



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

**WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT, EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE
PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS OF UGANDA:**

**A CASE OF MULAGO NATIONAL REFERRAL HOSPITAL AND NAGURU
GENERAL HOSPITAL**

BY

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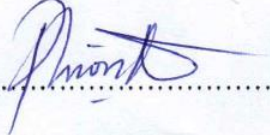
**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS
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PLAN A

December, 2023

DECLARATION

I, **PHIONA ARINAITWE** declare that this dissertation is the result of my independent effort and investigation. It has never been submitted to any university or other institution of higher learning for any award.

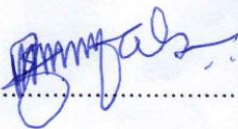
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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research dissertation is submitted with my approval as a university supervisor.

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Mr. Asuman Matongolo

DEDICATION

This report is dedicated to Atangaza Ayeza; thank you for focusing me son.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I thank God Almighty for my life and success in my academic arena. I extend my sincere thanks to my supervisors, Assoc Professor. Samuel Mafabi and Mr. Asuman Matongolo without whose guidance and encouragement, this report would not have been submitted. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to all the respondents from Mulago and Naguru Hospitals who provided primary data voluntarily. The Lord reward you abundantly.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CVI	Content Validity Index
WHO	World Health Organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
NRH	National Referral Hospital
TWA	Theory of Work Adjustment
MoH	Ministry of Health

ABSTRACT

Employee performance is a remarkably multidimensional element which is an important factor in determining firm success or failure. The study examined the relationship between workplace environment, employee engagement and employee performance in public hospitals. The study was premised on the following research objectives: to examine the relationship between workplace environment and employee performance, to examine the relationship between workplace environment and employee engagement, to examine the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance and to examine the mediation effect of employee engagement. The study was premised on the theory of Work Adjustment to augment the relationship between the study variables. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design along with a quantitative research approach. A sample size of 317 was scientifically drawn from a population of 1,736 hospital staff using simple random sampling. The study used Krejcie and Morgan's table to determine the sample size. The study tested for validity and reliability of the data collection instruments using Content Validity Index and Cronbach alpha coefficient respectively and the coefficients for validity and reliability were all above the 0.7 threshold. Quantitative data analysis was done using regression and correlation analyses. Study findings revealed a positive relationship between workplace environment and employee performance, workplace environment and employee engagement and employee engagement and employee performance. The findings also revealed that both workplace environment and employee engagement predicted employee performance. Findings revealed that employee engagement is a partial mediator. Findings revealed that organizations that promotes collaboration, open communication, and teamwork experience improves quality of work through the sharing of ideas and knowledge. It was further observed that, when employees are comfortable, they are more likely to be absorbed in what they are doing which increases employee engagement. The study recommends that hospitals should encourage teamwork and collaboration to create a harmonious and cooperative work environment. Also, policymakers should establish workplace standards by setting and enforcing workplace standards and regulations that ensure safe, healthy, and inclusive work environments.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

By investing in human resources for health, the government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Health aims at improving the effectiveness of the health systems in the country. Though different scholars have differently defined it, World Health Organization (WHO) defines health worker performance in terms of four dimensions that include responsiveness, productivity, competence and availability (Krijgsheld et al., 2022).

The various indicators of responsiveness of health workers include increased client satisfaction (Mustafa et al., 2020), reduced readmission rates and cross-infections, reduced case fatality rates and proactive quality service, e.g. decubitus ulcers. Secondly, Dhahri et al. (2020) states that the indicators of availability include reduced waiting time, increased staff ratios, reduced cases of overtime (Shukur & Kanona, 2021), reduced cases of staff turnover and improved attendance of health workers (Zhang et al., 2021).

Thirdly, the indicators of competence of the health workers include improved prescribing practices as well as adherence to protocol during diagnosis and communication with patients (Levesque & Sutherland, 2020). Lastly but not least, the indicators of productivity of health workers includes improved occupancy rate, increased outpatient visits and interventions provided per worker or facility as well as patient contacts (Kola et al., 2021).

There is sufficient evidence to support the claim that the performance of health sector employees globally faces different paths (Scheffler et al., 2018). Whereas the performance of health sector employees in the developed world being on the upward trajectory subject to the presence of a

number of supportive equipment, the performance of the health workers in the developing countries is deteriorating subject to a range of variables (Razu et al., 2021).

The poor performance of health service providers leads to inaccessibility of care and inappropriate care, which thus contribute to a reduction in health outcomes as people are not using services or are mistreated due to harmful practices (Zurn et al., 2021). In Sub Saharan Africa, the poor performance results from the insufficient number of staff, or from staff not providing care according to standards and not being responsive to the needs of the community and patients (Cometto et al., 2020).

Insufficiency of health workforce is one of the predictors of declining health worker performance in Sub Saharan Africa. Despite having 25% of the world's illness burden, WHO estimates that Sub-Saharan Africa has only 1.3 per cent of the world's trained health personnel. Africa had an average of 1.30 health workers per 1000 people in 2015, significantly less than the 4.5 needed to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Though gains have been made, Africa has the most severe health personnel shortfall, predicted to reach 6.1 million by 2030, out of the anticipated global health staff need of 14.5 million required for UHC and SDGs.

The availability of health workers in Africa is considerably worse compared with other regions of the world, a situation characterized by health care worker shortage and distribution between urban and rural areas in such settings (Zurn et al., 2021). Experiences of long queues of patients waiting to see a doctor or nurse at a hospital/health center clearly speak of shortage. This insufficiency has created issues such as declining productivity of the health workers, low levels of responsiveness and hence competence of the health workers has been queried by the customers which has led to poor performance of the health workers (Dhahri et al., 2020).

A number of motivational theories assert that employees are driven into job engagement using acceptable physical working environment. In light of the above, a number of scholars (Zhenjing et al., 2022) argue that a conducive workplace environment which is comfortable, flexible and aesthetic to the employee encourages their mobility, concentration, sensory and physical connection to work roles and foster employees' engagement (Ahakwa et al., 2021). Further, a positive work environments not only provide support for the development and maintenance of their working capacity but also enhances it. A host of scholars (Hafeez et al., 2019) have indicated that work environment affects one's cognitive, emotional and physical well-being which are precursors to a health worker's employee performance.

The consistent poor performance of health service providers in the developing and less developed countries has always lead to both inaccessibility of, and inappropriate care. In Ugandan public health facilities at all levels, poor performance has contributed to reduced health outcomes since many people are neither using nor accessing appropriate services (Musoke et al., 2019) implying that the consequences of their decisions are adverse.

According to Nabukeera (2016) Public hospitals in Uganda continue to face a number of challenges with poor employee performance. This is evident with the fact that the elements of negligence are on the rise in these health facilities which has put the lives of patients in danger.

Secondly, there is enough evidence to support the claim that the employees in these facilities take a lot of time to cater for the needs of a patient, many a time, it has been reported that they are seldom effective in addressing patient needs and the quality of output has often been queried by academicians and patients alike.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The consistent poor performance of health sector employees in Uganda has been a source of alarm for the patients and policymakers alike (Musoke et al., 2019). This is so because of the fact that many of the public health sector staff are characterized by low levels of responsiveness, unavailability, are not productive because interventions provided per worker have been declining since the COVID-19 period. In Mulago NRH and Naguru Hospital, the performance of health workers has not been different (Turyareeba et al., 2020).

In a bid to improve the performance situation of health sector staff, the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Health has put forward a number of work environment strategies including; ensuring proper aeration and lighting of the facilities, improving their remuneration albeit by insignificant margins and ensuring a positive interaction between the various health sector employees and their administrators (Musoke et al., 2020). With this, engagement of these health sector workers would be improved and this emotional rejuvenation would lead to improvements in the performance of health sector employees (Hafeez et al., 2019).

Despite the fact that the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Health has put forward a number of work environment strategies for improving the performance of the employees, the latter seems more of a distant dream as issues with productivity, availability, competence and responsiveness of health sector employees are still very evident at all levels (Turyareeba et al., 2020) though it is not clear whether the National referral level is as adversely affected as the other levels. In case the problem of poor performance of employees in these hospitals is not worked on, the situation will deteriorate further and the long-term outcomes will be pervasive. Further, even with a number of studies carried out to investigate whether workplace environment and engagement affect performance of the health workers, the extent to which these variables

affect performance of the health sector employees has not been investigated which leaves a gap yet to be explored. The need to bridge this knowledge gap forms a basis for the current study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To examine the relationship between workplace environment, employee engagement and employee performance in selected public hospitals.

