

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

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this research thesis is my original work and has never been presented for any degree in any other university.

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## **DEDICATION**

This research thesis is dedicated to wife Ann who has been a pillar in my life. Thank you for your tireless encouragement throughout this noble task.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS**

ASID	-	American Society of Interior Designers
CIPD	-	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
EAP	-	Employee Assistance Program
ERS	-	Economic Recovery Strategy
GOK	-	Government of Kenya
HR	-	Human Resource
HRM	-	Human Resource Management
SMART-		Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
WHO	-	World Health Organization

## 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 recommends 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 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.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

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.

Factors within the workplace influence to a large extent the degree of employee involvement in their jobs and the organization. By ensuring that the work environment is conducive to occupy and work in, organizations are able to reduce the level of absenteeism and improve employee commitment to the goals of the organization. A proper work environment also help to enhance the employee's contribution to organizational performance. It is therefore important to establish work environment factors that are responsible for improvement in employees' performance and productivity. Several previous studies on workplace environmental factors have given different views on the workplace factors that influence employee performance. Some scholars have advanced the view that job performance is a function of several

environmental factors at the workplace and should be addressed by the management (Motowildo & Scotter, 1994)

Stup (2003) gave the view that organizations must do everything possible to address the issues of the level of employee contribution to organizational performance and standards of the company. Improvement in work environment has been identified as key to improving employee engagement. An attractive physical work environment improves employee's ability to perform their jobs effectively. An employee must be matched with the work environment to ensure a proper fit. This matching of employees to work environment conditions is referred to as an ergonomic workplace. There are several physical environmental work conditions of which contributes to effective performance of employees on the job and which are also associated with job satisfaction. The physical environmental conditions include the lighting, ventilation, layout of the office, configuration of the floor and the furniture layout (Brill et al., 1985). In addition, workplace environment conditions is considered as vital factor that contributes significantly to the performance of the employee. This helps in satisfying their needs, both intrinsic and extrinsic and also determines their motivation to work and stay on the organization as well as the level and quality of work by the employees (Haynes, 2008). A positive work environment therefore has a multitude of benefits to an organization.

The Kenya Government has 18 ministries out of which seven are devolved and operates in different counties including the Meru County. The ministries include: ministry of Interior and coordination of National Government, Ministry of Devolution and Planning, The National Treasury, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Trade, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology, Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban

Development, Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services, Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Industrialization and Enterprise Development, Ministry of East Africa Affairs, Commerce and Tourism and Ministry of Mining (Government of Kenya [ GOK], 2015).

In the recent times, employees have become a major pillar to the performance of the organization after investing in highly efficient systems. Management of the employees in order to reap the best from them must be done in a way that the management is able to enable them realize their capabilities with the aim of continued improvement of performance (Atkinson et al., 2016). For instance the Malaysian government has in the recent past insisted that human capital must be nurtured for the purpose of economic growth. Part of nurturing is coming up with ways of creating jobs opportunities as well as exploring new strategies to aid the business environment. (Gatere et al., 2015).

The quality of government structures have had to be improved by different governments worldwide as the global economy experiences changes that are far reaching. The concept of new public management has been introduced by the government of India in public administration. This was in a bid to see result necessitated by a will to change the public service to make it effective and efficient as a way of improving it. The concept of performance management basically includes comprehending and executing issues of performance at organizational level, individual level, team level to the level of the department and the organization itself. According to Mackie (2014), there are other factors in the work environment which affect employees performance which include the nature of leadership prevailing in the organization, employee motivation, decision making and innovation.

### **1.1.1 Employee engagement**

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 et al., 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).

Anitha (2014) indicated that the level of employee engagement and commitment to work determines the degree to which employees are involved in their jobs and which translates to a heightened degree of achievement of organizational goals. Engaged employees tend to show commitment to organizational values and achievement of superior performance on the job. In addition, highly engaged employees demonstrate

positive attitude to their jobs and their work environment. This leads to improved emotional involvement of employees on their jobs that enables them to improve on their performance and achievement of organizational goals. In addition, employees of an organization are expected to perform their jobs to the degree of exceeding the established work standards. When employees are fully engaged on their jobs, they perform beyond the expectation of their current work standards and this contributes to high level of organizational performance (Robertson & Cooper, 2011)

Many organizations currently are trying to address the issues of employee engagement in order to sustain their performance. They try to address measures that would ensure that employees achieve a high level of efficiency and effectiveness in performance of their tasks. Many organizations have identified employee engagement as key to ensure success in achieving organizational competitiveness. A number of studies conducted previously on employee engagement have tried to link success in organizational performance in terms of improved profit performance and financial stability to programs meant to improve employee engagement and commitment to work (Bates & Elwood, 2004; Harter et al., 2002; Richman, 2006). In spite of those findings, studies by Bates (2004) and Richman (2006) found that when employees join an organization, they are provided with training and development programs including induction which improves their level of involvement and productivity.

### **1.1.2 Work environment**

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.

Chandrasekhar (2011) indicated that conditions within the work environment is responsible to the way employees undertake their jobs and ultimately the success of the organization in achieving its objectives. He asserts that the workplace environment is a combination of a wide range of factors at the workplace including the actual physical setting. Workplace environment also covers organizational policies and employment conditions that determine the performance and level of employee performance and engagement. This affects organizational performance.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The Government of Kenya having identified its need to check and improve on performance, it 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 et al., (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 (2015), 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 (World Health Organization [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 central government ministries in Meru County.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The researcher presented in this section the objectives that guided the study.

#### **1.3.1 General objective**

This study sought to establish influence of work environment on employee engagement of central government ministries in Kenya, a case of Meru County

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

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

### **1.4 Research Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between physical work environment and employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between psychological work environment and employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between social work environment and employees engagement of central government ministries of Meru County.

**H<sub>04</sub>** There is no significant relationship between workplace flexibility and employee engagement of central government ministries in Meru County.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The results of this study will be beneficial to the following:

#### **County Governments in Kenya**

The study findings will enable Human Resources Officers will be able to develop appropriate HR policies to address issues of physical, psychological, social and flexible working conditions of employees. It will therefore be important to the cabinet secretaries and principal secretaries heading various ministries especially in Meru County understand better the Work Environment.

#### **Researchers and academicians.**

This study will provide researchers and academicians with information they need in Human Resource Management field of study which will aid in research undertaken in this area of study. Future researchers will also find the study useful in providing literature and theories and required to undertake research in this area. The findings of the study will aid to identify research gaps for future research purposes. Other scholars may use the findings of the study as reference material either for comparison purposes or for further studies in related discipline.

## **Government of Kenya**

The Government of Kenya will find the study useful to formulate policies on working environment of Government employees will help to improve working conditions of central government employees.

### **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

In the course of this research study, a number of challenges were experienced by the researcher which includes: bureaucratic procedure to be followed in obtaining information from the ministries offices. The researcher obtained an official letter from the supervisor to enable him go to the field to collect data. Another challenge that was encountered is data confidentiality where informants were treated with utmost confidentiality in the study.

