

Work-Life Balance and Employee Mental Health in Public Organizations: A Case Study of Ubungu Municipality, Tanzania

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored the effects of workplace flexibility on employee mental health at Ubungu Municipal Council in Dar es salaam. Adopting a single case study design, the research utilized semi-structured interviews for data collection. From a population of 194 employees, a sample of 35 respondents were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across departments and job grades. The collected data were analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings indicated that flexibility, even in limited forms such as adjusted reporting hours, served as a critical catalyst for work-life integration, meaningfully reducing employee anxiety and improving emotional regulation. Nonetheless, the execution was unreliable and heavily reliant on managerial discretion, creating perceptions of inequity and limiting the benefits for staff in rigid, front-line roles. The study concludes that institutionalizing flexible work arrangements via clear and equitable policies is important for fostering a mentally resilient workforce. The study recommended that the development of a formal flexibility policy and training for managers to consistently implement supportive practices, thereby safeguarding employee psychological well-being and enhancing overall organizational performance in the Tanzanian public sector.

Keywords: Work-life Balance, Employee mental health, Public Organizations.

1. Introduction

Work-life balance (WLB) has moved from a narrow individual concern to an organizational necessity, acknowledged for its thoughtful effect on employee well-being, productivity, and mental health (Krishnan, Singh & Baba, 2024). In an era of increased workloads and information technologies that blur professional and personal boundaries, stress, burnout, and psychological distress have become increasingly prevalent (Muhammad, 2023). Globally, the imperative for WLB is clear, with the World Health Organization reporting that a significant majority of employees consider it crucial for their mental well-being, while companies that promote flexible arrangements see measurable improvements in satisfaction and reductions in burnout rates (Marianggodo & Lahindah, 2025; Begum, 2025).

At a global landscape of WLB reveals blatant differences. For examples in developed economies, challenges persist despite established policies. For instance, long work hours and high demands in the US remain predictors of mental health issues, while the UK continues to lose millions of working days annually to stress-related absenteeism (Schieman et al., 2018; HSE, 2022). Equally, the European Union

and Nordic countries are often cited as leaders, proactively implementing directives that foster worker autonomy, nevertheless they too face new challenges from remote work and digital presenteeism (Eurofound, 2021; Kelliher & Anderson, 2019). In contrast, developing regions often grapple with more systemic issues, such as the intense "996" rather than "999" work culture in China, India and Pakistan, economic insecurity and weak institutional governance characterizing WLB (Zhang et al., 2020; Bharat, 2018; Aman-Ullah et al., 2024).

Within Sub-Saharan Africa, the context is particularly critical. The region is marked by excessive work demands coupled with weak mental health infrastructure, as seen in Nigeria, and a routine breach of legal protections for low-wage workers in South Africa (Adebayo & Ogunsina, 2021; Adriansyah & Muhliansyah, 2022). While studies from Ghana and Zambia affirm the positive relationship between WLB, psychological well-being, and employee performance, the implementation of supportive policies remains a significant challenge (Atan & Obeng, 2024; Hamanzangwa & Mundende, 2025). Neighboring East African nations, including Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, similarly report that Weberian model that prioritizes duty over well-being create environments ripe for stress and burnout among public servants (Agunda et al., 2024; Atukunda & Nyamboga, 2024; Obina et al., 2024).

In Tanzania, the rationality of WLB is formally acknowledged within the national policy and legal framework. The constitution, the public service Act (2002) and the Employment and Labour Relations Act (2004) stipulate the right to decent working conditions and frame WLB as a shared responsibility between the government, employers, and employees (URT, 2023). This establishes a solid legal foundation for ensuring that work respects health, family life, and personal development. Furthermore, Tanzania recognizes that a harmonious work-life balance is not merely a personal benefit but a strategic national asset contributing to social stability and economic growth (Aman-Ullah et al., 2024; Natujwa, 2024).

However, an important gap exists between the established legal framework and empirical evidence on its impact within specific Tanzanian public institutions. This is particularly true for many local governments like Ubungu Municipal council, which faces high operational pressures and public demand (Nyamwero & Kadigi, 2024). While the UMC has implemented various initiatives, such as health insurance, establishing strong workers' unions and staff forums, to address employee well-being, studies on the direct impact of these measures on work-life balance and mental health outcomes remain elusive phenomena (Omari, 2024; NSSF, 2024). Consequently, regardless of the establishing legal frameworks, its practical contribution to employee mental health in public institutions is not fully understood (International Labour Organization, 2020).

