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IMPACT OF WORK-RELATED STRESS ON EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE IN THE KENYA DISCIPLINED SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

The employees in the disciplined services are exposed to the stress outside the range of usual human experience. The operational duties of their work, by their nature, may at any time place the employees at high stress levels. In addition to the operational stressors inherent in disciplined services work especially the police, numerous studies have shown that factors related to organizational structure and climate can be an even greater source of stress for the disciplined officer. In the disciplined services, officers and staff are bound by strict difficulties in managing their occupational role. Without effective stress identification mechanisms as well as stress management programs, stress can have detrimental impact on staff and organizations performance. The purpose for this paper therefore was to evaluate the impact of work-related stress on employee's performance in the Kenya disciplined services. Kenya Disciplined services staff at NYS Nairobi stations were surveyed to identify their perceived job stressors and measure degree of impact of job related stress and organizations performance. The result was used to design effective strategies for reducing job stress that in turn result in improved job performance among these staff. A Sample size of 111 employees from a population of 557 was drawn for the study. Structured questionnaires were administered and data analysis done with the help of statistical package for Social Scientists (SPSS). The study findings indicated that 50.5% of staff were exposed to stress arising from excessive work pressure also recorded negative concentration of work; 2.97% of staff who suffered stress triggered by frequent abuse by supervisors had their concentration of work impaired. Also 58.1% of staff who are exposed to frequent run-ins with supervisors experienced impaired creativity. Adequate job control enhanced work creativity as posited by 59.2% of participating NYS staff. Findings also supported that staff exposure to sexual harassment in the office impacted negatively on creativity. It was therefore, recommended that there was a need for NYS to realign its vision, mission and long-term objective for the challenges of becoming a premier disciplined Service will be reflected on the quality of service delivery. Achieving these organization performance indicators calls for among others a stress free working environment among staff and a comprehensive stress policy to monitor, manage and prevent work stress.

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INTRODUCTION

Stress "is the reaction people have due to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them." (Managing stress at work: Discussion document, United Kingdom Health and Safety commission, London, 1999.) In the Kenya Disciplined services, officers operating under severe and chronic stress may well be at greater risk of error, accidents and over-reaction that can compromise their performance, jeopardize public safety and pose significant liability costs to the organization. However, disciple officers are rarely provided with effective stress management strategies to help alleviate these problems.

In disciplined organizations, officers with high job demands describe themselves as "working very fast" "working very hard" and not "having enough time to get the job done." Officers with little workplace control describe themselves as lacking the ability and/or authority to make decisions or impact on their job. The result of job stress is clearly detrimental to both organizational and individuals. In Kenya however, the economic costs of job stress, including absenteeism and lost productivity, are difficult to estimate but could be as high as several billion shillings per year. There are several stressors in the Kenya Disciplined Services. Bullying, work or the fear of losing the job is all examples of stressors. Although work overload in Kenya and specifically in Kenya Disciplined Services is not necessarily as high as in the Western countries or Asia, nevertheless, stress at the workplace implicate far- reaching consequences on officers and the organization.

In Kenya Disciplined Services, it is common for senior officers to command their juniors to use "initiative" whenever the latter are faced with challenging task which has deadlines yet the former do not issue any guidelines at all. This boards on of supportive supervision. Supportive supervision occurs when employees have high quality relationships with their supervisors. Supportive supervisors provide guidance and display confidence in their juniors. By effects of stress by helping officers focus the work at the hand and giving them confidence to perform their jobs. For instance, when work is moderate and positive related to performance, officers with high quality relationships with their supervisors should experience heightened motivation, task focus and performance. Conversely, supportive supervision will reduce the distracting nature of home stress, shift attention back to work and weaken the negative relationship between home stress and performance.

Work in the disciplined services is often regarded as an extreme stressful occupation, and officers typically suffer a variety of stress effects, trickling down on their ability to perform their duties effectively and satisfactorily (Rollin and Mike Atkinson,1999). It has also been argued in the management ranks of the different Kenya Disciplined Services that particular attention be given to occupational stress in Kenya Police, Administration Police and the NYS as its potential negative consequences affect society in more direct and critical ways than stress in most other occupations. Employee stress is there a significant bottom line issue that impacts on an organizations performance capacity. It cannot be ignored by any employer wishing to stay competitive in today marketplace as stress-free working environment creates a situation that is conductive for optimal work performance that in effect improves organizational performance. It was therefore desirable to survey the impact of work stress on the staff performance In the Kenya Disciplined Services and suggest a cost effective stress management strategy for the organizations.

RELATED LITERATURE

Job Stress in Organization

Job stressor has been described by stress researchers as the condition or situation at work that requires an adaptive response of an employee. Bullying, work overload or the fear of losing the job are all examples of stressors. On the other hand, the potential reaction by an employee to a stressor is a job strain (Spector, 1996). The most

common job stressors are: role ambiguity, workload and working hours, control, competition and business re-engineering work/home conflict and bullying.