1.4 Specific objectives

- i. To examine the relationship between workplace environment and employee performance
- ii. To examine the relationship between workplace environment and employee engagement
- iii. To examine the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance
- iv. To examine the mediation effect of employee engagement in the relationship between workplace environment and employee performance.

1.5. Research Questions

- i. What is the relationship between workplace environments and employee performance?
- ii. What is the relationship between workplace environment and employee engagement?
- iii. What is the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance?
- iv. What is the mediation effect of employee engagement in the relationship between workplace environment and employee performance?

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Geographical scope

The study was carried out in Mulago National referral Hospital and Naguru General Hospital. Mulago Hospital was founded in 1913, and is the main National Regional Hospital for the entire

country and a teaching hospital for the Makerere College of Health Sciences. It serves as a National Referral for the entire country and a general hospital as well as Health Center IV, III for the Kampala metropolitan with Official bed capacity of 1790. And is located on Mulago Hill in the northern part of Kampala city. Naguru general hospital also known as China-Uganda Friendship Hospital Naguru, was established between 2009 and 2012 with support from Chinese government. The hospital has a capacity of 100 beds and is located in the east of Central Business District of Kampala in Nakawa Division. The targeted hospitals were identified as public health facilities representative of different levels of public health care in Uganda.

1.6.2 Subject scope

The study included three variables that include workplace environments, employee engagement and employee performance. The study examined the relationship between and among these variables.

1.7 Significance of the study

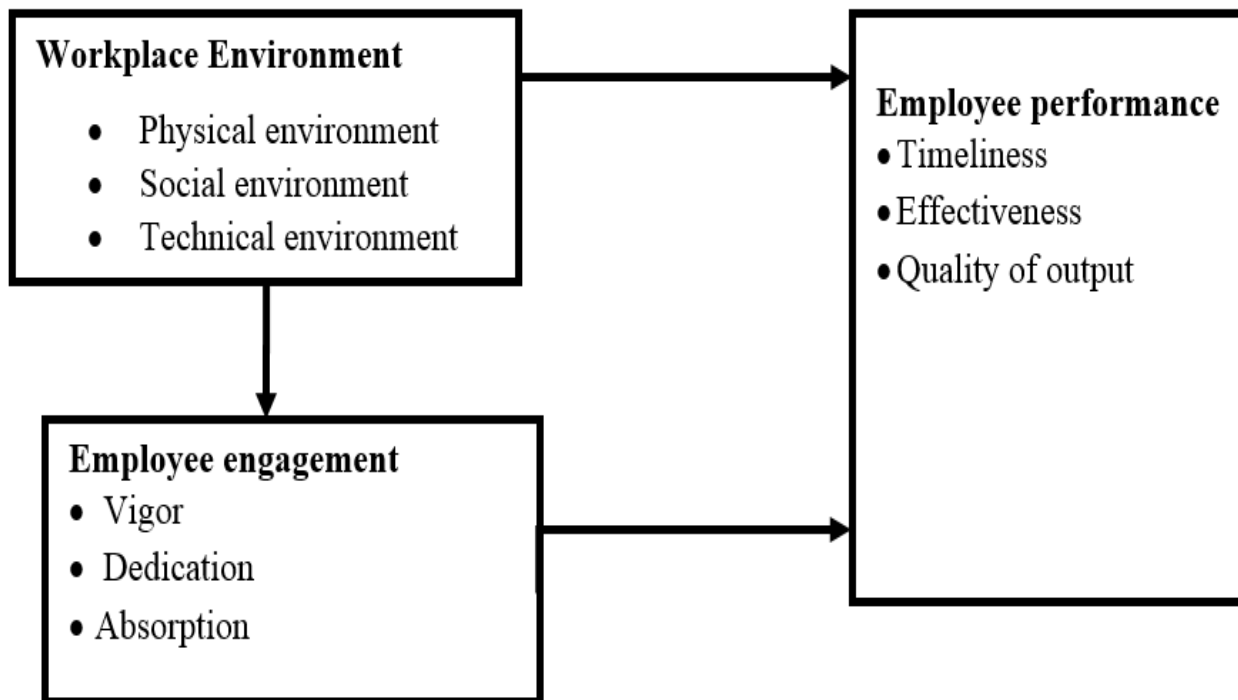
The hospital management and administration might get enlightened on the extent to which work environment affects health workers performance of the hospitals and hence revise existing strategies to ensure that performance is significantly improved.

In public sector administration, everything is all about laws and legal frameworks. The study results informs Public Health policy makers of the need to amend the existing laws to ensure that the loopholes and exceptions are removed for matters of improving the performance of the health sector employees

The issues raised in this study are likely to lead to the involvement of various researchers in generating more knowledge from various perspectives especially in the health sector. The

findings of this study could form a basis for further research to those interested in finding more on the relationship between workplace environments, employee engagement and employee performance in public hospitals of Uganda.

1.8. Conceptual Framework



Adopted and modified from Opperman (2020), Lapidus and Waite (2001), Nassazi (2013)

The figure above shows that work environments and employee engagement are linearly related with employee performance with many scholars indicating that the linear relationship is positive. However, there exists limited academic evidence on how employee engagement would mediate the relationship between work environment and employee performance, a gap the current study seeks to bridge.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Theory as defined by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) is a system of explaining phenomenon by stating constructs and the laws that inter-relate these constructs to each other. There are several key contemporary theories that have been used to clarify the effect of workplace environment on Staff Performance but for purposes of this study the Theory of work adjustment used is explained below.

2.1.1 Theory of work adjustment

The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) was originally proposed by Dawis and Lofquist (1984) as a theoretical framework for understanding vocational behavior and work adjustment. Theory of Work Adjustment has since been refined and expanded upon by many other researchers in the field of vocational psychology.

According to Dawis and Lofquist (1984), the Theory of Work Adjustment is based on the premise that individuals seek a good fit between their personal characteristics and the requirements and rewards of their work environment. They proposed that work adjustment involves a continuous process of seeking and maintaining a balance between an individual's abilities, needs, and interests, and the demands and rewards of the work environment.

Theory of Work Adjustment consists of three main components: person-environment fit, work behavior, and work and career outcomes. Person-environment fit refers to the degree of match between an individual's abilities, needs, and interests and the requirements and rewards of the work environment. Work behavior refers to the actions and behaviors that individuals engage in to achieve and maintain person-environment fit. Work and career outcomes refer to the results of work behavior, such as job satisfaction, performance, and career success.

Numerous studies have provided support for the theory of Work Adjustment and its components. For example, a study by Matli (2020) found that person-job fit was positively related to job satisfaction and job performance. Another study by Dick et al. (2020) found that the person to organization fit was positively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

The Theory of Work Adjustment has also been used to guide research and practice in vocational psychology. For example, Holland's (1997) vocational personality theory, which proposes that individuals seek work environments that are congruent with their personality, can be viewed as a specific application of theory of Work Adjustment. Additionally, the Theory of Work Adjustment has been used to develop and evaluate career interventions and vocational assessment tools (van Ruysseveldt et al., 2021).

2.2 Employee performance

Kwizera *et al.*, (2019) approached the concept of employee performance in terms of the timeliness of tasks, quality of work as well as effectiveness of employee work in the firm. On the other hand, Karhapää et al. (2022) established that employee performance is a behavior whereby employees of the organization are capable of successfully executing the allocated activities, subject to the regular restraints of the realistic use of available resources.

Employee performance has been considered to be significant in determining the organization's results and overall achievements (Tumwebaze et al., 2020). More so, the success of an organization relies mainly on the performance of its employees, therefore, employee performance has become an important objective for businesses. Hence, this has attracted attention from a number of researcher's worldwide to define the concept. For instance, Tisu et al. (2021) defined employee performance as workplace behavior which can make positive

contribution towards the organizational objectives. Also, Fonkeng (2018) looked at employee performance as the aggregated monetary and non-monetary added value by all employees both directly and indirectly to the accomplishment of the targeted objectives of the organization. According to Sharma and Sharma (2014), higher performance results in economic growth, higher profitability, and social progress. Kyei-Frimpong et al. (2022) examined that employee performance is the product of work with a fair corporate responsibility without interrupting any regulations and organizational objectives.

