

# The Contribution of Work Stress on Employees Performance in the Public Sector, Case Study Of Medical Store Department Dar Es Salaam

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to assess the Contribution of work stress on employees' performance in the public sector, the case of the Medical Store Department in Dar es Salaam. The study used a sample 35 respondents attained through purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and structured interviews and analyzed in descriptive statistics and thematic techniques. The empirical results found time pressure take lead as the number one source that contributes to stress for medical store department employees, followed by family and work demand, organizational changes, poor leadership, lack of promotion, job insecurity, and heavy responsibility. The result also discovered these factors had negative impacts on employee performance, most of them reduce low working morale, and caused headaches, illnesses, and working errors. The study recommended medical store department should focus on different programs that are useful to manage stress in the work environment including counseling services, monitoring staff performance life and health situation at least every month, engaging with employee assistance programs and the ministry of health should realize the welfare of their workers by introducing a guidance and counseling scheme of services in the public service as an integral component of Human Resource Management. This unit aims to help employees in the public service embrace and understand counseling at the workplace as a strategy to tackle stress and other maladaptive behaviors portrayed in the workplace.

**Keywords:** Work stress, Employee performance, Medical Store Department.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

A report from State Global Workplace reveals that worry, anger and sadness are among issues employees experience globally and have been rising over the past decade, Specifically, the statistics of 2020, 43% of respondents in more than 100 countries claim to experience stress in workplaces compared to the previous year where the percentage was 38% in 2019 (World Economic Forum, 2021).

For years, public sectors are going through enormous changes in terms of system and structure. The emergence of new technology, urbanization, continuing changes within the office system and economic growth, have left mark on the working conditions and daily lives of employees (Neelamegam, 2010). The scenario has led to a negative impact on public organizations and the employee population and also has caused strains at the same time some employees feel imprisoned in the work that treats them as quasi-machines rather than as human beings (Giorgi, 2017).

There is a body of research that explores stress from the standpoint of high in public works (HSE, 2017). Burke (2016) confirms that work stress is generally high in many public sectors even though there is disagreement as to whether public

sector workers are significantly more stressed than in the private sector (Hamann & Foster, 2014). Public sectors are immersed in environments of extreme scrutiny and distrust (Liu et al., 2012). The influence of the Bureaucracy system in the public sector has caused psychological anxiety among Indonesian servants as result show organizational change causes discomfort to the staff, which has brought anxiety (Pandin, 2018).

Colonial life study in the USA shows civil servants bring stress and worry into the office each day along with their laptops, coffee and ID. 41% of servants, say stress has caused a drop in work productivity. 33% reveal stress has led to lower engagement levels at work, 15% claim increasing pressure at work has pushed them into looking for other jobs, while 14% admit stress has made them absent more frequently (Colonial Life, 2019). A secondary analysis of the data by the Health and Safety Executive in the UK found that in 2016/17, 526,000 workers were suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety resulting in 12.5 million working days lost (Labour Force Survey, 2017).

The survey of 1,015 UK adults, reveals that 49% of workers in the public services sector are unable to find the time to undertake stress-reducing activities outside of work, compounding what is already a significant problem, while several corporate stress management consultants have teamed up to provide training for line managers on supporting stressed staff more sensitively. (Davis, 2016).

The South African Depression and Anxiety Group reported that 1 in 4 South Africans struggle with depression, however, only 1 in 6 workers are likely to do something about it (Delpert, 2020). Workplace stress is detrimental because not only does it lead to mental health issues, but also serious cardiovascular health issues like heart attacks (Old Mutual Corporate, 2017). In East Africa, Bhanu and Satish (2017) discover a substantial association between demographic characteristics such as gender, job role, age, and education level has effect on work stress in the majority of Kenyan employees. Muazza (2015) stress prompts employees to feel worried and pushed, which significantly affects the employee's performance. Nnuro (2015) Work stress not only undermines the performance graphs but also affects employees' happiness.

In Tanzania, it was reported by Muhimbili National Hospital public sector employees are experiencing strains and issues that irritate their minds and moods, hence, the report concludes, workplaces are confronted with a major challenge in employee retention (Kaminyonge, 2013). Mtanzania newspaper (2016), carrying a statement from Doctor Frank massao of Muhimbili National Hospital civil servants are characterized by worries, loneliness, anxiety, lack of energy and commitment, which he asserts situation is very harmful to their career life and health condition. Mkumbo (2014), argues there is a shortage of studies on work stress in Tanzania's public sector after his results show that a significant proportion of academic staff reported experiencing high stress in public universities reporting being more stressed than their counterparts in private universities. Such an essential reality about stress demonstrates that excessive tension has a bad impact on workers, therefore, there is a need for depth clarification and broad analysis in every public sector.