While progress in WLB has been documented in other national contexts, there is a pronounced lack of context-specific empirical evidence concerning its effect on employee mental health in Tanzania (Were & Mboya, 2024). The problem is that operational pressures at the UMC potentially foster a culture of extended hours and elevated workloads, which erodes work-life balance and contributes to anxiety, burnout, and depression, ultimately impairing both individual well-being and organizational efficacy. Existing legal provisions, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act (2005), provide a general framework but lack specific details for managing psychological well-being in high-stress public sector environments like the UMC.

To bridge this knowledge gap, this paper focuses on the Ubungu Municipal Council (UMC) as a case study. The specific objectives examined are: the influence of work flexibility on employees' mental health, the influence of self-care on employees' mental health at UMC and the effect of time management on employees' mental health at UMC. By examining this, the paper aims to provide much-needed empirical insights that can inform both organizational policy within the UMC and broader public sector human resource practices in Tanzania, changing from theoretical legal process to tangible employee well-being.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

Conflict theory states that society is in a constant struggle for limited resources, power and status. Originated from Karl Marx, the theory highlights how dominant groups use wealth and institutions to maintain control over subordinate groups, driving social change through systematic conflict. As a theoretical perspective, conflict theory emerged as a critical alternative to structural-functionalism, which analyzed society through a lens of consensus and integrated understanding (Prayogi, 2023). When applied to work-life balance, it moves beyond individual role strain to analyze the broader power dynamics and structural inequalities within the workplace. The theory highlight how systemic power imbalances between employers and employees can manifest in rigid organizational structures that exploit labor and restrict personal autonomy.

Conflict Theory is highly relevant to this study as it provides a framework for analyzing work-life balance and mental health within public organizations like UMC. The theory helps to describe how power imbalances can form unpredictable schedules and poor time management policies, excessively burdening to employees and worsening their mental health as they struggle to meet dilemma of accountability. Ultimately without equitable work-life policies, systemic inequalities are reinforced; in opposition, advocating for better flexibility and self-care support that can reduce this inherent conflict, empower employees, and improve overall well-being.

Nevertheless, the theory held some critics as Some scholars such (Ferrare & Phillippo, 2023, Ndiyun, 2023 and Thiel & Kuhne, 2025), revealed oversimplifies complex social dynamics by reducing them primarily to class struggle and power disparities, as a results neglect the significant roles of cooperation, consensus, and shared values in society. Basing on this weakness the study incorporates social exchange theory. The notion of social exchange theory emerged from the junction of psychology, sociology, and economics to study human behaviour and exchange processes in an organisational environment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Blau's thesis, proposed in 1964, suggests that interactions between diverse parties are determined by give-and-take or cost-benefit connections. When establishing ties, individuals or organizations frequently anticipate mutual advantages. In relation to this study, organisations (UMC) anticipate that by offering work-life balance amenities, their employees would experience increased satisfaction and have a longer tenure, provided with compensation, like pay and benefits, as a reciprocal arrangement for their contributions to the organisation, to large extent will facilitate mental health to employees.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Influence of workplace Flexibility on Employees' Mental Health

Literature across the globe establishes a strong, positive relationship between workplace flexibility and employee mental health. Wang et al (2024) in their n this cross-sectional study of 18 144 US adults who were employed, they found that greater job flexibility was significantly associated with reduced odds of experiencing serious psychological distress and experiencing anxiety. Greater job security was significantly associated with reduced chances of experiencing serious psychological distress and experiencing anxiety. The implication of this study is that implementing workplace changes and policies that increase job flexibility and security may reduce work-related stress and facilitate improved employee mental health.

Chaudhuri et al. (2024), conducted a study involved 311 HR personnel and managers, the findings revealed that employee flexibility is a critical factor for organizational resilience during crises. Their findings highlight that flexibility and innovativeness are vital for survival during turbulent periods, providing valuable insights for leadership and human resource management that are applicable to the context of the UMC in Tanzania.

