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Physical Wellbeing Programs and Performance of Academic Staff in Selected Chartered Public Universities in Kenya

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Abstract

The performance of academic staff plays a vital role in Kenya's economic growth and societal advancement, with universities serving as key institutions in producing the human capital essential for national development. However, despite their vital role in teaching, research and community service, only one university appeared in year 2023 edition of the Global 2000 list at position 1425 which was a drop from year 2022 due to decline in students' employability and research performance. This study examined the effect of physical wellbeing programs and performance of academic staff in selected chartered public universities in Kenya. The study employed positivism philosophy and was guided by social exchange theory and theory of planned behavior. Descriptive and cross-sectional designs were employed. Target population comprised of 7090 academic staff from 8 public universities with a sample size of 379. Purposive, stratified and simple random sampling were employed to select academic staff. Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires where close-ended responses were measured on 5-point Likert scale and open-ended responses were analyzed using content analysis. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze quantitative data which comprised of percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviation. Linear regression model was employed to examine the association between physical wellbeing and the hypothesized construct. Hypothesis was investigated at 95% confidence level. The study established that physical wellbeing was statistically significant and was positively associated to performance of academic staff in chartered public universities in Kenya with ($\beta = 0.248$, $t = 6.497$, $p < .001$). However, the model was modest with physical wellbeing programs accounting for 11.8% of the variance in performance ($R^2 = 0.118$). To boost academic staff performance, the study recommends improving access, awareness, and flexibility of physical wellbeing programs.

Key Words: Physical Wellbeing Program, Academic Staff Performance, Chartered Public Universities in Kenya, Teaching, Research, Community Service



1. Introduction

One of the most critical elements for success in an organization is employee performance (Adekiya, 2023). Over the past few years, there has been a burgeoning acknowledgment about the association between healthy employees and the quality of their work (Ganu et al., 2017). According to Dawad and Hoque (2016), wellbeing of employees is primacy and employees' performance is a matter of great concern in the global economy. In recent years, a call has been made around the globe that public service employees need to enhance performance (Gitonga, 2018). Performance in the context of this study was measured through teaching, publishing of research papers and community service. Evidence from various contexts emphasizes this link. Research by Australia's Group of Eight (Go8) universities established that employees with higher wellbeing perform their work almost three times better than those with poor wellbeing (Wellness Designs, 2018). In Nigeria, Agboola and Ikonne (2019) found wellbeing especially physical wellbeing as necessary for high performance and similarly, Maseno University, which is a public University in Kenya introduced wellbeing programs to improve academic staff performance (Atieno & Otsyulah, 2019).

To understand this association, it was imperative to give an explanation as to what physical wellbeing means. Nzonzo and Plessis (2020) defined physical wellbeing as a behavioral and lifestyle changes that ensure a healthy mind and body. Tuwai et al. (2015) associated physical wellbeing with drug awareness, stress counseling, and fitness. The current study operationalized physical wellbeing as work environment, exercise facilities, and training on healthy lifestyles. In public universities, performance is closely aligned to their core mission. As postulated by Odhiambo (2018), the core mission of universities is defined by three functions; delivering exemplary teaching, advancing research, and fostering community outreach, which collectively serve as the cornerstone of institutional performance and academic excellence.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Universities play a vital role in creation and dissemination of knowledge through teaching and research (Ibrahim et al., 2022) and the teaching staff are the pillars of achievement in these institutions as they ensure the delivery of quality education (Choong et al., 2013). Ultimately, the performance of universities largely depends on the effectiveness of their teaching staff. However, while they serve a vital function of teaching, research and community service, the number one University in Kenya was placed at position 1425 in 2023 Global 2000 list edition (Center for World University Ranking, 2023). As reported by Muchungu (2023) the university had dropped 20 places from year 2022 ranking and the reason was due to decline in employability of students and its research performance.

Mahando and Juma (2020) raised concerns voiced by researchers who identify specific flaws in HRM practices for instance poor staffing, skewed HR policies and lack of physical resources as the basis of disappointing public universities workers performance. Similarly, Makori et al. (2019) observed that Universities academic staff perceives that universities are unwilling to empower them with resources in realizing their goals. A critical aspect of these human resource management weaknesses is the inadequate attention to staff wellbeing.