Different scholars have measured employee performance differently. For example, Knights et al. (2020) measured the concept of employee performance using dimensions of availability, responsiveness, productivity and competence. Furthermore, Biron et al. (2022) measured employee performance using two types of performance which included process and outcome. Process performance caters for the specific actions that employees display to accomplish effective performance or what workers do in their work conditions (Karhapää et al., 2022). On the other hand, outcomes performance refers to the products or services that are aligned with organizational goals and objectives and these may include creativity, customer satisfaction, and innovation, high productivity that can be observed at the individual, group and organizational level. Lastly, Pakpahan and Sambung (2022) measured employee performance using timeliness, effectiveness and work Quality. This study therefore adopted measures by Pakpahan and Sambung (2022) since they have been widely used for different studies and hence could be fit for this study.

2.3 Workplace environment

Workplace environment is an important component of work life for employees as employees

spend significant part of their time at work, and it affects them in one way or the other (Lee et al., 2022). An environment that focuses people and has stirred them to be in its workforce, provide them the prospect to perform efficiently, is called attractive environment or supportive environment and it helps to produce recruitment and keep on in occupation (Crnogaj et al., 2022).

The Work place Environment refers to the surrounding of an establishment where employees do their work. Mawardi (2022) defined work place environments as the forces that are currently and continually influencing performance, motivation and employment relationship. Work environment comprises a total network of inter-relationship existing among the stakeholders and the environment in which they operate. To the scholar, work environment consciously involves the process of ensuring quality of life, improving the degree of satisfaction derived from the work itself, providing opportunities for growth, creating safe and healthy workplaces, increasing creative and critical use of work system initiatives leading to workers effectiveness (Costantino et al., 2021).

A good workplace environment includes all the essentials of a job, such as the amenities to perform responsibilities, a relaxed workspace, protection, and no noise. Durodolu et al. (2021) found that, relative to those who feel insecure, workers who feel relaxed with their work environment are likely to work more efficiently and enjoy the working process. The Work place Environment is linked to the atmosphere of a specific company in which its workers conduct their duties (Matteson et al., 2021). Work environment focuses on working hours, working space, equipment and facilities which are components of physical work environment.

In addition, Ahakwa et al. (2021) indicated that “the workplace environment involves elements

such as participation; group cohesion; provision for supervisors; role direction; self-sufficiency; clarity; creativity, physical well-being, and management power.” Also, the scholars defined a range of dimensions for assessing the workplace environment, including: job challenge, job autonomy, leader concern, and support, leader work facilitation, working group cooperation, workgroup spirit, position uncertainty, fairness and reward system equity.

Work environment significantly contribute to increased staff performance (Lindeberg et al., 2022). Over the last decades, physical work environment and work system have become complex due to the changes in several factors such as the social environment, information technology and work processes (Bergsten et al., 2021). Where workers are mentally and ardently fit, their passion to work will be enhanced and their performance outcomes will ultimately be amplified. Bhatti et al. (2022) also stated that a proper workplace environment reduces absenteeism and as a result strengthens employees’ satisfaction. Research indicated positive reactions to an enabling work environment strategies such as the work processes, job designs, environment and facilities design (Mawardi, 2022).

Attractive work atmosphere and supportive environment give increase to the circumstances in which employees put together their preeminent use of skills, competences, and knowledge to execute efficiently. In this case, organizations should invest more in providing quality services to the customers (Voordt & Jensen, 2023). Modern workplaces of IT and software houses physical environment is surrounded by computers, printer, machines, and different types of machines. Due to constant interaction with technology, an employee’s brain is filled with sensor information.

Work place environment is grouped into two; Internal environment and External environment.

According to Lee et al. (2022), when viewed external work environment as a result of factors such as custom and laws of the community within which the business operates. It includes the weather condition and policies outside the work environment. The Internal work environment is seen as the environment that focuses largely on the operations of the organization. The internal work environment consists of the work system, buildings, furniture, layout, as well as the physical conditions under which employees operate. The internal work environment largely focused on the determination of specific goals and objectives aimed at fulfilling the mission.

On the other hand, Bergsten et al. (2021) measured workplace environment using physical environment, social environment and technical environment. The technical environment deals with the adequacy of equipment, tools, skills, knowledge, and supervision required to alter materials or information in some specified or anticipated way to achieve a desired end result. Social environment refers to peers, others with whom employees relates, team and work groups, interactional issues, the leadership and management. Social environment is designed in such a manner that encourages informal interaction in the work place so that the opportunity to share knowledge and exchange ideas could be enhanced. Lastly, physical environment influences how organization employees are led, co-operate, and perform tasks. This study adopted the measures of physical environment, social environment and technical environment as suggested by (Ahakwa et al., 2021).

2.4 Employee engagement

Employee Engagement is an important term in an organization, which has gained substantial interest in scholarly study. The concept of employee engagement was put forward by Kahn who perceived it as the involvement of employees in their work roles whereby employees also

express themselves physically and emotionally during job performances (Aggarwal et al., 2022). According to Davis and Van der Heijden (2023), the concept of employee engagement is how much an employee gets fully involved in their work so as to increase their dedication towards their work. Employees who are fully engaged at their work are most likely to excel in their work activities and increase the competitiveness of their organizations through high productivity, high quality goods and low employee turnover.

Different researchers have tried to define the concept of employee engagement differently. For instance; Chiwawa (2022) referred to the employee engagement as the degree that one is conscientious and involved in his/her work roles. Also, employee engagement is perceived as a good and satisfactory behavior associated with work that is marked by three components: vigor, interest and devotion (Abdullahi et al., 2023). An engaged employee is projected to experience traits such as socially, psychologically and cognitively (Saks et al., 2022).

Adopting the same definition, Bakker (2022) also described employee engagement as "the degree of participation, communication, intimacy and impact of an employee with a specific brand, the involvement of an employee with a brand, irrespective of the medium where they make the decisions. Furthermore, Mutha and Srivastava (2023) conceived of employee engagement as the productive, interpersonal, emotional conduct of work, motivating workers to mentally, cognitively, and physically express and plan for their duties. Employee engagement is described based on the nature of the relationship between an organization and its employees (Akanpaadgi & Binpimbu, 2021)

To obtain valuable market success results for various organizations, the employee engagement is extremely significant. The authors have shown that it is important for companies to involve their

workers, as employee engagement establishments have a greater degree of customer satisfaction and commitment, extra efficient, and profitable than those with less employee engagement. Memon et al. (2020) have recommended cultivating employee engagement's idea as retrenchment reduces workers' motivation and devotion to their establishments. Therefore, low amounts of dedication have a detrimental impact on the employee retention. Mokhtar et al. (2021) suggested that a well-performing company is dependent on its ability to maintain a safe, engaged and dedicated workforce through interaction.

Accordingly, researchers have come up with different dimensions to measure the concept of employee engagement. For instance, Vijayalakshmi et al. (2021) measured employee engagement using vigor, absorption and dedication. Vigor means employees having high energy and emotional resilience during work (Windia *et al.*, 2020). Dedication looks having a sense of importance, eagerness, motivation, pride and challenge at work (Mustafa *et al.*, 2022). Also, Absorption is being fully concentrated and intensely absorbed in one's tasks whereby employees find it different to leave work (Kosaka & Sato, 2020). On the other hand, Jian et al. (2020) measured employee engagement using intellectual, social and affective engagement. This study therefore adopted measures of Vijayalakshmi et al. (2021) which include vigor, absorption and dedication.

2.5 Workplace environment and employee performance

Past studies have shown that work environment has a significant positive effect on Employee Performance (Crnogaj et al., 2022). Workplace Environment could positively and significantly affect Employee Performance (Matteson et al., 2021). According to Ahakwa et al. (2021), the office atmosphere's practical design helps enhance workers experiences and necessitate improved

efficiency. Previous researchers stated that the physical working environment helped to deter employees' ability to connect with their work roles and influence their behavior (Lindeberg et al., 2022). A study had shown that a conducive physical working environment could reduce absenteeism and enhance employee performance. Thus, to retain employee performance, the organization had to improve the physical working environment. Bergsten et al. (2021), revealed that a suitable workplace temperature energizes an office occupier to work at the employee's best.