According to Spector (1996) Job control is the extent to which employees are able to make own decisions about their work. This includes issues such as when, how, where to work and what tasks to do. Studies have found out that employee perceptions of control arc associated with job stress

High levels of control usually go and conform to a great degree of emotional distress, intent to quit the job, absence and turnover. This reflects negatively on the organization ability to perform and deliver services effectively.

Defrank and Ivanicevich (1998), argues that if an organization does not handle the implementation of transformation change programmes such as downsizing. cost reduction, delayering or outsourcing effectively, then increased distress can be the consequence. That could be because those changes are made without the involvement of the employees, who have to cope with the new circumstances without being briefed sufficiently prior to the implementation. In this setting, the role of employees becomes secondary to technology and competitiveness, which leads to frustration because of a feeling of being overburdened.

The effective management of diversity provides many advantages to organizations in terms of achieving synergy effects through creative inputs from different (cultural) backgrounds. Nonetheless, if diversity is not managed effectively it may lead to interpersonal stress, competition among different groups tor attention and resources, and decreased interaction because of the perceived need for political correctness in speech, interaction and recognition (Defrank and Ivanicevich, Aug 1998). Therefore "diversity stress" reflects the occurring feelings of ambiguity and uncertainty. They arise when an employee does not have the personal resources to both understand and to respond appropriately in a multicultural situation. The diversity stress often results from differences beliefs and values. Moreover, these kind of stress is often the direct of result of unfair behavior of managers and colleagues towards people of different gender, race, color or origin.

Work stress can also be based on conflict or tension with co-workers and supervisors and can involve arguments, nervousness, strain, and tension. Tepas and Price (2001) says that stress can be viewed as, "….an agent, circumstance, situation, or variable that disturbs the 'normal' functioning of an individual". Defrank and Ivanicevich (998), view stress as an adaptive response, moderated by individual differences, that 15 a consequence of any action, situation or event that places special demands on a person.

Cranewell-ward (1995), perceives work stress as an imbalance between the level of demand placed upon staff and their capability to meet those demands. This definition contains four important features: it refers to a reaction to a situation, not the Situation itself (the latter often called stressor), it emphasise the individual nature of stress, since the perception of stressors differs from person to person; it is "special", since only significant or unusual situations can be said to produce stress; and asserts the individual capability of coping with the amount of stress.

Stress pressure can result in eustress; 11 it 1s neither too much nor too high but just right for the employee. Corbridge and Pilbeam (1998), asserts that this optimal amount of stress placed upon an individual lead to a high performance of an individual as a consequence of feeling challenged but not overburdened. Officers operating under severe and chronic stress may well be at greater risk of error, accidents and over-reaction that can compromise their performance, jeopardize public safety and pose and significant liability costs to the organization (Rollin and Mike Atkinson 1999)

Cooper (1998), Conceptualizes that changes and dynamisms n the nature of work imposes more pressures on employees. In order that staff may be happy., motivated, achieve expected results and perform exemplarily in their work, they must be fit for the work, not to do too much of it and must have a sense of it. Galinsky et al (2001) asserts that women feel more job stress than men. While men work longer hours, take less vacation time, and tend to have jobs with characteristics leading to more stress, women report having more demanding jobs. They are interrupted more frequently while working8 and have too many tasks to do at the same time.

Cox et al (2000) 1dentity ten stressful characteristics of work, which are divided into two groups: "content of work" and "context of work". "Content of work" refers to the following classes of stressors, work-environment and work equipment; task design, workload/work-pace and work schedule. "Context of work" is made up of stressors such as organizational culture and function, role in organizations, career development, decision latitude and control, homework interface, and interpersonal relationships at work. Interpersonal relationships encompass negative interactions with others in the workplace.

Other studies have shown that shift schedules that disrupt normal sleep patterns and social life, authoritarian management styles, poor interpersonal relationships with supervisors, interdepartmental politics, lack of adequate planning and resources, lack of promotion and transfer opportunities, excessive paperwork, lack of autonomy in performing duties and lack or recognition tor work accomplishments are among the organizational stressors faced by members of the disciplined services (Brown and Campbell, 1994).

Doby and Caplan (1995) holds the view that excessive levels of work stress often result from inadequate feedback regarding performance, lack of training, lack of control, and lack of meaningfulness or knowledge of how the individual contributes to the organization's goals. Guppy and Rick (1996) conceptualized that stress can be caused by work overload, under employment, role conflict, and role ambiguity.

