



**STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOURCES OF OCCUPATION
STRESS ON JOB PERFORMANCE AND IMPLICATIONS
ON CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP**

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Abstract:

Occupational stress has become a vital issue to address in faith-based organizations because of its detrimental impact on job performance. In Christian higher institutions, where faith is integrated into teaching and learning processes the wellbeing of employees is required to accomplish the mission of the university. The purpose of this study is to examine the perception of staff on the sources of occupational stress so that appropriate measures are put in place to improve workers' wellbeing and productivity. This study is based on quantitative research conducted in two conveniently selected Christian universities in Kenya. Data was collected through a questionnaire based on open and close-ended questions. The descriptive survey design was used for the study while regression analysis was used to test the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Census survey sampling was used to determine the participants in the study. The total sample for the study was 158; comprising of full-time administrative and academic staff. The major sources of occupational stress include excessive workload ($P = .016, < .05$), inconducive work environment ($P=.009, < .05$), inadequate financial payment ($P=.000, < .05$), students' disruptive behaviour ($P=.000, < .05$), and job

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dissatisfaction ($P=.029, <.05$). Based on the outcome of the study, specific recommendations to cope with stress in the workplace were made.

Keywords: occupational stress, perception, employees, job performance, sources of stress

1. Introduction

Occupational stress has become a global issue that calls for adequate measures to manage its threat to employee's well-being and productivity in the workplace. *"Our daily lives are fraught with various stressors and we often need to interact with others while under the influence of stress both at the workplace and in our private lives"* (Tomova et al., 2014, p. 96). Many studies across the globe show that stress affects job performance. For instance, stress survey conducted in the United Kingdom among employees in selected organizations proved that occupational stress cause employees: loss of sleep, anxiety at work and disrupted concentration at work (Perkbox, 2018). Similarly, research conducted in India among faculty members in B-Schools showed that stress leads to a high rate of absenteeism, poor performance, job dissatisfaction, high medical bills, increased errors in memoranda, lateness to work and low productivity (Banerjee & Mehta, 2016). Furthermore, a study in America reported that 80% of employees feel stressed by their current job with nearly half of the employees deducing that they need help in managing stress (The American Institute of Stress, 2017).

In Africa, stress has also been noticed among employees. For example, a study among employees in six selected universities in Kenya indicated that academic staff with more administrative responsibilities experienced burnout more than colleagues with less administrative tasks (Mbogo, 2016). Conversely, a study in Open Distance Learning University in South Africa exemplified that administrative staff experience a high level of stress caused by personal growth opportunities while academic staff experienced higher stress due to work overload and job insecurity (Poalses & Bezuidenhout, 2018).

In Christian universities where faith is integrated into teaching and learning processes, work-related factors may cause stress that may affect job performance. According to Gillespie et al.;

"University staff plays a vital role in the creation and development of knowledge and innovation, in addition to education and training. It is well documented that high levels of occupational stress, left unchecked and unmanaged, undermine the quality, productivity and creativity of employees' work." (2001, p. 55)

It takes healthy workers to offer quality services to make an organization to flourish. When employees are affected by work-related stress it affects their wellbeing and lowers their productivity. The purpose of this paper is therefore to examine the perception of staff on the sources of occupational stress and its implication on job performance. The study will offer a guide to employees and leaders on the sources of

occupational stress so that appropriate measures are put in place in coping with stress in the workplace.

2. Sources of Occupational Stress

Occupational stress is mental or emotional strain caused by work-related factors. It is based on work demand and other related factors within the work environment that are detrimental to workers' life and productivity in the workplace. Stress can lead to a change in the behavior of a person. An employee, who is effective in their daily engagement in the workplace, may suddenly change because of stress. This may be caused by internal and external factors within and outside the organization. Cole and Kelly aver that:

“The main sources of stress at work are located in number groupings. They may arise from environmental factors, job and organizational factors (including the organizational culture), workplace relationships, domestic situations, or personality factors.” (2011, p. 158)

If the relationship in the workplace among bosses and colleagues is not good, it can cause stress to an employee. Also, employees can experience stress in the workplace based on organizational culture when they do not like the leadership style of their supervisor. This may cause unnecessary anxiety at work that can hinder their effective performance. Furthermore, the insufficient remuneration of employees based on the domestic situation of an organization can hinder the flow of funds to take care of basic needs. This can affect employees' ability to concentrate at work.

