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WORK LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS IN KIAMBU COUNTY, A CASE OF KENYA WOMEN MICRO FINANCE BANK

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP STUDIES OF ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT)

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

BY

DIANA NKIROTE GITONGA

NOVEMBER, 2024

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This dissertation has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors:

Signature:…….. Date:…….

Dr.Hellen Nkirote Mugambi

First Supervisor

Signature:……. Date:……

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DR. KEPHA OMBUI

Second Supervisor

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, son, siblings and my loving parents for being understanding, their encouragement and support.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the effects of work-life balance practices on employee retention in Kiambu county, a case of KWFT. Specifically, the study sought to assess the effects of flexible work arrangement, recreational services, leave policy and child care support services on employee retention at the Kenya Women Microfinance Bank in Kiambu County. The study was anchored on the High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) theory, Person-Environment Fit theory, Adam's equity theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The unit of analysis was the nine branches of KWFT located in Kiambu County while target population was 210 employees. The study adopted Slovins' formula. The study used closed ended questionnaires to collect the primary data. A pilot study was conducted in Nairobi City County where 14 questionnaires were issued out to employees at KWFT River Road branch and Jogoo Road branch. The data that was gathered was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Qualitative data from open ended questions was analyzed by the use thematic and content analysis and presented in prose form. Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in the study to analyze quantitative data. Descriptive statistics involved the use of mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistic involved the use of correlation and regression analysis. Data was presented using tables. The study concluded that there exists a positive and significant relationship between flexible work arrangement and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study also concluded that there was a positive correlation between employee retention and recreational services, favorable leave policy and child care support services. The study recommended that MFI should tailor flexible work options such as remote work, flexible hours, or compressed workweeks to meet the diverse needs of its workforce. The study also recommended that developing a comprehensive and employee-friendly leave policy is vital for retaining talent.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBD	Central Business District
EAPs	Employee Assistance Programs
FMLA	Family and Medical Leave Act
FWA	Flexible Work Arrangements
HPWS	High-Performance Work Systems
KBA	Kenya Bankers Association
KWFT	Kenya Women Microfinance Bank
KWPC	Kenya Women's Political Caucus
MFIs	Microfinance Institutions
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
RIASEC	Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TSC	Teachers Service Commission

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, and research qestions. The chapter presents the research objectives and probles. Next, the chapter further discusses the justification and significance of the study, scope of the study, and limitations and delimitations of the study. Following is a definition of terms, and summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background to the Study

Microfinance institutions (MFIs) have adopted different approaches to promoting work-life balance among their staff, globally. In North America, MFIs have implemented flexible work arrangement and programs to promote employee well-being. Wellness programs and Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are two examples of initiatives that MFIs have adopted to promote work-life balance and support the well-being of their staff (Anila & Krishnaveni, 2020). Wellness programs can include a variety of activities and resources to promote physical and mental health, such as fitness classes, nutrition education, mental health support, and stress reduction techniques. These programs can be offered on-site or remotely, and can be customized to meet the specific needs of the organization and its employees (Kossek et al., 2019). Grameen America is one example of an MFI in the United States that offers wellness programs to promote employee well-being (Mazur, 2021). The organization provides staff with access to a variety of wellness resources and activities, including fitness classes, healthy snacks, and stress management support. In addition, the organization offers an EAP to provide staff with confidential counseling and support services

In South Asia, many MFIs have implemented flexible work arrangement to promote work-life balance. For example, MFIs such as SKS Microfinance in India and BRAC in Bangladesh offer telecommuting, job sharing, and flexible working hours to their staff (Pearson *et al*., 2020). These arrangements enable staff to balance

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their work and personal commitments, such as caring for children or elderly relatives (Dailey & Kirk, 2017). Telecommuting, or working from home, or other remote locations can be an effective way to allow employees to balance their work and personal responsibilities (Greenhaus *et al.*, 2018). With telecommuting, employees can work from a location that is convenient for them, reducing the time and stress associated with commuting to and from work,.

In Africa, some MFIs have implemented initiatives to promote work-life balance that are tailored to the unique needs and challenges of the region, (Myers-Davis, 2017). One such initiative is the provision of on-site childcare facilities, which are especially helpful for staff who struggle to balance their work and childcare responsibilities. Vision Fund in Zambia is one example of an MFI that has implemented an on-site childcare center to support work-life balance among its staff (Tuminez, 2019). The childcare center is available to all employees and provides a safe and nurturing environment for children while their parents are at work. This has been especially beneficial for women, who are often the primary caregivers for their children, and face significant challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities.

In addition to on-site childcare facilities, some MFIs in Africa have implemented flexible work arrangement to promote work-life balance (Aguirre et al., 2018). For example, Opportunity International in Malawi introduced a flexible work policy that allowed staff to work from home or adjust their working hours to accommodate their personal responsibilities (Atiku, Jeremiah & Boateng, 2020). This has been helpful for staff who live far from their workplace and may face long commutes or transportation challenges (Annan, 2020). By providing these resources and support systems, MFIs have been able to create a more supportive and sustainable work environment for their employees, while also improving their overall job satisfaction and retention.

In Kenya, MFIs have a critical role to play in improving the livelihoods of low-income individuals and communities. However, the nature of their work can be

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demanding and may require long hours and high levels of commitment from employees (Mogeni, 2020). In recent years, many MFIs have recognized the importance of work-life balance and have implemented strategies to support their employees' well-being. For instance, Musoni Microfinance has implemented various strategies to support work-life balance among its employees (Waghmode, 2020). The organization offers flexible work arrangements, including part-time and remote work options, to support employees who have caregiving responsibilities. Musoni Microfinance also provides access to wellness programs, including gym memberships and health education sessions, to support employees' physical and mental well-being.

1.1.1 Employee Retention

Employee retention refers to an organization's ability to keep its employees over a certain period of time. Retention is an important aspect of human resource management because turnover can be costly for organizations in terms of time, resources, and productivity (Allen *et al*., 2018). High employee turnover can be costly for organizations as it results in the loss of valuable knowledge and skills. Replacing an employee is also an expensive process, as it involves recruitment costs, training, and lost productivity. High employee turnover can also lead to decreased morale among remaining employees who may feel overworked and undervalued. Retention is also critical for maintaining a positive organizational culture, as employees who feel valued and supported are more likely to be engaged and committed to their work (Fasolo & LaMastro, 2019). High turnover rates can also disrupt team dynamics and negatively impact the overall culture and performance of an organization.

To improve employee retention, organizations can adopt various strategies. One approach is to provide competitive compensation packages that include fair salaries, bonuses, and benefits such as healthcare and retirement plans (Akdag, 2018). Organizations can also offer opportunities for professional development and career growth, including training programs, mentoring, and leadership development programs. These opportunities help employees to develop new skills and advance their careers within the organization, which can increase their job satisfaction and

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commitment (Akila, 2020). In addition, rganizations also promote work-life balance by offering flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or flexible schedules. Providing employees with a work environment that supports their personal and family responsibilities can improve their overall well-being and job satisfaction, (Baron & Kenny, 2019).

Organizations can also prioritize employee engagement by fostering a positive work culture that emphasizes communication, recognition, and teamwork. This creates a sense of belonging and positive work environment that encourages employees to stay with the organization. Organizations also prioritize employee feedback and communication which helps them identify areas for improvement and address employee concerns; thus creating a culture of openness and transparency, which improves employee satisfaction and engagement (Koch & Hill, 2018). Effective communication also helps to build trust between employees and management, which improves retention rates (Irshad & Muhammad, 2018).

Compensation and benefits play a critical role in employee retention, as employees need to feel that they are being compensated fairly for their work. This can include competitive salaries, health insurance, retirement benefits, and other perks such as flexible work arrangement or paid time off. Offering career development opportunities such as training, mentoring, and leadership development programs also helps to retain employees by providing them with opportunities to learn and grow within the organization (Gaan, 2020).

Furthermore, measuring employee retention is a critical aspect of talent management for organizations. Retention metrics help organizations understand how well they are retaining their employees and identify areas for improvement (Pradeep, & Dinakar 2018). One of the methods for measuring retention is through employee engagement surveys which measure employee satisfaction, motivation, and commitment to the organization. Engaged employees are more likely to stay with an organization, while disengaged employees may be more likely to leave. Employee engagement surveys can provide valuable insights into the factors that influence

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retention, such as work-life balance, career growth opportunities, and company culture (Goswami, 2019).

Exit interviews are another tool for assessing employee retention. When employees leave an organization, exit interviews can help to understand the reasons for their departure. They reveal issues that may have contributed to employee turnover, such as lack of career development opportunities, poor management, or dissatisfaction with compensation and benefits. This information can be used to address retention issues and improve the employee experience (Subramani 2021).

Retention metrics can also be analyzed by employee demographics, such as age, gender, and job level. This can help to identify whether certain groups of employees are more likely to leave the organization and which factors are influencing their decisions, (Elsafty & Oraby, 2022). For example, younger employees may value career growth opportunities more than older employees, while employees in certain departments may be more sensitive to compensation and benefits. In addition to measuring retention, it is also essential to understand the factors that influence retention rates (Basha, & Ramaratnam, 2017).. These factors include job satisfaction, career growth opportunities, compensation and benefits, work-life balance, and company culture Organizations can use these factors as a framework for developing retention strategies and addressing retention issues. In this study employee retention will be measured by turn-over rates, career development and engagement rates.

1.1.2 Work-Life Balance Practices

Work-life balance practices refer to policies, programs, and initiatives implemented by organizations to help their employees balance their work responsibilities with their personal and family obligations (Dhas, 2018). These practices aim to promote the well-being of employees by providing them with the flexibility and support they need to manage their work and personal lives effectively. Work-life balance practices can take many forms, such as flexible work arrangements like, telecommuting, flexible schedules and wellness programs (Beauregard & Henry,

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2019). Mentioned earlier, another form is family-friendly practices like on-site childcare and time-off arrangements like vacation time and paid parental leave. By implementing work-life balance practices, organizations can improve the job satisfaction and productivity of their employees, reduce absenteeism and turnover rates, and promote a positive workplace culture (Yadav, & Dabhade, 2018).

Wellness programs are initiatives or activities that aim to improve the health and well-being of individuals, typically within a workplace or community setting. The goal of wellness programs is to improve the overall health and well-being of individuals, which has a wide range of benefits, such as reducing healthcare costs, improving employee productivity, and enhancing quality of life. By investing in wellness programs, employers can create a healthier, more engaged, productive workforce, while also promoting a culture of well-being and care. This program includes: Health education, physical fitness activities, mental health support and Preventive health screenings (Adikaram, 2016).

Leave policy refers to a set of rules and guidelines governing the range of employee benefits and programs that provide paid time off work for various reasons (Modau et al., 2019). These programs are designed to support employee well-being, work-life balance and help employees manage personal or family-related responsibilities (Muthulakshmi, 2018). These programs include sick leave, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), vacation leave, and parental leave. On the other hand, child care support services are an effective work-life balance strategy for working parents. By providing access to affordable and high-quality child care, these services help working parents manage the demands of their jobs while also ensuring their children are well-cared for and safe. These support services include resource and referral centers, emergency child care, and after-school programs (Popoola & Fagbola, 2021).

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1.1.3 Kenya Women Microfinance Bank

In Kenya, Kenya Women Microfinance Bank (KWFT) was among the first microfinance institutions established with the goal of providing financial services to women (Hannan, 2020); it was founded in 1981 as a project of the Kenya Women's Political Caucus (KWPC), which aimed to empower women economically and politically. The bank is headquartered in Nairobi and has branches throughout Kenya and offers a range of financial services, including savings accounts, loans, and insurance (Muthama & Warui, 2021). The bank's services are designed to meet the specific needs of women, who are often excluded from the formal financial sector due to cultural and social barriers. KWFT's clients include small business owners, farmers, and women in the informal sector.

Today, over eighty percent of KWFT's clients are women. By providing access to credit and financial education, microfinance institutions have enabled women to start and expand businesses, thereby increasing their income and improving their social status (K'Aol, 2022). Kenya Women Microfinance Bank focuses on providing financial services to women. However, like many microfinance institutions in Kenya, KWFT faces several challenges. One of the main challenges is high workload and long working hours (Mjomba, 2019). Secondly, many microfinance institutions operate in rural areas where the amenities and infrastructure are still being developed which often leads to long travel times for employees. This leads to a lack of work-life balance. Moreover, microfinance institutions often have high demand for loan products, which puts pressure on employees to work long hours to meet targets and deadlines work-life balance (Kossek, & Ozeki, 2020).

Another challenge facing microfinance institutions is the lack of flexibility in working arrangements. Many microfinance institutions have strict schedules and policies that limit the ability of employees to adjust their work schedules to meet personal needs (Amimo, 2018). This is particularly challenging for employees with family responsibilities and other personal commitments. Furthermore, the work environment in microfinance institutions can be stressful and demanding. The nature

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of the work requires employees to interact with clients who may have financial difficulties, which can be emotionally draining. This also leads to burnout and negatively impact employee morale and productivity (Manor& Desiana, 2018).

Lastly, employee retention is another significant concern for microfinance institutions (MFIs), as high employee turnover rates is costly and negatively impacts the quality of services provided to clients. For instance, MFIs, like Kenya Women Microfinance Bank (KWFT), must also develop strategies to retain their employees, promote employee satisfaction, and maintain a stable workforce (Ng'ang'a, 2019). The aim of this study is to assess the effect of work-life balance practices on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Employee retention is a critical issue for organizations, including microfinance institutions like Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. High employee turnover has negative impacts on organizational performance and is costly due to the need for frequent recruitment and training of new staff (Onyango & Omwenga, 2023.; Mburu, 2019; Lucy, 2022). Work-life balance is one of factors that has been linked to employee retention in organizations. According to the Kenya Bankers Association (KBA, 2021), the staff turnover rate in the Kenyan banking sector was 14% in 2019. However, the turnover rate at KWFT was higher than the industry average, with a turnover rate of 20% in the same year. This suggests that KWFT may be facing challenges in retaining its employees. Several factors have been identified as contributing to employee turnover at KWFT, including low salaries, limited opportunities for career advancement, and a lack of work-life balance. Also, KBA (2021) noted that employees at KWFT reported struggling to balance work responsibilities with personal commitments. such as family responsibilities, which led to high levels of stress and burnout, which in turn may have contributed to employee turnover.

