



**INFLUENCE OF WORK ENVIRONMENT ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AMONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
MINISTRIES IN KENYA, A CASE OF MERU COUNTY**

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement continues to receive attention in empirical studies since it influences performance of organizations. The relationship between work environment and employee engagement was examined through descriptive survey of 200 employees in central government ministries in Meru County using structured questionnaires for data collection. Upon quantitative analysis of data, the regression results of the study found that while physical work environment ($t = 3.460, p = 0.001$) and social work environment ($t = 4.531, p < 0.001$) had significant influence on employee engagement at 5% significance level, psychological work environment ($t = 1.685, p = 0.094 < 0.1$) and work place flexibility ($t = 1.18, p = 0.239 > 0.1$) did not significantly influence employee engagement at 5% significance level though the psychological work environment was only significant at 10% significance level. It was also found that psychological work environment had a positive significant relationship with employee engagement ($r = 0.256, p < 0.001$). The study recommended that devolved central government ministries improve their physical and social work environment as a priority. Measures should also be taken to improve psychological work environment though it did not significantly influence engagement, the relationship with engagement was positive. Workplace flexibility did not have significant influence on employee engagement hence should not be given attention. Further, it was recommended that more studies be conducted on why workplace flexibility is neither significantly related with employee engagement nor has a significant influence on employee engagement yet other studies suggested otherwise in other contexts.

Key Words: *Physical Work Environment, Social Work Environment, Psychological Work Environment, Work Place Flexibility*

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INTRODUCTION

The environment in which the organizations operate today is highly competitive and many organizations are putting in place measures to achieving operational excellence in order to improve their positioning in the industry. To achieve this, a lot of attention is shifting to the role of human resources in organizational performance. Employee engagement is one way through which organizations can ensure success and achieve competitiveness. There is need to implement measures that would ensure that members of the organization have a heightened level of performance and commitment to the organization. For this reason an organization must address a wide range of measures which would improve the degree to which employees are involved in their jobs and job performance.

There is an increasing interest in research on employee engagement (Albrecht, 2010). Employee engagement can be defined as a series of psychological states (cognitive, emotional and behavioral) that ultimately represents an intention to act and perform work effectively. Rich, et al. (2010). The performance of employees on the job contributes significantly to profit performance of an organization (Bevan, 2012). Ineffective performance on the job has the capacity to affect organization negatively and this leads to low level of productivity, poor profit performance and overall low level of organizational performance (Okoyo & Ezejiofor, 2013). Organizations should ensure that their employees are engaged and demonstrate superior performance. Studies conducted by Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) found that employee Performance at the workplace is key to organizational performance and management must ensure a good workplace environment for employees. Job performance is considered as those activities or tasks which employees are involved in on day today basis which define the level of achievement of organizational goals. They the behaviors which are demonstrated by employees at work and which

contributes to achievement of business objectives (Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1999). Similarly, a high level of employee performance and engagement is vital for organization to achieve high success in their performance. It is therefore important for organizations to ensure sustained level of employee performance and engagement (Muchhal, 2014).

Tripathi (2014) defined the work environment as that which covers the actual physical conditions of the job, organizational and work culture. Every aspect of the work environment is linked to the level of employee performance and productivity which is consequent to their motivation and engagement. The way the organization is managing its work environment ultimately translates to organizational productivity and performance. In addition, work environment is regarded as conditions of work prevailing in a given organization and which encompass the physical aspect and setting which include heat and equipment and the characteristics of the job which covers the workload and task complexity (Briner, 2000). In his understanding of the work environment, he included broader organizational aspects such as the culture and history of the organization. Additionally, he considered the external aspects and industry conditions part of the working environment.

Statement of the problem

The Government of Kenya having identified the need to check and improve on performance, has therefore endeavored to improve on the engagement and performance of its employees across its ministries through restructuring, establishing efficiency through information systems and even developing new ways to measure performance (GoK, 2015). It has therefore reinstated back the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) so as to enhance performance of the public sector which is performing poorly. Among the major contributors include but not limited to political interference, excessive regulations and controls, mismanagement, absolute mismanagement,

undefined Organization culture, distended staff establishment, poor organizational structure, unpleasant working environment among others.

