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SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

**DETERMINING THE PREVALENCE AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH WORK
STRESS AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA, LUSAKA**

BY

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requirements of a Degree in Bachelor of Science in Public Health**

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DECLARATION

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I declare that this dissertation is my creative work and to the best of my acquaintance has not been presented for a degree in any other institution.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, whose unwavering love, encouragement, and support have sustained me throughout my studies. Your sacrifices and belief in me have been my greatest motivation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

TTSC	Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping
TPSM	Theory of Preventive Stress Management
EP	Employee Performance
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
HRM	Human Resource Management
JD	Job Demand
TP	Time Pressure
JS	Job Security
NAZ	National Assembly of Zambia
MPs	Members of Parliament
MSD	Musculoskeletal disease

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Abstract

Introduction: Work-related stress is a significant global occupational health challenge that impairs employee well-being, productivity, and organizational effectiveness. This study aimed to determine the prevalence of work stress and identify the key associated factors among employees at the National Assembly of Zambia in Lusaka.

Methods: A quantitative, descriptive cross-sectional study design was employed, utilizing a structured self-administered questionnaire. The study instrument collected data across critical domains, including perceived job demands (e.g., heavy workload and long hours), levels of job control and social support, specific sources of stress (such as political pressure, deadlines, and poor communication), and the impact of stress on mental health and work-life balance.

Results: Findings are expected to reveal a measurable prevalence of work stress within this public service environment. The subsequent analysis of associated factors is anticipated to highlight significant relationships between high stress and variables such as excessive workload, lack of supervisory support, and limited autonomy in job execution.

Conclusion: The results will provide empirical evidence necessary for the National Assembly to design targeted occupational health interventions, specifically recommending the implementation of formal stress management and employee wellness programs to foster a healthier and more productive working environment.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter is important because it provides the foundation and context for the research, helping to justify why the study is necessary and relevant. It highlights existing knowledge, identifies gaps or unresolved issues in previous research, and explains how the current study will contribute to addressing those gaps. In the case of work stress at the National Assembly of Zambia, the background will shed light on the broader issue of work stress in public institutions, its effects on employee performance, and the need for targeted interventions. This context ensures that the research is grounded in real-world challenges and aligned with both organizational and academic priorities. Chapter one presents the background to the study, Statement of the Problem, Study objectives, Significance of the study and Research questions.

1.1 Background

Selye (1974) as cited in Ling (2008) defined stress as a set of neurological and physiological reactions that serve an adaptive function. In today's world, most people experience higher levels of stress. The term “stress”, as is currently used, was first introduced by Hans Selye in 1936 and is considered as the originator of the stress theory. Selye defined stress as the “non-specific response of the body to any demand for change”. However, the commonly accepted definition of stress states that it is a condition or feeling, experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual can mobilize (Lazarus, 1966).

Most studies have shown that job stress negatively affects an individual’s work performance. There are many sources of job stress, role ambiguity, job insecurity, working relationships, lack of motivation, working environment, working hours and time pressure. Stress is also triggered by an individual’s lifestyle outside work environments such as family commitment and natural calamities associated with the individual (Alkubaisi, 2015).

Most business entities call for improved quality in their products with the aim of enhancing their competitive advantage among their peers, this triggers pressure at all levels of the firm. Meeting performance targets has become challenging with employees from all over the industries finding it difficult to meet these challenges (Al-khasawneh & Futa, 2013). Mental confusion, stress, depression as well as anxiety are among the many psychological as well as mental issues which

negatively impact on performance of employees at their work (Yildirim & Arslan, 2020). In occasions where employees are stressed, there is a feeling of depression which affects the concentration thus resulting to poor performance. (Yunita & Saputra, 2019). Scholars have reported that stress has negative implication on the performance of employees (Roster & Ferrari, 2019; Harras, 2019; Mo et al., 2021). Michael Armstrong and Angela Baron (2004), delineated employee performance as the degree to which an employee fulfils the job's prerequisites. Recent studies (Smith et al., 2021) underscore the significance of understanding the intricate interplay between workplace stressors and the resultant effects on employee performance. As organizations strive for efficiency and productivity, recognizing and addressing the implications of stress on employee performance has become imperative for fostering a healthy and sustainable work environment.

Befitting its role as a key element to overall organizational performance productivity, the epidemic of workplace stress can be seen as a result of changing workplace and economic conditions over the past 20 to 30 years (Bickford, 2005). According to a study by Lodhi and colleagues (2013) on the factors affecting employee performance in the workplace, certain factors individually and collectively have an effect on the performance of employees. Some of these variables include employee involvement, employee satisfaction, work environment, job motivation and Job stress (Lodhi, 2012). However, multiple studies conducted on the relationship between stress and job performance (J.C Gandi, 2011). According to research conducted by Bishar and Ramay (2010) on the impact of job stress on employee's job performance in the banking sector of Pakistan, discovered that job stress had a negative reaction with job performance that when stress occurs, it affects the performance of employees negatively (Smith, 2021).

As reported by Mangkunegara (2011) workplace stress can be interpreted as the feeling of pressure that employees experience while handling their duties. The symptoms of workplace stress may be characterized by feelings of restlessness, unstable emotions, trouble in sleeping, unreluctance, anxiety, loneliness, tense, excessive smoking, high blood pressure, nervous and indigestion among others. Davis and Newstrom (2008) holds that stress can be presented as a condition of tension which has an impact on the emotions of an individual, physical condition and thought process. Employees who live and operate with stress at their workplaces can become nervous which triggers chronic worries (Lazarus & Folkman, 2021). These employees may become irritable and thus

unable to relax or show an uncooperative attitude towards work among other behaviors (Cohen et al., 2016).