Kiambu County is the second most populous county in Kenya with the population being 40% rural and 60% urban due the northwards growth of Nairobi

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County (Itotia, 2021). It is an economic, industrial, and political powerhouse with a large urban educated populace. Work-life balance is a contemporary issue in Kiambu County due to a rising trends in urbanization, dual-career couples, ever-rising demands in work schedules compounded by declining dependence on extended families for child-support & commercialization of domestic household support services. A study conducted on work life balance and staff performance identified its effect on numerous values on work-life conditions, that is, employee performance, employee satisfaction, job satisfaction, employee commitment, workplace factors, organization stress, practices among female employees and behavioral outcomes (Andeyo & Otuya, 2020). Similarly Vishnu and Amutha (2019) on the work-life balance in the health care sector. However, the study was conducted in health sector while the current study will be conducted in the banking sector. Kinyili (2019) did a study on the work-life balance practices and staff retention in Machakos County, Kenya. However, the study used a mixed research design as opposed to the current study which assessed the effect of work-life balance practices on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess the effect of work-life balance practices on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

i. To assess the effects of flexible work arrangements on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.
ii. To determine the effects of recreational services on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.
iii. To establish the effects of leave policy on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

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iv. To assess the effects of child care support services on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

1.4 Research Questions

i. What is the effect of flexible work arrangements on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank?

ii. What is the effect of recreational services on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank?

iii. How does leave policy affect employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank?

iv. How do child care support services affect employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The first significance of this study is at the corporate level, where understanding the impact of work-life balance practices on employee retention is essential for the overall success and sustainability of the organization. Employee turnover can be costly for companies in terms of recruitment, training, and lost productivity (Bahar et al., 2022). By investigating the relationship between work-life balance practices and employee retention, the study provides insights into the strategies and policies that can be implemented by financial institutions to improve employee satisfaction, engagement, and ultimately reduce turnover rates (Refs). This, in turn, enhances the bank's reputation, maintains a skilled and experienced workforce, and contributes to long-term organizational growth.

Secondly, at the sector level, the findings of study are of importance to the microfinance sector. Microfinance institutions often face unique challenges in retaining talent due to factors such as high workloads, limited resources, and demanding work environments (Sindhuja & Subramanian, 2020). By specifically examining the Kenya Women Microfinance Bank, the study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of work-life balance practices tailored to the context of microfinance institutions. The findings can help inform best practices and strategies

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that can be adopted by similar organizations to improve employee retention, thus benefiting the sector as a whole.

Next, at the individual level, the study's significance lies in its potential to improve the well-being and job satisfaction of employees within the Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. Work-life balance practices are aimed at creating a supportive and harmonious work environment that allows employees to effectively manage their personal and professional responsibilities. By investigating the impact of such practices on employee retention, the study sheds light on how employees perceive the bank's efforts in facilitating work-life balance and the subsequent influence on their decision to stay or leave the organization. This understanding can help in the development and implementation of employee-centric policies and initiatives that promote a healthy work-life integration, fostering a positive work environment and enhancing the overall job satisfaction and quality of life for the bank's employees (Akpa et al., 2022).

The academicians contribute to the growth of knowledge through research. They are interested in new research which serves to widen the theoretical framework and also bridging of knowledge gap. This study is of value to the academicians as it contributes to knowledge on work life balance practices and employee retention, as further explored in Chapter Two. The study identifies knowledge gap in employee retention and work life practices which the academicians can provide further research and fill the gaps through further research.

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1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on assessing the effect of work-life balance practices on employee retention. The independent variables of the study were flexible work arrangements, recreational services, leave policy and child care support services. The dependent variable was employee retention. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The unit of analysis was the nine branches of KWFT located in Kiambu County while the unit of observation was 62 middle level employees and 148 lower levels employees from the nine branches of KWFT in Kiambu County. Therefore, the

total target population was 210 employees. The study adopted Slovins' formula to get the sample size of 138 employees from the total target population. The study was conducted in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank and was limited to the 9 KWFT branches namely Ruiru, Gatundu, Limuru, Kiambu, Thika, Githurai, Kikuyu, Githunguri and Banana located in Kiambu County, Kenya (KWFT, 2022). The study was conducted between November 2023 and September 2024 with a budget of Ksh 134,000.

1.7 Limitations and Delimitatations of the Study

Limitations refer to the potential weaknesses or constraints of a study that may affect the validity or generalizability of the findings (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). Delimitations, on the other hand, are the boundaries set by the researcher to narrow the scope of the study (Simon, 2021). The study was limited to Kenya Women Microfinance Bank, specifically in Kiambu County, thereby excluding other microfinance institutions (MFIs) in different counties. Data collection faced challenges as some management personnel were unwilling to authorize data collection at their branches. To overcome this limitation, the researcher provided a consent statement and research permit that clarified the academic nature of the study. Additionally, the researcher encountered time and financial constraints; these were addressed by sourcing financial support from family and friends and by hiring a research assistant to facilitate data collection. Thus, while the study's scope was delimited to a specific institution and location, strategies were implemented to mitigate the associated limitations.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Child Care Support Services	Refers to various programs and initiatives provided by organizations to assist their employees in balancing their work responsibilities with the care of their children, (Adikaram, 2016). In this study this will include bring-your-baby-to-work, maternity leave, nanny care services and

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	preschool
Employee Retention	Refers to the ability of an organization to retain its employees for a prolonged period. It is a measure of how well an organization can keep its valuable and high-performing employees from leaving to join other organizations, (Dailey, & Kirk, 2017). In this study this will include turnover rates, engagement rates and work tenure
Flexible work arrangement	This refers to alternate arrangements or schedules from the traditional working duration and location. Employees may choose a different work schedule to meet personal or family needs, (Elsafty, & Oraby, 2022). In this study this will include working remotely, job sharing and part time.
Leave policy	Refers to a document with rules and guidelines set by an organization governing time that employees take off work during otherwise normal working hours which they are entitled to, by law, or by contract for reasons such as industrial accident, illness, personal reasons, vacation, or any other reason determined by the employee. This leave can be planned or unplanned, (Manor, & Desiana, 2018). In this study leave policy will include religious leave, medical leave, education leave and public holiday leave.
Recreational Services	This refers to activities carried out or sponsored by the organization to improve the employees' social and physical well-being, (Akdag, 2018). In this study this will include, sporting activities, annual family days, team-building events and club memberships.
Work-Life Balance	Refers to the balance between one's professional work life and personal life outside of work, including family, leisure,

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and other personal commitments, (Dhas, 2018). In this study this will be assessed on practices such as include flexible work arrangements, recreational services, leave policy and child care support services.

1.9 Summary

The chapter provides an introduction and background to the study, outlining the key components necessary for understanding the research context. It begins with a statement of the problem, highlighting the challenges faced by the subject under investigation. The objectives of the study are clearly defined, including a general objective and specific objectives that guide the research focus. This is followed by research questions that seek to address the core issues identified. The significance of the study emphasizes its importance to stakeholders and its potential contributions to existing knowledge. The scope of the study delineates the boundaries within which the research will be conducted, while limitations and delimitations and the definition of terms.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to reviewing literature relevant to the study on the work-life balance and staff performance. It provides discussions on various theories on work-life balance programs. This chapter also displays the conceptual framework that outlines the relationship between work life balance and staff performance. The chapter further looks at empirical studies and documented research on the subjects of work-life balance and staff performance and ends by summarizing key variables and identification of the research gaps based on previous studies.

2.2. Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on the High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) theory, Person-Environment Fit theory, Adam's Equity Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory.

2.2.1 High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) Theory

High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) theory was developed by researchers John P. Campbell and David W. Pritchard in the late 1980s. They proposed that an integrated set of human resource practices can significantly contribute to organizational effectiveness, (Delaney, & Huselid, 1996). The theory emerged as a response to the changing nature of work and the growing recognition of the importance of human capital in achieving organizational goals. The HPWS theory is a significant organizational approach that aims to enhance employee productivity, engagement, and overall performance, (Huselid, & Becker, 2011). The theory suggests that by providing flexible work arrangements, organizations can enhance work-life balance for their employees. This can lead to increased job satisfaction, reduced work-related stress, and improved overall well-being, ultimately resulting in higher performance levels. By offering flexibility, organizations demonstrate their

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support for work-life balance and promote a positive work environment, (Guest, 2017).

High-Performance work systems encompasses a range of interrelated human resource practices and strategies aimed at maximizing employee performance, well-being, and organizational outcomes. These practices typically include selective hiring, comprehensive training and development, performance management systems, employee involvement and participation, and incentive-based compensation (Boxall & Macky, 2019). The integration of these practices is believed to create a synergistic effect, leading to enhanced individual and organizational performance.

The HPWS theory further emphasizes the importance of aligning human resource practices with organizational goals, leading to improved employee performance. Selective hiring processes and comprehensive training ensure a competent and skilled workforce, contributing to higher productivity and efficiency (Jiang et al, 2012). The theory emphasizes employee involvement and participation, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement among employees. This leads to higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and motivation, ultimately enhancing performance and reducing turnover rates.

However, the theory has been criticized on the basis that implementing and maintaining HPWS practices can be resource-intensive, requiring significant investments of time, money, and expertise, (Paauwe, & Boselie, 2005). Another argument is that small organizations with limited resources may find it challenging to fully adopt the theory. The HPWS theory primarily focuses on enhancing performance, which can inadvertently lead to increased pressure and stress among employees. This may negatively impact their well-being and work-life balance (Wood, & De Menezes, 2011).

Despite its limitations, the theory was relevant for this study, particularly in explaining the effect of work-life balance practices on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. Flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting,

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flexible hours, and job sharing, align with HPWS principles by empowering employees to manage their work-life balance effectively (Boxall & Macky, 2020). When employees have the flexibility to adjust their work schedules to fit their personal needs, they experience higher job satisfaction and reduced stress. This supportive and adaptive work environment fosters a sense of loyalty and commitment, leading to increased employee retention. By integrating flexible work arrangements, organizations can leverage HPWS to create a more engaged and dedicated workforce, thereby reducing turnover rates. Hence the theory helped in explaining the effects of flexible work arrangement on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

2.2.2 Person-Environment Fit Theory

The Person-Environment Fit (P-E Fit) theory, developed by Holland (1985), is a widely recognized psychological framework that examines the compatibility between individuals and their work environments. The Person-Environment Fit theory was initially formulated in the 1970s, and proposed that individuals and work environments possess distinct characteristics that can be categorized into six vocational personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional [RIASEC] (Vianen, 2018). This theory emerged as a response to the need for a systematic framework to assess the fit between individuals and their occupational environments (Kristof & Zimmerman, 2005).

The P-E Fit theory posits that individuals seek congruence or compatibility between their personal characteristics and the demands and attributes of their work environments (Ostroff & Schmitt 2014). It emphasizes that when there is a good fit between a person and their environment, it leads to positive outcomes, such as job satisfaction, performance, and well-being. Conversely, a poor fit may result in stress, dissatisfaction, and decreased performance (Saks & Ashforth, 2015).

The P-E Fit theory has shown strong predictive validity in various domains. It has been linked to outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment,

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turnover intentions, and overall well-being. By examining the fit between individuals and their work environments, organizations can gain insights into potential sources of dissatisfaction and make informed decisions (Caplan, 2013). The theory recognizes the importance of individual differences and preferences in the work environment. It also emphasizes that individuals have unique characteristics and seek environments that align with their personality, interests, and values. This approach acknowledges the importance of person-environment congruence for fostering optimal performance and satisfaction (Chatman, 2015).

On the other hand, Kristof (2012) criticizes the theory in the sense that P-E Fit theory focuses on the initial fit between individuals and their work environments, neglecting the potential for changes over time. Thus arguing that individuals' preferences and work environments can evolve, necessitating a more dynamic perspective to account for fluctuations in fit and its consequences. Moreover, the theory has been criticized for oversimplifying the complexity of human behavior and preferences. It may not fully capture the multidimensionality and diversity of individuals and work environments (Rounds & Tracey, 2015).

The theory was relevant to the current study as it proposes that individuals are most satisfied and effective in their work when there is a match or compatibility between their personal characteristics and the work environment. When considering leave policies, P-E Fit theory can be relevant. Leave policies that are aligned with employees' personal needs and circumstances contribute to a positive person-environment fit. Hence the theory helped in explaining the effects of leave policy on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

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2.2.3 Adam's Equity Theory

Adam's Equity Theory was formulated by John Stacey Adams in 1963 as an alternative to traditional motivation theories that focused solely on rewards (Pritchard, 1969). Adams sought to explain how individuals perceive fairness and balance in their work relationships. He proposed that employees compare their inputs (effort, skills,

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experience) and outcomes (salary, recognition, benefits) to those of others to determine whether they are being treated equitably (Cropanzano & Folger, 1991).

Adam's Equity Theory posits that individuals strive for a state of perceived equity or fairness in their work relationships. It is based on the principle that people evaluate the fairness of their inputs and outcomes relative to the inputs and outcomes of others (Greenberg, 2013). When employees perceive a fair exchange between their inputs and outcomes, they experience job satisfaction and motivation. Conversely, inequity, whether perceived as under-reward or over-reward, can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction and may result in various forms of behavior to restore equity (Huseman et al, 2015).

The theory is relevant to this study as it provides insights into the motivational aspects of work relationships by emphasizing the importance of fairness perceptions (Indriani, 2015).. It helps managers understand how employees' perceptions of equity influence their motivation and commitment to the organization. Adam's Equity Theory recognizes the significance of social comparisons in determining fairness perceptions. It acknowledges that individuals compare their inputs and outcomes to those of others to assess fairness, highlighting the importance of relative comparisons in the workplace. Adam's Equity Theory helps identify potential sources of inequity within organizations. By recognizing and addressing disparities in inputs and outcomes among employees, organizations can create a more equitable work environment, leading to increased employee morale and commitment.

