

Stressors among Uganda and Nigeria Employees' Performance in Public Sector

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to investigate stressors among Ugandan and Nigerian employees in the public sector. We adopted the descriptive survey research design. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was applied, with the total population selected to form the sample of 400 public service employees drawn from the population of the study, which comprised 13,081 employees from Uganda and Nigeria. Therefore, data from 400 questionnaires was used for the analysis, as none of the questionnaires were mutilated. We analyzed the questionnaire data using the test-retest reliability method. The completed 55-item closed-ended questionnaire used for data collection was summarized and analyzed using simple percentages, bar charts, pie charts, simple linear regression, and multiple linear regression. It was revealed that: (1) workload has a significant effect on employees' performance in the public service of both countries. (2) Role conflict has a significant effect on employee performance in the public service of both countries, Uganda and Nigeria; and (3) time pressure has a significant effect on employee performance in the public service in both countries, Uganda and Nigeria. (4) In both Uganda and Nigeria, employees' motivation significantly influences their performance in the public service. (5) The organizational environment has a significant effect on employee performance in the public service in both countries, Uganda and Nigeria. (6) There are significant composite predictive effects of work stress variables (workload, role conflict, time pressure, employee motivation, and organizational environment). Both Uganda and Nigeria's environments have an impact on employee performance in the public sector. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that government and private organization management ensure adequate reduction or adjustment of workload to minimize work stress and improve employee performance.

Keywords: Work stress, Employee performance, Public service, Organizational environment

INTRODUCTION

Every organization whether public or private or a manufacturing and service provision enterprise has distinguished responsibilities, roles, and designations it assigns to its workforce. These responsibilities, roles, and designations assigned to employees are the actions and/or activities that are designed to fulfill the core purpose of the organization's existence. Therefore, employees are expressly obligated to ensure that their roles/functions in organizations meet expected standards at all times. However, in an attempt to function following organizational expectations,

employees are directly and/or indirectly challenged with varying degrees of factors that may limit them from performing their responsibilities accurately. The varying degree of factors that can limit employees' performance may arise out of work stress in the form of internal or external organizational factors. Internal organizational work stress factors revolve around excess workload, communication problems/distortion, delayed remunerations, poor staff synergy, and limited integration of workers' interests, suggestions, and opinions into top-management

decisions, among other things. External organizational work stress factors include but are not restricted to lifestyle, physical attributes, family demands, personnel aspirations, and so on [1]. The concept of work stress has been an important aspect of research in the field of social services and management, because of its inextricable relationship with employee performance. There is a wide array of empirical studies in contemporary times that attempt to investigate work stress by operationalizing it into workload, role conflict, time pressure, motivation, and role ambiguity [2]. Workload describes the magnitude of official responsibility assigned or designated to a Specific position in an organization, which may be perceived by an employee to be either excess or less [3]. Role conflict describes conditions under which an employee exhibits incompetence out of dissonance/confusion arising from inconsistent, numerous, ambiguous, or incompatible demands attached to his/her organizational responsibility [4]. Time pressure describes a psychological work stress pattern that challenges an employee under conditions for which he/she perceives not to have sufficient period to complete a specific organizational target assigned to them [5]. Motivation describes the intrinsic and/or extrinsic factors that propel an employee to carry out a challenging or difficult organizational task in time and space [6]. Role ambiguity refers to the exhibition of comprehensive ignorance concerning

Statement of Problems

The primary objective of public institutions across the globe, particularly in Uganda and Nigeria is the provision of services to society, particularly services that private organizations are restricted from rendering to the public. In both countries, such public entities include the Ministry of Works and Transport, the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy Matters and Rural Development, Ministry of Information and State Orientation, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Arts and Culture, Ministry of health & environment, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of lands, survey & housing, Ministry of Agriculture & Natural resources, Ministry of commerce & industry, and Ministry of water resources. These ministries are predominantly saddled with the provision of services that revolve around but are not restricted to the monitoring and control of the development of infrastructures, Arts and culture, transportation modalities, etc. within the state. Irrespective of the core purpose of these institutions in delivering adequate public services, a varying degree of poor performance in terms of delayed administrative processes for ensuring sustainable public sector optimal service delivery appears to be a common factor in both countries, Uganda and Nigeria. The problem is perceived to a large extent by the relatively poor performance of workers in these institutions. Furthermore, the

a job responsibility/task by an employee resulting from zero knowledge about his/her inputs concerning designated tasks [4].