According to Atambo and Nyamwamu (2015), the conditions of work place, psychosocial atmosphere among others are basically considered as being equally vital in improving performance of the organization and that of the employee. In order to boost employee engagement, various measures have been set by the government in various ministries. However, actions implemented have not translated much into improvement in behavior and achieving results or guaranteeing accountability in the utilization of resources by the ministry and service delivery efficiency. According to GoK (2012), information systems are inadequately applied, there lacks a proper evaluation for the systems to establish their performance and performance incentive system that leads employees to perform poorly. According to WHO (2015), productivity of employees has been affected by the low level of workforce performance.

Studies conducted by the American Society of Interior Designers [ASID] (2015), Work environment in 69% of organizations were found to be a significant source of non-performance while 41% of the organizations were found to be struggling owing to a lack of conducive work environment (American Psychological Organization [APO], 2015) the study established that job satisfaction which is a factor of organization performance was affected by the design of the physical workplace. Thirty one percent of people who took part in the survey indicated they were satisfied with their jobs. The respondents in the study indicated that they were happy with their jobs and reported that the work environment was conducive. Fifty percent of the respondents are involved in the job search and indicated that they would prefer working for an organization which has attractive physical work setting and good psychological work environment. With the findings of these studies, it is important to focus on the areas in the workplace environment in public organizations that requires to be addressed in order

to improve on employees' performance. It is these research gaps in the past studies that motivated this study hence the researcher sought to answer the research question: does workplace environment factors affect employee engagement of devolved central government ministries in Meru County.

Objectives of the study

This study sought to establish the influence of workplace environment on employee engagement of central government ministries in Kenya, a case of Meru County. The specific objectives were:-

- To determine the influence of physical work environment on employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County
- Determine the effect of psychological work environment on employees' engagement of central government ministries in Meru County
- To examine the effects of social work environment on employee engagement of central governments ministries in Meru County
- To establish the effect of workplace flexibility on employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County

The study was guided by the following research hypotheses;

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between physical work environment and employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County.
- H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between psychological work environment and employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County.
- H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between social work environment and employees engagement of central government ministries of Meru County.
- H₀₄ There is no significant relationship between workplace flexibility and employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of work adjustment

This theory tries to link the employees to the work environment. (René,1964) asserted that if a person's work abilities, skills and attitudes are matched with the job and organization, the person will perform the job well and will demonstrate high level of satisfaction in his /her job. In addition, if the organization provides certain rewards to accelerate the level of employee performance, the level of employee satisfaction will improve and job performance. In organizations, individuals are motivated to work hard if employers are able to provide work support environment which recognizes their achievement and performance. In the work environment, individuals seek recognition for performance, comfortable work conditions, safe work environment and autonomous work conditions that allow employees their work environment.

Two-Factor Theory

Two-Factor Theory by Frederick Herzberg (1959) tried to explain the conditions in the work environment that would cause satisfaction and motivation to employee to improve their job performance. Such conditions he regarded as satisfiers for example opportunity for achievement and highly enriched d work environment. He also identified alternative work conditions which he referred to as dissatisfies or hygiene factors because they support the mental health of a worker. These include good salary, the nature of leadership or supervision prevailing at the workplace, social support among employees. This theory supports the need to improve work environment to motivate employee to higher performance and to eliminate conditions in the workplace responsible for lack of satisfaction among employees and that affect their performance. The theory explains workplace ergonomics that affects employee's performance. It supports the variable work Environment as it helps in understanding the individual focused work environment and therefore make it favorable for

the employees in support to the organization's performance.

Affective events theory

This theory provides a linkage between the internal conditions of any work environment and the reactions of the employees to such work conditions (Phua, 2012). If conditions in the work environment has the capacity to affect employees work and productivity, there will be less inducement to perform at a higher level. Psychologically, employee's job performance and satisfaction will be affected. This will impact negatively to organizational performance. Hence organizations should ensure work environment which does not elicit negative reactions from employees.

