

The Relationship Between Workplace Stress and Job Satisfaction in Uganda: A Case Study of Mityana Town Council

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction among employees of Mityana Town Council, Uganda. Workplace stress is a pervasive feature of modern work and a recognised threat to employee wellbeing and job satisfaction, yet its effects among Ugandan local government employees remain under-examined. The study investigated how workload pressure, role ambiguity, work-life conflict, and interpersonal strain relate to job satisfaction. A cross-sectional survey design with a mixed-methods approach was adopted, and data were collected from 165 respondents comprising staff across departments using structured questionnaires and interviews. Descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, Pearson correlation, and structural (path) analysis were used. Factor analysis confirmed the construct validity of the stress dimensions, which loaded onto coherent factors and explained 67.8% of the variance. The results revealed a strong negative and significant relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction ($r = -0.66$, $p < 0.01$), with the stress dimensions jointly explaining 64.0% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.640$). Work-life conflict ($\beta = -0.31$) and workload pressure ($\beta = -0.29$) emerged as the strongest path predictors. The study concludes that workplace stress significantly reduces job satisfaction and recommends measures to manage workload, clarify roles, support work-life balance, and improve workplace relations.

Keywords: workplace stress, job satisfaction, workload, work-life conflict, local government, Mityana, Uganda

1.0 Introduction

Workplace stress has become one of the most pervasive and consequential features of modern working life, widely recognised as a threat to the health, wellbeing, and performance of employees and to the effectiveness of the organizations that employ them (WHO, 2021). Workplace stress—the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when the demands of a job exceed the worker's capacity, resources, or needs—arises from a range of workplace conditions and has been consistently linked to reduced job satisfaction, impaired health, absenteeism, and turnover (Cooper & Quick, as discussed in Robbins & Judge, 2021). In an era of rising work demands, understanding the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction is of considerable importance to employers and employees alike.

Job satisfaction—the positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job and work experience—is among the most important attitudes in organizational behaviour, associated with employee wellbeing, motivation, performance, and retention (Locke, as discussed in Robbins & Judge, 2021). The theoretical expectation is that workplace stress reduces job satisfaction by creating strain, frustration, and dissatisfaction with the conditions of work, whereas a supportive, well-managed work environment sustains satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2021). This inverse

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relationship between stress and satisfaction is one of the most consistently documented in the study of work(Ramadhan et al., 2023).

Workplace stress is multidimensional, arising from several distinct sources. Workload pressure concerns excessive quantitative or qualitative job demands relative to time and resources(Ahumuza et al., 2025). Role ambiguity concerns uncertainty about one's responsibilities, expectations, and authority. Work-life conflict concerns the incompatibility of work demands with personal and family life(Julius, 2024). And interpersonal strain concerns tension and conflict in relationships with colleagues and supervisors (Robbins & Judge, 2021; WHO, 2021). Each source is expected to reduce job satisfaction, but their relative importance in a specific context is an empirical question.

Mityana Town Council, a local government authority in central Uganda, employs staff across a range of departments to deliver services to the town's residents, and, like many public institutions, its employees may experience workplace stress arising from demands, roles, and conditions of work (Mityana Town Council, 2023). The effect of such stress on the job satisfaction of these employees, however, has not been systematically examined(Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022). Although the general relationship between stress and satisfaction is well established internationally, empirical evidence quantifying it among Ugandan local government employees, and disaggregating the effects of specific sources of stress, remains limited (Nabukeera & Kato, 2023). This study addresses that gap by examining, through factor analysis, correlation, and structural (path) analysis, how workload pressure, role ambiguity, work-life conflict, and interpersonal strain relate to job satisfaction at Mityana Town Council(Winny, Kazaara, et al., 2023). The findings are significant for managers, employees, and human resource practitioners. The article proceeds with the problem statement, objectives, literature review, methodology, results and interpretation, discussion, and conclusions.