Different authors and organizations have analyzed the concept of occupational stress. The World Health Organization (2019) describes work-related hazards as work contents and context. Contents include workload or too little work, lack of participation in active decision making, long working hours, and time pressure to accomplish a given task. The context may include insecurity, low payment, low social value, lack of promotion, unfair performance evaluation system, poor relationship with supervisors, no career development opportunities, lack of clarity about organizational objectives and harassment or violence. Both the context and content features have negative effects on workers' health and productivity. Bickford (2005) affirm that:

“Stress in the workplace is a growing concern in the current economy, where employees increasingly face conditions of overwork, job insecurity, low level of job satisfaction, and lack of autonomy. Workplace stress has shown to have a detrimental effect on the health and well-being of employees, as well as a negative impact on workplace productivity and profits.” (Bickford, 2005, p. 2)

To manage the increasing challenges faced by workers requires proactive measures by employees and leaders of an organization to cope with occupational stress.

Staff is required to take precaution because they are the first casualty of occupational stress. Salleh illustrated that:

“Stress affects everyone, young and old, rich and poor. Life is full of stress. Stress is an everyday fact of life that we must all deal with. It comes in all shapes and sizes; even our thoughts can cause us stress and make the human body more susceptible to illness.” (Salleh, 2008, p. 12)

Developing a personal mechanism in managing stress will help individual employees to live a healthy life as they carry out their daily duties. Rafael and Javari state that:

“Human performance in organizations reflects on the knowledge, skills, behavior, and values. Since the abilities and skills will help the organization to better performance and productivity, any expenditure on education and development is a long-term investment that the organization can benefit from.” (Rafael & Javari, 2015, p. 35)

To foster effective performance among workers in Christian institutions of higher education requires leaders' knowledge of human fragility; this enables leaders to treat every employee with love and care. Subsequently, it enables leaders to examine the work environment to ensure it is safe enough for every employee to carry out their respective duties. Furthermore, it enables leaders to establish rules in managing occupational stress in the workplace for the well-being and effectiveness of the workforce. Lastly, it enables leaders to invest on a long-term basis in managing occupational stress.

Stress is viewed by many authors in terms of positive and negative perspectives. The negative aspects are dominated in literature. In response to the positive perspective, many authors argued that some employees are motivated to work better when they are under pressure but warn that continuous exposure to stress is harmful to the human body. It is advisable not to expose the body to continuous stress because it can cause extreme tiredness and illnesses that can be harmful to an employee's wellbeing. Subsequently, the negative perspective of stress is caused by life-threatening circumstances that affect an employee physiologically and psychologically. This can result in a change in behavior and low productivity (Graham & Bennetti 1998; Salleh, 2008; Bressert, 2016; Champoux, 2006).

The positive stress is called 'eustress' while the negative stress is called 'distress'. Mills et al. (2019) claim that a major characteristic of eustress is based on the feeling of excitement. Eustress only lasts for a short time, while the characteristics of distress are based on the feeling of anxiety, an inability to cope with work demands, unpleasant feelings, decreased performance and mental and physical problems.