Human Relations Theory

Elton Mayo and associates developed a theory on human relations through an experiment conducted at Hawthorne plant, Western Electric Company, Illinois USA, between 1924 to 1932. The experiment set out to determine other factors at the workplace that determines employee's productivity other that god working conditions. The experiment involved a group woman who were working under experimental and controlled work environment. Women in the controlled room worked under normal work conditions where there was enough light, good supervision and were motivated by good pay. Women in the experimental conditions worked under dim light and dark room conditions but were allowed to decide on their own when they can take arrest break. They did not have a supervisor. When their performance was measured, the results indicated that their performance improved and that they very were happy with their jobs as women who were working under normal work conditions. The experiments were conducted repeatedly for a period of five years by Elton Mayo between 1927 to 1932. When the experiments was concluded, it was established that social work conditions at the workplace improves workers' productivity. By allowing women in the experimental conditions to work without a supervisor, they developed a group

pride which improved their performance in spite of harsh work conditions. The theory has significant relevance to explaining work environment and influence on employee performance. When organizations provide employees with good social work environment where they are consulted and

involved in decision making, they will improve their performance and productivity. Hence organizations should not assume that employees are only motivated to higher productivity by other good conditions of work but should address the social needs of employees at the workplace.

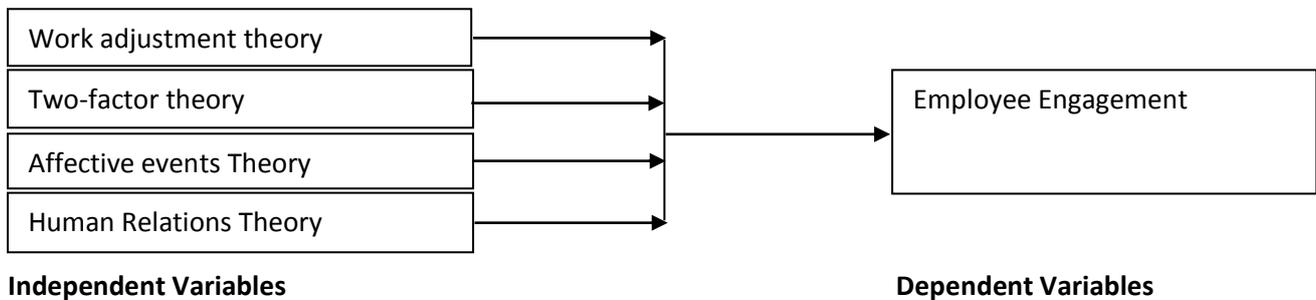


Figure 1: Theoretical framework
Source: Author 2019

Empirical Review

Several studies carried out to investigate the association between work environment and employee engagement found that employee engagement is highly influenced by work environmental conditions (Naharuddin & Sadegi, 2013; Chandrasekarr, 2011; Dolden & Vischer, 2008). Implementing suitable environmental factors at the workplace which constitute both physical and psychosocial which increases the level of employee engagement (Buhter, 1997; Chandrasekar, 2011). Similarly, in a study by Khan et al. (2011) which investigated the effect of workplace environment on employees’ performance in a sample of 150 who responded to the questionnaires distributed to employees of the education sector in Pakistan found that workplace environmental factors significantly contributed to employee performance and engagement. In addition, it was found that organizations that invested in improved office conditions experienced high level of employee retention and engagement (Miles, 2000). Other research studies that investigated the relationship between environmental factors such as work station partitions and employee engagement found a strong association between those factors (Visher 2008).