This study confined itself to collecting data through a detailed questionnaire from the employees in the 7 ministries. The researcher did the best to persuade the respondents to allow access. The respondents were informed of the discreetness and with level of confidentiality that they required.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study sought to investigate workplace environmental conditions that affect the level of employee engagement in Central Government ministries in Meru County. The variables that guided this research were: The conditions of the physical setting of the workplace, social and psychological conditions of work social work environment, and workplace flexibility and employee performance in central government ministries as the dependent variable. The research was carried out in Meru County and covered non-devolved ministries of GoK.

## **1.8 Assumptions of the Study**

In this study the researcher made the assumption that people who responded to the questionnaire were familiar with work environment and understand their rights as Kenyan citizens and therefore were expected to respond effectively to the questionnaires. The study also assumed that the respondents in the study were truthful and accurate in their responses.

## **1.9 Definition of Operational Terms**

**Work environment** – This is an element on an employee's mind and body which acts and reacts. It covers the entire surrounding of the organization including the physical, social, psychological and mental surrounding which enables the employee to effectively work and increase productivity (Vredenburg & Amir, 2015).

**Employee engagement** Employee engagement is defined as the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy an employee directs toward positive organizational out- comes (Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

**Physical work environment** Refers to the actual conditions prevailing in the workplace which influence the work undertaken by employees.

**Psychological work environment** Refers to the degree of feelings of attractiveness of working conditions which supports the level of employee commitment to work for example improvement in the level of accountability and involvement of employees in decision making. It covers the aspects of interactions between and among work environment that affect employee performance.

**Social work environment** Refers to the degree of interpersonal relations, team working, management style and social support which employees receive at the workplace.

**Work life balance.** This terminology is used to describe workplace situations in which employees are allowed to balance the family life and work demands. It refers to human resource practices in which employees are supported by policies which acknowledge the need to balance personal engagement with demands of work.

**Employee Performance** This refers to the level job outcomes when employees work in organizations which translates into job satisfaction and satisfaction of the customer.

**Employee engagement** Employee are said to be engaged in an organization when they demonstrate a very high level of involvement in their jobs and strive to improve the performance over and above work expectations. Employee who are engaged with their work will improve working relationship with the colleagues and have a very high level of understanding of the business context. They aim to work hard to achieve business objectives and productivity.

**Work-place flexibility.** This refers to a work environment which allows employees to determine time to report to work and where to work from. Workers have a choice to make decisions on the way they will do their work. Flexibility at work is achieved through telecommuting.

**Flexible Work Arrangement.** Refers to Working arrangements made between employees and employers which gives employees the opportunity to agree with the employer on the duties allocation according to where and when the work can be done.

**Central Government Ministries** These are governmental organizations governed by cabinet ministers who administer certain aspects of public administration.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

An empirical literature review as per the study variables are presented in this chapter. It also covers a theory which underpins the study, research gap, conceptual framework, operational framework and chapter summary.

#### **2.2 Theoretical literature**

This study is guided by the following theories:

##### **2.2.1 Theory of work adjustment**

This theory tries to link the employees to the work environment. René and George (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.

The nature of flexibility prevailing in the work environment allows employees to make decisions on how best they can adapt to working conditions prevailing an organization. Flexible conditions as perceived by employees vary from one organization to another



and even from one person to another. Flexibility is influenced by factor internal to individuals and organization such as one's own personality and the culture prevailing in an organization. Similarly, external factors which provides alternative to employees will influence the flexibility of individuals. Where an organization cannot provide flexibility required by employees, they may introduce certain form of adjustment (René & George 1964). Individual employees may be required to take active adjustment that allows them to alter their work environment. Employees may introduce changes that affect the job content and behavior required to undertake a given job. They should also be able to reflect on their skills and abilities required to undertake the job effectively. In certain cases, employees may endeavor to change the nature of reinforcement of the job by trying to gain better rewards in terms of improved working conditions, additional responsibility and a wider scope of tasks to be performed (René & George 1964). This theory supports a variable Employee commitment as they generally feel a connection with the organization and this helps in identifying the areas that requires to be addressed for better performance in the organization.

### **2.2.2 Two-Factor Theory**

Two-Factor Theory by Frederick Herzberg 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 makes it favourable for the employees in support to the organization's performance.

### **2.2.3 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.

Research by Aston-James and Ashkanasy (2005) found that events in the workplace will trigger behavior and response from employees which affect their performance. Organizational internal events which are not favourable to employees may lead to negative job attitude among employees hence poor of organizational performance. In addition, the theory links conditions of work and job characteristics that contributes certain responses by employee (Briner, 2000). Events that happen at the workplace that affect employee wellbeing will ultimately affect their performance.

### **2.2.4 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

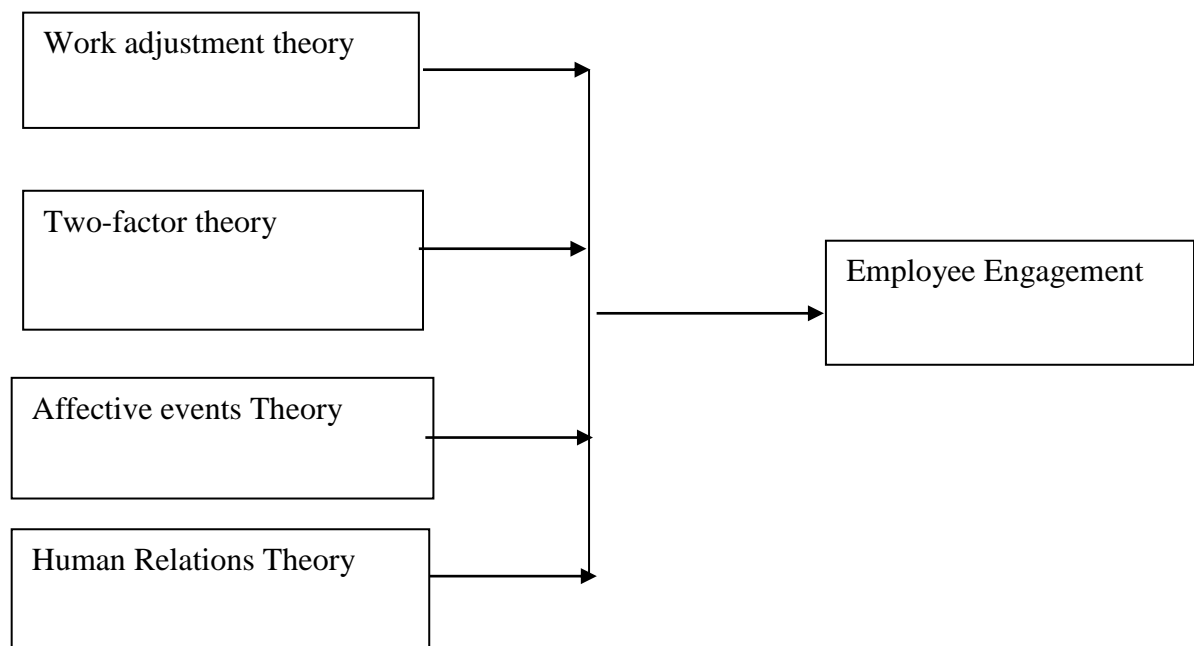
determines employee's productivity other than good working conditions. The experiment involved a group of women who were working under experimental and controlled work environments. Women in the controlled room worked under normal work conditions where there was enough light, good supervision and were 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 a break. They did not have a supervisor. When their performance was measured, the results indicated that their performance improved and that they were very 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 were concluded, it was established that social work conditions at the workplace improve 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 (Young, 2009)