International Labour Organization (ILO) research survey (2016) listed the implications of stress on humanity and the global economy:

“Work-related stress cost global society untold billions in direct and indirect cost annually. And that is quite apart from the human price paid in misery, suffering, and suicide. For instance, in Japan, 32.4% of workers reported suffering from strong anxiety, worries, and stress from work. In Europe, the estimated cost of work-related depression is £617 billion a year which includes the costs to employer’s absenteeism and loss of productivity.” (ILO, 2016)

According to the survey, the effects of occupational stress have caused lots of problems to employee's health and lower productivity across the globe. The problems caused by occupational stress are not limited to some specific organizations. Moreover, administrative and academic staff in higher institutions suffers from stress caused by occupational stress. For example:

Gillespie et al. (2001) carried out a longitudinal study among 22 focus groups with a total sample of 178. This comprised 74 academic and 104 general staff in 15 Australian universities. The outcome of the study disclosed five sources of occupational stress this consist of lack of resources support services, work overload, poor management practice, insufficient recognition and reward, and job insecurity. Subsequently, the study also showed that occupational stress affects the physical and psychological health of employees. It leads to interpersonal conflicts and absenteeism in the workplace.

Ahsan, et al. (2009) adopt a mixed-method approach to investigate the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. Three hundred respondents were selected in a public university in Klang Valley area of Malaysia. The main determinant of job stress is associated with workload pressure, homework interface, role ambiguity, and performance pressure. The first outcome of multiple linear regression analysis shows that there is a significant relationship between workload and job stress, $B=0.283$, ($q=0.001$). This implies that the more an employee is exposed to work overload the higher the chance of experiencing high job stress. The second outcome of multiple linear regression analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between homework interface and job stress with $\beta = 0.218$, ($q=0.01$). The third outcome of multiple linear regression analysis showed that there is a significant association with role ambiguity and job stress at $\beta=0.180$, ($q=0.01$). The last multiple regression analysis indicated that there is a significant association with performance pressure and job stress at $\beta=0.209$, ($q=0.001$). In response to job stress and satisfaction, the study concluded that there is a significant effect of job stress on job satisfaction depicted by the P-values ($p<0.01$).

Masuku and Muchemwa (2015) conducted quantitative research among 36 full-time lecturers at a particular Christian university in Zimbabwe. The study found out that the main cause of stress is workload. This is caused by meeting up with deadlines and long working hours. Further, the study statistically tested the relationship between stress symptoms across subgroups such as gender, age position, and faculty. The outcome of the test revealed that there is no significant difference in response to stress across subgroups. This implies that stress affects everyone irrespective of gender, age and position in Christian universities.

The sources of occupational stress include excessive workload, inadequate financial payment, job dissatisfaction, inconducive working environment, and disruptive behavior in school caused by students who are arrogant and disrespectful to staff. Studies have showed that occupational stress affect job performance because it leads to disrupted concentration at work, lateness to work, absenteeism, low productivity and loss of motivation (Perkbox 2018; Benerjee & Mehta 2016; America- America Institute of Stress, 2018; Petretomodes 2002 and Mbogo, 2016). Figure 1 illustrates the major sources of occupational stress and how they affect job performance.