Additionally, studies by Anitha (2014) found that work environment was strongly and significantly associate with employee engagement. It was found that the conditions prevailing at the workplace have a greater impact on employee’s performance as they work in an organization. The work environment should be safe and conducive to employees for them to realize their full performance. This leads to their engagement. Additionally, it was found that as safe work environment and retains s employees on their jobs. Similarly, earlier studied found that organizations that provided safe work environment improved the level of commitment and employee engagement to their jobs Miles (2001, Harter et al. (2001). Organizations that addressed measure meant to improve d work environmental conditions demonstrated higher chance of improving the level of commitment and engagement of employees. As well, studies by (Holbeche & Springett, 2003) found that measures to improve work environment contributed to employee satisfaction and engagement. In addition, organizations that put measure to address employees needs through feedback mechanisms that allow employees to make their needs known to the management and also help employees to develop their skills and address work environment issues affecting

employees experienced high level of job satisfaction and engagement among employees (Deci & Ryan, 1987).

The work environment broadly covers an aspect of physical Conditions of the workplace and how employees interact with their environment (Kohun, 2002). Additionally, Heath (2006) asserted the environment under which employees work has several work components ranging from procedures applied in the workplace, policies governing work, rules, organizational culture and the work stations itself. All are an aspect of physical work environment including office layout and design.

Several studies conducted have been undertaken on the association of physical work environment (PWE) and employee engagement. Studies by Gensler (2011) found strong relationship between physical environmental conditions and quality of work performed by employees in organizations. In this study, work environment was found to be the key link of employees with the jobs they undertake which when improved, provide motivation, satisfaction and superior employee performance. He further found that that it is difficult to isolate work environment from employees hence it contributes effectively to employee engagement and performance. Increasingly employees seeking to join organizations are becoming concerned with physical work environment, work life balance, health and fitness conditions (Emmanuel, 2014).

In studies by Donald et al., (2004) involving 16,000 employees of several public and private firms in the United Kingdom to establish the association between psychological factors and productivity, the study found a strong relationship and concluded that implementing psychologically motivating work environment improves employee productivity and engagement.

Goudswaard (2012) found that work environment which cover work life balance and psychological conditions and social dialogue leads to increase in employee performance and organizational productivity. Studies by (Baren, 2013) found that

employee's psychological relatedness which include psychological needs motivate individuals to initiate positive behavior which translate to higher performance. Bolman and Deal (2014) found that need for autonomy and intrinsic rewards contribute to achievement of employee engagement at the workplace. Studies by (La Guardia, 2009) found that psychological needs of an employee contribute to motivation and engagement. Kopsa and Srideri (2010) found that organizations that provide a psychologically safe workplace improve employee engagement. This was supported by Dollare and Baliker 2010 who found that the culture of psychological ownership and engagement begins when leaders create a psychologically safe workplace. (Schaufeli, 2012) found that workplace climate particularly psychological perception of employees of their workplace influence the intensity and direction of energy towards organizational outcomes and level of employee engagement. Shuck et al. (2011) found a strong evidence on the relationship between psychological workplace climate and employee engagement.

Tahir and Awan (2015) in a study on the impact of working environment on employee productivity found that supervisors support and relationship with coworkers contribute positively to employee productivity in banks and insurance companies in Pakistan. Haynes (2008) found that behavior component of the work environment has a positive influence on employee performance and productivity. Supportive work behavior among employees contributes to employee performance and engagement. Arokiasamy (2013) found that a sense of belonging and social support at the workplace improves employee's performance and engagement. Bakker and Demerout (2007) found that interpersonal and social relation such as supervisor and co-worker support improves the level of employee performance and engagement at the workplace. Demerouti, et al (2001) found that job aspects such as physical, psychological and social contributes to achievement of work-related

goal and employee performance., productivity and engagement. Pisanti, et al (2011) found a positive relationship between a social support at the workplace and psychological well-being which contributes to employee performance and engagement. Nasurdin, et al (2018) found a positive association between social support and employee engagement among Nurses from nine private hospitals in Malaysia. The study found that peer and social support significantly improves employee's performance and engagement. Employee performance is a measure of engagement. Employees who are engaged will improve on their performance.

Studies by Arora (2015), found that an organization implementing work-life balance with experience a high levels satisfaction among employees which rests into their engagement and retention. Employees prefer the work environment where the employer has implemented policies that enable them to reduce work and personal related conflicts. By implementing flexible conditions of work, employees will be able to balance their home and work demands. The workplace is highly attracting female employees who have multiple roles as mother and a worker hence then need to come up with policies that carter for all employee's needs.