In addition, it can be concluded that people working in organizations have different behavioral needs, values and desires which should be valued by organizations. These factors are very important to employees and if recognized by organizations, employees will improve their productivity and performance. This supports the variable on management support as it helps in understanding issues related to human resources and

how to manage the resource effectively as this will aid in improving the employees' performance and eventually the organization development will be achieved (Ohemeng, 2009)

**Figure 2.1**

*Theoretical framework*



**Source: Author 2019**

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

Study variables covered in this study is reviewed in this section. Specifically past studies which have been conducted in relation to work environment factors and their effect on employee performance and engagement.

#### **2.3.1 Working environment and employee engagement.**

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 (Chandrasekar, 2011; Donald et al., 2005; 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 John and Michelle (2015) asserts that organizations that invested in improved office conditions experienced high level of employee retention and engagement. 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. (Neely, 2014).

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. May 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 and 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).

These findings were also consistent with the studies by Meyer (2010) who found that when organizations address measures that provide support and improve working relationship with employees, employees developed a high level of psychological safety which resulted into their satisfaction and engagement. In addition, the results of the studies on the relationship between work environment and employee engagement revealed a strong association between conditions in the workplace environment and employee engagement and performance.

### **2.3.2 Physical work environment and employee engagement**

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, polices 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 (Baron, 1987).

In a study by Tamessek (2009) on the association perceived employees' physical work environment and performance found that that employees highly value their social needs and this motivated them to stay in organization. Employees stay in organizations because they are satisfied and engaged in their jobs. The study concluded that workplace environment which more supportive to employees will be perceived positively and preferred by many employees hence the need by organizations to improve physical work environment of employees. Such work environment will experience a low turnover rate among employees.

### **2.3.3 Psychological work environment and employee engagement**

In studies by Donald et al., (2005) 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.

Awan (2015) 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 Rein et al., (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 contributes to achievement of

employee engagement at the workplace. Studies by La Guardia, (2009) found that psychological needs of an employee contributes to motivation and engagement. Kompasso and Sridevi (2010) found that organizations that provide a psychologically safe workplace improves employee engagement. This was supported by Abdel-Aziz and Bontis (2010) who found that the culture of psychological ownership and engagement begins when leaders create a psychologically safe workplace. (Schaufeli, 2012) found at 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.

#### **2.3.4 Social work environment 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 Demerouti (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. Fisher (2019) 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. Ahmed and Mackie (2014) found that perceived organizational support positively influence employee engagement, job satisfaction and commitment. Sharma and Dhar (2016) found that organizational support has a positive influence on employee commitment and engagement. Studies by Bhanthumavian, (2003) found that supervisory support in the workplace including emotional support (such as showing empathy, acceptance and care) informative support (giving feedback or guidance in the workplace) material support ( such preparing budget, aids, resources and tangible assistance that are related to work improves employee motivation, performance and engagement. Schaufeli and Bakker (2014) found that peer support provided by co-workers as positively related to work engagement and dimensions of vigor and dedication. Wang and Eccles (2012) found that social support increases feelings of relatedness among employees which contributes to employee engagement.

### **2.3.5 Workplace flexibility and employee engagement**

Studies by Harter and 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 cater for all employee's needs.

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

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.

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.

Research by European Foundation, (2007) found flexible work conditions to contribute to higher employee performance, commitment to the employer and engagement. In addition, flexible work arrangement resulted in high level of innovation among employees and low turnover. In addition, studies by Winston and Stone (2014) found a strong association between friendly employment policies and reduced family-work conflicts. The study findings has profound implications on the need by organizations to implement flexible work conditions that will improve employee retentions and

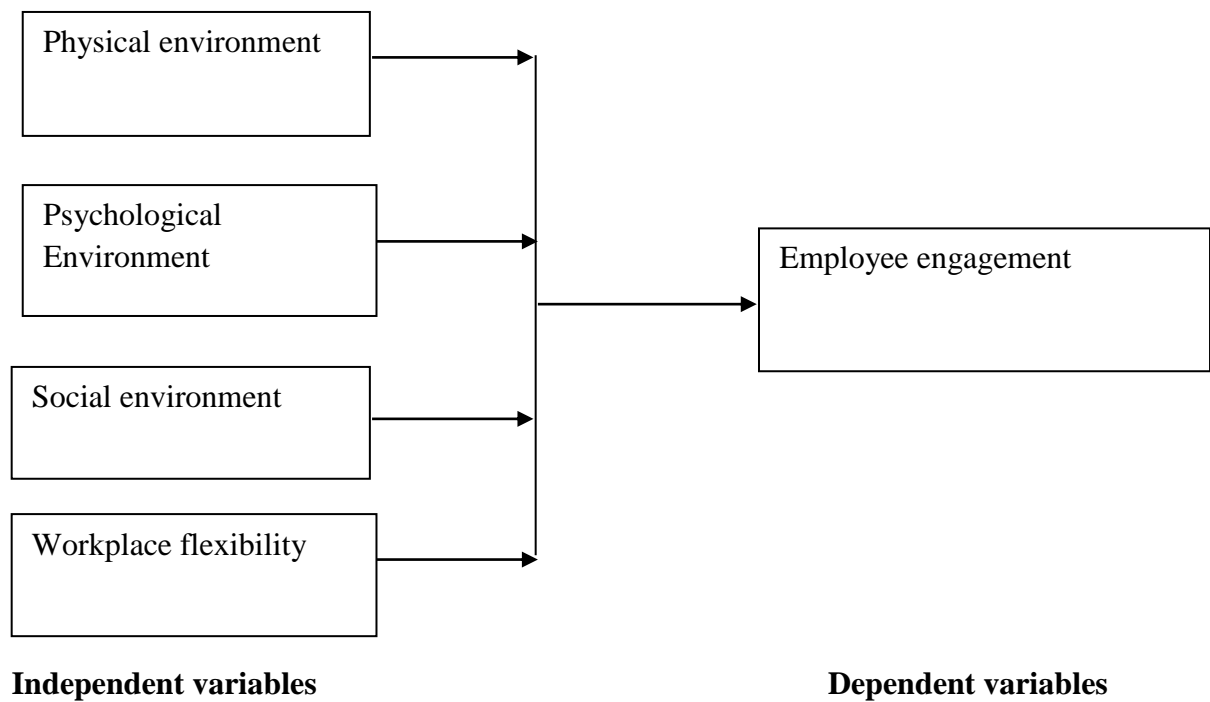
engagement. Similarly, flexible working arrangement makes employees to experience a high level of satisfaction and productivity in their jobs and would improve their engagement if employers provide such work conditions (Armstrong, 2009).