Further study conducted by Paschina (2023), explored this dynamic among working students in France, identifying trust in management as a key driver of positive outcomes. Their quantitative study revealed that work flexibility acts as a mediating factor, connecting high levels of trust to improved productivity and quality of results. This suggests that organizations cultivating a culture based on trust and flexibility are more likely to achieve sustainable growth, a consideration relevant for Tanzanian public institutions.

The mediating role of psychological well-being is further highlighted by Hashmi et al. (2023), in their correlational study, they found that: “happiness serves as a mediator between flexible work arrangements and positive employee outcomes”. Their work demonstrated that the ability to balance personal and professional life through flexible practices significantly boosts staff satisfaction, the human resource manager can utilize these findings to support employee mental health in environments like the UMC.

Ghonim et al. (2025) studied 300 employees in the telecom sector, through regression analysis, they identified workload flexibility as the strongest predictor for mental health followed by flexibility in workplace and working hours, the study emphasizing the importance of both temporal and spatial adjustments to meet worker needs, even within operational constraints. Generally, the findings revealed that, flexibility had a substantial positive impact on mental health by enhancing job engagement.

Shiri et al (2022) established that work life balance enabling employees to determine their own working patterns more freely and boost their mental well-being and protect against mental health decline, they added that “given the widespread use of flexible work arrangements in various sectors of employment, the potential role of flexible working arrangements in the prevention and management of mental health problems is noteworthy due to the steep rise in mental health problems in various countries”. In principles the findings revealed that, in the presence of a positive association between flexible working arrangements and mental health logically can produce considerable impacts in current societies where there are more options to arrange the time and place of work.

Hernández et al. (2024) provided a complex perspective from Mexico, noting that the benefits of flexibility are not uniform across all demographics. Their study of industrial SMEs found that the relationship between flexibility and work-life balance was more pronounced for female employees than their counterpart male. This highlights the importance of context-specific and potentially gender-sensitive approaches when designing flexible work policies, a crucial consideration for the UMC in developing equitable and effective labour agreements.

Systematic study of D'Oliveira & Anagnostopoulos (2021) reviews published in outlets indicate that work life balance schedules control lowers the risk of depressive symptoms, fatigue, and anxiety. Flexibility improves the interface between personal and professional roles, dropping family-to-work conflict which acts as a primary mediator for stress reduction.

The emergency of worldwide Covid-19, disease significantly enlarged working from home which is a part of flexible working arrangements, to a such extent linked to better work balance and private life and ultimately lead to longer work careers. In opposing, other studies such as (Riemann& Abendroth, 2023 and Guoqiang & Bhaumik,2024) have reported that flexible working arrangements may increase work private life conflict and have no beneficial effects on health.

The study by Moen et al (2011) examined the effects of an organizational initiative (a natural experiment) on mental health. The experiment aimed to increase flexible working arrangements by allowing employees to be able to change their schedules or work location. The findings revealed the natural experiment did not directly lead to changes in emotional exhaustion or psychological distress at the follow-up but increased schedule control and decreased negative work home spill over, which were both associated with lower emotional exhaustion and psychological distress but no statistically significant difference in the associations between men and women.

Aprillian et al (2024), examine the effect of work-life balance on employee mental health, the role of resilience mediation and the role of moderating organizational support in generation Z employees. The findings revealed Work Life Balance has a direct effect on mental health, that is the higher the Work Life Balance, the better the mental health of employees. And vice versa, if the Work-Life Balance is low, then the employee's mental health will also be lower. In this study, relicensing regulations do not mediate the influence of work-life balance on the mental health of the employee and organizational support regulations do not moderate the influence of the work-life balance on the mental health of the employees.

The study conducted by AKU'S (2025) revealed alarming rates of mental health conditions among Tanzania's frontline health worker as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) emerged as the most prevalent issue, affecting one in three community health workers and one in four nurses, midwives, and doctors. The findings revealed depression and anxiety posed significant challenges, with 14% of community health workers and 11% of doctors experiencing depression. Anxiety levels were found to be slightly lower, with 8% of community health workers, 7% of doctors, and 4% of nurses and midwives reporting symptoms. The study identified stigma, stress, and years of experience as key predictors of PTSD, with less experienced health workers being particularly vulnerable. The study findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive mental health support for Tanzania's frontline health workers, ensuring their well-being as they continue to provide essential services to communities across the country.