The dimensions of work stress given in the brief description above are important issues that the management of organizations should pay sufficient attention to because they have a role to play in the performance of employees and the entire organizational operations [7]. Moreover, if the management of organizations critically evaluates the responsibilities assigned to each job position about the internal and/or external factors that constitute an organization, then the issue of work stress among employees can be adequately managed. The evaluation of assigned employees' responsibilities in line with the internal and external environment indicates that an organizational environment whether internal or external plays a moderating role in the work-stress-employee performance relationship. Zafar *et al.* [1] considered the work environment as a mediating factor that determines the extent to which work stress impacts the performance of employees. Therefore, in an attempt to sustain optimal organizational operations through effective employee performance, the issues that revolve around work stress and work environment become important to decision-making organizations, especially public institutions in both countries, Uganda and Nigeria.

administrative processes that revolve around the core objectives of the selected institutions are relatively slow and residents in the environment are restricted to the available slow pace of service delivery offered by these institutions. The slow pace of service delivery in these institutions is attributable to the nature and/or weight of responsibilities assigned to members of the institution, as the weight of their daily job demands is perceived to be largely overwhelming and burdensome. For instance, the workload, role conflict, time pressure, employee motivation, and unconducive organizational work environment constitute work stress which seemingly dampens the capacity of the employees to carry out their assigned duties effectively and efficiently. The degree of workload assigned to workers in these public service organizations appears to be excess, and as such makes employees in these institutions subject to stress. Also, the time frame for which administrative modalities and outcomes are set for workers in these institutions is predominantly inequitable and as such induces stress on workers thereby dwindling their performance. Furthermore, employee motivation in these organizations particularly intrinsic extrinsic motivation among employees appears to be low, in terms of delayed salaries, little or no recognition, limited integration of staff opinions into top-administrative decision-making processes, etc. are

among the stress push factors that are associated with a decline or poor performance among staff. Role conflict and role ambiguity are also manifested among staff in these organizations largely due to the excess workload, poor motivational levels, and minimum time frame for executing specific organizational tasks. These problems have so far manifested in the level of service delivery offered by the selected public service to its immediate society members. The work environment of public service in both countries, Uganda and Nigeria also appears to be relatively uncondusive and this is characterized by little or no access to advanced technology for facilitating administrative processes such as information communication technology (ICT) related resources, irregularly or epileptic

public electricity supply among other things. These issues however appear to aggravate work stress about employee performance in the organization and therefore call for long-term planning and organizational adjustments to amplify staff performance in particular and improve organizational performance in general. Above all, past studies in the Uganda and Nigerian context have on average focused attention on the work stress-employee performance relationship using private entities with little emphasis on public institutions. Hence, these identifiable gaps are primarily sufficient reasons to undertake this study with a major focus on selected public organizations in both countries, Uganda and Nigeria.

METHODS

The Person-Environment Fit Model (PEF), Job Characteristics Model (JCM), and Jobs-Demand Resource Model (JBR) were used for the research. A survey research design was adopted. The stratified and simple random sampling technique was used for the study sample selection. A total of 400 staff were sampled from the population of 13,081 staff from the study area. This simply represents 3 percent of the total population of the study. A 55-item closed-ended questionnaire was

used for data collection. The reliability coefficients of the pilot testing of the research instrument were high enough, and the test-retest reliability method was adopted. The instrument was then used for data collection. In the course of the data analysis, frequency counts, simple percentages, and mean distribution were used in presenting the primary data collected in the field. The simple linear regression analysis and the multiple linear regression were used for the test of the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistical analysis was used in the presentation, distribution, and return of questions,

respondent age, pie chart, and bar chart was displayed

Table 1: Distribution and return of the questionnaire

S/N	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Number of questionnaires completed and returned	400	100
2.	Number of questionnaires not returned	-	-
	Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 shows that a total of 400 copies of questionnaires were administered to the

respondents and were carefully filled under the supervision of the researcher and returned.

Table 2: Distribution and Respondent's age

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	191	47.8
Female	209	52.3
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 depicts the demographic information of the respondents. The categorization based on the gender of respondents showed that 191 (47.8%) of the respondents were male and 209 (52.3%) were

female. This implied that there were more female respondents than male respondents in the study as shown in figure 1 below.