Objective of the Study

This research studied the impact of work-related stress on employee's performance in the Kenya Disciplined Services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Stressors

Roles

The work role can be a potential stressor (CUP A, 2003). Person-role conflict occurs when there is a mismatch between the core values of the person and the behaviours expected of that person in the role. Role expectation conflicts exists when some behaviours expected of the role occupant are difficult for the person holding that role to enact. Multiple role sender conflict occurs when a person is expected to fill different roles at the same time, even when expectations of these roles conflicts. Inter-role conflict occurs when a person has multiple roles to play and role demands as such that it is difficult to perform well in each one. A common inter-role conflict is that between employee/ group member and spouse and parent. Each of these roles demands time and energy. Sometimes there is not enough of either to satisfy the requirements of both roles.

Role overload occurs when occurs when the Individual either tries to do too much or is given to much that can be coped with. Measure of overload are empirically linked to assessment of stress (Posig and Kickul,2003). High level working hours corresponds with a high quantitative workload; the amount of work a person has to do. A heavy level quantitative workload means the employee has too much to do. Qualitative workload is the difficulty

of work in relation to an employee's capabilities. A heavy of qualitative workload means that a person is not able to do the jobs tasks because they are too difficult for him or her.

According to Spector (1996), role ambiguity is the extent to which employees are unclear about what their job functions and responsibilities are. This stressor would be experienced t an employee has been put in charge of a different task but has been given no instructions, directions or even no appropriate training. Role ambiguity can also create stress. The person in the job role is subject to role ambiguity when it is unclear what job duties are most important, which deadlines are most critical or, in some cases, which demands to attend to from two different bosses. Also, progress on the job or in a training program is sometimes not evaluated on a regular basis. This can cause employees or trainees to feel unsure about their performance.

Interpersonal Relations

Poor interpersonal relations in the workplace are consistently identified as source of stress. That is, in order to win favor with, or avoid being a victim of, an abusive supervisor, coworkers may harass, exclude, or engage in "mobbing' (Schuster, 1996) coworkers.

The quality of leadership is a critical factor relative to the stress of the organization. If leaders' in an organization are viewed by the juniors as incompetent, unethical, non-strategic, unapproachable, and unfair; not having reasonable expectations; not clearly communicating their vision and directions, then the junior staff will experience stress. True leadership does not come from the position held but rather from creating a vision, setting an example, and inviting participation. As noted by Kouzes and Posner (1995) in *The Leadership Challenge*, "Leaders don't command and control; they serve and support". Leaders can create stress if employees do not think they nave the good ot the institution and its people in their minds and in their minds hearts.

Poor leadership also has been associated with increased levels of work stress (Offerman and Hellmann, 1996). Ashforth (1997) found that when abusive supervisors used non contingent punishment, employees felt a sense of helplessness, alienated and consequently stressed from work. Generally, employees who perceive their supervisors to be abusive experience low levels of job satisfaction, low level of effective commitment and physiological distress (Tepperr,2000). The critical analysis here that poor leaders contribute to the experience of stress among their employees in two main ways. First, poor leadership by itself is likely a source of stress for the individuals who report to them. Additionally, poor leaders are likely to create a work environment that is rife with other work stressors such as lack of control and heavy workloads. Taken together, these points suggest that leadership has a persuasive effect on stress and wellbeing in the workplace.

Career Concerns

Career-related factors such as job insecurity, fear of job obsolesce, under- and over promotion, and, more generally, concerns about career development have been identified as stressful. Siegrist (1996) proposed the effort –reward imbalance model that essentially suggest that stress results when rewards are not consistent with efforts in work environments. In this view, efforts are described as strivings for the individual to meet demands and obligations of the job. Rewards are conceptualized as encompassing financial rewards, esteem rewards and careers rewards, including job security. He does, however, involve an individual variable, over commitment to explain potential discrepancies. That is, individuals who are over committed to their work may maintain a high effort, low-reward environment. Eventually, however, this condition will result in stress.

Elements of the job's design may affect only one person and not the work group as a whole. Career progress can also create stress. For example, under-promotion, the feeling of being unduly delayed in career progress, is a common source of stress. On the other hand, over promotion can also cause stress. When a person is promoted too quickly into a job for which he or she 1s unready or under qualified, that person may feel that failure is imminent and may even fear losing the job (CUPA, 2003)

Work Scheduling

Working rotating shifts or permanent night works results in a disruption of physiological circadian rhythms as well as disrupted social activities and has been identified as work related stressors. For example, employees who work nights and overtime report that this affects their mental and physical health resulting in stress (Ettner and Grzywacz,2001).

Job Content Control

There is ow substantial evidence that job characteristics such as skill use, skill variety and autonomy are associated with stress (Parker and Wall, 1998). A growing body of scholars have confirmed repeatedly the convincing relationship between job control and non-stress and lack of job control and stress (Bosma et al, 1998).

