PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AT WORK AND JOB PERFORMANCE

A qualitative study of physical activity at work from the perspective of office workers in Tanzania.

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ABSTRACT

Sedentary behavior has been among the major challenges facing employees working in offices subsequently failing to attain WHO recommendations on physical activity. Office employees are mostly at high risk of developing non-communicable diseases because most of their work is executed while sitting. This study aims to explore how employees have experienced the influence of physical activity on their job performance at work by using a qualitative research approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine employees working in the banking industry in Tanzania. A content analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The main findings of this study highlighted the need to create a workplace culture that encourages physical activity. Having regular movement in the office has promoted employees’ health and overall job performance. Furthermore, employees experienced challenges such as time constraints, and high job demands hindering them from participating in physical activity which needs to be addressed. Finally, workplace health promotion influenced their overall health and enhanced well-being. Through physical activity, they experienced improved cognitive functions and better health. Therefore, this study concludes that there should be increased support of physical activity in the workplace for the benefit of employees’ health leading to their job performance.

Keywords: employees, job performance, lifestyle habit, physical activity, qualitative method
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1 Introduction

Most organizations are looking for ways to improve their employee’s health and performance. This has become a concern because many employees are performing their duties in the office setting which involves long sitting hours. As a result of long sitting hours employees are affected as it is linked to various health risks including obesity, cardiovascular disease, and musculoskeletal problems (Daneshmandi et al., 2017) resulting in low performance in the Organization.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2016) has identified how employees' health appears to be a critical issue that directly impacts an organization’s overall success and growth through performance. One factor that has gained considerable attention in recent years is physical activity. This is especially true for office employees and Bushiri (2014) shows how physical activity is linked to improved physical and mental health which affects employee job performance in an office-based environment, such as the banking industry in Tanzania.

The banking industry is generally known for its demanding and high-pressure work environment. This provides a unique background for understanding how experience in physical activity can influence an employee’s job performance. In the banking context, in Tanzania, employees are often tied to their desks and engaged in sedentary tasks for long periods, and the potential benefits of incorporating physical activity into their routine become increasingly relevant. The main objective of the study is to explore various ways in which physical activity can affect job performance as perceived by employees. By gaining a deeper understanding of the employees’ experiences of physical activity and job performance, organizations can design effective wellness programs that promote physical activity and a working culture that promotes employee well-being. The study will also contribute to the existing literature and provide practical implications for organizations that aim to promote a healthy working environment. Also, the findings of the present study will provide practical implications for employers and policymakers developing evidence-based strategies and interventions to optimize health and job performance in the banking industry.
2 BACKGROUND

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 2022). Through WHO’s definition of health, it is evident that health is considered a prerequisite for every individual to be productive in the community (World Health Organization, 1986). In the same way, Tanzania has adopted the Ottawa charter for health promotion on the overall objectives of health in improving the health and well-being of all Tanzania with a focus on non-communicable diseases (United Republic of Tanzania, 2017). Physical activity intervention in private and public sectors is among the health promotion strategies in Tanzania. Also, health education in collaboration with other private sectors and community awareness of healthy and healthy literacy is the outcome of a healthy lifestyle (United Republic of Tanzania, 2017). Gorman, (2012) has argued how intervention in the current workplace has undergone a significant transformation with an increasing number of jobs becoming sedentary and technology dependent. As a result, concerns have arisen about the potential negative effects of prolonged sitting and reduced physical activity on employees' health and job performance (Mustar et al., 2021). Most people are working in office-based workplaces which is approximately 80% of their time sedentary (Parry & Straker, 2013). Research shows that most employees are inactive because of long-sitting duties performed in the office which affects their health (Landais et al., 2022). Daneshmandi et al. (2017) have shown how sedentary behaviors affect health and are at the risk of developing diseases such as diabetes type 2, high blood pressure, back pain, heart disease, high cholesterol levels, depression, and disabilities.

2.1 Physical activity

Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure (World Health Organization, 2022). Physical activity is a primary human function that is a prerequisite for good health throughout life (Ohrnberger et al., 2017). World Health Organization (2020) recommends physical activity for adults a minimum of 150–300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity in a week. Physical activity both moderate and vigorous intensity can improve health as per the (WHO) 2022 recommendation. However, Warburton et al. (2006) highlighted how physical activity has prevented the risk of developing chronic diseases and has improved overall health.
Studies have shown that regular physical activity helps in weight management through calorie burn and body weight (Cox, 2017). Also, improved fitness, flexibility, and general individual well-being which increases the quality of life (Cox, 2017). Physical activity increases social engagement and through social engagement contributes to overall well-being and enhances social skills (Di Bartolomeo & Papa, 2019).

Generally, improved health results in mental well-being have managed to reduce symptoms of stress, depression, and anxiety (Singh et al., 2023). Furthermore, physical inactivity results in a substantial economic burden. This includes loss in productivity, which arises from absenteeism from work due to illness or disability (Kuoppala et al., 2008). As a result, more physical activity the fewer non-communicable diseases leading to a high quality of life and lowering economic costs in society (Anderson & Durstine, 2019).

However, lack of physical activity has been a major problem around the globe which has affected most people in the world (Guthold et al., 2018). As a result of less activity globally, organizations are giving serious attention to various health programs on physical activity (Etemadi et al., 2016). Because of the health challenges encountered by office-based employees, physical activity recently obtained significant recognition in many organizations from both employers and employees. Many organizations have focused on addressing their employees’ health aspects as prevention is better than cure. Since people spend most of their time at the office, performing their duties and prioritizing their health should be considered (Søvold et al., 2021). Mitchell & Bates, (2011) shows employees with poor health means reduced productivity and increased expenses for the employer. As a result, organizations have realized the essential of their employees and trying to improve their workforces’ performances and well-being, recognizing, and promoting the connection between physical activity and job performance (Koinig & Diehl, 2021).

Since physical activity intervention is considered, a preventive measure resulting in better health, there are positive benefits for an individual’s physical and mental health. Studies show that individual health and well-being have an impact on their work-related duties which affects performance (Kundi et al., 2021). Coulson et al. (2008) argued that people with regular physical activity at work are more efficient and effective while performing their duties. Santos & Miragaia, (2023) in their systematic review confirmed that physical activity programs at work contribute to the benefit of the organization. Studies recommend people with physical activity at work can focus and concentrate for a long time while performing their duties with an outcome of positive results (Zhang and Chen, 2019). To enhance the level of physical activity at the workplace employers can facilitate by providing incentives such as paying free time for physical activity, providing active breaks, and providing facilities such as
a changing room in the workplace (Ullberg et al., 2023). Therefore, encouraging and facilitating regular physical activity in the workplace is a fundamental aspect of promoting a healthy population which can perform better.

2.2 Physical activity in low-income countries

Global Action Plan on Physical Activity, (2018) has analyzed how physical activity plays a crucial role in maintaining good health and overall well-being regardless of one’s socioeconomic status. Msambichaka et al., (2018); and Sfm et al., (2020) highlighted on the level of physical activity in low incomes and high-income countries difference due to various factors. Factors such as limited access to resources, cultural norms, and challenges in daily life. Global Action Plan on Physical Activity, (2018) have identified limited education and awareness about the importance of physical activity and its benefits contribute to low activity level. Many people might not have access to information about the links between physical activity and reduced risk of chronic diseases.