With little or no structured physical wellbeing programs, staff are stressed, face burn out and this undermines their teaching effectiveness and efficiency, and research productivity which affects their institution ranking.

Wellbeing programs have been established to lead to improved employee performance (Mungania et al., 2016) and despite this establishment, existing investigations often lack objectivity when analyzing the indirect, complex, and interactive impact of physical wellbeing programs and employee performance, particularly within public universities. Therefore, there is a need to examine the relationship between physical wellbeing programs and performance of academic staff in selected chartered public universities in Kenya, to address the neglected human resource management dimension that is key in improving global competitiveness and institutions' excellence.

1.2 Objectives and Hypotheses of the Study

The objective of the study was to establish the relationship of physical wellbeing programs on performance and the hypotheses was stated in null form; H_{01} : Physical wellbeing programs have no significant relationship on performance of academic staff.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study drew upon a theoretical framework informed by social exchange theory and theory of planned behavior as advanced by various scholars.

2.1.1 Social Exchange Theory

The theory was advanced by George Homans in 1958 and emphasized social interactions between people (Redmond, 2015). The model advances reciprocity that favorable or negative treatment is returned in kind (Gouldner, 1960). It suggests that effective HR practices are investments employees reciprocate with increased abilities, engagement, and drive (Gould-Williams, 2016).

Social Exchange Theory explains the give and take between academic staff and public universities' management. The staff are expected to be efficient and effective in teaching, publishing of research papers and engagement in community service, but on the other hand, they expect the institution to support in provision of physical wellbeing initiatives such as conducive workspaces, exercise facilities, and also offer trainings on healthy lifestyle. Yet, non-provision by the Universities and also nonattendance by some staff weakens motivation and increase burnout. Where universities invest in physical wellbeing programs and encourage staff to participate, staff feel valued and reciprocate with higher teaching, research, and community service.

2.1.2 Theory of Planned Behavior

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was advanced by Icek Ajzen in 1985 and built upon the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). TRA, advanced in 1975 by Fishbein and Ajzen, posits



that human behavior is intentional and governed by subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and attitudes (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The theory suggests that desire to engage in wellbeing activities is shaped by personal evaluation, perceived societal expectations, and confidence in adopting the behavior (Hwu & Yu, 2006). This theory is frequently employed in health and wellbeing and has enjoyed success in explaining and forecasting diverse human behaviors, including physical exercises (Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019). More & Phillips (2022) postulated that for people who undertake mountaineering, unlike those who are new to it, are more likely to participate in similar activities later.

Theory of Planned Behaviour elucidates how the intentions of the academic staff in public universities to participate in healthy practices such as working in conducive environment, engagement in exercises, attendance of trainings on health lifestyles are shaped by attitudes, social norms, and perceived control. In Kenyan public universities, when institutions provide, conducive workspaces, exercise facilities, and healthy lifestyles training, staff are more likely to adopt and sustain such behaviors. On the other hand, if there is no support, even the positive intentions may fail to translate into action, which may undermine the physical wellbeing programs and eventually affect the performance of teaching staff in terms of teaching, research, and community service.

2.2 Empirical Review

This section delved on empirical literature in field of physical wellbeing programs and performance as well as identifying and bridging the existing gaps.

2.2.1 Physical Wellbeing and Employees Performance

Physical wellbeing Programs promote healthy behaviors and optimal physical function. A study by Etemadi et al. (2016) reviewed sixty journals, articles, and reports from 1969 to 2015 on physical fitness and performance. A qualitative descriptive design was used. The findings focused on job satisfaction, mental and physical health. The review revealed that fitness and productivity programs at the workplace could positively impact physical activity levels and established a direct relationship between fitness and work productivity. The study had conceptual, methodological, and contextual gaps which the current study tried to fill by using primary data and conceptualized physical wellbeing as work environment, exercise facilities, and training on healthy lifestyle.

Correspondingly, Torres and Zhang (2021) focused on impact of wearable devices on hotel workers programs. The participants wore wearable fitbits that tracked their activities and sleep patterns for fourteen (14) days. Additionally, the participants submitted to the researchers' food diaries in separate forms. Facts on job engagement and satisfaction, intention to leave and organizational citizenship behaviors was obtained prior and after the period. Findings established a rise in physical activities and healthy food intake. Additionally, there was positive change in employee engagement, commitment and satisfaction in the job. The study, which is a quasi-experimental used technology-based wellness interventions in measuring physical activity, job satisfaction, employee engagement, healthy food consumption, organizational dedication and leaving intention. The study has a conceptual, methodological and contextual gap since it is a quasi-experimental study which

was carried out in a hotel industry. The current study is a descriptive study and was carried out in selected chartered public universities in Kenya.

