

# **Journal of Management Info**

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Research Article

# Working conditions and employee's productivity: Evidence from a health centre in Ghana

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Submitted: 25 November 2020

Revised: 28 April 2021

Accepted: 12 May 2021

#### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to identify the types of working conditions at the Beposo Health Centre, the nature of their working conditions and the effects of hygiene factors on employees' productivity. Data were drawn from 33 employees of the Health Centre using a questionnaire and analyzed using Predictive Analytical Software to determine the frequency and mean. The study found that employees at the health centre were provided with job security, work-life balance, occupational health and safety and workload. It also ascertained that the physical work environment was not comfortable for the employees although they were provided a considerable amount of workload and high job security. Also, it was revealed that noisy environment, stress and absence of work-life balance were some hygiene factors that affected employees' productivity. This study has implications for the development of procedures and measures to improve employees working conditions and productivity in the developing country context.

**Keywords:** Employee Productivity; Hygiene Factors; Working Conditions

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Working conditions are significant to employee productivity. Eluka et al. (2013) highlighted that in this competitive environment, the working conditions of employees are essential in achieving customer satisfaction and organizational performance. The term employee refers to an individual who takes on a part-time or full-time job with clearly spelled out terms of engagement and has recognized rights and duties. The International Labor Organization has the mandate to determine labour standards, develop policies and programs to promote decent work for all people (Fields, 2003). To guarantee safe and healthy working conditions for employees, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration was founded to set and enforce standards and provide training, outreach, education and assistance. Workers have the rights to work under satisfactory, safe and healthy conditions, receive equal pay for equal work done, have rest and leisure and reasonable limitations to working hours and period of working days as well as numeration for public holidays (Ghana Labour Act 651, 2003). Increased productivity of employees is assumed to be the result of better workplace conditions.

Ali et al. (2013) highlight working conditions as the collaboration of employees and their organizational climate which includes psychological as well as physical working conditions.



Working conditions are also defined by Spacey (2018) as the requirements, setting and terms of a job that impact the satisfaction of employees. Ali et al. (2013) emphasize that there is a tendency for employees to be absent, have stress-related ailments and produce on a lower scale when they have a negative perception of their working conditions. According to Kreisler & Semali (1997) and also referred by Ali et al (2013), employees tend to produce on a greater scale when provided with a friendly, safe and conducive environment. Alam (2012) stated that for workers to be highly motivated, feel secured and relaxed, they need good working conditions. On the contrary, poor working conditions bring out dread of awful wellbeing in employees. Productivity, as defined by Rolloos (1997) and cited by Ali et al. (2013), is that which people can produce with the least effort. It relates to the measure of the proficiency of an individual, machine, industrial facility or system in changing inputs into valuable outputs. Employee productivity is therefore an evaluation of the competence of a worker or group of workers. Thus, the output of an employee over a certain period determines the productivity of the individual.

In Africa, several studies have been conducted to ascertain the effects working conditions have on employee productivity. In the study on the working conditions and employee productivity in manufacturing companies in Sub-Saharan Africa, Ali et al. (2013) found out that there is a positive correlation between working conditions and employee productivity. Raziq & Maulabakhsh (2015) also said the productivity of employees in an organization is influenced by the working conditions in that organization. The organization putting in place good working conditions is necessary for the organization to increase its employee productivity. The productivity of every organization is a reflection of its employees and as such every organization must seek to provide for its employees good working conditions to increase productivity. To gain a competitive edge, organizations must be mindful of the impact working conditions have on employee productivity in order to capitalize on them. However, many organizations fail to provide their employees with better working conditions. In Ghana, a report by joyonline.com states that as of 2015 workers in the health sector are giving warnings to the government that the quality of health care will be compromised if the government does not complete negotiations of their conditions of service. The workers claim they do not receive any additional benefit aside that from their salary and this has left them demoralized. The then General Secretary of Ghana Registered Nurses Association, Kwaku Asante Krobea added that the situation is a disincentive to the employees. Also, the then General Secretary claimed some key employees at the health sector are supposed to receive accommodation, fuel and car maintenance but as of now are receiving nothing. He stated that one can appreciate the fact that the health worker will not be motivated given the current economic situation. This has left the workers in a state of tension and frustration and is still expected to give off their best. According to Kaledzi (2017), a report by one of Ghana's leading research institutions points out that a number of Ghanaians do not consider the working conditions of the workplace when accepting job offers. Kaledzi (2017) further highlighted that a report by the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research showed that in Ghana, due to high unemployment rates, employees are only interested in securing a job placement.



