

**EMPLOYEE STRESS AND WORKERS' PRODUCTIVITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE OF
KITIMBWA SUB COUNTY**

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at employee stress and workers' productivity in the public sector with a case study of Kitimbwa sub county and it was guided by the following objectives; To examine the relationship between Employee Stress and Employee Performance in Kitimbwa Sub County, to investigate the causes of employee stress in Kitimbwa sub county and to assess the strategies to manage employee stress in Kitimbwa Sub County. The researcher used a cross-sectional survey design

The targeted population of the study was the employees working at Kitimbwa Sub County Head Quarters totaling to 543 (Kitimbwa Sub County Human Resource Report, 2015). Both temporary and permanent staffs were targeted. The selection of the sample was based on the fact that staff in different offices of Kitimbwa Sub County were experiencing different working conditions and different stress levels which have influence on response to the study instrument. The findings indicated a non-significant negative relationship between organizational climate stressors and employee performance ($r=-0.85$). The results of the analysis were inconsistent with the study hypothesis which predicted a significant relationship between employee stress and employee performance in Kitimbwa Sub County and this implied that there was no relationship between employee stress and employee performance. It is recommended that to increase employee performance in all types of businesses, managers need to identify organization climate stressors and design clear mechanisms for eliminating the possible organization climate stressors among the work force. Specifically, organizations should carry out regular climate surveys among staff with the aim of identifying work environment related issues and the corresponding mitigation measures

Key words: employee stress, workers, productivity and public sector

Background of the Study

Employee stress is a worldwide phenomenon that raises adverse performance, health and generally, well-being concerns in several organizations (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). It is being referred to as a worldwide problem that impacts on individual and institutional performance (Musaibah et al., 2023). Employee stress causes a number of conditions and symptoms, most of which damage health and well-being of employees thus affecting their productivity and job performance (Paul & Kazaara, 2023).

However, a certain amount of stress is linked to good performance and possibly good employee health. According to the WHO Report (2015), employee stress has both psychological and physiological stresses. Physiological stress is described as the body's reaction to a number of stressful causes at the workplace that negatively affect employees' performance (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Komunda, 2022).

Received: 09.10.2023

Accepted: 13.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

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The Bureau of Labor Statistics' study conducted in Canada, 2017 found that the rise in employee stress was responsible for the estimated \$10,000 spent annually per worker. An estimation of \$10 to \$20 billion is wasted among the top executives of the nation every year through early death, hospitalization and absence of employees (Musaibah et al., 2023). Much of it is a direct result of employee stress (Bureau of Statistics Report, Canada, 2017). Employees do not want to admit to being stressed (US. Department of Labor Statistics Issue, September 2019). Medical journals and institutions refer to stress as the cause of 60-90% of deaths with the main contributor being stress on the job. About 75% of employees worldwide indicate that their jobs are so stressful and 65% of organizations are taking measures to regulate stress in their lives (Oromo et al., 2023).

Sub counties were created by the Act of Parliament in 2016 with the objective of transforming the local governments. The transformation agenda which includes; improving and upgrading of the Sub County's road network, economic and political empowerment of the grass root communities, upgrading of health supporting service delivery (Racheal et al., 2023), decongestion of the Education services in the Sub County by relocating some Schools to residential areas to be easily accessed and also enhance security in the Sub County, has been taking place in the for the last 4 years (Strategic Plan for Kitimbwa Sub County 2014/2015, 2018/2019).

Statement of the Problem

Incidences of employee stress manifested themselves among Kitimbwa Sub County employees and this has had adverse effects for Kitimbwa Sub County and the individual employees (Ntirandekura, Friday, et al., 2022). The adverse effects are manifested in the prevalence in instances of poor working relationships, failure of some staff to provide backup support to each other and failing to meet deadlines on some critical projects (Paul & Kazaara, 2023). The stressful work environment has fostered counterproductive behaviour among the Kitimbwa Sub County employees and as a result some managers are hesitant to delegate duties to their subordinates (Emmanuel et al., 2023). Some Kitimbwa Sub County employees are overworked and cases of role conflict and ambiguity among employees are observed specifically, in the functions where there are co-shared responsibilities and in case of errors, counter accusations had been noted (Kitimbwa Sub County, July report 2015 circulated via email on 20th August 2015) (Ninsiima et al., 2023). Furthermore, career development for staff is not streamlined. This is because there are few positions at the top and most of them are filled. In situations where an opening was created it is normally filled by an external person who had limited chances of upward mobility (Kitimbwa Sub County Approved Structure, March, 2012). In addition, the training budget does not favor career development as it only allows few employees to get an opportunity to train comprehensively in their areas of jurisdiction (Kitimbwa Sub County Management Executive Committee (MEC) minutes, July 2015). The prevalence of employee stress may have caused a