Physical activity is known to help and manage several non-communicable diseases subsequently improving the overall life expectancy (Durstine et al., 2013). Sedentary lifestyles are associated with an increased risk of chronic conditions such as obesity and cardiovascular disease. Park et al. (2020) recommended reducing sedentary behavior and increasing the promotion of physical activity are both important to promote health. Mahindru et al. (2023) in their review showed the role of physical activity which has been linked to improved mental health as it helps reduce stress and anxiety and boost mood through the release of endorphins.

Unfortunately, the level of physical activity recommended by World Health Organization (2020) has not been given much attention in low-income countries including Tanzania. However, reports show that low-income countries including Tanzania need to scale up the development and implementation of policies to increase the level of physical activity thereby preventing ill health (World Health Organization, 2022). Through public awareness and advocacy on the importance of physical activity, private and public sector organizations have considered physical activity to be an important factor in influencing employee’s health and well-being (World Health Organization, 2018). Physical activity does not only benefit the physical and mental health of individuals but also societies and economies in general (World Health Organization, 2022). Physical inactivity is a key risk factor for non-communicable diseases and mostly occurs in low-income countries. John et al. (2017) highlighted that insufficient physical activity is a major contributing factor associated with the problem of
non-communicable diseases in Tanzania. Another study by Katzmarzyk et al. (2022) shows that insufficient physical activity has been identified to be the fourth leading risk factor for mortality in low-income countries. For this reason, there has been advocacy for health promotion in low-income countries showing the importance of physical activity as a health determinant (Albert et al., 2020). Also, physical activity advocacy and policy implementation need to be prioritized in low-income countries as it will tackle increasing non-communicable disease risks and improve health (John et al., 2017).

2.3 Physical activity as health promotion at the workplace

Workplace health promotion is the joint efforts of employers, employees, and society to improve the health of the employees at the workplace (Andersen et al., 2015). Workplace health promotion is related to how workers’ health and well-being are enhanced and maintained by employers. Evidence shows how workplace health promotion led to better health employees and high job performance (Shain & Kramer, 2004). Health habits that are associated with good physical condition result in physical and mental health well-being (Cancelliere et al., 2011). Managers at the organizational level can facilitate health promotion programs at the workplace. This can be done through health education and awareness by incorporating physical activity as a health promotion strategy in the workplace (Whitehead, 2006). Strategies such as sharing information, providing resources, and providing education to raise awareness about physical activity and its benefits can promote health in the workplace. Having health promotion programs with different content and design in the workplace can improve employees’ overall health and job performance (Ullberg et al., 2023). Therefore, health promotion programs such as physical activity have been considered by many organizations as a tool to influence health and improve job performance.

Furthermore, Mashili et al. (2018) discuss how promoting physical activity should be considered in the workplace. Better working conditions that promote employee health are required in the workplace to increase job performance. Having strategies that promote physical activity in the workplace through creating a healthy environment that encourages healthy behavior is also required (Pronk & Kottke, 2009). Encouraging physical activity in the workplace acts as a promotion and preventive approach to employee health as it helps in reducing sedentary behavior. Encouraging breaks and movement while working will increase energy and productivity. Having active and healthy employees reduces the amount of absenteeism in the workplace and increases productivity through their performance (Voordt & Jensen, 2023). To consider the negative impact of being physically inactive, employers might promote a healthy working environment to ensure they have employees who are active.
and productive (Genin et al., 2018). Overall, workplace health promotion needs to be integrated into the working environment by management to ensure that proper policy is in place that supports employees’ health (Larsson et al., 2016). By having physical activity as a health promotion strategy at the workplace, employers can support their employees in living healthier lives, create a positive and productive work environment, and reduce the company’s healthcare costs.

2.4 Job performance

Job performance can be understood as an achievement-related behavior with some evaluative component, that is, the extent to which an employee meets general organizational performance expectations (Ángeles Loper-Cabarcos et al., 2022). Achieving organizational expectations is determined by the goals set and achieved by employees. Gagne, (2018) developed a model which transforms organizational goals into organizational behavior. Employees with positive behaviors and healthy lifestyles can adopt dynamics in the workplace and perform higher (Bushiri 2014). High-performing employees can achieve the set goals if they are healthy physically and mentally. Etemadi et al. (2016) elaborated on how healthy and physically fit employees are less stressed, and can concentrate to become more efficient, ensuring the organization achieves the expected performance (Woo & Postolache, 2013).

Any organization failing to achieve its target is operating under economic loss, hence many employers try to find ways to enhance employee high performance through different interventions in the workplace (Santos & Miragaia, 2023). Among other interventions, physical activity is an important tool in promoting health benefits and motivating employees on lifestyle habits. Having regular physical activity in the workplace potentially will increase the employees’ high job performance in the workplace (Pronk et al., 2004). Consequently, to increase high job performance when based on social economic productivity in an organization it is important to consider employees' lifestyle habits. Ensuring employees are physically and mentally fit will enhance a positive attitude toward work resulting in high job performance (Golden, 2012).

However, organizations intending to have high-performing employees need to consider different mechanisms that influence performance. Encouraging and providing support on health promotion interventions in the workplace facilitates health lifestyle workplace can promote healthy lifestyle (Ullberg et al., 2023). Therefore, any organization intending for high job performance needs to consider employees' health and mental well-being.
2.5 Theoretical framework

This study is intended to explore how employees have experienced physical activity and how it has influenced their job performance. Organization Behavior Management (OBM) focuses on understanding and managing individual behavior in the organization (Ludwig, 2015). According to Ludwig & Fraizer (2012), the OBM model describes the interaction between the individual and their work environment considering individual factors such as involvement, attachment mood, and job satisfaction. Since the management aims at individual behavior, must consider leadership, decision-making, and organizational structure. The OBM model also seeks to influence the behavior of employees which contributes to organizational success. When employers want to enhance performance and create a work environment that fosters positive employee behaviors OBM can be used (Gravina et al., 2021).

2.5.1 Organizational behavior management

The OBM model focuses on the application of behavioral principles to individuals or groups in a business setting, and OBM is used to influence behavior change in the workplace (Wilder et al., 2009). In general, planned behavior can help in developing interventions aimed at modifying employee behaviors. For any behavior changes to occur there is also a need to analyze and modify circumstances in the environment. Using the OBM model to consider the working environment of the employees as supporting or not supporting physical activity will help to analyze factors for physical activity and modify how to engage more in physical activity potentially resulting in increased job performance.

Through OBM, it is believed that engaged employees are more productive and can perform better in the organization (Ludwig & Fraizer, 2012). However, this is determined by the role of the employer in facilitating and promoting a healthy work environment. Employers’ role such as encouraging employees to take regular breaks throughout the working day can promote physical activity and combat sedentary behavior (Landais et al., 2022). These breaks can involve short exercises for stretching and walking. Providing designed spaces with set-up fitness rooms that help employees incorporate physical activity into their daily routines (Ryde et al., 2020). Implementing stand-up and walking meetings can also be conducted in the office which can increase the employees’ level of movement in the office (Parry et al., 2019).
Generally, employees perform their job while sitting involving long sitting hours, providing them with an adjustable standing desk, and chairs that can help them change posture is necessary (Ryde et al., 2020). Employers using the OBM model can create an office environment that supports physical activity which can be achieved through behavior and ergonomic modification in the office. To consider how physical activity influences employees’ job performance in the workplace, the OBM model is suitable for this study. The model stands as a justification for why positive behaviors in the working environment can influence health well-being and job performance (Wright et al., 2007). In this study, OBM will mainly be used to discuss the study results about physical activity and job performance in employees working in an office-based environment.