Workplace stress is a pervasive phenomenon with profound implications for both employees and organizations. The demanding nature of contemporary work environments has led to a surge of interest in understanding the antecedents, manifestations, and consequences of stress in the workplace. Recent studies (Smith et al., 2021; Johnson & Brown, 2022) highlight the multifaceted nature of workplace stress, emphasizing the role of factors such as excessive workload, role ambiguity, and interpersonal conflicts. Notably, the latest literature delves into the physiological and psychological ramifications of prolonged exposure to workplace stress, linking it to adverse health outcomes (Robinson et al., 2020). As organizations grapple with the challenge of maintaining employee well-being and performance, a comprehensive understanding of the latest research on workplace stress is essential for implementing effective interventions and fostering healthier work environments. This study adopted job demands, time pressure, salary and job security as measures of workplace stress (Lee & Kim, 2022).

LePine et al. (2015) refers to employee performance (EP) as the features portrayed by the employees from which the firm can achieve its objectives and goals. The EP can also be expressed as performance of the roles related to the job in a diligent manner as presented by (Briscoe & Claus, 2008). Atsatsi (2019) on the other hand refers to EP as the extent to which employees meet the calls of the tasks as dedicated to them within the stipulated resources. EP puts together the contextual performance, task performance as well as adaptive performance (Koopmans et al., 2011). Okiro, Aduda, and Omoro (2015) looks at EP as the degree to which employee accomplish their duties in an entity with respect to the objectives and goals of the firm.

Scholars have examined various dimensions of performance, including task-related activities, interpersonal behaviors, and adaptive responses to organizational change. A study by Anderson and Smith (2021) delves into the importance of aligning individual goals with organizational objectives to enhance overall performance. Moreover, recent research conducted by Brown et al. (2022) underscores the significance of leadership styles in shaping employee performance. Their findings suggest a positive association between transformational leadership and heightened levels of employee engagement, leading to improved performance outcomes. Concurrently, contemporary literature, as highlighted by Clark and Martinez (2023), places emphasis on exploring contextual factors like organizational culture and job design. Examining the interplay of

these elements and their impact on employee performance is essential for organizations aspiring to optimize their human capital and attain enduring success. This literature review seeks to amalgamate insights from diverse perspectives, contributing to the ongoing evolution of understanding the crucial organizational phenomenon of employee performance.

The impact of work-related stress extends beyond individual employees, affecting organizational productivity and national economies. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) estimates that stress-related issues lead to at least one trillion dollars in lost productivity annually. This underscores the significance of understanding work stress and implementing strategies to mitigate its effects. Work stress is influenced by factors such as work organization, job design, and labor management (An, 2008). Furthermore, it can negatively impact employees' health, social interactions, and job performance (Raja & Vijayakumar, 2017). Despite growing research on work-related stress, there is a gap in studies focusing specifically on the National Assembly of Zambia (NAZ). The tasks and responsibilities undertaken by both Members of Parliament (MPs) and National Assembly staff present unique stressors that warrant further investigation. This study seeks to determine the prevalence and factors associated with work stress at NAZ, Lusaka, contributing to effective workplace interventions and policy recommendations.

The chapter sets the stage for understanding work stress at NAZ, forming the basis for the literature review, research methodology, and data analysis. The findings will help inform workplace policies, mental health interventions, and employee welfare programs, ultimately enhancing productivity and organizational efficiency.

1.2 statement of the problem

Work related stress is an issue of contention in today's world because it affects both the organization and the employees. It is a phenomenon that may not be avoided among employees across various sectors globally. Wong and Teo (2010) recommend that leaders and human resources practitioners of organizations should be concerned about the implications of stress on the overall output of the employees in their organizations.

In the context of legislative bodies, such as the National Assembly of Zambia, the demands of legislative work can contribute to significant levels of work-related stress. Members of Parliament and Staff often face high workloads, tight deadlines, long working hours, political pressures, and public scrutiny, which may lead to mental and physical strain. While work stress is a known phenomenon in various governmental organizations, its specific impact on the National Assembly

of Zambia remains underexplored. Preliminary data from the National Assembly Clinic, which provides primary health care services to MPs and staff of the National Assembly, indicate a significant rise in stress-related health issues among MPs and staff over the past three years. According to the clinic's 2024 annual report, consultations for stress-related conditions which include headache, insomnia, hypertension, MSDs—formed part of the top ten (10) causes of morbidity.

Furthermore, informal interviews conducted with clinic staff reveal that many employees report symptoms of burnout, citing reasons such as excessive workloads, lack of work-life balance, and inadequate organizational support. These findings suggest a systemic issue that extends beyond individual coping mechanisms.

The National Assembly, which forms part of the three arms of Government, is the core legislative institution in Zambia. It plays a critical role in shaping the country's policies, laws, and governance. This unique environment, characterized by the intersection of political dynamics, administrative duties, and public service, presents particular challenges that may influence the well-being and productivity of its members. However, there is a lack of empirical research that explores the extent, causes, and consequences of work stress within the National Assembly of Zambia. This knowledge gap hinders efforts to develop effective strategies for managing stress and improving workplace conditions for all individuals involved in legislative activities.

Understanding the nature of work stress within this context is vital to promoting a healthier, more efficient parliamentary environment. High levels of stress can lead to burnout, diminished job satisfaction, reduced productivity, and negative impacts on decision-making processes. Furthermore, unaddressed stress may also influence the broader political landscape, potentially undermining the quality of governance and public trust in democratic institutions.