Studies by Cole (2002) found that flexibility in the workplace where employees are able to determine time and hours for work which suits them improved employee's productivity and engagement as they are in a position to balance work with personal matters. Additionally, several studies have found strong association between flexible work environment and employee engagement. Organizations should use technology which enables employees to telecommute to improve their performance and engagement.

Table 1: Description of physical work environment

Descriptive Statistics	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Work space in the office is adequate	198	1	5	3.69	1.17
Workplace machines and tools are readily available	200	1	5	3.64	0.81
The employer provides health and safety measures for employees.	200	1	5	3.63	0.80

In a study by Okemwa (2016) which sought to establish the influence of flexible work arrangement among nurse in public hospitals in Kenya found that there was strong commitment and engagement among nurses as they had the flexibility to attend to other personal engagements. Similarly, in a study by Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman (2010) established a strong relationship between flexibility in the workplace that enable employees to balance their work engagements and that of the family which improved their motivation, commitment and engagement.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive approach was used in this study since it had been found to be most suitable for analyzing the relationship studies (O'Sulliva & Abel, 2007). The design was found ideal in this type of study and was therefore adopted by the researcher. The population of the study considered all the 2410 employees of non- Devolved Government Ministries in Meru County. The study used 10 percent of the population to come up with sample size of 241. In data collection, this study used structured questionnaires. In this research study the research analyzed qualitative data using percentages, mean and standard deviation while quantitative data was analyzed using Correlation, ANOVA and Multiple regression analysis. Coding of data was done to enable the researcher convert information gathered into a medium that can be manipulated and analyzed using SPSS version 20.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Physical Work Environment

The study sought to determine the effect of physical work environment of employee performance. The findings were shown in Table 1.

Employer provides me with safely training	199	1	5	3.6	0.91
Accidents are frequent in this organization	199	1	5	2.27	1.11
Wellness programs are provided to employees	200	1	5	3.46	0.93
Welfare programs are provided to employees	199	1	5	3.83	0.62
Work environment is unsafe	198	1	5	2.12	1.27
Valid N (listwise)	194				

Source: Research data, 2019

The findings in Table 1 showed that on overall, physical work environment on employee performance was good with a mean of 3.32 and SD of 0.42

Psychological work environment

The study also sought to determine the effect of psychological work environment on employee performance. The finding were presented in Table 2

Table 2: Psychological work environment

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
I have sufficient support from my boss.	200	1	4	4.10	0.41
My boss provides me with adequate resources to do my work	200	1	4	4.03	0.44
I am happy with the rewards provided by my employer	200	1	5	3.81	0.69
I am happy with the job benefits provided	200	1	5	3.73	0.77
I safe and secure working for the organization	199	1	4	4.08	0.54
I am happy with leadership in the company	200	1	5	3.98	0.72
Emplayolles are recognized for better performance	199	1	5	3.88	0.87
Employees are involved in decision making	197	1	5	2.85	1.11
I am made accountable for their job	199	1	5	4.00	0.68
My job provides me with adequate challenge	200	1	5	3.76	0.71
I have enough information regularly regarding my work.	200	1	4	4.095	0.65
Valid N (listwise)	194				

Source: Research data, 2019

Table 2 showed the respondents agreed that psychological work environment has a strong influence on performance with a mean of 3.87 and SD=0.40.