In addition, studies have been carried out on work environment as a factor that determines employee performance (Bhatti et al., 2022). In their studies, Voordt and Jensen (2023) analyzed the extent to which employees perceive their workplace environment as fulfilling their intrinsic, extrinsic, social needs and their need to stay in the organization. They also analyzed the impact of perception of work environments on employee commitment and turnover in the organization. They concluded that if the employees are provided with enabling work environmental support, they will be highly satisfied and show high level of commitment towards their organization and hence low turnover rate.

Lee et al. (2022) indicated that workplace environmental elements such as sufficient light, absence of noise, proper ventilation and layout arrangement substantially increase employees' productivity. Mohsan (2012) investigated the impact of workplace environment and infrastructure on employees' performance from the education in Pakistan and concluded that incentives at workplace had a positive impact on employees' performance. According to Franssila and Kirjonen (2022) found that the variables incentives, motivation and working conditions have a significant effect on employee performance in an Indonesian university. It is evident from these

studies that a good workplace environment plays a very vital towards increasing performance of employees in general.

Similarly, a good work environment is very helpful for employees in completing their duties (Bhatti et al., 2022) so that employees who are assigned to serve clients will make consumers who are suffering because of the illness satisfied (Costantino et al., 2021). Therefore, a good work place environment is significant for employee performance as indicated in a study by (Badrianto & Ekhsan, 2020).

2.6 Workplace environment and employee engagement

A number of scholars have noted that a good work environment (e.g. team-building activities) stimulates friendships in the workplace and minimizes office conflicts and politics (Zhenjing et al., 2022) which will improve engagement of the employees. Further, a good work environment is characterized by friendship which in turn promotes cooperation and collaboration between colleagues and subordinates and their bosses (Saragih et al., 2021). Other scholars (Bashir et al., 2020) have added that good work environments promote collaboration which then improves individual engagement.

In addition to the above, Ozturk et al. (2020) believes that a good work environment is defined in part by quality and reliable infrastructure. That's everything from the equipment & technology that employees use, the communication channels at the employees' disposal, the quality of furniture in the office, and more. When this infrastructure is top-notch, employees are not only more engaged but also more efficient (Scrima et al., 2021).

In better work environments, Faupel and Helpap (2020) noted that a smooth flow of information between team members, across departments, and from the leadership down to the subordinates

which significantly improves the latter's engagement. Other scholars (Ahakwa et al., 2021) cite that a good work environment is also characterized by reasonable employee remuneration, compensation, promotion, and rewards yet they failed to indicate why some well paid employees are seldom engaged.

2.7 Employee engagement and employee performance

Employee engagement is a key vital duty that drives employee performance, achievement, and consistent improvement throughout the entire year (Adhitama & Riyanto, 2020). Past studies have made revealed that Employee Engagement has a significant positive influence on Employee Performance (Ayub & Islam, 2018; Sendawula, Kimuli, Bananuka, & Muganga, 2018). However, Kuruppuge and Gregar (2017) identified a negative relationship between Employee Engagement and Employee Performance. Dedicated worker is mindful of the corporate setting and partners with peers to enhance job efficiency for the organizations benefit. The level of loyalty strongly influences the degree of employee performance that an individual has to his company and its beliefs (Sendawula et al., 2018). Employee engagement is regarded as capacity, interest, participation, effectiveness, vigor, motivation, excitement, and a positive state (Men, O'Neil, & Ewing, 2020). Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes, and Delbridge (2013), revealed that committed workers have a healthy mindset and a work-based state of mind marked by vigor, commitment, and interest, making staff mentally present at work, reducing their tendency to make mistakes and errors related to work which improves their performance. Employees who are engaged are more prepared to learn new things. This demonstrates that engaged employees are able to put their ideas into motion and, as a result, reach high levels of success at work (Sugianingrat, Widyawati, Ximenes, 2019).

In a study by Sendawula, et al. (2018), the correlation results showed that there is a significant correlation between employee engagement and employee performance in the health sector. This implies that when Employees are engaged, their performance will increase. Kruse (2012) examined 28 research studies by various scholars and discovered a connection between Employee engagement and operation, revenue, pricing, safety, productivity, earnings, and overall profitability. Monica and Krishnaveni (2018), who expressed that engaged workers frequently portray a strong positive emotional bond with their job and are frequently more active, efficient, stronger, happier, and less likely to abandon their employer, all support the correlation between Employee engagement and employee performance. This result is also in line with Dhir and Shukla (2018), who performed a meta-analysis and discovered that Employee engagement is linked to higher performance. Employees who are engaged outperform their discontented colleagues.

Previous studies over a range of areas have discovered different performance based results of engagement. Bakker (2022) examine that engagement is connected to both in-role and extra-role performance. Numerous different examinations have discovered connections among engagement and performance results (Bakker, 2022). Employee engagement is a key determinant of performance. Mone and London (2010) suggest that designing a performance management process that can foster employee engagement will lead to higher levels of performance. Employee engagement is a relatively new concept (Macey & Schneider, 2008) and the factors that produce engagement may be different from those that produce more traditional employee outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Macey et al., 2008). Employee engagement, if focused on performance management process, may foster performance improvement even better. Engaged employees tend to show commitment to organizational values and achievement of superior performance on the job. When employees are fully engaged on their jobs, they perform

beyond the expectation of their current work standards and this contributes to high level of organizational performance (Robertson & Cooper, 2011). It is therefore important for organizations to ensure sustained level of employee performance by way of an engaging work environment (Muchhal, 2014).

2.8 Mediation effect of Employee Engagement

Employees develop a capability to engage in their work if the work environment in which they perform their tasks is conducive to them, a supportive work environment will encourage total focus and immersion into job roles which then lead to desired work output leading to high organizational performance. The reverse is true if the workplace environment is toxic and not supportive to employees. Employee engagement has the capacity of catching employees' heads, hearts, and spirits to motivate them for excellence. Workers feel engaged when they experience physically and psychologically attached to their organization and job responsibilities (Abdullahi et al., 2021).

Studies by Zhenjing et al. (2022) also recognized that work environment was strongly and significantly associate with employee engagement. It was found that the conditions prevailing at the workplace have a greater impact on employee's performance as they work in an organization. The work environment should be safe and conducive to employees for them to fully engage and realize their full performance. Additionally, it was found that as safe work environment and retains employees on their jobs.

Studies by Tahmasebi and Babashahi (2021) assert that there exists a strong relationship between physical environmental conditions and quality of work performed by employees in organizations. In this study, work environment was found to be the key link to employees and the jobs they

undertake which when improved, provided motivation, satisfaction and superior employee performance. He further found that that it is difficult to isolate work environment from employee engagement which contributed effectively to employee performance.

The Affective events theory provides a linkage between the internal conditions of any work environment and the reactions of the employees to such work conditions. If conditions in the work environment has the capacity to negatively affect employees work and productivity, then there will be less inducement to perform at a higher level. Psychologically, employee's job performance will be affected by their ability to engage and this will impact negatively to organizational performance. Hence organizations should ensure work environment which does not elicit negative reactions from employees (Dasgupta & Dey, 2021)

In a study which investigated the effect of workplace environment on employees' performance in a sample of 150 who responded to the questionnaires distributed to employees of the education sector it was found that organizations that invested in improved office conditions experienced high level of employee retention and engagement (Hartati, 2020). Other research studies that investigated the relationship between environmental factors such as work station partitions, employee engagement and employee performance found a strong association between those factors (Arimie & Oronsaye, 2020).

2.9 Literature gaps

The gap identified from theoretical and empirical studies is that, in as much as workplace environment can easily be linked to having an effect on employee performance and many scholars have determined Employee engagement to having a significant effect on employee performance,

It is labored to find authors who have definitively researched the intermediating effect of employee engagement between workplace environment and employee performance.

