

Effects of Workplace Conflict Stress on the Performance of Nurses in Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract: Managing resources is ensuring that employees and organizations achieve high levels of performance. However, in many organizations the performance of workers in different working conditions is less compared to their full potential in terms of skills, abilities and capacities.

Aim: of this study was to examine the effect of workplace conflict stress on the performance of Nurses in Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Method: The study used explanatory study design. The target population was 2453 nurses working at Kenyatta National hospital. This study adopted stratified sampling technique. Selection of the respondents was through simple random sampling, a sample size of 332 respondents. Questionnaires were utilized in collecting primary data. The researcher used both inferential statistics and descriptive analysis in analyzing quantitative data.

Results: The study found that workplace conflict stress had a positive significant relationship with the performance of nurses in Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Conclusion: The study concluded that workplace conflict had psychological as well as the physiological effects on both workers and managers, impacting their health and job efficiency, and it is a leading cause of absenteeism and low employee turnover.

Recommendation: The study recommended that Managers must understand and realize that the value they add to the company is in their dealings with people in order to cope with stress more effectively.

Keywords: Workplace Conflict Stress, Performance

I. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of managing employees is ensuring employees and organizations achieve high levels of performance. However, Kumar (2013) observed that the performance of workers in different working conditions is less compared to their full potential in terms of skills, abilities and capacities. Manjula (2010) argued that, the performance level generally is always below 50 percent of individual's ability of performance. The performance of employee is influenced by work satisfaction and work stress the employee goes through. According to Choobineh, Hoboubi, Kamari Ghanavati, Keshavarzi and Akbar Hosseini (2016) work related stress is a significant cause of low quality of workers.

Stress is the response of an individual resulting either external or internal factors that place excessive psychological, behavioral pressure on the individual. Workplace stress has become a global phenomenon that manifests itself in a variety of ways in every workplace (Olaniyi, 2013). According to Robbins and Judge (2017) work related stress overwhelms employees with expectations that they cannot meet, resulting to a low performance. Worker's stress is the emotional response that happens when employees can't meet what is expected by the employer. The combination of high job demand together with a low level of work performance will always result in pressure. It makes an individual feel uncomfortable when handling his or her responsibilities. Stress is not only negative but also affects employees positively.

Ratnawat and Jha (2014) observed that work related stress diminishes worker's output and is decidedly identified with the likelihood of workers leaving the organization. Worker execution guarantees a viable generation of results and it keeps up associations important and dynamic to the society. It likewise implies productive utilization of assets for the accomplishment of results. Workers performance is the thing that influences the amount they add to the organization. Work-related stress can radiate from such enormous numbers of variables, according to Dwamena (2012), such as ludicrous cutoff times and desires, over-burden of creativity, unmanageable outstanding tasks at hand, long working hours, no effect on execution goals, lack of participation in basic leadership and no support or virtually nothing.

Robbins and Judge (2017) indicate that stress in the workplace may result from information asymmetry on the role or lack of training of training and capacity building on the required skills. Conflict in the work place or role ambiguity diminishes the performance of employee which leads to much exit from the company. According to Ehsan and Ali (2019) many employees experience work related stress from time to time which end up affecting their productivity. Some of the work related stress experienced by employees includes: overwork stress, workplace conflict stress, time stress and role ambiguity stress.

Many employees in Kenya experience work place conflict stress (Karihe, Namusonge & Iravo, 2015). Bullying and

gossip from a troublesome co-worker are some of the workplace conflicts that employees encounter. This leads to personality clash and in turn into conflict. According to Karihe, Namusonge and Iravo (2015) companies can achieve high performance by promoting good behaviours to prevent confrontation and ensure that all workers are treated equally at work. Companies should also put policies in place to resolve any unacceptable code of ethic within their organizations

Robbins and Judge (2017) argued that the performance of the employee determined in relation quality which demonstrated by the perception of the workforce. Performance is determined by quality of the output, efficiency of the process, time of delivering the results and effectiveness of the assignment done. Robbins and Judge (2017) proposed several indicators of employee performance. These indicators include but not limited to Organizational effectiveness, reduced employee turnover, customer satisfaction and employee strikes. Employee performance in this study was measured in terms of organizational effectiveness and satisfaction of customers.

Research Objective

The study generally examined the effect of workplace conflict stress on the performance of Nurses in Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Research Question

What is the effect of workplace conflict stress on the performance of Nurses in Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi City County, Kenya?

Statement of the Problem

Staff productivity determines amount and quality of the services rendered in any institution, and has significant effect on the contribution of those institutions to the society. One key aspect of human development and for achieving organizational objectives is good health. Kenya is working towards ensuring that every citizen receives good health care services. To achieve this, the government of Kenya has established KNTRH which is the biggest referral hospital in the land. Despite having this biggest health facility in Kenya, in 2018 Kenyans rated hospitals as the worst performers in terms of service delivery, according to a new consumer survey. The survey by mSurvey, a consumer feedback company revealed that hospitals, particularly public ones, experienced the sharpest decline, moving from -4 to -10 in the Customer Loyalty Industry Benchmark Quarter Two 2018 ranking. The poor rating was largely attributed to the speed of attending to patients, inadequate facilities and equipment as well as negligence.