Kaledzi (2017) further revealed that a report on Ghana's social development outlook 2016 showed that over the past five years, employees in the formal sector have experienced poor working conditions. Employers do not pay the employees their taxes and due pension contributions and most of these employees do not have written contracts. In response to this, the study is intended to investigate how working conditions affect employee productivity. Specifically, the study seeks:

- 1. To identify the types of working conditions in Beposo Health Centre.
- 2. To examine the nature of working conditions on employee productivity in Beposo Health Centre.
- 3. To examine the effects of direct and indirect hygiene factors on employee productivity in Beposo Health Centre.

This facility is in the Sekyere Central District of Ghana serving the people of Beposo and its environs. The facility has been attending to over 2000 people over the past years. However, there has not been much investigation on the subject matter for academic and policy purposes. This makes it relevant to use this facility as a focus of this study.

# 1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION

- 1. What are the types of working conditions?
- 2. What is the nature of working conditions in Beposo Health Centre?
- 3. What are the effects of direct and indirect hygiene factors on employee productivity?

#### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Working Conditions and Employee Productivity

According to Spacey (2018), common types of working conditions include remuneration, profit sharing, employee benefits, workload, work schedule, occupational stress, work-life balance, hygiene factors, responsibility and accountability, commuting and travel, autonomy, organisational culture, performance management, among others. Ali et al. (2013) and Aseanty (2016) have established in the studies that working conditions and employee performance have a strong, positive and significant relationship. Nduku (2015) also found that working conditions have positive effects on employee performance.

According to Armstrong (2006), both management and employees prioritize the amount and method of remuneration. Employees can be motivated to be more productive by remuneration but that necessarily should not be compensation-based (Aliyu et al., 2018). One of the major challenges affecting the performance of organizations in Africa is employees' remuneration. In 2013, there were many labor agitations and strikes in Ghana because the government had a lot of compensation and remuneration issues with public sector workers (Asamoah et al., 2013). According to Hedwiga (2011), most organizations have been found to inadequately compensate workers and this has had an adverse effect on productivity resulting in the decline of the performance of organisations especially in the delivery of public services. Kuvaas (2006) state that the absence of viable compensation frameworks leads to low basic pay and wages which prompts low employee productivity,



expanded staff turnover rates and declined workers confidence which adversely influences the general performance of numerous public sector organizations. Imran et al. (2015) also add when employees are incentivized with good salaries, they are motivated to perform hence productivity ultimately increases. Tetteh et al. (2015) further argue that the effect of incentives on employees' job performance becomes more significant and potent when employees are satisfied with the various forms of incentive packages given to them in the organisation. According to Stuart (2011), an organization is likely to reduce the cost of recruitment when the remuneration system is attractive. This is because the retention rate will be high, employee relations will be enhanced, employees will be committed to their work and their productivity will be maximized and the overall effect is that the organization will achieve its goals.

According to Garrison and Bly (1997), as cited by Dwamena (2012), organizations are now mindful of the issues associated with stress. The illnesses caused by stress are costly and they can cause the employee to be weak. Medical compensation, absenteeism and turnover increase when occupational stress is not handled properly which in turn leads to productivity decrease. According to Dwamena (2012) that the effects of occupational stress on productivity are represented by the inverted U-type curve. It depicts that as stress increases, so does the performance. Nevertheless, if stress continues to increase beyond an optimal point, productivity will start to decline. Khuong & Yen (2016) emphasise that stress from work has a negative influence on employee job performance. This demonstrates that occupational stress is essential to enhance productivity but once it reaches a level of acute discomfort, it is harmful and counterproductive. Occupational stress can have adverse effects on employees' wellbeing by causing dysfunction in multiple areas hence causing productivity to decrease example, nurses' health-related quality of life is negatively affected by occupational stress (Sarafis et al., 2016). Goswami (2015) elaborates that fear, anger and anxiety among employees which is the subjective effect occupational stress results in poor mental and psychological health.