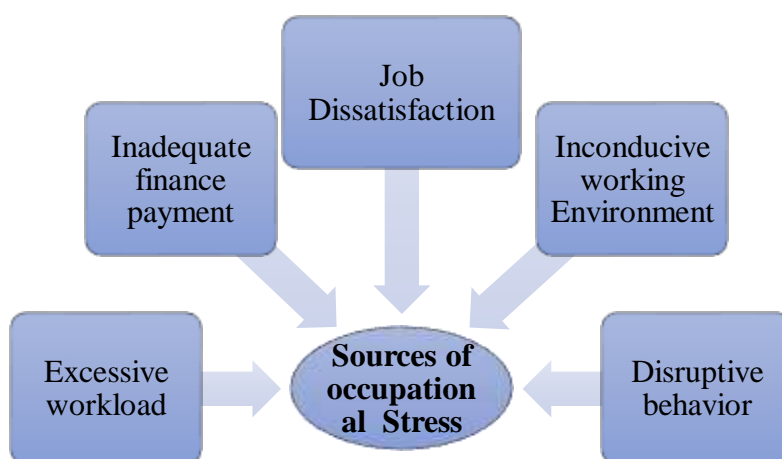


Figure 1: Sources of Occupational Stress

2.1 Explanation of the Components of the Sources of Occupational Stress

- 1) **Excessive workload:** This is when employees have lots of work to accomplish within a specific time. This prevents them from making proper use of their time of a break to relax the body and therefore they spend long working hours to meet up with work targets. The workload can be quantified in terms of the amount of work assigned to employees to carry out within a specific period of time. In addition, it can be qualified when the workload exceeds the required energy, skills, and knowledge to carry out the work successfully (Kendall et al., 2000).
- 2) **Inadequate financial payments to employees:** The inability of employers to pay workers in due time to cater for their basic needs. Inadequate financial reward is identified by Ali et al. (2014) as one of the sources of occupational stress among employees in private universities. This may arise when an employee receives little pay irrespective of the degree of the work they do. It may also occur when an employee does not receive salaries at the appropriate time to cater for basic needs.
- 3) **Inconducive working environment:** This is when the work environment is not sufficient to bring about good results or high productivity. It is related to environmental pollution and a lack of adequate facilities to make work easy. Hassard and Cox (2017) identify noise as a common attribute associated with the physical environment. It was discovered that employees in the office setting are

stressed by noise caused by calls and the phone ringing. The implication of this affects employees' well-being and performance in the workplace.

- 4) **Job dissatisfaction:** This is lack of satisfaction with a current job based on work demand and other related factors within the organization that is not conducive for employees. This may arise as a result of change in the organizational structure whereby an employee is assigned to a new phase of work that they are not familiar with. There is a strong correlation between dimensions of workplace, stress, and job satisfaction. High levels of work stress are associated with low levels of job satisfaction. Job stressors are predictive for dissatisfaction and greater propensity to leave the organization (Hoboubi et al., 2016, p. 61).
- 5) **Students' disruptive behavior:** This is caused by students' disrespectful attitudes towards employees in the school. Lopes et al. (2012) aver that:

"Many teachers find it difficult to handle classroom disruptions caused by students who cannot regulate their impulsive tendencies and emotional reactions effectively, or who cannot sustain the motivation for studying. This problem is likely to contribute to high levels of occupational stress among teachers" (p. 711)

Student's disruptive behavior is observed in school when students are not motivated to learn through a commitment to reading and accomplishing their school assignments in due time. This may result in poor academic performance and delay in the submission of final grades by lecturers.

2.2 Gender Response to Occupational Stress

Different factors are used to illustrate the differences in stress response for both males and females. For example, Mckeand (2016) mentioned that traumatic stress is mostly experienced by females because they are mostly exposed to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is grouped by Cole and Kelly (2011) as one of the environmental factors that contribute to occupational stress. The working relationship between leaders and workers if not in good condition, might affect workers emotionally and cause unnecessary tension in the work environment. Such tension may arise as a result of sexual harassment, bullying, and violence by colleagues, clients or superiors.

A female worker may experience depression and anxiety based on sexual harassment by colleagues and supervisors which comes in the form of unwanted body touch or unhealthy sexual encroachment. In most developed countries, some women have narrated their ordeal on how some male employers had made some sexual advancement with the threat to terminate their job if they refused to comply with their request. A Study in America revealed that 54% of women have experienced unwanted sexual advances and the accomplices were men at work (30%) and their superiors (23%). It is reported that 50% of women faculty and staff experienced sexual harassment in academia (The National Academies Press, 2018). The ordeal of occupational stress has caused lots of depression and guilt to many female workers who have succumbed to

sexual harassment in their place of work. Stress is felt and observed by individual employees in the workplace irrespective of gender disparity. Nonetheless, the responses to stress differ across gender.

To maintain good health and effectiveness in the workplace entails appropriate precaution by individual staff to manage personal stress. The American Psychological Association stated that:

“Not only do men and women manage stress differently, but they also place a different level of importance on doing so. Men report being less concerned about managing stress and are more likely to say they are doing enough in this area, whereas women place more emphasis on the need to do so but feel they are not doing well enough” (2011, p.21).

Women are more responsive to occupational stress than the male because they respond quickly to the symptoms of stress but required more efforts in managing occupational stress.