In addition, principals of management that dictate how exactly to maximize employee productivity center around two major areas of focus: personal motivation and the infrastructure of the workplace environment, not many authors can draw a line between personally induced employee engagement coming from individual intrinsic factors and employee engagement that is induced by the work environment in measuring the effect of employee engagement on employees' performance.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section presents research design, the study population, sample size and technique, unit of analysis, unit of inquiry, data sources, data collection instrument, validity and reliability, measurements of research variables, data processing and analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design

The researcher applied a cross-sectional research design along with a quantitative research approach. The cross-sectional research design was implemented since it is essential and convenient when collecting data at one point in time (Bryman, 2004). Cross-sectional research design also facilitates large sample coverage as every participant participates only once or in a snapshot, which saves time (Creswell, 2014). Also, the quantitative research approach is selected for simplicity and clarity purpose when it comes to addressing objectives aimed at examining the relationship between variables (Williams, 2007).

3.2 Study Population

The population for this study was 1,736 Hospital staff (MoH HRD, 2020). Mulago hospital has 1,380 employees while Naguru General Hospital employs 356 staff. This study was stratified into respondents with a leading role in understanding the content of the study. Population include heads of departments, Senior Medical personnel, Medical officers, Hospital administrators, Nurses and Midwives, medical interns, morticians, biomedical engineers and even cleaners from the infections control units. Since the study is keen on hospital wide performance, all levels of the hospital organogram was represented in the study population.

3.3 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study constituted employees in hospitals (Mulago Hospital and Naguru General Hospital). This is because the study analyzed performance of employees in Mulago hospital and Naguru General Hospital.

3.4 Unit of Inquiry

The unit of inquiry in this study was the hospital employees. This is because of their position and knowledge concerning the subject being investigated. Unit of inquiry is used to mean individuals from whom data to be used in the study is collected.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample of 317 employees was investigated comprising 252 employees from Mulago Hospital as well as 65 from Naguru General Hospital. This is aimed at gathering enough information and to have a well-represented population for the study. The study used simple random sampling to derive the targeted sample. This is because it gives each element in the population an equal chance of being selected in a generalized form (Walliman, 2017). All employees identified within Mulago Hospital and Naguru General Hospital formed one sampling frame. By way of picking without replacing, the researcher selected one employee after another until 317 was separated from the population. The details are presented in the following table;

Table: Sample size distribution per hospital

Hospital	Population	Sample size
Mulago Hospital	1,380	252
Naguru General Hospital	356	65
Total	1,736	317

Source: (MoH HRD, 2020; Krejcie and Morgan, 1970)

3.6 Data Sources

Data was collected from employees in the field as the primary source of data. According to Creswell (2014), primary data is helpful as it is collected for a particular purpose it was initially

meant for. Also, primary data offers current information concerning the subject matter to draw reliable conclusions and recommendations.

3.7 Data Collection Instrument

Data was collected using a self-administered close ended questionnaire, rated using a 5-Point Likert scale ranging from; 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-Not sure, 2-disagree and 1-strongly disagree. The scale was selected to provide respondents with the extent to which they agree with the different notions (Likert, 1932). The questionnaire was divided into key sections to address precisely each variable. These included; background information of the respondents, workplace environment, employee engagement and employee performance. Finally, the questionnaire instrument was embraced because it enables obtaining data from a large sample, and it is the most appropriate tool for collecting quantitative data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007).

3.8 Validity and Reliability

3.8.1 Validity

The validity of the study is concerned with the extent to which the data collection instruments accurately measure what they intend to (Amin, 2005). In this study, expert judgment and content validity index (CVI) was used. After drafting the questionnaire, it was shared with academic supervisors and experts to provide comments regarding the appropriateness and understandability of the items contained in the instrument. Based on their comments, the questionnaire was amended. CVI was also used where the researcher distributed the questionnaire to specific people who were conversant about the subject, not necessarily those targeted by the study to express the content validity. Based on the results obtained, the researcher computed CVI using the formula, K/N

where; K is the number of items identified as valid and N is the number of items under each construct. As a general rule, CVI should be 0.7 or better under to be considered valid (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, as indicated in table 3.2 below, all items contained in the questionnaire were found to be valid.

Table 3.2 shows Validity results

	CVI	Number of items
Working Environment	0.83	22
Employee Engagement	0.82	14
Employees Performance	0.87	17

Source: Primary data

3.8.2 Reliability

Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to determine Reliability of the instrument. The reliability output from SPSS indicated in the table below, showed that the reliability of the study was found to be acceptable. According to George and Mallery (2003), if the reliability result is above 0.9 it is excellent, if it is above 0.8 it is good and if it is above 0.7 it is acceptable. Thus, the questionnaire based on the table below was reliable.

Table 3.3: Cronbach Alpha Reliability Results

	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Working Environment	22	.877
Employee Engagement	14	.891
Employees Performance	17	.882

Source: SPSS output

3.9 Measurement of the Variables

In this study, workplace environment was measured using physical environment, social environment and technical environment (Opperman, 2002). Also, employee engagement was measured using Lapidus and Waite (2001) three scales of employee absorption, dedication and vigor. Finally, employee's performance was measured using Nassazi (2013) three scales of quality of work, timeliness of activities and effectiveness of employees' work in an organization.

3.10 Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected was edited for incompleteness and inconsistency. The statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) version 23 was used for data entry and analysis. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to establish the relationships between workplace environments, employee engagement and employee performance. Regression analysis was used to determine how the predictor variables can explain the dependent variable. This is because there are more than one variable affecting the dependent variable.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought an introductory letter from the University which was presented to the management of both Mulago and Naguru hospitals to seek permission and consent to collect data for academic purposes. The data obtained from the respondents was treated as confidential for the safety, social and psychological well-being of the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides information on analysis, presentation and interpretation of findings of the data collected for the study. The survey was carried out on workplace environment, employee engagement and employee performance in selected public hospital. The presentation is guided by the research objectives and the statistics are thus a reflection of the respondent's views on the research questions. This chapter starts with response rate, demographic characteristics and then findings representing the study objectives. The data is presented using percentages, frequencies organized in tables. Pearson's correlation coefficient was presented later in order to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Regression analysis was also conducted to determine the combined effect of the predictor variable on the dependent variable.

4.2 Response Rate

The survey covered a sample of 317 respondents of which only 258 of the respondents returned the questionnaires. This gave a response rate of 81.3%. This response rate is appropriate for analysis because Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) indicated that if the response rate is 50% or below, it shows that the data is inadequate for analysis, but if the response rate is 60%, it means that the data is good for analysis and if the response rate is 70% and above, then data is regarded as very good for analysis. The response rate was 81.3% because 18.7% accounts for questionnaires that were partially filled as well as those that were never returned.

4.3 Demographic characteristics

This section presents personal profile (gender, age, level of education, marital status and number of years at work).

4.3.1 Gender of respondents

The gender of the respondents is indicated in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Gender of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	120	46.5
Female	138	53.5
Total	258	100.0

Source: Study Findings

Majority of the respondents were female at 53.5% while 46.5% were male. This implies that public hospitals in Kampala employs more female than male. It also implies that female perform more than male in hospitals.

4.3.2 Age of respondents

The age bracket of the respondents is indicated in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Age of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
20-30 Years	115	44.6
31-40 Years	127	49.2
41-50 Years	10	3.9
51 Years & Above	6	2.3
Total	258	100.0

Source: Study Findings

The majority of the respondents were aged between 31 and 40 years (49.2%) implying that they were mature and responsible enough to efficiently execute their hospital tasks.

4.3.3 Marital Status

The marital status of the respondents is indicated in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Marital status of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Single	96	37.2
Married	146	56.6
Divorced	8	3.1
Widowed	8	3.1
Total	258	100.0

Source: Study Findings

The majority of the respondents were married at 56.6%, singles were 37.2% and those that were divorced were 3.1%. This implies that public hospitals employ more married employees than single and those who divorced.

4.3.4 Educational level

The education level of the respondents is indicated in table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 Educational level of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Certificate	0	0
Diploma	49	19.0
Bachelor's degree	147	57.0
Master's degree	52	20.2
Others	10	3.9
Total	258	100.0

Source: Study Findings

The majority of the respondents being bachelors' degree holders (57%) indicates that they have the required technical knowledge which would enable them to effectively execute their routine activities.