Casper et al. (2011) posit that as individuals continue to pursue the quality of life that they need, they experience more conflict between work and their personal lives. Mwangi et al. (2016) emphasise that work-life balance is an important aspect of work and family which should be contained to improve employees' performance. Adnan (2019) adds that employee performance is positively and significantly affected by work-life balance and happiness. Wang & Walumbwa (2007) notes that work-life balance at the workplace has become a vital issue because it leads to low turnover, work engagement and increased productivity. According to Kim (2012), several researchers have emphasized the fact that one of the most critical managerial strategies for ensuring employee performance and organizational performance is managing work-life balance. Existing literature suggests that work-life balance generally has a positive impact on individual and organizational productivity (Voydanoff, 2014). Also, organizations that gave more widespread packages of work-life balance practices had higher ratings on a measure of organizational performance.

Job security refers to the likelihood or perceived likelihood that employees will not be terminated (Burchell, 2014). A survey conducted by KPMG as cited by Lucky et al. (2013) on job security shows that 75% of employees prioritize job security when searching for jobs.



According to Lucky et al. (2013), quoted by James (2012) job security has a substantial effect on the overall performance of the team and the performance of the organization. Imran, Majeed, & Ayub (2015) assert that lack of job security can be a cause of decrease in productivity. James (2012) also notes that the productivity of the employees is affected when there is low job security since the employees lose faith in the organization. He highlights further that when an employee enjoys more job security, the individual is more likely to perform his task effectively which in turn will reflect the overall productivity of the organization.

Aggarwal (2014) argues that organizations should provide employees with a safe, secure and healthful environment. Iheanacho Maryjoan & Tom (2016) posited that the health and safety of employees are important in the achievement of organizational goals. The health and safety policies focus on protecting employees and other people affected by an organization's activities, products and services against hazards. Considering the effect of health and safety on employees' productivity, the Australian National Commission for health and safety (2002) as quoted by Iheanacho Maryjoan & Tom (2016) opines that employee's absenteeism and turnover are reduced when employees enjoy a safe working environment through the use of effective occupational health and management systems. This has a direct positive effect on productivity. Lim et. al., (2012) also indicates that employees are able to work effectively and efficiently resulting in better performance when they understand the health and safety rules and procedures of their work and the tools used for working. Hudson (2010) also adds that health and safety practices promotion has a direct impact on employees' productivity. That is good occupational health and safety practices would generate positive organizational culture and this will enhance productivity of all employees.

McCoy & Evans (2005) as cited by Bushiri (2014) stated that the components of the physical work environment need to be suitable to reduce stress for employees while performing their job. Also, the physical environment assumes a significant role in building up the organization and connections in the working environment. According to Brill (1992) as highlighted by Bushiri (2014) the physical design at the workplace can increase the productivity of employees from five to ten percent. Amir (2010) also stated that the physical workplace is an area in an organization that is being arranged so that the goal of the organization can be achieved. The organization's physical work environment and its design and layout can influence the behavior of the employee at the workplace.

#### 2.2. Frederick Herzberg's Theory

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (Hygiene-Motivation Theory) by Herzberg et al (1959) classifies the factors, which affect job satisfaction into hygiene, and motivational factors. These include satisfiers/ motivators and dissatisfies/ hygiene factors (Herzberg, 1974). Alfayad & Arif (2017) further explain that hygiene factors detail the aspect of work, which makes workers unhappy or dissatisfied while the motivational factors point to the part that provides the workers the feeling of being content and satisfied. Herzberg sees hygiene factors as traditional and not very important to performance. They include working conditions, interpersonal relations, job security and company policies. However, it is crucial



to gratifying the hygiene elements to reduce job dissatisfaction. To improve and escalate job satisfaction, it is more necessary to focus on the motivational factors. Hygiene aspects are basic to stay away from the awful and negative emotions in the work environment. On the contrary, motivational aspects are the main factors which drive employees at the workplace.

#### 3. METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research approach was adopted because of the nature of the study. This method was chosen because it helps the researcher to establish, confirm or validate relationships and develop generalizations that contribute to existing theories. It was selected because it has the advantage of producing a good number of responses from a wide range of people. According to Bushiri (2014), another advantage is that it helps to find views as they are in their natural setting.

