigated relationship between fringe benefits and staff satisfaction in organizations in Pakistan. Findings revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between recreational leaves and health protection benefits on job satisfaction. However flexible working conditions had insignificant relationship with employee productivity. Akom, Obeng-Sarpong, Aflakpui, and Sarpong (2021) studied the relationship between leave policies and performance of university staff in Nigeria. Regression analysis showed that there is no linear relationship between leave policies and employee performance. Kasau (2017) examined relationship between work life balance and performance of Kitui County government. Findings showed a negative correlation between leave policy and employee performance. Conclusions were that although leave policy is important, but it does not significantly affect performance. Kyalo (2021) examined effect of flexible working conditions on employee performance in the banking sector in Kenya. Results showed that the staff were very committed because they were not denied leave when they asked for it. They were also paid while on leave. Family and study leave had the greatest relationship with employee performance.

### **Tele-working and Employee Performance**

Pänttjä (2021) investigated effect of teleworking on employee productivity in Finland and China. Findings showed that teleworking improved employee productivity due to less sick offs and breaks. This increased employee satisfaction due to a quiet working environment. Firm profits also increased during employees' teleworking, since the rent and office running costs were significantly reduced. Bloom et al. (2015) analyzed impact of working from home on employee productivity in China. The study noted that employees working from home made 13% more per week and answered 40 more calls per week. This was due to calmer environment at home. The staff also worked 9.2% more minutes daily than while working in the office since they did not have to commute, took shorter lunch and tea breaks, and less sick off days. Uchenna, Uruakpa, and Uche (2018) sought to find out if there was a relationship between working from home and employee productivity. Findings showed that working from had a weak positive relationship with work quality. Teleworking enabled employee to work from various location which enhanced flexibility. Maluki (2020) assessed the framework for improving employee acceptance of teleworking in private universities in Kenya. Findings showed that the staff perceived that inadequate training before and after adopting the teleworking system, lack of employee motivation and commitment, inadequate IT support, lack of top management support, unclear teleworking policies, and technological readiness could lead to rejection of teleworking.

### **Job Sharing and Employee Performance**

Tubigi and Alshawi (2015) evaluated knowledge management process on organizational performance in an airline industry in Germany. The study revealed that knowledge transfer was most common in knowledge management process used by organization but did not influence performance. Selvarajan, and Solansky (2019) studied influence of co-worker support on employee performance in USA. Findings showed that coworker-support and coworker-exchange were positively related to employee performance. Minabere (2020) examined the relationship between job sharing and organizational performance of telecommunication companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. Findings showed that there is a positive significant relationship between job sharing and organizational performance. Muigai (2015) study sought to determine the relationship between knowledge transfer and

employee performance. The findings established that knowledge transfer positively influence employee performance.

## **Theoretical Perspectives**

### **Self-Determination Theory**

Self-determination theory was developed by Ryan and Deci (1985). According to the authors, everyone has the need for relatedness, competence, and autonomy as their three core psychological requirements. The three needs serve as a catalyst for individual development. The urge for autonomy is the main topic of this study. Autonomy is the personal choice in decision-making that gives one the impression that they are in charge of the course of action. Experiencing autonomy is having the freedom to express oneself without being constrained by outside forces. Voluntary motive makes employees prefer temporary contracts as a form of flexible working since it brings about better productivity, new ideas (innovations) which at long run yields job satisfaction to the employee. Being independent and having the ability to make your own decisions are both aspects of autonomy. When people have a choice, can control their own actions, and have their sentiments acknowledged by others, they feel more autonomous (Martela & Reikki, 2018). Flexible work practices give employees some choice over their work schedules without jeopardizing the employers' expectations for task completion.

### **Three Stage Model for Talent Management**

The three stage Model of Talent Management was hypothesised by Brandt in 2007. The theory consists of identifying, developing and retaining talents (Brandt & Kull, 2007). The model defines a talent as an intangible asset that the organization can acquire. The first step in the model is to identify talents and attract them to the organization. The strategies that can be used to attract the talents are offering a competitive salary, a balance between work and life, opportunities of career development, opportunities of learning and development and work challenges. The second step in the model involves talent development. After attracting talents, an organization needs to develop and grow the talents. At this stage, the organization determines the learning process and programs to participants (Brandt & Kull, 2007). The third step is to retain talent. The model proposes that retaining talents involves creating a sense of belonging and commitment to the organization's employees, motivating and creating a good atmosphere for learning. Chitsaz-Isfahani and Boustani (2014) asserts that, developing existing staff through talent management strategies costs less than acquiring new talents. University staff needs knowledge of their strengths and consequently the areas where they can improve to improve on their productivity. Feedback should be given to the staff to clarify areas which they need to improve. Coaching builds on this knowledge and contributes instructions, guidance and support to allow employees to act on the feedback that they are given (Brandt & Kull, 2007).