4.3. 5 Length of service with the hospital

The number of years respondents have worked in the firm is indicated in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 How length of service with the hospital

	Frequency	Percentage
BELOW 5 Years	102	39.5
5-10 Years	133	51.6
11-14 Years	23	8.9
Total	258	100.0

Source: Study Findings

The majority of the respondents had worked for between 5 and 10 years (51.6%). This implies that employees who responded had adequate experience in the hospital operations.

4.4 Correlation analysis

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine the degree of association between the study variables. Results of the correlation tests are presented in table 4.6 below

Table 4.6: Correlation results

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
WORK PLACE ENVIRONMENT (1)	1								
Physical Work Environment (2)	.847**	1							
Social Environment (3)	.862**	.557**	1						
Technical Environment (4)	.908**	.649**	.745**	1					
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT (5)	.550**	.341**	.397**	.701**	1				
Vigour (6)	.646**	.434**	.416**	.795**	.834**	1			
Absorption (7)	.388**	.214**	.325**	.497**	.865**	.554**	1		
Dedication (8)	.466**	.294**	.346**	.601**	.886**	.651**	.673**	1	
EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE (9)	.523**	.477**	.374**	.519**	.581**	.499**	.456**	.568**	1

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

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

Source; primary data

4.4.1 Workplace Environments and Employee Performance

Table 4.6 above revealed that there is a positive relationship between workplace environments and employee performance ($r=0.523^{**}$ $p\leq .01$). This implies that any positive change in workplace environments is associated with a positive change in the employee performance. This also means that investing in creating a positive workplace environment can yield tangible benefits in terms of improved employee performance. Additionally, the dimensions of workplace environments such as physical work environment ($r=0.477^{**}$), social environment ($r=0.374^{**}$) and technical environment ($r=0.519^{**}$) had a positive relationship with employee performance.

4.4.2 Workplace Environment and Employee Engagement

Table 4.6 above revealed that there is a positive relationship between workplace environment and employee engagement ($r=0.550^{**}$ $p\leq .01$). This implies that any positive change in workplace environment is associated with a positive change in the employee engagement. This also means

that engaged employees are more likely to stay with their current employer, reducing turnover costs and the need for frequent recruitment and training. Furthermore, the dimensions of workplace environment such as physical work environment ($r=0.341^{**}$), social environment ($r=0.397^{**}$) and technical environment ($r=0.701^{**}$) had a positive relationship with employee engagement.

4.4.3 Employee Engagement and Employee Performance

Table 4.6 above indicated that there is a positive and significant association between employee engagement and employee performance ($r=0.581^{**}$ $p\leq .01$). This means that any positive change in employee engagement is associated with a positive change in employee performance; when employees see a clear connection between their efforts and recognition or rewards, they are more likely to stay engaged and perform at their best. In addition, the dimensions of employee engagement including Vigor ($r=.499^{**}$), Absorption ($r=.456^{**}$) and Dedication ($r=.568^{**}$) had a positive relationship with employee performance.

4.5 Regression analysis

The regression analysis model was used to test the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. This was done to determine the extent to which the independent variables (workplace environment and employee engagement) impact on the dependent variable (employee performance). That is, the percentage change in the dependent variable accounted for by the changes in the independent variable. Regression findings are presented table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Multiple Regression model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	37.195	2.298		16.186	.000
Workplace Environment	.174	.035	.292	5.016	.000
Employee Engagement	.358	.050	.421	7.236	.000
Model summary					
	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig. F
	.631	.398	.393	84.129	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Engagement, Workplace Environment

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: Primary Data

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the combined effect of predictor variables on the dependent variable. Regression findings in table 4.7 above revealed that a combination of workplace environment and employee engagement predicated up to 39.3% (adjusted R square = 0.393) of the observed variance in employee performance. Employee Engagement was found to be the most significant predictor of employee performance (Beta = 0.421, Sig = .000). This means that employee engagement has an effect on employee performance. Workplace environment was observed to be the least significant predictor of employee performance (Beta = 0.292, Sig = .000). This means that Workplace environment has an effect on employee performance.

4.6 The mediating role of employee engagement

To test the mediation effect of employee engagement in the relationship between workplace environment and employee performance as the third objective, Sobel test was conducted in this study to establish the nature of mediation and the extent to which employee engagement influences the relationship between workplace environment and employee performance. The tests of

mediation were carried out using Med Graph program developed by Jose (2004) based on works of Field (2006); Baron and Kenny (1986). According to Baron and Kenny (1986), before mediation can be tested, three conditions have to be met. A three step approach was used as suggested by Jose Path Model (2004): To test for mediation, the researcher first investigated whether or not i) workplace environment significantly predicts the mediator, ii) workplace environment significantly predicts employee performance in absence of Employee Engagement as a mediator, iii) Employee Engagement shows a significant unique predictive relationship on employee performance and iv) the predictive power on the relationship of workplace environment on employee performance reduces upon addition of Employee Engagement in the Jose Path Model using regression coefficients.

Type of mediation	Significant
Sobel z-value	4.60848
<u>Standardised Coefficients</u>	
Total:	0.523
Direct:	0.339
Indirect:	0.21
Indirect to Total ratio	0.401

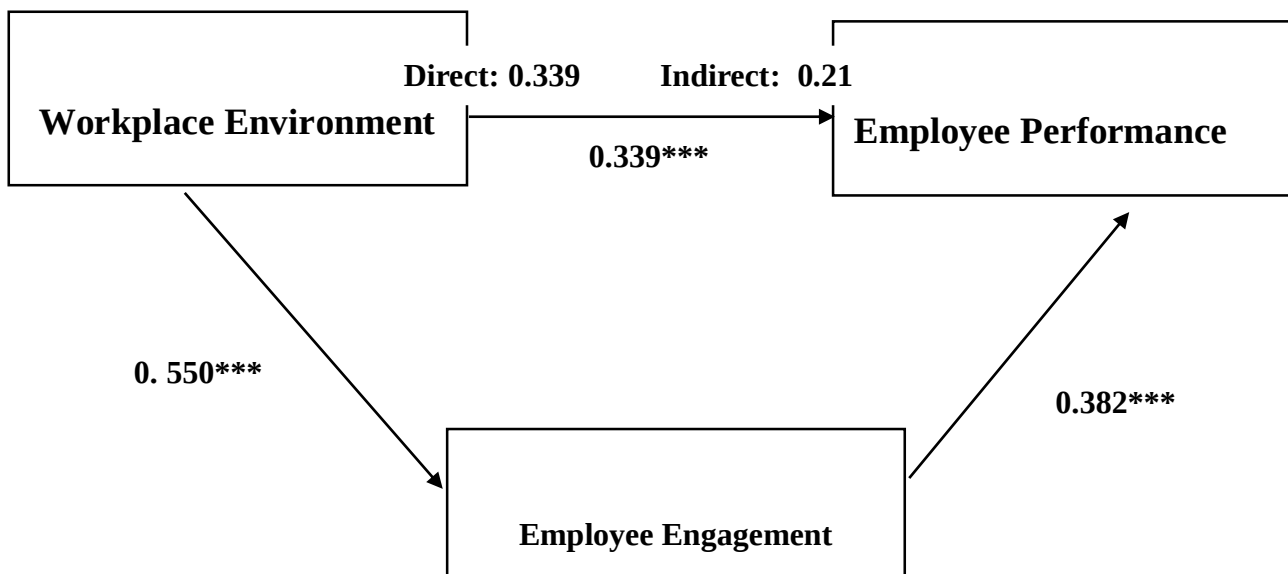


Fig. i: Med graph shows mediation of Employee Engagement

Mediation results in the Figure above reveal that when Employee engagement was added, it reduced the relationship between workplace environment and employee performance from 0.523 to 0.339 but it remained significant. This implies that Employee engagement has a partial mediation effect on the relationship between workplace environment and employee performance. Thus, workplace environment can directly influence employee performance without going through Employee engagement but the effect can also go through Employee engagement. From the model above, Employee engagement as a mediator contributes 21% in the model.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is comprised of the discussion of findings, conclusion, recommendations, areas for further research and limitations of the study. Research findings are discussed based on the study objectives while drawing comparison between the findings and literature review.