Colquitt (2001) criticized Equity Theory in that perceptions are subjective and influenced by individual differences, interpretations, and biases. What one person considers fair, another may view as unfair, making it challenging to objectively assess and address perceptions of equity. Adam's Equity Theory primarily focuses on equity perceptions as a motivational factor, potentially overlooking other important aspects of employee motivation, such as intrinsic motivation, job characteristics, and personal values. The theory places considerable emphasis on social comparisons, which can lead to a competitive mindset and unnecessary rivalry among employees (Konovsky&

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Leventhal, 2013). This may undermine cooperation, teamwork, and collaboration within the organization.

The theory was relevant to the current study because it suggests that employees are motivated by perceived fairness in the workplace, comparing their job inputs and outputs with those of others. When an organization provides childcare support services, employees see this as a valuable benefit that balances their work effort and personal sacrifices. This perceived fairness enhances job satisfaction and loyalty, reducing turnover. By offering childcare support, employers can create a sense of equity, making employees feel valued and fairly treated, which significantly boosts retention rates.

2.2.4 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, is a seminal framework in understanding employee motivation and job satisfaction. The theory was developed by Frederick Herzberg in the 1950s (Stello, 2011). The theory argues that there are two distinct sets of factors influencing employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction: hygiene factors and motivators (Alshmemriet al, 2017). Hygiene factors are related to the work environment and include aspects such as company policies, supervision, salary, and working conditions. While these factors do not necessarily motivate employees, their absence can lead to job dissatisfaction. On the other hand, motivators are intrinsic factors that contribute to job satisfaction and include elements such as achievement, recognition, and personal growth. Herzberg argued that improving hygiene factors can prevent dissatisfaction, but only addressing motivators can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation (Bhatt, Chitranshi & Mehta, 2022).

Despite its influential role, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory has faced criticism from various quarters. One major critique is that the theory oversimplifies the complexity of employee motivation by categorizing factors strictly as either hygiene or motivators (Siruri & Cheche, 2021). Critics argue that factors traditionally

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considered as hygiene can also contribute to job satisfaction and vice versa, depending on the context and individual differences (Kotni & Karumuri, 2018). Furthermore, the theory has been criticized for its reliance on self-reported data, which may not accurately reflect the diverse motivations and satisfactions of all employees.Additionally, the theory may not account for the varying importance of different factors across different industries or cultural contexts, limiting its universal applicability.

Despite these critiques, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory remains relevant, particularly in understanding the impact of recreational services on employee retention. Recreational services, such as wellness programs, sports facilities, and social events, primarily address hygiene factors by improving the work environment and reducing stress (Rai, Thekkekara & Kanhare, 2021). These services contribute to a more enjoyable and less stressful workplace, which can prevent job dissatisfaction and burnout. When employees feel that their work environment supports their well-being and work-life balance, they are more likely to remain with the organization. By enhancing overall job satisfaction through recreational services, organizations can indirectly influence employee retention, making it a valuable strategy in the broader context of Herzberg's theory.

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2.3 Empirical Literature Review

2.3.1 Flexible Work Arrangement and Employee Retention

Doe (2022) conducted an empirical study on the effect of flexible work arrangements on employee retention. Using a mixed-method research design involving quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the study explored whether organizations offering flexible work options experience higher employee retention rates. The sample consisted of 200 employees from various industries and organizational sizes. The findings of the study indicated a significant positive relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee retention. The quantitative analysis revealed that organizations that provide flexible work options

have higher employee retention rates compared to those that do not. Employees who have access to flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting, flexible hours, and compressed workweeks, are more likely to stay with their organizations for longer periods. The study adopted mixed research method but the current study adopted descriptive research design.

Smith (2019) conducted a study on the impact of flexible work arrangements on employee retention in the information technology (IT) sector. The research methodology involved a survey administered to 300 IT professionals working in various organizations. The findings revealed a strong positive association between the availability of flexible work options, such as telecommuting and flexible schedules, and higher employee retention rates. The study was conducted in telecommunication sector while the current study was conducted in banking sector.

Similarly, Johnson and Davis (2020) conducted a study on flexible work arrangements and employee retention across different industries. By examining a diverse range of research articles, the study provided a comprehensive overview of the topic. The analysis confirmed a significant positive effect of flexible work arrangements on employee retention. The results demonstrated that organizations offering flexible work options experience higher employee retention rates compared to those that do not. The meta-analysis emphasizes the importance of implementing flexible work arrangements as a strategic tool for improving employee retention across various sectors. However, the study examines flexible work arrangements across various industries without focusing on any particular sector. The findings are generalized across different types of organizations, which may not capture the specific nuances of microfinance institutions.

Within the Kenyan context, Mugambi and Namusonge (2021) examined the influence of work-life balance on employee retention in commercial banks. The study applied a descriptive research design and the target population comprised a total of 160 staff working at the five selected commercial banks with headquarter offices situated in Nairobi. The study utilized stratified random sampling to select the sample

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size for the study, whereby respondents were stratified according to the respective banks. A total of 114 employees however formed the sample size for the study. Primary data were collected directly from respondents using semi-structured questionnaires, including both open and close ended questions. Data collected were analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics aided by Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 24) to compute responses frequencies, percentage mean and standard deviation results. Finally, Multiple Linear Regression model was employed to establish the significance of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The findings were presented using tables and charts. The study concluded that work hours flexibility is critical to influencing significantly employee retention. However, the study focuses on commercial banks in Nairobi. While commercial banks and microfinance institutions share some similarities, the work environments, employee expectations, and operational dynamics can be different.

Likewise, Kiprono (2021) conducted a study on flexible working patterns on employee performance in Kericho County Referral Hospital. The study was guided by Vroom's Expectancy Theory. The study adopted descriptive research design. The target population was stratified into top management, doctors, clinical officers, nurses and subordinates consisting of 111 employees. A sample of 104 staff of the hospital was selected using stratified sample techniques and from each strata simple random sampling was used. The data were collected using closed and open-ended questionnaire where validity of the research instrument was determined by peer expert judgment and by the researcher's supervisor and piloting. The findings indicated that 'flexi working strategies' was significant to the performance of employees in an organization (Ibid). However the study focused on a hospital setting, which may have different operational needs and employee expectations compared to a financial institution. The work environment and job roles in a hospital can differ significantly from those in a microfinance institution.

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2.3.2 Leave Programs and Employee Retention

Olšavský and Treľová (2020) conducted a study on the impact of education leave on employees' productivity and job satisfaction in The Slovak Republic. Primary data were collected using interview schedules and questionnaire formulated using 22 semi-closed questions. The survey results showed that education leave enhances employees' productivity and job satisfaction. The dependent variable was employees' productivity while the current study' variable was employee retention. However, the study focused specifically on education leave as a work-life balance practice and its effect on productivity and job satisfaction. The study does not address other work-life balance practices or their collective impact on employee retention.

A similar study by Umar (2019) investigated the effect of education leave on employee performance in Indonesia. The study aimed to analyze the effect simultaneously and partially between the variables of education leave on employee performance. The sample of the research was on 94 employees. Random sampling technique was used and path analysis. The results showed that the variables of education and training and leadership influence simultaneously and partially on employee performance. The study was conducted in a developed country while the current study was done in Kenya which is a developing country. Differences in economic development, regulatory environments, and cultural attitudes towards education leave may affect the generalizability of the findings to other geographical and political contexts.

Kauhanen (2021) conducted a study on the effects of an education-leave program on educational attainment and labor-market outcomes. Using Finnish administrative linked employer-employee panel data and matching methods. The study revealed that adult education allowance is available to employees with at least eight years of work experience and allows them to take a leave for 2–18 months to participate in an education program. The study found large positive treatment effects on educational attainment and changing occupation. The dependent variable was employees' productivity while for the current study it was employee retention.

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However, the study focuses specifically on an education-leave program available to employees with significant work experience. The specific nature of the education-leave program in Finland may not be directly applicable to other contexts or sectors such as MFIs.

Koitalek (2018) investigated the influence of leave policy on employee commitment at Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in Kenya. Primary data were collected using self-administered questionnaires and the data wereanalyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The data werepresented using tables and pie charts. The study established that teachers' service commission had different forms of leave that compares with other state bodies and that the management involves junior staff in decisions relating to their leave. The study revealed a diversity of leave at TSC, which attracts different types of employees. However, the study examined a government body in the education sector. The nature of the organization, its leave policies, and employee engagement strategies might differ significantly from those in the microfinance sector.

Nkanata et al., (2023) conducted a study on the influence of leave programs on staff retention in public level five hospitals in Kenya. The study embraced descriptive and correlational research designs. The study target population was 472 doctors, 3318 nurses, and 449 clinical officers from the 11 available public level five hospitals in Kenya. The study used proportionate stratified random sampling to select eight (8) public level five hospitals, and a total sample size of 40 doctors, 278 nurses, and 37 clinical officers. To select the study participants in each stratum, simple random sampling was used. Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire through drop and pick approach. Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of the research instruments; data were analyzed using SPSS, with descriptive and inferential statistics being used to discuss study findings based on the objectives. The study found out that the leave programs significantly influenced retention of health workers. However the study examineds public level five hospitals, which operate in the healthcare sector. The nature of work in healthcare is different from that in financial institutions,

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involving different stressors, work patterns, and leave requirements.Lastly, the methodology, including sampling and data collection, is specific to healthcare which may differ from methods used in this study.

2.3.3 Recreational Services and Employee Retention

Mogeni et al., (2019) conducted a study on the influence of recreational services on employee retention of commercial banks in Kenya. A descriptive survey was used to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The target population was 4,054 employees in Nairobi County from all the 40 listed and operating commercial banks. Stratified random sampling design was used to select a sample size of 364 respondents. Primary data were collected using self-administered questionnaires. Quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics and analysis was done by use of SPSS as a statistical package and qualitative data was analyzed by use of content analysis approach. The results of regression analysis revealed that there is a significant positive influence of recreational services on employee retention. However, the study focused specifically on recreational services and their impact on employee retention. This narrow focus may not cover other important work-life balance practices that could influence retention in the MFI sector.

Mokaya and Gitari (2018) focused on the effects of workplace recreation on employee performance, the case of Kenya Utalii College. The study was descriptive covering a stratified sample of 81 respondents drawn from 162 employees. Data collected through self-administered questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The study concluded that recreation is a significant factor in employee performance; increases the level of commitment, enhances bonding and improves employee wellbeing with a consequent positive effect on job satisfaction, service provision, customer satisfaction and productivity. The study was conducted in a public institution while the current study was conducted in a private institution.

Baridulaet al, (2019) conducted a study on the employee recreation and organizational performance of deposit money banks in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The

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study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary source of data were generated through self- administered questionnaire. The population of the study covered 355 permanent and full-time staff. The sample size of 188 was drawn using the Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used for hypothesis testing with the aid of the SPSS Package version 23. The findings revealed that employee recreation is significantly correlated with organizational performance of deposit money banks in Port Harcourt. However, the focus was on how employee recreation impacts organizational performance, which may involve different operational and cultural factors compared to microfinance institutions.

In another study, Enenifa and Akintokunbo (2020) investigated the workplace recreational activities and employee effectiveness in deposit money banks in Yenogoa Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The population of the study was 277 employees of nineteen (19) deposit money banks.. The sample size of 164 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The findings from the data analysis revealed a significant relationship between workplace recreational activities and employee effectiveness in deposit money banks. However, the study focused specifically on workplace recreational activities and their relationship with employee effectiveness. This narrower focus does not encompass other important work-life balance practices relevant to this study.

2.3.4 Child Care Support Services and Employee Retention

Babu and Bhavana (2020) conducted a study on the impact of childcare assistance (a work-life balance practice) on employee retention in the Indian IT sector. A total of 300 samples with 30 samples (assistant managers, managers, and senior mmanagers) from each company had been included based on simple random sampling. Managerial personnel from HR, marketing, finance, operations and technical functions are included in the study. The study showed that when the average childcare assistance score increases, the average employee retention score also increases proportionately. The study revealed both a positive correlation and

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significant association between employee retention and childcare assistance. However the study investigated the Indian IT sector, which includes a different set of industry-specific practices and employee expectations and findings in that context may differ from a microfinance setting.

Chordia (2018) sought to find out whether federal child care programs were sufficient for employee retention, using a critical examination from a gendered perspective. Furthermore, the study used 2010 to 2015 federal agency-level longitudinal panel analysis. Findings suggested that structural provisions such as satisfactory child care programs are not adequate in enhancing retention of either male or female employees. Satisfaction with child care programs is less likely to increase retention of female employees than male employees. However, as compared with male employees, female employees are more likely to be retained when satisfactory child care programs are combined with inclusive organizational practices. The study adopted longitudinal panel analysis while the current study adopted descriptive research analysis.

Mogeniet al, (2019) did a study on the influence of child care services on employee retention of commercial banks in Kenya. A descriptive survey was used to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The target population was 4,054 employees in Nairobi County from all the 40 listed and operating commercial banks in Kenya. Stratified random sampling design was used to select a sample size of 364 respondents. Primary data were collected using self-administered questionnaires. Quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics; and analysis were achieved by use of the SPSS statistical package. Qualitative data were analyzed by use of content analysis. The results of regression analysis revealed there was a significant positive influence of child care services on employee retention. although the focus on childcare services in commercial banks provides specific insights, this may differ in methodological approach from this study.

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2.4 Research Gap Analysis

Below, in Table 2.1, is a summary of four key studies that have informed the research gap analysis for this current study. The summary presented provides the following information: the author (or authors) of each study and year of publica,ion. Next is a brief description of the focus of the study, followed by the summary of the findings of the study. The gaps of each study are then identified.

