

Original Research Article

Influence of job stress on employee performance in NGOs in Kenya: A case of compassion international

Oyoo M. O.

Abstract

Jomo Kenyatta University of
Agriculture and Technology

E-mail: okinyimark@yahoo.com

This paper is aimed at determining the effect of stress on performance of employees. It is based on empirical research conducted on employees of compassion International assisted projects in Kenya. The objective of this research was two-fold: To determine factors that cause stress among employees in the NGO sector in Kenya and to explore whether these factors influence performance of employees in the NGO sector in Kenya positively or negatively. A sample of 123 employees taken from a population of 180 was used. Data was collected through questionnaires based on close-ended questions. Multiple Linear Regression technique was used to test the hypothesis. The results obtained from the data revealed that job stress has an influence on employee job performance with role conflict having an insignificant influence on job performance of employees while workload had a positive influence and monetary reward had a negative influence on employee job performance. Thus it was recommended that the employers of employees working in NGOs in Kenya should help manage their stress levels to a minimum. This could be achieved by conducting stress audits occasionally to gauge the stress levels of employee. Trainings on wellness programs may also be useful in helping the employees keep their stress levels to the minimum.

KeyWords: Employee Performance, NGOs, Job Satisfaction, Job Stress

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Stress is a phenomenon that is experienced in the whole world and manifests itself among workers as a result of pressures originating from the workplace and outside the workplace. Many individuals in the workforce deal with at least some sort of stress in their lives, Sometimes it is stress that stems from family problems, finances, and other personal issues, and other times stress comes directly from the workplace. Some individuals deal with so much stress on a daily basis that it can significantly affect their performance and productivity. Over the past few years, job stress is considered to be a worldwide problem and increasing steadily in the U.S. and other nations where the industry is growing rapidly. Poor salary packages, long working hours, mistreatment of

employees by supervisors, are the major causes of creating stress in employees. Job stress produces large number of undesirable effects for both individual and organization. Kenyans continue to experience stress as a result of hardships such as the recession, drought and inflation among other factors. Ngeno (2007) concurs with this assertion and further points out that employee in Kenya have to contend with low salaries, lack of involvement in decision making, heavy workload, and few opportunities for promotion. A research conducted by (Munali, 2005) revealed that employees are reporting increased levels of stress which has led to poor health and consequently performance. As such, organizations should respond to stress experienced by employees in order to enhance their legitimacy and obtain the resources necessary for their survival.

Objectives

This study had two major objectives:

- i. To determine the factors that cause job stress on employees in the NGO sector in Kenya.
- ii. To explore whether these factors have positive or negative impact performance of employees in the NGO sector in Kenya.

Scope of the study

This study was conducted in projects assisted by Compassion International in the former Nyanza and Western Provinces in order to determine the impact of stress on employees referred to as Child Development Workers (CDWs)

Significance of the study

Stress is one of the most pervasive problems an organization has to contend with. For the prosperity of an organization, it is a prerequisite that its employees work in a stress free environment. Stress leads to decrease in employees' efficiency, increase in absenteeism and turnover. This study is vital as healthy, satisfied and stress-less employees are more focused towards offering services and performing their duties and will be the valuable assets for an organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Stress

Job stress is a universal phenomenon that every employee or employer goes through at job. Every employer or employee handles job stress differently according their own way. According to Padiwal (2011), Job stress is basically a mismatch between the individual capabilities and organizational demand. It expresses itself differently in different work situations and affects the workers differently (Malek, 2010). It makes an individual experience dysfunction in organizational expectation and his/her own needs. Currently stress has become a global issue and affects all the countries, all categories of employees and societies (Haider and Supriya, 2007). The stress begins with the demand and opportunity from environment for a person and ends with the individual's response to that demand and opportunity (Shah, 2003). In developing countries like, Kenya due to recession in economy, stress is experienced more in every employee. Job stress is linked to the expectations, situations, and circumstances in the organization (demands) and the stuff used in meeting demands (resources). According to

Jonge and Dormann (2006), the level of stress minimizes when resources are adequate to meet demands. Employees experience stress because of various issues among them workload, technological problems at work, long working hours, inadequate salary, insufficient time for family and job worries at home. According to (Ismail and Hong, 2011) other causes of work stress include role conflicts, work intensification, poor relationship with colleagues and unfavorable working conditions. Stress causes dissatisfaction among employees and as a result of this they may become nervous and anxious (Tsaur and Tang, 2012).

Employee Performance

Employee performance at the workplace is a major concern for the organizations irrespective of all the factors and conditions. As such, employees are considered very important assets to their organizations (Qureshi and Ramay, 2006). Good performance by employees of an organization leads to a good organizational performance which ultimately makes an organization more successful and effective and the vice versa (Armstrong, 2009). Problems arise in many organizations when they start perceiving that their performing are already at the best level and with great efficiency leading to complacency that there is no need for further improvement in their organizations (Summers and Hyman, 2005).