Vhutali (2025) examines the complex relationship between work-life balance (WLB), mental health well-being, and women's performance in the workplace. Drawing on the Spill over Theory, his study examines how experiences in personal and professional domains influence each other, particularly for women navigating dual roles. Through a systematic review of existing literature, the research identifies that effective WLB and robust mental health support significantly enhance women's productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. On the contrary, poor integration of work and personal life, coupled with inadequate mental health resources, contributes to stress, burnout, and diminished performance. The findings underscore the importance of supportive workplace environments, flexible policies, and mental health initiatives in fostering women's well-being and optimizing their contributions at work. The study concludes with strategic recommendations for organizations to implement inclusive practices that promote both balance and psychological resilience among female employees

Generally empirical reviews show that employee-oriented work flexibility such as control over work hours, self-scheduling, and hybrid locations has modest, beneficial effects on mental health, including reduced psychological distress, lower burnout, and less emotional exhaustion. However, findings across observational studies remain different depending on whether flexibility is driven by employee choice or employer demands.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach because the study intends to explore the "why" and "how" of human behaviour, opinions, and experiences in order to gain an in-depth, contextual understanding of the influence of work-life balance on employee mental health. A qualitative approach facilitates the exploration of complex phenomena through the detailed experiences and perspectives of participants themselves (Saunders et al., 2023). The research employed a case study design in order to have in-depth, detailed examination of Ubungo Municipal employees in their real- working life context hence capture the current state of their work-life balance and its psychological impacts within the organization (Denzin et al., 2024).

The research was conducted at Ubungo Municipal Council (UMC) in Dar es salaam region. The area was selected as a critical case due to the fact that, it is among of government institution, where employees are subject to intense workloads and performance pressures. Empirical evidence suggests that such demanding environment make stress and mental health unavoidable, making it an ideal context for this investigation.

The study population consisted of all 194 core employees of Ubungo Municipal Council (UMC). From this population, a sample 30 respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. The rationale for choosing is due to the fact that, it ensured a balanced representation of staff across different departments and job grades, thereby capturing a diverse range of experiences and minimizing selection bias.

Primary data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. This method was chosen because it allows participants easily to elaborate on their life experiences, perceptions, and feelings regarding workplace flexibility, self-care practices, and their mental well-being. The interviews were designed to be conversational, enabling the researcher to probe deeper into significant themes as they emerged during the discussions.

The data collected from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved a systematic process of transcribing the interviews precise, repeatedly reading the transcripts to ensure familiarity, and generating initial codes. These codes were then collated into potential themes, which were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the dataset.

4. Findings

4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

This section presents the demographic profile of the 30 respondents who participated in the study on the influence of work–life balance on employee mental health at the Ubungo Municipal Council (UMC). The demographic characteristics analyzed include gender, age, education level, marital status, and monthly income. Understanding these characteristics provides critical context for interpreting subsequent findings, as factors such as gender roles, age-related responsibilities, and socioeconomic conditions can significantly shape employees’ experiences of work–life balance and mental well-being.

4.2. Qualitative Findings

This section presents the qualitative results derived from semi-structured interviews conducted among employees of the Ubungo Municipal Council (UMC). The Ubungo Municipal Council serves as one of the busiest government institution operational centres, serving civilians from different wards. Its high workload and strict performance expectations make it an appropriate setting for scrutinizing how work life balance affect employee mental health.

Interviews were guided by the study’s objectives and explored employees’ lived experiences with workplace policies, job demands, and coping strategies. The transcripts were transcribed precise, coded inductively, and subjected to thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke’s (2019) framework. Four prevailing themes and several sub-themes emerged, reflecting repetitive patterns of meaning across participants’ explanations. The themes are presented in the order of their prominence and logical relationship to the research objectives.

4.2.1 Flexibility as a Catalyst for Work–Life Integration

Participants consistently identified flexibility as an emerging yet unevenly implemented feature of work at UMC. While some departments had adopted informal arrangements—such as adjusted reporting times or limited remote work—these were largely contingent on managerial discretion rather than institutional policy. Employees repeatedly noted that even small allowances for flexibility produced tangible psychological relief. One of respondent had this to say: “My supervisor allows me to come in an hour late once a week to drop my child at school. That small adjustment has reduced my anxiety and helps me start my day calmly,”. Such a statement highlight how modest schedule autonomy contributes to improved emotional regulation and reduced morning stress. However, employees in front-line counters (receptionists) described rigid shift systems tied to customer-service metrics, leaving little room for flexibility. They reported heightened mental fatigue and feelings of pressure to meet daily quotas.

