

Compressed Work Weeks and Organizational Performance: Evidence from County Government of Busia, Kenya

IRENE NAMUKI WAKHUNGU

Department of Business Administration and Management, Kibabii University, Kenya

Abstract- *Compressed work weeks have emerged as an alternative work arrangement with potential to enhance organizational performance while supporting employee work-life balance. However, their implementation and impact in African public sector organizations remain largely unexplored. This study examined the influence of compressed work weeks on organizational performance in the County Government of Busia, Kenya. A census survey design was employed, targeting 91 senior management employees, with 88 questionnaires returned (96.7% response rate). Data were collected using structured questionnaires with reliability confirmed at Cronbach's Alpha of 0.768. Simple linear regression analysis revealed that compressed work weeks had a statistically significant positive influence on organizational performance ($\beta=0.636$, $R^2=0.405$, $F(1,86)=58.537$, $p<0.001$). The findings indicate that compressed work weeks accounted for 40.5% of variations in organizational performance, representing the strongest predictor among work-life balance variables examined. The study concludes that compressed work weeks enhance organizational performance through improved employee morale, reduced absenteeism, enhanced productivity, and better work-life integration. County governments should operationalize compressed work week policies, develop clear implementation guidelines, and establish supportive organizational cultures to maximize benefits while addressing potential challenges.*

Keywords: *Compressed Work Weeks, Organizational Performance, Work-Life Balance, County Government*

I. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary organizations face increasing pressure to balance operational efficiency with employee well-being in an era characterized by demanding work environments and evolving workforce expectations (Deery et al., 2017). Compressed work weeks, defined as alternative work schedules allowing employees to complete standard work hours in fewer than five days, have emerged as innovative organizational strategies addressing these competing demands (Travis, 2010). Typically, compressed work

weeks involve employees working longer daily hours (e.g., four 10-hour days) to achieve a traditional 40-hour work week, thereby earning an additional day off (Poor, 2010).

Globally, compressed work week adoption has accelerated, particularly in developed countries. Research indicates that approximately 30% of organizations in the United States and Europe have implemented some form of compressed work schedules, recognizing their potential to enhance organizational effectiveness while supporting employee well-being (SHRM, 2019). Studies demonstrate mixed but generally positive outcomes, with effectiveness dependent on organizational context, implementation quality, and employee preferences (Baltes et al., 1999; Deery et al., 2017). Proponents argue that compressed work weeks offer benefits including reduced commuting frequency, extended personal time, improved employee morale, decreased absenteeism, and enhanced recruitment and retention (Crosby et al., 2008).

However, compressed work weeks present potential challenges including employee fatigue from extended daily hours, work-family conflict intensification during work days, coordination difficulties, and potential health impacts (Travis, 2010). In developing countries, particularly within Africa's public sector, compressed work week adoption remains limited despite potential benefits. Infrastructure constraints, rigid organizational cultures, regulatory barriers, and limited awareness have constrained implementation (Mordi et al., 2013).

The Kenyan context exemplifies these challenges. County governments, established following the 2010 constitutional devolution, operate within traditional bureaucratic frameworks emphasizing physical presence and standardized schedules (Lubale, 2012). The County Government of Busia faces work-related

challenges including high employee stress, absenteeism, staff turnover, and suboptimal performance (KNBS, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for flexible work arrangements, yet systematic implementation of alternatives like compressed work weeks remains limited (Ministry of Health Kenya, 2020).

Despite growing international research on compressed work weeks, empirical evidence examining their influence on organizational performance within Kenya's county governments remains virtually nonexistent. Existing studies have focused primarily on private sector organizations in developed countries or on employee-level outcomes rather than organizational performance metrics (Deery et al., 2017). This study addresses this gap by investigating the relationship between compressed work weeks and organizational performance in the County Government of Busia. The specific objective was to assess the influence of compressed work weeks on organizational performance, providing evidence-based insights for policy development and organizational practice in devolved government systems.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Spillover Theory and Conservation of Resources Theory. Spillover Theory (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000) posits that experiences in one life domain influence experiences in another domain. In compressed work weeks, positive spillover occurs when the additional day off enables employees to better manage personal responsibilities and recuperate from work demands, which translates into improved workplace attitudes and performance (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). The extended personal time facilitates recovery from work stress and generates positive states that spillover into improved effectiveness (Sonnetag & Fritz, 2015). Conversely, negative spillover may occur when extended daily work hours create excessive fatigue and work-family conflict intensification (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001).

Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989) posits that individuals strive to acquire, maintain, and protect valued resources including time, energy, and health. Compressed work weeks can serve as resource conservation strategies by reducing commuting frequency (conserving time and energy),

providing extended recovery periods (conserving psychological resources), and enabling better resource allocation across work and non-work domains (Halbesleben et al., 2014). When employees experience enhanced resource availability, they possess greater capacity to invest resources in work performance (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008).

