

Relationship between Family Responsibilities and Performance of Staff at University Libraries in Meru County

Kimoriot Maureen Jeruto^{1*}, Gichohi Paul Maku¹, and Nzioka Catherine Mueni¹

¹*Kenya Methodist University P.O Box 267, 60200, Meru, Kenya*

**Correspondence email: morynjc@gmail.com*

Abstract

Library staff are obligated to run the day-to-day operations of university libraries by providing information materials to students and faculty to support learning and research as well as manage family needs like shopping, house management, and child care. For library staff to work effectively there is need for minimal interference of work from family responsibilities however, libraries operate throughout the year librarians are rooted within the university, leading to lack of work and family balance. Family responsibilities and work responsibilities require much attention of the university library staff leading to fatigue, burnout and poor job performance. This research aimed at examining the relationship between family responsibilities and work performance of university library staff. The objective of the study was to examine the influence of family responsibilities on the performance of university library staff. The research was anchored on spillover theory, and adopted a descriptive survey research design. Thirty eight (38) university library staff from (four) 4 universities in Meru County were selected as respondents using census method. Data was collected using questionnaires, and it was analyzed descriptively using inferential statistics. Results indicated that library employees perform well in the work place despite family responsibilities. The research concluded that family responsibilities affect university library staff work performance to a very small extent, thus they are able to carry out their work duties. The research recommends that future studies be carried out to provide a clearer understanding of the relationship between family responsibilities and performance of university library staff in Kenya.

Keywords: *University Libraries, Work Performance, Family Responsibilities, work-family conflict*

IJPP 10(3); 14-27

1.0 Introduction

A University library is a system set up, managed by information professionals, and financed by the parent institution to keep books and non-books information materials for scholarly work (Nkamnebe et al., 2014). The role of the university library is summed up as transfer of information, support education and scholarly research; and safeguarding of academic records to serve the information needs of teaching staff and students (Dale et al., 2011). Globally, university libraries are facing competition due to the proliferation of information, scarce resources, and wide use of technologies. Technology is forcing university libraries to adopt different information communication technologies, such as providing online outreach services to its patrons to improve overall job performance at the workplace and other domains of life, such as family responsibilities (Okpe, 2012).

“Lack of work and family life balance affects how library staff performs in the workplace and may result into divided loyalty, which may ultimately lead to staff turnover, low commitment and low productivity”

In Sri Lanka, library staffs achieve high performance in the workplace because library staff can attend to family responsibilities without interfering with work schedules (Weerakkody & Mendis, 2014). The core function of a university library is to support the parent institution meet its short and long-

term objectives which are summed up as teaching, learning, research, and community service. For library staff to carry out their duties effectively, there is need for minimal interference of work from family responsibilities. However, libraries operate throughout the year; hence, librarians are rooted within the university premises, leading to work-family life imbalance, which ultimately results in fatigue, burnout, and poor quality of life and poor job performance.

Lack of work and family life balance affects how library staff performs in the workplace, and may result into divided loyalty, which may ultimately lead to staff turnover, low commitment and low productivity. The outcome of the research indicated that library employees are able to perform well in the work place despite taking care of family responsibilities. As discussed by Nwokike and Unegbu (2019), library staff performance determinants include the ability to conduct library routine jobs, attend to, and respond to patron queries effectively and efficiently. The ability to use communication mediums to carry out library duties as well as present library work in verbal and written mediums is essential when conducting library instruction programs as well as relating with fellow peers in the library.

According to Mayhew (2019), performance is measured in various ways, such as using detailed rating scales, graphic scales, staff self-evaluation form, and the use of 360-degree feedback method of measurement by getting the response of individual library staff

from other library staff members. McCloy et al. (1994) developed a model used to assess library staff performance. The model represents performance, not as outcomes, but results of library staff performance. Job performance is based on job-specific task proficiency and non-work explicit task (McCloy et al., 1994). Past researches have established unpredictable job performance among library staff (Amusa et al., 2013). However, expert librarians add to the entire development of the library by responding to users timely and effectively in Nigerian libraries. Effects such as decreased job satisfaction, increased staff turnover, as well as absenteeism leads to poor or lower performance (Keoboualapheth et al., 2017). Librarians perform their duties, such as library routines of ensuring library services run smoothly and responding to patron queries promptly.