3. Theoretical Analysis of Stress and Job Performance

This section assesses two major theories on occupational stress and job performance. The General Adaptation Syndrome Theory (Hans Selye 1907-1982) was used to explain the symptoms of stress and how it can be managed to improve the well-being of employees. Hans Selye is considered the founder of the theory of stress. He studied organic chemistry in medical school in Prague. As a medical student, he developed an interest in observing patients suffering from sickness. His major interest was to identify specific symptoms in patients that depict symptoms of stress. He carried out his experiment with a rat by exposing it to an intense situation such as scorching heat, frigid cold, brilliant lights, noises, and strenuous exercise. Selye argued that all living organism responds to stress. He claimed that *“Anything that causes stress endangers life unless it is met by adequate adaptive responses”* (Selye 1951, p. 327). The adaptive responses require an action step to either fight against the symptoms of stress perceived or ignore the signals received when exposed to stress conditions. *“The Alarm-Reaction stage”* - at this stage, the body responds to the symptoms of stress which prepares a person to take adequate precautions to protect the body against harm or ignore the warning signs. *“The Resistance stage”* - at this stage, the body naturally adjusts itself to resist the symptoms of stress occurrences when the person has developed the fight –or- flight response. If there is no determination to prevent the body against continuous exposure to stress it can lead to chronic stress. *“The Exhaustion stage”* -the consequences of stress at this stage result in prolonged experiences of stress that lead to physical, emotional and mental exhaustion. The signs of exhaustion include depression, anxiety, fatigue, and burnout (Higuera, 2017), (Tan & Yip, 2018), (Selye, 1951).

3.1 The Scientific Classical Theory is a popular management theory (Frederick Winslow)

Taylor, in his quest to improve work efficiency in the workplace, developed the scientific principle of management in 1911. According to him:

“The greatest prosperity can exist only as the result of the greatest possible productivity of the workers’ machine of the establishment that is when each worker and each machine are turning out the largest possible output; because unless your workers’ and your machines are daily turning out more work than others around you, it is clear that competition will prevent paying higher wages to your workers than are paid to those of your competitor.”
(Taylor, 1911, p. 12).

Taylor's theory aimed to improve productivity in the workplace. His theory has made a significant impact on organizational success worldwide. Taylor as a mechanical engineer was not satisfied with the manner in which employees discharged their respective tasks in the workplace because of the use of different techniques to carry out the same duty. He believed that work should be done with a sense of aggression and more commitment rather than getting work done so easy for achieving about one-third of possible production; thus, motivation pegged on material rewards based on the performance of individual workers. One gets higher or lower pay depending on their level of labor. Taylor came up with five principles of scientific management to improve work effectiveness in the workplace. 1) Employers to develop a new pattern of work to replace the old routine so that work is done in a more structured way for profit and prosperity of the organization. 2) Employers to train staff based on their area of specialization. 3) Employers are to supervise work done in the workplace. 4) Employers to divide work among staff based on specialization. 5) Work should be equally distributed among staff to encourage active participation. Hence, the role of the manager is to supervise the work done in the workplace. 5) Employers give equal opportunity for staff to develop their skills (Taylor, 1911).

4. Methodology

The method used in this study was the quantitative method, using the descriptive research design. The design helped to classify and describe data in detail through words, tables, pie charts, bar charts, percentages and frequencies for a better understanding of the phenomenon under study (Nassiuma, 2017). Subsequently, simple linear regression analysis was used to predict the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (DeVault, 2019), where $y = (\beta_0 + \beta_1 + E)$. The variables were subjected to the statistical test at a significant level of 5% to determine if there was a strong significant relationship or not between work-related stresses on job performance.

The population comprised full-time employees' both academic and administrative staff. The academic staff included Deans of schools and faculty, heads of department (HODs) and other lecturers on full-time employment. The administrative staff included employees on a full-time basis like admissions officers, maintenance officers, registrars, librarians, cafeteria and account officers. The study was conducted in two Christian universities in Kenya. The two selected universities were chosen from a subset of the six universities, which began as theological colleges but are now full-fledged universities.