Social work environment

Further, the study sought to establish the effect of social work environment on employee performance. The findings were presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Description of Social work environment

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
I enjoy good working relationship with my boss	200	1	3	4.08	0.45
My boss is a wonderful person to work with.	200	1	4	4.03	0.55
I happy working with my colleagues.	198	1	5	4.06	0.54
We work as a team in the department	196	1	4	3.95	0.51
I have a feeling of well-being with my colleagues.	199	1	3	4.03	0.38
I have a person at work who I can confide in.	199	1	4	3.61	0.74
Valid N (listwise)	185				

Source: Research data, 2019

Table 3 presented the results of social work environment on employee performance with overall mean of 3.86 and SD=0.27

Workplace flexibility

Finally, the study sought to establish the effect of workplace flexibility on employee performance. The results were presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Work flexibility

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
My organization has flextime work arrangement	199	1	4	4.02	0.61
I have a choice of when I can undertake my work	199	1	5	3.36	0.82
My employer provides me the chance to choose where I can work.	199	1	5	3.06	0.90
Telecommuting is provided by my employer and enables me to work from home or away from the office.	197	1	5	2.76	1.02
There is a compressed work week option for employees.	200	1	5	3.18	0.83
The employee provides opportunity for part-time work which I find preferable.	198	1	5	3.08	1.03
The employer provides assistance with child care.	170	1	5	3.37	0.86
The employer allows employees to take career breaks i.e. opportunity to take study leave for a given period of time.	198	1	5	3.74	0.85
In this organization, employees can combine career and family.	198	1	5	3.39	0.92
The management of this company is accommodative of family related needs.	198	1	5	3.46	0.95
Valid N (listwise)	163				

Source: Research data, 2019

Table 4 showed that most of respondents concurred that workplace flexibility with a mean of 3.34 and SD= 0.53 showing a strong relationship with employee performance.

Employee engagement

The study sought to determine the extent of employee engagement in the government ministries. The findings of the results were shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Employee engagement

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
I am proud to work for this organization.	195	1	3	3.94	0.49
I would recommend my organization as a great place to work.	196	1	4	3.74	0.57
My organization motivates me beyond what I would in a similar role elsewhere.	195	1	4	3.80	0.72
I have an opportunity for professional growth and development.	195	1	5	4.07	0.69
My manager is a great role model for employees	195	1	4	3.90	0.61
My employer provides recognition of my performance.	194	1	4	3.63	0.75
I rarely think of looking for job in another organization.	196	1	5	3.29	0.90
I expect to stay in this organization until I retire.	196	1	5	3.18	0.88
I have access to thinks I need to do my job well.	194	1	4	3.81	0.61
Most of the systems and processes here support getting work done effectively.	195	1	5	4.05	0.80
Valid N (listwise)	188				

Source: Research data, 2019

The results in Table 5 showed that the mean of engagement was 3.74 and SD=0.46

Work Environment and Employee Engagement
Means and standard deviations were computed for work environment and employee engagement the

values of each study of the variables were presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Description of the status of work environment and employee engagement

Descriptive Statistics					
Construct/ Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Physical work environment	200	2.2	4.30	3.32	0.42
Psychological work environment	200	2.55	4.91	3.87	0.40
Social work environment	200	2.8	4.80	3.86	0.27
Workplace flexibility	200	1.56	4.70	3.34	0.53
Employee engagement	196	2.44	4.80	3.74	0.46
Valid N (listwise)	196				

Source: Research data, 2019

Table 6 showed the results of means and standard deviations calculated from the respondents' data. The analysis of responses revealed the extent to which employees regarded the implementation of work environment practices in central government ministries in Meru County. The responses were measured on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The mean for work environment 3.59 and SD=0.52 showing that the respondents agreed that the physical work environment practices were implemented in the devolved government ministries in Meru County. In addition, the mean for employee engagement 3.74 and SD= 0.46 showed that respondents were in agreement that work environment practices improved engagement.

Correlations analysis

Correlation coefficients were computed to determine the relationship working environment and employee engagement. This analysis helped to produces results on the way independent variables used in the study were related to the dependent variable as far as the degree of influence is concerned hence the analysis using Pearson's product moment to determine the association between the variables of the study. Table 7 showed correlation results of physical work environment, psychological work environment, social work environment, and workplace flexibility and employee engagement.