Stress puts lots of negative effects on employees. Stressed employees cannot meet the expectations of their organizations majorly due to the physical, psychological and organizational burnouts they are facing (Khattak et al., 2011). Employees in service organization are subjected to high degree of work related stress, which is the major reason for employees' poor performance at job (Ismail and Hong, 2011). Job stress has very negative effects especially on the female employees' well-being which in turn creates dissatisfaction and negative emotions towards work and ultimately their performance and productivity decreases. Employees, who feel in their organizations that their job is stressful, record a decrease in their performance levels (Shahid, 2012).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data used in this study was gathered from different Compassion International assisted Projects. Responses were obtained from different workers who are permanently employed in the projects. This research is quantitative in nature. A survey was conducted using close-ended questionnaires. The study employed Stratified sampling technique. To determine the sample size the normal approximation to the hyper-geometric

Table 1. Regression results for Job Stress and Employee Performance

| Variables | Employee Job Performance | | |
|------------|--------------------------|------|---------|
| | B | SE | β |
| Job Stress | 0.18 | 0.07 | 0.12** |
| | R = .123 | | |
| | R2 = .015 | | |
| | F Value = 4.205 | | |
| | P value = .015 | | |

*P<0.05; **P< 0.01; ***P< 0.001

Table 2. Regression results for Job Stress constructs and Employee Performance

| Variables | Employee Performance | | |
|------------------|----------------------|-------|---------|
| | B | SE | β |
| Role conflict | -.080 | .09. | -.045** |
| Work Load | .208 | .09 0 | 0.125** |
| Monetary Rewards | .03 | .09 | -.154** |
| | R = .150 | | |
| | R2 = .022 | | |
| | F Value = 4.157 | | |
| | P value = .006 | | |

*P<0.05; **P< 0.01; ***P< 0.001

distribution was used (Morris, 2014 The sample size formula was as follows:

$$n = \frac{NZ^2pq}{\{E^2(N-1)+Z^2pz\}}$$

Where; n= is the required sample size

N= is the population size (180 employees)

Z= is the level of confidence of the sample size (set at 95%) thus Z=1.96

P and q are the population proportions (Each set to 0.5).

E sets the accuracy of the sample proportions (set to 0.05).

From the calculation, the study sample was found to be 123. The study had two variables, the dependent and the independent variable. The independent variable was Job stress which had three constructs: role conflict, workload and monetary rewards. The dependent variable was Performance.

The study used the following three hypotheses:

H₁: There is a relationship between role conflict and employee performance.

H₂: There is a relationship between workload and employee performance.

H₃: There is a relationship between monetary rewards and employee performance.

Internal consistency of the research instrument was measured through the coefficient alpha.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents had different levels of education as indicated in Table 1. Respondents with university education were 23.5%, (27) those with diploma education were 56.5%, (65) and those with certificate education 13.9% (16), and those with other qualifications were 6.1% (7). Out of a total of 115 respondents, 49 (42.6%) were females while 66 (57.4%) were males. In terms of age, those employees over 36 years were 28 (24.4%), those between 20-25 years were the least 7 (6%), those aged 26-30 years were 34 (29.6%) while those aged 31-35 years were 46 (40%)

Majority of the respondents are males 70 (56.9%) with females being 53 (43.1%). In terms of age 15 (12.2%) are aged between 20-25 years, 34 (27.6%) are aged between 26-30 years, 46 (37.4%) are aged between 31-35 years while 28 (22.8%) are over 36 years.

Educationally, majority of the employees 65 (52.8%) hold Diplomas, 35 (28.5%) of the respondents are bachelor degree holders, while 23 (18.7%) are certificate holders.

Majority of the respondents 66 (53.7%) have worked in this field for between 1-5 years. A total of 26 (21.1%) of respondents had been in the field for 5 – 10 years while 25 (20.3%). had been in the field for over 10 years. Only a paltry 6 (4.9%) respondents had been in the field for

less than one year.

Majority of the respondents 73 (5.3%) have worked in their current organizations for 1- 5 years. Those who had been in the organization for 5 – 10 years were 30 (24.4%) while those who had worked for over 10 years were 12 (9.8%). Only 8 (6.5%) of the respondents had worked in their current organizations for less than one year and over ten years.

The R value was 0.123. This indicates that there is a positive relationship between job stress and employee performance. The R squared (R^2) value of .015 explains 1.5 percent of job performance. The remaining 98.5 is explained by other strategies put in place by organizations in order to enhance their employee job performance. Work stress had $b = .12$ at $p < .01$ indicating that it was statistically significant. The model was significant with the F ratio = 4.205 at $p < 0.015$.

The results of the linear regression analyses presented on table 2 above shows that R value was equal to .150 indicating there is a positive relationship between job stress and employee job performance. The R squared (R^2) value was equal to .022 meaning the factors making up stress manifestation can explain 2.2% of corporate performance. The model was significant with the F ratio = 4.157 at $p < 0.006$.

DISCUSSION

The results on the test of hypothesis three (H_1) indicate that excesses on aspects of role conflicts were reported by the respondents. This explains why role conflict was not significant.