Workplace Violence

The relationship between bullying and stress is frequently with models of stress introduced to make sense of the problem (Einarsen, 1996). In this respect bullying is considered a variant or subset of severe work place stress (Niedl,1995). In line with such an approach, the antecedents of bullying have frequently been sought amongst traditional stressors such as role conflict, lack of control, and work overload. Exposure to workplace bullying has been found to be associated with high levels of stress. (Quine,1999).

Bullying is persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behavior abuse of power or unfair penal sanctions which makes the recipient feel upset, threated, humiliated or vulnerable which undermines their self-confidence and which may cause them to suffer stress (http//www.sucessunlimited.co.uk). The results in strong feelings of fear, shame, embarrassment and guilt, which are encouraged by the bully, who is usually the superior of the person being bullied. According to Tim fields (1996), continuously bullying can lead to stress which can compromise on service delivery and lower performance of the employees. Sexual harassment has been identified also as a workplaces stressor (Schneider et al, 2000).

Organizational impacts of work stress are lowered morale, decreased work quality and productivity, and increased employee turnover and poor corporate image. These causes of stress will be assessed on how they affect the performance of the employees of the Kenya Disciplined Services in terms of efficiency, increased work output which further reflect in quality of service delivery and the corporate image of the organization. The causes of stress will constitute, independent variables while the reflective effect of stress among employees on their performance will be the response variables. The employee performance will affect the organizational performance.

Impact of Work Stress on Performance

The oldest work stress-performance model is based on the Yerkes-Dodson Law, which suggested an inverted – U shaped relationship. That is, for low to moderate levels of stress, the relationship with performance is positive, but for moderate to high levels of stress, the relationship between with performance is negative (Richardson, 1995). There is an optimal point at which stress increases performance, with either too much stress associated with decreased performance. The right combination of intensity and duration of stress leads to optimal performance.

Nonetheless staff responds to stress in different ways, which can directly affect their work performance (Cranewell Ward, 199D|. while experiencing massive stress, employees are likely to have difficulties concentrating, become forgetful, be less rational and think less clearly indecisiveness and making wrong decisions are the consequence. Behaviorally, overstressed employees have difficulties working effectively and become obsessive about trivia. Consequently, they miss important deadlines and tend to smoke and drink. The latter impairs efficiency and performance. Under stress, managers resort to experience and what has worked in the past

rather than using their judgments, which is far less likely to be successful. Furthermore, managers becoming distressed may act and lead unduly aggressively or irritably.

The impacts of stress on staff whether triggered by work or social problems eventually lead to reduced employee performance at work epitomized by increased sickness, low morale, low commitment and absenteeism (Cole, 2000)

The negative physiological and psychological effects of stress may also cause work performance to deteriorate, leading to reduced efficiency and motivation in performing job duties, poor morale, excessive absenteeism and premature retirement. Work in the disciplined services often places excessive absenteeism and premature retirement. Work in disciplined services often places officers in situations where reaction, speed, coordination and the capacity to make rapid decisions and accurate judgments under pressure 15 Critical, and inefficient mental and emotional responses and accurate judgments u stress can significantly impair these abilities (Amsten1998)

Excess stress, or distress, results in lowered individual and organizational performance, with both production and quality suffering (Nelson and Quick, 1996).

Individuals who are experiencing high levels of occupational stress may become irritable and exhibit anti-social behaviors that will tend to alienate their friends, family members, and co- workers thereby affecting their performance negatively (Mack et al, 1997).

it appears that most of the total costs resulting from stress are often unlikely to be borne by the individual organization, but instead to become 'externalized, in other words distributed among the employees (Levi and Lunde-Jensen, 1995).

Cooper et al (1996) suggest that among typical outcomes of stress are a reduction in j satisfaction resulting in poor productivity and low performance. Common effects of exposure to stressors are poor concentration and diminishing self-confidence (Brady, 1999) which affect work-productivity (Warshaw and Messite, 1996). This ultimately affect impact negatively on employees' productivity and consequently on organization performance.

Stress arising from sexual harassment for example manifest itself in 'cognitive distraction' or loss of concentration (Barling et al, 1996), interfering with judgment which in effect lowers individual productivity. Cooper et al (1996) focus on the following well known and well documented outcomes frequently associated with experience of stress: greater sickness, absenteeism, impaired performance and productivity, and higher turnover rates.

Lower job-satisfaction and organizational commitment are other likely outcomes of stress which Lower would affect organization performance negatively (Barling, 1996).

Work turnover is expensive as excessive employee turnover is often cited as a key barrier to high quality service. Turnover reduces the productivity of an entire work unit/team, particularly as a result of uncompensated extra workloads, the stress and tension caused by turnover and, as a result of, the decline in corporate image. Indirect costs include variables such as the loss in organizational knowledge and skills, reduced corporate growth through lower productivity and the impact on organizational commitment that frequent turnover can have among the negative impact on organizational commitment that frequent turnover can have among the employees who stay at the organization. These indirect costs can often be greater than the direct costs of turnover.