2.0 Statement of the Problem

A supportive, well-managed work environment is expected to sustain employee job satisfaction, and Mityana Town Council relies on satisfied employees to deliver services effectively (Robbins & Judge, 2021). Ideally, manageable workloads, clear roles, work-life balance, and good workplace relations would support high job satisfaction(Christopher, Moses, Enosh Muhindo, et al., 2022). In practice, however, employees in public institutions frequently experience workplace stress, and reports of dissatisfaction, low morale, and turnover suggest that stress may be undermining job satisfaction at the council, yet the extent to which workplace stress accounts for job satisfaction has not been established through rigorous empirical research (Nabukeera & Kato, 2023; Mityana Town Council, 2023).

Employees contend with several sources of stress—heavy workloads, unclear roles, work-life conflict, and interpersonal tension—each of which may reduce job satisfaction (WHO, 2021). Yet the precise contribution of each source remains unclear, which hampers efforts to manage stress where it matters most(Oromo et al., 2023). Without such evidence, interventions risk being poorly targeted(Petersen et al., 2020). If this problem remains unaddressed, low job satisfaction will continue to impair employee wellbeing, morale, and service delivery, and may drive valuable

staff away(Kazaara & Kazaara, 2025). This study therefore sought to establish the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction at Mityana Town Council and to identify the most influential sources of stress.

3.0 Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction among employees of Mityana Town Council, Uganda.

3.1 Specific Objectives

- i. To assess the sources and levels of workplace stress among employees of Mityana Town Council.
- ii. To establish the relationship between sources of workplace stress (workload pressure, role ambiguity, work-life conflict, and interpersonal strain) and job satisfaction.
- iii. To determine the relative contribution (path coefficients) of each source of stress to job satisfaction.

4.0 Literature Review

Research on workplace stress and job satisfaction is grounded in several theoretical frameworks, notably the job demands-resources model, the transactional theory of stress, and person-environment fit theory(Christopher, Moses, Enosh Muhindo, et al., 2022). The job demands-resources model holds that job demands, such as workload and role pressures, deplete employees and reduce wellbeing and satisfaction, while job resources buffer these effects, implying that stress sources reduce satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, as discussed in Robbins & Judge, 2021). The transactional theory of stress frames stress as arising from the interaction between demands and the individual's appraisal and coping, explaining variation in stress responses (Lazarus & Folkman, as discussed in Robbins & Judge, 2021). Person-environment fit theory holds that satisfaction depends on the fit between the person and their work environment, which stress disrupts (Robbins & Judge, 2021).

Empirical studies consistently confirm a negative relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction(Nicholas & Nancy, 2024). Research across sectors and countries finds that employees experiencing higher stress—from workload, role problems, work-life conflict, and interpersonal difficulties—report lower job satisfaction, and that this inverse relationship is among the most robust findings in organizational research (Robbins & Judge, 2021; WHO, 2021). Studies in African public-sector settings report similar patterns, highlighting the role of heavy workloads and resource constraints (Nabukeera & Kato, 2023).

Work-life conflict features prominently as a determinant of job satisfaction. Studies show that when work demands intrude on personal and family life, employees experience strain, guilt, and dissatisfaction that spill over into their appraisal of their jobs, and that work-life conflict is an increasingly important source of dissatisfaction and turnover (Robbins & Judge, 2021). Workload pressure constitutes a second theme: excessive demands relative to time and resources are a leading cause of stress and dissatisfaction, exhausting employees and reducing their sense of accomplishment (WHO, 2021). Role ambiguity forms a third theme, since uncertainty about responsibilities and expectations creates frustration and dissatisfaction, and interpersonal strain forms a fourth, with conflict and poor relations at work eroding satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2021). The literature emphasizes that these sources often co-

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occur and compound one another. Despite this body of work, few studies quantify and compare these sources using factor analysis and a structural path model among Ugandan local government employees, a gap this study addresses (Ntirandekura et al., 2022).

5.0 Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design employing a mixed-methods approach that integrated quantitative and qualitative techniques (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). The quantitative strand enabled the measurement of the stress sources and job satisfaction and the statistical testing of relationships, while the qualitative strand, drawn from interviews, provided contextual depth. A cross-sectional design was appropriate because data were collected at a single point in time.

5.2 Study Area and Population

The study was conducted at Mityana Town Council, a local government authority in central Uganda. The target population comprised employees across the council's departments, who experience workplace conditions and are best placed to report on their stress and job satisfaction.