## 2.4 Conceptual framework

In the following is an illustration to show how the variables in the study are related.

**Figure 2.2**

### *Conceptual framework*



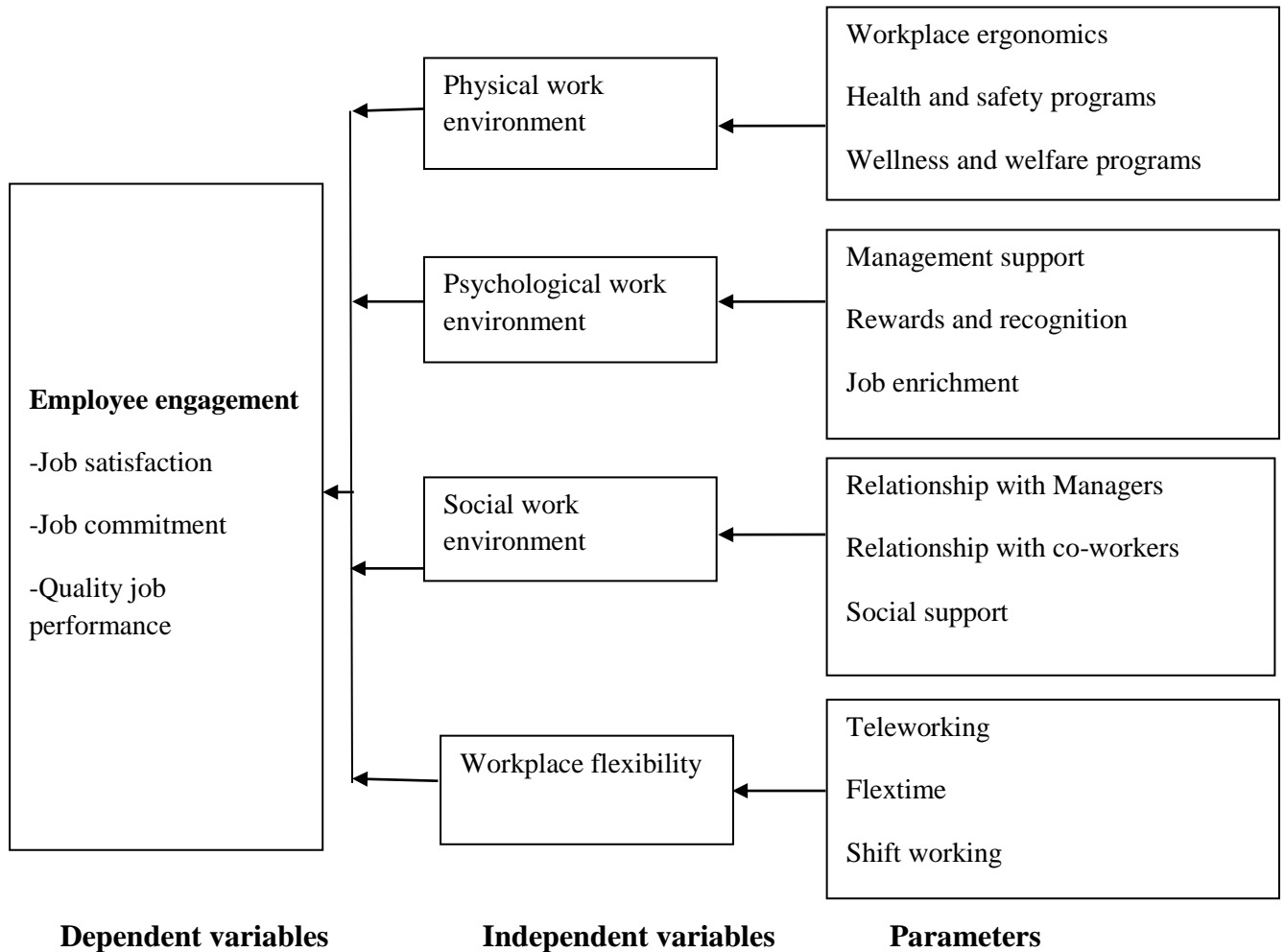
Source: Author 2019

## 2.5 Operational Framework

The operational measures of variables are presented in Figure 2.3

**Figure 2.3**

### *Operational Framework*



(Source: Author 2019)

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this section, an introduction is given on the methods employed by the researcher to undertake the research study. Specifically, it has explained the specific research tools suitable for the study and how the data will be collected and analyzed which covers descriptive and inferential statistical data analysis tools. Justification is also given for various methods used in this study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Descriptive approach was used in this study since it has been found to be most suitable for analyzing the relationship studies (Wright & Pollert 2006.) This design is easy to understand and is useful in describing the population characteristics of the study variables (Kothari, 2015).It also show clearly complete description of the situation be studied (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).The design was found ideal in this type of study and was therefore adopted by the researcher.

#### **3.3 Target Population**

Mugenda (2008) expressed the view that a research should be based on a clearly defined population is composed of individuals, events and objects which have similar qualities that can be observed and described. A population therefore contains elements that are homogenous and meets the requirement of a given specification (Mugenda, 2008). Similarly Sekaran and Bougie (2011) indicated that the study population must be composed of things which the research would want to carry out an investigation that he would want to unfold. The population of the study considered all the 2410 employees of

non- Devolved Government Ministries in Meru County. The study covered all the 7 ministries.

### 3.4 Sampling Size and Sampling Frame

A sample is drawn from a given population and represents a components the population being studied (Mugenda, 2008). In any research study the population must comprise of the participants that could form a study group (Kothari, 2015). The population in this study was the 2,410 employees in the seven Central government ministries in Meru County. According to Mugenda (2008) minimum sample size of 10 percent to 20 percent of a large study population is sufficient for a study. The study used 10 percent of the population to come up with sample size of 241.

#### 3.4.1 Sample Size Frame

**Table 3.1**

*Sample size frame*

<b>Ministries</b>	<b>Total population</b>	<b>Sample (10%)</b>
Lands & Physical Planning	300	30
Interior and Coordination of National Government	1200	120
Information & Communication	100	10
National Treasury	200	20
Education	200	20
Public service ,Youth and Gender	260	26
Labour and social protection	150	15
Total	2,410	241

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

In data collection, this study used structured questionnaires. The structure of the questions were closed end which required the respondents to give their views. The questionnaire was structured using Likert five-point scale. All the questionnaires were dropped and picked later by the researcher as agreed by the respondents.