### **Spill Over Theory**

Spillover theory, also known as spillover effect or externality, refers to the transfer or diffusion of effects, influences, or impacts from one domain or context to another (Agarwal et al., 2010; Perri & Peruffo, 2016). It suggests that the consequences or outcomes of an action or event in one area can extend beyond the immediate or intended boundaries, affecting other areas or domains (Scholarios & Marks, 2004). The idea of spillover effects or externalities has roots in economics and has been studied by economists such as Arthur Pigou and Ronald Coase (Lai, 2002). Spillover theory provides a relevant framework for understanding the dynamics between work and non-work domains in the context of flexible work practices. According to spillover theory, experiences, attitudes, and behaviors in one domain can spill over and influence other domains (Shi & Wang, 2022). Understanding the interplay between work and non-work domains through the lens of spillover theory helps shed light on the potential impact of flexible work practices on employee outcomes in

Kenyan universities. It emphasizes the importance of creating work environments that support work-life balance and acknowledges the interconnectedness of various aspects of employees' lives.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population was staff of Karatina University and Dedan Kimathi University. The two universities have a total of approximately 1300 staff both teaching and non-teaching staff which were the study unit of observation. The researcher randomly picked 103 staff from the two universities.

**Table 1: Sampling Matrix**

University	Population	Sample size (20% of the population)
Karatina (strata A)	517	103
Dedan Kimathi (strata B)	783	157
<b>Total</b>	<b>1300</b>	<b>260</b>

The study used questionnaires to collect data. The pilot was conducted with 10% of the sample size as recommended by Orodho (2012) hence 26 university staff took part in the pilot. This study used content and construct validity. To enhance content validity, the researcher used judgmental technique. To ensure construct validity, the study used factor loadings. The least factor loading threshold expected was 0.3. Questionnaire reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean,) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression). Data was presented in Tables.

## RESULTS

The study assessed the flexi time, leave, tele-working and job sharing on employee performance in higher learning institutions in Nyeri County, Kenya. Results are presented in table 2, 3,4, 5 and 6.

### Flexi Time

Majority of the staff have compressed working hours which enables them to either attend to personal issues or relax after work hence reducing chances of stress. The staffs are also allowed to work part time to complete tasks that were not able to accomplish during normal working hours. The supervisor also supports the staff through allowing them to work at their convenience as far as they meet their targets. However, institutions do not compensate staffs who work overtime. This may demotivate the staff who may feel that they are spending too much time in the office without compensation. Findings are in agreement with Sabina and Daro (2017) that flexible working hours are beneficial to the staff as it helps them to plan their schedule after work hence work life balance and staff who work with flexible working hours are more satisfied at work. Similar results were conducted by Galea et al. (2014); Omondi (2016); Sekhar & Patwardhan, (2021).

**Table 2: Flexi Time***Key: SD=strongly disagree, D=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA= strongly agree, M=Mean.*

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		M
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Compressed working schedules helps staff to deal with other personal issues	19	13.6	7	5.0	4	2.9	39	27.9	71	50.7	3.97
Compressed working hours enhances my work performance	3	2.1	7	5.0	2	1.4	53	37.9	75	53.6	4.36
The institution supports part time working	5	3.6	12	8.6	12	8.6	27	19.3	84	60.0	4.24
The institution supports flexi-time working schedule	12	8.6	4	2.9	12	8.6	36	25.7	76	54.3	4.14
My working hours are clear	15	10.7	2	1.4	3	2.1	48	34.3	72	51.4	4.14
The institution compensates staff for working over time	32	22.9	83	59.3	7	5.0	12	8.6	6	4.3	2.55
I am permitted to work from any other location	12	8.6	4	2.9	9	6.4	34	24.3	81	57.9	4.24
Staff who are unable to work full time may make agreements	5	3.6	4	2.9	10	7.1	54	38.6	67	47.9	4.22
I am permitted to leave my workplace at any time	42	30.0	77	55.0	7	5.0	6	4.3	8	5.7	2.23
I feel pressure to a certain extent due to heavy workload	3	2.1	7	5.0	16	11.4	43	30.7	71	50.7	4.23
I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do	4	2.9	7	5.0	2	1.4	23	16.4	104	74.3	4.54
Serving clients in different time zones increase my time pressure	5	3.6	13	9.3	2	1.4	37	26.4	83	59.3	4.29
Different groups at work demand things from me	10	7.1	14	10.0	5	3.6	34	24.3	77	55.0	4.22