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Table 2. 1: Summary of the Reviewed Literature and Research Gaps

Author	Focus of the Study	Findings of the Study	Gaps of the Study	How the study addressed the Gaps
Mwebi and Kadaga (2019)	Effects of flextime work arrangement on employee performance in Nairobi CBD Commercial Banks.	From the findings, the study showed that flextime work arrangement influences employee performance in Nairobi central business district commercial banks. The study exhibited the availability of flextime work arrangement across Nairobi central business district commercial banks	However, the study was conducted among commercial banks and used proportionate sampling method	The current study closed the gap by focusing on Kenya Women Microfinance specifically, the branches in Kiambu county. The study adopted Slovins' formula to get the study sample size.
Olšavský and Treľová, (2020)	Impact of education leave on employees' productivity and job satisfaction in Slovak Republic	Impact of education leave on employees' productivity and job satisfaction in Slovak Republic	However, the study focused on the employee productivity and job satisfaction in Slovak Republic	The current study focused on employee retention in Kenya women microfinance bank specifically the branches within Kiambu County.
Umar, (2018)	Effect of education leave on employee performance in Indonesia	The results showed that the variables of education and training and leadership influence simultaneously and partially on employee performance.	The study was conducted in Indonesia and the dependent variable focused on employee performance.	The current study was conducted in Kenya women microfinance bank specifically the branches within Kiambu County and the dependent variable focused on employee retention.

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Mokaya and Gitari, (2018)	Impact of office recreation on staff wellbeing. The descriptive research method was used in this study	The study findings revealed that physical fitness and mental health programs have a considerable favorable influence on employee wellness and performance, according to the study.	However, the study's population consisted of 748 Nigerian University Commission employees, with a sample size of 230 determined using the Taro Yamane formula.	The current study was conducted in Kenya women microfinance bank specifically the branches within Kiambu County and used Slovins' formula to get the study sample size.

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2.5 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a foundational structure or theoretical framework that provides a systematic and organized approach to understanding and studying complex phenomena (Leshem & Trafford, 2020). It serves as a roadmap or skeleton for research, guiding researchers in developing hypotheses, conducting investigations and interpreting results. The independent variables of the study were flexible work arrangement, recreational services, leave policy and child care support services. The dependent variable was employee retention.

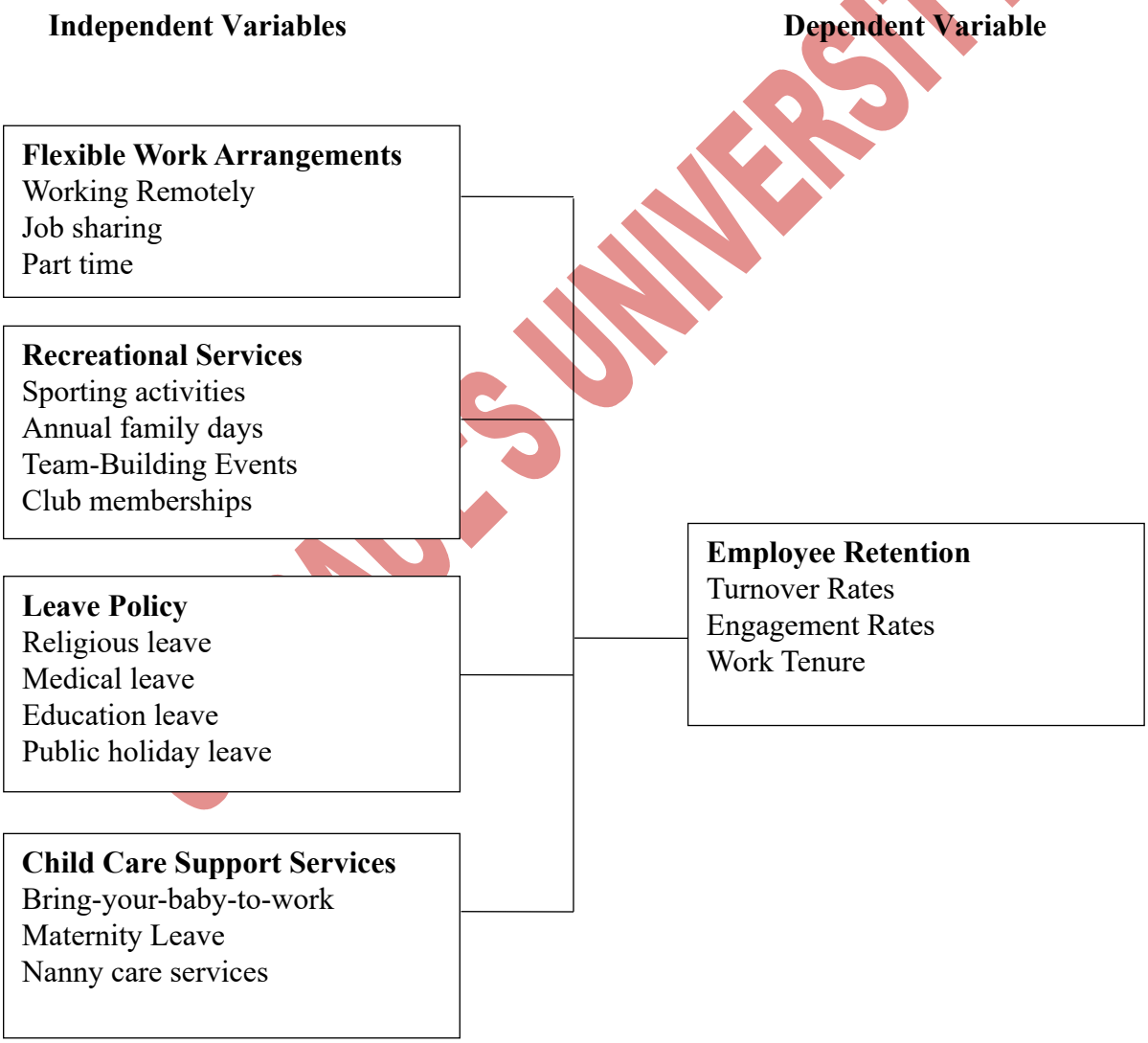


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Own Conceptualization (2023)

In the succeeding section, is an elaborate discussion on the concepts depicted in the conceptual framework which include Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA), Recreational Services, Leave Policy and Child Care Support Services (IVs) and Employee Retention (DV).

2.5.1 Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) involve alternative schedules or locations for work, providing employees with the freedom to choose when and where they perform their tasks (Shifrin & Michel, 2022). The impact of flexible work arrangements on employee retention is substantial. By offering flexibility, organizations demonstrate a commitment to the well-being and work-life balance of their employees. This, in turn, fosters a positive work environment that can contribute to increased job satisfaction and loyalty. Employees who feel trusted and empowered to manage their own schedules are more likely to stay with a company for the long term, as they appreciate the flexibility afforded to them (Austin-Egole, Iheriohanma & Nwokorie, 2020). Additionally, flexible work arrangements can attract and retain top talent, as they align with the evolving expectations of a diverse and dynamic workforce.

2.5.2 Recreational Services

Recreational Services (RS) refers to activities and facilities provided by employers to promote the physical and mental well-being of their employees outside of work responsibilities (Woo, Jang & Chang, 2022). The impact of recreational services on employee retention is notable. Offering recreational services not only contributes to a healthier workforce but also enhances the overall workplace culture. Employees who have access to on-site fitness centers like gym, team-building events, or wellness programs are more likely to feel valued and engaged (Enenifa & Akintokunbo, 2020). This positive association with the workplace contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction, ultimately influencing employee retention.

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Organizations that prioritize the well-being and enjoyment of their employees through recreational services create a more attractive and fulfilling work environment, reducing turnover and retaining valuable talent.

2.5.3 Leave Policies

Leave Policies (LP) delineate the guidelines and provisions for time off from work, including vacation, sick leave, and study leave (Glass & Riley, 2019). The influence of leave policies on employee retention is substantial. Providing generous and flexible leave options demonstrates an organization's commitment to supporting its employees in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Employees who feel supported in managing their personal and family needs are more likely to remain loyal to their employers (Modau et al., 2023). Moreover, a well-structured leave policy can contribute to a positive workplace culture, fostering a sense of trust and fairness that strengthens the employer-employee relationship. By addressing the diverse needs of employees through comprehensive leave policies, organizations can enhance job satisfaction and, consequently, employee retention.

2.5.4 Child Care Support Services

Child Care Support Services (CCSS) involves employer-sponsored initiatives to assist employees in managing their childcare responsibilities. The impact CCSS on employee retention is significant (Chordiya, 2019). Employees, especially parents, often face challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities, and organizations that offer childcare support demonstrate an understanding of these challenges. By providing on-site childcare facilities, flexible schedules, or financial assistance for childcare expenses, employers can alleviate the stress associated with childcare and create a family-friendly work environment (Johnco et al., 2021). This, in turn, enhances employee loyalty and commitment, as employees appreciate the support extended to them in managing their family obligations. In summary, CCSS contributes to a positive workplace culture that values its employees, ultimately

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leading to increased retention of valuable talent and promotes career progression for women and single fathers.

2.5.5 Employee Retention

Employee Retention (ER) is a critical aspect of organizational success and sustainability. It refers to the ability of a company to retain its employees over a specified period, thereby reducing turnover rates (Ghani et al., 2022). High employee retention is indicative of a positive work environment, effective leadership, and satisfied employees. One of the primary benefits of strong employee retention is the preservation of institutional knowledge and expertise within the organization. Experienced employees who stay with a company for an extended period contribute to organizational continuity and stability (Elsafty & Oraby, 2022). This continuity is essential for maintaining consistent business operations, fostering innovation, and ensuring that the company can adapt to evolving challenges.

Moreover, employee retention is closely linked to overall productivity and efficiency. When employees remain with a company for a longer duration, they become more familiar with its processes, systems, and culture. This familiarity translates into increased efficiency and effectiveness in their roles (Elsafty & Oraby, 2022). Continuity in staffing allows for the development of strong teams with established communication patterns and collaborative dynamics, leading to smoother workflow and better problem-solving capabilities. High employee retention also positively impacts customer satisfaction, as experienced and knowledgeable employees are better equipped to deliver high-quality products or services and provide superior customer service (Prasetyo & Aliyyah, 2021).

2.6 Summary

This chapter provides a thorough literature review, beginning with a theoretical review then an empirical literature review. The chapter also presents research gaps analysis and finally, the conceptual framework.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology which was employed to conduct the study. It presented the research design and population. It also presented sampling technique and sample size, data collection instruments and procedure, pilot test, validity and reliability and data analysis procedures.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive research design. Descriptive research is a social research design with the primary aim of describing (rather than explaining) a particular phenomenon (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2013). A cross-sectional descriptive research design allows for gathering in-depth information that may be either quantitative or qualitative in nature. Further the descriptive research design gives the opportunity to use both quantitative and qualitative data, in order to find data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon that is being studied.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population for a survey is the entire set of units for which the survey data are to be used to make inferences. A target population can also be defined as a certain group of the population that share similar characteristics (Novikov & Novikov, 2013). The unit of analysis was the nine branches of KWFT located in Kiambu County while the unit of observation was 62 middle level employees and 148 lower levels employees from the nine branches of KWFT in Kiambu County. Therefore, the total target population was 210 employees (see Table 3.1, below).

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Table 3. 1: Target Population

KWFT Branches	Middle Level Employees	Lower-Level Employees	Total
Banana Unit	7	15	22
Gatundu Unit	6	18	24
Githunguri Unit	7	16	23
Githurai Unit	8	15	23
Kiambu Unit	6	17	23
Kikuyu Unit	7	18	25
Limuru Unit	6	15	21
Ruiru Unit	8	16	24
Thika Unit	7	18	25
Total	**62**	**148**	**210**

Source: Kiambu County Business Registrar (2023)

3.4 Sampling Technique

Sampling is described as the process of selecting a representative number of items out of the targeted population (Orodho, 2015). The study adopted Slovins' formula to get the sample size of 138 employees from the total target population.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$$

Where: n = sample size
N = population size
e = margin of error
1 = is a constant value

$$n = \frac{210}{1+210(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{210}{1.525}$$

$$n = 137.70$$

Therefore, the Sample Size was 138 employees

The study further adopted stratified random sampling from which the samples was allocated to various categories according to their relative sizes in the targeted population using the following formula:

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$n_h=(N_h/N)$ x n

n_h = Sample size of stratum h

N_h = population size of stratum h

N = total population size

n = total sample size

The stratified sample size is as shown in the sampling frame Table 3.2: Sample Size Determination.

Table 3.2: Sample Size Determination

Level of Management	Target Population	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
Middle Level Employees	62	41	30
Lower-Level Employees	148	97	70
Total	**210**	**138**	100

Source: Research Data (2023)

3.5 Data Collection

3.5.1 Instrumentation

The study used closed ended questionnaires to collect the primary data desirable for the study. A questionnaire is a data collection tool designed by the researcher, whose main purpose is to communicate to the respondents what is intended and to elicit desired response in terms of empirical data from the respondents in order to achieve research objectives (Zohrabi, 2012). The design of the questionnaire was based on a five Likert scale (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). Likert scale questions were used to make it easier to measure levels of agreement or disagreement on certain variables. The questionnaire was the most applicable instrument due to its ease of distribution and data collection, ease of data analysis, standardization of the questions and cost efficiency (Wellington, 2014). (See Appendix II)

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3.5.2 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher first sought clearance by an Institutional Scientific and Ethicaal Research Committee (ISCERC) after which the researcher sought authorization letter from National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI) (See Appendix IV and III respectively). The researcher later presented the NACOSTI permit to the directors of the nine (9) branches of KWFT located in Kiambu County for the purposes of seeking formal authorization to undertake data collection. After the necessary authorization the questionnaires were delivered to the respondents. The employees were first required to consent to the introduction letter presented to them indicating that their participation is voluntary in nature and their response was kept anonymous. The questionnaires were collected after two weeks.

3.6 Pilot Study

Pilot studies examines that the questionnaire does not have ambiguous questions, the length of the questionnaire, the relevance of the set questions, and the readability of the questions (Pearson et al., 2020). A pilot study was conducted in Nairobi City County where 14 questionnaires were issued out to employees at KWFT River Road and Jogoo Road branches. This represented 10% of the study sample population. The piloted questionnaires were not included in the main study. Nairobi County was selected because it has similar socio-economic characteristics with those of Kiambu County, one of the economically endowed counties in Kenya. After the pilot study the relevant comments and questions were used to irmprove the useability of the questionnaire.

