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EFFECTS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG PUBLIC OFFICERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: Occupational stress is a serious problem in many organizations. It is currently an issue of great concern not only to employers but other stakeholders in the organizations as well. This study was intended to establish the Effects of Occupational Stress on Job Performance among Public Officers in the Department of Immigration, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study wased based on Person – Environment Fit and Cognitive theories of stres. Cross – sectional survey design was used on a target population of 194 public officers from 5 work stations in the department of immigration in Nairobi County. The study employed Systematic random sampling technique to select 127 public officers for the study. Section heads and administrators were then sampled purposefully due to their experience and greater understanding of the topic. A questionnaire and an interview guide were used to gather information from the respondents. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, mean, standard deviation and percentages were used to analyze the data. A pilot test was conducted to test the reliability and validity of the research instruments. Cronbach Alpha was used as a measure of reliability. The findings of this study are hoped to be beneficial to the department of immigration in mitigating the effects of occupational stress in work place, industrial court may also use the findings of this study in sorting out work place conflicts, policy makers may also use the recommendations of this study to come up with mechanisms of establishing counselling units in the place of work. The study established that majority of the public officers felt ill and absented themselves from duty due to occupational stress. Some of them also exhibited symptoms such as withdrawal, mood swings, irritation, out of control and substance abuse and this negatively affected their productivity. The study recommended establishment of counselling unit in the department of immigration, establishment of social welfare policies for staff, coming up with a standard policy on transfer and deployment of officers, job reengineering and redesign.

Keywords: Absenteeism, Counselling, Effects, Productivity, Stress, Substance Abuse, Welfare, Withdrawal, Workload.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is important to acknowledge that stress is a universal experience that human beings undergo in life - managers, executives, and employees are not exceptional. According to Bashir (2007), approximately100 million workdays are lost due to stress. Also, it is estimated that 50% to 75% diseases are stress-related. Stress is responsible of not only loss of employment but also its absence. Treven (2002) observes that the rate of occupational stress in organizations in increasing on a worrying trend which is resulting to negative affecting goal achievement and the performance of employees. The report by the American Institute of Stress revealed that stress has a significant correlation with almost 80% of work related injuries and 40% workplace turnover (Atkinson, 2004). It is important to note that this phenomenon is not



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restricted to American population. Another report by the Confederation of British Industry revealed that stress ranks the second on list of factors leading to employees' absenteeism in the white-collar workers in the United Kingdom. Also, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions reported that a third of the European workers are affected by stress (Giga, Cooper, & Faragher, 2003).

In Australia, there is an increase in stress-related claims' compensation by workers every year (Caulfield, Chang, Dollard, & Elshaug, 2004). Kenya Immigration Department has been faced with a lot of challenges that can in essence jeopardize job performance such as, inadequate human resource capacity and relevant and up-to-date facilities to meet the increasing demands for Immigration services. Kenya is surrounded by neighbouring countries that are often involved in crime armed conflicts such as Uganda, South Sudan, and Somalia. Additionally, the terrain along most parts of the border are not only unmanned and insecure but also porous and difficult to patrol and control effectively. Therefore, the immigration department has to be vigilant with the entry and exit of persons, document fraud, human trafficking smuggling, and organized crime using the available human resources and facilities - it puts the staff under pressure as far as their performance is concerned (CBMM, 2011). There is no inter-state connectedness along the border for immigration control and monitoring. Also, the integrated alien management system is lacking in most facilities. There is also a lot of difficulties experienced by staff on the issuance of entry permits to foreigners because they lack of a skills inventory to guide. Besides, there are inadequate legislation as well as policy frameworks coupled with weak enforcement of the set policies and regulations that pose a lot of challenges to immigration officers hence negatively affecting their operations (STM, 2008). Some studies have been conducted locally with a specific focus on occupational stress. For instance, a study by Gitongo (2011) on the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction at Kenya Customs Administration revealed that employees experienced stress because of working past official hours, tight work deadlines and handling multiple tasks at once.

Cooper and Marshall's (1976), suggested that there are five stressors that are intrinsic to the job. These causes of stress include factors like role that an employee plays in the organization (whether there is a conflict in the role played and whether there is an ambiguity as far as career development is concerned). Career development entails aspects like job promotion and job security. Other factors include time pressures or workload and poor physical working conditions. Poor relationship with supervisors and other colleagues at work is a major contributor of stress related to work. When the organizational structure and climate does not encourage cooperation and friendly socialization where issues like bullying arise, the ultimate result will be stress at work.