Santos and Miragaia (2023) carried out a study that focused on physical programs and employee wellness and company productivity by reviewing literature from two databases. PRISMA was applied for quality assurance and Microsoft Excel 2016 was employed to organize database. The sample comprised of 64 reports from international journals from 1986 to 2019. In this study, these areas were highlighted; workplace wellbeing programs, physical activity and work benefits, and sedentary jobs. Analysis established physical activity programs were beneficial and reduced absenteeism and presentism rates. This study has a methodological gap since it used secondary data from databases. The study only considered research published in international journals which might have excluded relevant research published in other sources such as conference papers or grey literature which may have led to publication bias. This current research tried to fill the gap by using primary data.

Rieker et al. (2023) conducted a study focusing on social life, physical fitness, and cognition as independent variables and linked to work ability for midlife and older adults which was dependent variable using a multi-group SEM approach. The study employed cross-sectional data comprising of 247 and 236 midlife and older adult employees respectively. Findings established that physical fitness significantly affected work ability in midlife adults, while cognitive functions had an insignificant effect in both groups. The study had contextual and conceptual gaps as it was conducted in Germany on employees from the Dortmund Vital Study. The study may have been skewed toward a certain health status or occupation and may not be generalized to all midlife and older adults.

3. Methodology

The research study adopted a positivism philosophy, as advanced by Johnson and Clark (2006) as cited in Kinyua et al. (2015). Positivism philosophy was appropriate because it emphasized objectivity and use of evidence that was measurable to explain the associations between variables. In this research study, positivism philosophy guided the measurement of physical wellbeing programs as captured through variables such as work environment, exercise facilities, and trainings on healthy lifestyles and its relationship with the academic staff performance. This approach enabled the use of structured questionnaire and statistical analysis to test hypotheses and draw generalizable conclusions based on empirical data.

This study adopted descriptive and cross-sectional designs which were considered appropriate since they allow collection of data from large population at a single point in time, which makes them efficient in time and resources. Cross-sectional designs are applied widely in social science and management research since they are suitable for examining patterns, relationships, and differences among variables without manipulating the environment of the study (Taris et al., 2021). Additionally, they provide basis that is reliable for understanding associations which can inform theory development and policy decisions. This is particularly in the contexts of Universities where longitudinal tracking may not be achievable.



The research population consisted of 35 public universities in Kenya, out of which 8 were purposively selected. These were the universities that were among the first to be granted charters. The target population comprised of 7,090 academic staff from these universities, from which a sample size of 379 was calculated using Yamane formula. Stratified sampling and simple random were employed to select the academic staff.

Pilot test was done on thirty-eight (38) academic staff who provided data, and they represented 10% of the sample total of 379. Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires where the closed-ended items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, while the open-ended responses were analyzed using content analysis.

The Validity of the research instrument was carried out using face validity, content validity, and construct validity. Reliability was measured using cronbach alpha with a threshold of 0.7. Sampling adequacy, linearity, normality, and multicollinearity diagnostic tests were performed to make sure the results of linear regression analysis were dependable. These tests were significant in assumptions testing of Classical Linear Regression Models (CLRM).

4. Findings

4.1 Pilot Test Results

The validity and reliability of the research instruments were evaluated and confirmed during the pilot study, with the results guiding the researcher on how to refine and analyze the collected data further.

4.1.1 Validity of Research Instruments

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to ascertain the research instrument construct validity by analyzing the study items. Empirical Kaiser Criterion was used and according to (Kaiser, 1960) Eigenvalues should be greater than 1.