Library work requires minimal supervision of the library staff, who are expected to work within set timelines and meet the specified performance targets and goals (Mulanya & Kagiri, 2018). University libraries have stipulated breaks ranging from tea breaks to lunch breaks, where library staff members can take time off for a healthy break (Kenya Methodist University [KeMU], 2012). Leave application procedures and protocols to be observed when a library staff intends to be away from the office to attend family responsibilities as guided by labor laws in Kenya (GoK, 2012). For librarians to carry out their duties effectively, there is need for minimal interference of work from family responsibilities (Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020).

Statement of the problem

To achieve the expected performance, library staff are expected to prioritize their work obligations and balance family responsibilities outside the workplace (Durodolu & Mamudu, 2020). However, many library staff are blamed for poor performance in their job. Studies on the relationship between work-life balance and work performance among university library staff is scanty, hence the research gap that this study seeks to fill. The existing research on family responsibilities and work performance of librarians are limited in scope. For instance, Townsend and Bugg (2020) focused on perceptions of work-life balance for urban academic librarians in United States of America (USA), while Mwangi et al., (2017) examined the effects of work-life balance on workforce performance at Kabarak University, Kenya.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research was to determine the relationship between family responsibilities and work performance among university library staff in Meru County.

Research question

The specific research question was: how does family responsibilities influence the performance of staff at university libraries in Meru County?

Literature review

Work-family engagement is a battle in the undesirable spillover from work-to-family responsibilities (Tziner et al., 2015). Spillover theory has often addressed the

negative spillovers. Studies have shown that positive spillover is equally possible. Positive spillovers from home environments may lead to positive results at work, leading to improved work performance (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). The clash of work and family is unavoidable as each pulls in the opposite; thus, the discordant since the two have different stresses, customs, beliefs, and desires. Work-family conflict is stress associated with employees who devote more time to work, resulting in clash with family tasks. Thus, work and family roles are related (Soomro et al., 2018). However, past research on work-family conflicts was unidirectional on work effects based on family obligations.

Current studies indicate that this relationship is bi-directional; meaning that work does not only spill over to domestic responsibilities, but the domestic responsibilities equally spill over to the office domain (Lewis & Rajan, 2013). Notably, family responsibilities are not limited to caring for a spouse, child, and parent, but also caring for a physically challenged child, sibling or ageing parent. In Europe, work and family life conflict are prevalent; most Europeans perceive that work takes too much time, thus spending less time with their families (Carvalho et al., 2018). Female employees are the most affected by family responsibilities because of child care and the entire household.

Despite men taking part in child care activities, the ideology of division of domestic work remains unchanged (Buonomo, 2020). Research carried out by Walton and Edwards (2013) on flexible work

practices in the library information sector provided analysis of the existing laws about employers and employees as per work-life balance, family domains, leave options and flexible work arrangements in Ireland. The research showed that the adoption of flexible work arrangement in libraries is attractive to female employees who carry the liability of baby and household care.

Research by Zheng (2015) indicated that family responsibilities affect the performance of the employees of an organization and that family welfare is the main responsibility that makes the employees lose focus at the work place. In developing countries, empirical research by Adekanye and Nduka (2017) reveal that female librarians make a higher percentage of librarians in academic libraries. International labor organizations have made efforts to sensitize organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa on the importance of work-family balance (Muasya, 2016). Consequently, Muasya (2020) has studied women working in public and private universities in Kenya who depend on domestic workers to manage family activities.