The target population of this study included both junior and senior staff thus Physician Assistants, Nurses, Midwives, Biostatistician, Accountants, Laboratory technicians and The Storekeeper. The total population size of employees at Beposo Health Centre is thirty-three (33). This study selected respondents who are responsible for employee performance management and the employees themselves. In this study, a sample of 33 respondents of both junior and senior staff was used by answering questionnaires to get the findings for the study.

To collect data, the researcher first interviewed the Human Resource Officer of the facility to find out the working conditions that existed prevailed for workers of the facility. Consequently, based on the literature review and interview conducted, appropriate research constructs were developed. The questionnaire was then designed using Google form to validate these constructs. The questionnaire was administered through the staff WhatsApp platform. Several follow-ups were made to ensure maximum participation. The questionnaire was arranged into four (4) sections. The first section was designed to collect general information about the respondents. The subsequent sections focused on the types of working conditions in the health centre, nature of the working conditions and the effects of hygiene factors on their productivity respectively. Respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement with constructs on a Likert scale where: 1 represented strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral 4 for agree and 5 for strongly agree. Data obtained from the respondents were analyzed using frequency and mean. Any mean point below 3 was considered to be disagreement while any mean above 3 was considered agreement.

Key traits for the success of any research project are access and ethics (UKEssays, 2018). Ethics has significant insinuations for the negotiation of access to people and organizations when collecting data. The general ethical issue here is that research design should not subject the research population to embarrassment, harm or any other material disadvantage. Before the study was carried out, the researcher sought permission from the hospital administrator on how information for this study could be accessed.



## 4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

#### 4.1. RESPONDENTS PROFILE

Table 1 shows that 51% of the respondents were male, 76% were aged between 20-30 years and 64% had a diploma. 70% of the respondents were Junior staff, 76% had worked with the facility for 1-4 years. The table also shows that 64% were single and 64% were nurses.

Table 1. Demographic Variables

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	17	51.000
	Female	16	49.000
	Total	33	100.000
Age	20-30	25	76.000
	31-40	5	15.000
	41-50	3	9.000
	Total	33	100.000
Education	Secondary	1	3.000
	Diploma	21	64.000
	Master	3	9.000
	Other	8	24.000
	Total	33	100.000
Rank	Junior Staff	23	70.000
	Senior Staff	10	30.000
	Total	33	100.000
Years of Service	1-4	25	76.000
	5-10	4	12.000
	11-15	4	12.000
	Total	33	100.000
Marital Status	Single	21	64.000
	Married	12	36.000
	Total	33	100.000
Position	Physician assistant	1	3.000
	Nurse	21	64.000
	Midwife	4	12.000
	Accountant	2	6.000
	Laboratory Technician	1	3.000
	Biostatistician	2	6.000
	Storekeeper	2	6.000
	Total	33	100.000

#### 4.2. Types of Working Conditions

Concerning the objective of identifying the types of working conditions in the Health Centre, the results presented in Table 2 show that a higher number (84.8%) of the respondents indicated employees were provided with a physical work environment and remuneration. Another 72.7% indicated that they faced workload management problems while another 66.7% representing indicated they were provided work-life balance. However, 18.2% revealed they were faced with occupational stress and another 21.2% were provided occupational health and safety.



Table 2. Types of Working Conditions

Types of working conditions	Frequency	Percent
Occupational health and safety	7	21.200
Workload management problem	24	72.700
Physical work environment	28	84.800
Job security	21	63.600
Work-life balance	22	66.700
Remuneration	28	84.800
Occupational stress	6	18.200

#### 4.3. NATURE OF WORKING CONDITIONS

From Table 3 the results indicate that about 67.7% of the staff disagreed that the work environment is comfortable with a mean score of 2.27, 57% of the staff also disagreed that the workload is too much ( $\mu$ =2.78). The results also revealed that 60.6% of the staff thus ( $\mu$ =2.69) did not think their job was too stressful and 75.8% also disagreed with the statement that the workplace is safe, secure and healthy ( $\mu$ =2.42). The results further revealed that 75.8% of respondents agreed the Health Centre provides high job security ( $\mu$ =3.63), 78.8% of the staff also ( $\mu$ =3.81) agreed that employees can balance work and family. Finally, it was discovered that 66.7% agreed that the salary provided by the Health Centre is satisfactory ( $\mu$ =3.57).