**N=140**

**Table 3: Leave Days***Key: SD=strongly disagree, D=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA= strongly agree, M=Mean.*

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		M
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
My institution adheres to the leave policy	5	3.6	13	9.3	2	1.4	37	26.4	83	59.3	4.32
Am committed to the institution	9	6.4	12	8.6	8	5.7	65	46.4	46	32.9	3.86
My leave days enables me to solve family related issues	12	8.6	20	14.3	6	4.3	66	47.1	36	25.7	3.67
My leave days are enough to attend to other personal issues	78	55.7	27	19.3	17	12.1	12	8.6	6	4.3	2.31
I respond to job related functions while on leave	8	5.7	10	7.1	5	3.6	77	55.0	40	28.6	3.94
Study leave improves professional skills and efficiency	11	7.9	12	8.6	4	2.9	29	20.7	84	60.0	4.16
I am free to schedule my yearly leave exactly as I want it	7	5.0	14	10.0	7	5.0	63	45.0	49	35.0	3.95
Employees use compassionate leave when they have to take time off urgently	6	4.3	12	8.6	0	0	42	30.0	80	57.1	4.27
My employer allows employees to take care of pressing personal matters	17	12.1	9	6.4	4	2.9	70	50.0	40	28.6	3.76
In the event of a family emergency, I am permitted to take a few hours or days off	7	5.0	9	6.4	2	1.4	25	17.9	97	69.3	4.40
Leave help to reduce work-family conflicts.	5	3.6	3	2.1	8	5.7	34	24.3	90	64.3	4.44
I am paid accordingly in case I am called upon by my employer during my leave days	38	27.1	74	52.9	3	2.1	13	9.3	12	8.6	2.06

**N=140**



**Table 4: Tele-working***Key: SD=strongly disagree, D=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA= strongly agree, M=Mean.*

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		M
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
The university encourages tele-working	10	7.1	22	15.7	7	5.0	20	14.3	81	57.9	3.44
Adequate support from the IT team enhances acceptance of teleworking	12	8.6	16	11.4	9	6.4	22	15.7	81	57.9	3.97
IT support team maintain and monitor teleworking platforms and networks	6	4.3	12	8.6	3	2.1	35	25.0	84	60.0	4.28
I frequently use teleworking systems to perform my duties	11	7.9	21	15.0	1	0.7	37	26.4	70	50.0	3.24
It is easier to upgrade/update teleworking systems in case of any new feature	29	20.7	77	55.0	2	1.4	23	16.4	9	6.4	1.69
Teleworking platforms are compatible with available hardware and network	52	37.1	52	37.1	16	11.4	13	9.3	7	5.0	1.92
Teleworking platforms are compatible	35	25.0	45	32.1	8	5.7	18	12.9	34	24.3	2.16
Internets costs hinders effective tele-working	17	12.1	12	8.6	16	11.4	44	31.4	51	36.4	3.71
Tele-working save paperwork costs for the students and staff	15	10.7	15	10.7	8	5.7	41	29.3	61	43.6	3.84
The university IT team is always ready to help in case of challenges with the system	58	41.4	27	19.3	15	10.7	27	19.3	13	9.3	2.36
The university offered adequate training on tele-working	49	35.0	28	20.0	18	12.9	31	22.1	14	10.0	2.52
Teleworking improves employee productivity	22	15.7	27	19.3	12	8.6	30	21.4	49	35.0	3.76

**N=140**

**Table 5: Job Sharing***Key: SD=strongly disagree, D=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA= strongly agree, M=Mean.*