2.0 Materials and Methods

This research adopted descriptive survey design. The target population was thirty eight (38) university library staff from four (4) university libraries in Meru County, the only universities located in the region. The research utilized questionnaires as the main tool of data collection. This population was small, hence all library staff participated in the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted with the use of census method to

collect data from the respondents. The research tools were pre-tested to ensure validity and reliability were achieved. Data collected was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) Version 25. Descriptive statistics (median and percentages) and regression analysis were used to analyze data. Tables were used to present the findings of the study. Informed consent was sought from the sampled respondents, and confidentiality and anonymity was observed. Further, inviolability of data was maintained.

3.0 Results and Discussion

The Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient value of the construct was above 0.621, which implied the data collection instrument used was reliable. Cronbach alpha (α) coefficient of 0.5 and above is dependable and satisfactory as

recommended by Abbot and McKinney (2013), who stated that Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.5 and above implies an acceptable measure of internal consistency.

Results on family responsibilities

Closed ended questionnaires had various statements on family responsibilities; namely, shopping activities, taking care of elderly parents and daily family activities. Respondents rated these items in a scale; where very small extent-1, small extent-2, moderate extent-3, large extent-4 and very large extent-5. Open questions on how best university library staff were able to balance work and household tasks and with reference to work performance was asked as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1
Family Responsibilities on Work Performance

Measurement Items (N=27)	Very Small Extent	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Large Extent	Very Large Extent	Total %	Count	Mean	St Dev
Performance at work is interrupted by family shopping activities	(21) 8%	(3) 1%	(2) 7%	(1) 4%	0%	100%	27	4.629	4.172
Being away from work taking care of elderly parents affects performance	(18) 67%	(5) 9%	(2) 7%	(2) 7%	0%	100%	27	4.444	4.018

Ensuring school going children get to school on time interferes with work performance	(14)52 %	(7) 6%	(3) 11%	(2) 7%	(1) %	100 %	27	4.14 8	3.781
Aiding school going children do their homework affects performance at work	(12)44 %	(9) 3%	(2) 7%	(1) 4%	(3) 1%	100 %	27	3.96 2	3.661
Sleeping late in the evening affects punctuality to work in the morning	(11) 41%	(4) 5%	(9) 33%	(1) 4%	(2) 7%	100 %	27	3.77 7	3.646
Taking up part time jobs affects work performance	(9) 33%	(6) 2%	(7) 26%	(3) 1%	(2) 7%	100 %	27	3.62 9	3.333
I don't go to work when I face child care challenges	(6) 22%	(6) 2%	(7) 26%	(1) 4%	(7) 6%	100 %	27	3.11 1	2.956
Sickness of family member affects daily routines at work	(5) 19%	(4) 5%	(7) 26%	(4) 5%	(7) 6%	100 %	27	2.85 1	2.708
Total								3.86 9	0.457

Mean value of 3.869 and standard deviation of 0.457 indicate low variations in the respondent's scores. From the analysis it is evident that university library staff with

families carry out shopping activities, take care of elderly parents or grandparents, and manage daily family activities. These activities affect their performance to a very

small extent (52%); thus, they are able to perform at the work. These findings are contrary to research conducted by Zheng (2015) which indicated that family responsibilities affect the performance of the employees of an organization, and that family welfare is the main responsibility that makes the employees lose focus at the work place. Majority of library staff showed the ability to moderately and highly balance work and family tasks while few stated they highly balanced work and family responsibilities. The research indicated that university library staffs were able to carry out family responsibilities without compromising their work performance through proper planning of family responsibilities, time management, and delegation of duties. To promote a

healthy work and family relationship, organizations may adopt tailored policies such as job sharing, flexible leave arrangements, career breaks to enable employees plan for work and family activities as encouraged by (Carvalho et al., 2018; Walton & Edwards (2013).