Table 3. Nature of Working Conditions

Statements on Nature of working conditions	N	Mean
The work environment of this Health Centre is comfortable	33	2.2727
The workload in this Health Centre is too much	33	2.7879
The job is too stressful in this Health Centre	33	2.6970
The health Centre is safe, secure and healthy	33	2.4242
This health Centre provides high job security	33	3.6364
Employees in this Health Centre can balance work and family	33	3.8182
The salary provided by this Health Centre is satisfactory	33	3.5758

# 4.4. DIRECT HYGIENE FACTORS ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY

Table 4 shows the results for Direct Hygiene Factors and Employee Productivity. Regarding the effects of direct hygiene factors on employee productivity, the results revealed that 51.5% of the staff ( $\mu$ =3.39) agreed to the statement that the noisy environment decreases their output. 75.8% ( $\mu$ =2.36) also disagreed that because the Health Centre is safe, secure and healthy it increases their productivity. 57.6% agreed that stress increases their productivity ( $\mu$ =3.36). The findings further revealed that 75.8% of respondents ( $\mu$ =3.84) agreed that high job security increases their work output and 66.6% of respondents ( $\mu$ =2.51) disagreed that the absence of work-life balance decreases their output. Finally, it was discovered that 57.6% of respondents ( $\mu$ =3.21) agreed that increased workload causes them to work more.



Table 4. Direct Hygiene Factors and Employee Productivity

Statements on direct hygiene factors and employee productivity		Mean
Noisy environment of this health centre decreases your output.	33	3.393
Because the health centre is safe, secure and healthy it increases your output.	33	2.363
Stress in this health centre increases your output.	33	3.363
The absence of work-life balance decreases your output	33	2.515
High job security provided by this health centre increases your work output.	33	3.848
Increased workload in this health centre causes you to work more.	33	3.212

#### 4.5. EFFECTS OF INDIRECT HYGIENE FACTORS ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY

From Table 5, the results indicate that 51.5% of respondents ( $\mu$ =3.36) agreed that a noisy environment distracts their work. Also, 81.8% of respondents ( $\mu$ =2.27) and 78.8% respondents ( $\mu$ =2.33) respectively disagreed that salary and bonuses provided by the health centre motivate them to work and work extra. It was discovered that 72.7% of respondents ( $\mu$ =2.51) disagreed because the health centre is not safe, secure and healthy to reduce workplace injuries and 34.4% of respondents ( $\mu$ =3.36) agreed that stress causes them to be absent. The findings also showed that 69.6% of respondents ( $\mu$ =2.60) disagreed that the absence of work-life balance in the health centre makes them less focused. Finally, the findings revealed that 72.7% of respondents ( $\mu$ =3.75) agreed that high job security makes them more committed.

Table 5. Indirect Hygiene Factors and Employee Productivity

Statements on indirect effects of hygiene factors		Mean
The noisy environment of this health centre distracts your work.	33	3.363
The salary provided by this health centre motivates you to work.	33	2.272
The bonuses provided by this health centre motivate you to work extra.	33	2.232
The safe, secure and healthy environment reduces workplace injuries.	33	2.515
Stress in this health centre causes you to be absent.	33	3.363
The absence of work-life balance in this health centre makes less focus.	33	2.606
High job security provided by this health centre makes more committed	33	3.757

#### 5. DISCUSSION

The study aimed at ascertaining the effects of working conditions on employee productivity. Data for the study was gathered by issuing questionnaires. To achieve this, these objectives were set thus to identify the types of working conditions, to examine the nature of working conditions and to examine the effects of direct and indirect hygiene factors on employee productivity. The study conducted revealed that job security, work-life balance, physical work environment, occupational stress, occupational health and safety and workload were the types of working conditions provided for employees at the health centre.