The purpose of this study was to assess the contribution of work stress on employees' performance in the public sector Case of the Medical Store Department, Dar es Salaam.

**The study was guided by the following research objectives:-**

1. Assess factors that contribute to stress towards employees in the Medical Store Department.
2. Examine work stress associated with employee performance in the Medical Store Department.
3. Explore strategies that can be used to manage stress toward employees in the Medical Store Department.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical literature review

#### Affective event theory of Work stress

The theory developed by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) explains how emotional situations influence stress on employees as well as how it affects performance. The theory states emotions are central to how employees handle both positive and negative situations at work. Lee& Ashforth (1996) Jobs that are high in negative emotions can lead to stress and frustration, ongoing negative emotions may result in unhappiness. For instance, working in a bullying and harassment environment, from your supervisor or colleagues, a scenario may cause stress to an employee and hold back performance. Schaubroeck

(1999) argues that the relationship between events and health status is mediated by coping processes, for instance, incorporating psychological knowledge about attributions and emotions can enhance theory-building in the organizational sciences. Perrewe and Zellars (1999) both believe that the approach has greater potential for increasing knowledge about how to make work environments healthier than the alternative approach of focusing on mental processes and individual coping behaviours. Topper (2007) recommended that the organization to focus on employee health despite just focusing the profits and manufacturing which he considered as narrow goals. The theory assisted the researcher in the study because it portrayed the concept of work stress on employee performance. The theory also looks at coping strategies for work stress in this study which proposed a focus on employee health despite just focusing on the profits and manufacturing which he considered as narrow goals.

## **2.2 Empirical literature review**

### **Factors that contribute to stress toward employee in the workplace**

Aftab & Javeed (2012) revealed that work stress among public employees paves the way toward counterproductive work behaviour which was justified by the positive correlation between work stress and employee counterproductive work behaviour. Pudrovskaya (2014) Exercising work authority can be a chronic stressor for women in the social context of gender-based inequality. Perveen (2010) Women feel more victimized as they experience high demands from work and family. Rogers (2011) postulates that stress occurring as a result of work relationships is governed by a poor social environment, which in turn is recognized by a lack of support or help from colleagues or supervisors, poor communication or deficient consultation between managers and employees or bullying and harassment. The stagnation of roles is inherent in Public sectors Preshita and Pramod (2014) assert that stagnating roles are one of the most powerful stressors in Indian Public banks, it contains many monotonous jobs and employees who have repeated the same task over a long period without career growth opportunities and has caused stress to many employees. Jacob (2012) claims that Job insecurity has become a more common cause of stress in the public sector, the argument is that the level of stress among the employee of the public sector keep on rising as a result of fear of losing jobs, especially in the today's world where there is a lot of unemployed youth out there who are willing to get the job regardless of the scale of the salary one is getting.

### **Work stress associated with an employee's performance in the workplace.**

Bickford (2005) strongly agrees with a huge connection between work stress and employee performance where the joining of these two impacts the health and well-being of an employee, and it has resulted in absenteeism and turnover behaviours which impact the organization's income. Ali, et al. (2014) state that stressed workers are more likely to be unhealthful, poorly motivated, less productive and less safe at work. Rehman (2010) argues that high levels of stress are directly related to the poor mental health of employees and reduced performance around the globe. Stress in the workplace has brought low job commitment which ultimately hinders overall performance (Ziauddin et al. 2010). Franzer (2009) reveals that the consequence of work stress is invariably an increased risk of injury or illnesses to the employees, therefore, it is not surprising to see performance is not well maintained when employees experience this situation because of strains. Griffin, (2011) shows that mood and sleep disturbances, stomach ailments and headaches are parts caused by stress that may have a negative impact on employees' performances in a work environment.

### **Strategies that can be used to manage stress in the workplace**

A study conducted by Harnois (2000) recommends that employee assistance programmes should be designed to alleviate and assist in eliminating workplace problems. Panigrahi (2017) Organizations should teach employees to exercise work-life balance through training and should use the available technology and provide specialized training courses on any topic required for work advancement. Chali (2019) suggests that counselling support may be among the appropriate stress coping strategies whereby stressed employees may manage their stress by finding a counsellor who will be responsible for stress management in the workplace through the use of mentoring and counselling support. Zyl (2002) suggests an organization calls for a proper procedure for measuring stress by using the most important techniques for instance Observation technique by which employees can be exposed if stressful circumstances appear, the self-assessment technique to employees after every month where the goal is to self-evaluate and examine themselves in order first to spot what has been good or bad in term of emotions, health and life situation.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The population of this study comprised 35 respondents from the Medical Store Department Head Office, Dar es Salaam. The researcher employed the mixed method approach (qualitative and quantitative) to collect data from key participants in order to address the intended research objectives. Purposive sampling and Simple random sampling were used to gather information. Data generated in the primary method from the structured questionnaire and structured interviews and analyzed in descriptive statistics with aid of SPSS software version 26 present it in the forms of table, figure and percentages and thematic techniques.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings have been presented in accordance with the research objectives.