Results on performance of university library staff

Respondents were asked to rate items such as good communication, good discipline, communal activities, positive interpersonal skills, meeting work targets on work performance. Using a scale where very small extent-1, small extent-2, moderate extent-3, large extent-4 and very large extent-5. The descriptive findings are shown in Table 2

Table 2
Performance of University Library Staff

Measurement Items (N=27)	Very Small Extent	Small Extent	Medium Extent	Large Extent	Very Large Extent	Count	Mean	STD Dev
Communications boost my job performance	4%	0%	7%	22%	67%	27	1.518	1.277
At time I'm away from work attending to personal matters	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%	27	4.737	4.198
Family responsibilities sometimes take up time for work responsibilities	63%	33%	0%	4%	0%	27	4.556	4.082
Most of the time when at work I perform my work duties as expected	15%	7%	19%	37%	22%	27	2.556	2.389

I don't have discipline issues at work	11%	7%	11%	26%	44%	27	2.148	2.072
I work well in team work activities thus relate well with colleagues at work	4%	22%	26%	19%	30%	27	2.518	2.309
I relate well with my peers at work which makes me work well	4%	0%	15%	33%	48%	27	1.778	1.515
I lead junior officers well in my department	15%	15%	22%	22%	26%	27	2.703	2.553
Leadership position in the library affects my performance	58%	12%	15%	4%	12%	26	4.00	3.731
I have liberty to plan how to do my job in the workplace	19%	11%	15%	33%	22%	27	2.703	2.567
Annual performance appraisal score is always high	4%	7%	19%	33%	37%	27	2.074	1.845
Daily work routines sometimes are very stressful, and this affect my productivity	78%	11%	11%	0%	0%	27	4.667	4.189
I do office work at home sometimes	48%	19%	19%	4%	11%	27	3.889	3.610
Total							3.225	1.051

The results in Table 2 showed an aggregate mean value of 3.225 and a standard deviation of 1.051. This indicates a high variation in the participant’s response. This could perhaps be due to disparities in the staffs’ opinions of how different work factors affected each library staff. The main areas that affected most of the university library staff work performance to a very large extent are good communication, good discipline, communal activities, positive interpersonal skills, and meeting work targets. These findings corroborate Nwokike and Unegbu (2019) who stated that library staff performance determinants include the ability to conduct library routine jobs effectively and efficiently. Factors such as decreased job satisfaction, increased staff turnover, and absenteeism leads to poor or lower performance (Keoboualapheth et al., 2017).

Work performance of university library to a very small extent is affected by library staff being away from work attending to family responsibilities, poor teamwork, holding no leadership position, and work not being stressful. University library staff were further asked to rate their ability to balance work and

life with reference to job performance. Majority stated they would highly balance work and family responsibilities by utilizing measures provided by their universities, such as off-days, annual leave, working in shift and time management. Research conducted by Wadsworth et al. (2016) state that family, medical, and leave policies which are provided in universities for library employees can be utilized to run their family, responsibilities. Most library staff demonstrated the ability of planning properly for family activities and work activities with proper time management and delegation of duties. As evidenced by Muasya (2020) who stated that women working in public and private universities in Kenya depend on domestic workers to manage family activities and in turn enables them to perform their duties affectively.

To test the assumptions of study, regression analysis was conducted. Regression analysis was used to determine if the sample data was drawn from a normally distributed population. Normality test was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk statistic as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3
Normality Test

Variables	Shapiro-Wilk statistic		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Work Performance	.993	27	.999
Family Responsibilities	.918	27	.35

The findings from normality test showed normality, since all the probability values of all variables were more than 0.05. Multiple regressions were used to determine the ability of family responsibilities to predict library staff work performance.