2.6 Problem formulation

Attaining the recommended level of physical activity among office-based employees has been a challenge. Sedentary work and lack of facilities are among of challenges hindering office workers from being active leading to health risk diseases. Employees experience this challenge as most of their jobs are performed while sitting which leads to a low level of physical activity in the office. The challenge occurs as health promotion interventions like physical activity are not implemented in most offices. Knowing the health outcomes related to physical activity in the workplace the need arises to influence health behavior intervention in the workplace which became beneficial for both employees and employers. However, the concept of physical activity as an intervention in the workplace has not been prioritized in the Tanzania context. A survey conducted by (Mayige & Kagaruki, 2013) identified various health risk factors that are embedded in lifestyle including a sedentary life leading to an increase in non-communicable diseases. In Tanzania, most office workers perform their work while sitting, and it is believed sitting for a long time is not avoided which can cause health problems. Hence physical activity has not been well promoted in the workplace many employees who work in the office, especially in the banking industry, are not aware of the importance of physical activity. Knowing health implication outcomes for employees with sedentary lifestyles it is worthy to explore employees’ experience of physical activity in the workplace resulting in negative or positive job performance.
3 **AIM**

This study aims to explore how office workers experience physical activity at work and how it can influence their job performance.

3.1 **Research questions**

How do office workers experience their prerequisites to be physically active at work?

How do office workers experience barriers to physical activity at work?

How do office workers experience the influence of physical activity on their job performance at work?

4 **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

This section presents the methodological approach which was used in this study. The section describes participants, the data collection process, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

4.1 **Methodological approach**

This study aimed to explore how office workers experience physical activity and how it can influence their job performance at work. Therefore, a qualitative approach with an inductive approach is deemed to be most appropriate as the study focuses on employee experiences. Qualitative research is conducted in their natural setting trying to understand, or interpret, the meaning people bring to the researchers (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The study used interviews for data collection as it intends to find out the experience and understanding of the participants. Throughout the study, the interviews helped to obtain in-depth data and knowledge of the subject (Busetto et al., 2020).

4.2 **Research context**

The study was conducted in a bank context in Tanzania, Shinyanga Region. This means having access to information from the bank and dealing with employees, there was a need to
seek approval of the study. This is because employees working with banks have confidentiality agreements and do not share information with third parties. Before the study was conducted, there was a need to seek formal approval from high-level management of the bank. The approval procedure was initiated from the local bank office where the data was collected. Since the author planned to collect interview data, the branch manager of the local bank office was informed about the study. An information letter was shared explaining the aim of the study (Appendix A). Also, the interview guide was requested by the bank and was shared with the branch manager and Human Resources Department (Appendix B). Upon receipt of the interview guide, approval was granted from the head office (HR department) to recruit participants for the interviews. The interviews were conducted in one local bank office (branch) which is one of the bank’s 254 branches located all over the country. The branch in which interviews were conducted has approximately 20 employees and is in Shinyanga Region.

4.2.1 Participants

Participants in this study were recruited through purposeful sampling. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), purposeful sampling is used to identify participants who are knowledgeable about a certain topic or experience with a phenomenon of interest. Since the study aimed to get data from participants who have experience in office-based employment on physical activity at work purposeful sampling was used. In practice, the study also used convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is the method by which participants are selected based on their willingness to participate in the study at their time of convenience (Patton, 2002). Given the nature of the work of the participants, convenience sampling was judged as the best approach to collect information from the participants. The employees were informed by their local branch manager about the study. After information was shared with the employees, the author met the whole employee group and explained the study’s aim and how the study would be conducted.

In the local bank office, employees usually have morning sessions to share their daily goals, and 7 minutes were offered to the author to explain the study and its aim. Having prior knowledge of the study shared by the author with the whole group, it was easy for the employees to volunteer to participate. To comply with ethical standards all employees who volunteered to attend the study were given the consent information form to read and sign.

All nine employees who volunteered to participate in the study were bank employees. Employees who volunteered were managers, senior officers, and junior officers with
permanent contracts. The employees had working experience between eleven months and fifteen years. The study included 5 men and 4 women.

4.3 Data collection

Semi-structured interviews with nine employees were conducted to collect data. Using semi-structured interviews helps to gain an in-depth understanding by exploring the participant’s feelings and experiences about a particular phenomenon (Patton, 2002). In addition, an interview guide was designed in line with Patton’s description of the interview guide (Patton, 2002) whereby he categorizes experience questions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge about the phenomena questions. The interview questions were categorized into three categories in the interview guide: (a) prerequisites to be physically active at work (b) barriers to physical activity at work (c) how physical activity influences their job performance at work (See the interview guide in Appendix B). These categories were created based on the study aims and research questions.

Before the data collection process, a pilot interview was conducted to see the functioning of the questions and to assess the time that might be spent in the interview. Since data were collected through interviews, open-ended questions were used to get more information about their experience. After performing the pilot interview, adjustment of questions was made to have understandable questions and proper flow. Due to the participants’ nature of work, the interviews were conducted on the office premises. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded using a mobile phone. The interviews were approximately 20 to 58 minutes in length and the median length was 25 minutes. Also, while recording the interviews the phone was on flight mode to ensure the author was focused and that there was no interruption. To ensure the quality of the data some notes and observations were taken during the interviews. Due to the language barrier, one interview was conducted in Swahili while all others were conducted in English. The interviews were transcribed, and the interview conducted in Swahili was translated into English during the transcription. After the interviews, a unique code was developed for the interviews (IP-IP9).

4.4 Data analysis

All interviews were transcribed using Word online and analyzed using conventional content analysis as it is an analytical method that helps to describe the phenomena and all-new insights that might arise from the textual data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Conventional
content analysis is an inductive method of qualitative research. The method is useful when the researcher has little information about the phenomena under study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) described how to conduct conventional content analysis as follows: (a) familiarizing oneself with the data, (b) formulating codes by reading word by word, (c) highlighting words that must appear to capture the key thought and concept (d) label the emerging codes and, (e) developing categories by collapsing codes with similar content.

In the study, the analytical steps above were closely followed by the author by reading the transcribed interview ensuring familiarity with all aspects of the data. After familiarizing yourself with the data, key concept words were highlighted to make notes of first impression on the analysis process where the codes are developed. Moreover, through the notes, codes are labeled to reflect and relate to key thoughts. Then codes were sorted into categories based on how they link to each other in terms of content. This was done systematically to keep the same meaning of the text. The method of analysis is shown in (Appendix C).