Table 7: Correlation coefficients of physical work environment, psychological work environment, social work environment, and workplace flexibility and employee engagement

	PhWE	PsWE	SoWE	WoFLX	EmpEE
Physical work environment (PhWE)		1			
Psychological work environment (PsWE)	.417**		1		
Social work environment (SoWE)		<0.001		1	
Workplace flexibility (WoFLX)		0.075	0.102		1
Employee engagement (EmpEE)		0.291	0.152	0.13	
		-0.051	0.054	0.067	
		0.474	0.447	0.067	
	.317**	.256**	.334**	0.109	1
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.13	
N	196	196	196	196	196

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

Table 7 showed that for workplace flexibility did not exert a strong influence on employee engagement ($r=0.109$, $p=0.13>0.05$). This finding is inconsistent with studies by Okemwa (2016) which sought to establish the influence of flexible work arrangement among nurse in public hospitals in Kenya and found that there was strong commitment and engagement among nurses as they had the flexibility to attend to other personal engagements. Similarly, the results of this study differs with the finding by Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman (2010) who established a strong relationship between flexibility in the workplace and employee work engagements.

There was however a moderately strong significant relationship between the other three variables work environment dimensions and employee engagement (Physical work environment: $r=0.317$, $p<0.001$; Psychological work environment: $r=0.256$, $p<0.001$; Social work environment: $r = 0.334$, $p<0.001$). All the relationships were positive. The strongest relationship was between social work environment and employee engagement ($r=0.334$, $p<0.001$), while the weakest relationship was between workplace flexibility and employee engagement ($r=0.109$, $p>0.05$). The significant results on the relationship between physical work environment and employee engagement concurs with the studies Gensler (2011) who found strong relationship between physical environmental

conditions and quality of work performed by employees in organizations. In addition, the positive results on the relationship between psychological work environment and employee engagement is in agreement with the studies by (Baren, 2013) who found that employee’s psychological relatedness which include psychological needs motivate individuals to initiate positive behavior which translate to higher performance and engagement. Similarly, the social work environment which was found to be positively related to employee engagement in this study concurs with studies by Arokiasamy (2013) who found that a sense of belonging and social support at the workplace improves employee’s performance and engagement. Bakker and Demerout (2007) also found that interpersonal and social relation such as supervisor and co-worker support improves the level of employee performance and engagement at the workplace.

Regression analysis on influence of Work environment on Employee Engagement

Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the influence of work environment comprising Workplace flexibility, physical work environment, Social work environment, Psychological work environment on employee engagement. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 8 Model summary, Table 9: Model fit (ANOVA), and Table 10: Regression Coefficients

Table 8: Model summary on influence of work environment on employee engagement

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.464	0.215	0.199	0.410827

a Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Flexibility (WoFLX), Physical work environment (PhWE), Social work environment (SoWE), Psychological work environment (PsWE)

According to the result in Table 8, the combination of Workplace Flexibility , Physical work environment , Social work environment , Psychological work environment explain 21.5% ($R^2=0.215$) of the variation in employee engagement. These results

shows that the three variables used in this study though are positive but do not have a major influence on employee engagement as other variable s not covered in this study explains up to 78.5% of variation in employee engagement.

Table 9: Model fit (ANOVA)ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.855	4	2.214	13.116	.000 ^b
	Residual	32.237	191	0.169		
	Total	41.091	195			

a Dependent Variable: Employee engagement (EEAV)

b Predictors: (Constant), Workplace Flexibility (WoFLX), Physical work environment (PhWE), Social work environment (SoWE), Psychological work environment (PsWE)

This analysis was undertaken in order to test if the was significant and could be used for the study hence ANOVA test. The results in Table 9 showed that P-value $0.000^b < 0.05$. This showed that the model could be used for the study in predicting the considered factors and their respective relationship with employee engagement. Specifically, the combination of Workplace Flexibility, Physical work environment, Social work environment, Psychological work environment explain the

variation in employee engagement ($F_{4,191}=13.116$, $p < 0.001$).