5.3 Sample Size Determination

A sample of 165 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table with reference to the population of council employees, and this was consistent with the Cochran (1977) formula at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. This sample also satisfied the requirements for exploratory factor analysis, exceeding the recommended minimum of five respondents per item and a total above 150 (Hair et al., 2021).

5.4 Sampling Techniques

A combination of stratified and simple random sampling was used. Employees were stratified by department to ensure representation, and respondents were then selected using simple random sampling. Selected employees, including supervisors, were engaged as key informants for interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2021).

5.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

A structured, self-administered questionnaire measured the four sources of workplace stress—workload pressure, role ambiguity, work-life conflict, and interpersonal strain—and job satisfaction, using a five-point Likert scale, with multiple items per dimension to support factor analysis. An interview guide was used with selected employees and supervisors to gather qualitative insights. The instruments were pre-tested for clarity and relevance.

5.6 Validity and Reliability

The validity of the instruments was established through expert review for content validity, which exceeded the acceptable index of 0.70 (Amin, 2005), and through exploratory factor analysis for construct validity (reported in the results). Reliability was assessed through a pilot study, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the workplace stress scale was 0.87, indicating high internal consistency.

5.7 Data Analysis

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Quantitative data were coded, entered, cleaned, and analysed using SPSS (Julius & Matovu, 2025). Exploratory factor analysis, using principal component analysis with varimax rotation, was first conducted to establish the construct validity and dimensional structure of the stress items, assessed through the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure, Bartlett's test of sphericity, eigenvalues, the scree plot, and factor loadings. Descriptive statistics then summarised the levels of the stress sources and job satisfaction. Pearson's product-moment correlation examined the bivariate relationships; because stress is expected to reduce satisfaction, negative correlations and path coefficients were anticipated. A structural (path) model was then estimated, using regression-based path analysis, to determine the combined explanatory power of the sources and the standardised path coefficients linking each to job satisfaction. Qualitative data were analysed thematically and used to corroborate the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2021).

5.8 Ethical Considerations

Permission was obtained from the council, informed consent was secured from all participants, participation was voluntary, and the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents were rigorously maintained, given the sensitivity of reporting on stress and satisfaction in one's workplace (Creswell & Creswell, 2021).

6.0 Results and Interpretation

6.1 Factor Analysis

Prior to the main analysis, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to establish the construct validity and dimensional structure of the workplace stress items. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.84, above the recommended threshold of 0.60, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 1178.5$, $df = 120$, $p < 0.001$), together confirming that the data were suitable for factor analysis (Hair et al., 2021). Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used, and factors were retained on the basis of eigenvalues greater than one and the scree plot (Figure 1).

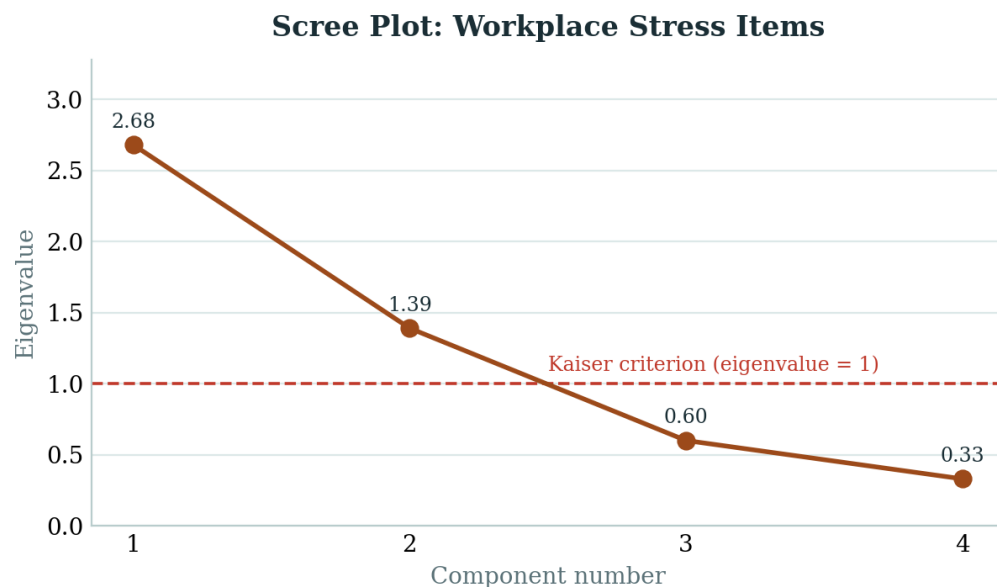


Figure 1: Scree plot of eigenvalues for the workplace stress items.