4.5 Research ethics

The Swedish Research Council (2017) presents ethical issues to be adhered to while conducting research. This is because there is access to sensitive information for participants which needs to be protected. In this study, informed consent was shared with participants to know their rights to participate in the study or to withdraw at any time they would feel like without explaining the reason. Participants received an information letter to read and understand (see Appendix A). The letter informed the participants about the aim and ethics of the study. Also, since the data was collected through interviews, there should be a consideration of how to access participants’ information and confidentiality. Hence participants were assured of confidentiality, and they were aware of their legal rights. The ethical issues for participants in this study were considered to negotiate trust and they were informed. The approval was granted by the thesis supervisor for the study plan and the management of the bank provided permission to collect data by interviewing their staff. Also, each participant was asked for permission to voice record the interview and informed about permanently deleting the recorded interview after thesis approval.
5 RESULTS

This section presents the main categories and subcategories identified in the analysis. Categories concerning office workers’ experience of physical activity and how it affects their job performance are presented and illustrated with quotes.

5.1 Creating a workplace culture that encourages physical activity

This is achieved through the description of two relevant categories: making movement in the office and leadership support and role modeling were the categories identified by the participants as their prerequisites of physical activity in the office environment.

5.1.1 Making movement in the office possible

The participants also point out that they use stairs to move from one place to another to ensure movement during the workday. Furthermore, participants shared that while they are performing their duties outside the office instead of using a car, they park the car at one point and walk to the destination as part of their daily physical activity. Participants shared how walking while they are performing their duties outside the office contributes to physical movement.

Moreover, some participants shared that part of their roles involves a lot of movement in the office. Having different roles in the office makes them automatically move while performing their duties. The experience was shared by the participants performing their duties in the office on how they engage themselves in the movement in the office. Described by one participant as his roles involve receiving money from other branches and carrying it to the strong room and from the strong room to the cashiers. His role involves a lot of movement, and he is the only one who has access whereas other employees do not have access. This shows that his roles include movement from one place to another as part of daily activity.

“When I do filing from my office to another office, I can say there is a movement as I have to leave my office and move to another office which is upstairs, and when I am working with the loan department I can say I have an opportunity of going outside then from there, that’s a bit easy because you’ll be walking around finding for customers”. IP -2.

Participants describe that considering the design of the office, they try to move as much as possible from one place to another while they are in the office as their work involves long
It was also shared by participants that the design of the office allows mobility from one office to another which is also encouraged by the management.

5.1.2 Leadership and role modelling

Having management and leaders who recognize the importance of physical activity in the workplace was of added value to the employees. Having role models and leaders who lead by example gives support to the employees to participate in physical activity. It was shared by participants how leadership and management have encouraged them to participate in physical activity.

“The employer is very much encouraging us to participate in physical activity in and outside the office as every week we have competition, and we are encouraged to participate and in office, they walk around to encourage us to make some movement”


Participants shared how management encourages them to participate in different sports and games for them to be active. Also, leaders have been examples of making movement in the office which encourages them to exercise. Having physical activity in the workplace management support is highly needed to encourage participants to participate in physical activity. The management has created wellness program events that create a positive environment and encourage an atmosphere around physical activity.

“Of course, we have, and from what I think in most cases, we insist our staff be more active and to move from one place to another because of the nature of their jobs which involves a long time sitting so they need to be active, but this depends on an individual as you cannot force someone to be active.” IP -1.

Being active and making movements in the office is encouraged by the management to ensure participants are active. This was shared by one participant as they consider the nature of the job performed by employees and encourage them to be active. As management knows the roles of physical activity and the nature of the job performed, employees are encouraged to be active. However, this depends on an individual responsibility and initiative to utilize facilities provided by employer.
5.2 Challenges faced by employees in the workplace.

This category addresses the challenges faced by participants to participate in physical activity at work. Three relevant subcategories were identified from the data. Sedentary work environment, limited time and high work demands, and lack of facilities enhancing physical activity.

5.2.1 Sedentary work

During the interviews, participants explained the nature of their work at the office which involves long time sitting as one of the challenges for them not to participate in physical activity. Participants mentioned that being a bank employee is very challenging as most of their work involves long sitting time to attend to customers. Furthermore, participants expressed that working as a banker most of their work requires them to sit at a desk or in front of a computer for a long period to perform their job which makes it difficult to be for an individual to physically active at work.

“The nature of the job I do does not give me any break and it is very demanding, and I do my job all day sitting As I mentioned earlier am I a teller, and our job is performed while sitting attending customers, so I don’t get time at all.” IP-6

Work assignments involving a long time sitting do not provide breaks to employees which can create tensions resulting in physical health problems. Participants experience that there is a high risk of reduced physical activity when they sit for a long time at the office which leads them to a sedentary behavior. Reflecting on the participant’s experience, sitting for a long time increases the risk of chronic disease and mental ill-health.

5.2.2 Limited time and high work demands

Participants highlight that the nature of the job they are doing is not only involving long sitting time, but also stressful and demanding which does not give them much time to participate in physical activity. The participants also highlighted that lack of time leading to the failure to participate in physical activity at work affects their performance. They describe that they sometimes feel very tired while performing their duty because the body is not active. They further explained that they do not only miss time to exercise but also, they sometimes miss time to eat because of the high work demands. All participants shared that lack of time to participate in physical activity is a challenge that affects them while performing their day-to-day activities.
“To be honest no because my schedule is very tight which does not allow me to participate in any kind of physical activity, how do I wish to participate but where do I get time to do that? The nature of the job I do does not give me any break and it is very demanding, so I don’t get time at all.” IP -6

Participants also highlighted that having different work assignments that describe the nature of the work one is performing affects them and they do not get time to participate in physical activity. It was also described that some of their jobs do not give them time to do anything apart from work as they get into the office in the morning and leave the office very late.

5.2.3 Lack of facilities enhancing physical activity

It is highlighted by the participants that the office lacks facilities such as a gym or exercise room which makes it difficult for employees to engage in planned physical activity. The lack of such facilities is considered a challenge by participants as they mentioned the gym, which is available for the bank employees in the region, is of low quality and is very crowded with too many people. Therefore, the participants do not feel comfortable attending that gym. Also, participants shared having a room in the office where they can be physically active before or after work would make it simpler for them to participate in physical activity.

“Because sometimes I would say I need to find where I can exercise like the gym, but we have only one gym here and everyone is going there so I do not feel comfortable going as it is full of people maybe if we had a room here in the office would be easy for me to exercise but we don’t.” IP- 2.

Participants expressed a feeling that having limited access to facilities that support physical activity at the workplace also limits their possibilities to be active. Hence, when employees do not have access to facilities, it reduces the chance of physical activity and taking breaks resulting in sedentary behaviors.

5.3 Workplace health and job performance at work

The category is addressing how employees experience physical activity with their job performance. To address this, subcategories were developed from the data. The category consists of three subcategories which are improved mood, cognitive function, and overall health and well-being.
5.3.1 Improved mood

Through the study, the participants shared the positive impact that resulted from participating in physical activity. They shared that through physical activity they experienced improved mood, which helps in stress reduction and leads them to a positive attitude towards work and better performance. Participants say that improved mood has increased their job satisfaction and reduced absenteeism as they feel more motivated to come to work. Participants also expressed that improved mood makes it easy for them to focus on different work tasks and be productive throughout the day.

```
...... “You feel fit mentally and physically fit while performing your duties. All your body becomes so active and open-minded”. IP -5.
```

Overall, the participant expresses improved mood as a positive experience of physical activity at work. One interpretation of improved mood is that employers need to consider improving and creating a positive work environment that supports an employee’s well-being as it will help them feel motivated and engaged in their work.