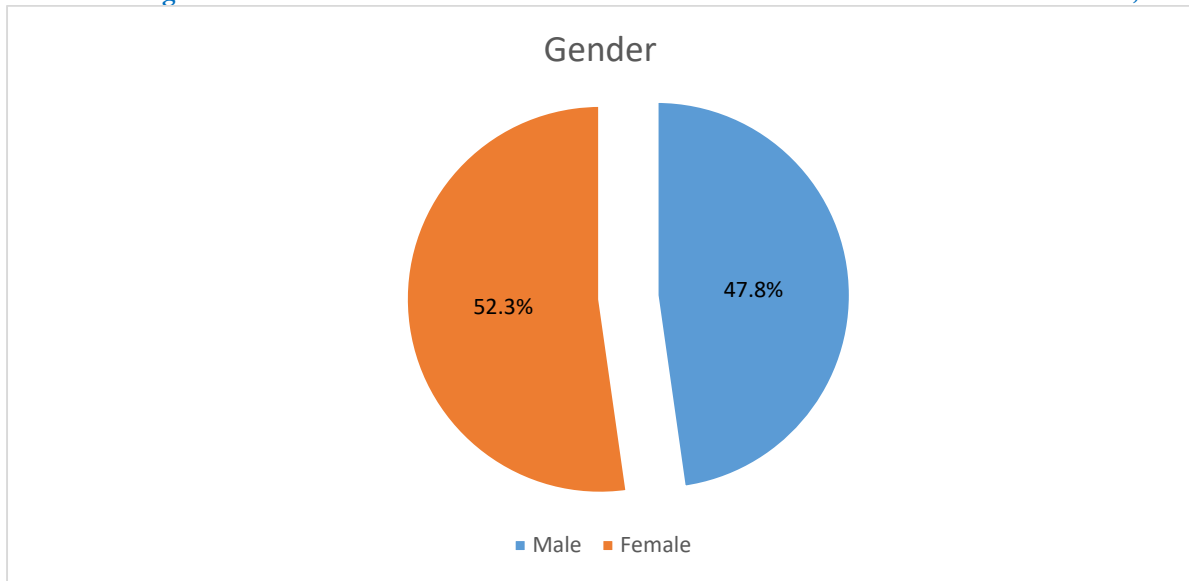


Figure 1: A pie chart showing the distribution of the sample by age of the respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
18-30	88	22.0
31-49	226	56.5
50 years and above	86	21.5
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The section in Table 3 depicted the demographic information of the respondents. The categorization based on the respondent's age showed that 88 (22.0%) of the respondents were between the ages 17 and 30 years, 226(56.5%) were between the ages

of 31-49, and 86 (21.5%) respondents were between 50 years and above. this implies that the majority of the respondents were between ages 31 and 49 as shown in figure 2 below.