The hospital staff at KNTRH took much time to respond to the clients. For instance in August 2018 services were disrupted after 4700 employee in Kenyatta National Teaching and referral Hospital downed their tools and went on for a strike. The rates of burnout stress among medical officers were 96.7 percent and for nurses was 94.1 percent. However, burnout stress only and ignored other types of stress and

ongoing study will explore four types of stress thus filling the study gap.

Studies found a strong link between performance and worker's stress. Using Structural Equation Model (SEM) found that work related stress lowers employees' productivity in South Sumatera. However, the study concentrated on skills stress and conflict stress. The current study will investigate the overwork stress. That stress in the work place negatively affected employee performance in Italy. Similar results were found that too much stress will negatively affect employee performance in Australia. However these studies were done in developed countries hence their results cannot be generalized for all other countries. The studies also did not major on the work related stress but looked at stress in general. The ongoing study will specifically address the work related stress only. Therefore, this study examined the effect of workplace conflict stress on the performance of Nurses in Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

This study was guided by the transactional theory of work related stress which was described by Max Weber in 1947 who argue that transactional theory is very important in context to achieve the maximum results in a specific time. Clear instructions and reward and punishment are the basic valuable characteristics of this theory that makes significance. The major aim of the transactional leadership is making employees perform in order to get a better compensation. These types of leaders improve the employee motivation through offering rewards that are conditional. The focus of the theory lies in emphasizing control, organization and planning that is short term. In addition, Weber (1947) show that transactional leadership entails a way in which employees are motivated and directed basically through satisfying their own demands. These leaders gain power by exercising authority and responsibility bestowed on them and the employees are meant to obey their leader's instructions.

Theory of transactional argues that work stress results from transaction between a person and work environment which threatens their welfare (Lazarus 1986). According to Lazarus (1986) any aspect within the work environment can yield stress to the employees if not dealt with. However individual stress can result from several factors such as: personality, previous experiences, situational demands, coping skill and time lapse. According to this theory stress within the workplace is linked with certain situations within a workplace. The theory also argues that stress can be caused by conflicts between different groups of people in an organization. The theory also argues that any form of stress be it work related or not will lead to low productivity and output. The theory also attaches stress to psychological and physiological changes. According to this theory coping with the workplace stress affects employee performance in the short run and if not dealt with it may lead to exit of the affected employee.

The theory shows the direct link between workplace stress and employee performance which is important in answering the first research question of this study. The theory explains the factors that can affect employee demands and capabilities and one of them is any current stress state already experienced.

Empirical Literature Review

Workplace conflict stress arises due to the way in which people or departments behave towards each other or deal with each other. Bashir and Ramay (2010) analyzed how performance of employees was affected by workplace conflict stress in Pakistan's banking sector using explanatory research design. According to Bashir and Ramay (2010) interpersonal working arrangements such as disputes between staff and peers and supervisors causes stress in the work place. Bashir and Ramay (2010) established types of relationships that existed in organizations and the contributions they had to work place stress.

Cavanaugh (2010) analyzed the role of conflict stress among managers. The research revealed that individuals who could not manage conflict stress better performed poorly. The findings of Cavanaugh (2010) postulated that workplace conflict stress such as office politics; support from both peers and supervisors and the management styles. It was revealed working hierarchical and complicated bureaucratic organization can be more stressful. The study only focused on the conflict between supervisors and employees using regression model. Other types of stress were also ignored. To fill this gap the ongoing study will address other forms of work related stress.

Hon and Chan's (2013) study looked into the impact of group conflict and workplace stress on employee performance. Using a multilevel approach, the impacts of task-related conflict and interpersonal conflict on two types of occupational stress, challenge-related stress and hindrance-related stress, were studied. Team mission conflict was found to be positively connected with challenge-related tension in a survey of 265 employees and their managers in fifty Chinese hotels, according to the findings of hierarchical linear modeling, team relationship conflict was positively connected with hindrance-related tension, which was negatively associated with job performance and satisfaction; team relationship conflict was negatively linked with work performance and satisfaction; and team relationship conflict was negatively connected with work performance and satisfaction.

The effect of work stress on employee performance was investigated by study by Sharmilee, Abdul and Zubair (2017). A convenient sampling technique was used to pick 310 respondents from different sectors in Malaysia. The survey questionnaire was sent to my Facebook inbox. The effect of stress on employee performance was investigated using regression analysis. According to the findings, time constraints and task uncertainty have an important and negative impact on employee results. Workload and lack of

motivation, the other two causes, have no major impact on performance of employees.