To answer the research question, *how does family responsibilities influence the performance of staff at university libraries in Meru County?* A linear regression was carried out and the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.608 ^a	.369	.255	.369

The Results from Table 4 shows that R is .608 which indicate a strong correlation between family responsibilities and work performance of university library staff. The R Square statistics tells how much of the variance in the dependent variable is caused by the independent variable. In this case, R square value is .369, which means that family responsibilities explain 36.9% of the variation in work performance of university

library staff as stated by Medina et al (2017), that most employees have always tried to balance their family responsibilities with job performance, by not carrying family responsibilities to their place of work. Analysis of variance was carried out to determine if the model was statistically significant. The findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.756	4	.439	3.223	.032 ^b
	Residual	2.996	22	.136		
	Total	4.752	26			

The findings show a significant P-value of the model, that is, $P = 0.032$, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the model is statistically significant in forecasting the effect of family responsibilities on work

performance. The coefficients indicated in Table 6 describe the relationship between family responsibilities and work performance of university library staff.

Table 6
Model coefficients table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.823	.337		5.404	.000
FamilyResp_WP	.097	.102	.183	.952	.003

The regression weights for family responsibilities of staff was 0.097, which was significant as indicated by a P-value that is less than 0.05. This shows that for one unit increase in family responsibilities, there are

0.097 increases in the work performance. These findings agree with findings by Zheng et al. (2015) which indicated that family responsibilities affect the performance of employees of an organization.

4.0 Conclusion

The family responsibilities of staff are significantly predicted by work responsibilities. Library employees are able to perform well at their work place despite taking care of family responsibilities such as home care, family shopping, taking care of the elderly and school going children. Most library staff showed the ability of planning properly for family activities and work activities with proper time management and delegation of duties.

5.0 Recommendations

To promote a healthy work and family relationship, university libraries should develop policies on job sharing, flexible working hours, leave arrangements and career breaks, to enable library staff plan for work and family activities. Further, studies can be undertaken to establish whether factors other than work-family life balance affect work performance of university library staff.

References

- Adekanye, E., & Nduka, S. (2017). Work-Family Conflict, Job Satisfaction and Job Performance of Female Librarians in Nine Selected Federal Academic Libraries in South-West, Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology*, 10(2), 215–277. <https://jaistonline.org/10vol2/22.pdf>
- Amusa, O. I., Iyoro, A. O., & Olabisi, A. F. (2013). Work environments and job performance of librarians in the public universities in South west Nigeria. *International Journal of Library and Information Science*, 5(11), 457-461. <https://doi.org/10.5897/IJLIS2013.0404>
- Carvalho, V. S., Chambel, M. J., Neto, M., & Lopes, S. (2018). Does work-family conflict mediate the associations of job characteristics with employees' mental health among men and women?. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 966. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00966>
- Dale, P., Beard, J., & Holland, M. (2011). *University libraries and digital learning environments*. Routledge. <https://www.ashgate.com>
- Durodolu, O. O., & Mamudu, P. A. (2020). Work-life balance of librarians at the Kenneth Dike library in Nigeria. *Library Management*, 4(2), 79–90. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/LM-06-2019-0035>
- GoK. (2012). *Laws of Kenya: Employment Act*. National Council for Law Reporting. <https://www.kenyalaw.org>
- Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of management review*, 31(1), 72-92. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2006.19379625>
- Buonomo, I., Fiorilli, C., Romano, L., & Benevene, P. (2020). The Roles of Work-Life Conflict and Gender in the Relationship between Workplace Bullying and Personal Burnout. A