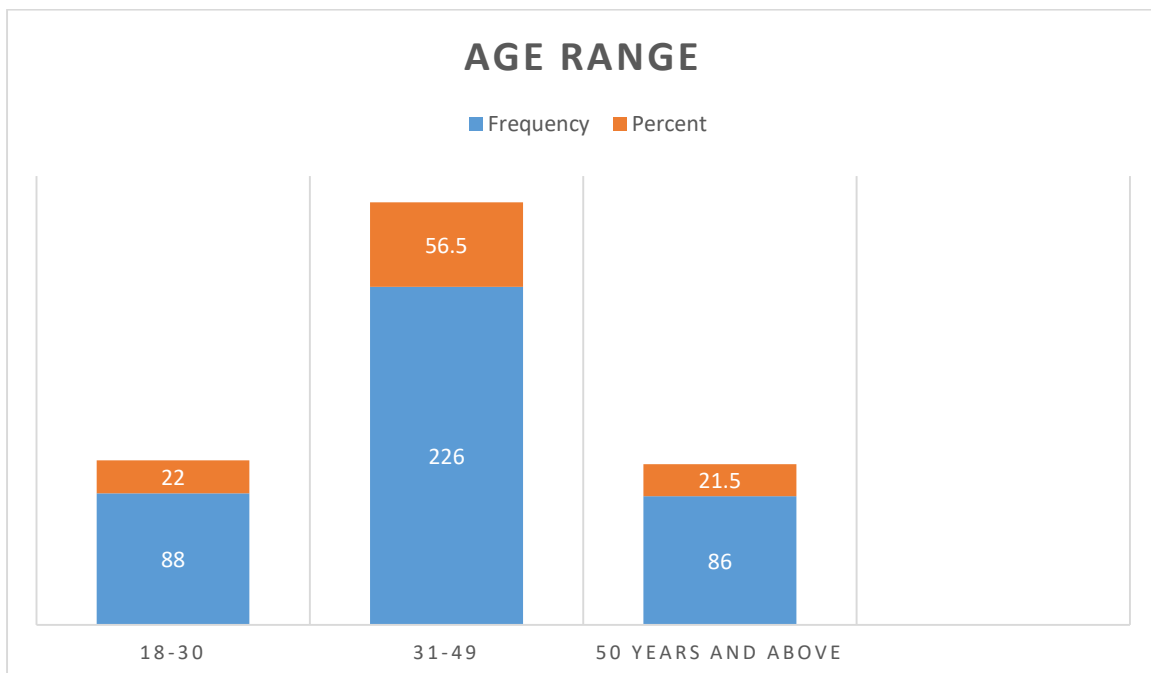


Figure 2: A column chart showing the distribution of the sample by age of the respondents

Table 4: Distribution and respondent's religion		
	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	345	86.3
Islam	52	13.0
Others	3	.8
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The section in Table 4 depicted the demographic information of the respondents. The categorization based on the respondent's religion showed that 345 (86.3%) of the respondents were christens, 52(13.0%) were Islam's 3(0.8%) respondents

belonged to other religions. The result implies that the majority of the respondents who participated in the study were Christians as indicated in figure 3 below.

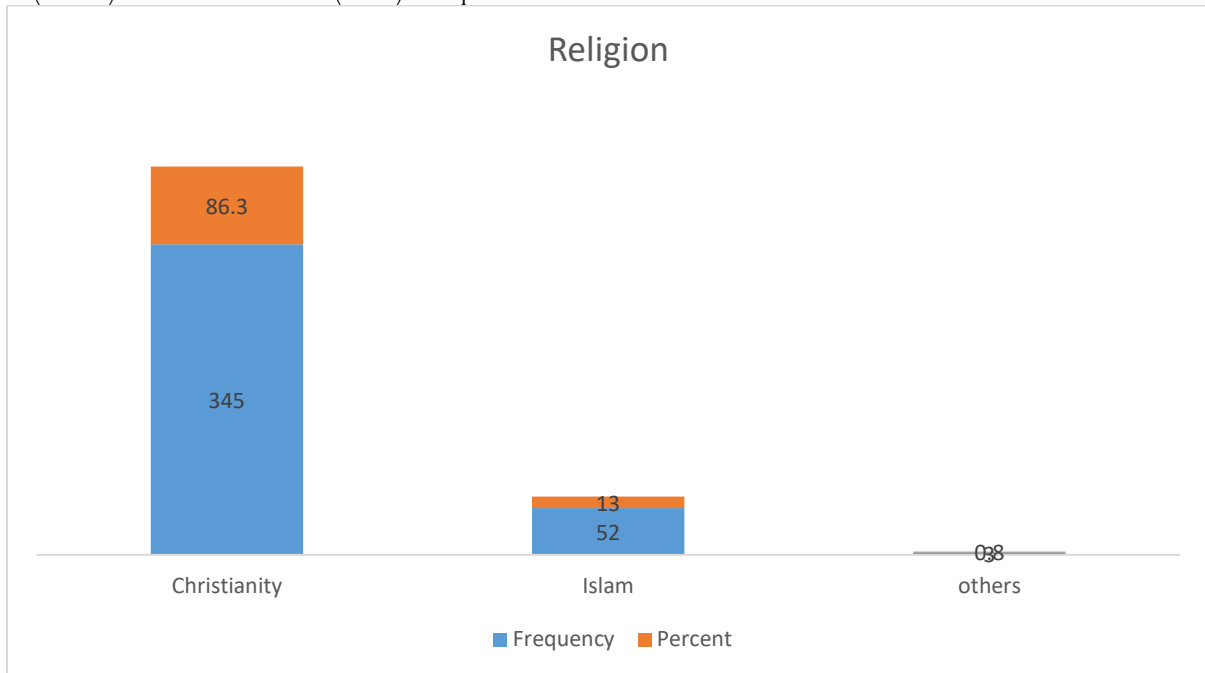


Figure 3: A column chart showing the distribution of the sample by age of the respondents

Table 5: Distribution of sample by marital status		
	Frequency	Percentage
Married	190	47.5
Single	163	40.8
Others	47	11.8
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 depicts the demographic information of the respondents. The categorization based on the respondents' marital status showed that 190 (47.5%) of the respondents were married, 163

(40.8%) were single, and 47 (11.8%) respondents were either separated or divorced. Hence, the majority of the respondents were married as indicated in the figure below.