Progression in Immigration department is neither structured nor linked to training or corporate targets. The public service policy on promotions is based on how many years a person has worked on a job group which is a minimum of three years in a job group regardless of the academic credentials, professionalism or productivity. The slow progression leads to stagnation of officers at one grade for many years, this in essence is discouraging and to a great extent can affect workers job performance. The current study seeks to find out the effects of career development/ slow progression affect service delivery in the department of immigration. Chapman (2007), argues that job insecurity, lack of promotion opportunities, poor pay and work of 'low social value', slow career progression/ advancement, unclear and unfair evaluation system of performance, incompetence in task performance to a great extent contribute to occupational stress in many organizations which in the long affects job performance. This study sought to establish the effects of occupational stress on job performance among public officers in the department of immigration, Nairobi county, Kenya.

II. METHODOLOGY

A cross – sectional survey design was adopted for this study on a target population of 194 public officers which comprised of administrators, head of sections, immigration officers, clerical and support staff. This method was adopted since it was able to describe the frequency of occurrences, true picture or actual reality on the ground as far as the target population is concerned. The method also provided an opportunity for the researcher to understand not only the characteristics and the preferences of the target population but their views as well. Cross-sectional survey is better than other designs since it is efficient in covering large area and population at a given time. Also, reliability and validity is possible with cross-sectional survey design and the findings can be generalized (Groves, 2010). The heads of sections were sampled since they supervise other staff in the departments and are also responsible for evaluation of work performance. Immigration officers, clerical officers and support staff were selected because they perform the various functions in the department. Stratified sampling technique was used in the study to ensure fair representation of all sections. Systematic sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the study as shown in Table 1 below.



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Table 1: Sampling

Section	Population	Sample Size
Administration	5	3
Foreign National Management	26	17
Passports	53	35
Border Management	103	67
Training and Research	7	5
Total	194	127

Table 1 presents the distribution of sample size across the five sections as follows 3 from Administration, 17 from Foreign National Management, 35 from Passport Section, 67 from Border Management and 5 from Research and Training. The researcher developed a questionnaire in relation to the research objectives. The questionnaire comprised five sections, Section A) contained the background information of respondents, Section B) prevelence of occupational stress, Section C) causes of occupational stress, Section D) effects of occupational stress and Section E) intervention measures adopted by the department of immigration in addressing occupational stress. A questionnaire was administered to the public officers in the sections selected in order to get information on the influence of occupational stress on job work performance and necessary intervention measures. The questionnaire contained both structured and unstructured items. The Key informant interview guide was used by the researcher to collect information coming directly (verbal responses) from the Administrators and Head of sections. The interviews gave the researcher an opportunity of probing the respondents thoroughly resulting in the collection of more in-depth information. The interview guides were open. As a consequence, the researcher had a chance to convince unwilling respondents to answer all the questions easily and flexibly. The interview guide also comprised of five sections to conform to the research objectives. Pre-testing helped in revealing deficiencies such as vague guidelines, inadequate space of writing; ambiguous questions as well as erroneous numbering thus improved the quality of the questionnaire.

The pilot study was carried out in two regional offices of the department of immigration. Kothari (2004) defines validity as the degree to which obtained results obtained represents the actual picture of the reality of the target population after data analysis. The instruments were checked for both face and content validity. The researcher also incorporated their comments in the instruments before administering it to the respondents. Kothari (2004) defines reliability as the degree or extend at which a research instrument produces reliable or consistent data or results after repetitive trials. The drive behind piloting is to make sure that biases and ambiguities in the tools of collecting data are addressed or cleared before the actual study. The questionnaires as well as interview guides were piloted using a sample of 20 public officers to ensure reliability. Quantitative data analysis included computation of descriptive statistics such as mean, percentages, and frequencies to describe characteristics of respondents, causes and effects of occupational stress among public officers in the department of Immigration. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to aid the researcher in analysing the data.

III. FINDINGS

The study sought to establish the marrital status of respondents. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Marital status of Respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	18	15.0	15.4	15.4
Married	93	77.5	79.5	94.9
Divorced/Separated	3	2.5	2.6	97.4
Widowed	3	2.5	2.6	100.0
Total	117	97.5	100.0	
Not Responded	3			



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Table 4 indicates that majority of the respondents were married (79.5%), 15.4% were single, 2.5% were divorced and and a similar number were widowed (2.5%). The sought to establish the levels of occupational stress among public officers in the department of immigration. This was done by asking the respondents questions and their opinions regarding their knowledge on work environment and occupational stress. Results are presented in Table 3.