2.2 Compressed Work Weeks and Organizational Performance

The relationship between compressed work weeks and organizational performance has received scholarly attention internationally. A meta-analysis by Baltes et al. (1999) examining 31 studies found that compressed work weeks were associated with improved job satisfaction, enhanced productivity, and reduced absenteeism. Organizational performance benefits include reduced absenteeism as employees schedule personal appointments during days off (Deery et al., 2017), enhanced productivity from reduced interruptions (Bird, 2010), improved employee morale from enhanced work-life balance (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001), enhanced recruitment and retention (Travis, 2010), and extended operational hours enabling improved customer service (Crosby et al., 2008).

However, benefits depend on implementation quality, organizational culture, and job characteristics (Baltes et al., 1999). Potential challenges include employee fatigue from extended daily hours (Bambra et al., 2008), work-family conflict intensification on work days (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001), and coordination challenges when employees have non-overlapping schedules (Travis, 2010).

2.3 Empirical Evidence

Deery et al. (2017) investigated compressed work hours and absenteeism in Canadian front-line service workers, finding that compressed work week satisfaction was significantly negatively associated with absenteeism. Women reported higher satisfaction than men. Bambra et al. (2008) conducted a systematic review finding mixed evidence—while some studies reported improved work-life balance, others identified increased fatigue. Pierce and Newstrom (1980) examined long-term effects over three years, finding sustained positive effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

In Africa, Mordi et al. (2013) found that compressed work schedules could enable workers to achieve organizational tasks while accommodating family commitments, though implementation barriers included organizational culture resistance. In Tanzania, Kazutaka (2010) found that schemes extending operating hours improved communication and teamwork. In Kenya, Dennis (2016) found positive relationships between compressed work weeks and nurse performance in public hospitals. However, no studies have specifically examined compressed work weeks within Kenya's county governments.

2.4 Knowledge Gaps and Conceptual Framework

Despite growing international research, gaps persist regarding public sector applications in developing African contexts. Most studies focus on private sector organizations in developed economies (Baltes et al., 1999). Virtually no research has examined compressed work weeks within Kenya's county governments (Lubale, 2012). Previous studies emphasized employee-level outcomes with insufficient attention to organizational-level performance metrics (Dennis, 2016).

This study's conceptual framework posits a direct positive relationship between compressed work weeks (independent variable) and organizational performance (dependent variable). Compressed work weeks are operationalized through institutional allowance, spending and saving habits, social life impacts, overtime working quality, employee preferences, and perceived organizational benefits. Organizational performance is measured via service delivery quality, customer satisfaction, and complaint frequency. The framework suggests that effective implementation positively influences performance through reduced absenteeism, enhanced productivity, improved morale, extended operational coverage, and resource conservation.

Hypothesis: H_0 : Compressed work weeks have no statistically significant influence on organizational performance in the County Government of Busia, Kenya.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Study Area

This study employed a descriptive survey research design appropriate for investigating characteristics of populations and establishing variable relationships

(Kothari, 2003). The research was conducted in Busia County, one of Kenya's 47 devolved governmental units in Western Kenya, spanning 1,695 square kilometers with a population of 743,946 people (KNBS, 2009).

3.2 Population, Sampling, and Data Collection

The target population comprised 91 senior management employees: County Chief of Staff (1), County Executive Members (15), Deputy Executive Members (15), Chief Officers (15), Deputy Chief Officers (15), County Directors (15), and Deputy County Directors (15). A census survey approach was used, targeting all 91 employees, eliminating sampling error (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

Data were collected using self-administered structured questionnaires. Section A captured demographics (gender, marital status, age, education, job category, work experience). Section B contained Likert-scale statements (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) measuring compressed work weeks (7 items) and organizational performance (3 items). Compressed work weeks items assessed institutional allowance, spending and saving habits, social life impacts, overtime working quality, employee preferences, five-day versus alternative week preferences, and perceived organizational benefits.

3.3 Validity, Reliability, and Data Analysis

Content validity was established through expert review by three Human Resource Management faculty members and pilot-testing with 10 employees. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The compressed work weeks construct achieved $\alpha=0.768$, exceeding the 0.70 threshold (Santos, 1999).

Following ethical approval, 88 of 91 questionnaires were returned (96.7% response rate). Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) summarized demographics and distributions. Inferential statistics employed simple linear regression: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$, where Y =Organizational Performance, X_1 =Compressed Work Weeks. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha=0.05$ level.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

Gender analysis revealed 77.3% male and 22.7% female respondents. Marital status showed 59.1% married, 27.3% single, and 13.6% divorced. Educational qualifications indicated 76.1% held

undergraduate degrees, 20.5% master's degrees, and 3.4% PhDs. Age distribution showed 62.5% aged 35-44 years, 23.9% aged 45-54 years, 5.7% aged 25-34 years, and 7.9% aged 55+ years. Work experience varied: 37.5% worked 1-5 years, 33.0% worked 6-10 years, 19.3% less than one year, and 10.2% worked 10+ years.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Compressed Work Weeks (N=88)