5.3.2 Cognitive function

Participants experience that through physical activity they have improved their reasoning capacity and problem-solving skills at work. They experience that through physical activity they have improved their ability to process visual and auditory information and feel that they have better memory. Furthermore, participants shared how they are more cognitively active because of physical activity which also helps to develop their focus on work, especially when dealing with customers. Also, they express how their mind is sharp and active which makes it easier to make decisions while performing their duties at the workplace. Furthermore, participants shared the opinion that through physical activity their work is more efficient, and they have a high drive motive towards work. They confirmed that physical activity has helped them to deliver their duties on time and with the ‘right’ attitude.

```
“One benefit is being very active, while you are performing your duties, your mind is settled and active and you can concentrate. One can concentrate if one has a fresh mind which makes you more productive” IP-7
```

An office worker who also has a driving task expressed how physical activity has helped him while performing his duties.

```
“Well through physical activity, I can say it makes me feel very active which leads to my brain functioning very well especially when I am driving. While driving I need a
lot of concentration because most people do not follow traffic rules, especially motorcycles.” IP-4

Through physical activity, employees have experienced a positive impact on their cognitive function while performing their duties. By supporting physical activity employees have improved cognitive functioning, hence employers can help them thrive in the workplace and possibly perform better on their job.

5.3.3 Overall health and well-being
The result from participants shows that physical activity is experienced to positively influence their overall health and well-being. It was highlighted by participants that physical activity has influenced overall well-being promoting physical health, mental health, and social connectedness. Furthermore, through physical activity participants managed to maintain their health and control their weight. Through physical activity, participants feel that they have a reduced risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Moreover, participants shared their experience that through physical activity at work, they feel better mentally which improves their job performance.

“I can declare since I started physical activity, I am now physically fit, and I have no more complaints about my health. I am very healthy” IP-4

“I am very active and have no more sick leave so I am very productive because I can see it from my work on how I deliver every day. Also, I have increased efficiency while performing my duties” IP-9

Additionally, participants shared how physical activity increased their level of fitness resulting in increased energy levels which allows them to perform their job better in their roles. When their energy is improved it provides the ability to cope with workplace challenges such as high stress levels. Therefore, physical activity at the workplace is interpreted as an important aspect for employees as it supports their health and well-being. This does not only affect their health but also their social well-being as it increases teamwork and engagement.
6 DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore how office workers experience physical activity at work and how it can affect their job performance. Since the aim was to explore and study a phenomenon, a qualitative method with an inductive approach was used. In the following section methodological considerations, quality criteria, and the results of previous research will be discussed.

6.1 Methodological discussion

Using a qualitative research method to study employees' experience with physical activity at work and how it influences their performance is appropriate as it answers questions on how the phenomenon of physical activity occurs at the workplace. For this reason, a qualitative method was considered an appropriate method because it intends to deepen the understanding and interpretation of social phenomena in the natural context of the study participant (Creswell, 2012). This is also considered the strength of the qualitative method used in the study. Participants in this study were identified through purposive sampling with work experience in the office. In practice, convenience sampling was used, nine participants participated due to their convenience and shared their experiences. In addition, this was the best approach because of the willingness of the participants to participate in the study. Also, the participants' ability to share their experiences and opinion at their convenience suit their timetable. However, there was a sample limitation, which was caused by the participant's convenience as 10 participants were intended to participate in the study. However, due to convenience, only nine participants were available to participate in the study. Dworkin, (2012) suggests that the number of participants to be included in qualitative studies should range from 5 to 50. However, having nine participants in the study is still considered the strength of the study.

Moreover, the study considered participants who had at least eleven months of working experience and had permanent employment so they could share their experience about spending time at the office. The purpose of having participants with varied backgrounds would help in increasing the possibility of getting different points of view concerning the aim of the study. This study had participants with working experience from eleven months to fifteen years with the same employer. Also, the study considered participants from different job positions as managers, senior officers, and junior officers which made the study have different roles and working experience. The study also included both males and females even though the number of females was low compared to the number of males in the office.
Having participants from different job positions the author was able to understand varied experiences of physical activity at the workplace.

The data collection was conducted using interviews and an interview guide prepared to address the study's aim. The pilot interview was conducted with a participant who has working experience from working in an office workplace before data collection. Through the pilot interview, a few questions were adjusted to make the questions clearer and the flow of the interview guide better. Overall, the adjustment of the questions helped to improve the study's quality and logic. Conducting face-to-face interviews was helpful as the author was able to communicate directly with the participants listen to the participants' experiences and observe their attitudes. The interviews also allowed the author to explain and elaborate to avoid ambiguity and in case clarity was needed to fulfill the aim (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Conducting interviews in the office premises was easy as it saved time and got access to participants. However, there was an interruption in one of the interviews which could affect the quality of the study. Due to the interruption, the author had to repeat what was required to be addressed in the question to avoid losing the interview's content. This was considered a limitation of the study as the interview was conducted in the office premises with colleagues outside the interview room. Conducting interviews in the workplace created a risk of destruction during the interview. Also due to limited time, the author could not verify the data through member checking whereby participants had to check their transcribed interview to enhance data accuracy (Birt et al., 2016).

The collected data were analyzed using a conventional content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This type of analysis is useful as it is used generally with study design aiming to describe a phenomenon. Also, it uses inductive reasoning whereby collected data categories and themes emerge to allow new insight (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The author approached the text by identifying the codes and then categories that emerged to answer the aim and research questions. Knowledge generated from content analysis is established on participants’ unique views and grounded in the actual data. Hsieh and Shannon, (2005) provide a clear outline based on five analysis phases that were followed. These phases are meant to move from one to another where the author must follow every phase. This approach has its advantage as the author gains direct information from study participants without imposing preconceived categories.

However, the approach has some challenges whereby it might fail to develop a complete understanding of the context leading to failure in identifying key categories that represent the full context. The author considered it challenging to code and categorize all data considering the participant’s varied experiences of physical activity in the workplace. During the data
analysis, the author had to focus only on the content and the aim of the study otherwise it could lead to failure in identifying key categories. To minimize the bias while analyzing the data, a systematic approach was used to ensure the findings were based on the data and not the researcher’s view. Nevertheless, due to the mixture of languages during the interviews, the translations were made in English to keep the same meaning. The data analysis has been challenging and time-consuming as one of the interviews had a mixture of language English and Swahili which made the author take more time to translate to avoid losing the meaning in the translation process. However, the author was aware of the challenge, which was addressed as the author mastered both languages. For accuracy, the author checked the transcript against the original audio recordings to ensure that the transcript reflected the recordings.

6.1.1 Quality of the study
Bryman et al. (2008) highlight quality criteria to use while assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research. These criteria are credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Using open-ended questions during the interviews, participants were free to share their experience with physical activity in the office making it possible for the author to capture the participants' expressions during the whole process of data collection. A pilot interview was conducted before the first actual interview occurred whereby modification of questions was made to enhance understanding and interview quality.