- Study on Italian School Principals. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(23), 8745. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17238745>
- Kenya Methodist University (2012). *Human Resource Manual/Policy*. KeMU. www.kemu.ac.ke
- Keoboulapheth, S., Sabil, S., & Wah, T. K. (2018). Mediating Effects of Coping Strategies on the Relationship between Organizational Support and Work-Family Conflict. *Journal of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development*, 3(1), 22-40. <https://doi.org/10.33736/jcshd.640.2017>
- Lewis, S., & Rajan-Rankin, S. (2013). Deconstructing “family supportive cultures”: A vision for the future. In *Expanding the boundaries of work-family research* (pp. 53-69). Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137006004_3
- Medina-Garrido, J.A., Biedma-Ferrer, J.M., & Ramos-Rodríguez, A.R. (2017). Relationship between work-family balance, employee well-being and job performance. *Academia-revista Latinoamericana De Administracion*, 30(1), 40-58. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ARLA-08-2015-0202>
- Muasya, G., & Nzengya, D. (2021). Work-Life Balance in Kenya: A Systematic Review of Literature. *Work-Life Interface*, 97-125. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-66648-4_4
- Mwangi, L., Boinett, C., Tumwet, E., & Bowen, D. (2017). Effects of Work-life balance on Employees’ Performance in Institutions of Higher Learning. A Case Study of Kabarak University. *Kabarak Journal of Research & Innovation*, 4(2), 60–80. <http://eserver.kabarak.ac.ke/ojs/>
- Mulanya, C., & Kagiri, A. (2018). Effect of work life balance on employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya. A case of commission on revenue allocation. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 5(4), 1448–1466. <https://strategicjournals.com/index.php/journal/article/view/966>
- Mayhew, R. (2019). *The Three Types of Methods Used to Measure Performance Small Business—Chron.com*. <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/three-types-methods-used-measure-performance-23612.html>
- McCloy, R. A., Campbell, J. P., & Cudeck, R. (1994). A confirmatory test of a model of performance determinants. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(4), 493–505. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.79.4.493>
- McKinney, J. & Abbott, M. (2013). *Understanding and Applying Research Design*. 10.1002/9781118647325.ch15. DOI: 10.1002/9781118647325.ch15

- Nkamnebe, E., Udem, O., & Nkamnebe, C. (2014). Evaluation of the use of university library resources and services by the students of Paul University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice e-Journal* <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1147>
- Nwokike, O., & Unegbu, V. (2019). Evaluating the Job Performance of Librarians in Universities in South-East, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice e-Journal* <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/2536>
- Okpe, I. J. (2012). Annual performance appraisal of practicing librarians: A study of academic institutions in Nigeria. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 2(5), 0–10. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280736470>
- Soomro, A. A., Breiteneker, R. J., & Shah, S. A. M. (2018). Relation of work-life balance, work-family conflict, and family-work conflict with the employee performance-moderating role of job satisfaction. *South Asian Journal of Business Studies*, 7(1), 129–146. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SAJBS-02-2017-0018>
- Tamunomiebi, M. D., & Oyibo, C. (2020). Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance: A Literature Review. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 5(2), 85–94. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2020.5.2.196>
- Townsend, T., & Bugg, K. (2020) Perceptions of Work–Life Balance for Urban Academic Librarians: An Exploratory Study, *Journal of Library Administration*, 60(5), 493–511, DOI: 10.1080/01930826.2020.1729624
- Tziner, A., Rabenu, E., Radomski, R., & Belkin, A. (2015). Work stress and turnover intentions among hospital physicians: The mediating role of burnout and work satisfaction. *Revista de Psicología Del Trabajo y de Las Organizaciones*, 31(3), 1576–5962. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rpto.2015.05.001>
- Walton, G. & Edwards, C. (2013). Flexible Staff: Implications for the Drive for Flexibility on the Changing Skills and Attributes in Higher Education Librarians Developing Hybrid Library Service. In B. Woolls & B. Sheldon (Ed.), *Delivering Lifelong Continuing Professional Education Across Space and Time: The Fourth World Conference on Continuing Professional Education for the Library and Information Science Professions* (pp. 123-131). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Saur. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110948585.123>
- Weerakkody, W., & Mendis, M. D. V. S. (2014). Relationship between work life balance and employee performance. *Kelaniya Journal of Human Resources Management*, 9(1), 95–117. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317661036>

Zheng, C., Molineux, J., Mirshekary, S., & Scarparo, S. (2015). Developing individual and organisational work-life balance strategies to improve employee health and

wellbeing. *Employee Relations*, 37(3), 354–379. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-10-2013-0142>