#### 4.1 Assess factors that contribute to stress towards employees in the Medical Store Department.

The first research objective sought to find out the factors that contribute to stress toward employees in the Medical Store Department, data were collected through questionnaire and interview. The table below presented and analyzed the finding of the study.

**Table 1: Factors that contribute to stress towards employees in the Medical Store Department.**

Source	A		NS		D		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Time pressure	33	94.2	1	2.9	1	2.9	35	100
Work / family Demand	32	91.4	3	8.6	0	00.0	35	100
Lack of promotion	26	74.2	9	25.7	2	5.7	35	100
Heavy responsibility	26	74.3	8	22.9	1	2.9	35	100
Education /experience	25	71.4	8	22.9	2	5.7	35	100
Organizational changes	24	68.6	7	20.0	4	11.4	35	100
Job insecurity	24	68.6	9	25.7	2	5.7	35	100
Personality reason	21	60.0	13	37.1	1	2.9	35	100
Salary payment	19	54.3	13	37.1	3	8.6	35	100
Policies reason	15	42.8	16	45.7	4	11.4	35	100
Poor leadership	13	37.2	19	54.3	3	8.6	35	100

The result from table 1 unveiled that, Time pressure take lead as the number one source that contributes to stress for medical store department employees, about 33 employees (94.2%) admit the situation of executing a task for a short period and making a decision sometime has made them uncomfortable with the nature of the work they were doing. The majority of employees also confessed to challenges with work and family demands, As shown in the table, 32 employees (91.4%) half and a quarter of medical store department staff agree to experience this situation which has caused them stress. The researcher also founds out that 26 employees (74.2%) argued lack of promotion in their working career has influenced them to stress, and they claimed their role has stagnated, the number looked similar to 26 employees (74.3%) who argued that heavy responsibility is one of the issues that stress them. About 24 employees (68.6%) admit to feeling worried and pushed because of organizational changes that come from the bureaucratic system.

The researcher also interviewed employees on factors that contribute to stress towards employees in the medical store department.

#### Work and family demand

*“Work and family demand have caused stress to me, the interference of work and family demand occurs whereby there is higher demand from the family as well as from the work, as a result, higher demand in the work role has affected me in the family” (participant, July 2022).*

*“Sometimes I spend doing tasks till night or on weekend days. This has made me not have enough time to spend with my family, and this has caused a lot of conflict in my family”. (Participant, July 2022).*

Results from the interviews with two of the medical store department employees revealed that married employees are stressed in balancing work and family demands, which has troubled them in executing both demands at the same time, the finding indicates that

high responsibility from the work affects family and caused a problem, these have impact employees on work attendances, efficient, as well as work performance, goes down. The results concur with study findings by (Perveen 2010) who strongly argue that the more time an employee spends on work, the more conflict is seen between work and family and failure to balance work and family have been experiencing a higher level of stress while women feel more victimized as they experience high demands from both sides.

### Heavy task

*"I work as a casual worker every day we have a heavy load of a task, per daily we have to carry at least 50 to 100 boxes of medicine, this has been a stressful situation". (Participant, July 2022)".*

This result showed that casual employees are stressed over a heavy tasks whereby a lot of responsibilities have caused them to look tired during work hours, this disturbed them in physical and mental situations. The finding is supported by the study of Nyunza (2020) who believe time spending and excessive work are the great sources of stress among Kilimanjaro International Airport employees.

### Organizational Changes

*"Everyone is nervous due to organizational changes that occur often, you may not even spend two years working then you will hear you have to move to other offices, these changes have separated with our beloved one". (Participant, July 2022).*

*"For the past six years, the office is experiencing the transition of three director generals, and every director comes with their leadership style, these changes have led us to lose the position we have or cause us to be under-promoted." (Participant, July 2022).*

This study revealed organizational changes have caused employees to part away from their beloved children, wives, husbands and family members, the situation has caused anxiety to employees by feeling they are going lose their positions or under-promoted. A similar study by Pandin (2018) argued about the public sector experience organizational changes because bureaucratic system, has caused discomfort of the staff and brought anxiety.

### 4.2 Examine work stress associated with employee performance in the Medical Store Department.

This objective aims to examine how work stress links to the performance of an employee, the objective observes the consequence that arises from work stress and how it is associated or related in terms of an employee's performance. Data were collected through interviews and analyzed below.