To increase the credibility of the study, categories were confirmed by presenting quotations from participants’ statements (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). To secure credibility the author used purposeful sampling to select participants who address the aim of the study. The collected data were carefully recorded and stored to ensure integrity and prevent data loss. Moreover, to enhance credibility the author checked and assessed the interview questions through pilot interviews to see if they addressed the aim of the study. Through analysis, some categories were not considered as they had no sufficient data to support them. Other categories were merged into each other. The categories that were merged are evaluated to match the purpose of the study. This was addressed by checking the analysis and if it aligns with the research questions addressing the aim of the study.

Dependability includes consistency and stability of the research process whereas, the author must present the research process clearly (Bryman et al., 2008). While conducting the study the author is responsible for outlining the research process from the beginning by developing
it. This helps the reader to assess the research path transparency (Bryman et al., 2008). This was attained through a research diary which was used during data collection to record every challenge faced during the process and was documented. The diary was important because data collection was conducted last summer which was important to record challenges faced during the data collection process. This helped the author to write a clear methods description which was important for dependability.

Transferability is another quality criterion that refers to the extent to which results of a study can be transferred and applied to other contexts or populations beyond the study setting (Bryman et al., 2008). This was attained by providing a rich account of descriptive data in methodology, research context, sampling process, participants’ characteristics, interview procedure, and interview guide. Having participants from the same employer and even with different locations and working in the banking industry the findings of the study are relevant to Tanzania context. Since the study was conducted in Tanzania which is among the low-income countries the results can be applied to other contexts, considering the population and nature of business conducted being the same.

To consider the context the results from this study are evaluated and can be transferred to similar situations and contexts in Tanzania. This is considering how the banking industry operates in Tanzania which will make it easy to transfer the results into similar contexts in the country (e.g., other local bank offices). This is important because it allows the author to assess the relevance and applicability of the results to other settings and populations.

Confirmability is the last criterion to consider the quality of the study. This is the degree to which the results of the study are based on collected data and the interpretation of the data rather than the researchers’ biased values or perspectives (Bryman et al., 2008). Also, the results can be confirmed or validated by others. However, based on the author’s experience knowing the participant’s lifestyle for a period, data were reported based on participants’ experiences related to the study’s purpose. The results were reported only based on what was related to the study and the author’s perception and experience was not considered as it might affect the results.

6.1.2 Ethical discussion

Ethical considerations are important aspects of any study that focuses on the protection of the rights and welfare of the research participants. Informed consent was obtained through an information letter given to participants to consent before participating in the study.
However, considering all the ethical principles adhered to, the study was conducted in the participant’s conference room. This made the author feel like participants were not secure enough to disclose all the information. The reason for participants feeling insecure, the interviews were conducted in the conference room which was not so private, and it felt like the information shared could be heard by a third party. The risk of information being heard by a third party affected the study. If the interview was in a private room with no interruption the author of the study thought more information could be shared. Conducting interviews in the participant’s office, participants could be in fear of losing their jobs. They could lose their job in case of information, shared was critical to the employer and leaked. The author considered it a challenge because the room used for the interview had access to everyone whereas during the interview there was an interruption which made the participant uncomfortable.

Also, since there was a gathering of recorded material from participants the material was protected in the phone with a password whereby no one had access except the author. Having the recorded material on the phone was a challenge as the phone could get lost or stolen. To address this challenge to protect participants’ information the author had to keep the phone in a safe place and find another phone to use to avoid misplacing the phone with information. Respecting the participant’s rights and dignity collected data was only used for study purposes. After the study is completed and approved, transcripts and audio files will be permanently deleted.

6.2 Results discussion

This study aimed to explore office employees’ experience of physical activity and how it can influence their job performance. Following the aim of the study, the results point out the need to create a healthy and successful workplace culture. Results from the study show that a workplace culture that encourages employees to participate in physical activity potentially reduces employees’ physical inactivity in the workplace. However, results also show that employees experienced challenges such as limited time, high workload, and lack of facilities making it more difficult to participate in physical activity at work. Finally, results show employees’ workplace health and job performance. They experienced improved mood, cognitive function, and overall improved well-being. The improved health and well-being experienced by employees were beneficial for their job performance at work. However, there is a need to address challenges affecting employees if employers want to improve job performance.
6.2.1 **Office Mobility**

The following section will discuss employee’s prerequisites for physical activity at the workplace. Results show employees can be active while performing their daily activities if office design allows mobility. Having an office design to allow mobility from time to time made participants move when they needed it. Using stairs increases employees' mobility when performing their duties at work. Also, management encourages employees to move, when necessary, based on the available resources and facilities to encourage movement. The results underline the importance of an office environment, but also having a workplace culture that promotes physical activity can encourage employees to do physical activity at work. The results are in line with previous studies indicating how office environment and design increase physical activity (Awan & Tahir, 2015; Jones & Jones, 2013).

This was emphasized by Ullberg et al., (2023) that physical activity should be part of daily office life. This can be made possible by employers in promoting a healthy working environment. When there is a conducive working environment with a well-designed office environment it can make employees prioritize movement and physical activity at work. Participants shared their experience of prioritizing physical activity while they were in the office performing their duties. Participants addressed that being active in the office should be encouraged by the employer but there is also an individual responsibility to be active. Also, participants' readiness for movement helps to reduce sedentary behaviors while performing their duties. To reduce sedentary behavior through individual readiness participants addressed how they were making movement while performing their duties outside the office by parking the vehicle at one point and proceeding to the other point by walking.

These results are in line with previous studies addressing how resource availability and organizational readiness should be considered when planning interventions in the workplace (Pronk & Kottke, 2009; Weiner, 2009). But also, readiness to increase movement in the workplace depends on how managers in the office behave. Therefore, leading by example can motivate employees to increase mobility if they have managers practicing movement and acting as role models in the workplace (cf. Abbas & Asghar, 2010; Schein, 2010). Also, if management can provide and promote a supportive environment for employees. A supportive environment that is in line with employees’ incentives such as room to exercise during working hours, offering gym membership, organizing wellness programs, and encouraging employees to take active breaks. Moreover, making employees participate in sports can increase movement in the workplace (Ullberg et al., 2023). This practice is also supported by previous research emphasizing how leading by example can influence employees to increase their movement in the office (Ullberg et al., 2023). Hence
organizational readiness among employees also can be linked to the current culture at the workplace so that it can suit in.

6.2.2 Challenges Faced by employees at the workplace

Participants shared their concern about long sitting times resulting in sedentary behavior being among the barriers to participating in physical activity at work. The employees shared how they feel about work. Most of their duties involve long sitting hours to attend to customers. Previous studies show that long sitting hours are related to a sedentary lifestyle which increases the high risk of cardiovascular disease and musculoskeletal issues such as back pain and neck pain (Park et al., 2020).