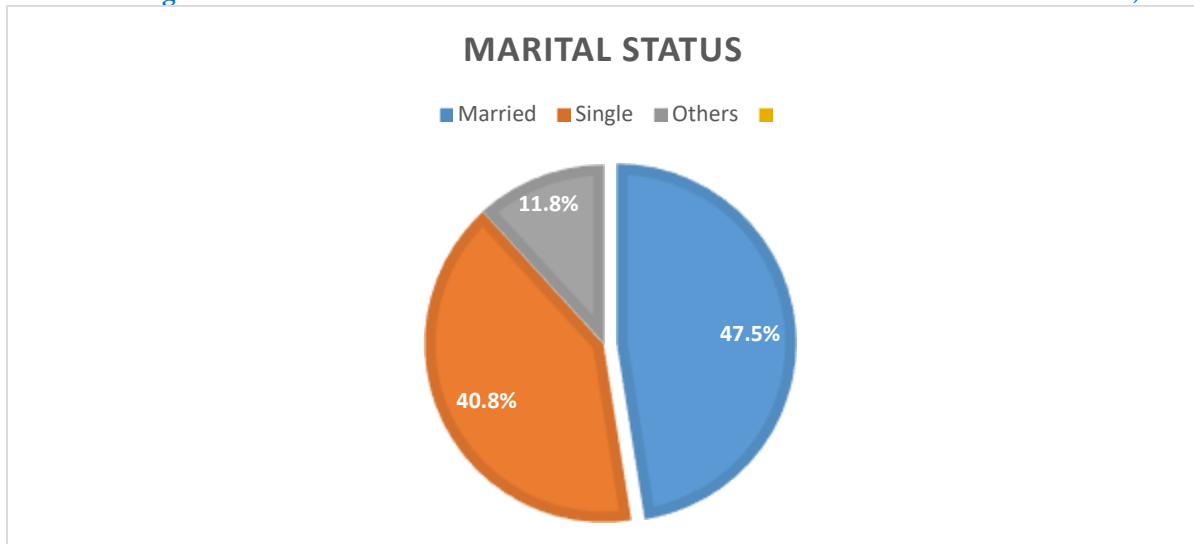


Figure 4: A pie chart showing the distribution of the sample by marital status

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Workload	16.37	2.977
Role conflict	16.66	2.737
Time Pressure	16.17	2.711
Employee Motivation	15.62	2.628
Organizational Environment	17.51	3.738
Employee performance	30.17	6.162
Valid N (listwise)		

DISCUSSION

The broad objective of the study was to investigate stressors among Ugandan and Nigerian employees.

The influence of employee workload on employees' performance in public service in Uganda and Nigeria

The findings of the study revealed that workload has a significant effect on employees' performance in public service in both countries, Uganda and Nigeria. This corroborates the findings of previous authors. Kholifat and Almatarneh [8] studied the impact of work stress on job performance among public school managers in South Jordan province using the survey research design on a sample of 216 respondents. Work stress was measured using workload, role conflict, and role ambiguity while job performance was measured in terms of output, efficiency, and effectiveness of employees. The regression analysis was adopted for the hypotheses test and the result showed that job stress had a negative relationship with job performance in the study area. The study concluded that the dimensions of work stress including workload, time pressure, role conflict, and role ambiguity were sufficient predictors of employee job performance in the study area. The study recommended among other things, a reduction in workload, adjustment in time pressure, and redesigning of job tasks, etc. Kazmi et al. [9] used a sample of 314 respondents in the study on occupational stress and its effect on job performance. The study used copies of