### **3.6 Reliability and Validity of Instruments**

The researcher ensured appropriateness of the research questionnaire by subjecting it to test of validity and reliability. A valid research instrument is that which is capable of measuring the desired purpose for which it was developed. According to Mugenda (2008) validity takes into consideration the framing of the questions to determine whether the right questions in terms of accuracy were asked and appropriate response options provided. The researcher ensured that the questionnaire passed the external validity and content validity test.

According to Creswell (2015), external validity of an instrument is the extent to which results of a study can be postulated from a sample to an entire population. An instrument that is externally valid is one that can be used to obtain population generalizability, that is to say it adequately represents the views of the population which is being studied. Content is said to be valid when it is considered appropriate for the purpose of research (Creswell 2012). Additionally, the content validity is concerned with whether the questions and statements accurately address what the researcher wants to find out. A valid content is that which is validated by expert opinion

According to Kumar, (2005) an instrument is considered reliable when it can produce consistent results with repeated trials. Eriksson and Kovalainen, (2008) also maintain that reliability is the degree to which stable and consistent results are obtained from a

particular assessment tool. The more consistent the results given by repeated measurements, the higher the reliability of the instrument. Reliability test was used by the research to confirm that if the instrument is used consistently, it is capable of producing consistent results to the same group of respondents (Creswell, 2011). The scores from the first and second tests are correlated to evaluate the stability of the test over time. The correlation coefficient that is obtained is an indication of the stability of the scores. Cronbach's alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of factors extracted from the likert scale in the questionnaire because it determines the internal consistency or average correlation in a survey instrument with  $\alpha = 0.7$

The questionnaires were therefore administered to 21 respondents in the seven central government ministries in Meru County. This was found to be adequate because according to Kumar (2005), a pre testing of the questionnaire can be done using 10 percent of the entire sample of the study. The questionnaires were completed and reviewed to improve validity and reliability before being administered to the target population of this study.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of subjecting the data collected to statistical tools of data analysis using various quantitative and qualitative analytical methods. 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. Multiple regressions analysis is required to analyze data which have a number of study variables and therefore this method was found ideal for this research study. Collected data was coded before feeding the information into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Measures of central tendency were used to generate



relevant percentages, frequencies and means whereas qualitative data was grouped thematically based on the research questions raised and analyzed using SPSS software. 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. The regression model took the following form:

$$Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y= Employee Engagement, a =constant  $\beta$  is the coefficient for  $X_i$  (i=1, 2, 3, 4)

$X_1$  = Physical work environment

$X_2$  = Psychological work environment

$X_3$ = Social work environment

$X_4$ = Workplace flexibility

$\varepsilon$  = Error Term

### **3.8 Research Ethics**

Ethical issues in research consist of practices which the researcher must adhere to in the course of a research study. (Kothari, 2015) opined that ethical issues involve making judgment about right or wrong behavior. The researcher, in undertaking this research, sought the consent of human resource officers in the ministries before collecting data and was morally obliged not to misuse the data collected but to strictly adhere to principles of confidentiality whiles doing everything possible to protect the dignity, privacy and interest of respondents. All the respondents to the study were given the assurance that information provided will be safe guarded closely and shall not be disclosed to others but

will be used strictly for study purposes. The researcher also ensured that the respondents were given full information on the reasons why the study was being conducted to remove any suspicion which could affect data collection. The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the University and NACOTSI for the respondents to know that the research is fully approved. Anonymity of respondents was also guaranteed by researcher.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher has presented the results of data analysis with their interpretation and discussion. It presents the analysis of the research findings and the respective interpretations. In this chapter, the results of descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis have been provided.

#### 4.2 Analysis of Respondents.

##### 4.2.1 Response rate

The study collected primary data through questionnaires distributed to a sample population of 241 respondents comprising of employees of central government in Meru County. The analysis of questionnaires are given in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**

*Response Rate*

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Filled and returned questionnaires	200	82
Unreturned questionnaires	41	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Research Data, 2019*

Table 4.1 indicate that the response rate was good with two hundred 200 people responding. This represented (82%) of the sampled respondents. Unreturned questionnaire were 41 people representing 18%. The response rate of 82% was sufficient

for the study. This is in according to Cooper and Schindler (2011) who pointed out that a response rate of 60% and above is sufficient for a study.

#### 4.2.2 Demographic Data of Respondents

In order to determine the characteristics of the respondents, data was collected on gender, highest level of education, age bracket, department and Ministry to which the respondents belonged distribution. The distribution of the respondents are as follows.

**Highest level of education.** While 20 respondents did not indicate their highest level of education, the distribution of level of education for the rest 180 respondents are as presented in Table 4.2

**Table 4.2**

#### *Highest level of education*

Highest level of education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
n/a	20	10	10	10
Bachelor degree	69	34.5	34.5	44.5
Diploma	95	47.5	47.5	92
Doctorate degree	1	0.5	0.5	92.5
Master's degree	15	7.5	7.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

**Source: Research data, 2019**

Table 4.2 shows that the majority of the respondents were diploma holders (47.5%) followed by bachelor degree holders (34.5%) while less than 10% had either master (7.5%) or doctorate degree (0.5%).

**Age of respondents.** Further, data on age bracket was collected and presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.3.**

*Age bracket of employees*

Age bracket

Age bracket	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
				Percent
	2	1	1	1
18-27	32	16	16	17
27-43	130	65	65	82
44-60	35	17.5	17.5	99.5
Above 61	1	0.5	0.5	100
Total	200	100	100	

**Source: Research data, 2019**

Table 4.3 shows that majority of the employees (65%) were aged between 27 and 43 years. Those in the age bracket of 18 to 27 were 16 % and 17% were in the age bracket of 44 to 60.

**Gender.** Though two respondents did not indicate their gender, 198 respondents were either male or female. The results on gender are shown in Table 4.4

**Table 4.4**

*Gender of respondents*

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
n/a	2	1	1	1
Female	88	44	44	45
Male	110	55	55	100
Total	200	100	100	

**Source: Research data, 2019**

As shown in Table 4.4, there were more male (55%) respondents than female (44%) respondents however neither of the gender was more than two-thirds of the total number.

Further, the distribution of respondents by Ministry, Job Title and Department is presented in Appendix A-1, A-2, and A-3 respectively.

**4.3 Reliability Results**

The researcher sought to determine the reliability of data using Cronbach's alpha tests. This was done with a sample population of 10 percent. Upon pilot testing it was found necessary to delete some items from the set of items that had been included in the instruments. The result in Table 4.5 show the original total number of items that were in the questions and the number of items that were deleted to arrive at a reliable instrument that was used for data collection.