Most participants felt stressed through long sitting hours which has affected their physical health. They experienced body and joint pain, and increased body weight leading to poor performance. The results are in line with previous studies as sitting was recognized to be an easy habit that is hard to unlearn affecting their health and job performance (De Cocker et al., 2015; Hanna et al., 2019; Kallings et al., 2021; Park et al., 2020). Participants shared that despite knowing their work schedule, they do not have time to participate in physical activity because of job demands. Failing to participate in physical activity participants felt how their health and well-being have been affected. Also, they are not active because they do not have time to participate in physical activity. The results were in line with previous studies on how physical activity can affect an individual positively and negatively. Malm et al. (2019) discussed how physical activity has health benefits for an individual.

Furthermore, participants felt they did not get time to participate in physical activity because of their workload. Barriers such as job demands, and overwork made participants lack time to participate in physical activity. They felt stressed, overwhelmed, tired, and less motivated because they had to meet their employer’s demands. Participants felt being overworked and lacking time to participate in physical activity has caused high levels of stress and various health problems. Studies show that overworked employees are stressed. This was elaborated by Bhui et al. (2016) who argued how workload and pressure reduce productivity. On employees. When employees are overworked, they find it difficult to focus which reduces the quality of work and job performance. This was also discussed by (Haq et al., 2020) on how overworked employees negatively affect overall productivity. However, it was suggested that if employers consider and adopt technology in the workplace would help to reduce workload. Having technology helps to reduce workload as customers could access online services leading to reduced workload as some of the services can be accessed by customers online.
Moreover, participants felt that working in an environment with no facilities acts as a barrier to participating in physical activity. This was supported by previous studies on how the lack of facilities acted as a barrier for employees to participate in physical activity in the workplace (Safi et al., 2022; Fletcher et al., 2008). Participants had the feeling that if they have facilities like a gym, changing room, and resting room, could make it easier for them to participate in physical activity. Changing rooms which include a shower room would encourage them to active transportation such as cycling to and from work. This was made possible in some branches where they managed to have gym facilities for employees to participate in physical activity. Having a gym and changing room in the office will give employees the convenience to be physically active whenever they have time (World Health Organization, 2017). Moreover, participants felt like having some activities in the office like yoga or dance before starting their work will make them participate in physical activity. This was also mentioned to be possible in a few branches where employees have a dancing session every day before starting their work.

### 6.2.3 Workplace health and performance at the workplace

Participants shared that when employers consider and implement physical activity programs in the workplace there is a positive change in the workplace. Previous studies show that when physical activity programs are provided by employers, programs supporting the health and well-being of employees which encourage a positive work environment will lead to job performance (Chakraborty & Ganguly, 2019; Grawitch et al., 2006; Pronk, 2009). Based on participants’ experience the results show how physical activity has a positive influence on job performance. The results show that increased energy levels and improved mood have influenced participants to perform higher at work. Through physical activity at work, participants were active and focused, and their moods improved. Participants who were participating in a physical activity shared how they have managed to reduce stress levels leading to better job performance.

Furthermore, participants shared that physical activity has increased their cognitive functions and enhanced creativity. Participants experience that being physically active at work helped them to focus and deal with customers because when dealing with customers they need to have the right attitude to serve customers. These results correspond well with previous studies highlighting if physical activity is promoted there is a high chance of improving cognitive abilities and enhanced mood among employees (Casimiro-Andújar et al., 2023; Laux et al., 2020; Mandolesi et al., 2018). Previous research also shows that when people have a better cognitive function it is easy to create new ideas and innovations at work.
To have cognitive functions at the workplace, employers need a supportive plan that encourages employees to engage in continuous physical activity.

Moreover, participants shared that physical activity has improved their physical health. Through participating in physical activity, participants shared how they have reduced the amount of absenteeism due to illness. The results are in line with previous studies that demonstrate how physical activity can reduce diseases related to work and absenteeism in sedentary employees (Bueno et al., 2018). Bhui et al. (2016), highlighted physical activity has been among the few organizational interventions showing satisfying effects on absenteeism that should be encouraged in the workplace. This demonstrates the importance of having workplace interventions promoting physical activity. Moreover, being physically healthy helps to reduce workplace stress because individuals can manage stress levels and maintain a healthy work-life balance (Bhui et al., 2016). Previous studies show through physical activity employees can gain health benefits (Haddon, 2018; Ryde et al., 2020; Warburton et al., 2006; World Health Organization, 2017; World Health Organization, 2020). Also, participants shared their experiences on how physical activity has influenced their job performance at work. Through participating in physical activity, participants felt they have increased their energy level which influences their job performance at the workplace. Having enough energy helps them to tackle their duties and achieve their intended target. This can be made possible by having a conducive environment that can increase engagement and job performance (Coulson et al., 2008). This is supported by previous studies on how physical activity influences job performance at the workplace (Drannan, 2016; Santos & Miragaia, 2023). Any organization intending to promote the well-being of employees through physical activity should support health promotion programs such as physical activity at the workplace (Jirathananuwat & Pongpirul, 2017).

6.2.4 Theory relating to physical activity in the workplace

As previously discussed, Organizational behavior management (OBM) focuses on understanding and managing the individual behavior in the organization (Wilder et al., 2009). The OBM model considers the interaction between the individual and their work environment considering all factors within the organization. The results show how employees who interact with the environment in the workplace can become physically active while performing their duties. The results are in line with the OBM model suggesting that when employers support employees to have movement in the workplace helps them to be focused. Encouraging employees to take active breaks can help them to reduce stress levels and recharge. This behavior strategy for the employer to encourage active breaks for employees to help their physical and mental well-being is also supported by previous studies (Centre for
Disease Control, 2015; Randolph, 2016; Russell, 2008). Also, Ullberg et al. (2023) demonstrate how support from employers through providing a conducive working environment for physical activity can lead to improved job performance. Studies demonstrate that offering tools like standing and adjustable desk, chairs, and keyboards that support ergonomics encourage employees to be active and can influence job performance (Dewitt et al., 2019; Ma et al., 2021).

The OBM model demonstrates that when management understands employees’ behavior it is easier for employers to promote healthy lifestyles in the workplace (Taylor et al., 2018). Managers can lead by example to promote a healthy lifestyle in the office and encourage behavior change by taking breaks and making movements to increase physical activity awareness (Koinig & Diehl, 2021).

Also, employees fail to participate in physical activity because of barriers they experience at the workplace. The model suggests that if the employer and a manager give support it is easier to address potential barriers to physical activity at the workplace. Having support provided by the employer that could encourage physical activity in the workplace can motivate employees to participate in physical activity. When employers support employees by providing access to the training facility in the office can encourage employees to participate in physical activity (Ullberg et al., 2023). Facilities that include exercise and shower rooms can encourage employees to do physical activity before or after working hours (Biswas et al., 2018).

To increase job performance employees, need to get more time to participate in physical activity. Employers should facilitate and encourage employees to participate in physical activity. Through the OBM model when employers know the demands of their employees, it is easy to balance the needs and implement what suits the employees (Vance, 2006). Lastly, all the positive experiences were identified by employees because the employer created an environment that fosters positive behavior, enhances employee well-being, and improves job performance (cf. Zhenjing et al., 2022). Employers can use OBM as a tool to analyze and understand behaviors associated with physical activity and design tailored interventions. Ramezani et al. (2022) in their systematic review concluded that having different interventions in the workplace will encourage employees to participate in physical activity.

### 6.3 Future research and relevance to public health

This study aims to explore how office workers experience physical activity and how it can influence their job performance. This study has an impact on public health as inactive