3.6.1 Validity of Research Instrument

Validity is the extent to which a concept, measurement, or research study accurately reflects the true meaning or reality it claims to represent (Orodho, 2015). Content validity was ensued through the use of expert and supervisor opinions. The comments and observations made were useful in the development and correction of the research instruments. After these consultations, the relevant comments and suggestions were synchronized. With all such input, necessary changes were made in

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relation to the validity of the questionnaires. Therefore, useful items were added and ambiguous ones removed from the questionnaires before field administration.

3.6.2 Reliability of Research Instrument

Reliability is the consistency, stability and dependability of measurements, tests, or research outcomes over time and across different conditions. In other words, a measurement or test is considered reliable if it yields consistent and reproducible results when applied repeatedly under similar circumstances (Maughan & Burdett, 2013). This is because the larger the reliability the smaller the mistake and conversely, the larger the error, the smaller the reliability. Reliability in this study was enhanced by pre-testing the questionnaire with a selected sample which was not included in the main study. An internal consistency technique was adopted by utilization of Cronbach's Alpha to test the reliability of the study. Internal consistency reliability is a measure of reliability employed in evaluating the level by which various test items that probe the same construct produce similar results. Higher values of alpha are more desirable. According to Tiso (2013) a reliability of 0.70 or higher (obtained on a substantial sample) is considered acceptable.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis comprises of cutting the acquired information into a manageable size, coming up with summaries, looking for patterns and applying statistical techniques (Edward & Smith, 2013). Before initiating the process of data entry all the questionnaires were sorted. The researcher went through all the data selected and summarized them. The data that was gathered in this study was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Qualitative data from open ended questions was analyzed by the use thematic and content analysis and presented in prose form. Quantitative data from closed-ended questions was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics through the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics involved the use of mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistics involved the use of Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis. After analysis quantitative data was presented using tables.

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$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$……..….....

Where:

Y= Employee Retention

β_0 represents Constant

X_1 represents Flexible Work Arrangements

X_2 represents Leave policy

X_3 represents Wellness Programs

X_4 represents Child Care Support Programs

ε represents Error Term

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$, Represents Regression Coefficients for Independent Variables

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The first step of ethical consideration was to seek permission from all the relevant bodies. In this case, the researcher first sought clearance by ISERC and NACOSTI. The researcher then presented the letters to branch managers of all the targeted branches. Before data collection, the researcher informed the respondents about the purpose of the research (Govil, 2023). An explanation was given on the significance of the research findings to them. The researcher conformed to the principle of informed consent where the respondents were encouraged to participate in the study willingly (Rani & Sharma, 2022). (See Appendix IV for consent form). The researcher assured the respondents that the information they provided was utilized for the purpose of the study only and that information obtained were treated with utmost confidentiality. Lastly, the names of the respondents did not reflect on the research instruments (Khan, 2019).

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3.9 Summary

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology employed in the study, detailing the research design, population, and sampling techniqueused to gather data. It describes the data collection methods and instruments, including the procedures followed and the pilot study conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the research

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instruments. Finally, the chapter addresses the data analysis techniques and the ethical considerations that guided the research process.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on data analysis, results presentation and discussion of the findings. The general objective of the study was to assess the effect of work-life balance practices on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

4.2 Response Rate

Response rate equals the number of people with whom the questionnaires were properly completed divided by the total number of people in the entire sample (Fowler, 2014). The study administered 138 questionnaires for data collection. However, 120 questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This represented 87% overall successful response rates which implies that the response was adequate for the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a response rate above 80% is considered adequate.

Table 4. 1: Response Rate

Category	Question Issued	Question Correctly Filled
Middle Level	41	36
Lower Level	97	84
Total	138	120

4.3 Reliability Test Results

A pilot study was conducted in Nairobi City County where 14 questionnaires were issued out to the employees of the selected branches of the KWFT. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the data. The result of the findings is shown in Table 4.2

Table 4. 2: Reliability Test Results

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Flexible Work Arrangement	6	.874
Recreational Services	7	.889
Leave Policy	7	.854
Child Care Support Services	5	.899
Employee Retention	5	.798

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The questionnaires were coded and Cronbach's Alpha Test was then conducted. All the 5 variables gave Cronbach's Alpha threshold values greater than 0.7 as shown in Table 4.2. From the pilot study the Cronbach Alpha values were 0.874, 0.889, 0.854, 0.899 and 0.798 for flexible work arrangement, recreational services, leave policy, child care support services and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank respectively. All the variables had Cronbach values which were greater than 0.7. This implies that the instruments were reliable.

4.4 Demographic Information

The demographic information presented was on the gender, age, education level and duration the respondents had been working in KWFT. The predictors impact on the work tenure, engagement and turnover rates.

4.4.1 Gender of the Respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate the gender representation of the study subjects. The findings were as presented in Table 4.3

Table 4. 3: Gender Representation of the Study Subjects

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	46	38
Female	74	62
Total	**120**	**100**

According to the findings, 46 of the respondents (38%), were male while 74 respondents (62%), were female. This, according to HR policy, is a favorable gender equity aspect (Sanbonmatsu, 2023). Gender was important in this study as it contributed to informing human resource on which work-life practicesshould be enforced; such as maternity leave and child care support since majority workers were found to be female.

4.4.2 Age of the Respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their age. The findings are as presented in Table 4.4, below.

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Table 4. 4: Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
21-30 Years	30	25
31-40 Years	49	41
41-50 Years	25	21
More than 50 Years	16	13
Total	**120**	**100**

According to the findings, 30 respondents (25%) were in the age bracket of 21-30 years; 49 respondents (41%) were in the age bracket of 31-40 years; 25 respondents (21%) were in the age bracket of 41-50 years; and 16 respondents (13%) were in the age bracket of above 50 years. This, according to HR policy, is a favorable aspect of age diversity at KWFT, which implies variation in work ethics, skills, and experience. Additionally, the majority of the respondents were between 21 and 40 years, representing younger employees who, due to parental responsibilities and the initial phase of their careers, may bring fresh perspectives and adaptability to the workplace. Yet, they are more flexible, motivated, and innovative and can give competitive edge to the organization if properly engaged with good work-life balance practices.

4.4.3 Respondents' Highest Level of Education

The respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of education. The findings were as shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4. 5: Respondents' Highest Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Professional Certificate	0	0
Diploma	26	22
First Degree	34	28
Master's Degree	44	37
Post graduate Degree	16	13
Total	**120**	**100**

From the findings, 26 of the respondents, (22%) indicated that they had diploma education; 34 respondents, (28%) had attained first degree; 44 respondents. (37%) had attained master's degrees; and 13 respendents (13%), had attained,

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postgraduate degrees. This implies that majority of the respondents had attained master's degree and bachelors' degree. Education is an indicator of a person's skills level and productivity (Gilberts & Benson, 2014). The respondents are highly qualified and thus capable of giving relevant information regarding work-life balance.

4.4.4 Duration of Service in the Microfinance

The respondents were also asked to indicate the duration the respondents had been working with the KWFT. The findings were presented in Table 4.6. below.

Table 4. 6: Duration of Service in the Microfinance

Duration of Service	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 Years	8	7
5-10 Years	33	28
11-15 Years	42	35
15-20 Years	22	18
More than 20 Years	15	13
Total	**120**	**100**

According to the findings, 8 respondents (7%) indicated that they had been working with KWFT for less than 5years;33 respondents (28%) stated that they have been working with KWFT for 5-10 years; 42 respondents (35%) stated 11-15 years; 22 respondents (18%) were in age bracket of 15-20 years; while 15 respondents (13%) were in age bracket of more than 20 years. Majority of the employees had a duration of service of between 5 to 15 years, implying that KWFT would benefit by the findings of this study to improve work tenure.

4.5 Descriptive Statistics

The study requested respondents to give opinions regarding the effects of flexible work arrangements, recreational services, leave policy and child care support services on employee retention in KWFT. The interpretation of the findings were made based on mean and standard deviation. The value of the mean indicated the level of agreement. The value of the mean ranged between 1-5, with 1 being the least

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mean and 5 being the highest mean. Standard deviation is a measure of the dispersion of a set of data from its mean.

4.5.1 Flexible Work Arrangement

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to the extent to which flexible work arrangement affects employee retention at Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The findings are presented in Table 4.7.

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Table 4. 7: Flexible Work Arrangement

Statement	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %	Mean	Std
Flexible work arrangement helps employees balance between work and personal life thus reducing stress levels, increasing job satisfaction and minimizing turnover	26	47	17	10	0	3.887	0.907
Providing employees with freedom to choose when and where they work helps them to optimize the work environment to suit their preferences and circumstances	37	45	13	5	0	4.113	0.870
Remote workers often report higher levels of job loyalty due to the flexibility and autonomy that remote work provides	55	42	3	0	0	4.516	0.565
Job sharing provides employers with greater flexibility in scheduling and work assignments which enhance employee retention	57	37	6	0	0	4.500	0.621
Job sharing help employees to bring their diverse skills and perspectives together leading to higher quality work	39	44	11	6	0	4.145	0.866
Condensed workweeks allow employees to work during their most productive hours, which can lead to higher quality work and greater efficiency.	44	50	6	0	0	4.371	0.607
Average Overall Mean and Std						**4.255**	**4.436**

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According to the findings, 26% of the respondents strongly agreed, 47% agreed, 17% were neutral, and 10% disagreed that flexible work arrangement helps employees to balance between work and personal life thus reducing stress levels, resulting in increased job satisfaction and minimizing employee turnover with a mean of 3.887 and the standard deviation of 0.907. The findings further indicated that 37% of the respondents strongly agreed, 45% agreed, 13% were neutral, and 5% disagreed that providing employees with the freedom to choose when and where they work, helps them to optimize their work environment to suit their individual preferences and circumstances with a mean of 4.113 and the standard deviation of 0.870. In addition,

55% of the respondents strongly agreed, 42% agreed, 3% were neutral and none of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that remote workers often report higher levels of job loyalty due to the flexibility and autonomy that remote work provides with a mean of 4.516 and the standard deviation 0.565.

The study's findings are in line with those of Monczkaet al, (2015) which found that remote work offers employees greater flexibility in managing their work schedules and the autonomy to decide how and where they complete their tasks. This autonomy can lead to increased job satisfaction and, in turn, higher job loyalty. When employees have the ability to tailor their work environment to their preferences, they may feel more in control of their work-life balance, which can enhance their loyalty to the company and employee retention.

The findings further indicated that 57% of the respondents strongly agreed, 37% agreed, while 6% were neutral that job sharing provides employers with greater flexibility in scheduling and work assignments which enhance employee retention with of mean 4.500 and the standard deviation of 0.621. 39% of the respondents strongly agreed, 44% agreed, 11% were neutral while 6% disagreed that job sharing helps employees to bring their diverse skills and perspectives together leading to higher quality work with a mean of 4.145 and the standard deviation of 0.866. The findings are in line with those of Ellram and Tate (2017) who found that when employees with different backgrounds, experiences, and skills collaborate through job sharing, they can complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. This diversity can lead to a broader range of skills being applied to the job, enhancing the quality of the work produced.

Furthermore, 44% of the respondents strongly agreed, 50% agreed while 6% were neutral that condensed workweeks allow employees to work during their most productive hours, which can lead to higher quality work and greater efficiency with a mean of 4.371 and a standard deviation of 0.607. The findings agree with those of Narasimhan (2019) which found that condensed workweeks often involve longer workdays with fewer transitions between work and personal life. This reduction in

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context switching can help employees maintain their focus on work-related tasks for longer periods, leading to improved efficiency and potentially higher-quality work.

With an average mean of 4.255, respondents largely agreed that flexible work arrangements positively influence employee retention. The standard deviation of 4.436 indicates a moderate dispersion of opinions, suggesting some variation in how respondents perceive these arrangements but a general consensus on their benefits. This aligns with findings by Monczkaet al (2015), who observed that flexibility and autonomy in work arrangements lead to greater job satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, some of the KWFT employees revealed that "Flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options or flexible hours, empower employees to better manage their personal commitments, such as childcare, healthcare, or further education. This improved work-life balance reduces stress and burnout, making employees more satisfied with their job and less likely to seek alternative employment.

4.5.2 Recreational Services

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the extent to which recreational services affect employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The findings were presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4. 8: Recreational Services

Statement	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %	Mean	Std
By participating in sporting activities, employees can achieve a better work-life balance, as it allows them to disconnect from work and focus on their personal well-being.	52	39	9	0	0	4.419	0.667
Sporting activities improve employee engagement by providing opportunities for employees to socialize and build positive relationships with coworkers	37	31	19	13	0	3.887	1.073
When the institution organizes events such as annual family days it makes employees feel appreciated which enhance employee retention	44	40	6	10	0	4.177	0.932

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Organizational entertainment programs improve the mental and physical health of employees	37	39	10	14	0	3.984	1.032
Recreational activities such as belonging to club help employees reduce stress levels.	42	39	11	8	0	4.145	0.921
Organizational entertainment help employees recharge and refresh, which can lead to increased productivity	37	44	16	3	0	4.145	0.807
Average Overall Mean and Std						**4.126**	**5.432**

According to the findings, 52% of the respondents strongly agreed, 39% agreed, while 9% were neutral that by participating in sporting activities employees can achieve a better work-life balance as it allows them to disconnect from work and focus on their personal well-being with a mean of 4.419 and the standard deviation of 0.667. The findings further indicated that 37% of the respondents strongly agreed, 31% agreed, 19% were neutral while 13% disagreed that sporting activities improve employee engagement by providing opportunities for employees to socialize and build positive relationships with coworkers with a mean of 3.887 and the standard deviation of 1.073. The findings are in line with those of Krauseet al., (2018) which found that sporting activities often involve teamwork and collaboration. When employees participate in sports together, they learn to work as a team, communicate effectively, and rely on each other to achieve common goals. These experiences can translate into improved collaboration and camaraderie in the workplace, ultimately enhancing employee engagement.