This research aims to investigate the factors contributing to work stress among Members of Parliament and their support staff, identify the impact of this stress on their well-being and job performance, and assess existing coping mechanisms. By doing so, the study seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving workplace conditions, promoting mental health, and enhancing the overall functioning of the National Assembly. Such findings could inform

policy reforms, stress management interventions, and leadership practices aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of work stress in Zambia's legislative environment.

1.3 Justification of the study

While work stress has been studied in various public sectors, to the knowledge of the researcher, there is a gap in studies focusing specifically on legislative bodies like National Assembly of Zambia. The findings from this study will fill a significant gap in the existing literature, offering valuable insights into the unique stressors faced by Members of Parliament and staff at National Assembly of Zambia. The research will also contribute to the broader discourse on work stress in political and governmental organizations, providing useful knowledge for policymakers, researchers, and other legislative bodies in the region and beyond thereby significantly contributing to the academic knowledge.

In addition, the study findings will be used as a guideline by management in order to determine the prevalence and main sources of work stress. The results of this study will also help in the development of effective stress management strategies and policies within the National Assembly of Zambia and subsequently improve employee's performance.

The researcher anticipates that as this study will contribute substantially to the establishment of a theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of how organizational culture can be aligned with digital innovation and technology to yield increased productivity and serve people in various parts of the country efficiently with high satisfaction. This will form a new insight and contribute to the current ideas of organizational culture and stress management.

Furthermore, this study will be of importance to future researchers as it will give more details on the problem and it will be used as a forum for discussing the effect of job stress on the organizations. Finally, the Government of Zambia will also benefit from the findings in this study to identify the gaps in industries and implement policies towards creating an environment that will aid companies to adhere to the stipulated laws and regulations on stress management.

In summary, the study of work stress at the National Assembly of Zambia is not only important for enhancing the functioning of the institution but also for promoting the well-being of its Members of Parliament and staff. This research will provide critical insights into the factors contributing to work stress, the impact on individual health and organizational performance, and the potential strategies for reducing stress within this vital public institution

1.4 Scope of the study

This study will focus on examining the impact of work stress on employee performance at the National Assembly of Zambia. The research will target all employees within the institution to assess the prevalence of job-related stress and how it influences their overall work output. Key variables in this study will include work stress (independent variable), measured through indicators such as workload, time pressure, and role conflict, and employee performance (dependent variable), assessed based on productivity, work quality, and goal achievement. Data relevant to these variables will be collected and analyzed within the research timeframe of January 2025 to December 2025, aiming to provide insights that could inform interventions to improve staff well-being and organizational efficiency.

1.5 Objectives of the study

1.5.1 General objective

To determine the prevalence and factors associated with work stress among Members of Parliament and staff at the National Assembly of Zambia, Lusaka.

1.5.2 Specific research objective

- i. To assess the prevalence of work stress among employees at the National Assembly of Zambia.
- ii. To explore work related factors influencing employees stress among Members of Parliament and staff of National Assembly Zambia.
- iii. To identify the sources of job stress among employees at the National Assembly of Zambia.
- iv. To examine the impact of work stress among employees at the National Assembly of Zambia.

1.6 Research questions

1. How prevalent is work stress among employees of the National Assembly of Zambia?
2. What are some of the factors influencing work stress among members of parliament and staff of National Assembly of Zambia?
3. What are the sources of work stress among employees at the National Assembly of Zambia?
4. What is the impact of work stress on employees at the National Assembly of Zambia?

1.7 Definition of operational terms

Stress: Health and Safety executives (HSE) define stress as an adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them. Work-related stress is thus understood to occur when there is a mismatch between the demands of the job and the resources and capabilities of the individual worker to meet those demands.

Performance: A constant procedure for improving individuals by aligning actual performance with preferred organizational goal. A good performance of the employees of an organization leads towards a good organizational performance thus ultimately making an organization more successful and effective and the vice versa (Armstrong, 2009).

Workers: These are individuals hired working under a contract in an organization.

International Labor Organization (ILO): This is a United Nations Agency dealing with Labor Issues (UNA) particularly promoting rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues (ILO, 2014).

Nongovernmental Organization (NGO): According to Werker and Ahmed (2007), Nongovernmental Organizations are defined as private organizations, characterized as humanitarian or cooperative, rather than Commercial objectives that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide social services and undertake community development (Werker and Ahmed, 2007).

Psychological Stressors: According to Mario, Verplanken, Manstead and Stroebe (2007), psychological stressors are the effects of both conscious and unconscious attitudes, as well as gap between intentions and behaviour which is internal to an individual. The conflict arising between the people's desire and the need to stay healthy.

Burnout: Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), define burnout as a metaphor that is commonly used to describe a state of mental weariness. Originally, burnout occurred exclusively in the human services among those who did people related work.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review for the study. McCombes (2019) defines literature review as a method of gathering information from scholarly sources on a specific topic. The main objective of conducting literature review is to obtain context and background information relating to the topic of discussion and to understand how previous researchers conducted similar studies in this regard.

This literature review critically examines prior studies relevant to work stress in public sector institutions, with the aim of identifying established findings, theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, and prevailing gaps in the knowledge base. By synthesizing key contributions from the field, this review highlights how past research has shaped current understanding and underscores the need for further investigation.