Census survey sampling was used to determine participation and gather information from the participants since the authors investigated the perception of staff on the sources of occupational stress on job performance. The total sample for the study was 158. The study was however limited by unavoidable challenges including; selection of the two Christian universities from a subset of the six universities that began as theological seminaries. Although the census sampling technique was applied, the response rate from one of the universities was low. These affect the generalization of the findings since the population was not randomly selected to represent a wider range of Christian institutions of higher education in Kenya.

5. Findings

In response to the main objective of the study, the following were the sources of occupational stress:

a. Workload

Majority (44.0%) of the respondents indicated that excessive workload is the main source of occupational stress. Conversely, 21.5% of the respondents were neutral on the matters of excessive workload while 34.5% of the respondent indicated that excessive workload does not contribute to their stress.

b. Work environment

Most (73.4%) of the respondents indicated that they worked in a safe and conducive environment and that their employer-supplied adequate equipment to make work easy. A significant number of employees 16.5% were neutral on the matter of conducive working environment. Only 10.0% of staff reported that they did not work in conducive environment.

c. Inadequate financial payment

Majority of the respondents 21.3% were uncertain about the influence of financial issues. Likewise, an equal response rate of 20.7% was achieved between those who agreed and strongly disagreed on the subject matter. The outcome of the study implies that employees in Christian Universities have divided opinions on the matters of financial challenges.

d. Students’ Disruptive Behavior in Universities

Majority (61.7%) of the respondents did not consider students’ disrespectful attitudes in school as a source of occupational stress. Moreover, some (17.4%) employees were neutral on the matter of student’s disruptive behavior in school while some (20.9%) employees confirmed that students’ disrespectful attitudes in school caused them stress at work.

e. Job Dissatisfaction

Most (62.4%) of the respondents confirmed that they were satisfied with their current job based on the facilities provided by their employer and the hours worked each day. Contrarily, some significant number (22.8%) of employees were neutral on the matter of job satisfaction in their current job while some staff 14.8% indicated that they were dissatisfied with their current job. Many of the staff (59.5%), who had worked within 6-10years, averred that stress affects their performance in the workplace while 40.54%, reported that stress does not affect their work performance. Conversely, 57.6% of staff who had worked within 1-5 years confirmed that stress has a negative consequence on their performance while 42.4% indicated that stress does not have negative consequences on their performance. Lastly, 75.0% of staff who had worked within the period of 11 years and above reported that stress affects their performance. About 25.0 % of staff indicated that stress does not affect their performance. The outcome of the study implies that stress affects employees' performance in the workplace irrespective of the years of experience and familiarity of their job. Figure 2 presents the negative impact of stress on workers performance in the workplace.