Table 1: *Principal Components of Physical Wellbeing Programs*

Component	Eigenvalue	Suggested Label	Key Contributing Items
PC1	5.44	Access to exercise facilities	Exercise facility availability; Health training sessions
PC2	1.77	Usage and impact of physical programs	Exercise participation
PC3	1.56	Health training engagement	Attendance at health lifestyle training; Perceived benefits of training
PC4	1.43	Comfortable work environment	Office ergonomics; Movement areas; Workspace lighting and air quality
PC5	0.81	Training emphasis & time constraints	Institutional support for training; Limited access or competing time demands

Source: Pilot Data (2025)



Table 1 above presents the results of PCA that was carried out to assess the construct validity of the physical wellbeing. The analysis produced five components, of which four had eigenvalues above 1 and thus were retained for interpretation. PC1 had an eigenvalue of 5.44 and was labeled 'access to exercise facilities' PC2 which was labeled 'usage and impact of physical programs' and had an Eigen value of 1.77. PC3 had an Eigen value of 1.56 and was labeled as 'health training engagement'. PC4 had an Eigen value of 1.43 and was titled 'comfortable work environment' PC5 with an Eigen value of 0.81 which reflected 'training emphasis and time constraints, was not retained due to its low explanatory value.

4.1.2 Reliability of Research Instruments

To evaluate study constructs' reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated and benchmarked at Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.7.

Table 2: Reliability of Study Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Comment
Physical Wellbeing	0.85	Reliable

Source: Pilot Data (2025).

Results presented in table 2 above show that the physical wellbeing construct achieved the acceptable and recommended Cronbach's alpha threshold of 0.70 by producing a coefficient of 0.85, which indicated an excellent reliability.

4.2 Response Rate Analysis

A total of 341 self-administered questionnaires were issued to respondents. 321 were completed and returned, representing a 94% response rate which was excellent according to Metsamuuronen (2017), as cited by Murungi and Kinyua (2024).

4.3 Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The demographic variables assessed include gender, age, education level, years worked in the university, and present designation as shown in Table 3.

As shown in table 3, the respondents were distributed fairly across gender which was male and female where the majority were male at 65% and female were 35%. The distribution of male to female respondents was close with CUE (2018) report where male and female academic staff were 68% and 32% respectively in chartered public Universities. The age bracket showed that those below 29 years were 5%, 30-39 years were 23%, 40-49 years were 33%, 50-59 years were 27% and those with 60 years and above were 12%. Age group 40–49 had the largest proportion (33%), indicating a relatively mature academic workforce. Almost 72% of the total staff were aged 40 years and above, which suggested staff with wealth of experience but indicated that there is aging workforce, which pointed to succession planning needs. Only 5% were below 30 years, suggesting low recruitment.



Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	204	65
	Female	111	35
	Total	315	100
	Abstained	6	—
Age Bracket	29 yrs and below	16	5
	30–39 yrs	72	23
	40–49 yrs	106	33
	50–59 yrs	84	27
	60 yrs and above	39	12
	Total	317	100
	Abstained	4	—
Education Level	PhD	17	5.5
	Master's Degree	92	29
	Bachelor's Degree	206	65.5
	Total	315	100
	Abstained	6	—
Years Worked in the University	Less than 1 year	10	3
	1–5 years	53	17
	6–10 years	92	29
	11–15 years	85	27
	16 years and above	76	24
	Total	316	100
	Abstained	5	—
Present Designation	Graduate Assistant	14	4
	Assistant Lecturer	26	5
	Tutorial Fellow	25	8
	Lecturer	146	46
	Senior Lecturer	59	18
	Associate Professor	16	5
	Professor	13	4
	Total	316	100
	Abstained	2	—

Source: Survey Data (2025).

A strong majority 65.5% of staff had PhD degrees, 29% had master's degrees while 5.5% had bachelor's degrees. Work experience distribution showed that academic staff who had less than 1 year work experience were 3%, 1 - 5 years were 17%, 6 - 10 years were 29%, 11 - 15 years were 27% while those that had worked for 16 years and above were 24%. Around 80% of the academic staff had an experience of more than 5 years, which indicated that there was experienced and a stable workforce. However, only 3% of the staff had less than 1 year experience suggesting low recruitment.