Poor job performance may appear as yet another Consequence of organizational stress, thereby reducing productivity. In some cases, the stress arises from a lack of confidence in supervisory staff. The lack of confidence may come about because of general organizational uncertainty or combination of little no supervisory training,

lack of communication skills, or uncertainty lack of openness and trust. High levels of stress, let unchecked, have been shown to lead to increases in absenteeism and staff turnover (Cooper and Cartwright, 1994).

Suffering from the effects of stress for a period of time exposes an employee to a burnout. A son suffering from a burnout is emotionally exhausted and has low work motivation: being depressed about work and having little energy and enthusiasm for the job (Spector, 1996)

Creativity is the production of 1deas, products, or procedures that are novel or original and potentially relevant for or useful to the organization (Lubart, 1996). It often involves gathering information from multiple sources, recognizing unusual connections between elements of a problem or situation, and combining them into a practical and useful product.

Creativity is particularly important for service sector employees because providing novel services, integrating customer preferences with knowledge of constraints, and making innovative suggestions for improving internal procedures are critical customer satisfaction and effective service delivery (Cummings and Oldham, 1991). In NYS it involves novelty in training techniques, helping trainees adapt to the requirements and the training environment and mat and about ways to improve training quality and the general creative suggestions to co-workers and procedures and operations. The argument is that stress will negatively affect creative behavior or sons. First., although the increased focus caused by stress can improve creative behaviours , the narrowing of attention can reduce ability to recognize alternative and can prevent them from integrating diverse sources of information into novel outcomes. Second, although institutional rewards and constraints reinforce aspects of performance, discretionary behavior such as creativity is often not included in employee job descriptions or expectations.

A Supportive environment can alleviate the negative effects of stress on performance such as productivity (Amabile et al, 1996). Supportive supervisors are non-controlling, display confidence in their employees, and treat them as loyal and trustworthy. This reduces negative effects of stress on creativity by counteracting feelings of nervousness and tension. By communicating trust and support, supervisors may facilitate employee creativity, even under stressful conditions. This would allow employees to maintain the flexibility, autonomy, divergent thinking, and risk-taking characteristics of creative performance even when work stress is present.

Stress Management programmes

Organizations have adopted various researched strategies to manage stress. In 1996, Cooper et al came up with three strategies for stress management in organizations: primary prevention (stressor reduction), secondary prevention (stress management) and tertiary prevention (employee assistance programmes or workplace counselling).

Primary prevention is about modifying or eliminating the sources of stress inherent in the working environment. This strategy focuses on adapting the environment to fit the individual as far as possible. Elkin and Kosch (1990) suggested some useful strategies to reduce or eliminate workplace stressors. When an alarming amount of stress has been diagnosed within the company, designing the tasks and the working environment should be the first step to be taken. That is because work overload is often the result of poor organized work and merely specified tasks, defining tasks with help of specific job descriptions will help to distribute the workload in a fair and feasible way.

Additionally, the delegation to work should be encouraged and the workloads of each individual can be varied. It Is so helpful to rotate people on assignments. Furthermore, acting on stressors includes the provision of training and development opportunities to enhance individual job skills. Another way of primary prevention lies in educating managers to recognize distress and to respond in an appropriate way. Redesigning the work

environment includes the evaluation of the physical work environment, aiming to match personal expectations and needs. Another useful statement to eliminate stressors is to establish flexible working schedules, in which options are available regarding starting and ending times, working hours per day, number of days worked per week and so on. This Will enable an employee to work when there are lots to do, and to Work is in times of low work requirements. Establishing fair employment policies is yet another approach to lessen distress. This includes agreements on working hours or granting appropriate wages in form of performance related payment or honoring working of overtime through additional payments. Recruiting and selecting the right persons for a vacant job also comes under primary prevention. Employing workers with the required skills helps to avoid organizations and employees to face situations where a person is simply not capable of fulfilling a task because it is too difficult for him/her. This ties directly into the need for elaborate training programs. Management must understand that the changing working environment requires change in employee's skills. Here, training means not merely the learning of new technologies but also the improvement of decision-making skills, increasing awareness of effective team interaction and the development of communication skills. Such programmes can reduce stress and lead to employee satisfaction thus impacting positively on their performance.

Secondary prevention is concerned with the prompt detection and management of experience stress by increasing awareness and improving the stress management skills of an employee through training and educative activities. It focuses on stress education and stress management.