#### Emotional consequences

*"Last year I lost my mother honestly emotional I was not okay, it took me a year to recover, my work performance and attendance were not good, and emotional I was not here at work when the memories of my mother appear to me." (Participant, July 2022)*

The findings above proved that Medical store department employees are disturbed by the emotional problem caused by stress. The consequence has been associated with low attendance and performance to employees, as revealed the employee experienced a grief episode and mentality disturbance which caused employees to have low morality and performance. This result is consistent with Rehman et al. (2010) and Bickford (2005) who both argued stress impacts the emotional well-being of an employee and causes low productivity and reduced performance around the globe.

#### Intellectual consequences

*"Error occurs a lot of time in work because of a lot of reason consumed in our head, this has caused to downgrading our work performance, for instance, I deal with customers invoices, a lot of time are misplaced, sometime you may not remember where you placed it, this has been impacting our working efficiency and make us like do nothing here. (Participant, July 2022).*

The result revealed errors always occurs, this is because of tiredness, working pressure and overweight responsibilities in and outside of the office, the situation influences error performance of employees. This result is reliable with the study of Knight (2017) strongly argued performance declines when employees have more work than they can reasonably handle, sometimes it causes errors as well as failure to consistently deliver high-quality work

**4.3 Explore strategies that can be used to manage stress toward employees in the Medical Store Department.**

The purpose of this objective is to explore the strategies that can be used to manage stress in the Medical Store Department. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews and presented in figure.



**Figure 1; Strategies to manage stress**

**Counseling Program.**

Figure 1 showed the response of medical store department employees concerned with strategies that may use to address the problem of work stress. The majority of employees strongly agree with the application of counseling services. One of the employees admit that

*“Presence of counselling program may have a positive impact on assisting distressed employees, sick and accident employees to cope with the issue.*

The result is supported by a study of Chali (2019) who suggests that counselling support may be among the appropriate stress coping strategies, whereby stressed employees need a counsellor who will be responsible for stress management in the workplace.

**Monitoring Staff**

Figure 1 also revealed the importance of Monitoring Staff performance, life situation and healthy condition as one of the tools that may be used by management to help employees spot what has been good or bad in terms of performance, emotions, health and life situation then correcting challenges and helping the employee return to work. 85.7% equal to 30 employees believe the approach may help to evaluate performance by correcting the mistake and enabling growth in careers. One of the employees add that

*“Employees experience with life or health issues that undermine the performance without the office notice, the approach may add great benefit on spot the problem immediately and help the employee to overcome and return to work”*

The finding is compared with Zyl, (2002) who suggests an organization calls for a proper procedure for measuring stress by using techniques of self-assessment technique to employees after, every month, the aim is to self-evaluate and examine themselves in order first to spot what has been good or bad in term of emotions, health and life situation.

**Employees Assistance Program (EAP)**

The result in figure 1, also stated the use of EAP since the majority confessed to experiencing personal, work, health and emotional problems. 97.1%, equal to 34 employees agree with the approach. One of the employees confessed that

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*“The program may address organizational and employee challenges in coping with violence, work-life balance issues, trauma and other emergency response situations.*

The results supported study findings by Panigrahi (2017) and Harnois (2000) who recommended employee assistance programmes should be designed to alleviate and assist in eliminating workplace problems also seeing the program will be useful to teach them to balance work-life and family life, also the available technology will be good in providing specialized training courses to employees on any topic required for work advancement.

### Long-term approaches

The result in table 1 authenticated the approaches of a long-term plan for medical store department employees that may be used to overcome these noted problems and motivate them to work and perform their duties diligently. The validated approaches have been accepted by all employees who asked about and believe the use of counseling, work motivation, monitoring staff, application of assistance programs as well as behavioural assessment will ensure the welfare of employees thrive in physical, social, emotional and psychological. The study was supported by the government of Kenya (2008) by enacting the Scheme of Service for Counseling Personnel, in realizing the welfare of their employees by introducing guidance and counseling services in the public service as an integral component of Human Resource Management. (MSPS, Counseling Policy, 2009).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

Time pressure was one of the main factors that contribute to stress in medical store department employees, the study also concluded with other factors such as work and family demand, lack of promotion, heavy responsibility education and experience factor, organizational changes job insecurity, personality reason salary payment, policies reason and poor leadership. Furthermore concluded these factors have negative consequences on employee performance. Also concluded by indicating the strategies that may use to manage stress in Medical Store Department and the majority agreed with employee assistance programs, counseling services and monitoring staff as well as long-term strategies

### 5.2 Recommendations

The government of Tanzania through the ministry of health should realize the welfare of their workers by introducing a guidance and counseling scheme of services in the public service as an integral component of Human Resource Management. This unit aims to help employees in public service embrace and understand counseling at the workplace as a strategy to tackle stress and other maladaptive behaviours portrayed in the workplace.

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