Predominantly such narratives reveal flexibility as a crucial yet selectively distributed resource. Its partial implementation created perceptions of inequality across units, where administrative and supervisory staff enjoyed more adaptive schedules than clerical or counter employees. The findings therefore portray

flexibility not merely as a structural convenience but as a determinant of work life integration, central to employees' ability to harmonise professional and personal obligations.

4.2.2 Psychological and Emotional Benefits of Flexibility

The second theme captures the emotional and cognitive gains derived from flexible work arrangements. Interviewees consistently linked schedule autonomy to improved focus, mental clarity, and overall satisfaction. They labelled flexibility as a buffer that helps restore psychological balance, particularly after periods of intense work pressure. One of the senior official from the Municipality had this to say: "During Covid 19 pandemic we have the option to work from home for a few days, I felt more refreshed and mentally stable because I was able rest properly,". The existing literature such as (Huffington, 2014, Boushey, 2016 and Greer & Umney, 2022) revealed the ability to plan personal time allowed employees to decompress, attend to family responsibilities, and return to work with renewed concentration. On the other hand, the absence of flexibility, was associated with exhaustion, anxiety, and irritability.

The data suggest that flexibility operates as a protective mechanism within the high-pressure environment of Ilala Claims Office. Employees who could exercise limited control over their schedules exhibited fewer signs of emotional burnout and were more likely to maintain consistent productivity. Importantly, respondents also highlighted that flexibility did not reduce accountability; rather, it enhanced it by enabling workers to meet targets without sacrificing mental well-being.

4.2.3 Organizational Support Systems and Mental-Health Resources

This theme centres on institutional mechanisms for promoting mental health. Interviewees agreed that UMC has made admirable efforts to support employee well-being, including comprehensive medical insurance that covers psychological counselling, staff welfare associations, and periodic wellness seminars. Nonetheless, they noted that these initiatives are underutilized and poorly integrated into everyday operations. One of participant had this to say: "We have insurance that covers counselling, but no one tells you how to access it. It feels like the information just stays in HR," such comments reveal a communication gap between policy provision and employee awareness. Numerous interviewees perceived the organization's wellness initiatives as reactive, often introduced after incidents of absenteeism or stress-related illness, rather than as proactive prevention strategies.

Participants advocated for a more organized method such as continuous sensitization workshops, manager training in stress management, and regular dissemination of wellness information. They further suggested aligning wellness efforts with workload planning, ensuring that mental-health support becomes a visible, routine aspect of organisational culture. Overall, while resources exist, their fragmented implementation limits their impact, compelling employees to rely on personal coping mechanisms instead of institutional assistance.

4.2.4 Self-Care Practices as a Coping Mechanism in a High-Stress Environment

Nearly all respondents described individual self-care strategies as their principal defense against occupational stress. Common practices included walking, gym sessions, meditation, prayer, spending time with family, and socializing with colleagues. The prominent employee on the department of community development had this to say: "After work, I take a long walk around the neighbourhood just to decompress from the day. It helps me leave work at work,"

These activities functioned as personal interventions that restored psychological equilibrium after demanding workdays. However, employees also cited several barriers to consistent self-care: high workloads, tight deadlines, insufficient staffing, and a pervasive culture of presenteeism that equated rest with low commitment. Many respondents expressed guilt or anxiety when requesting time off, fearing negative performance evaluations.

Although UMC promotes physical health through National health insurance fund (NHIF), its medical insurance and safety campaigns, participants felt that mental wellness was rarely discussed or openly encouraged. They proposed formalising self-care initiatives such as on-site relaxation spaces, wellness days, and structured leave policies to normalize mental-health maintenance.

In essence, self-care among Ubungu Municipal Council employees is largely self-directed and informal, yet it remains a vital survival mechanism. Its prevalence underscores employees' resilience but also exposes institutional gaps where formal mental-health support should exist.