In terms of designation, professors were 4%, associate professors were 5%, senior lecturers were 18%, lecturers were 46%, assistant lecturers were 8%, tutorial fellows were 8% while graduate assistants were 11%. The staff who were the majority were Lecturers at 46%, this indicated that this is the most common rank. Professors and associate professors combined were at 9.1% which indicated a top-tier that was narrow. This data indicates that universities need capacity building programs to support upward mobility.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis

This section discussed descriptive analysis of physical wellbeing programs and academic staff performance.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Physical Wellbeing

Sub-Construct	Questions	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Work Environment	I have an office space all by myself	275	3.21	1.72	1.00	5
	I have an office space which is shared	286	3.53	1.67	1.00	5
	The workspace has access to natural light and fresh air	314	4.20	1.11	1.00	5
	The workspace has comfortable furniture that supports my posture and comfort	310	3.58	1.28	1.00	5
	There are designated areas where I can move around and take breaks	310	3.61	1.36	1.00	5
Exercise Facilities	The University has on-site exercise facilities	314	3.73	1.38	1.00	5
	There is free access to the facilities	313	2.91	1.41	1.00	5
	The facilities charges are subsidized	308	3.14	1.36	1.00	5
	The facilities have a friendly schedule	309	3.23	1.31	1.00	5
	I create time to exercise at the facilities	312	2.64	1.37	1.00	5
	The facilities have improved my work performance	307	2.76	1.36	1.00	5
Training on Health Lifestyle	The University organizes health lifestyle training	314	3.04	1.46	1.00	5
	I attend health lifestyle training	314	2.58	1.33	1.00	5
	The training has improved my work performance	312	2.65	1.31	1.00	5
Narrative Responses	Do you consider physical wellbeing program as important in enhancing performance in your institution? (Yes = 258; No = 15; Total = 273)					
Average Score			3.20	1.39	1.00	5.00

Source: Survey Data (2025).

In table 4, analysis of physical wellbeing indicators revealed a moderate overall satisfaction, with an average mean of 3.20 and standard deviation of 1.39 indicating experiences that are fairly diverse across respondents. The most positively rated aspect was access to natural light and fresh air in the workspace, which had a mean of 4.20 and standard deviation of



1.11, showing high satisfaction and responses that were relatively consistent. The presence of on-site exercise facilities was rated well with a mean of 3.73 and standard deviation of 1.38, this suggested institutional support for physical wellbeing programs. Shared office space had a mean of 3.53 and standard deviation of 1.67, comfortable furniture had a mean of 3.58 and a standard deviation of 1.28, and designated areas to move and take breaks which had a mean of 3.61 and standard deviation of 1.36 were rated moderately.

In contrast, having a private office was scored slightly lower with a mean of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 1.72, which showed greater variability and possibly unequal access. Free access to facilities had a mean of 2.91 and standard deviation of 1.41, subsidized facility charges had a mean of 3.14 and a standard deviation of 1.36, and facility scheduling had a mean of 3.23 and standard deviation of 1.31 which scored more neutral, indicating some doubts on accessibility and convenience. The question on creating time to exercise had a mean of 2.64 and standard deviation of 1.37, while the impact of facilities has a mean of 2.76 and standard deviation of 1.36. Similarly, health lifestyle training had moderate ratings with a mean of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 1.46 but lower for actual attendance with mean of 2.58 and a standard deviation of 1.33 and perceived performance impact with a mean of 2.65 and standard deviation of 1.31).

In the open question, majority 94.5% of respondents viewed physical wellbeing programs as important for enhancing performance. These results are in agreement with those reported by other scholars that well-designed wellbeing programs can significantly improve employee well-being and lead to a more productive workforce (Ishaq, 2025).

4.5 Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis testing was conducted using linear regression analyses. A 95% significance level was applied as the statistical basis for drawing conclusions.

4.5.1 Physical Wellbeing on Academic Staff Performance

The study used 318 valid responses to test the null hypothesis H_{01} : physical wellbeing has no significant effect on performance of academic staff.

Table 5: Regression Model Summary

R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p	Durbin–Watson	N
0.118	0.115	42.22	< .001	1.614	318

Note. $p < .001$ indicates statistical significance. Source: Survey Data (2025).

Table 6: Regression Coefficients for Physical Wellbeing

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	95% CI (β)
Intercept	3.3313	0.128	26.090	< .001	[3.080, 3.583]
Physical Wellbeing	0.2482	0.038	6.497	< .001	[0.173, 0.323]

Note. β = standardized coefficient; SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval; $p < .001$ indicates statistical significance. Source: Survey Data (2025).