Highly committed employees demonstrate a willingness to share and make sacrifices required for the organization to achieve its performance goals. This was confirmed by the results of the regression showing that workload had a positive effect on corporate performance. The results of the hypothesis two (H_2) revealed that factors within the organization such as work overload, did not affect performance negatively. Lack of control over workload, demanding and difficult clients and office politics may have triggered positive stress, which in turn enhanced performance. This is an indication that individuals who participated in the study were able to mobilize the energy necessary to cope with everyday work stress, which had a positive effect on their performance. The regression analysis also generated the following coefficients. Workload had a significant positive effect on employee performance with $b = 0.125$ at $p < 0.01$. Monetary rewards had negative effect on employee performance with $b = -.154$ at $p < 0.01$, while role conflict had no significant effect on employee performance.

The results of the hypothesis three (H_3) showed that Monetary rewards had a negative effect on employee performance. This may be explained by the respondent dire need of finances. This may lead to employees

becoming frustrated by the work situation, getting irritated with the work efforts of others and being misunderstood by their supervisors or manager due to inability to meet their necessary financial needs. This may lead to involvement in other activities to make more money to meet their financial needs.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between job stress and employee job performance. A theoretical argument by (Welford, 1973) is that moderate levels of stress are preferable because they can stimulate individuals to work harder and accomplish more. Stress that has positive effects also known as eustress occurs when situations perceived as challenging and demanding lead to high performance. These findings support the inverted U relationship which meaning at low levels of stress individuals function perfectly or even better than under normal conditions but at higher levels individuals begin to develop stress symptoms and performance declines over time.

The study recommends that there is need of managers to think of how to help employees working in NGOs in Kenya manage their stress levels to a minimum. Stress audits may be carried out occasionally to gauge the stress levels of employee. Trainings on wellness programs may also be useful in helping the employees keep their stress levels to the minimum as well as providing remuneration packages that are comparable to other organizations within the industry.

When organizations are managed in ways that bring out the best in people, employee job stress is reduced. The key to maximizing the performance and productivity while minimizing job stress of employees is understanding the factors that influence whether someone working hard will feel stressed out and burnt out, or whether they will feel motivated, excited, and committed.

The more control people have over their work, the greater their job satisfaction, the higher their work quality, and the lower their stress level. Giving employees control encompasses giving them the power to make some job-related decisions, the flexibility to organize their work in the way they find optimal, and the authority to make improvements on how their job is done. This requires providing necessary training for employees, coaching, and providing information they need to make intelligent decisions. Supervisors also play a huge role in employee building morale, performance, and controlling stress level. Supervisors who know how to provide guidance, support, and encouragement minimize employee stress. Whereas supervisors with poor management skills or with personal problems can't help employees deal with stressful times, and are a tremendous source of stress.

Supervisors should encourage employees to talk freely and support one another.

REFERENCES

- Armstrong M (2009). *Armstrong handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*. (11th Edition). London, Philadelphia: Kogan page
- Earnshaw J, Morrison L (2001). Should employees' worry?- workplace stress claims following the John Walker decision, *Personnel Review*, 3(4): 468-478.
- Haider Y, Supriya MV (2007). Career management: A view through stress window. *International Review of Business Research Papers*. 3(5): 182-192.
- Ismail MI, Hong TT (2011). Identifying work related stress among employees in the Malaysian financial sector. *West. J. Manag.* 3(2): 229-243.
- Jonge JD, Dormann C (2006). Stressors, resources, and strain at work: A longitudinal test of the triple match principle, *J. Applied Psychol.* 91(5), 1359-1374
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Economic survey*. Ministry of Planning. Nairobi, Government Press.
- Khattak JK, Khan MA, Haq AU, Arif M, Minhas AA (2011). Occupational stress and burnouts in Pakistan's banking sector, *Afr. J. Bus. Manag.* 5(3): 810-817.
- Malek MHBA (2010). The impact of job stress on job satisfaction among university staff: Case study at Jabatan Pembangunan. University of Sains Malaysia Pulau Pinang. 1-89.
- Morris E (2014). Sampling from Small Populations. Accessed online at: <http://uregina.ca/~morrisev/Sociology/Sampling%20from%20small%20populations.htm> on 24/11/2015
- Munali J (2005). Stress and individual performance of workers in hotels at the kenyan coast.(Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation).Thesis. Andra Pradesh Open University, Hyderabad State. India
- Ngeno G (2007). Causes of burnout among primary school teachers within Kericho Municipality, Kenya.*Journal of Technology and Education in Nigeria*,12(2), 9-18.
- Pediwal GL (2011). Excessive stress and its impact on employee behavior. *J. Glo. Econ.* 1(1): 13-40.
- Qureshi MT, Ramay IM (2006). Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Organizational Performance in Pakistan. Muhammad Ali Jinnah University: Islamabad.
- Shah FA (2003). Role stress in the Indian industry: A study of banking organizations. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, Shriram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources. 38(3): 281-296.
- Shahid MN, Khalid L, Sohail N, Ashraf MA (2012). Work stress and employee performance in banking sector evidence from district Faisalabad Pakistan. *Asian J. Bus. Manag. Sci.* 1(7): 38 -48.
- Summers J, Hyman J (2005). Employee participation and company performance; A review of the literature, University of Aberdeen. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.