Valid Frequency Percent **Cumulative Percent** Percent 15.4 18 15.4 High 15.4 Valid 99 84.6 84.6 100 Low

100

100

Table 3: Prevalence of Occupational Stress

Table 3 shows that 15.4% of the participants have high levels of occupational stress and 84.6% have low levels of stress. This is a worrying trend. Working under stress is detrimental to job performance. Officers with high levels of stress are overwhelmed with work as a result of factors such as heavy workload and perceived supervision discrimination. This is in line with Cooper and Marshall's (1976) and Chapman (2007) that workers' preoccupation with job promotion, job security, workload and poor relationship with supervisors and other colleagues at work is a major contributor of stress at the work place. More so, Erkutlu & Chafra (2010), affirmed that the workplace stands out as a potentially important source of stress purely because of the amount of time that is spent in this setting. However, stress also differs in employees. This study finding is in line with Jayashree (2010) that stress is much more common in employees at lower levels of workplace hierarchies, where they have less control over their work situation. Table 4 presents prevalence of occupational stress across departmental sections.

Table 4: Prevalence of Occupational Stress per Departmental Section

117

Total

Departmental Sections			Level of occ	Level of occupational stress	
•			High	Low	
	Administration	Count	1	2	3
	Administration	% within Section	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	Famiga National Management	Count	1	18	19
Foreign National Management	% within Section	5.3%	94.7%	100.0%	
C. d'an December	Count	3	35	38	
Section	Section Passports	% within Section	7.9%	92.1%	100.0%
	Dondon Monogoment	Count	10	40	50
	Border Management	% within Section	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%
T	Count	3	4	7	
	Training	% within Section	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
T-4-1		Count	18	99	117
Total		0/ within Castion	15 40/	94 60/	100.00/

The findings in Table 4 shows that 33.3% of participants working in the administration section had high occupational stress with 66.7% having low levels of occupational stress. Those working in the foreign national management section with high occupational stress levels were 5.5% while 94.7% had low stress levels. In the passport section, 7.9% had high levels of occupational stress and 92.1% had low levels of occupational stress. Results also indicate that 20% of participants working in the border management section had high occupational stress with 80% having low levels of occupational stress. The results also show that 42.9% of participants working in the training section had high occupational stress and 57.1% had low levels of occupational stress. The variation in the prevalence of occupational stress across departmental sections may be attributed to the sections having different mandates and functions. Paticipants were also asked their opinions on what they thought their success on job depended on . The responses are represented in Table 5.

15.4%

84.6%

% within Section

Table 5 shows that 23.3% of the respondents reported that success on their job dependes on meeting the set targets, 20.8% reported teamwork as contributing to the success on job performance, 25% responded that the success of their job depends on the number of applications received, 8.3% feedack from respondents, 8.3% good infrustricture (equipments), a similar number (8.3%) indicated job training and accountability while 5.8% indicated good leadership as a determinat to successful job performance.

100.0%



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Table 5: Prevalence of Occupational Stress

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Meeting set targets	28	23.3	23.3	23.3
Teamwork	25	20.8	20.8	44.2
Number of applications received	30	25.0	25.0	69.2
Feedback from clients	10	8.3	8.3	77.5
Good infrastructure in terms of equipment	10	8.3	8.3	85.8
Good leadership	7	5.8	5.8	91.7
Job training and accountability	10	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of occupational stress on job performance among public officers in the department of immigration. According to Blackwell (1998) stress manifests itself in different forms. For instance an individual who is experiencing high levels of stress may develop depression, high blood pressure, irritability boredom, ulcers and job dissatisfaction which in the long run affects productivity of an organization. Generally, in any organization, about 10% of the employees are incapacitated by acute or chronic problems which cause loss of concentration, irritability, and reduced productivity. Such problems include and are not limited to financial stress, family and marital problems, drug and alcohol abuse, emotional upsets, conflicts and career problems (Barling et al., 2005). Stress shows itself in some ways, Blackwell (1998). For instance an individual who is experiencing high levels of stress may develop depression, high blood pressure, irritability boredom, ulcers and job dissatisfaction. This study observed that occupational stress manifested itself in very many ways and this is summarised in the table below.

