

Stress and Work Performance among Administration Police Officers at Police headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between stress and work performance among Administration Police Officers stationed at the Nairobi Police Headquarters in Kenya. Employing a descriptive research design, the study was underpinned by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress theories, facilitating an analysis of psychological distress and its effects on occupational efficacy. The participants were randomly selected in a sample size of 169 respondents. Data was collected primarily using structured questionnaires. Findings reveal a significant concern regarding work-related stress, with 35.5% of officers reporting fatigue, 32.0% expressing dissatisfaction with work allocation, and 34.3% indicating inadequate time for personal activities. Notably, 39.6% attributed their diminished performance to work overload, while correlation analysis identified a weak positive relationship between work stress and performance ($r = .164$, $p = .033$), suggesting that higher levels of stress may marginally correspond with improved performance. These findings highlight an urgent need for strategic interventions within the national police force, including comprehensive wellness programs focused on stress management and enhanced communication strategies.

Keywords: Administration Police; psychological factors; work performance; stress management; wellness programs

1. Introduction

Administration Police Officers at Police Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, operate in an environment characterized by unique challenges and demands, which can significantly influence their work performance. Stressors such as long working hours, exposure to traumatic incidents, and the need for quick decision-making can lead to heightened levels of stress, potentially impacting officers' performance. Work performance is a critical issue in organizations that has attracted substantial attention from researchers and scholars worldwide. It is defined as the action of successfully completing assigned tasks, determined by the reasonable utilization of available resources (Ahmad et al., 2018). Several factors, including psychological issues, can significantly affect work performance. Psychological factors influence the mental health and emotional intelligence of employees, which, in turn, impacts their performance. These effects may be either positive or negative, depending on whether the psychological factors are progressive or adverse. For example, police officers are

particularly affected by stress, anger, anxiety, and sleep deprivation (lack of sufficient sleep). Iskamto (2021) found that workplace stress can lead to feelings of fear, anxiety, and anger, resulting in poor mental and psychological health.

Researchers have identified various psychological factors contributing to increased pressure and stress among employees, viewing stress as an environmental stimulus. Numerous reasons can cause stress within organizations, with family conflicts and work overload being two of the most significant contributors (Iskamto, 2021). Iskamto (2021) further argues that factors such as role ambiguity, heavy workloads, poor work environments, and insufficient job-related knowledge escalate stress and pressure among employees. Consequently, work stress can stem from a working environment in which individuals do not feel secure. Shane (2010) emphasizes that organizational issues are primary contributors to work stress among police officers. Yahaya et al. (2019) contend that the work environment plays a crucial role in the stress employees experience within organizations. Work stress is prevalent in companies of all sizes and remains one of the leading psychological factors affecting police officers globally.

Management support is essential in addressing varying levels of stress among employees. Panigrahi (2016) posits that management support should focus on providing assistance that effectively reduces job-related stress among workers. A lack of organizational recognition for employees' exemplary work can exacerbate stress levels, leading to intentions to leave the organization (Panigrahi, 2016). Altidang (2020) explored the relationship between management, employees, stress, and work performance, finding a negative linear association between stress and work performance, with management style playing a significant role in this dynamic. Thus, organizational management has a considerable impact on creating stress among employees, indicating that the responsibility for alleviating this condition lies with them.

Stress has substantial impacts on workforce performance, prompting firms to implement strategies to address this condition. Numerous studies found that work stress adversely affects employees' job satisfaction and overall performance. Ismail et al. (2015) conducted an investigation in a large private investment bank in Peninsular Malaysia, revealing that work-related stress significantly impacts work performance. The findings indicated a correlation between high stress levels and poor work performance among employees.

Moreover, stress has the potential to cause absenteeism and elevated turnover rates. Daniel (2020) examined the implications of stress on workforce performance, suggesting that employees may create challenges for management if leaving a stressful job is not feasible. These challenges include inefficiencies in job performance, hindrances for subordinates, and waste of operational resources, among others. The author asserts that factors linked to poor work performance or negative outcomes among employees affect both physical and psychological well-being, thereby exacerbating stress levels. Employees enduring stressful situations at work experience negative effects on their performance, which subsequently hinders overall organizational performance. Research indicates that moderate levels of stress can enhance job performance and productivity (Daniel, 2020). However, when work stress exceeds certain thresholds, performance declines more significantly. Poor work performance is observed among employees experiencing extremely low or high stress levels. Those under high stress frequently seem to lack motivation and enthusiasm, resulting in reduced productivity. In such instances, employees are inclined to escape the stressful environment, leading to

diminished concentration on their tasks.