The review begins by discussing previous studies conducted in developed countries, followed by those conducted in developing countries which include African countries. Additionally, the literature review discusses studies that were conducted in Zambia

2.2 Global perspective

Globally, Guo, Y., Ma, T., Yang, T., & Tian, X. (2019) explored the impact of job-related stress on the job performance of healthcare workers in China. The study drew data from 1594 workers in the health sector working particularly in public hospitals in eastern, western, and central China. The research employed descriptive statistics, structural equation modelling, correlation analysis, and subgroup analysis. The findings of the study indicated heightened levels of not only the challenge stress but also the hindrance stress among the participants. Notably, hindrance stress demonstrated a noteworthy adverse correlation with public services motivation and job performance.

In Nepal, Gurung and Bastola (2021) conducted a separate study to investigate how workplace stress impacts on the performance of workers. The main emphasis of the research centered on

employees in the health sector, where a sample of 167 individuals was used. Questionnaires were utilized in collecting data, and subsequent analysis involved descriptive statistics, regression, and correlation analysis. The study findings indicated a moderate level of employee performance in hospitals situated within the Gandaki Province. Additionally, the research identified that workload exerted a minor adverse impact on employees' job performance.

Roskam *et al* (2013) conducted a two-country study in Canada and Switzerland, in which they examined employee's performance in resolving work related stress and effect. The aim of the study was to examine occupational health and safety issues in line with the impact of management practices and work organization on check-in employees' health. The study revealed that check-in staff are exposed to several hazards at the workplace.

For instance, there is a high rate of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) that result from frequent lifting or handling of baggage and prolonged standing while operating a computer in a constrained space. As a result, MSDs are common among check-in employees and can lead to temporary or permanent disability as well as disrupt sleep and non-work activities. The study therefore, revealed that heavy workload is one of the leading factors contributing to job-related stress. The study also revealed other hazards which lead to job-related stress for check-in employees including violence, environmental conditions, and uneven workload distribution. The study further revealed that other aspects such as quick turnaround policies, work intensification, lack of training, lack of autonomy, and exclusion in workplace decision-making have negative effects on check-in employees. For example, the "quick turnaround" policies practiced by airlines increases stress levels, work pressure and workload for check-in employees.

Stress has an impact on the fulfilment of performance targets where workers are faced with abnormal conditions such as tension with regards to time, overworking and fatigue (Riaz et al. 2016). Workers with low levels of the uneasiness have high chances of performing better (George, 2015). Business managers are advised to encourage employees to get committed to their organizations to enhance devotion to the company and thus their work performance (Ahmad, et al., 2016).

An inquiry by Fink (2016) in USA established that 50% of workers experienced work related stress which impacted negatively on their productivity. Literature has reported that most employees reported being subjected to a variety of psychosocial risks, such as: experiencing organizational

change (51%); working at a fast pace (59% of surveyed workers); working under tight deadlines (62% of surveyed workers) and working more than 40 hours per week (24% of surveyed workers). Forty percent of employees in 31 European nations indicated that stress was not adequately addressed or managed (EU-OSHA, 2013).

2.3 African perspective

In Africa, a systematic review revealed that burnout, a reaction to persistent work-related stress, was observed at a rate of 87% (Owuor et al., 2020). Another meta-analysis indicated that the prevalence of low back pain among nurses in the continent ranged from 44.1% to 82.7%, with an average of 64.07% (Kasa et al., 2020). Notably, a study conducted in Nigeria reported an even higher prevalence of low back pain, reaching 71.4%. The causes were primarily attributed to physical strain (54.1%) and stress from nursing duties (76.5%), while prolonged standing was identified as a risk factor by 90.9% of participants (Adetoun & Oluwatosin, 2020). When comparing these African findings to a global review indicating a pooled prevalence of nurse burnout at 11.23%, it becomes evident that Africa experiences a disproportionately higher impact of occupational stress (Woo et al., 2020).

The Kenyan scenario, though with limited studies seems no different from the African region. A cross sectional study in one of Kenya's busy maternity hospital; Pumwani hospital, showed (88.6%) of the respondents were experiencing burn out (Muriithi & Kariuki, 2020). A corresponding investigation into burnout among healthcare professionals was conducted at Kenyatta National Hospital, revealing a raw prevalence rate of 95.4%. In another study at a comparable institution, Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, moderate levels of burnout were identified among nurses, accounting for approximately 40% (Gichara, 2017).

Studies have demonstrated the untoward consequences of occupational stress where it has been linked to poor mental health (2011; Madsen et al., 2017) increased health impairing behaviors increased smoking and alcoholism (Roberto & Taylor, 2020); suboptimal physical well-being, encompassing conditions like obesity, cardiovascular disease, and hypertension. (Heikkilä, 2020), as well as on measures of organizational health like sick leave, absenteeism, work satisfaction, productivity, and attempts to quit (Leka et al., 2010). It has also been associated with financial losses on account of lost productivity and adverse health consequences (Hassard et al., 2018).

In Nigeria, Oruh, Mordi, Dibia and Ajonbadi (2021) studies influence of compassionate managerial leadership style in mitigation of stressors at the workplace as well as in the alleviation of stress experiences among workers. Through a thematic analysis process, the study drew and analyzed data from 11 manufacturing entities, 10 banking institutions and 9 frontlines workers in the healthcare sector in Nigeria. The study revealed a positive influence of compassionate managerial leadership in driving response to workers fearing to lose their jobs, being overworked, their pay being low and/or delayed as well as healthcare risk by employees.

Mutua, Singh, and Njoroge (2023) concentrated on examining the stress related to occupation and related variables affecting nurses employed in theatre at KNH. To determine the sample size, the research utilized Fisher's formula, determining a sample of 180 nurses. Data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire. The study's results presented varied findings concerning the correlation between predictor and response variables. A difference was observed in occupational stress between gender, various levels of education as well as different age groups studied. Finally, the research concludes by reporting lack of correlation between the predictor and response variables. Additionally, the study found a substantial increase in nurses' occupational stress due to a significant shortage of staff.