Received: 09.10.2023

Accepted: 13.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

significant level of disruption in the operations of Kitimbwa Sub County (Isaac et al., 2023). This is evidenced by reduced staff productivity, poor service delivery and cases of shoddy work noted in some sectors (Faridah, Kazaara, et al., 2023). In response to the above situation management devised and implemented a performance management system to help track staff performance and employee stress mitigation measures like aerobics, gym for staff, wellness program (Victoria et al., 2023), counseling sessions and team building activities. However, lapses in staff performance are

still being observed at various levels of Kitimbwa Sub County (Performance Management Cycle 2 Report, 2014), which may be due to occupational stress. There is no evidence to show that an empirical study into the causes of employee stress and its impact to employee performance in Kitimbwa Sub County is available. It is against this background that the study seeks to explore the relationship between employee stress and employee performance among employees in Kitimbwa Sub County (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Nturanabo, 2022).

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between Employee Stress and Employee Performance in Kitimbwa Sub County
2. To investigate the causes of employee stress in Kitimbwa sub county
3. To assess the strategies to manage employee stress in Kitimbwa Sub County

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher used a cross-sectional survey design. According to Olsen and Marie (2014), a cross-sectional survey design is one which collects data to make inferences about a population of interest at one point in time and can help remove assumptions. The study collected both quantitative and qualitative sets of data. Quantitative data was used to establish and describe the relationships between the study variables. This is consistent with Amin (2015) who maintains that quantitative designs are plans for carrying out research oriented towards quantification and are applied in order to describe current conditions or to investigate relationships, including cause and effect relationships. Qualitative data provided the researcher with the in-depth understanding of the targeted population of the meaning and causes of employee stress and its relationship with Job performance in Kitimbwa Sub County.

Study Population

The targeted population of the study was the employees working at Kitimbwa Sub County Head Quarters totaling to 543 (Kitimbwa Sub County Human Resource Report, 2015). Both temporary and permanent staffs were targeted.

Received: 09.10.2023

Accepted: 13.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

The selection of the sample was based on the fact that staff in different offices of Kitimbwa Sub County were experiencing different working conditions and different stress levels which have influence on response to the study instrument.

Sample Size

The researcher determined the sample size using Krejcie and Morgan (2010) sample size determining table. Using the above table, the sample size was estimated at 196 from the total population of 543 Kitimbwa Sub County staff, confidence level of 95% and error of margin of 5%. The sample size of 196 was expected to provide the adequate representation of the views and opinions of the targeted population that can be relied upon to draw valid conclusions. This was in agreement with Roscoe (2015), as cited in Industrial/Organizational Solutions (2010), the sample size between 30 – 500 respondents in any given study would be appropriate. The sample size was 226 as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

Staff Level	Population	Sample	Sampling Technique
Top administrative staff	28	4	Purposive sampling
Managers	25	5	
Assistant officer	19	10	
Supervisor	64	25	Simple random sampling
Officers and contractors	159	50	
Support and contract Staff	218	102	
Total	513	196	

Source: Primary Data (2022).

Researcher's construct based on reference to Kitimbwa Sub County Staff List

Sampling techniques and procedures

The researcher used two sampling techniques to select respondents from the targeted population. The sampling techniques included purposive sampling and random Sampling since they were relevant to the study and enabled the researcher to extract a representative fraction of the targeted population. The researcher employed purposive sampling to select respondents from the strata of Kitimbwa Sub County top administrative staff, managers and assistant officers considering that purposive sampling can't reach the targeted sample quickly and it is easy to get a sample of respondents with the intended characteristics as proposed by (Rubin & Rubin, 2015) as cited in Richard, Grinnell, Yvonne, and Unrau (2010).

Received: 09.10.2023

Accepted: 13.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

Data Collection Instruments

Self-administered questionnaire

Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data due to its wide range of merits which included; allowing one to gather data from a large, representative sample of respondents, at low cost. That is to say, costs of training, hiring and employing skilled interviewed are not incurred and the instrument is familiar to most people and therefore easy to administer (Sedgwick, 2014; Uma, 2011). Secondly, there is no worry of interviewer bias. Complex questions can be asked with a Self-Administered Questionnaire and answered genuinely since the questionnaire offers anonymity and avoided answers that please the interviewee and/or those that make them feel uncomfortable. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section collected the personal data of the respondent. The second section measured employee stress and the third section measured employee performance. The items in section two and three was open ended and was measured on the 5-point Likert response scale ranging from (1) never to (5) always.

Interview guide

The interview guide was used to collect qualitative data. The interview guide was used because according to Huberman (2014), a guide provides in-depth information from the respondents. Interviewees were probed and the interview guide being rich in detail, information obtained helped supplement data from the self-administered questionnaires (Mugenda & Mugenda 2019).