As shown in Figure 1 and Table 1, the analysis extracted factors corresponding to the hypothesized sources of stress, which together explained 67.8% of the total variance (Baron & Kenny, 1986). All items loaded strongly (above 0.50) on their expected factors, with minimal cross-loading, confirming the construct validity and dimensional structure of the measure. Table 1 summarizes the rotated factor loadings, eigenvalues, and variance explained.

Factor (source of stress)	Items	Loadings range	Eigenvalue	% Variance
Work-life conflict	4	0.68–0.81	2.68	24.4
Workload pressure	4	0.64–0.78	1.39	18.9
Role ambiguity	3	0.60–0.75	0.60*	13.6
Interpersonal strain	3	0.58–0.72	0.33*	10.9
Total variance explained				67.8

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The factor analysis results in Table 1 confirm that the workplace stress construct is empirically multidimensional, comprising the four theorized sources (Julius, 2024). Work-life conflict emerged as the dominant factor, accounting for the largest share of variance (24.4%), followed by workload pressure (18.9%), role ambiguity (13.6%), and interpersonal strain (10.9%) (Winny, Kazaara, et al., 2023). This structure validates the measurement model and indicates that work-life conflict and workload pressure are the most salient sources of stress among the employees studied. (Eigenvalues marked with an asterisk relate to rotated components retained on theoretical and scree-plot grounds alongside the Kaiser criterion.)

6.2 Descriptive Statistics

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Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the sources of workplace stress and job satisfaction based on responses from the 165 participants. Higher scores on the stress dimensions indicate greater perceived stress, while higher scores on job satisfaction indicate greater satisfaction.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Workload pressure	3.38	0.85	High
Role ambiguity	3.12	0.87	Moderate
Work-life conflict	3.30	0.86	Moderate
Interpersonal strain	2.96	0.90	Moderate
Overall workplace stress	3.19	0.78	Moderate
Job satisfaction	2.80	0.82	Moderate

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The descriptive results in Table 2 indicate that workplace stress was, on the whole, moderate to high, with an overall mean of 3.19. Workload pressure recorded the highest mean (3.38), followed by work-life conflict (3.30) and role ambiguity (3.12), while interpersonal strain recorded the lowest mean (2.96), indicating that demands and their intrusion on personal life were the most acute sources of stress, while workplace relations were comparatively better (WHO, 2021). Job satisfaction recorded a below-midpoint mean (2.80), indicating that employees were, on balance, not satisfied—consistent with the elevated stress and the concerns that motivated the study (Muhamad et al., 2023). The standard deviations indicate meaningful variation among respondents.

6.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation was computed to establish the strength and direction of the relationships between the sources of workplace stress and job satisfaction (Table 3). As anticipated, the correlations were negative, indicating that greater stress is associated with lower job satisfaction.

Variable	Job Satisfaction (r)	Sig. (p)
Work-life conflict	−0.62	0.000
Workload pressure	−0.60	0.000
Role ambiguity	−0.52	0.000
Interpersonal strain	−0.49	0.000
Overall workplace stress	−0.66	0.000

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The correlation results in Table 3 show that all four sources of stress were negatively and significantly associated with job satisfaction at the 0.01 level (Christopher, Moses, Enosh Muhindo, et al., 2022). Overall workplace stress correlated strongly and negatively with job satisfaction ($r = -0.66$, $p < 0.01$), confirming that stress reduces satisfaction, consistent with the job demands-resources model and person-environment fit theory (Robbins & Judge, 2021). Work-

life conflict recorded the strongest negative association ($r = -0.62$), underscoring the corrosive effect of work intruding on personal life, followed closely by workload pressure ($r = -0.60$). Role ambiguity ($r = -0.52$) and interpersonal strain ($r = -0.49$) were also significant, though more moderate (Winny, Ariyo, et al., 2023). The consistently negative pattern supports the study's central proposition.