2.4 Zambian perspective

Work-related stress is a significant concern in Zambia, affecting various sectors and impacting employee well-being and organizational performance. Several studies have examined this issue from different perspectives, highlighting the prevalence, causes, and effects of occupational stress in the Zambian context.

A preliminary study focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Zambian construction industry revealed that a majority of these enterprises are aware of common mental health issues, with burnout being the most recognized disorder. Notably, 53% of respondents reported experiencing stress at work, and 60% acknowledged the presence of stigma towards mental ill-health in the workplace. This study underscores the need for targeted interventions to address occupational stressors and promote mental health awareness within the construction sector (Zamstat, 2020).

In the aviation sector, research conducted at Kenneth Kaunda International Airport's Ground Handling section aimed to analyze the effect of job stress on employee performance. The findings indicated that poor physical work environments and the frequent presence of job stress factors negatively impacted employee performance. The study concluded that addressing these stressors is crucial for enhancing employee productivity and overall service quality in the aviation industry.

The Zambia Police Service has also been the subject of research concerning occupational stress. A study investigating the effects of occupational stress on service delivery within the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Lusaka Urban District found that police officers encounter unpredictable and potentially volatile situations that contribute to occupational stress. The study highlighted that such stress adversely affects service delivery, leading to issues like increased absenteeism, diminished performance, and changes in behavior. Recommendations were made to implement strategies to mitigate occupational stress and enhance service delivery in the Zambia Police Service (Zamstat, 2016).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has recognized the risk factors for work-related stress in Zambia, particularly in the context of a rapidly evolving working environment. On World Day for Safety and Health at Work, the ILO in Zambia recommended ten key measures to address these risk factors, emphasizing the importance of generating and compiling national data to inform the development of intervention measures needed to tackle work-related stress.

The banking sector has also been examined concerning work-life balance and its effects on employee performance. A case study of AB Bank in Lusaka explored how work-life balance impacts employee performance, highlighting the importance of balancing multiple roles and the relationship between work-related conflict and facilitation. This study contributes to understanding how work-life balance can mitigate stress and enhance performance in the banking sector.

In the healthcare sector, a pilot study at the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) in Lusaka explored the stressful aspects of doctors' jobs. The study aimed to identify specific stressors affecting doctors, contributing to the broader understanding of occupational stress in the medical field within Zambia.

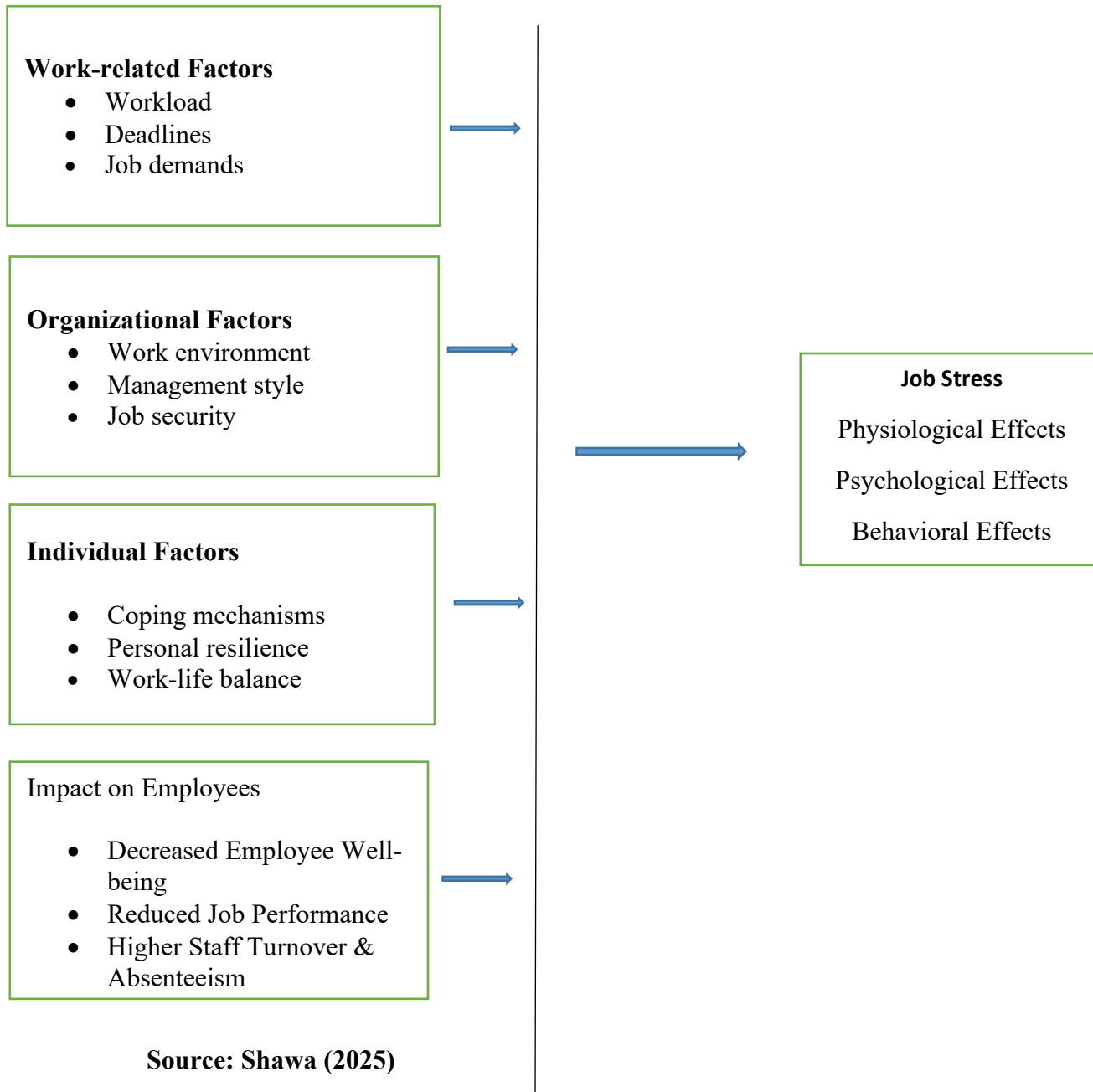
Furthermore, discussions on mental health and the workplace from a Zambian perspective have highlighted the lack of mental health and wellness awareness in workplace settings. These discussions emphasize the need for increased awareness and the implementation of mental health policies to create supportive work environments.