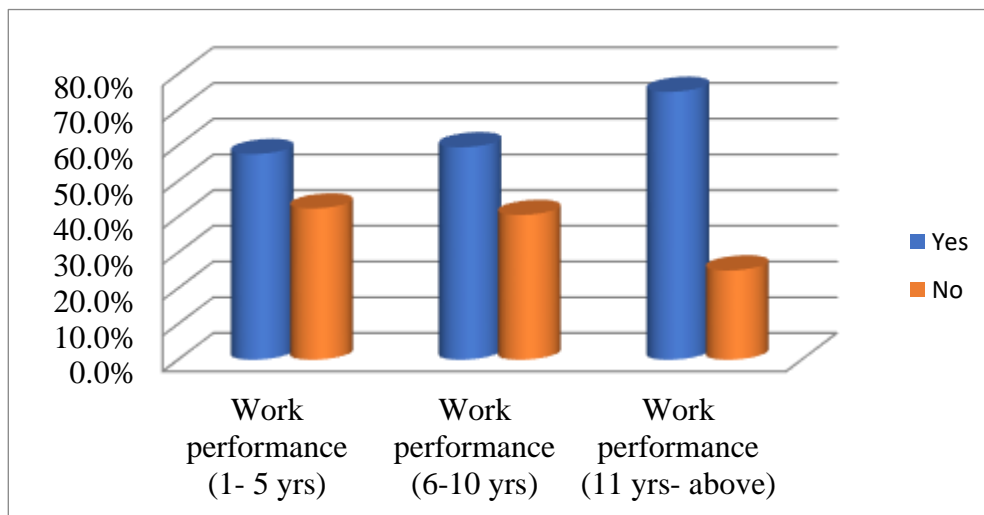


Figure 2: Negative impact of stress

Majority (28.8%) of the respondents as shown in Figure 3 admit that they performed poorly in their job when their health condition was affected by work-related stress, when they were under pressured to accomplish a given task, and when salaries were not paid in good time. Nevertheless, 26.9% of the employees conceded that they did not perform poorly based on any circumstance caused by work-related stress. A

significant number (21.8%) of employees, were neutral on the matter of poor performance.

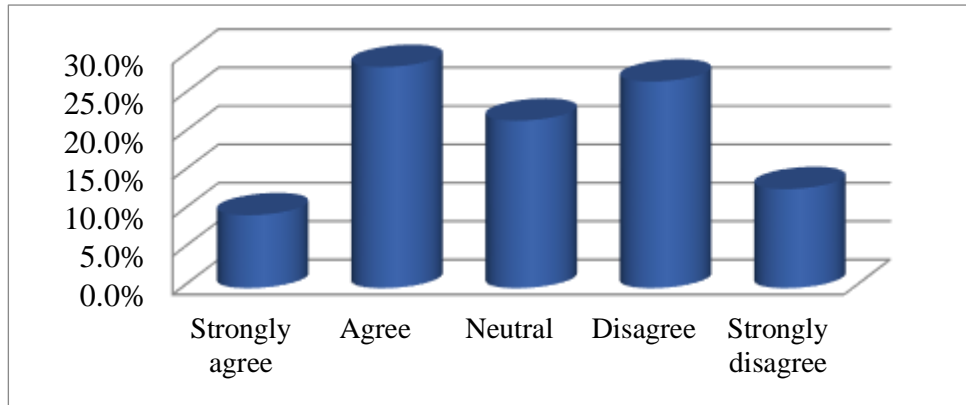


Figure 3: Poor performance

The outcome of the stress level across gender in Figure 4 showed that males reported a moderate level of stress than female staff in the workplace (56.5%, 41.6%) respectively. Similarly, 7.2% of males reported they were more stressed at work than 6.7%, female staff. The study concluded that both males and females were stressed at work.

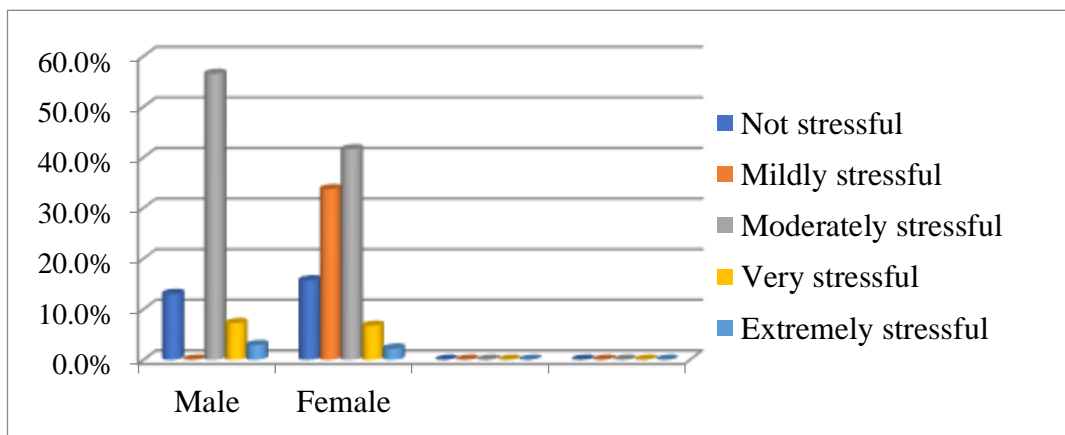


Figure 4: Gender and stress

5.3 Test of hypothesis

Having confirmed that occupation stress was reported as a major challenge by personnel, the authors tested the hypothesis:

H₀: Work conditions such as workload, work environment, salary and students' response to services delivered and the job satisfaction of staff, have no significant effect on workers' performance.