The research further inquired about the nature of working conditions in the Health Centre. It was revealed that the physical work environment is not comfortable for the employees and as such the Health Centre needs to improve on the physical work environment by providing comfortable and conducive surroundings. This supports the argument by McCoy



& Evans (2005) who stated that the elements of the physical work environment need to be proper so that employees will not be stressed while performing their job. The study also revealed that the health centre provides a considerable amount of workload and the job is not stressful. The study further discovered that the health centre provides high job security and employees were also able to balance their work and family. Finally, it was revealed that the salary provided by the health centre was satisfactory however the workplace is not safe, secure and healthy.

The study further sought to examine the effects of direct and indirect hygiene factors on employee productivity. For direct hygiene factors, it was revealed that a noisy environment decreases employee's productivity. The findings also showed that a safe, secure and healthy environment does not increase productivity. Moreover, it was discovered that stress does not increase productivity which contradicts the findings of Blumenthal (2013) who was of the view that productivity increases as stress increases which he presents with the inverted U- curve. The study further revealed that the absence of work-life balance does not decrease employees' productivity. This finding is in contradiction with Frone et al. (1997) who is of the view that the absence of work-life balance causes poor performance. Also, it was discovered that high job security increases employee productivity which is supported by James (2012) who states that low job security affects employees' productivity since they lose faith in the organization. Finally, the study revealed that increased workload increases productivity, and this is supported by the findings of Petterson et al. (1997) which states that increased workloads increase short-term productivity.

With regard to the effects of indirect hygiene factors on employee productivity, the findings showed that a noisy environment distracts their work. The findings also show that the salary and bonuses provided by the health do not motivate employees to work extra and this finding is in contradiction with Stuart (2011) who reported that in organizations where the remuneration system is attractive it maximizes employee productivity. The study also revealed that a safe, secure and healthy environment does not reduce workplace injuries. Moreover, the findings show that stress causes employees to be absent which is supported by Mead & Bower (2000) who states that stress causes absenteeism at the workplace. Again, the findings revealed that the absence of work-life balance does not make the employee less focused. Finally, it was discovered that high job security leads to high employee commitment.

#### 6. CONCLUSION

The study sought to establish the effects of working conditions on employee productivity. The specific issues that the study focused on were to identify the types of working conditions in Beposo Health Centre; examine the nature of working conditions on employee productivity in Beposo Health Centre and examine the effects of direct and indirect hygiene factors on employee productivity in Beposo Health Centre. Using data from 33 employees of the health centre, it was found that the working conditions provided for employees of the Health Centre were job security, work-life balance, physical work environment, workload, occupational stress, remuneration and occupational health and safety. Also, for the nature of working conditions, it was seen that the physical work



environment was not comfortable and conducive enough for the employees. However, it was seen that there was an optimum level of workload and occupational stress while high job security, work-life balance and remuneration were satisfactory. However, respondents indicated that the workplace was not safe, secure and healthy. For the effects of direct hygiene factors on employee productivity, it was discovered that employees needed a comfortable work environment to be productive. Also, a safe, secure and healthy environment, stress and work-life balance do not increase employee productivity. However, high job security and increased workload increase productivity. Lastly, for the effects of indirect hygiene factors on employee productivity, it was found out that noisy work environment distracts employee work. It was also seen that salary and bonuses do not motivate them to work. Again, a safe, secure and healthy workplace does not reduce workplace injuries, and stress causes the employees to be absent. However, high job security leads to high employee commitment.

#### 7. IMPLICATIONS

The practical implications of the findings are aimed at indicating to policymakers, and administrators of health institutions on the procedures and measures to improve employees working conditions and productivity.

#### 8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations acknowledged by this study include: First, this study only collected data from employees from one health facility in Ghana. Therefore, this sample size is not sufficient enough to reflect the general health sector of Ghana. Future research could widen the sample to include other types of health faculties from across the country. Secondly, the study did not consider the effect of the types of working conditions available on productivity. Therefore, studies can take a closer look at the different types of working conditions and how each one affects productivity.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the findings and conclusions presented, the following recommendations are suggested: the health centre should improve on the physical work environment by making it more comfortable and conducive. Also, the health centre should implement occupational stress management since stress decreases employee productivity and causes them to be absent. It is further recommended that since most of the respondents indicated job security and workload as conditions that increase their productivity, the health centre should maintain and improve on them.

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