Collectively, these studies and discussions underscore the prevalence and impact of work-related stress across various sectors in Zambia. They highlight the necessity for comprehensive strategies, including improving work environments, promoting mental health awareness, and implementing supportive policies to mitigate occupational stress and enhance employee well-being and organizational performance.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Dependent Variable

Independent Variable



CHAPTER THREE:

STUDY METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This study aims to assess the prevalence of work-related stress among employees at the National Assembly of Zambia. By identifying the prevalence, sources, and impacts of work stress, the study will offer evidence-based recommendations for managing stress effectively in this setting. Further this chapter discusses the study approach, design, the target population, sample size, data collection methods and tools and how ethical related events will be upheld. This chapter provides a road map on how the research will be done to yield results.

3.1 Study Approach

The study will employ a quantitative research approach, which is best suited for systematically collecting and analyzing numerical data to uncover patterns, test hypotheses, and make generalizable conclusions. This approach is particularly appropriate for studies that seek to measure the prevalence, relationships, or effects of specific variables across a defined population. By using structured tools such as questionnaires or surveys, quantitative research allows for the collection of standardized data, enabling objective comparison and statistical analysis.

The justification for using a quantitative approach lies in its ability to provide precise, reliable, and replicable results. It is especially valuable when the aim is to quantify behaviors, attitudes, or outcomes and to identify statistically significant differences or associations among variables. Moreover, quantitative methods are advantageous for their scalability, allowing data to be collected from large samples and thereby increasing the power and external validity of the findings. In the context of this study, which may involve measuring the effectiveness, coverage, or uptake of a health intervention, or understanding population-level trends, a quantitative design ensures that evidence is grounded in measurable data. It supports the use of statistical software—such as SPSS version 22—for rigorous analysis and enables data to be visually presented through graphs and charts for clear communication with stakeholders, policymakers, and funders.

3.2 Study design

The study is a descriptive cross-sectional study in which quantitative research method will be employed. The study will focus on employees at the National Assembly of Zambia, including MPs and staff to provide a holistic view of work stress across different job roles. The respondents will be given questionnaires to circle or tick in the responses listed on each question.

A descriptive cross-sectional design will be used in the research to provide a snapshot of the population at a single point in time. This design is appropriate for assessing the prevalence and characteristics of specific variables without manipulating the study environment. It allows for efficient data collection and analysis to identify patterns, relationships, and trends among participants.

3.3 Study population/Target population

The study draws its target population from all employees include MPS and staff at the National Assembly of Zambia.

3.4 Sample size add sampling procedures

The study will use convenient sampling. Convenience sampling involves selecting participants who are readily available and easy to reach. It is commonly used in exploratory research where time, cost, and accessibility are constraints. The study adopted the Yamane formula to calculate the sample of 120 employees who work at the National Assembly to be used in the study. According to Yamane (1967) as cited by Israel (2003) this formula is as stipulated below

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

Equation 1: Formula for calculating a sample for proportions

n= The sample size

e - The desired level of precision (i.e. the margin of error). The study will be based on a 90% confidence interval hence used a level of precision at 0.1. 21

N= The population.

Therefore, based on the above, the sample size was calculated as follows:

600

$1+600 (0.1)^2$

$=120.4$

The sample size will also account for a non-response rate of 10% consequently bringing the entire sample size to 132 employees.

3.5 Data collection methods

A technique refers to the specific device or means of recording data such as interviews. Instruments are the tools used to collect data like interviews guide and questionnaire (open ended or closed ended). The study will use closed ended questionnaires to answer the objectives of research. The questionnaire will have responses in order to limit the respondents to give different opinions on the questions. This will allow collection of quantitative data that is easy to analyze statistically within a computer.

3.6 Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis will be conducted using SPSS version 22, a robust statistical software package that allows for accurate and efficient processing of large datasets. The data will first be cleaned and coded within SPSS to ensure consistency and reliability. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations will be used to summarize the data, while inferential statistical tests—such as chi-square tests, t-tests, and ANOVA—will be employed where appropriate to examine relationships and differences between variables. Once the analysis is complete, the results will be exported to Microsoft Excel to facilitate the creation of visually engaging 3D graphs. These graphs will enhance the interpretation and presentation of the findings, making it easier to communicate trends, patterns, and key insights to stakeholders and decision-makers.