Also, the findings indicated that 44% of the respondents strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 6% were neutral, while 10% disagreed that when the institution organize events such as annual family days it makes employees feel appreciated which enhance employee retention with a mean of 4.177 and a standard deviation of 0.932. Further 37% of the respondents strongly agreed, 39% agreed, 10% were neutral while 14% of the respondents disagreed that the organizational entertainment programs improve the mental and physical health of employees with a mean of 3.984 and a standard deviation of 1.032. The study findings are in line with those of Pagell (2019) which

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revealed that entertainment programs, such as game nights, movie screenings, or relaxation sessions, offer employees an opportunity to unwind and reduce stress. Participating in enjoyable activities can trigger the release of endorphins, which are natural stress relievers, leading to better mental health to balance work and life.

Additionally, the findings indicated that 42% of the respondents strongly agreed, 39% agreed, 11% were neutral, while 8% disagreed that recreational activities such as belonging to membership clubs help employees reduce stress levels with a mean of 4.145 and a standard deviation of 0.921. In addition, 37% of the respondents strongly agreed, 44% agreed, 16% were neutral while 3% disagreed that organizational entertainment help employees recharge and refresh, which can lead to increased productivity with a mean of 4.145 and a standard deviation of 0.807. The study findings are in tandem with those of Handfield, (2018) engaging in enjoyable and entertaining activities provides employees with a break from the demands of their work. This break allows them to relax, unwind, and reduce stress levels. Lower stress is associated with improved mental clarity and focus, which can enhance productivity.

With an average mean of 4.126, respondents largely agreed that recreational services positively impact employee retention. The standard deviation of 5.432 reveals a wider range of opinions, indicating that while many employees value recreational services, there is considerable variation in how these services are perceived. This finding aligns with Krauseeet al (2018), who noted that participation in sports and team-building activities enhances employee engagement. Moreover, some of the employees revealed that "Kenya Women Microfinance Bank recognizes the importance of team building activities in promoting a cohesive and collaborative work environment. The organization regularly organizes team building activities and events for its employees. These activities are designed to foster strong working relationships among team members, enhance communication and teamwork skills, and promote a positive workplace culture."

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4.5.3 Leave Policy

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the extent to which leave policy affect employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The findings are presented in Table 4.9.

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Table 4. 9: Leave Policy

Statement	S A %	A %	U %	D %	SD %	Mean	Std
Taking periodic time off allows employees to rest, relax, and rejuvenate both physically and mentally leading to increased job satisfaction and a higher likelihood of remaining with the organization.	47	34	13	6	0	4.210	0.908
When employees have the opportunity to take time off and enjoy a proper work-life balance, they feel valued and appreciated by the organization	50	31	15	5	0	4.258	0.886
Employees who feel cared for and supported during times of illness are more likely to remain loyal to the organization and actively contribute to its success.	44	53	3	0	0	4.403	0.557
Providing religious leave can demonstrate to employees that the company values and respects their religious beliefs and practices	37	44	16	3	0	4.145	0.807
Providing sick leave make employees feel valued and respected, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and loyalty to the company	35	45	5	0	0	4.452	0.592
Public holiday leave help employees manage their work-life balance more effectively, reducing stress and burnout	44	50	6	0	0	4.371	0.607
Leave programs such as bereavement leave makes employees feel that the organization care about their social welfare	42	39	11	8	0	4.145	0.921
Leave programs allow employees to take time off for personal or creative pursuits which enhance creativity and innovation	55	33	7	5	0	4.387	0.869
Average Overall Mean and Std						**4.296**	**4.357**

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According to the findings, 47% of the respondents strongly agreed, 34% agreed, 13% were neutral, and 6% disagreed that taking periodic time off allows employees to rest, relax, and rejuvenate both physically and mentally leading to increased job satisfaction and a higher likelihood of remaining with the organization with a mean of 4.210 and a standard deviation of 0.908. Further, the findings

indicated that 50% of the respondents strongly agreed, 31% agreed, 15% were neutral while 5% disagreed that when employees have the opportunity to take time off and enjoy a proper work-life balance, they feel valued and appreciated by the organization with a mean of 4.258 and a standard deviation of 0.886. The study findings are in line with those of Ramamurthy (2017) which noted that taking time off provides employees with a break from work-related stressors. This break helps reduce stress levels and prevents the accumulation of stress-related health problems, such as anxiety and depression.

In addition, 44% of the respondents strongly agreed, 53% agreed, while 3% were neutral that employees who feel cared for and supported during times of illness are more likely to remain loyal to the organization and actively contribute to its success with a mean of 4.403 and a standard deviation of 0.557. In addition, 37% of the respondents strongly agreed, 44% agreed, 16% were neutral, while 3% disagreed that providing religious leave can demonstrate to employees that the company values and respects their religious beliefs and practices with a mean of 4.145 and a standard deviation of 0.807. The findings are in line with those of Schiele and Wagner (2018) which noted that offering religious leave helps create an inclusive workplace that respects and accommodates the diversity of its employees. It sends a clear message that the organization welcomes individuals of all faiths and backgrounds.

Furthermore, 35% of the respondents strongly agreed, 45% agreed, while 5% were neutral that providing sick leave makes employees feel valued and respected, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and loyalty to the company with a mean of 4.452 and a standard deviation of 0.592. Moreover, 44% of respondents strongly agreed, 50% agreed, while 6% were neutral that public holiday leave help employees manage their work-life balance more effectively, reducing stress and burnout with a mean of 4.371 and a standard deviation of 0. 607.

Furthermore, 42% of the respondents strongly agreed, 39% agreed, 11% were neutral while 8% disagreed that leave programs such as bereavement leave makes

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employees feel that the organization care about their social welfare with a mean of 4.145 and a standard deviation of 0.921. Finally, 55% of the respondents strongly agreed, 33% agreed, 7% were neutral while 5% disagreed that leave programs allow employees to take time off for personal or creative pursuits which enhance creativity and innovation with a mean 4.387 and a standard deviation of 0.869. The study findings are in line with those of Dobler and Burt (2016) which found that recognizing and accommodating religious beliefs and practices demonstrates an organization's commitment to upholding individual rights and freedoms, which can enhance employee satisfaction and loyalty.

With an average mean of 4.296, respondents strongly agreed that leave policies, including sick leave, religious leave, and public holiday leave, contribute positively to employee retention. The standard deviation of 4.357 shows some variation in responses, reflecting differing experiences or expectations regarding leave policies. This is consistent with Ramamurthy (2017), who emphasized the importance of leave in reducing stress and improving job satisfaction.

Moreover, one of the employees stated that:

"KWFT is committed to adhering to all relevant labor laws, including those governing annual leave entitlements for employees. The bank ensures that its leave policies and practices align with the labor laws and regulations in Kenya. This includes providing employees with their legally mandated annual leave days, granting leave based on the accrued entitlement, and following proper procedures for requesting and approving annual leave."

Another employee said:

"At KWFT, the bank is dedicated to maintaining a fair and compliant approach to leave management to safeguard the rights and well-being of its employees. It also stays updated on any changes or updates to labor laws to ensure

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ongoing compliance. Employees can confidently rely on the bank's commitment to adhering to labor laws regarding annual leave entitlements"

4.5.4 Child Care Support Services

The research also sought to establish the influence of child care support services on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The findings were as indicated in table 4.10.

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Table 4. 10: Child Care Support Services

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std
Providing child care support services helps alleviate the stress and burden associated with finding suitable child care arrangements, allowing employees to focus on their work knowing that their children are well cared for.	58	24	8	4	6	4.177	0.912
When employees have peace of mind regarding their children's care, they can concentrate on their work tasks more effectively.	40	48	4	8	0	3.984	1.032
Maternity/Paternity leave help employees feel valued, appreciated, and accepted, which can boost self-esteem and confidence	50	34	8	4	4	4.145	0.921
Employees who have access to child care support services are more likely to be productive at work, as they can focus on their work without worrying about their children's care arrangements.	54	36	2	5	3	4.563	0.608
Child care support services such as breastfeeding areas improve employee morale by demonstrating that the company values and supports its employees' family responsibilities	48	44	0	5	3	4.307	0.738
Providing child care support services can help employees manage their family responsibilities more effectively, reducing stress and hence improve employee retention rates	37	44	3	0	4	0.807	0.789
Average Overall Mean and Std						**3.663**	**5.000**

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From the findings, 58% of the respondents strongly agreed, 24% agreed, 8% were neutral, 4% disagreed, while 6% strongly disagreed that providing child care support services helps to alleviate the stress and burden associated with finding suitable child care arrangements. This support allows employees to focus on their work knowing that their children are well cared for with a mean of 4.177 and standard deviation of 0.912. In addition, 40% of the respondents strongly agreed, 48% agreed, 4% were neutral, while 8% disagreed that when employees have peace of mind regarding their children's care, they can concentrate on their work tasks more effectively with a mean of 3.984 and a standard deviation of 1.032. The study's findings agree with those of ZsidisinZ (2018) which revealed that child care support services, such as on-site child care facilities or subsidies for external child care, enable employees to balance their work responsibilities with their family life more effectively. This balance reduces the stress of juggling both responsibilities.

On the same note, 50% of respondents strongly agreed, 34% agreed, 8% were neutral, 4% disagreed, while 4% strongly disagreed that maternity leave helps employees feel valued, appreciated, and accepted, which can boost self-esteem and confidence with a mean of 4.145 and a standard deviation of 0.921. Furthermore, 54% of respondents strongly agreed, 36% agreed, 2% were neutral, 5% disagreed, while 3% strongly disagreed that employees who have access to child care support services are more likely to be productive at work, as they can focus on their work without worrying about their children's care arrangements with a mean of 4.563 and a standard deviation of 0.608. The study's findings are in line with those of Nageb (2019) who found that when employees know that their children are in safe and reliable child care arrangements, they can work with peace of mind, knowing their children are well-cared for. This peace of mind allows employees to concentrate on their tasks without being distracted by concerns about their children's welfare.

Moreover, 48% of the respondents strongly agreed, 44% agreed while 5% disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed that the child care support services such as breastfeeding areas improve employee morale by demonstrating that the company

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values and supports its employees' family responsibilities with a mean of 4.307 and a standard deviation of 0.738. In addition, 37% of the respondents strongly agreed, 44% agreed, 16% were neutral, while 3% disagreed that providing child care support services can help employees manage their family responsibilities more effectively, reducing stress and hence improve employee retention rates with a mean of 4.145 and a standard deviation of 0.807. The findings of the study concur with those of Wagner and Bode (2017), which found that access to reliable child care support services alleviates one of the significant stressors for working parents, that is, finding suitable and dependable child care arrangements. When employees are confident in their child care options, they experience less stress, which positively impacts their overall well-being.

With an average mean of 3.663, respondents moderately agreed that child care support services impact employee retention. This mean is somewhat lower compared to the other factors, indicating that while such services are appreciated, they might not be as influential as flexible work arrangements or leave policies. The standard deviation of 5.000 suggests high variability in opinions, which could be due to individual differences in the need for and perception of child care support. This aligns with Zsidisin (2018), who found that child care support helps reduce work-related stress but may not be as universally impactful as other factors.

From the analysis some of the employees revealed that "childcare support, such as on-site childcare facilities or subsidies for external childcare services, helps alleviate the stress and anxiety that working parents often experience when juggling work and family responsibilities. When employees know that their children are well-cared for, they can focus on their jobs with greater peace of mind, leading to reduced stress and improved work-life balance.

4.5.5 Employee Retention at Kenya Women Microfinance Bank

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on employee retention at Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The findings are presented in Table 4. 11, below.

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Table 4. 11: Employee Retention at Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

Statement	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %	Mean	Std
The rate of employee turnover is very low in the organization	37	34	10	16	3	3.855	1.185
Average tenure of majority of employees is very high	55	34	8	3	0	4.403	0.778
The organization is attracting new talents from employees in the same sector	44	46	7	3	0	4.307	0.738
The rate of employees being poached by competitors is very low	55	33	7	5	0	4.387	0.869
Average Overall Mean and Std						**4.238**	**3.57**

According to the findings, 37% of the respondents strongly agreed, 34% agreed, 10% were neutral, while 16% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed that the rate of employee turnover is very low in the organization with a mean of 3.855 and a standard deviation of 1.185. In addition, 55% of the respondents strongly agreed, 34% agreed, 8% were neutral while 3% disagreed that the rate of employee turnover is very low in the organization with a mean of 4.403 and a standard deviation of 0.778. According to Barad and Salameh (2017) expanding by high average tenure often indicates a seasoned and experienced workforce. Employees who have been with the company for a long time typically have a deep understanding of the organization's culture, values, and processes.

Further, 44% of the respondents strongly agreed, 46% agreed, 7% were neutral while 3% disagreed that the organization is attracting new talents from employees in the same sector with a mean of 4.307 and a standard deviation of 0.738. Moreover, 55% of the respondents strongly agreed, 33% agreed, 7% were neutral while 5% disagreed that the rate of employees being poached by competitors is very low with a mean 4.387 and a standard deviation of 0.869. Verma and Pullman (2016) noted that offering competitive compensation packages, including salaries, bonuses, and

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benefits, can discourage employees from considering job offers from competitors. They may feel well-compensated and valued in their current positions.

The overall mean for employee retention at Kenya Women Microfinance Bank is 4.238, with a standard deviation of 3.57. These values reflect a strong agreement on the effectiveness of the organization's retention strategies, though individual perceptions vary. This finding is consistent with research by Lee and Mitchell (2018), who found that high employee retention rates are often associated with effective retention strategies and positive employee experiences. Their study highlighted that organizations with robust retention practices typically enjoy higher employee satisfaction and lower turnover rates, aligning with the observed high mean score in this context.

4.6 Inferential Results

4.6.1 Correlation Analysis

The research undertook correlation analysis to establish the nature and strength of the relationships between the independent and the dependent variables of the study.