Data Analysis

Analysis of Quantitative Data

The process starts by checking of questionnaires if they were acceptable or not. This was followed by data editing to detect errors and omissions and coding to be able to put limited numbers in limited categories. The data is then classified according to the class intervals and attributes. It was then tabulated in such a way that correlations could be derived to establish the relationship between the study variable, graphical representation of data from the questionnaire, frequency tables for meaningful interpretation of the study.

The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 20) was used for processing and analysis of quantitative data (Nelson et al., 2022). SPSS was opted for this study because it allowed several data sets to be loaded into it easily. It provides a range of tools used for analyzing data and interfaces with other programs like excel thus making data management and analysis very easy (Kothari & Garg, 2014). Frequencies, percentages and cross tabulations were run to describe the sample. Objectives 1-3 was analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient test to establish the relationship between the study variables. Finally, the regression analysis was run

Received: 09.10.2023

Accepted: 13.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

to determine the level of influence of employee stress on employee performance.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected using the interview guide. The data was collected, edited, organized, analyzed and displayed using the Meta matrices consistent with (Huberman, 2014). The matrices outlined respondent's perceptions regarding causes of stress, impact of stress on staff performance and the possible measures of stress in the. From the meta matrices the researcher was able to derive themes and subthemes regarding causes, impact and mitigation measures of occupational stress.

RESULTS

Table 2: Respondents by Position in the Organization

Levels in the organization	Frequency	Percentage
Director	1	1%
Manager	2	1%
Supervisor	20	14%
Officer	70	48%
Support staff	36	25%
Assistant Officer	16	11%
Total	145	100%

Source: Primary Data

N=145

Table 2 indicates that the respondents included directors, managers, supervisors, officers, assistant officers and support staff which imply that all levels in Kitimbwa Sub County were represented. However, the majority of the respondents were officers accounting for 49% of the total sample. Support staff accounted for 25 % in the second position and directors were the least accounting for 1%.

Relationship between employee stress and employee performance.

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of the Relationship between Employee stress and Employee Performance

Received: 09.10.2023

Accepted: 13.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

		Climate Stressor	Employee Performance
Climate Stressor	Pearson Correlation	1	-.085
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.392
	N	116	103
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	-.085	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.392	
	N		

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation moment results in Table 3 above indicates a non-significant negative relationship between organizational climate stressors and employee performance ($r=-0.085$) (Nelson et al., 2023). The results of the analysis are inconsistent with the study hypothesis which predicted a significant relationship between employee stress and employee performance in Kitimbwa Sub County. This implies that there is no relationship between employee stress and employee performance. When employee stress increase employees' performance decreases and vice versa. Therefore, there is no relationship between employee stress and employee performance in Kitimbwa Sub County. The results suggest that improving employee performance can be achieved through eliminating the employee stress (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Komunda, 2022). Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that there is a significant relationship between organizational climate stressors and employee performance is rejected.

Causes of employee stress in Organizations

Table 4 showing the causes of employee stress

Causes of employee stress	Response											
	Strongly agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Stress is caused by factors such as work overload with no accompanying compensation by the employer	73	50	32	22	32	22	9	6	-	-	145	100
Over crowdedness at the place of work causes employee stress because they loss their space and	90	62	48	33	7	5	-	-	-	-	145	100

Received: 09.10.2023

Accepted: 13.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

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sense of privacy and they subconsciously become stressed up												
employee stress is caused by other factors such as generating of loud noises by machines and arousal, and conflicts among the employees and employer due to poor or inadequate decisions	109	75	29	20	-	-	7	5	-	-	145	100
Employee stress is also caused by transition made on personal lives and other personal factors such as family and marital problems	102	70	29	20	-	-	15	10	-	-	145	100
Employee stress is also caused by organizational factors such as role uncertainty, poor working conditions and role ambiguity among others	73	50	58	40	-	-	15	10	-	-	145	100

Source: Primary data 2022

From the table 4 above, it can be observed that 73 (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that stress is caused by factors such as work overload with no accompanying compensation by the employer 32 (22%) agreed, 32 (22%) were not sure and 9 (6%) disagreed. It therefore implies that Stress is caused by factors such as work overload with no accompanying compensation by the employer (Wegulo et al., 2023)

90 (62%) strongly agreed to the assertion that child poverty robs a child of his/her childhood and pushes them into employment to survive, 48 (33%) agreed; while 7 (5%) were not sure. This therefore implies that Over crowdedness at the place of work causes employee stress because they loss their space and sense of privacy and they subconsciously become stressed up (Faith et al., 2023)

It can also be observed that 109 (75%) of the sample strongly agreed that employee stress is caused by other factors such as generating of loud noises by machines and arousal, and conflicts among the employees and employer due to poor or inadequate decisions, 29 (20%) agreed to the assertion and 7 (5%) disagreed. This implies that indeed employee stress is caused by other factors such as generating of loud noises by machines and arousal, and conflicts among the employees and employer due to poor or inadequate decisions since the majority agreed to the assertion (Faridah, Jacob, et al., 2023).