questionnaires designed in a six-Likert scale format. Occupational stress was decomposed into workload, role conflict, and role ambiguity while job performance was measured in terms of staff output (i.e., sales value and sales volume). The multiple regression analysis was used for the hypotheses test and the result showed no statistically significant effect of occupational stress on job performance. The study concluded that job performance among medical practitioners in the study area can be attributed to other factors outside the dimension of occupational stress used in the study. Similarly, Jamal [10], in a cross-cultural study found that the dimension of occupational stress particularly burnout had no statistically significant effect on employee performance. The result of the study showed that job performance among Canadian and Chinese employees does not differ in any dimension. The study recommended consistent performance and quarterly staff training activities. Similarly, Ismail et al. [11], investigated the relationship between occupational stress and job performance. Occupational stress was measured in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity while job performance was measured in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of employees. The study adopted the quasi-experimental research design on a sample of 301 respondents. Copies of questionnaires were administered and information received was subjected to the correlation coefficient

test and the results showed that the occupational stress dimension used in the study was significantly related to job performance. Also, the study found that emotional intelligence had a moderating effect on the occupational stress-job performance relationship in the study area. The study concluded

The Effect of Role Conflict on Employees' Performance in Public Service in Uganda and Nigeria

In this study, conflict had a significant effect on employees' performance in the public service in both countries, Uganda and Nigeria. This is in tandem with Husein [12], who investigated job stress impacts as a predictor of job performance levels using multiple regression analysis. Role of conflict and role ambiguity were used as measures of job stress while sales value and sales volume were used as job performance measures. The samples of 306 respondents were randomly selected from the population of the study and administered copies of questionnaires having 35 items. The semi-double

The Effect of Time Pressure on Employee Performance in Public Service in Uganda and Nigeria

In this study, time pressure had a significant effect on employee performance in public service in Uganda and Nigeria. Idris [13] investigated the effect of overtime role stress on psychological strain among academics in Malaysian public universities. Role stress was measured in terms of ambiguity and conflict while psychological stress was measured in terms of withdrawal. The study adopted the survey research design which afforded the use of copies of questionnaires on randomly selected respondents from public universities in the study area. The double log regression analysis was adopted for the study and the result showed that the dimension of overtime role stress had an inverse effect on psychological strain among academics in Malaysia. The study concluded that overtime professional activities are considerably inconsistent with the academic profession and therefore should be recommended that the workload of academics be

The Effect of Employee Level of Motivation on Employees' Performance in the Public Service in Uganda and Nigeria

Employees' motivation had a significant effect on employees' performance in public service in Uganda and Nigeria. In a similar study, Muogbo [15], carried out a study on the influence of motivation on employees' performance in some selected firms in Anambra State. The result obtained from the analysis showed that there existed a relationship between extrinsic motivation and the performance of employees while no relationship existed between intrinsic motivation and employee performance.

The Extent to which Organizational Environment Moderates the Influence of Work Stress on Employee Performance in Public Service in Uganda and Nigeria

In this study, the organizational environment has a significant effect on the employees' performance in public service in Uganda and Nigeria. Contrary to this, Hanif [16] studied teachers' stress, job performance, and self-efficiency of women school teachers in Islamabad. Stress was measured using workload and role conflict while job performance was measured in terms of output and self-efficiency

that occupational stress and job performance were similar in the manifestation of high, low performance, and high-low stress among staff in the area. The study recommended among other things monthly performance appraisal vis-à-vis training.

log regression was used for the hypotheses test and the results showed that job stress hurt performance in the study area. The study concluded that employee performance in terms of the degree to which it increases or decreases can be accounted for by relative changes in job stress among staff. The study recommended among other things improving working conditions, increasing salary scale, perpetual performance appraisal, and regular staff training/development in both ICT and other related technologies.

reduced in order to maintain optimal performance. Similarly, Dar *et al.* [14] investigated the impact of stress on employee job performance in the Pakistani business sector using the survey research design. Job stress was measured in terms of role conflict, role conflict, motivation, and workload while job performance was measured in terms of timely service delivery and employee efficiency. The sample of 222 respondents was randomly selected for the study and administered copies of the questionnaire. The multiple regression test was adopted for the hypotheses developed and the results showed a negative effect of stress on employee job performance. The study concluded that low employee performance is a result of high stress among workers in the Pakistani business sector. The study recommended consistent performance appraisal, and regular staff training among other things.

The study reveals extrinsic motivation given to workers in an organization has a significant influence on the workers' performance. The researcher recommended that all firms should adopt extrinsic rewards in their various firms to increase productivity. Based on these findings, employers are continually challenged to develop pay policies and procedures that will enable them to attract, motivate, retain, and satisfy their employees.

was measured in terms of timely delivery. The result showed that job stress had a negative effect on staff performance as well as no significant difference between the job stress performance of female workers in the different organizations. The study concluded that the effect of job stress on employee performance did not differ in any way among women from the different organizations.