2. Statement of the Problem

A complete operational police system plays a crucial role in maintaining peace, protecting property, ensuring laws are followed, and providing security in a country. The police service in Kenya experiences numerous problems, which are related to stress that immensely affect work performance. Workplace stress has caused police officers to record high rates of reduced job performance among the police officers in Kenya (Jonyo, 2015). Studies have been done especially on psychological factors and the work performance across varied career worker, however, few have targeted the police profession. This study aimed at filling this gap by investigating the effects of stress on work performance among administration police officers working at Police Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

3. Methodology

The research was conducted at Jogoo House, the headquarters of the National Police Service in Nairobi, the capital and most populous city in Kenya. Nairobi, with a population of approximately 4.4 million (and a metropolitan total of around 9.4 million), faces significant security challenges due to its high population density and diverse criminal activities stemming from economic pressures. Given these challenges, the study focused particularly on the police service under the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, as employees in this department experience various psychological stressors. The study employed a descriptive research design. A random selection of 169 administration officers participated in the study, guided by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Hans Selye's Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress. Data collection involved structured questionnaires, and the analysis was conducted both descriptively and inferentially, utilizing counts, percentages, and Pearson correlations. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research, ensuring no conflicts of interest, particularly regarding the use of data for monetary gain. Confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent were rigorously maintained. Prior to the research, the Nairobi County Government and police service authorities were informed to facilitate a transparent process and prevent community resistance.

4. Findings and Discussion

Administration Police Officers at Police headquarters Nairobi Kenya. Administration Police Officers at Police Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, operate in an environment characterized by unique challenges and demands, which can significantly influence their work performance. Stressors such as long working hours, exposure to traumatic incidents, and the need for quick decision-making can lead to heightened levels of stress, potentially impacting officers' performance. The results on the responses to stressors are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1 Responses to Stressors at the Work Place

Stressor statement	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Weakly agree		Agree		Strongly agree		Missing		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
You are satisfied with the amount of work assigned to you	9	5.3	11	6.5	37	21.9	71	42.0	38	22.5	3	1.8	169	100.0
The amount of work allocated to you is appropriate.	12	7.1	22	13.0	29	17.2	56	33.1	45	26.6	5	3.0	169	100.0
The targets given to me are achievable.	10	5.9	23	13.6	49	29.0	56	33.1	30	17.8	1	.6	169	100.0
You have time to bond with your family.	30	17.8	15	8.9	25	14.8	53	31.4	44	26.0	2	1.2	169	100.0
You get enough time to relax and rest after work.	20	11.8	14	8.3	36	21.3	59	34.9	31	18.3	9	5.3	169	100.0
You have a good life balance.	23	13.6	17	10.1	25	14.8	59	34.9	37	21.9	8	4.7	169	100.0
You experience fatigue often.	4	2.4	17	10.1	36	21.3	60	35.5	43	25.4	9	5.3	169	100.0
You work manageable number of hours.	14	8.3	24	14.2	30	17.8	67	39.6	30	17.8	4	2.4	169	100.0
You have enough time to complete the work assigned to you.	54	32.0	64	37.9	28	16.6	11	6.5	7	4.1	5	3.0	169	100.0
Your job makes you feel stressed.	37	21.9	51	30.2	40	23.7	15	8.9	22	13.0	4	2.4	169	100.0
You feel overwhelmed due to being	27	16.0	61	36.1	31	18.3	27	16.0	18	10.7	5	3.0	169	100.0

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given too many responsibilities.														
Work performance of police officers has been negatively influenced by work overload-related stress.	45	26.6	67	39.6	10	5.9	14	8.3	29	17.2	4	2.4	169	100.0
Stress resulting from working under stress has negatively affected work performance among police officers.	32	18.9	58	34.3	24	14.2	17	10.1	33	19.5	5	3.0	169	100.0
Working under pressure has been a leading cause of stress among police officers.	27	16.0	48	28.4	31	18.3	13	7.7	45	26.6	5	3.0	169	100.0
Work stress has affected the overall performance of the police service department.	40	23.7	57	33.7	18	10.7	17	10.1	32	18.9	5	3.0	169	100.0