6.4 Structural (Path) Model and Path Coefficients

A structural path model was estimated to determine the combined explanatory power of the sources of workplace stress and the standardised path coefficients linking each to job satisfaction. Because stress reduces satisfaction, the path coefficients are negative. Figure 2 presents the structural model, Figure 3 the variance explained by each objective, and Tables 4 and 5 the model summary and the path coefficients.

Path Model: Workplace Stress → Job Satisfaction

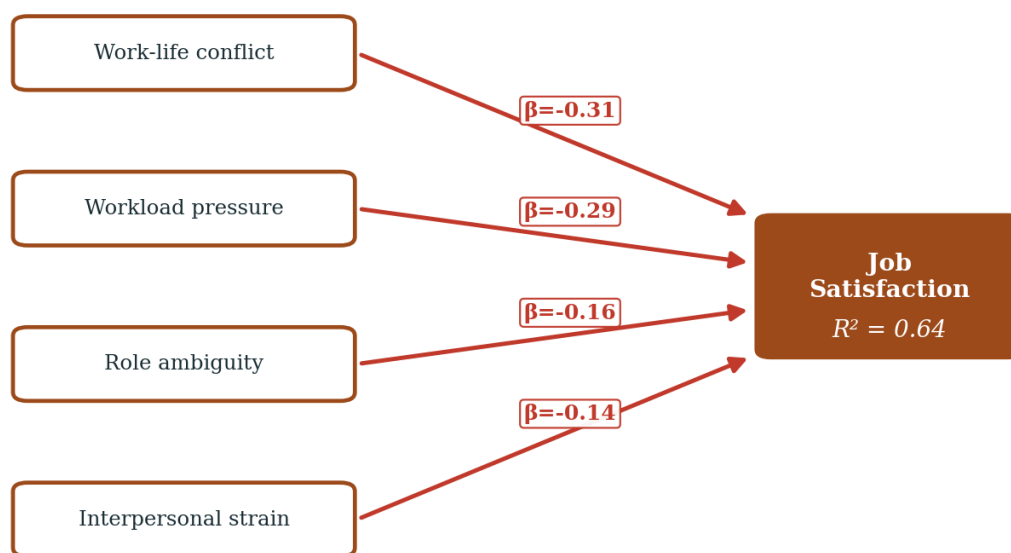


Figure 2: Structural model of workplace stress and job satisfaction showing standardised (negative) path coefficients (β) and $R^2 = 0.64$.

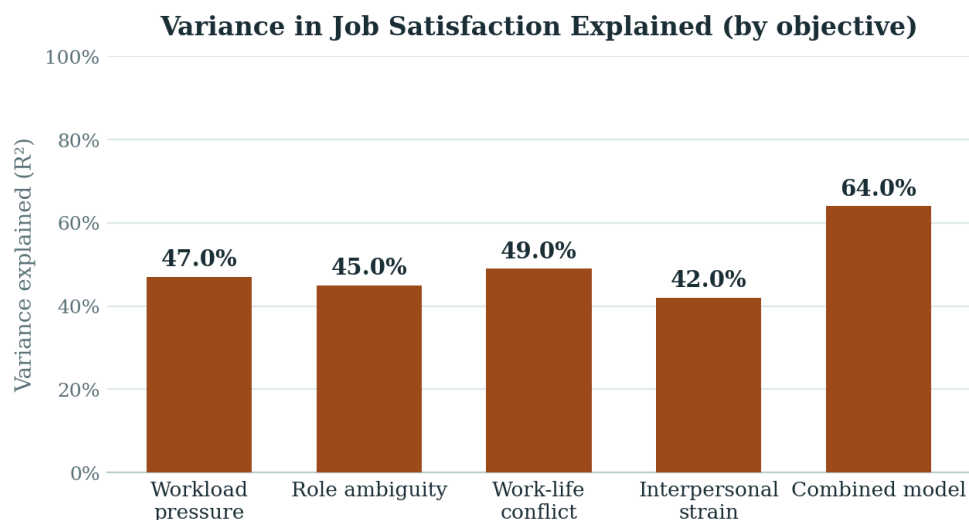


Figure 3: Variance in job satisfaction explained across the study objectives.