According to Cohen (1997), a stress management programme should include: identifying and helping identify symptoms of distress, developing clear and measurable goals, focusing on necessary kills to be acquired as well as personal and attitudinal development, communicating with employees about job Stressors, Job strains and the benefits of stress management programs aid finally developing 1ndividualised and topic specific programmes to meet the needs of the employees. Symptoms or distress are explained to employees to achieve the awareness that there could be a stress problem within the organization or for the individual. Additionally, 1t develops self-awareness and provides individuals with a number of basic relaxation techniques. It includes time management courses or assertiveness training as well as the development of cognitive coping skills. Managing stress could cover areas such as simplifying daily routines, cutting clutters or taking regular breaks from repetitive work (Cohen, 1997)

Tertiary prevention is s about the treatment, rehabilitation and recovery process of those or are suffering from serious ill health as a result of stress. Interventions at this level typically involve counselling services for employees in the workplace. Such services are either provided by in-house counsellors or outside agencies in form of Assistance Programmes (EAP). In Kenya, the development of EAP has not found ground though a number been developed in the last few years (example of Peak Performance Consultants who offer in house training on stress management). The idea behind EAP is to enable employees to talk through work-related problems with a counselor. The latter offers a safety valve to relieve stress and enhance productivity (Midgley, 1997J.

Whereas there is considerable activity at the secondary and tertiary level, primary preventions are quite rare in Kenya (Peak performance Consultants). Reason for this is, that it is considered less disruptive to change extensive organizational development programmes. Overall, interventions at the individual level can make a difference temporarily reducing experienced stress. According to Reynolds (1993) at the outcome of stress management training is a modest improvement in self-reported symptoms psychological indices to strain, but little or no change in job satisfaction (Cooper, 1998)

Moreover, counselling is useful in treating and rehabilitating distressed employees, but as they arc kely to re-enter the same Job/work environment as dissatisfied and no more committed as before employees are entering a vicious circle.

According to Corbridge and Pilbeam (1998), the reason for an expressly stated stress policy in an organization lies in focusing managerial attention on reducing direct and indirect cost of stress.

However, even more important is the management's responsibility for the physical and mental health and safety of their employees. Moreover, protecting the organizational image in relation to the service delivery, efficiency, customer base and the labor market, underpinning a belief that, for the organization, people are a source oi competitive advantage is another reason for a stress policy.

According to Corbridge and Pilbeam (1998), a company's stress policy can ,exemplary, contain: a about the organizational attitude towards harmful stress, a statement about the need to de-stigmatize an admission of distress by an employee and the provision of stress-reporting channels, confidential counselling and referral services, stress education and awareness training stress; stress audit arrangement, risk assessment and a commitment to react upon the stressors as well as individual coping strategies and a process of stress monitoring and policy review.

Rollin et al (1999) in their research on the impact of stress among police officers assesses their physical health and vitality, emotional wellbeing, coping and interpersonal skills, work Performance, workplace effectiveness and climate, family relationships, and physiological and psychological recalibration following acute stress. They concluded that the integration of effective self-management programs in training could ultimately improve officers' long-term health and emotional wellbeing and increase work effectiveness and performance. Training in emotional self-management also Significantly benefits police organizations by improving Judgment and decision making, decreasing the frequency of on-the-job accidents, organizational liabilities and more effective Communication and cooperation within work teams, and enhanced work performance.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Gachare (2000) in her study “Occupational Stress Management Consulting firms in Nairobi” found that the highest stressors among workers are brutality by the management, insensitivity at the work place, imposition of decisions on the employees without their consultation, inability to perform and factors intrinsic to the consultancy job. These factors reflect the working conditions of these workers and are a reflection of the prevailing social and economic situation in the country. Common partiality problems cited in the social, political and economic life in Kenya ae tribalism, nepotism and power game. These have a high bearing on the working place. Insensitivity at the workplace has high significance because a good working relationship in the workplace can provide the necessary social support needed to buffer resistance to stress. Factors intrinsic to this type of job that causes great stress are deadlines and time pressures and having many conflicting priorities.

Gachare found various ways on how employees deal with stress. She argues that religion is still a major part for this group of workers. Since religion is mostly communal, it strengthens the social support highly used as a measure to deal with stress, Physical exercise are also highly used for most people on a weekly basis.

According to the findings of Gachare, management had done very little effort in dealing with stress. They view stress as a responsibility of employees.

According to Mugwere (2002) in her study "A case study of the determinates of work stress and management", there are various causes of stress. These are; time pressure and deadlines responsibility without authority, thwarted ambition, restriction on behavior, poor relation with the boss, too much work, managers' leadership style, under promotion, too little work, poor physical working conditions, poor relations with co-workers, poor relation with subordinates, poor supervision, difficulties in delegating responsibility, role conflict and role ambiguity.

In order to cope with stress., Mugwere found that various measures need to be put in place by management. These are; start counselling services, recognition and moral support from bosses, employee's meetings/time, recreational activities / entertainment, provision of stress management courses, improve communication, and improve employer/employee relation.