To be able to determine the relative influence of each of the work environment dimension on employee engagement, coefficients of regression were generated together with their associated t-value and p- values. The coefficients of regression associated with each dimension of work environment are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Regression CoefficientsCoefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	0.036	0.318		0.114	0.909
Physical work environment (PhWE)	0.266	0.077	0.246	3.460	0.001
Psychological work environment (PsWE)	0.137	0.081	0.120	1.685	0.094
Social work environment (SoWE)	0.489	0.108	0.294	4.531	<0.001
Workplace flexibility (WoFLX)	0.066	0.056	0.076	1.18	0.239

a Dependent Variable: Employee engagement (EmpEE)

Source: Research data, 2019

The results in Table 10 showed that both physical work environment and Social work environment positively and significantly influence employee engagement at 5% significance level (Physical work environment: $t=3.460$, $p=0.001$; Social work environment: $t=4.531$, $p < 0.001$). The influence of the psychological work environment on employee engagement was not significant at 5% significance level but at 10% significance level ($t= 1.685$,

$p=0.094 < 0.1$). However, workplace flexibility did not have a significant effect on employee engagement ($t=1.18$, $p=0.239 > 0.1$).

Hypotheses testing results

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between physical work environment and employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County. The regression results found a significant relationship between physical working

environment and employee engagement. The null hypothesis was rejected as physical work environment significantly influence employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between psychological work environment and employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County. The influence of the psychological work environment on employee engagement was found not be significant at 5% significance level but at 10% significance level ($t= 1.685, p=0.094 < 0.1$). Hence it has weak influence on employee engagement. Null hypothesis was accepted.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between social work environment and employees engagement of central government ministries of Meru County. The third hypothesis tested the relationship between social work environment and employee engagement. Social work environment was found to positively and significantly ($p<0.001$) related to employee engagement at 5% significance level. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between workplace flexibility and employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County. The last hypothesis of the study tested the influence of workplace flexibility on employee engagement of Central government ministries in Meru County. The results found that workplace flexibility did not have a significant ($p>.005$) influences on employee engagement hence null hypothesis was accepted.

CONCLUSION

The first objective of the study was to determine the influence of physical work environment on employee engagement among central government employees in Meru County. The study concluded that physical work environment significantly improves employee engagement and should be encouraged by the central government.

The second objective of the study was to determine the effect of psychological work environment on

employee engagement among the employee of central government in Meru County. The study concluded that psychological work environment has a weak influence on employee engagement and should not be given more emphasis to improve engagement.

The third objective of the study was to establish the effect of social work environment on employee engagement among employees of central government in Meru County. The study found a significant influence of social work environment on employee engagement. A good social work environment should be promoted to improve employee engagement.

The last objective of the study was to determine the influence of workplace flexibility on employee engagement among central government employees in Meru County. The study found that there was no significant ($p > 0.05$) influence of workplace flexibility on employee engagement hence workplace flexibility should not be promoted among central government employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, it was recommended that efforts should be made to continue with measures that enhance physical work conditions of employees. The study found that physical work environment significantly contributes to employee engagement hence adequate measures should be put in place to offer attractive physical work conditions for employees. In addition, the study found that social work environment had a significant effect on employee engagement. It was therefore recommended that measures to improve social work environment for employees should be improved. On the effect of workplace flexibility on employee engagement, the study found that workplace flexibility is not practiced by the central government for its employees and does not have any association with employee engagement. Hence the central government should not spend more effort on measures to address workplace flexibility as the practice will not contribute employee

engagement. On the influence of psychological work environment on employee engagement, the study found a weak relationship with engagement. It is recommended that if adequate measures are put in place to address issues of psychological work engagement for employees, this may translate into positive results and contribute significantly to employee engagement.

Suggestions for further research

The researcher recommended that future research on the effect of work environment on employee engagement should be undertaken in other sectors in Kenya. In addition, the further studies should be

undertaken to determine other factors responsible for employee engagement among government employees since the factors investigated in this study only explains 21.5% variation in employee engagement. This implied that there are several other factors within devolved central government ministries responsible for employee engagement which can form the basis for future studies. Further, it is recommended that more studies be conducted on why workplace flexibility is neither significantly related with employee engagement nor has a significant influence on employee engagement yet other studies suggest otherwise in other contexts.

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