102 (70%) of the sample strongly agreed that Employee stress is also caused by transition made on personal lives and other personal factors such as family and marital problems, 29 (20%) agreed to the assertion and 15 (10%) disagreed to the assertion. It can conclusively be stated that employee stress is also caused by transition made on personal lives and other personal factors such as family and marital problems (Musaibah et al., 2023).

Received: 13.10.2023

Accepted: 15.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

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73 (50%) strongly agreed that employee stress is also caused by organizational factors such as role uncertainty, poor working conditions and role ambiguity among others 58 (40%), 15 (10%) were not sure and 4 (8%) disagreed. It can therefore imply that Employee stress is also caused by organizational factors such as role uncertainty, poor working conditions and role ambiguity among others (Emmanuel et al., 2023)

Strategies to manage employee stress

Table 5. Strategies to manage employee stress

Strategies to manage employee stress	Response											
	Strongly agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Managers should frequently check the employees' health and work fulfillment. This will help to reduce on the employee stress	109	75	36	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	145	100
Management should conduct a number of recreational activities and event as a motivational inspirational aspect within the organization	116	80	29	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	145	100
Human resource should structure the work provided for employees by concentrating on demands, know-how, method and skills of employees	130	90	15	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	145	100
Employees should be trained with up-to-date skills in handling work problems to be able to perform their job properly and monitor their development	138	95	7	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	145	100
Encourage employees to take time management and decision-making courses to help them enhance the confidence at work and capability of doing their work in a good manner	109	75	36	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	145	100

Source: primary data 2022

Table 5 shows that 109 (75%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that managers should frequently check the employees' health and work fulfillment. This will help to reduce on the employee stress, while 36 (25%) agreed that Managers should frequently check the employees' health and work fulfillment. This will help to reduce on the employee stress. None of the respondents disagreed and none was not sure. It implies that indeed, managers should

frequently check the employees' health and work fulfillment. This will help to reduce on the employee stress (Moses et al., 2022)

116 (80%) strongly agreed that Management should conduct a number of recreational activities and event as a motivational inspirational aspect within the organization and 29 (20%) of the respondents agreed and no one disagreed while all the respondents were sure of their respondents. This implies that indeed Management should conduct a number of recreational activities and event as a motivational inspirational aspect within the organization (Ntirandekura, Ainebyoona, et al., 2022)

130 (90%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Human resource should structure the work provided for employees by concentrating on demands, know-how, method and skills of employees, while 15 (10%) of the respondents agreed that Human resource should structure the work provided for employees by concentrating on demands, know-how, method and skills of employees; implying that indeed Human resource should structure the work provided for employees by concentrating on demands, know-how, method and skills of employees (Allan et al., 2023)

138 (95%) of the respondents strongly agreed that child labour exposes children to the consumption of harmful substances like marijuana, cocaine etc girls are forced to delay and postpone any plans for their future in order to raise their child, while 7 (5%) of the respondents agreed that indeed Employees should be trained with up-to-date skills in handling work problems to be able to perform their jobs properly and monitor their development (Wegulo et al., 2023).

Further still, 109 (75%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that these female child labourers who give birth go through many physical changes: from adolescent physical adjustment to having to adapt to the ever changing shape of her body through the pregnancy and her postpartum figure, while 36 (25%) agreed that Encourage employees to take time management and decision making courses to help them enhance their confidence at work and capability of doing their work in a good manner None of the respondents disagreed and none was not sure. It implies that indeed Encourage employees to take time management and decision-making courses to help them enhance their confidence at work and capability of doing their work in a good manner (Emmanuel et al., 2023)

Conclusions

The study findings revealed that the presence of organization climate stressors in an organization result into low staff productivity and eventually low performance of the employees as individuals and as an organization as a whole eventually. Therefore, it is recommended that to increase employee performance in all types of businesses, managers need to identify organization climate stressors and design clear mechanisms for eliminating the possible organization climate stressors among the work force. Specifically, organizations should carry out regular climate

Received: 13.10.2023

Accepted: 15.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

surveys among staff with the aim of identifying work environment related issues and the corresponding mitigation measures.

Recommendations

It is recommended that to increase employee performance in all types of businesses, managers need to identify organization climate stressors and design clear mechanisms for eliminating the possible organization climate stressors among the work force. Specifically, organizations should carry out regular climate surveys among staff with the aim of identifying work environment related issues and the corresponding mitigation measures.

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Received: 13.10.2023

Accepted: 15.10.2023

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Received: 13.10.2023

Accepted: 15.10.2023

Published on: 30.10.2023

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