Fonkeng (2018) study that examined the effects of job-stress on employee performance in an Enterprise. The sample size of 80 participants was determined using a purposive and simple random technique. Questionnaires and focus group discussions were used to collect data. The findings show that the participants are under a lot of stress, which has a negative impact on their performance because many of them believe that management is pressuring them to improve their productivity. Some workers believe that a stress-free program helps them and the institution to be more productive, while others do not believe that this program can help to reduce stress.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Kothari (2004) emphasized that the choice of research design adopted in any research depends on the relevance of the proposed design to the nature and purpose as well as the economy of the research. The relationship between the dependent and independent variables was established using an explanatory study design. The study targeted nurses working at Kenyatta National hospital which according to the Report on health workforce mapping at KNTRH in the year 2019 were the majority. According to the Report on health workforce mapping at KNH in June 2019 the nurses were 2453 in total. This researcher adopted stratified sampling technique. The method was preferred since it classifies the population in to different strata (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). In selecting the sample, the employees were stratified in to five categories such as: emergency, critical care, nephrology, neonatal and peri-operative. Selection of the respondents was through simple random sampling. Questionnaires were utilized in collecting primary data. Piloting of 20 questionnaires was done and the respondents involved did not participate in the final collection of data. The validity of research instrument was analyzed using content validity and the reliability was tested using Cronbach alpha test at 0.7. The research used both inferential statistics and descriptive analysis to analyze the quantitative data.

IV. FINDINGS

The findings of the effect of workplace conflict stress on the performance of Nurses in Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi City County, Kenya are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Workplace Conflict Stress

Statement	M	SD
At my workplace/office, the workers/colleagues have a strong working relationship.	3.98	1.211
In the event of a workplace dispute, my coworkers are supportive.	4.05	0.812
There is a good relationships between the supervisors and the employee	4.30	0.582
I sometimes quarrel with my co-workers due to work related issues	4.14	0.840
Average Score	4.21	0.798

Source: Researcher Data (2021)

It was established that respondents strongly agreed that performance of nurses is affected by workplace conflict stress in KNTRH with average mean of and standard deviation of 0.798. This is consistent with Hon and Chan's (2013) research, team task conflict was linked to challenge-related stress, which was associated to job performance and satisfaction, according to a study that looked at the influence of group conflict and work stress on employee performance.

The respondents strongly agreed with the statements that at their workplace/office, the workers/colleagues have a strong working relationship ($M=4.30$, $SD=0.582$) and that sometimes they quarrel with their co-workers due to work related issues ($M=4.14$, $SD=0.840$). This is supported by a study by Sharmilee, Abdul and Zubair (2017) investigated how performance of employees was impacted by job stress and time pressure and position uncertainty were discovered to have a significant and detrimental impact on staff productivity. The other two factors, overwork and a lack of enthusiasm, have no significant impact on employee productivity.

The respondents agreed with the statements that their coworkers are helpful in the event of a dispute at my workplace ($M=4.05$, $SD=3.98$) and the workers/colleagues at my workplace/office have a strong relationship ($M=3.98$, $SD=1.211$). These results are consistent with those of Fonkeng (2018), who investigated the effects of job-stress on employee performance in an enterprise and discovered that participants are subjected to undue stress, which has a negative impact on their performance because many of them believe management is pressuring them to increase their productivity.

Model Summary of Regression Analysis

Table 2: Model Summary of Regression Analysis

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Sig.
1	0.948	0.899	0.898	0

Source: Researcher Data (2021)

The value of adjusted R^2 is 0.898 which indicates the factor of performance of employees as contributed by the workplace conflict stress. This is an indicator that other variables apart from the ones studied contribute to 10.2% of performance.

Coefficient of Determination of the Variable

Table 3: Coefficient of Determination of the Variable

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.676	.093		10.536	.000
	Workplace conflict stress	0.707	.017	1.253	2.529	.000

Source: Survey Data (2021)

It was established that when level of performance was at 0.676 when workplace conflict stress is kept constant. The study also revealed that workplace conflict stress influenced the implementation performance of Nurses in Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi City County, Kenya to a very great extent at a factor of 0.707. The resulting equation was as follows.

The resulting regression equation was $Y = 0.676 + 0.707X_1$

Where

Y = Performance

X_1 = Workplace conflict stress

The study established that work conflict stress had positively and significantly related to employee performance in KNTRH with beta value ($\beta = 1.253$, $p < 0.05$). This is supported by a study by Sharmilee, Abdul and Zubair (2017) investigated how performance of employees was impacted by job stress and found a substantial evidence that job stress had significantly influenced performance of employees.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The study concluded that workplace conflict had psychological as well as the physiological effects on both workers and managers, impacting their health and job efficiency, and it is a leading cause of absenteeism and low employee turnover. Too much stress is always detrimental and employees and organization both suffer from its ill effects.

The study recommended that Managers must understand and realize that the value they add to the company is in their dealings with people in order to cope with stress more effectively. They must also raise their self-awareness of the factors that contribute and the shapes of conduct that contribute to the initial state of emotional exhaustion. Workplace stress has significant consequences for workers' well-being and, eventually, for the company's bottom line. As a result, it is suggested that organizational managers collaborate to exchange perspectives and discuss improvements that reduce excessive tension and move everyone closer to their objectives.

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