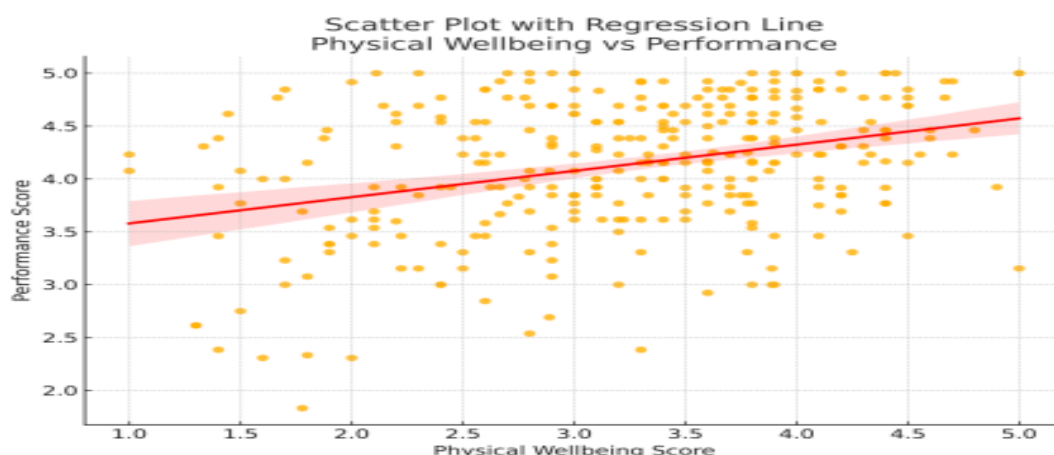
The linear regression model used to assess the relationship between physical wellbeing and employee performance was expressed as: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$. Substituting as:- Employee performance = $3.3313 + 0.2482 \times \text{physical wellbeing} + \epsilon$. This implied that a one-unit increase in physical wellbeing was associated with an average increase of approximately 0.248 units in employee performance. Additionally, a physical wellbeing score of zero corresponded to a predicted employee performance score of 3.331.

Tables 5 and 6 shows regression analysis results, indicating that the model was statistically significant overall, as evidenced by the F-statistic of 42.22 and a p-value less than 0.001. While the model accounted for a modest proportion of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = 0.118$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.115$). However, the R^2 value which was 0.118 shows that the physical wellbeing programs explains only 11.8% of the performance variance, which submits that even when the association is significant, it is relatively modest. This indicates that there are other factors that are beyond the physical wellbeing programs in influencing academic staff performance.

The predictor, physical wellbeing, had a positive and statistically significant effect on the outcome. Ceteris paribus, a one-unit increase in physical wellbeing program was associated with a 0.2482 unit increase in the dependent variable with $p < 0.001$, with a 95% confidence interval ranging between 0.173 and 0.323. The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.614, which falls between the acceptable range of 1.5 and 2.5, this is an indication that autocorrelation was not a concern in the residuals. This suggests that the assumption of independence of errors was met, thereby supporting the reliability of the regression results.

These findings suggest that physical wellbeing had a statistically significant positive effect on employee performance. Since $p < 0.001$, the null hypothesis was rejected. This evidence of significant expectation was in agreement with the previous study that was carried out by Van der Put et al. (2023).

Figure 1: Relationship Between Physical Wellbeing and Staff Performance



Note. $N = 318$. Physical wellbeing is positively associated with staff performance ($p < .001$). Source: Survey Data (2025).

The scatter plot in figure 2 provides a visual representation of the association between physical wellbeing programs and performance of academic staff. This upward trend of the fitted line of regression shows that the higher levels of physical wellbeing programs were associated with higher performance. Although the points are somehow dispersed around the line which reflects the modest explanatory power of the model $R^2 = 0.118$, the overall pattern supports the statistical findings that the relationship was positive and was also significant with $p < .001$. This visual evidence reinforces that while physical wellbeing programs contributes to performance, other factors beyond physical wellbeing programs also plays a vital role.

Table 7: Regression Model with Demographic Variables

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	p-Value	Significance
Physical Well-being	0.140	0.042	.001	Yes
Gender (Male)	0.106	0.065	.106	No
Age (30–39 yrs)	0.299	0.176	.090	Marginal
Age (40–49 yrs)	0.282	0.181	.122	No
Age (50–59 yrs)	0.260	0.191	.175	No
Age (60+ yrs)	0.177	0.206	.391	No
Education (PhD)	0.376	0.226	.098	Marginal
Designation (Lecturer)	0.287	0.146	.050	Yes
Designation (Senior Lecturer)	0.380	0.165	.022	Yes
Designation (Tutorial Fellow)	0.356	0.157	.024	Yes
Designation (Associate Professor)	0.505	0.217	.021	Yes
Designation (Professor)	0.451	0.223	.044	Yes

Note. β = standardized coefficient; $p < .05$ indicates statistical significance. Source: Survey Data (2025).