5.2 Discussion of findings

5.2.1 Workplace Environments and Employee Performance

The findings showed a positive and significant relationship between workplace environments and employee performance. This implies that when organizations provide employees with proper lighting and climate control can increase comfort and reduce physical discomfort, allowing them to focus better and perform tasks with greater ease and accuracy. Also, minimizing distractions through noise control measures such as soundproofing or designated quiet areas can enhance concentration and the quality of work. Thus, the results into increased employee performance of workers in the public hospitals. Furthermore, organizations that promotes collaboration, open communication, and teamwork can lead to improved quality of work through the sharing of ideas and knowledge. When employees work together harmoniously, they can collectively solve problems and produce high-quality results. Additionally, providing employees with up-to-date tools, software, and equipment can streamline their work processes, increasing the timeliness of activities. Offering technical training and development opportunities ensures that employees have the skills and knowledge necessary to perform their tasks effectively and efficiently which increases employee performance.

The finding is consistent with past studies that have shown that workplace environment has a significant positive effect on Employee Performance (Crnogaj et al., 2022; Matteson et al., 2021; Ahakwa et al., 2021). This supported by Lindeberg et al. (2022) who concluded that physical working environment increases employees' ability to connect with their work roles and influence their behavior leading to increased performance. This is in line with Ahakwa et al. (2021) indicated that the office atmosphere's practical design helps enhance workers experiences and necessitate improved efficiency. Additionally, Lee et al. (2022) indicated that workplace environmental elements like sufficient light, absence of noise, proper ventilation and layout arrangement substantially increase employees' productivity.

Furthermore, a conducive physical working environment reduces absenteeism and enhances employee performance. Thus, to achieve employee performance, the organization has to improve the physical working environment. Bergsten et al. (2021) revealed that a suitable workplace atmosphere energizes an office occupier to work at the employee's best. This is supported by Bhatti et al. (2022) who established that workplace environment is a key factor that determines employee performance. Voordt and Jensen (2023) concluded that if the employees are provided with enabling work environmental support, they will be highly satisfied and show high level of commitment towards their organization and hence low turnover rate.

5.2.2 Workplace environment and Employee Engagement

The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between workplace environment and employee engagement. This implies that organizations that offer a well-designed and comfortable physical environment can help employees feel more relaxed and at ease, allowing them to concentrate better on their tasks and absorb themselves in their work. When employees are

comfortable, they are more likely to be absorbed in what they are doing which increases employee engagement. In addition, receiving regular recognition and constructive feedback from peers and supervisors can boost employees' sense of vigor and dedication. Feeling valued and appreciated for their contributions increases their engagement. Moreover, streamlined workflows and automation of repetitive tasks in the technical environment makes employees focus on more challenging and meaningful work, increasing their dedication and vigor.

This finding agrees with the previous studies which established that a positive work atmosphere, such as team-building exercises, encourages friendships in the workplace and reduces office conflicts and politics, which will increase employee engagement (Zhenjing et al., 2022). Moreover, the presence of friendship among coworkers, subordinates, and their superiors fosters cooperation and collaboration in a positive work environment (Saragih et al., 2021). This is supported by Ozturk et al. (2020) who concluded that adequate infrastructure is a key component of a productive workplace. This includes all of the tools and technologies used by employees, the channels of communication available to them, the standard of office furniture, and more. Employee productivity increases when this infrastructure is of the highest caliber (Scrima et al., 2021).

Furthermore, smooth flow of information between team members, between departments, and from the leadership down to the subordinates, according to Faupel and Helpap (2020), greatly increases the employee's engagement. According to Ahakwa et al. (2021), a good workplace environment is also characterised by acceptable employee salary, compensation, promotions, and prizes. This is in agreement with Bashir et al. (2020) who established that a collaborative work environments foster employee engagement through fostering teamwork.

5.2.3 Employee Engagement and Employee Performance

The findings revealed a positive and significant association between employee engagement and employee performance. The regression analysis revealed that employee engagement was found to be the most significant predictor of employee performance. This implies that when employees are absorbed in their tasks, they are more likely to focus intensely and pay attention to details. This heightened concentration often results in higher-quality work as they are less prone to errors and can produce more accurate and thorough outcomes. Also, engaged employees tend to lose track of time because they are deeply occupied in their work. As a result, they are more likely to meet deadlines and complete tasks promptly, contributing to the timeliness of activities which increases employee performance. Furthermore, dedicated employees are committed to their roles and the organization's goals. They are more likely to take pride in their work, set high standards for themselves, and go the extra mile to produce high-quality results. Also, vigorous employees bring enthusiasm and energy to their tasks, which can translate into a more creative and innovative approach to problem-solving. Their enthusiasm can inspire fresh ideas and contribute to the quality of work which increases employee performance.

This finding is consistent with Bakker (2022), Ayub and Islam (2018) and Sendawula et al. (2018) who found that employee engagement has a considerable positive impact on employee performance. This is supported by Adhitama and Riyanto (2020) who concluded that employee engagement is a crucial element that motivates employee performance, accomplishment, and ongoing progress. The degree of an employee's engagement to his or her employer has a significant impact on the degree of employee performance (Sendawula et al., 2018). Thus, employees who are engaged are more likely to uphold organisational ideals and perform better at work. According

to Robertson and Cooper (2011), when employees are fully devoted to their work, they go above and beyond the call of duty and help to boost organisational performance.

Additionally, Monica and Krishnaveni (2018) indicated that engaged employees frequently exhibit a strong positive emotional bond with their work and are frequently more active, efficient, stronger, happier, and less likely to leave their business; all of these factors reinforce the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance. This finding is consistent with a meta-analysis by Dhir and Shukla (2018), who found that employee engagement is related to better performance. Employees who are engaged perform better than their unsatisfied co-workers. Furthermore, Truss (2013) found out that motivated employees have a positive outlook on life and a work-based mentality characterised by vigour, commitment, and interest. This mental presence at work reduces employees' propensity to make mistakes and errors connected to their jobs, which enhances performance. Engaged workers are more equipped to pick up new skills. This suggests that highly successful employees are those that are able to put their ideas into action (Sugianingrat et al., 2019).

5.2.4 The mediating role of employee engagement

The findings on the mediating role of employee engagement revealed that employee engagement plays a partial mediation on the relationship between business workplace environments and employee performance in public hospitals. This means that employee engagement is a conduit through which workplace environments partly predicts employee performance in public hospitals.

It can be inferred that employee engagement may act as a partial mediator in this relationship. However, the few existing studies in line with our study findings agree that favorable workplace environment makes employees more comfortable and absorbed in what they do which increases

employee engagement (Abdullahi et al., 2021). This, in turn, can positively influence various dimensions of employee performance. According to (Zhenjing et al., 2022), workplace environment is highly and significantly associated with employee engagement, and thus, employees are inspired to get fresh ideas which contributes to the quality of work hence increasing employee performance.

5.3 Conclusion

From the findings of the study, a number of conclusions were drawn. From the first objective of the study, it was concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between workplace environments and employee performance. A positive and significant relationship has been established, highlighting the critical role of the workplace in influencing employee productivity, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. This highlights the importance of organizations prioritizing the creation of conducive and supportive work environments.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between workplace environment and employee engagement. This underscores the pivotal role of the workplace environment in influencing employee commitment, motivation, and overall job satisfaction. Recognizing this connection is pivotal for organizations aiming to optimize their workforce's engagement levels and, consequently, their performance and retention rates.

From the study findings, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between employee engagement and employee performance. The regression analysis revealed that employee engagement was found to be the most significant predictor of employee performance.

Thus, this compelling correlation emphasizes the fundamental role of fostering employee engagement in enhancing individual and organizational outcomes. Organizations that prioritize and nurture employee engagement are likely to experience improved productivity, greater employee satisfaction, and a competitive advantage in the market.

5.4 Recommendations

The researcher recommended that;

Results indicated that workplace environments is a significant predictor of employee performance among public hospital employees, thus it is recommended that public hospitals need to cultivate a positive workplace environment. This can be done by developing a culture of inclusivity, respect, and open communication to foster a sense of belonging and support among employees. Additionally, they should encourage teamwork and collaboration to create a harmonious and cooperative work environment. This will increase employee performance.

Furthermore, public hospitals should promote work-life balance among employees. This can be achieved by implementing flexible work arrangements and remote work options where feasible to help employees manage their personal and professional lives effectively. Employees should be encouraged to take regular breaks and vacations to prevent burnout. This will increase their motivation hence improving employee performance.