**Table 4.5:**

***Reliability results***

	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Physical work environment	0.729	8
Psychological work environment	0.780	11
Social work environment	0.606	6
Workplace flexibility	0.821	10
Employee engagement	0.832	10

**Source: Research data, 2019**

Table 4.5, presents the result of Cronbach's Alpha test. The results were reliable because most constructs had a Cronbach's alpha above the mostly recommended threshold of 0.7. According to Nunnally (1978), the results of the values which are 0.7 and above are considered adequate for the study. Therefore, the items tested in the study are reliable and valid (Nunnally, 1978). Further, through social work environment had a value of 0.606, this value is acceptable since for psychologically unstable constructs as low as a minimum value of 0.4 is acceptable.

#### **4.4 Descriptive Analysis**

Data was collected on work environment variables: physical, psychological, social and workplace flexibility and the results, interpretation and discussion are presented in this section. The study used the average mean and Standard deviation to obtain information regarding individual respondents.

#### 4.4.1 Analysis of physical work environment

The study sought to determine the effect of physical work environment of employee performance. The findings are shown in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6**

##### *Description of physical work environment*

##### Descriptive Statistics

					Std.				
					N	Min	Max	Mean	Dev
1.	Work space in the office is adequate	198	1	5	3.69	1.17			
3.	Workplace machines and tools are readily available	200	1	5	3.64	0.81			
4.	The employer provides health and safety measures for employees.	200	1	5	3.63	0.80			
5.	Employer provides me with safely training	199	1	5	3.6	0.91			
6.	Accidents are frequent in this organization	199	1	5	2.27	1.11			
7.	Wellness programs are provided to employees	200	1	5	3.46	0.93			
8.	Welfare programs are provided to employees	199	1	5	3.83	0.62			
9.	Work environment is unsafe	198	1	5	2.12	1.27			
Valid N (listwise)		194							

**Source: Research data, 2019**

The findings in Table 4.6 shows that on overall, physical work environment on employee performance is good with a mean of 3.32 and SD of 0.42



#### 4.4.2 Psychological work environment

The study also sought to determine the effect of psychological work environment on employee performance. The findings are presented in Table 4.7

**Table 4.7**

#### *Psychological work environment*

##### Descriptive Statistics

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

**Source: Research data, 2019**

Table 4.7 shows the respondents agreed that psychological work environment has a strong influence on performance with a mean of 3.87 and SD=0.40.

#### 4.4.3 Social work environment

Further, the study sought to establish the effect of social work environment on employee performance. The findings are presented in Table 4.8

**Table 4.8.**

##### *Description of Social work environment*

##### Descriptive Statistics

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

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**Source: Research data, 2019**

Table 4.8 presents the results of social work environment on employee performance with overall mean of 3.86 and SD=0.27

#### 4.4.4 Workplace flexibility

Finally, the study sought to establish the effect of workplace flexibility on employee performance. The results are presented in Table 4.9

**Table 4.9.**

##### *Work flexibility*

##### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
1. My organization has flextime work arrangement	199	1	4	4.02	0.61
2. I have a choice of when I can undertake my work	199	1	5	3.36	0.82
3. My employer provides me with the chance to choose where I can work.	199	1	5	3.06	0.90
4. 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
5. There is a compressed work week option for employees.	200	1	5	3.18	0.83
6. The employee provides opportunity for part-time work which I find preferable.	198	1	5	3.08	1.03
7. The employer provides assistance with child care.	170	1	5	3.37	0.86
8. 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
9. In this organization, employees can combine career and family.	198	1	5	3.39	0.92

10. 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 4.9 shows 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.

**4.4.5 Employee engagement**

The study sought to determine the extent of employee engagement in the government ministries. The findings of the results are shown in Table 4.10

**Table 4.10.**

*Employee engagement*

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
1. I am proud to work for this organization.	195	1	3	3.94	0.49
2. I would recommend my organization as a great place to work.	196	1	4	3.74	0.57
3. My organization motivates me beyond what I would in a similar role elsewhere.	195	1	4	3.80	0.72
4. I have an opportunity for professional growth and development.	195	1	5	4.07	0.69
5. My manager is a great role model for employees	195	1	4	3.90	0.61
6. My employer provides recognition of my performance.	194	1	4	3.63	0.75
7. I rarely think of looking for job in another organization.	196	1	5	3.29	0.90
8. I expect to stay in this organization until I	196	1	5	3.18	0.88

retire.

9. I have access to thinks I need to do my job well.	194	1	4	3.81	0.61
10. 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 4.10 shows that the mean of engagement was 3.74 and SD=0.46

#### **4.3.6 Summary status of 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 are presented in Table 4.11

**Table 4.11**

#### *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 4. 11 shows 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 shows that respondents were in agreement that work environment practices improved engagement.

#### 4.4 Correlations Analysis

Correlation coefficients were computed to determine the relationship working environment and employee engagement. This analysis helped to produce 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 4.12 shows correlation results of physical work environment, psychological work environment, social work environment, and workplace flexibility and employee engagement.

**Table 4.12**

*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			

	<0.001				
Social work environment (SoWE)	0.075	0.102	1		
	0.291	0.152			
Workplace flexibility (WoFLX)	-0.051	0.054	0.13	1	
	0.474	0.447	0.067		
Employee engagement (EmpEE)	.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 4.12 shows 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 et al., (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 Popli and Rizvi (2016) 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 Demerouti (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.

#### **4.5 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 4.13 Model summary, Table 4.14: Model fit (ANOVA), and Table

##### **4.5.1: Regression Coefficients**

**Table 4.13**

*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 4.13, 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 4.14**

***Model fit (ANOVA)***

ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.855	4	2.214	13.116	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	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 4.14 show that P-value 0000<sup>b</sup> < 0.05. This shows 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 4.15

**Table 4.15**

***Regression Coefficients***

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	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 4.15 shows 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 ( $t=1.18$ ,  $p=0.239 >0.1$ ).

#### **4.6 Hypotheses Testing Results**

The following hypotheses were tested and different results were derived as follows:

4.6.1  $H_{01}$ : 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.

4.6.2  $H_{02}$ : 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.

4.6.3  $H_{03}$ : 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.

4.6.4 H<sub>04</sub>: 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.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Information presented in this chapter pertains to summary of research findings, the conclusions drawn from study variables and study recommendations. The findings are summarized in line with the objectives of the study which was to examine the influence work environment on employee engagement of Central Government ministries in Meru County. The chapter also includes conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

#### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

The main objective of this study was to find to establish the relationship between work environment and employee performance of Central Government ministries in Meru County. Specifically the study focused on the following specific objectives: To establish the relationship between physical work environment and employee engagement, to determine the relationship between psychological work environment and employee engagement, to establish the relationship between social work environment and

employee engagement, to examine the relationship between workplace flexibility and employee engagement from which summaries of findings were made.

### **5.2.1 Influence of physical work environment on employee performance.**

The first objective of the study analyzed the relationship between physical work environment and employee engagement. The study found that there is significant relationship ( $p < 0.001$ ) between physical work environment and employee engagement meaning that investing in good physical work environment promotes employee engagement among employees of central government in Meru County.