Statement	Mean	SD
Overtime working has improved quality of work	3.92	1.43
I am in favor of compressed work weeks as alternative arrangement	3.76	1.59
Compressed work has affected my social life	3.74	1.47
Compressed work has enabled me on spending and saving habits	3.65	1.64
Institution allows employees to work on compressed week basis	3.60	1.56
Compressed week is beneficial to the organization	3.42	1.55
I would prefer compressed work week of 5-day week	3.34	1.50

Mean scores ranged from 3.34 to 3.92, indicating moderate awareness and mixed perceptions. The highest mean (M=3.92) for "overtime working has improved quality of work" suggests recognition that extended work periods enhance work quality. The lowest mean (M=3.34) for "prefer compressed work week" suggests ambivalence about replacing traditional schedules.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Organizational Performance (N=88)

Statement	Mean	SD
Minimum customer complaints	3.68	1.20
Customer satisfaction commendable	3.58	1.15
Service delivery is good	3.19	1.29

Performance means ranged from 3.19 to 3.68, indicating moderate performance levels with room for improvement.

4.3 Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Table 3: Regression Analysis Results

Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F	Sig.
0.636	0.405	0.398	0.654	58.537	0.000

Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	0.420	0.432	-	0.971	0.334
Compressed Work Weeks	0.799	0.104	0.636	7.651	0.000

The correlation coefficient (R=0.636) indicates a strong positive relationship between compressed work weeks and organizational performance. The coefficient of determination (R²=0.405) demonstrates that compressed work weeks explain 40.5% of variance in organizational performance, representing the strongest predictor among all work-life balance variables examined. The regression model was highly statistically significant (F(1,86)=58.537, p<0.001).

The regression coefficient (B=0.799) indicates that for every one-unit increase in compressed work weeks, organizational performance increases by 0.799 units. The t-statistic (t=7.651, p<0.001) provides strong evidence for rejecting the null hypothesis. Therefore, compressed work weeks have a statistically significant positive influence on organizational performance in the County Government of Busia, Kenya.

Regression equation: $Y = 0.420 + 0.799X_1$

4.4 Discussion

These findings align with Spillover Theory and Conservation of Resources Theory. The positive relationship supports Spillover Theory's proposition that extended personal time from compressed work weeks enables better recovery and personal responsibility management, which spills over into improved workplace performance (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Conservation of Resources Theory explains how compressed work weeks conserve employee resources through reduced commuting and extended recovery periods, enabling sustained engagement and performance (Hobfoll, 1989).

These findings corroborate previous research. Baltes et al. (1999) found compressed work weeks associated with improved job satisfaction and productivity. Deery et al. (2017) found negative associations between compressed work week satisfaction and absenteeism. Dennis (2016) found positive relationships between compressed work weeks and nurse performance in Kenya.

The strong effect size ($R^2=0.405$) suggests that compressed work weeks may be particularly effective in public sector contexts where rigid schedules have historically limited work-life balance. The finding that compressed work weeks explain 40.5% of organizational performance variance—higher than telecommuting (20.9%) or flexible work schedules (30.1%)—suggests that compressed work weeks may offer particularly strong benefits. This could reflect that compressed work weeks provide clear, tangible benefits (full days off) while maintaining full-time commitment and compensation.

However, the moderate mean for "prefer compressed work week" (3.34) suggests concerns about extended daily hours, aligning with research identifying potential challenges including fatigue and work-family conflict intensification (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). Successful implementation requires addressing these concerns through supportive policies and monitoring systems.

CONCLUSION

Based on empirical findings, compressed work weeks have a statistically significant strong positive

influence on organizational performance in Busia County Government ($\beta=0.636$, $R^2=0.405$, $p<0.001$), representing the strongest work-life balance predictor examined and accounting for 40.5% of organizational performance variance. Despite this substantial predictive power, implementation gaps exist with moderate awareness and mixed perceptions, suggesting systematic frameworks remain underdeveloped. The primary benefits include enhanced work quality through extended uninterrupted work periods, improved work-life balance through additional days off, and resource conservation enabling sustained employee engagement, demonstrating compressed work weeks' viability and effectiveness in African public sector contexts where they can serve as powerful strategic tools for enhancing organizational effectiveness while supporting employee well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Policy Operationalization: Fully operationalize compressed work week policies with clear eligibility criteria, implementation guidelines, performance expectations, and accountability mechanisms.
2. Pilot Programs: Implement pilot compressed work week programs in selected departments to test effectiveness, identify challenges, and refine approaches before broader rollout.
3. Flexible Configurations: Offer multiple compressed work week configurations (4/10, 9/80, etc.) accommodating diverse employee preferences and job requirements.
4. Support Systems: Establish support systems addressing potential challenges including fatigue management strategies, work-life boundary guidance, health monitoring, and coordination protocols.

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