4.6.1.1 Correlation between Flexible Work Arrangement on Employee Retention

The study conducted a correlation analysis between flexible work arrangement and employee retention at Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. From the results, the study established that there exists a positive and significant relationship ($r = .641$, $P=0.000$) between flexible work arrangement and employee retention at Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. Therefore, the findings imply that flexible work arrangement enhances employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study findings are in line with those of Smith (2019) who found a strong positive association between the availability of flexible work options, such as telecommuting and flexible schedules, and higher employee retention rates.

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Table 4. 12: Correlation between Flexible Work Arrangements on Employee Retention

		Employee Retention
Flexible Work Arrangement	Pearson Correlation	.641*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	120

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

4.6.1.2 Correlation between Recreational Services on Employee Retention

In addition, the study conducted a correlation analysis between recreational services and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The coefficient of correlation (r=0.619 and P=0.023) illustrated in Table 4.13 shows that there was a strong positive and significant relationship between recreational services and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The findings imply that recreational services improve employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study's findings are in line with those Mokaya and Gitari (2018) which found that recreation is a significant factor in employee performance; increases the level of commitment, enhances bonding and improves employee wellbeing with a consequent positive effect on job satisfaction, service provision, customer satisfaction and productivity. Moreover, Baridulaet al, (2019) revealed that employee recreation is significantly correlated with organizational performance of deposit money banks in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Table 4. 13: Correlation between Recreational Services on Employee Retention

		Employee Retention
Recreational Services	Pearson Correlation	.619*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023
	N	120

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

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4.6.1.3 Correlation between Leave Policy on Employee Retention

As shown in Table 4.14, the study also sought to determine the nature of the relationship between leave policy and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The correlation coefficient (r=0.597, P=0.018) indicates a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between leave policy and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. This implies that leave policy enhances employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study findings are in line with those of Olšavský and Treľová (2020) who found that education leave enhance employees' productivity and job satisfaction in Slovak Republic. Moreover, Umar (2018) revealed that the variables of education and training and leadership influence simultaneously and partially on employee performance. Enenifa and Akintokunbo (2020) also revealed that there was a significant the relationship between workplace recreational activities and employee effectiveness in Deposit Money Banks in Yenogoa, Bayelsa State.

Table 4. 14: Correlation between Leave Policy on Employee Retention

		Employee Retention
Leave Policy	Pearson Correlation	.597*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018
	N	120

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

4.6.1.4 Correlation between Child Care Support Services Employee Retention

The correlation analysis results shown in Table 4.15 indicates that there exists a strong, positive and significant relationship (r=0.604, P=0.032) between child care support services and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. This implies that child care support services enhance employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study's findings are in line with those of Babu and Bhavana (2020) who found that when the average childcare assistance score increases, the average employee retention score also increases proportionately. The study also

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reveals a positive correlation and significant association between employee retention and childcare assistance.

Table 4. 15: Correlation between Child Care Support Services Employee Retention

		Employee Retention
Child Care Support Services	Pearson Correlation	.604*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032
	N	120

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

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4.6.2 Regression Analysis

4.6.2.1 Regression Model Summary

The study conducted a regression analysis to find out the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables as shown in Table 4.16. The model showed 46.6 % of variance in employee retention is explained by the independent variables under study while 53.4% explains other factors that were not covered in this study.

Table 4. 16: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.739[a]	.546	.466	.64723

a. Predictors: (Constant), Flexible work arrangement, recreational services, leave policy and child care support services.

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

4.6.2.2 ANOVA of the Regression Model

From the findings the *F* statistic = 34.604 as illustrated in Table 4.17. Since the f calculated is greater than f statistic, it infers that the model is statistically significant. Therefore, there is strong evidence that the regression results are statistically significant and the variation in the results is insignificant that cannot result to much difference in case of a change in the study units (population) and therefore the model was fit for the study.

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Table 4. 17: ANOVA of the Regression Model

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	35.713	4	8.928	34.604	.000[a]
	Residual	29.695	115	0.258		
	Total	65.408	119			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Flexible Work Arrangement, Recreational Services, Leave Policy And Child Care Support Services

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

4.6.2.3 Multiple Regression Coefficients

The study also conducted a regression analysis to establish the regression coefficients connecting the independent and dependent variables as illustrated by the equation illustrated below:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1$ flexible work arrangement $+ \beta_2$ recreational services $+ \beta_3$ leave policy $+ \beta_4$ child care support services. Y represents employee retention at Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

X_1 represents flexible work arrangement, X_2 recreational services, and X_3 represents leave policy and X_4 represents child care support services, β_0 represents constant which defines the value of employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank without the inclusion of predictor variables. From the results in Table 4.18 the given equation was answered by the values of Unstandardized Coefficients (B) and all of them were statistically significant since their p values (Sig. <0.05) were less than 0.05. The results indicate that all the predictor variables in the study have a positive relationship with employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

Thus,

$$Y = 0.038 + 0.596X_1 + 0.233X_2 + 0.245X_3 + 0.432X_4$$

The value of employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank without the influence of the predictor variables is 0.038. This explains that, at any given time

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employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank will be 0.038 holding other factors constant at 0.

The results also illustrate that a unit change in flexible work arrangement would result to 0.596 times positive change in employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study's findings are in line with those of Smith (2019), who found a strong positive association between the availability of flexible work options, such as telecommuting and flexible schedules, and higher employee retention rates.

In addition, the findings indicated a unit increase in recreational services would result to 0.233 positive changes in employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study's findings are in line with those Mokaya and Gitari (2018), which found that recreation is a significant factor in employee performance; increases the level of commitment, enhances bonding and improves employee wellbeing with a consequent positive effect on job satisfaction, service provision, customer satisfaction, and productivity.

Further the findings revealed a unit increase in leave policy would result to 0.245 positive changes in employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study findings are in line with those of Olšavský and Treľová (2020) who found that education leave enhance employees' productivity and job satisfaction.

Finally, unit increase in child care support would result to 0.432 positive change in employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank, as given by the coefficients in the model. The study's findings are in line with those of Babu and Bhavana (2020) who found that when the average childcare assistance score increases, the average employee retention score also increases proportionately.

Table 4. 18: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
l(Constant)	.038	.145		.260	.796
Flexible Work Arrangement	.596	.107	.548	5.570	.000

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Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
Recreational Services	.233	.081	.245	2.877	.006
Leave Policy	.245	.104	.179	2.356	.022
Child Care Support Services	.432	.106	.382	4.076	.000

Dependent Variable: Employee Retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

4.7 Summary

The chapter presents the research findings and discussions, beginning with the response rate and reliability test results and demographic analyses. The chapter further provides descriptive statistics on various variables like flexible work arrangements, recreational services, and employee retention at Kenya Women Microfinance Bank, followed by inferential analysis, including correlation and regression analyses to assess the relationships between key variables.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed summary of the major findings of the l study; it then draws conclusions and discusses implications emanating from these findings. Finally, presented are some recommendations and suggestions on areas for further study. The main aim of this study was to establish the effect of work-life balance practices on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study sought to determine key findings aligned to the objectives of the study. The summary was categorized in terms of specific objectives.

5.2.1 Flexible Work Arrangements on Employee Retention

The study's findings revealed that flexible work arrangements help employees balance between work and personal life thus reducing stress levels, resulting in increased job satisfaction, and minimizing high turnover. Likewise, providing employees with the freedom to choose when and where they work helps employees to optimize their work environment to suit their individual preferences and circumstances. The study's findings also revealed that remote workers often report higher levels of job loyalty due to the flexibility and autonomy that remote work provides. Moreover, job sharing provides employers with greater flexibility in scheduling and work assignments which enhance employee retention. The study further revealed that job sharing help employees to bring their diverse skills and perspectives together leading to higher quality work. The study also found that condensed workweeks allow employees to work during their most productive hours, which can lead to higher quality work and greater efficiency. The study also established that there exists a positive and significant relationship ($r = .641$, $P=0.000$) between flexible work arrangement and employee retention at Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study's findings are in line with those of Monczkaet al,

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(2015) which found that remote work offers employees greater flexibility in managing their work schedules and the autonomy to decide how and where they complete their tasks.

5.2.2 Recreational Services on Employee Retention

From the analysis, the study established that by participating in sporting activities, employees can achieve a better work-life balance, as it allows them to disconnect from work and focus on their personal well-being. The study's findings also revealed that sporting activities improve employee engagement by providing opportunities for employees to socialize and build positive relationships with coworkers. The study's findings further revealed that when the institution organizes events such as annual family days it makes employees feel appreciated which enhance employee retention (Umar, 2019). Moreover, organizational entertainment programs improve the mental and physical health of employees. The study also revealed that recreational activities such as belonging to fun clubs help employees reduce stress levels. The study further revealed that organizational entertainment help employees recharge and refresh, which can lead to increased productivity (Kauhanen, 2021). The study also showed that there was a strong positive and significant relationship (r=0.619 and P=0.023) between recreational services and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study's findings are in line with those Mokaya and Gitari (2018) which found that recreation is a significant factor in employee performance; increases the level of commitment, enhances bonding and improves employee wellbeing with a consequent positive effect on job satisfaction, service provision, customer satisfaction and productivity.

5.2.3 Leave Policy on Employee Retention

The study revealed that taking periodic time off allows employees to rest, relax, and rejuvenate both physically and mentally leading to increased job satisfaction and a higher likelihood of remaining with the organization. The study further established that when employees have the opportunity to take time off and

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enjoy a proper work-life balance, they feel valued and appreciated by the organization. Moreover, the study revealed that employees who feel cared for and supported during times of illness are more likely to remain loyal to the organization and actively contribute to its success (Glass & Riley, 2019).

The study further revealed that providing religious leave can demonstrate to employees that the company values and respects their religious beliefs and practices. Moreover, the study revealed that providing sick leave makes employees feel valued and respected, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and loyalty to the company. The study also revealed that public holiday leave helps employees manage their work-life balance more effectively, reducing stress and burnout. The study further revealed that leave programs such as bereavement leave makes employees feel that the organization care about their social welfare (Elsafty & Oraby, 2022). The study showed that there was a strong positive and statistically significant relationship (r=0.597, P=0.018) between leave policy and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

5.2.4 Child Care Support Services on Employee Retention

The study revealed that by providing child care support services, help alleviates the stresses and burdens associated with finding suitable child care arrangements. This support allows employees to focus on their work knowing that their children are well cared for. The study also revealed that when employees have peace of mind regarding their children's care, they can concentrate on their work tasks more effectively (Babu & Bhavana, 2020).

Moreover, the study revealed that maternity leave help employees feel valued, appreciated, and accepted, which can boost self-esteem and confidence (Mjomba, 2019). The study further revealed that employees who have access to child care support services are more likely to be productive at work, as they can focus on their work without worrying about their children's care arrangements.

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Moreover, the study revealed that child care support services such as breastfeeding areas improve employee morale by demonstrating that the company values and supports its employees' family responsibilities. The study also revealed that providing child care support services can help employees manage their family responsibilities more effectively, reducing stress and hence improve employee retention rates. The study also showed that there exist a strong, positive and significant relationship (r=0.604, P=0.032) between child care support services and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study's findings are in line with those of Babu and Bhavana (2020) who found that when the average childcare assistance score increases, the average employee retention score also increases proportionately. The study also reveals a positive correlation and significant association between employee retention and childcare assistance.

5.3 Conclusion

The study sought to determine the objectives of the study. The conclusion was categorized in terms of specific objectives.

5.3.1 Flexible Work Arrangement on Employee Retention

From the findings, the study concluded that sharing tasks helps employees to bring diverse skills and perspectives together, leading to higher quality work. Job-sharing arrangements allow employees to bring their unique knowledge and experiences to the role. The study also concluded that condensed workweeks allow employees to work during their most productive hours, which can lead to higher quality work and greater efficiency. Condensed workweeks provide extended periods for rest and personal activities, contributing to improved work-life balance.

The study further concluded that there exists a positive and significant relationship between flexible work arrangement and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study concluded that flexible work arrangements can have a significant impact on employee retention. Flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or flexible hours, allow employees to better balance their work

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and personal lives. This can lead to increased job satisfaction and reduced stress, contributing to higher employee retention rates.

5.3.2 Recreational Services on Employee Retention

The study concluded that recreational activities such as belonging to clubs helps employees reduce stress levels. Belonging to a club or social group provides employees with a sense of community and social support (Dhanshyam, 2022). Interacting with colleagues in a non-work setting fosters positive relationships, creating a support system that can help individuals cope with stress. Participation in recreational activities often involves enjoyable and leisurely pursuits, which can serve as effective stress-relief mechanisms (Miller, 2019).

The study also concluded that organizational entertainment helps employees recharge and refresh, which can lead to increased productivity. Organizational entertainment provides employees with a break from routine work, helping to alleviate stress. Taking time for enjoyable activities allows individuals to reset and return to their tasks with a refreshed mindset, reducing the negative impact of stress on productivity. The study further concluded that there was a strong positive and significant relationship between recreational services and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

5.3.3 Leave Policy on Employee Retention

The study concluded that leave programs, such as bereavement leave, makes employees feel that the organization cares about their social welfare. Bereavement leave recognizes the personal and emotional impact of losing a loved one. By providing dedicated time off for employees to grieve and attend to funeral arrangements, organizations show empathy and understanding during a difficult time. Offering bereavement leave demonstrates compliance with legal and ethical standards related to employee rights and well-being (Enenifa and Akintokunbo (2020). Organizations that prioritize these standards build trust and credibility with their workforce.

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The study also concluded that leave programs allow employees to take time off for personal or creative pursuits which enhance creativity and innovation. Leave programs provide employees with dedicated time away from routine work tasks. This break allows for reflection, renewal, and a mental reset, fostering a more creative and innovative mindset upon returning to work. The study further concluded that, there was a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between leave policy and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. The study findings are in line with those of Olšavský and Treľová (2020) who found that education leave enhance employees' productivity and job satisfaction in Slovak Republic

5.3.4 Child Care Support Services Employee Retention

The study concluded that CCSS such as breastfeeding areas improve employee morale by demonstrating that the company values and supports its employees' family responsibilities. Child care support services, such as breastfeeding areas, demonstrates that the company prioritizes and values its employees as individuals with family responsibilities. This employee-centric approach fosters a positive perception of the company's values. Employees are likely to experience higher job satisfaction when they see that their employer invests in family-friendly initiatives.