Aseto (2003) in her study. "The role of the manager in prevention of work related stress; A case study of insurance companies in Nairobi," found that there are many sources of workplace stress in staff. These are: inadequate salary, lack of training opportunities, obsolete technology and a lot of paperwork, inadequate staff/resources, role issues such as ambiguity and specification, lack of job security, work overload, difficult clients/brokers, staff turnover, working long hours, bureaucracy, lack of promotional prospects, unco-operative staff, tight deadline, rigid decision making, demoralized staff, monotony, lack of recognition and poor communication.

She further found some of the stress coping mechanisms used by staff when faced with found some of the stress coping mechanisms used by staff when faced with stressful work situations. These are, talking with fellow staff, trying to deal with the situation, going out with friends, hobbies, reading books, talking to bosses, watching T.V., listening to music, taking a break, doing physical exercises, prioritizing work, taking painkillers, putting in extra hours, planning ahead. Smoking using relaxation techniques such as breathing in and out, reorganizing work, taking a drink, using humor, persevering and use of positive thinking.

These are challenges managers face in handling employees work related stress. These, according to Aseto, are; identification of stress, even work load distribution, providing social support, devising work strategies, financial stress faced by staff, time pressure and staff shortage. She further found that there are certain techniques that managers use while coping with stress. These are: talking to staff, taking a walk, listening to music, creating extra time, team-building, creating conducive environment, use of positive thinking, taking a break and obtaining additional resources.

FINDINGS

Specific Work-related Factors that Contribute to Stress

Findings indicated that 89.1% of staff experience high work pressure, 76.1% has enough time to get their work done. Also, 59.3% of staff are exposed to high quantitative overload (high levels of working hours) and 59.1% are not regularly evaluated. Low levels of both qualitative work overload (27.8%) and role ambiguity are frequently experienced. Work pressure is explained by the fact that in most sections, work scheduling is minimal. The findings on qualitative work overload and role ambiguity point to the fact that staff hold the necessary knowledge, skills and experience and the staff have been adequately given instructions, directions an even appropriate training.

Roles

The study indicates that 71.7% and 64.5% of the staff respectively view their coworker and supervisors as supportive. Also, 41.9% are of the opinion however that supervisors do not clearly communicate the

organization's vision and mission. Staffs who frequently have run-ins with their immediate supervisors are 39.2%. Low percentage of staff exposed to both supervisor incompetence (28.6%) and issues related to ethics are reported. The implications of these findings is that staff working relationships are cordial and are likely to minimize stress, boost staff morale and satisfaction and thus their performance that will trickle down to that of the organization. Supervisors failure to effectively communicate organization's vision and mission to staff is however expected to counter effect this development as the teams are not inspired to meet performance aligned in the strategic objectives drawn on the guiding principles of the organizations core values, vision and mission.

Interpersonal relations

Study findings also showed that 65.4% and 57.0% of the staff respectively are of the opinion that their efforts are not appreciated and that rewards are not consistent with their efforts. Also, 55. 7% feel that they have been under promoted and their career progress path seems blocked. Work place safety and job security were however approved respectively by 61.2% and 68.6% of the staff. The percentage of staff who hold the view that they have been over promoted and are therefore not competent to deliver is minimal (17.6%). The findings point to the fact that staff are over committed to their work and have attempted to maintain a high effort in low-reward environment. This eventually results in stress that is likely to impact negatively on the organization's performance. Career progress concerns raised (under promotion and the lack of career progress guidelines) are also expected to create stress.

Career concerns

From the study findings it is clear that 56.7% of staff work beyond the limits of the normal eight working hours per day while 20.4% work on permanent night shifts. Staff who work in rotating shifts comprise of 15.7%. The findings point to the fact that relatively low percentage of staff are exposed to stress triggered by working rotating shifts or permanent night work.

Work scheduling

Further the study indicated that 79% and 77.4% of staff respectively are of the view that their jobs allow them to be creative and learn new experience. Also, 69.2% have less work authority and autonomy while 40% say they have a lot of say on what happens. The findings point to inadequate staff job control that is likely to result in stress.

Job content and control

The study also showed that 29.5% of staff are exposed to bullying while 9.8% are exposed to sexual harassment in their working environment. The levels of persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, insulting behavior, abuse or power and unfair penal sanctions by supervisors is likely to reflect on enhanced staff self-confidence which may reduce the chances of stress. This is likely to enhance the staff service delivery capacity and performance for enhanced organization performance.

Workplace violence

While looking at workplace violence, the study findings indicated that 78.5%, 76.6% and 75.2% of staff respectively hold the view that they work in offices with adequate lighting, space and ventilation. Staff and equipment however are inadequate as supported by 29.70% and 50.80% of staff. The implication of the findings on inadequacy of staff indicate that staff are likely to experience stress arising from high level of working hours thus with a high quantitative workload.