3.7 Ethical consideration

This research will be guided by three core ethical criteria: ethical principles, ethical rules, and scientific rigor. Ethical approval will be obtained from the University of Lusaka Research Ethics Committee, the National Health Research Authority (NHRA), the Lusaka District Health Office, and the National Assembly of Zambia, where data collection will occur.

3.7.1 Informed Consent

Before participation, all respondents will be provided with detailed information regarding the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the study. Written informed consent will be obtained from each participant, with sufficient time given for questions and clarifications. Participants will be clearly informed that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point, without any consequences or need for justification.

3.7.2 Confidentiality

Strict confidentiality protocols will be maintained throughout the research process. All collected data will be securely stored, password-protected, and accessible only to the research team. Personal identifiers will be removed from the data to ensure that participants cannot be linked to their responses.

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To further protect participants, all responses will be anonymized. No names or identifiable personal details will be used in any reports, presentations, or publications resulting from the study. Codes will be assigned to participants instead of names to ensure anonymity.

3.7.4 Right to Withdraw

Participants will retain the right to withdraw from the study at any point, including at short notice, without facing any negative repercussions. In such cases, their data will be excluded from the analysis, provided it is feasible to identify and extract it without compromising overall data integrity or anonymity.

3.7.5 Participant Well-being

The physical and psychological well-being of all participants will be a top priority. The study will be designed and implemented in a manner that ensures no harm, discomfort, or mistreatment arises. If any participant experiences distress during the process, appropriate support and referrals will be provided.

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Throughout the study, transparent and sincere communication will be maintained with all stakeholders. Participants will be informed of their rights, the purpose of the research, and how their data will be used, promoting trust and ethical integrity.

CHAPTER THREE:

STUDY METHODOLOGY

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected for the study and outlines the key findings in relation to the research objectives. The chapter begins with a description of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, followed by an examination of the major variables under investigation. Both descriptive and inferential statistics are used where appropriate to interpret the data and provide meaningful insights. The results are presented in tables, graphs, and narrative form to clearly illustrate the patterns, trends, and relationships identified in the study.

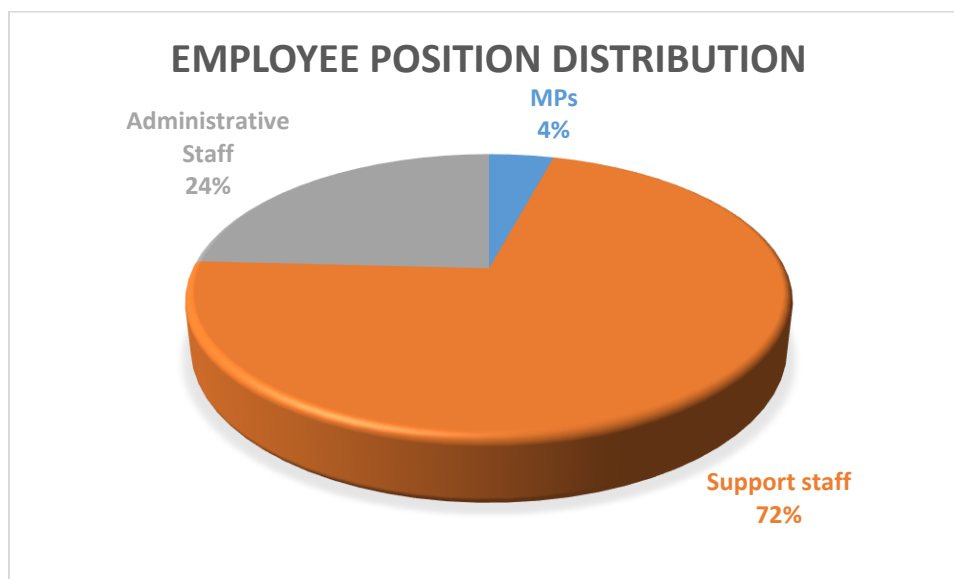


Figure 2: Employee Position Distribution

The analysis of employee positions revealed a heavily skewed distribution, with support Staff constituting the overwhelming majority of the respondent pool at 72%. Administrative staff represented the second-largest group at 24%. In contrast, Members of parliament functions were significantly underrepresented up to only 4%. This distribution indicates that the study findings are largely representative of the technical segment of the organization, a crucial point for contextualizing subsequent stress-related findings.

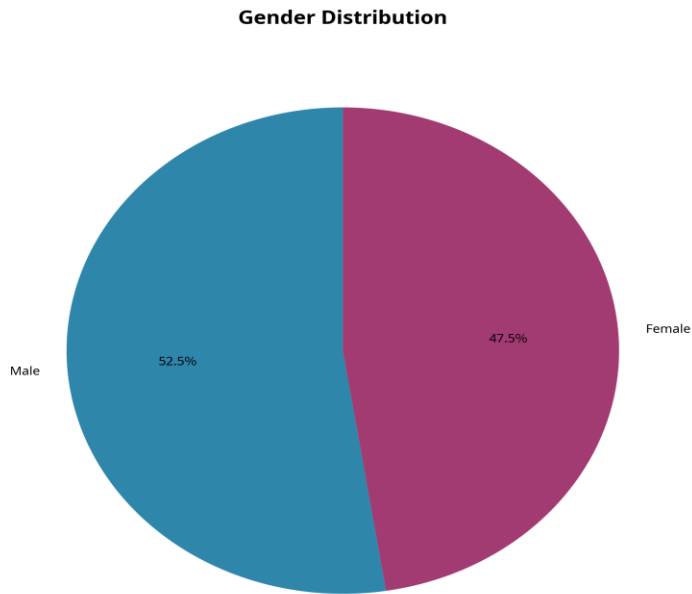


Figure 3: Gender Distribution

The gender distribution of the sample population was found to be almost evenly split, with a marginal majority of Male respondents at 52.5% compared to Female respondents at 47.5%. This near-equal representation across genders suggests that gender-based bias is unlikely to have significantly influenced the overall demographic profile of the survey results.