Table 1 reveals various stressors concerning work conditions experienced by respondents. When asked about satisfaction with the amount of work assigned, responses were varied, with 42.0% agreeing and only 5.3% strongly disagreeing. Regarding the appropriateness of work allocation, 26.6% strongly agreed while 7.1% strongly disagreed. The perception of achievable targets showed a split response, with 33.1% agreeing and 5.9% strongly disagreeing. Responses about having time to bond with family indicated a significant level of concern, with 17.8% strongly disagreeing and only 26.0% strongly agreeing. The ability to relax post-work indicated that 34.9% agreed they had enough time, yet 11.8% strongly disagreed. When considering life

balance, the responses were moderately positive, with 34.9% agreeing and a notable 13.6% strongly disagreeing. A substantial number, 35.5%, agreed they often experience fatigue, while only 2.4% strongly disagreed. The opinion on manageable working hours was mixed; 39.6% agreed while 8.3% strongly disagreed. A striking 32.0% strongly disagreed that they have enough time to complete their work, suggesting a major concern in time management. Stress relating to the job was significant, with 21.9% strongly agreeing they feel stressed and 30.2% disagreeing. Most respondents felt overwhelmed by responsibilities, with 36.1% disagreeing and only 10.7% strongly agreeing. The belief that work overload negatively influences performance was pronounced, with 39.6% disagreeing and only 17.2% strongly agreeing. Concerns were raised that stress from work affects overall performance, with 34.3% disagreeing and only 10.1% strongly agreeing. Lastly, 26.6% strongly agreed that working under pressure has been a leading cause of stress, while 16.0% strongly disagreed.

The findings from these responses reveal a complex landscape of employee performance and stress within the workplace. In examining the level of satisfaction with work assignments, a moderate percentage of respondents (42.0%) expressed overall agreement, but the presence of only 5.3% strongly disagreeing indicates limited but significant dissatisfaction. This suggests that while many feel their workload may be manageable, there is still a notable minority that feels overwhelmed. This sentiment correlates with Iskamto's (2021) assertions regarding the contributions of work overload to workplace stress.

The appropriateness of work allocation showed a positive response from 26.6% of participants who strongly agreed, contrasting with 7.1% who disagreed. Such perceptions of fairness in workload distribution are crucial, as highlighted in the literature, where poor work allocation is a source of stress (Iskamto, 2021).

When discussing achievable targets, responses were split, with 33.1% agreeing and 5.9% strongly disagreeing, reflecting a tension between expectation and reality that could exacerbate workplace pressure. This aligns with Shane's (2010) argument that unrealistic demands often contribute to stress in employees.

Concerns about family time were evident, with 17.8% of respondents strongly disagreeing that they have enough, indicating a potential conflict between work responsibilities and personal lives. This resonates with the literature, which cites family conflicts as significant contributors to stress (Iskamto, 2021).

Similarly, the ability to relax after work garnered mixed responses, with 34.9% affirming sufficient downtime, yet 11.8% strongly disagreed. This highlights a possible disconnect between work responsibilities and personal recovery time, a factor that Daniel (2020) notes can lead to increased stress levels.

The findings also underscore significant fatigue, with 35.5% agreeing that they often experience it, suggesting an ongoing challenge for many employees. The mixed opinions on life balance—34.9% agreeing with 13.6% strongly disagreeing—indicate that while some employees feel they maintain a healthy balance, a notable portion does not, aligning with Panigrahi's (2016) findings that poor organizational support exacerbates employee stress.

Respondents showed a concerning degree of stress related to their jobs, with 21.9% strongly agreeing they often feel stressed. This confirms the literature's stance on the harmful impacts of stress on performance and overall well-being (Daniel, 2020; Yahaya et al., 2019).

The findings on work overload and feelings of being overwhelmed suggest a disconnect between workload

expectations and actual capacity, with 32.0% strongly disagreeing that they have enough time to complete their work, indicating serious time management issues. This ties back into existing research that outlines how excessive workloads can lead to decreased performance and job satisfaction.

The high percentage of respondents (39.6%) who disagree that work overload affects their performance versus the 17.2% who agreed reveals a significant divide in perception, suggesting that many may not recognize the extent to which their stress impacts their efficacy. Stress from work, as indicated by 34.3% of respondents, poses a critical barrier to optimal performance, corroborating findings from Ismail et al. (2015) regarding the detrimental effects of stress on job performance.