### **5.2.2 Psychological work environment and employee engagement**

The second objective was to establish the relationship between psychological work environment and employee engagement. The study found a positive but weak relationship with engagement, meaning that effort to improve psychologically motivating work environment did not result much in employee engagement among employees of central government ministries in Meru County.

### **5.2.3 Social work environment and employee engagement**

Analysis of the results to the third objective was to establish the relationship between social work environment and employee engagement. The correlation results of the study found a positive relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between social work environment and employee engagement among employees of central government in Meru County. This means that improvement in social work environment will result in improvement in employee engagement.

#### **5.2.4 Workplace flexibility and employee engagement**

Finally, on the last objective which was to determine the relationship between workplace flexibility and employee engagement. The correlation and regression results found a negative relationship ( $p \text{ value} > 0.005$ ) between workplace flexibility and employee engagement meaning that any attempt by the central government to provide flexible work environment does not result in employee engagement.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

#### **5.3.1 Physical work environment**

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 concludes that physical work environment significantly improves employee engagement and should be encouraged by the central government.

#### **5.3.2 Psychological work environment**

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 concludes that psychological work environment has a weak influence on employee engagement and should not be given more emphasis to improve engagement.

#### **5.3.3 Social work environment**

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.

#### **5.3.4 Workplace flexibility**

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.

#### **5.4 Recommendations of the Study**

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.

### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

The researcher recommends 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 imply 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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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix I: Letter of Introduction**

Dear Respondent,

I am a Master of Business Administration (MBA) student at Kenya Methodist University, currently undertaking a research thesis '**Influence of work environment on employee engagement of Central Government Ministries in Kenya: a case study of Meru County**'.

The research intends to survey employees of Central Government Ministries in Meru County in order to obtain your views on influence of work environment on employee performance. Your participation in this study is extremely essential and will be highly appreciated.

I humbly request for frank and honest response. Your responses and information provided will be kept strictly confidential and the findings will be used only for academic purposes.

I shall be grateful if the questionnaire can be ready to be picked within the next two weeks. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. I greatly appreciate your help in furthering this research effort.

Yours sincerely

**Daniel Kamanja**

## Appendix II: Survey Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of two parts. Part A collects general information while Part B consists of several sections: Part A, B, C, D and E based on the specific variable under study. It will take you about ten to twenty minutes to complete both parts.

### Part A: Bio- Data/ General Information

Please fill in the table below by inserting a tick on the given space [] or written answer.

Please provide the following information about yourself.

1. Your Gender:

Male []

Female []

2. Your age bracket:

18 - 27 []

27-43 []

44-61 []

Above 61 []

3. Name of your Ministry:.....

4. Name of your department:.....

5. Your Job Title:.....

6. The number of years you have worked in the Ministry (please tick)

1 – 5 years []

6 – 10 years []

11 – 15 years []

over 15 years []

7. Highest level of education attained

Diploma []

Bachelor degree []

Master's degree []

Doctorate degree []

**Part B: WORK ENVIROBNEMENT FACTORS**

Please tick on the circle that best represents the extent to which you agree with the statement provided on these five point Likert Scale

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree  
=1                      =2                      =3                      = 4                      = 5

**PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding physical work environment in central government ministries?

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree  
=1                      =2                      =3                      = 4                      = 5

**Statement**

**1   2   3   4   5**

1. Work space in the office is adequate
2. There is congestion in the offices
3. Workplace machines and tools are readily available
4. The employer provides health and safety measures for employees
5. Employer provides me with safely training
6. Accidents are frequent in this organization
7. Wellness programs are provided to employees
8. Welfare programs are provided to employees
9. Work environment is unsafe
10. Offices are clean

## PSYCHOLOGICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about psychological work environment in central government ministries

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
Agree				
=1	=2	=3	=4	=5

<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
------------------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

1. I have sufficient support from my boss
2. My boss provides me with adequate resources to do my work
3. I am happy with the rewards provided by my employer
4. I am happy with the job benefits provided
5. I safe and secure working for the organization
6. I am happy with leadership in the company
7. Employees are recognized for better performance
8. Employees are involved in decision making
9. I am made accountable for their job
10. My job provides me with adequate challenge
11. I have enough information regularly regarding my work

**SOCIAL WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding social work environment in central government ministries

Strongly disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly agree  
 =1                              =2                              =3                              = 4                              = 5

<b>Statement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. I enjoy good working relationship with my boss					
2. My boss is a wonderful person to work with.					
3. Work environment is friendly					
4. I happy working with my colleagues.					
5. Work environment is intimidating					
6. We work as a team in the department					
7. I have a feeling of well-being with my colleagues.					
8. I have a person at work who I can confide in.					
9. I can receive help from y colleagues to carry out my work.					
10. I have opportunity to contact and collaborate with work colleagues					

## WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding social work environment in central government ministries

Strongly disagree =1; Disagree =2; Neutral =3; Agree = 4; Strongly agree = 5

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. My organization has flextime work arrangement					
2. I have a choice of when I can undertake my work					
3. My employer provides me with the chance to choose where I can work					
4. Telecommuting is provided by my employer and enables me to work from home or away from the office					
5. There is a compressed work week option for employees					
6. The employer provides opportunity for part-time work which I find preferable					
7. The employer provides assistance with child care					
8. The employer allows employees to take career breaks i.e. opportunity to take study leave for a given period of time					
9. In this organization, employees can combine career and family					
10. The management of this company is accommodative of family related needs					

## **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

### **Statement**

**1 2 3 4 5**

1. I am satisfied working for the government
2. I happy and committed to work for the government
3. I believe for quality work as I work for the government
4. I have an opportunity for professional growth and development
5. My manager is a great role model for employees
6. My employer provides recognition of my performance
7. I rarely think of looking for job in another organization
8. I expect to stay in this organization until I retire
9. I have access to things I need to do my job well.
10. Most of the systems and processes here support getting work done effectively.