Findings showed that workplace environment increases employee engagement. Hence, it is recommended that organizations should empower and develop their employees by providing opportunities for skill development and career advancement through training, mentorship, and ongoing education. Empowering employees to take ownership of their roles and contribute to

decision-making processes when appropriate increases their vigor and dedication towards their work tasks hence increasing their engagement.

Additionally, organizational should prioritize health and well-being of employees. This can be done by offering wellness programs that address both physical and mental health, including access to fitness facilities, stress management resources, and mental health support. Promoting healthy eating options and consider offering wellness incentives is essential in increasing employee dedication at work. This is increases employee engagement.

Managers should also establish clear career pathways by creating transparent career development paths and opportunities for employees, allowing them to see how their current roles contribute to their long-term goals within the organization. Offering mentorship and coaching to help employees navigate their career paths is essential in fostering employee engagement leading to improved employee performance.

The policymakers should establish workplace standards by setting and enforcing workplace standards and regulations that ensure safe, healthy, and inclusive work environments. They should also develop guidelines for workspace design, ventilation, lighting, and other factors that contribute to a positive workplace environment.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study was carried out on only two public hospitals; Mulago hospital and Naguru General Hospital in Kampala yet there are many public hospitals in Uganda. It may not be accurate to draw a general conclusion on all public hospitals using Mulago hospital and Naguru General Hospital.

Adopting a cross-sectional research design signifies that the study was not be able to capture the changes that may have occurred after the data collection period. This could have affected the reliability of the results contained in the report.

Since the researcher used close-ended questions, it may not have been able to obtain views and opinions from respondents through open-ended questions, and this could have affected the results.

5.6 Areas for further study

Given the time factor, it was not possible for the researcher to carry out the study beyond study scope in terms of time, geography and subject; therefore there is need for longitudinal studies in this context to contribute in the academic literature concerning workplace environment, employee engagement and employee performance among public hospitals.

The study was only carried out in hospitals particularly public hospitals in Kampala district, therefore, there is need to carry out a similar study in other public hospitals in Uganda.

Future researchers could also add other variables that account for the remaining 60.7% variance in employee performance.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Makerere University Kampala

Dear respondent,

I am requesting you to fill this questionnaire, which is aimed at collecting data aimed at establishing the relationship between workplace environments, employee engagement and employee performance in government hospitals of Uganda. You have been selected to be one of our respondents in this study. The information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality and shall not be used for any other purpose except for academic purposes. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Kindly tick (✓) the appropriate answer option below;

Personal profile

1. Your Gender

Male	Female

2. Age bracket of the respondent

20-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51 years & above

3. Marital status

Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed

4. Highest education status

Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Others (Specify)

5. How long have you worked with this hospital?

Below 5 years	5-10 years	11-14years	15 and above

SECTION B: WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

Instructions: please tick the most appropriate option basing on the scale provided below

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

Physical Work Environment						
	In this hospital;					
PWE1	We have enough lighting to carry out our work safely without straining to see.	1	2	3	4	5
PWE2	The Workspace allows us a full range of movements required to do the job	1	2	3	4	5
PWE3	Workplace temperature ranges are appropriate for employee comfort	1	2	3	4	5
PWE4	The seating provides the opportunity to alternate between standing and sitting to reduce fatigue and discomfort	1	2	3	4	5
PWE5	We have changing rooms to avoid spread of contaminating substances	1	2	3	4	5
PWE6	The toilets are appropriate for basic health, welfare, privacy and dignity	1	2	3	4	5
PWE7	The general cleanliness of the workplace environment at the hospital is satisfactory and motivates me to perform better.					
PWE8	Medical facilities are available to enable me to perform my jobs without complaining or getting tired	1	2	3	4	5
Social Environment						
SE1	My colleagues help me to apply my skills and knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
SE2	I receive cooperation of my peers at work	1	2	3	4	5
SE3	My co-workers are curious about my performance	1	2	3	4	5
SE4	My peers appreciate me when I implement new skills.	1	2	3	4	5
SE5	My colleagues correct me when I make mistakes on job	1	2	3	4	5
SE6	I am encouraged by my supervisor to consult with him/her on how to continuously improve in the way perform my duties.	1	2	3	4	5
SE7	My colleagues and supervisors always support me when executing my duties which encourages me to perform well.	1	2	3	4	5
Technical Environment						
TE1	The computers I use to work are up to date and reliable	1	2	3	4	5
TE2	The software I use is user-friendly	1	2	3	4	5
TE3	All technical issues at work are quickly resolved	1	2	3	4	5
TE4	I have access to any tools and resources that I would like to use	1	2	3	4	5
TE5	The hospital uses technology to improve workflow	1	2	3	4	5
TE6	The hospital always trains its employees on new technology	1	2	3	4	5
TE7	I have the skills needed to perform my job effectively					

SECTION C: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Instructions: please tick the most appropriate option basing on the scale provided below

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

CODE	Employee engagement	Scale (✓)				
	Vigour					
EE1	I feel valued, I know my input is important and it contributes to achieving quality and timely work.	1	2	3	4	5
EE2	When I get up in the morning, I feel happy going to work	1	2	3	4	5
EE3	I am always paid for the hours overworked which motivates me to do quality work.	1	2	3	4	5
EE4	I am always rewarded for the good job done which motivates us to work harder.	1	2	3	4	5
	Absorption					
EE7	Time flies when I'm working	1	2	3	4	5
EE8	When I am working, I am able to focus on the task at hand and forget everything else around me.	1	2	3	4	5
EE9	My task completion targets are clear and achievable which gives me a piece of mind and satisfaction.	1	2	3	4	5
EE10	I am able to deliver quantities desired in the stipulated time with support from my team.	1	2	3	4	5
EE11	I am able to deliver quantities desired in the stipulated time with support from my team	1	2	3	4	5
	Dedication					
EE13	I find the work that I do to be full of meaning and purpose.	1	2	3	4	5
EE14	I am treated fairly at my workplace, which makes me perform well.	1	2	3	4	5
EE15	There is equity in the treatment of each employee in the hospital which inspires me.	1	2	3	4	5
EE16	I am proud of the work that I do.	1	2	3	4	5
EE17	I feel comfortable, safe and healthy here with manageable workload that motivates me to work hard.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Instructions: please tick the most appropriate option basing on the scale provided below

Scale	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

CODE	Employee performance					
	Effectiveness					
EP1	I find no difficulties in using my work tools and equipment to perform my duties.	1	2	3	4	5
EP2	I have the data and information I need to achieve my work objectives	1	2	3	4	5
EP3	I achieve my work goals because they are clear and I have whatever I need to achieve them	1	2	3	4	5
EP4	I achieve the work targets	1	2	3	4	5
EP5	The hospital has a work plan in place and I perform my activities in line with the work plan	1	2	3	4	5
EP6	I work towards accomplishing the set activities	1	2	3	4	5
	Quality					
EP6	My supervisor reviews my work to ensure that any mistakes are corrected in time and the quality of reports produced is good.	1	2	3	4	5
EP7	The degree to which I do my work meets our customers' requirements	1	2	3	4	5
EP10	I am able to deliver the quantity and quality of work desired in the stipulated time with support from my team.	1	2	3	4	5
EP11	The quality of my reports is very good and reliable in aiding decision making and performance management.	1	2	3	4	5
EP12	The workload volume is manageable and my workstation is well fitted to enable me accomplish it well.	1	2	3	4	5
	Timeliness					
EP13	I am always punctual in my duty	1	2	3	4	5
EP14	I enjoy my work with minimal stress, which enables me to complete my work timely.	1	2	3	4	5
EP15	My workplace has enough resources/tools (e.g. theatre gowns, medical equipment, medical gadgets, well stocked pharmacy etc.) to aid me do my job well and produce the needed output timely	1	2	3	4	5
EP16	The hospital has a stipulated protocol for emergency cases to ensure timely treatment and we always follow it	1	2	3	4	5
EP17	I manage to plan my work so that I finished it on time	1	2	3	4	5
EP18	I ensure that daily patient attendance is done timely and issues/challenges resolved quickly.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for your cooperation!

Sample Size from a Given Population (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970)

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note.—*N* is population size.

S is sample size.