Table 1: Simple linear regression test

Variable	Mean square	p-values
Excessive workload	7.430	.016
Inconducive work. environment	2.882	.009
Inadequate financial payment	95.069	.000
Students' disruptive behavior	44.375	.000
Job dissatisfaction	6.069	.029

The outcome of the regression analysis test in Table 1 showed that the p-values in all the variables is less than .05% significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not accepted, and the conclusion made that excessive workload, inconducive work environment, inadequate financial payment, students' disruptive behaviour, and job dissatisfaction have significant effects on workers' performance.

6. Discussion of Findings

In response to the objective of the study, five sources of occupational stress were examined.

These included: excessive workload, inconducive working environment, inadequate financial payment, students' disruptive behavior, and job dissatisfaction. The outcome of the statistic test revealed five sources of occupational stress in the two universities. These include the following:

A. Excessive workload

Excessive workload has significant effects on workers' performance. ($P = .016, < .05$). The outcome of the study confirms the findings of Ahsan's et al. (2009) study confirms that workload has a significant relationship with job stress. Similarly, Poalses and Bezuidenhout (2018) found out that academic staff experienced higher stress due to work overload ($p \leq 0.006$).

B. Inconducive work environment

Inconducive work environment had significant effects on workers' performance depicted by ($P = .009, < .05$). The conclusion of the study on this aspect is similar to the findings of Hassard and Cox (2017). The authors identified noise as a common attribute associated with the physical environment. They reported that employees in the office setting are stressed by noise caused by calls and the phone ringing.

C. Inadequate financial pay to employees

Inadequate financial payment to employees had significant effects on workers' performance in Christian higher education. ($P = .000, < 0.05$) The outcome of the study confirms the findings of Ali et al. (2014) that showed inadequate monetary reward affected job performance ($P = .00, < 0.05$).

D. Student's disruptive behavior

Student's disruptive behavior in schools had significant effects on workers' performance in Christian higher education ($P=.00 < .05$). The outcome of the study confirms the findings of Oruc (2011) and Lopes et al. (2012) which demonstrated that disruptive behavior in schools caused teachers stress either in primary, secondary, or university.

E. Job dissatisfaction

Job dissatisfaction has a significant effect on workers' performance in Christian higher education ($P=.029, < .05$). This implies that when employees are not satisfied with their job they tend to perform poorly. A similar outcome was obtained in Mbogo's (2016). The study showed a significant relationship between global job satisfaction scores with an awareness of God's scores ($r=.28$). This implies that job satisfaction is based on individual perspectives in life. Some employees are satisfied with their current job based on the awareness of God while others are based on remuneration and benefits.

7. Conclusion

The study identified that the major sources of occupational stress that negatively affected personnel include excessive workload, inconducive work environment, inadequate financial payment, students' disruptive behavior, and job dissatisfaction. "Stress affects everyone, young and old, rich and poor. Life is full of stress. Stress is an everyday fact of life that we must all deal with" (Salleh, 2008, p.12). To deal with stress requires recognition of the sources of stress and then taking a proactive measure to cope with it. In managing occupational stress leaders in higher education should serve as role models in managing stress by assessing the work environment to understand the state of employees' work-life in terms of job demand and other related factors that may pose a threat to employees' health and productivity. Subsequently, they should ensure that employees work in a safe environment by providing adequate facilities to make work easy, organize forums, from time to time, where issues affecting employees are discussed, organize seminars to educate all employees on stress management. This will help employees to stay healthy and effective as they carry out their respective duties.

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