**Thank you for your response**

### Appendix III: Distribution of Respondents by Ministry, Job Title and Department

#### Appendix III-A: Distribution of Respondents by Ministry

##### Name of Ministry

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
n/a	5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Education	32	16	16	18.5
Immigration & Registration of Persons	9	4.5	4.5	23
Information & Communication	20	10	10	33
Interior & Coordination of National Government	1	0.5	0.5	33.5
Interior & Coordination of National Government	22	11	11	44.5
Interior & Security	1	0.5	0.5	45
Interior & coordination of national government	1	0.5	0.5	45.5
Justice & legal affairs	3	1.5	1.5	47
Labour & Social Protection	33	16.5	16.5	63.5
Lands and planning	33	16.5	16.5	80
National Treasury & Planning	20	10	10	90
Public service Youth & Gender Affairs	20	10	10	100
Total	200	100	100	

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### Appendix III-B: Distribution of Respondents by Job Title

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
n/a	6	3	3	3
Accountant	8	4	4	7
Administration Officer	1	0.5	0.5	7.5
Assessor	2	1	1	8.5
Assistant Children's Officer	1	0.5	0.5	9
Assistant deputy county commissioner	1	0.5	0.5	9.5
Assistant Registrar of Persons	2	1	1	10.5
Assistant Staffing Officer	1	0.5	0.5	11
Auditor	1	0.5	0.5	11.5
Cashier	1	0.5	0.5	12
Caterer	1	0.5	0.5	12.5
Children & Youth Officer	1	0.5	0.5	13
Children Officer	1	0.5	0.5	13.5
Children's Officer	2	1	1	14.5
Clerk	31	15.5	15.5	30
Communication Officer	1	0.5	0.5	30.5
Coordination Officer	4	2	2	32.5
Counselling Officer	1	0.5	0.5	33
customer care attendant	1	0.5	0.5	33.5
Customer Care	1	0.5	0.5	34
District Coordinator	1	0.5	0.5	34.5
Driver	17	8.5	8.5	43
Editor	1	0.5	0.5	43.5
Education Officer	4	2	2	45.5
Electoral Officer	1	0.5	0.5	46
Enforcement Officer	3	1.5	1.5	47.5
Examiner	1	0.5	0.5	48
Field Officer	2	1	1	49

Financial Officer	2	1	1	50
Guidance Officer	1	0.5	0.5	50.5
Head Teacher	1	0.5	0.5	51
HRM	4	2	2	53
I.T expert	1	0.5	0.5	53.5
Inspector	1	0.5	0.5	54
Journalist	2	1	1	55
Labour Officer	2	1	1	56
Librarian	1	0.5	0.5	56.5
Management	1	0.5	0.5	57
Marketing Officer	1	0.5	0.5	57.5
Mechanic	1	0.5	0.5	58
Planner	8	4	4	62
Police Woman	1	0.5	0.5	62.5
Policeman	1	0.5	0.5	63
Policeman	2	1	1	64
Procurement Officer	8	4	4	68
Prosecutor	1	0.5	0.5	68.5
Public Officer	3	1.5	1.5	70
Reception	1	0.5	0.5	70.5
Record Officer	3	1.5	1.5	72
Register in charge/ deaths & births	1	0.5	0.5	72.5
Remuneration Committee	1	0.5	0.5	73
Secretary	15	7.5	7.5	80.5
Senior Registrar	1	0.5	0.5	81
Service Officer	1	0.5	0.5	81.5
Social Worker	2	1	1	82.5
Staffing Officer	4	2	2	84.5
Sub county election officer	1	0.5	0.5	85
Supervision	2	1	1	86
Support Staff	11	5.5	5.5	91.5
Survey	1	0.5	0.5	92

Surveyor	1	0.5	0.5	92.5
Teacher	7	3.5	3.5	96
Typist	1	0.5	0.5	96.5
Valuer	1	0.5	0.5	97
Watchman	2	1	1	98
Youth Officer	4	2	2	100
Total	200	100	100	

### Appendix VIII C: Distribution of Respondents by Ministry Department

#### Department

Department	Frequency	Percent	Valid	
			Percent	Cumulative Percent
n/a	9	4.5	4.5	4.5
Accounts	8	4	4	8.5
Administration	5	2.5	2.5	11
Archives	1	0.5	0.5	11.5
Assessment	1	0.5	0.5	12
Catering	1	0.5	0.5	12.5
Cleaning	1	0.5	0.5	13
Clerk	1	0.5	0.5	13.5
Communication	4	2	2	15.5
Coordination	3	1.5	1.5	17
Customer Service	2	1	1	18
DPP	1	0.5	0.5	18.5
Editor	1	0.5	0.5	19
Examination	1	0.5	0.5	19.5
Finance	6	3	3	22.5
Gender Affairs	6	3	3	25.5
Human Resource	6	3	3	28.5
I.T	1	0.5	0.5	29
ID	2	1	1	30
IEBC	5	2.5	2.5	32.5
Information	1	0.5	0.5	33

Interior	2	1	1	34
Judiciary	2	1	1	35
Labour	7	3.5	3.5	38.5
Lands	2	1	1	39.5
Lands	12	6	6	45.5
Learning	1	0.5	0.5	46
Library	1	0.5	0.5	46.5
Management	2	1	1	47.5
Marketing	1	0.5	0.5	48
NSSF	6	3	3	51
Performance & appraisal	1	0.5	0.5	51.5
Planning	17	8.5	8.5	60
Procurement	11	5.5	5.5	65.5
Public Relation	2	1	1	66.5
Public Service	4	2	2	68.5
Reception	1	0.5	0.5	69
Registration of Persons	5	2.5	2.5	71.5
Registry	1	0.5	0.5	72
Revenue	3	1.5	1.5	73.5
Security	6	3	3	76.5
Social Protection	3	1.5	1.5	78
Social Services	2	1	1	79
Survey	1	0.5	0.5	79.5
Teaching	5	2.5	2.5	82
Technology	2	1	1	83
Transport	14	7	7	90
Treasury	4	2	2	92
TSC	11	5.5	5.5	97.5
Tutorial	1	0.5	0.5	98
Youth	4	2	2	100
Total	200	100	100	

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## Appendix IV: Data Collection Permit



### KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

P. O. Box 267 Meru - 60200, Kenya  
Tel: 254-064-30301/31229/30367/31171

Fax: 254-64-30162  
Email: info@kemu.ac.ke

Our ref: NAC/MBA/1/2019/5

1<sup>st</sup> April, 2019

Commission Secretary,  
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations,  
P.O. Box 30623-00100,  
**NAIROBI.**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**RE: DANIEL MBUGUA KAMANJA (BUS-3-6591-1/2016)**

This is to confirm that the above named is a bona fide student of Kenya Methodist University, undertaking Masters in Business Administration. He is conducting a research titled **INFLUNCE OF WORK ENVIRONMENT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES IN KENYA, A CASE OF MERU COUNTY.**

We confirm that his thesis proposal has been defended and approved by the university.

In this regard, we are requesting your office to issue a permit to enable him collect data for her Masters dissertation.

Any assistance accorded to him will be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

**DR. Evangeline Gichunge, PhD.**  
**ASS DIRECTOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**



Encl.

## Appendix V: Nacosti Research Authorization



### NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

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NACOSTI, Upper Kabete  
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NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/19/59166/29495**

Date: **25<sup>th</sup> April, 2019**

Daniel Kamanja Mbugua  
Kenya Methodist University  
P.O. Box 267- 60200  
**MERU.**

#### **RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Influence of work environment on employee performance of Central Government Ministries in Kenya, a case of Meru County”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Meru County for the period ending **23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2020.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Meru County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

  
**GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM**  
**FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
Meru County.

The County Director of Education  
Meru County.