Table 6: Effects of Occupational Stress on Job Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
There are times I suffer from illness such as muscle tension, nausea, headache increase heart rate etc	es,2.69	1.383
At times I am absent from work due to medical problems related to work	2.08	1.139
At times I feel angry or frustrated because of things related to work	1.83	1.133
I am not able to meet my target due to heavy workload and stressful we environment	ork 1.92	1.089
I sometimes feel like withdrawing from people	2.39	1.252
At times I resort to using drug and substances because of the problems I experient at work	2.25	1.292
A number of times I feel out of control due to problems at work	3.39	1.305

From Table 6, the respondents reported that illness (mean of 2.96), absenteesim (mean of 2.08), mood swings (mean of 1.83), are effects of occupational stress. They aslo agreed that their work suffers greatly (mean of 1.92) due to stressful work environment and heavy workload. Most of the respondents strongly agreed to sometimes withdrawing from people (mean of 2.39) when they are stressed out. The respondents also agreed that they sometimes resort to substance abuse because of the problems experienced at work (mean of 2.25). However, the respondents disagreed to getting out of control due to work associated stress.

Effects of stress such as feelings of being out of control impact heavily on the workers thereby affecting their performance. This results resonates well with Chapman (2007), that effects of stress such as feelings of job stagnation can cause medical issues. Stress can also lead to poor health hence necessitating absenteeism, poor work relationship, poor performance, labour turnover among others. Other research has shown that stress reduces peoples' ability to deal with large amounts of information and leads to impairment of both decision making and creativity (Cooper et al, 2001). The study sought to find out whether they have experienced illness due to occupational stress. The responses are captured in Table 7.



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Table 7 (a): Illness due to Occupational Stress

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	24	20.0	20.0	20.0
Agree	47	39.2	39.2	59.2
Not sure	10	8.3	8.3	67.5
Disagree	20	16.7	16.7	84.2
Strongly disagree	19	15.8	15.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 shows that 20% strongle agreed that they suffer illness due to occupational stress, 39.2% agreed, 8.3% were not sure, 16.7% disagreed while 15.8% strongly disagreed that they experience illness due to occupational stress. The study findings imply that majority of respondents suffer illness due to occupational stress. It's worth noting that chronically sick employee affects not only the employee's productivity but those around them as well. When one employee is out of the office, someone else carries the workload. Sick employees who experience frequent pain or other effects from illness are less likely to work to their best ability. The participants were also asked in a scale of 1-5 whether absenteeism from work was because of occupational stress, the results are as shown in Table 8.

Table 7 (b): Absenteeism due to Occupational Stress

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	47	39.2	39.2	39.2
Agree	41	34.2	34.2	73.3
Not sure	10	8.3	8.3	81.7
Disagree	20	16.7	16.7	98.3
Strongly disagree	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

The study found out as illustrated in Table 7 that majority of the respondents (39.2%) strongly agreed that there is absenteesim occasioned by occupational stress among immigration staff, 34.2% agreed, 8.3% were not sure, 16.7% disagreed while 1.7% strongly disagreed with the statement. This study findings is similar to a research carried out by Strahan et al (2008) who reported that stress can lead to destruction of team spirit, dissatisfaction with or absence or even resignation from work. The study also sought to establish whether the participants suffer from mood swings resulting from occupational stress. This is illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8 (a): Mood Swings

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	61	50.8	50.8	50.8
Agree	39	32.5	32.5	83.3
Not sure	5	4.2	4.2	87.5
Disagree	9	7.5	7.5	95.0
Strongly disagree	6	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 shows that 50.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that they experience mood swings as a result of occupational stress and 32.5% agreed, 4.2% of the respondents were not sure, 7.5% disagreed that they experience mood swings due to occupational stress, while 5% strongly disagreed with the statement. The study sought to establish whether employees feels that occupational stress affects their productivity and job performance. The findings are presented in Table 9.

Table 8 (b): My work suffers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	61	50.8	50.8	50.8
Agree	39	32.5	32.5	83.3
Not sure	5	4.2	4.2	87.5
Disagree	9	7.5	7.5	95.0
Strongly disagree	6	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	



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Table 9 reveals that majority of the respondents (50.8%) strongly agreed that their work suffers due to occupational stress, 32.5% agreed with the statement, 4.2% were not sure, 7.5% disagreed while 5.0% strongly disagreed. Cummulatively, 83.5% agreed that their work suffers due to occupational stress. This an indication that the employees potentials and productivity is reduced due to occupational stress thus affecting the general performance of the organization. The respondents were required to indicate the extent to which they experience withdrawal due to occupational stress. The findings are presented in Table 10.