4.3 Discussion

This study's findings demonstrate that workplace flexibility significantly influences the mental health of employees at Ubungu Municipal Council (UMC) in Tanzania. The analysis revealed that even minimal flexibility, such as adjustable reporting hours, substantially reduces stress, enhances focus, and fosters a greater sense of personal control. Employees reported that such arrangements improved their emotional stability and daily productivity. Conversely, the absence of flexible structures in high-intensity units like benefit-processing was directly associated with increased fatigue, anxiety, and burnout, affirming that flexibility is a critical positive factor for psychological well-being at UMC.

These findings relate strongly with international research, underscoring the universal importance of flexibility. The work of Chaudhuri et al. (2024), which identified employee flexibility as a key factor for organizational survival during crises, is reflected in the Tanzanian context, where flexibility acts as a vital resilience factor for employees facing demanding workloads. This positions flexibility not as a mere convenience but as a strategic component for organizational and individual endurance in challenging environments.

The relationship between flexibility and managerial trust, highlighted in previous studies, was also evident. Paschina (2023) found that trust mediates the connection between flexibility and job satisfaction, an insight reverberated by UMC employees. Participants perceived flexible arrangements as a sign of trust from their supervisors, which in turn fostered greater motivation and mental calmness. This suggests that flexibility and trust function as mutually reinforcing elements that collectively enhance employee well-being.

Further validation comes from research on the psychological mechanisms linking flexibility to positive outcomes. The study aligns with Hashmi et al. (2023), who established that happiness mediates the relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee outcomes. UMC staff similarly reported that schedule autonomy generated feelings of happiness and stability, boosting overall morale. This is consistent with Ghonim et al. (2025), whose research in Egypt showed a strong positive correlation between flexibility and job engagement, confirming its role as a driver of both psychological and professional investment.

A notable cross-national parallel was observed regarding gender dynamics. Hernández et al. (2024) found that flexible arrangements disproportionately benefited women in Mexico, a finding reinforced by this study's context, where a majority of the workforce is female. Women at UMC particularly valued flexibility for managing dual domestic and professional roles, indicating that its benefits are especially pronounced for employees balancing multiple responsibilities in resource-constrained settings.

However, an unexpected and critical finding was the inequitable application of flexibility across departments. A disparity emerged wherein administrative staff enjoyed more schedule autonomy than front-line employees, who were subject to rigid, metric-driven attendance policies. This selective implementation created perceptions of inequality and resentment, demonstrating that poorly executed flexibility policies can inadvertently generate psychological strain, undermining their intended benefits.

The study is not without limitations. Its focus on a single local government, while informative, may not capture the full diversity of experiences across the all local governments in Tanzania. The case study design findings apply specifically to the studied group or individual and limit the extrapolated to a wider population. Future research should employ longitudinal approach to better understand the long-term impacts and causal pathways of flexibility on mental health.

Promising avenues for future inquiry include comparative studies between public and private sectors in Tanzania and the incorporation of psychometric tools to quantify mental health benefits. Research could also explore the role of digital flexibility and remote work technologies in the post-pandemic era, as well as incorporate managerial perspectives to better understand the barriers to implementation. Such mixed-method, longitudinal research would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how sustained flexible policies can improve staff retention and psychological resilience.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study determines that flexibility significantly enhances employee mental health by reducing psychological strain and promoting job satisfaction, with even minimal schedule autonomy yielding substantial benefits such as lower stress levels and improved concentration, while rigid structures correlate with fatigue and burnout; however, the inconsistent application of flexible arrangements across departments created perceived inequities that undermined these positive effects, underscoring that flexibility serves as both a structural and psychological resource that fosters resilience only when implemented equitably, thereby necessitating the formal institutionalization of flexible work practices within UMC's human resource policies rather than relying on discretionary managerial implementation.

5.2 Recommendations

The recommendations presented here derive directly from the study. This research provides crucial empirical evidence from Tanzania's public sector, establishing flexibility, self-care, and time management as vital resources for employee mental health. It validates and extends psychological theories like Conservation of Resources within an African bureaucratic setting. The findings demand concrete policy reforms, including a formal Employee Wellness Policy and mandatory mental health training for supervisors. The study also outlines essential directions for future research, such as longitudinal and

gender-disaggregated analyses. Ultimately, these combined efforts in knowledge, policy, and further inquiry are necessary to build psychologically resilient workplaces.

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