Adequacy in departmental facilities, staff and equipment

While looking at adequacy in departmental facilities, staff and equipment, the study indicated that departmental communication process is above average as confirmed by 78% of the study respondents.

Departmental communication process

The study also indicated that those departmental monthly meetings are held for between once to thrice as indicated by 60% of the study respondents

Frequency of departmental meetings

The study findings indicated that staff performance appraisal process is done annually for 71% of the NYS staff. While 4% are appraised on a daily basis, performance for 26% of staff is never appraised

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall low staffing levels in the Service indicate that staff are more likely to experience stress arising from high level of working hours thus with a high quantitative workload. Good communication process in the Service points to a system that fosters interdepartmental and vertical communication. Positive feedback is encouraged through staff appraisal systems for this ensures that staff are sure about their performance thus reducing any chances of stress arising thereon. The findings on the impact of stress on staff creativity raise an alarm as staff concentration suffers; they become forgetful, less rational and think less clearly. Indecisiveness, missing of important deadlines and making wrong decisions are the consequence. These are likely to impair efficiency and performance. Staff ability to generate novel and original ideas, products, and procedures is impaired resulting in ineffective service delivery. Organization performance is affected negatively by stress experienced by the staff. The impact of abusive supervisor triggered stress on staff work concentration is minimal. Also, high levels of qualitative work overload and poor worker-supervisor relationship results in reduced creativity. Adequate job control widens the scope of skill utility, variety and autonomy thereby creating an environment that enhances creativity and novelty of ideas. Though minimal, sexual harassment results in strong feelings of fear, shame; embarrassment and guilt, which divert attention from work to personal issues, thus reduced creativity in the Service. Low work pressure ensures that a staff plans and coordinates responsibility well thus enhanced productivity. Jobs that encourage learning improve staff knowledge, skills and competence in delivering role responsibilities thus reducing the chances of being rendered redundant resulting in low job insecurity thus shifting the efforts to peak productivity. Unsafe working environment reduces staff commitment to the organization resulting in poor performance as staff attention to organization's vision, mission and core values in delivery of service are distracted.

The study recommends that the Service needs to keenly address the stressors identified in the research. This exercise will involve work measurement exercise and staffing levels assessment to establish the number of staff required for each section. This will involve among others, matching of staff competence to tasks for right placement; business-reengineering process through increased automation of front and back office operations, which will result in reduced quantitative and qualitative work overload for increased efficiency and staff productivity. A time bound stress management program that will ensure a comprehensive review of staff salaries, promotion policy (clear career guidelines) and upward adjustments in staff allowances is recommended. Performance contract is recommended to ensure that staff are rewarded based on individual performance and ability to deliver and meet set targets. Other modern day rewards geared towards recognition of employee social needs such as provision of child day care services for female staff would reduce career-induced stress. Disparity in the reward system between the uniformed and the non-uniformed staff need to be addressed to ensure that the system is equitable, fair and commensurate to the level of performance. The management and the supervisors are urged to inculcate a culture that will institutionalize a "caring" organizational climate. This will ensure that managerial staff support their non-managerial counterparts and working relationships for reduced job stress. Also, the management ranks are recommended to adopt a participative management style that facilitates staff participation in decision-making process for reduced work stress. The human resource department is particularly

called upon to ensure that staff tasks and responsibilities are clearly defined to minimize on the role ambiguity exhibited by a cross section of staff. The management are also asked to form working teams and increase the level of role delegation. Safety in the NYS working environment needs to be improved by ensuring that standards for fire safety and occupational health and safety are satisfied. Adequate manpower planning is called for to address the issue of frequent and abrupt staff transfers. To address the issue of inadequate working equipment, the Service is urged to perform a resource audit of all its equipment, then draw a budget that will address key gaps to ensure that equipment are procured in time. Resources should be optimally allocated to key areas of Service operations. The Service is also asked to form a professional ethics committee that will facilitate reporting, handling, hearing and appeals on all disciplinary cases involving staff discrimination, sexual harassment, office violence, abuse, corruption, nepotism and favoritism. On communication, the Service should design systems that encourage communication intra and interdepartmental coordination, frequent and regular section and positive feedback mechanism. The career development strategy should incorporate avenues for staff training and development. Seminars, refresher courses and short courses, diploma and degree courses at various levels are recommended. Adequate issues of staff welfare need to be addressed. Frequent stress counseling programmes need to be incorporated within the organization structure operations of the Service. The study also recommends that further studies should be done to identify other constructs like work related variables such as job satisfaction, opportunities for career development, organizational commitment, cultural factors and labor turnover within the Kenya Disciplined Services.

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