The research study as shown in table 7 established that physical wellbeing programs had statistically significant positive effect on performance of academic staff, highlighting that supportive health initiatives, work environments that is conducive enhance performance. Designation also emerged as a predictor that was very strong, with lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors performing significantly better than their lower-ranked counterparts. In contrast, gender and age did not influence performance significantly, although staff who were aged between 30 and 39 years showed a marginal effect, while education in the PhD category also exhibited a marginal positive influence. The results lead to the conclusion that physical wellbeing programs and academic rank are the most critical determinants of staff performance, while demographic aspects such as gender, age, and qualifications play a limited role. This suggests that support structures in the institution and career progression pathways matter more for performance outcomes than personal characteristics.

Table 8: Demographic Data and Physical Wellbeing Constructs

Group	Office Space	Natural Light & Fresh Air	Furniture Comfort	Movement Areas
Female	3.30	4.17	3.62	3.52
Male	3.18	4.23	3.56	3.65
Diploma	3.15	4.00	3.40	3.35
Bachelor's	3.28	4.15	3.58	3.55
Master's	3.38	4.25	3.68	3.60
PhD	3.50	4.35	3.82	3.75
Professor	3.50	4.40	3.85	3.80
Associate Professor	3.45	4.35	3.78	3.75
Senior Lecturer	3.38	4.28	3.70	3.68
Lecturer	3.30	4.20	3.60	3.55
Assistant Lecturer	3.18	4.10	3.45	3.40

Note. Source: Survey Data (2025).

As per the above demographics, female academic staff reported higher scores in having offices that are not shared and furniture comfort, while male academic staff scored higher on natural light and in areas where they can move around. PhD holders reported the most favorable working conditions and diploma holders the least. Correspondingly, professors reported the highest scores in the aspect of office space, furniture, natural light and movement areas whereas assistant lecturers reported the lowest. This indicated that the perceptions of physical wellbeing programs varied according to gender, designation, the education level, and the rank.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusions

The study found that physical wellbeing programs was positive and significantly associated with teaching staff performance which was operationalized as efficiency and effectiveness in teaching, research publications and community service with $\beta = 0.248$, $t = 6.497$, $p < .001$, although it explained only 11.8% of the variance in performance $R^2 = 0.118$. The mean score for physical wellbeing programs was moderate with Mean of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.84, indicating generally favorable perceptions but notable variation across the academic staff. These results indicated that even when there are improvements in the work environment, and there is availability of exercise facilities, and training on healthy lifestyles which are linked to better teaching, research and community-service outcomes, these aspects only accounted for a modest share of overall performance. Other factors such as workload, awareness or accessibility issues likely explained the larger part of the variation. The observed gap between availability of facility and actual participation further limits the potential impact of physical wellbeing programs on teaching, research and community service.

5.2 Recommendations



The research study findings offered very key policy implications for management of academic staff in public universities in Kenya that are both effective and efficient. To improve on the efficiency and effectiveness of the physical wellbeing programs, the universities' management should ensure that there is increase in awareness and that the available facilities are accessible. The Universities' Management should also ensure that wellbeing programs are well aligned with the needs of staff and their work schedules. Through further subsidizing of the facility costs, offering more flexible activity times, aggressive promotion of wellbeing programs and encouragement of participation may encourage more engagement and positively influence staff performance.

The universities' Management should put into consideration reinforcement of support structures that enhances research and community engagement, such as mentoring in grant writing, and formal recognition of community service. Furthermore, including physical wellbeing programs in performance management systems can help enhance participation in all academic roles, eventually leading to a more balanced academic staff performance.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

The research study investigated selected chartered public universities in Kenya as its focal point which is a single sector. Consequently, the findings of the research study were specific to context of public universities in Kenya and may not directly translate to other sectors. Recognizing limitations of this research scope, it is suggested that future research studies may investigate similar phenomena in diverse sectors to enrich the understanding across a broader spectrum.

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