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		M
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
I am motivated to perform well because the institution encourages employees to share work	22	15.7	27	19.3	12	8.6	30	21.4	49	35.0	3.43
Job sharing allows me to finish work earlier	6	4.3	9	6.4	4	2.9	52	37.1	69	49.3	4.21
Job sharing has enabled me to have a fulfilling personal life	5	3.6	13	9.3	7	5.0	54	38.6	61	43.6	4.09
Successful job sharing arrangements serve the needs of individual employees	28	20.0	16	11.4	7	5.0	32	22.9	57	40.7	3.53
Staff are focused on exchanging the best practice	16	11.4	18	12.9	9	6.4	38	27.1	59	42.1	3.76
The institution has formal mechanisms to enable exchange of best practices	52	37.1	34	24.3	11	7.9	12	8.6	31	22.1	2.46
I willingly share knowledge with my colleagues	9	6.4	12	8.6	6	4.3	50	35.7	63	45.0	4.04
Job sharing has enabled me to adequately perform my work	7	5.0	30	21.4	6	4.3	32	22.9	65	46.4	3.84
If work gets difficult, my colleagues help me	28	20.0	18	12.8	6	4.3	37	26.4	51	36.4	3.32
There is friction or anger between colleagues	50	35.7	74	52.9	9	6.4	5	3.6	2	1.4	1.55
Rivalries and lack of trust among professionals hinder career growth and development	5	3.6	5	3.6	5	3.6	54	38.6	71	50.7	4.29
Communication gaps and chaos hinder better work relations	15	10.7	28	20.0	10	7.1	42	30.0	45	32.1	3.35

**N=140**

**Table 6: Employee Performance***Key: SD=strongly disagree, D=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA= strongly agree, M=Mean.*

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		M
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
I am willing to take up new roles delegated by my seniors	17	12.1	20	14.3	7	5.0	50	35.7	46	33.7	3.37
I can always do my job well with minimal supervision	17	12.1	26	18.6	18	12.8	44	31.4	35	25.0	3.22
I take time to follow up with students to ensure that they are happy with my services	30	21.4	49	35.0	11	7.9	24	17.1	26	18.6	1.91
I do my work effectively without complaining	8	5.7	34	24.3	5	3.6	58	41.4	35	25.0	3.33
I attend to all my duties on time	21	15.0	23	16.4	4	2.9	59	42.1	33	23.6	2.57
Students have lodged just a few complaints which have been linked to me	11	7.9	8	5.7	2	1.4	38	27.1	81	57.9	3.79
I am consistently successful in meeting my targets	14	10.0	23	16.4	13	9.3	48	34.3	42	30.0	3.42
I always relate well my with colleagues	17	12.1	28	20.0	8	5.7	49	35.0	38	27.1	3.55
My performance appraisals have always been higher than average	79	56.4	43	30.7	8	5.7	5	3.6	3	3.6	1.67
I am in a position to provide excellent services to the students	2	1.4	31	22.1	1	0.7	51	36.4	55	39.3	3.32
If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere, I leave my organization	5	3.6	7	5.0	15	10.7	50	35.7	63	45.0	3.86
I work towards meeting the set objectives	6	4.3	35	25.0	6	4.3	47	33.6	40	28.6	3.43

**N=140**

### **Leave Days**

Findings in table 3 imply that the universities adhere to stipulated leave policies since they allow the staff to take leave based on the situation at hand as well as annual leave. The leaves enable the staff to solve issues that they may be facing and they feel that the institution cares for them. In return they become productive to achieve the institution goals. Majority of the staff feel that the compassionate leave days are not enough and this could mean that some of them go back to work while they are still emotionally disturbed which may affect their productivity. The fact that some staff are either recalled or asked to attend to work related while on leave means that they don't get to enjoy their leave wholly and such staff may feel oppressed by the institution. The staff are also not paid for the work done when they are supposed to be on leave which may cause dissatisfaction with the institution hence low working morale. Through study leave, the staff are able to improve their skills and become more efficient and productive hence improving their performance. Findings are in agreement with Nisar and Siddiqui (2019); Agbonna et al. (2023) and Nisar & Siddiqui, (2019). that if a good number of leaves and a good health protection plan is provided by the employer, the employees tend to be more satisfied and committed towards their job.