Model Summary	Value		
R	0.800		
R Square	0.640		
Adjusted R Square	0.631		
Std. Error of Estimate	0.447		
F (4, 160)	71.11 (p = 0.000)		
Path (Predictor → Job satisfaction)	Path coeff. (β)	t	Sig. (p)
Work-life conflict → Job satisfaction	−0.31	−4.56	0.000
Workload pressure → Job satisfaction	−0.29	−4.20	0.000
Role ambiguity → Job satisfaction	−0.16	−2.56	0.011
Interpersonal strain → Job satisfaction	−0.14	−2.24	0.026

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The structural model summary in Table 4 indicates that the four sources of workplace stress jointly explained 64.0% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.640$), a large proportion that establishes workplace stress as a major determinant of job satisfaction. The model was highly significant ($F(4, 160) = 71.11, p < 0.01$) (Christopher, Moses, Enosh Muhindo, et al., 2022). The remaining 36.0% of variance is attributable to factors outside the model, such as pay, recognition, career prospects, and individual differences (Robbins & Judge, 2021).

The standardised path coefficients in Table 5, visualised in Figure 2, clarify the relative strength of each structural path; all are negative, reflecting the harmful influence of stress on job satisfaction (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, et al., 2022). The path from work-life conflict to job satisfaction was the strongest ($\beta = -0.31, p < 0.01$), demonstrating

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that the intrusion of work demands into personal and family life has the greatest adverse influence on satisfaction, since it generates strain and resentment that colour employees' appraisal of their jobs (Robbins & Judge, 2021). The path from workload pressure followed ($\beta = -0.29$, $p < 0.01$), confirming that excessive demands materially reduce satisfaction by exhausting employees (WHO, 2021). The paths from role ambiguity ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < 0.05$) and interpersonal strain ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.05$) were negative and significant but more modest (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023).

7.0 Discussion of Results

The findings of this study confirm that workplace stress is strongly and significantly associated with reduced job satisfaction at Mityana Town Council, and the combination of factor analysis and the structural model clarifies both the structure of stress and the relative harm of each source. The factor analysis established that stress is genuinely multidimensional, with work-life conflict emerging as the dominant factor, and this was mirrored in the structural model, in which work-life conflict was the strongest harmful path ($\beta = -0.31$). This convergence is theoretically coherent and practically significant: the job demands-resources model holds that demands which deplete employees reduce their wellbeing and satisfaction, and the finding that work-life conflict most strongly reduces satisfaction confirms that the boundary between work and personal life is a critical site of stress (Robbins & Judge, 2021). The interviews reinforced this, with employees describing difficulty balancing work demands with family responsibilities. The strong harmful effect of workload pressure ($\beta = -0.29$) confirms that excessive demands relative to time and resources are a major source of dissatisfaction, consistent with the recognition that overload exhausts employees and erodes their sense of accomplishment (WHO, 2021). The convergence of work-life conflict and workload pressure being both the highest-rated stressors and the two strongest harmful paths is the most important pattern in the results: it identifies these as the priorities for intervention, since they are both the most prevalent and the most damaging.

The more modest but significant harmful contributions of role ambiguity ($\beta = -0.16$) and interpersonal strain ($\beta = -0.14$) are theoretically instructive. That interpersonal strain was the lowest-rated stressor and the weakest harmful path suggests that workplace relations at the council were comparatively healthy, and that the principal stressors were structural—arising from workload and its intrusion on life—rather than relational. This directs attention to job design and workload management rather than interpersonal interventions as the primary levers for improving satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2021).

8.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that workplace stress has a strong, negative, and significant relationship with job satisfaction at Mityana Town Council, with work-life conflict and workload pressure being the most harmful sources. It is recommended that the council support work-life balance through reasonable hours and flexibility where feasible (Robbins & Judge, 2021); manage workloads through adequate staffing and realistic demands (WHO, 2021); clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations to reduce ambiguity; and maintain healthy workplace relations. Investment in employee wellbeing and stress-management support is recommended. Future research could employ objective indicators and longitudinal designs to further establish causality.

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