Valid Percent Frequency Percent **Cumulative Percent** 31.7 31.7 31.7 Strongly agree 38 30 25.0 25.0 56.7 Agree Not sure 27 22.5 22.5 79.2 17 14.2 14.2 93.3 Disagree Strongly disagree 8 6.7 6.7 100.0 Total 120 100.0 100.0

Table 9: Withdrawal due to Occupational Stress

From Table 9, it can be seen that 31.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that withdrawal is an effect of occupational stress on job performance, 25% of the respondents agreed, 22.5% were not sure that withdrawal is an effect of stress on job performance, 14.2% disagreed that withdrawal is an effect of occupational stress on job performance while 6.7% strongly disagreed. This recording is evident that withdrawal is a sign of stress at the department. The study sought to establish whether there are cases of substance abuse among public officers fuelled by occupational stress, the findings are captured in Figure 10.

Frequency Percent Valid Percent **Cumulative Percent** Strongly agree 41 34.2 34.2 34.2 44 36.7 36.7 70.8 Agree Not sure 10 8.3 8.3 79.2 14 11.7 11.7 90.8 Disagree 9.2 9.2 Strongly disagree 11 100.0 120 100.0 100.0 Total

Table 10: Substance Abuse due to Occupational Stress

From the study findings in Table 10, it was reported that 34.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that substance abuse is rampant among immigration staff due to occupational stress, 36.7% agreed, 8.3% were not sure, 11.7% disagreed while 9.2% strongly disagreed with the statement. The findings of this study implies that substance abuse is common among immigration staff this might because they want to escape from the reality and this inturn affects their job performance and might hinder an organization from achieving its objectives. This was corraborated by one of the Key informants who confirmed that most of the immigration staff engage in this vice due to stress related issues both at home and work. The participants were asked whether they get out of control due to occupational stress, the results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Out of control

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	14	11.7	11.7	11.7
Agree	20	16.7	16.7	28.3
Not sure	16	13.3	13.3	41.7
Disagree	45	37.5	37.5	79.2
Strongly disagree	25	20.8	20.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 11 illustrates that 37.5% disagree that getting out of control is an effect of occupational stress on job performance. 16.7% agreed that out of control is an effect of stress on job performance. 13.3% of the respondents were not sure that out of control is an effect of occupational stress on job performance.



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IV. DISCUSSIONS

The study established that majority of public officers in the department of immigration are immigration officers (61.3%) followed by clerical officers (31.1%) and support staff (7.5%). Furthermore, most of the respondents 42.4% have a bachelors degree, 23.7% had a masters degree and above while 22.9% were diploma holders. This is an indication that most of the respondents have adequate levels of literacy to understand the relation of occupational stress to job perfomance in the department. Majority of the respondents were employed on permanent and pensionable terms and were deployed in various work sections of the department depending on the amount of work. The study established that occupational stress led to illness (), absenteeism was also found to be an effect of occupational stress where majority 80.8% of the respondents indicated that they absented themselves from work due to occupational stress related issues. Absenteeism is a major manifestations of effects of occupational stress which in the long run affects productivity of the department.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The study established that majority of the public officers in the department of immigration were immigration officers between the age bracket of 41-50 with bachelor's degree and above an indication that the department of immigration has a dignified work force who are capable of delivering the departments mandates under conducive work environments.

The study established that though most of the respondents did exhibit symptoms of occupational stress to moderate extent, for instance, most respondents, feel out of control due to work related issues, do not have control of how they perform their work, are willing to put in extra effort beyond what is expected, are easily irritated by small issues, feel like withdrawing from people, find it hard making decisions among others. Majority of the respondents were affected by the occupational stress. Most of them suffered from illness, felt angry or frustrated because of things related to work, felt stressed due to unrealistic deadlines and were not able to meet their targets. This has had some effect on job performance of the respondents thus hindering efficient and effective service delivery by the department of immigration.

VI. RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study recommends that the department of immigration should consider setting up mechanisms for dealing with occupational stress before it degenerates into burnout. This can be done through setting up a counselling unit complete with trained counselling psychologists. This study was done to establish the influence of occupational stress among public officers in the department of immigration in Nairobi County, a similar study can also be done in other regional offices especially land border posts since they experience different challenges.

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