Moreover, the study concluded that providing CCSS can help employees manage their family responsibilities more effectively, reducing stress and hence improve employee retention rates. Child care support services, such as on-site child care facilities or flexible work hours, help employees strike a better balance between their work and family responsibilities. A better work-life balance contributes to higher job satisfaction and reduces the likelihood of employees seeking alternative employment. The study also concluded that that there exists a strong, positive and significant relationship between child care support services and employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank.

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5.4 Recommendations

The study made the following four recommendations. First, is implementing flexible work arrangements would significantly contribute to employee retention. To enhance this initiative, MFI should tailor flexible work options such as remote work, flexible hours, or compressed workweeks to meet the diverse needs of its workforce. Second, to boost employee retention through recreational services, Kenya Women Microfinance Bank should consider creating a vibrant and inclusive workplace culture that encourages regular breaks and relaxation. This might include setting up recreational areas, organizing team-building activities, and offering wellness programs. Moreover, the bank could involve employees in the decision-making process regarding recreational services, allowing them to choose activities or services that cater to their interests.

Third, developing a comprehensive and employee-friendly leave policy is vital for retaining talent. Kenya Women Microfinance Bank should review and update its leave policy to align with best practices and legal requirements. This policy should include a balance of annual leave, sick leave, and compassionate leave, with clear guidelines for requesting and approving time off. Encourage transparent communication between employees and supervisors regarding leave needs. Lastly, child care support services are essential for working parents and can significantly impact employee retention. Kenya Women Microfinance Bank can consider offering on-site or subsidized child care facilities or partnering with local child care providers to ensure accessibility and affordability for employees. Furthermore, the bank should promote awareness of these services among employees and provide flexible scheduling options for parents to accommodate their childcare responsibilities. Regular feedback from parents can help tailor these services to their specific needs and preferences.

5.5 Suggestion for Further Studies

The research suggests that this study be extended to other microfinance institutions in Kenya. This would provide valuable insights into how work-life balance practices vary across organizations and their impact on employee retention.

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Comparative research can uncover best practices and strategies that are transferable to other institutions. The research also suggested that a further study should be conducted in different organizations like manufacturing firms and institutions of higher learning for generalization of the study findings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Respondent,

REF: MBA RESEARCH STUDY

I am a postgraduate student at St. Paul's University undertaking a master's degree in Business Administration (Human Resource Option) in partial fulfillment of the requirement to the award of the master's degree. I am carrying out research on **WORK LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION: A CASE OF KENYA WOMEN MICROFINANCE BANK IN KIAMBUCOUNTY, KENYA**. Due to the nature of your work, I kindly request you to participate in helping me undertake the research.

To enhance this research work, I would like to collect data using questionnaires in your department. Therefore, this letter requests for your support in filling the questionnaires. The study will in no way expose or disclose the information and the internal procedures and practices but will only disclose statistics.

Your support and participation in this activity will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance.

DIANA NKIROTE GITONGA

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APPENDIX II

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

I am Diana Nkirote, an MBA student at St. Paul's University. I am to submit a research project as a requirement for partial fulfillment of a degree of master of business administration in the faculty of business studies. My research work is on "**WORK LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS IN KIAMBU COUNTY, A CASE OF KENYA WOMEN MICRO FINANCE BANK"** I hereby request your assistance in filling in the questionnaires provided. I also wish to assure you that the information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for the sole purpose of this study.

SECTION A. RESPONDENTS DETAILS

1. Gender

Male ( )

Female ( )

2. Your age brackets

21-30 Years ( )

31-40 Years ( )

41-50 Years ( )

More than 50 Years ( )

3. Highest education qualification attained

Professional Certificate ( )

Diploma ( )

First Degree ( )

Master's Degree ( )

PhD ( )

4. How long have you been working in this organization?

Less than 5 Year ( )

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5-10 Years	( )
11 – 15 Years	( )
I5-20 Years	( )
More than 20 Years	( )

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Section B: Flexible Work Arrangement

In a scale of 1-5, indicate the level of agreement regarding the following statement regarding the effects of flexible work arrangement on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. Key 5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral, 2= Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagreed

	Flexible Work Arrangement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
5	Flexible work arrangement helps employee balance between work and personal life thus reducing stress levels, resulting in increased job satisfaction and minimizing high turnover					
6	Providing employees with the freedom to choose when and where they work helps them to optimize their work environment to suit their individual preferences and circumstances					
7	Remote workers often report higher levels of job loyalty due to the flexibility and autonomy that remote work provides					
8	Job sharing provide employers with greater flexibility in scheduling and work assignments which enhance employee retention					
9	Job sharing help employees to bring their diverse skills and perspectives together leading to higher quality work					
10	Condensed workweeks allow employees to work during their most productive hours, which can lead to higher quality work and greater efficiency.					

11. Describe how job sharing is done in your organization

……

12. Describe how flexible work arrangement help in employee retention

……

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Section C: Recreation Programs

In a scale of 1-5, indicate the level of agreement regarding the following statement on the effects of flexible work arrangement on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. Key 5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral, 2= Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagreed

	Recreation Programs	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
13	By participating in sporting activities, employees can achieve a better work-life balance, as it allows them to disconnect from work and focus on their personal well-being.					
14	Sporting activities improve employee engagement by providing opportunities for employees to socialize and build positive relationships with coworkers					
15	When the institution organizes events such as annual family days it makes employees feel appreciated which enhance employee retention					
16	Organizational entertainment and recreational programs improve the mental and physical health of employees					
17	Recreational activities such as belonging to club help employees reduce stress levels.					
18	Organizational entertainment help employees recharge and refresh, which can lead to increased productivity					

19. Which sporting activities are organized by your institution?

……

20. Does the organization organize team building activities?

……

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Section C: Leave Policy

In a scale of 1-5, indicate the level of agreement regarding the following statement on the effect of leave policy on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank, Key 5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral, 2= Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagreed

	Leave Policy	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
21	Taking periodic time off allows employees to rest, relax, and rejuvenate both physically and mentally leading to increased job satisfaction and a higher likelihood of remaining with the organization.					
22	When employees have the opportunity to take time off and enjoy a proper work-life balance, they feel valued and appreciated by the organization					
23	Employees who feel cared for and supported during times of illness are more likely to remain loyal to the organization and actively contribute to its success.					
24	Providing religious leave can demonstrate to employees that the company values and respects their religious beliefs and practices					
25	Providing sick leave make employees feel valued and respected, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and loyalty to the company					
26	Public holiday leave help employees manage their work-life balance more effectively, reducing stress and burnout					
27	Leave programs such bereavement leave makes employees feel that the organization care about their social welfare					
30	Leave programs allow employees to take time off for personal or creative pursuits which enhance creativity and innovation					

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31. Does the organization adhere to labor laws on annual leaves?

……

32. Describe the effect of leave on employee retention

……

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Section D: Child Care Support Services

In a scale of 1-5, indicate the level of agreement regarding the following statement on the effect of leave policy on employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. Key 5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral, 2= Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagreed

	Child Care Support Services	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
33	Providing child care support services helps alleviate the stress and burden associated with finding suitable child care arrangements. This support allows employees to focus on their work knowing that their children are well cared for.					
34	When employees have peace of mind regarding their children's care, they can concentrate on their work tasks more effectively.					
35	Maternity/Paternity leave help employees feel valued, appreciated, and accepted, which can boost self-esteem and confidence					
36	Employees who have access to child care support services are more likely to be productive at work, as they can focus on their work without worrying about their children's care arrangements.					
37	Child care support services such as breastfeeding areas improve employee morale by demonstrating that the company values and supports its employees' family responsibilities					
38	Providing child care support services can help employees manage their family responsibilities more effectively, reducing stress and hence improve employee retention rates					

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39. Describe how child care supports helps in employee retention

……

……

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SECTION F: Employee Retention

In a scale of 1-5, in a scale of 1-5, indicate the level of agreement regarding employee retention in Kenya Women Microfinance Bank. Key 5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral, 2= Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagreed

	Employee Retention	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
40	The rate of employee turnover is very low in the organization					
41	Average tenure of majority of employees is very high					
42	The organization is attracting new talents from employees in the same sector					
43	The rate of employees being poached by competitors is very low					

THANK YOU

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APPENDIX III: LETTER FROM ISERC

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 Limuru,
Kenya
Email: office@spu.ac.ke
Website: www.spu.ac.ke

Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
Mobile: +254 (0) 728-669000
(0) 736-424440

REF: SPU/93/2023 **Date: 6th November 2023**

TO: Diana Nkirote
St. Paul's University

Dear Diana,

REF: Work Life Balance Practices on Employee Retention A Case of Kenya Women Microfinance Bank

Greetings,

This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 102, for the period between 6th November 2023 – 6th November 2024.**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect

the integrity of the research must be reported to *SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours

v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
viii. Please note that it is within the ISERC's mandate to monitor your research and to do random visits to the site.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

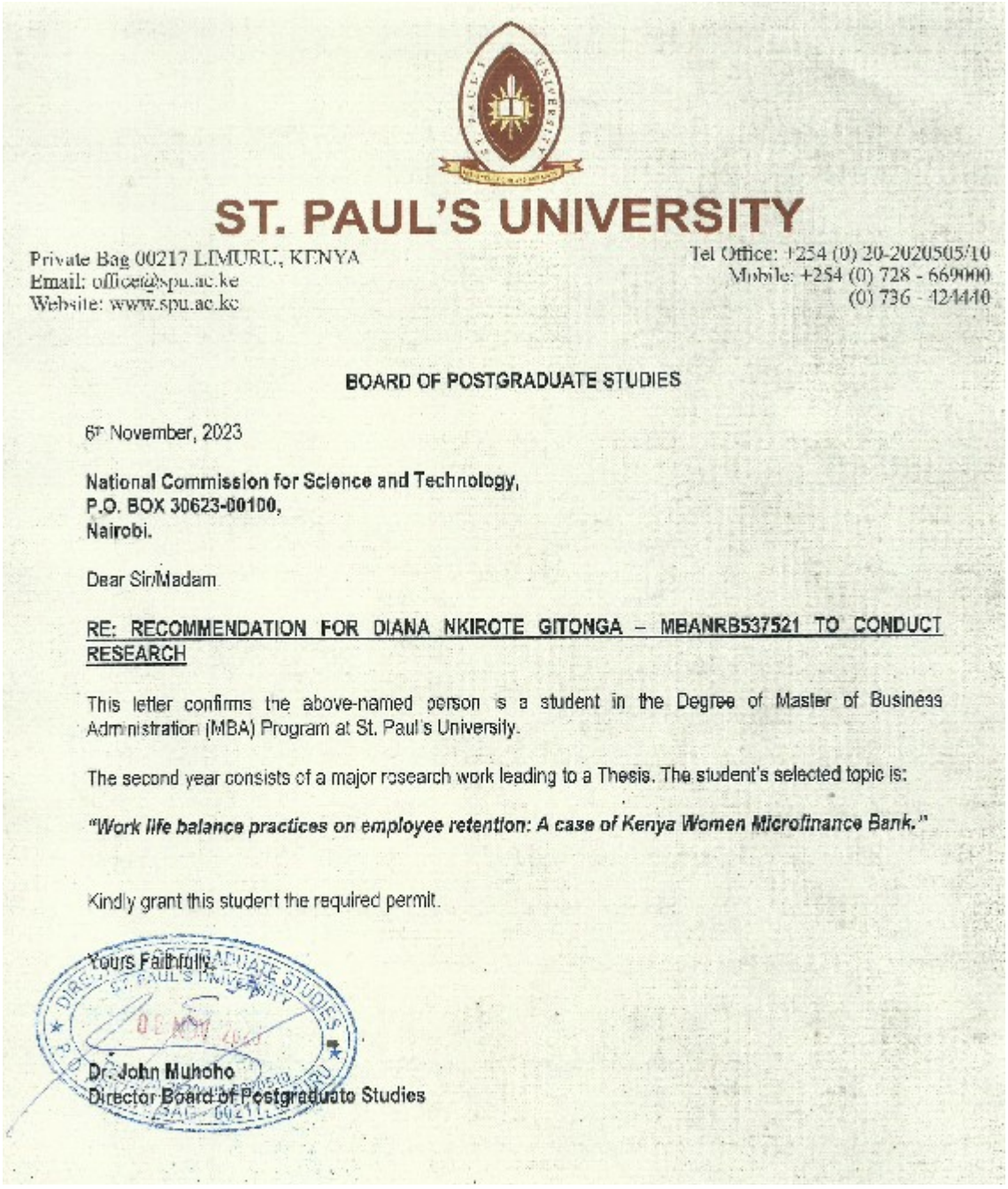


Dr. Daniel Nzengya, PhD
Chairperson
SPU- Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee



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APPENDIX IV: POSTGRADUATE LETTER



ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 LIMURU, KENYA
Email: office@spu.ac.ke
Website: www.spu.ac.ke

Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
Mobile: +254 (0) 728 - 669000
(0) 736 - 424440

BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

6th November, 2023

National Commission for Science and Technology,
P.O. BOX 30623-00100,
Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: RECOMMENDATION FOR DIANA NKIROTE GITONGA – MBANRB537521 TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter confirms the above-named person is a student in the Degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA) Program at St. Paul's University.

The second year consists of a major research work leading to a Thesis. The student's selected topic is:

"Work life balance practices on employee retention: A case of Kenya Women Microfinance Bank."

Kindly grant this student the required permit.

Yours Faithfully,

Dr. John Muhoho
Director Board of Postgraduate Studies

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APPENDIX V : NACOSTI RESEARCH PERMIT



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 101203

Date of Issue: 22/November/2023

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Ms.. Diana Nkirote Gitonga of Saint Paul University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kiambu on the topic: Work Life Balance Practices on Employee Retention A case of Kenya Women Microfinance Bank for the period ending : 22/November/2024.

License No: NACOSTI/P/23/31633

101203

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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APPENDIX VI: PLAGIARISM REPORT

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DIANA CORRECTED PROJECT.doc

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