behavior and a sedentary lifestyle can lead to physical illness and mental problems, such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, anxiety, and depression. Employers need to provide support to employees to avoid health and mental problems in the workplace. Employers can support employees by addressing barriers hindering employees from participating in physical activity for their health and well-being and to increase job performance. Support such as providing facilities to exercise, having technology that supports customers online, having active breaks, and having wellness programs can promote physical activity in the workplace (Ullberg et al., 2023).

Having physical activity intervention in the workplace leads to better physical and mental health outcomes such as reduced risk of chronic disease, and cardiovascular disease leading to a positive impact of high job performance (Andreson & Durstine, 2019). Moreover, research shows office workers usually have sedentary lifestyles due to the nature of their jobs. Therefore, a lack of physical activity can adversely affect their health and well-being, leading to poor job performance. However, further research is needed to assess the role of technology and remote work leading to physical activity and if technology-driven intervention can promote movement in the banking industry in Tanzania. Research should also be carried out to investigate the effects of physical activity on employee’s health and well-being within the banking sectors. Examining factors such as mental health stress level, cardiovascular health, and overall job performance. Physical activity as an intervention to measure changes in the parameters. Interventions should preferably be tailored to the specific needs of different employee populations.

7 CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to explore how office workers experience physical activity and how it can influence their job performance. From the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

- Participants reported engaging in physical activity by walking from one point to another outside the office demonstrating the importance of personal responsibility for being active. Individual readiness for movement is also crucial in reducing sedentary behaviors in the working environment. Participants shared that office designs that allow mobility such as using stairs positively affect employee’s physical activity during their daily work activities. Also, encouraging movement had both significance in the
office environment and workplace culture that promotes physical activity to encourage employees to be active at work.

- Participants shared the challenges they were facing in the workplace to be active. Being overwhelmed with no time to participate in physical activity was among the challenges they faced in the workplace. Also, their job was demanding, and they lacked facilities that could support physical activity in the workplace.

- Participants felt participating in physical activity has positively affected their job performance as well as their health and social well-being. Considering the nature of the job, which involves long sitting hours if they were not active, their job performance would be affected. Those who participated in physical activity proved to have increased their energy level, cognition levels, physical health, and mental well-being. Physical activity has been mentioned as an outcome leading to job performance.
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APPENDIX A

Information Letter

Dear participant,

I am Getrude Barnabas Munuo a master’s student at Mälardalen University in Sweden. I would like you to consider participating in the following study which is meant to explore physical activity and job performance among employees who are working at offices.

Before you become part of this study, I want to give you the details of this study.

Aim of study

Most employees working in the office are stationed in one place while performing their duties. Studies show that most people are affected due to sedentary behavior which has an impact on their health and affects their job performance in the organization as people spend most of their time at the workplace. Therefore, this study aims to explore how office workers’ experience of physical activity can influence their job performance.

Role of participants

If after knowing the aim of this study, you would like to participate in this study then you must approve a consent form. After that, an interview with different questions related to the prerequisites and challenges of physical activity will be conducted. The interview will take approximately forty-five minutes to an hour and will be voice recorded and conducted in person as per your choice.

Your responses will be kept confidential. Your name will be replaced with a code that will be used to keep track of your interview. The recordings will be deleted after processing the information. This interview will be used only for this study and will be accessed only by me,
my supervisor, and the thesis examiner. The name of the company in which you are employed will not be mentioned in the thesis.

**Rights of participants**

You are free to either accept or decline the question to participate in this study. Even if you are in the process of studying and want to quit, you can do so whenever you want and without telling any reason. You have the right to provide information that you want and withhold information that you do not want to talk about.

**Value of the study**

This study will help in investigating the influence of physical activity which will help in exploring experiences of physical activity and job performance. Also, this knowledge can contribute to an understanding of both employee health and effectiveness in office work.

If you have any further questions related to this study or need more information, please contact the people below.

**Contact Persons**

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**Supervisor:** Robert Larsson, Senior Lecturer, Mälardalen University, Sweden

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APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

- Can you tell me about your work at the office? What are your work assignments? How long have you worked at the Company?
- Can you tell me about the possibility of being physically active at the office?
- Do you experience any barriers to being physically active at the office?
- Is the office environment accessible for physical activity? If yes, can you give examples?
- Do you participate in physical activity to exercise? And how many times do you exercise in a week and an average of 30min?
- Have you experienced any changes caused by physical activity in your day-to-day duties?
- Does the employer encourage physical activity in any way? How do you participate in physical activity promotions at the workplace?
- Can you explain how physical activity affects you in your work?
- From your perspective, what are the benefits gained through physical activity at your workplace?
  Individual benefits
  Organization benefits
  Family benefits
- How do you think physical activity influences your performance at work?
- What do you think would bring about the greatest improvement in the office environment which will have a positive effect on your job?
- Is there anything else that you want to add or clarify?
APPENDIX C: ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

Table 1: An example of the process to reach main them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning Unit</th>
<th>Condensed meaning unit</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Sub category</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“...... I can say there is a movement as I must leave my office and move to another upstairs office, I can say I have the opportunity of going outside then from there, that’s a bit easy because you'll be walking around finding for customers”. IP -2.</td>
<td>Having an environment that allows interaction and movement.</td>
<td>Using available resources</td>
<td>Work environment</td>
<td>Creating a workplace culture that encourages physical activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“In most cases, we insist our staff be more active and to move from one place to another because of the nature of their jobs which involves a long time sitting so they need to be active”. IP-1.</td>
<td>Leaders emphasize the increase in physical activity</td>
<td>Leading by example</td>
<td>Leadership and role modelling</td>
<td>Creating a workplace culture that encourages Physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of the job I do does not give me any break and it is very demanding, I do my job all day sitting as I mentioned earlier am I a</td>
<td>Job demands involve constant sitting without a break.</td>
<td>High job demand</td>
<td>Sedentary work</td>
<td>Challenges faced by employees in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
teller, and our job is performed while sitting attending to customers, so I don’t get time at all.” IP-6

“My schedule is very tight which does not allow me to participate in any kind of physical activity... The nature of the job I do does not give me any break and it is very demanding, so I don’t get time at all.” IP -6

“..., but we have only one gym here and everyone is going there so I do not feel comfortable going as it is full of people Maybe if we had a room here in the office would be easy for me to exercise but we don’t.” IP- 2.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges faced by employees in the workplace.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of facilities</td>
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<td>One benefit is being very active, while you are performing your duties you</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having a tight schedule with no time for physical activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;You feel fit mentally and physically fit while performing your duties. All your body becomes so active and open-minded&quot;. IP -5.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

One benefit is being very active, while you are performing your duties you...
do your work while your mind is settled and active and you can concentrate. One can concentrate if one has a fresh mind which makes you more productive” IP-7

“I can declare since I started physical activity, I am now physically fit, and I have no more complaints about my health. I am very healthy” IP-9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brain function is enhanced through physical activity.</th>
<th>Health transformation</th>
<th>Effectiveness and Efficiency</th>
<th>Cognitive function</th>
<th>Overall, well-being</th>
<th>Workplace health and performance at work.</th>
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<td>Absent of risk diseases</td>
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