Gillispie et al. [17] explored occupational stress in universities by taking into consideration, staff perception of the causes, consequences, and moderators of strain factors as they affect performances. The exploratory research design was adopted for the study such that data for the investigation were strictly qualitative. Findings from the study unfolded that the causes of work stress among university workers include but are not restricted to excess workload, limited time frame, role ambiguity, role conflict, sexual harassment, etc. while the consequences of occupational stress were found to include but not restricted to faulty results, absenteeism, staff burn out, illnesses, etc. While the moderating factors found in the study include salaries, recognition, synergy among staff, etc. The study recommended that for academics to exercise optimal performance. There is a need for the adjustment of workload presented to them, regular training, and constant increase in salary and other fringe benefits.

The Composite and Relative Predictive Effects of Work Stress Variables on Employees' Performance in the Public Service in Uganda and Nigeria

There are significant composite predictive effects of work stress variables (workload, role conflict, time pressure, employee motivation, and organizational environment) on employees' performance in public service in Uganda and Nigeria. Ammar [19] studied the effect of internal variables on the level of job stress on employees in Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip. Internal variables were considered in the study to include but not restricted to financial, non-financial, and physical resources while job stress was operationalized into role conflict and role ambiguity. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design on a sample of 661 randomly selected respondents who

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that work stress has a perceptible effect on employees' performance in public service in both countries, Uganda and Nigeria. Specifically, workload, role conflict, time pressure, employee motivation, and organizational environment as indices of work stress all have an impact on employees' performance in public service in Uganda

The study's findings led to the following recommendations:

1. Government and private organization management should ensure adequate workload reduction or adjustment to minimize work stress and improve employee performance.
2. Relevant authorities should undertake interventions through a work skills acquisition program for all employees to ensure proficiency in all their job descriptions, create working synergy among employees, particularly with top management, and improve financial compensation and employee promotion.

Similarly, Cousins et al. [18] in their study, on management standards and work-related stress in the United Kingdom used the surveys on a sample of 404 randomly selected respondents. Management standard was measured in terms of time pressure, delegation, and leadership style while work-related stress was measured in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity. The regression analysis was adopted for the hypotheses test and the result showed that tight/stringent management standards had a significant effect on work-related stress in the United Kingdom. The study concluded that work-related stress manifested amongst staff in the United Kingdom can be accounted for by the degree of management strictness and zero tolerance for employee misconduct. The study recommended transformational and democratic leadership styles among managers in the United Kingdom business environment.

were administered copies of the questionnaire. The multiple linear regression test and the results showed that internal variables such as staff salary, recognition, and office space/lighting moderated the effect of job stress on employee performance in Palestinian universities. The study concluded that financial, non-financial, and physical infrastructures internal to an organization particularly universities in Palestine had a moderating effect on the relationship between job stress and employee performance. The study recommended improved salary skills and consistent training.

CONCLUSION

and Nigeria. The findings of the study also corroborate the person-environment fit (PEF) theory. This is because every activity within public or private organizations belongs to and affects the financial and non-financial resources, which in turn have an effect on the performance of the employee within the work organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Management should adequately recruit, train, deploy, and compensate competent persons required to meet or match specific job appointments that are directly associated with high time-pressure demands to avoid the manifestation of work stress, poor staff performance, and negative corporate operations.
4. Public service agency management should increase the level of employee motivation irrespective of his or her workload to cut down on employee poor performance such as absenteeism, faulty service delivery, late task accomplishment, distortion of

information, and withdrawal, among other things.

5. Management should ensure the consistent provision of an adequate supply of

Suggestions for Further Research

The current study revealed, through simple linear regression analyses, that work stress has a significant effect on employee performance. However, multiple regression was weak in a few instances, and some of the indicators, like motivation and role conflict, had negative effects on employee performance. Below, scholars suggest areas for further investigation.

1. The study should be replicated in other settings using a larger population and

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identified financial and non-financial resources to limit the possibility of one or more dimensions of job stress.

sample size to reinforce the reliability of the findings.

2. Other researchers, both academic and non-academic, should further examine an empirical analysis of the relationship between employee motivation as it relates to fringe benefits for employees in the organization and role conflicts.

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