### **Tele-working**

Findings imply that the universities encourage tele-working whereby staff are allowed to work from different location as they wish. The staff however face some challenges related to functioning of the systems. The IT staff are very reluctant to help the staff working from home. Some of the gadgets used by the staff are not compatible with the institutions software which may made tele-working a very challenging task. It may also slow down the work of the lecturers hence unable to meet targets. Tele-working also requires internet and power to work effectively which may be costly for some staff hence hindering them from tele-working unless the institution compensates them accordingly. There is also lack of staff training on technology use and some staff may have very hard time trying to work remotely. Through tele-working the staff are able to from any location and for more hours since they have more time at their disposal as opposed to working from office where they must commute to the office and back home. Findings are in agreement with Päänttjä (2021); Crandall & Gao, (2005) and Barbuto et al. (2022) that teleworking improve employee productivity due to less sick offs and breaks.

### **Employee Performance**

Findings imply that the staff are committed to achieve their work targets and they are submissive to their seniors. The staff however rarely seek feedback from their clients who are mostly the students hence they may not be able to assess whether their customers are satisfied with their services. The fact that majority of the staff are willing to take up other job show that they are not satisfied with their current job which may result to high staff turnover. The staff are also not able to attend to all their duties on time meaning that there could be high rate of lateness which is an indicator of poor staff performance. The staff performance could be rated as average since majority of the staff disagreed that their appraisals have been higher than average. Findings are in consistent with Rodriguez (2017); Lin et al. (2006) and Payne et al. (2000) that employee productivity, retention, and customer service are the key indicators of employee performance.

**Table 7: Coefficient of Correlation**

Variables		Performance	Flexi time	Leave	Tele-working	Job sharing
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Flexi time	Pearson Correlation	.467**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005				
Leave	Pearson Correlation	.348*	.212	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.081			
Tele-working	Pearson Correlation	.240**	.321	.211	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.005	.083		
Job sharing	Pearson Correlation	.511*	.218	.578	.708	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	.032	.000	.000	

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

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

According to the findings; there is a strong significant relationship between flexi time and employee performance ( $r=0.467$ ,  $p=0.005$ ), a moderate significant relationship between leave and employee performance ( $r=0.348$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), a weak significant relationship between tele-working and employee performance ( $r=0.240$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), and a strong significant relationship between job sharing and employee performance ( $r=0.511$ ,  $p=0.022$ ).

**Table 8: Regression Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
<b>Constant/Y Intercept</b>	4.413	.856		5.411	.000
<b>Flexi time</b>	.571	.324	.211	1.801	.003
<b>Leave</b>	.289	.110	.364	1.877	.040
<b>Tele-working</b>	.267	.010	.324	1.012	.211
<b>Job sharing</b>	.761	.313	.263	2.513	.020

The regression equation shows that; a unit change in flexi time would predict a unit increase in employee performance by a factor of 0.570, a unit change in leave would cause a unit increase in a unit increase in employee performance by a factor of 0.289, a unit change in tele-working would predict a unit increase in employee performance by a factor of 0.267 and a unit change in job sharing would predict a unit increase in employee performance by a factor of 0.761. Three variables (flexi time, leave, and job sharing) cause a significant change on employee performance  $\text{sig}<0.5$  while tele-working causes an insignificant change on employee performance  $\text{sig}>0.5$ . Findings also show that job sharing was the greatest determinant of employee performance in the public universities in Nyeri County ( $t=2.513$ ).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Flexi time enhances staff performance in public universities. The public universities have different working timelines. While some staff have compressed work times, others work depending on their availability. Staff of the public universities takes time off from work for various reasons which include, emergencies, sick, or study leave. The staff also apply for

their annual leave at their convenience. Tele-working affects staff performance since it enables staff to work remotely. Through tele-working, staff saves time that would otherwise be used to commute to and from work. The universities' staff share jobs within their respective departments. This is achieved through knowledge sharing among the staff in the same departments. Job sharing enhances staff performance since they are able to accomplish tasks on time.

The institutions should consider giving the staff flexibility on when to start and end their roles as far as they meet their targets and achieve organization goals. The university should work out a structure of working that provides for flexible work structure of working that may provide flexible work schedules in the universities. Employees will then be able to balance their personal and professional commitments.

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