Lastly, the acknowledgment that working under pressure contributes substantially to stress (26.6% strongly agreeing, 16.0% strongly disagreeing) highlights a critical area for intervention by management, as emphasized by Panigrahi (2016). This suggests that organizational leaders must actively address workload distribution, employee morale, and stress management to mitigate these issues and enhance overall workforce performance.

A descriptive analysis was done to determine how indicators of work stress relate with work performance among the respondents and Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2 Work Stress and Work Performance

				Work performance			Total
				Job dissatisfaction	Increased turnover	Declined work performance	
Work stress	Stressful environment	working	Count	31	54	7	92
		% within stress	Work stress	33.7%	58.7%	7.6%	100.0%
	Overload	Count		23	34	20	77
		% within stress	Work stress	29.9%	44.2%	26.0%	100.0%
Total	Count			54	88	27	169
	% within stress			32.0%	52.1%	16.0%	100.0%

Table 2 shows that among respondents who reported their working environment is stressful, 31 (33.7%) were not satisfied with their job, 54 (58.7%) reported increased turnover such as resignation and transfers, and 7 (7.6%) reported declined work performance due to lack of motivation. Of respondents who complained of overload of duties, 23 (29.9%) were not satisfied with their job, 34 (44.2%) reported increased turnover such as resignation and transfers, and 20 (26.0%) reported declined work performance due to lack of motivation. In summary, due to work stress, 54 (32.0%) respondents were not satisfied with their job, 88 (52.1%) reported increased turnover such as resignation and transfers, and 27 (16.0%) reported declined work performance due to lack of motivation.

The findings from the study indicate a significant relationship between work-related stress and various

negative outcomes for employees, such as job dissatisfaction, increased turnover, and decreased work performance. Specifically, a substantial proportion of respondents who described their working environment as stressful reported being dissatisfied with their jobs, with about 33.7% expressing discontent, while nearly 58.7% indicated they were considering resignations or transfers. Furthermore, a notable 7.6% of respondents acknowledged declining work performance, attributing it to a lack of motivation stemming from stress.

These results resonate strongly with the reviewed literature, which underscores that psychological factors, including work overload and environmental stressors, are major contributors to employee pressure and dissatisfaction. Iskamto (2021) highlights that issues such as unclear role definitions, excessive workloads, and inadequate support exacerbate stress levels within organizations, leading to feelings of insecurity among workers. This is particularly significant in high-stress professions like law enforcement, as noted by Shane (2010) and Yahaya et al. (2019), who assert that organizational environments are pivotal in determining employee stress levels.

Additionally, the findings align with the assertion by Panigrahi (2016) that the lack of management support can intensify stress, resulting in employees feeling undervalued, which, in turn, contributes to turnover intentions. The empirical evidence presented by Altidang (2020) complements these observations, indicating a negative correlation between stress and work performance. This suggests that, as stress levels rise, employee performance typically declines - a theme echoed in multiple studies, including those by Ismail et al. (2015) and Daniel (2020).

The overarching narrative presents a clear picture: work-related stress not only diminishes job satisfaction but also propels employees towards turnover and reduces their motivation and performance. The cumulative findings emphasize the critical role of managerial practices and supportive work environments in mitigating stress levels. Addressing employee stress through effective management strategies could enhance job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and bolster overall performance—underscoring that while moderate stress can drive productivity, excessive stress leads to detrimental outcomes for both employees and organizations.

To ascertain the significance of these findings, a Pearson correlation was performed at 0.05 significance level and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Correlation between Work Stress and Work Performance

		Work	
		Work stress	performance
Work stress	Pearson Correlation	1	.164*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.033
	N	169	169
Work performance	Pearson Correlation	.164*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	
	N	169	169

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 indicates a statistically significant positive correlation between work stress and work performance ($r = .164$, $n = 169$, $p = .033$). This suggests that as work stress increases, work performance tends to improve, albeit to a modest degree. The correlation coefficient of .164 suggests a weak positive relationship between the two variables. This correlation concludes that there is a significant association between work stress and work performance.

5. Conclusion

The study underscores the detrimental impact of workplace stress, characterized by long working hours, exposure to traumatic incidents, and the pressure to meet demanding targets. Officers reported feelings of overwhelm, fatigue, and significant dissatisfaction related to their workload and work-life balance. This overwhelming pressure correlates directly with diminished work performance, increased turnover intentions, and overall job dissatisfaction.

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7. References

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