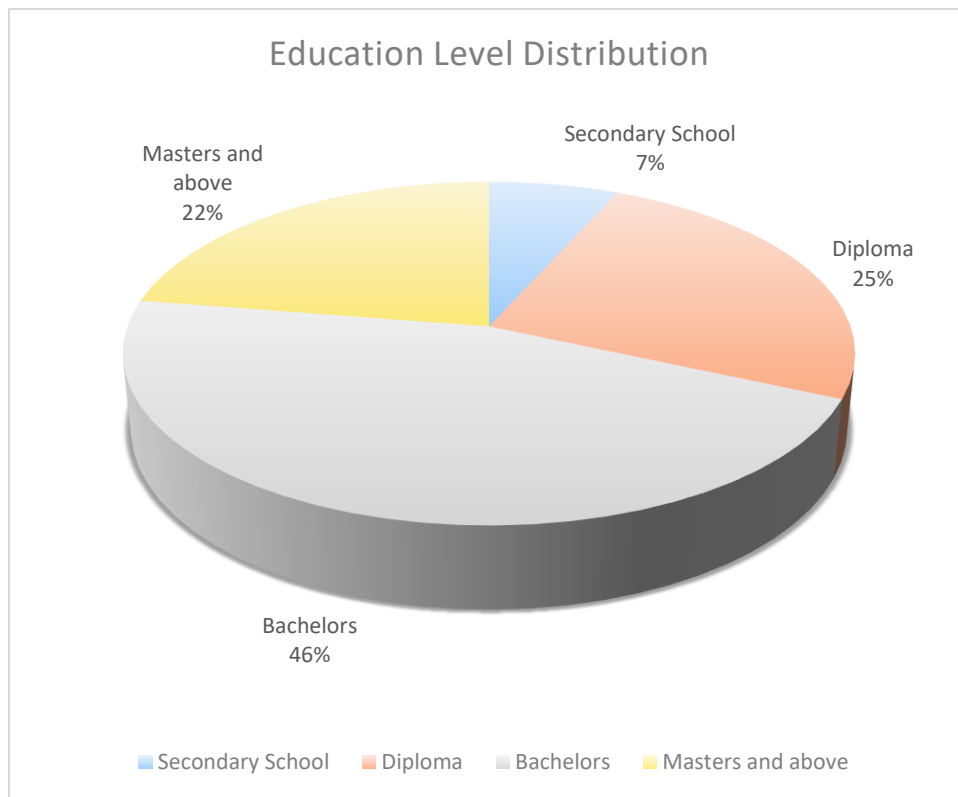


Figure 4: Education Level Distribution

The educational attainment of the respondents indicates a highly qualified workforce. The largest category was individuals holding a Bachelor's degree (46%), followed closely by those with a Diploma (25%) and those with Master's degree or higher (22%). Only 7% of respondents reported their highest qualification as High School. This finding establishes that the sample population possesses a high level of formal education, which may inform their perceptions of workload, complexity, and stress.

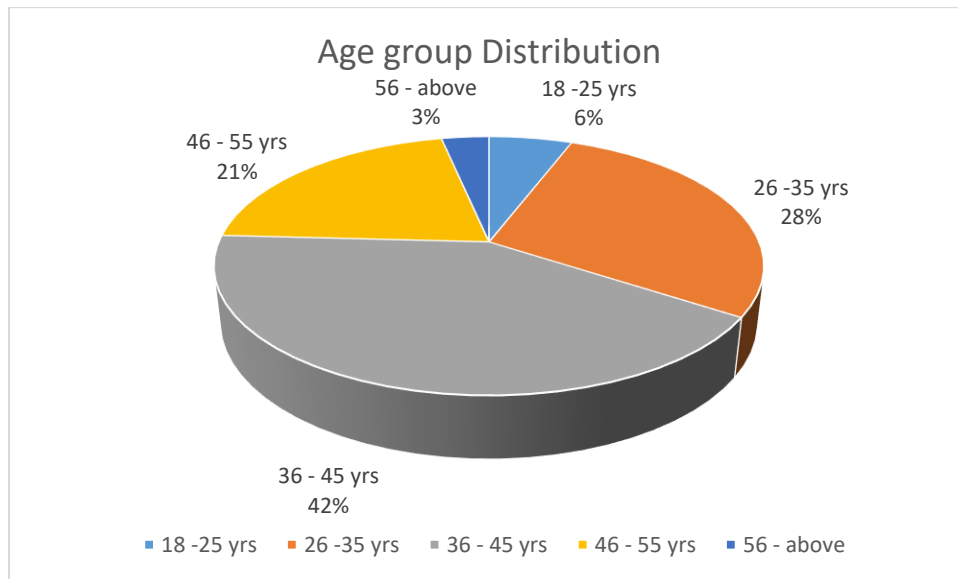


Figure 5: Age Group Distribution

The age profile is centered on the middle age groups, with the 36-45 bracket comprising the largest segment 42%. The next most populous category was the 26-335 age group 28%, followed by the 46-55 group 21%. The younger group, 18-25, stood at 6%, the order group from 56 and above stood 3%. This distribution indicates a mature, mid-career workforce, suggesting that stress factors may be tied to long-term career progression and responsibilities rather than entry-level challenges.

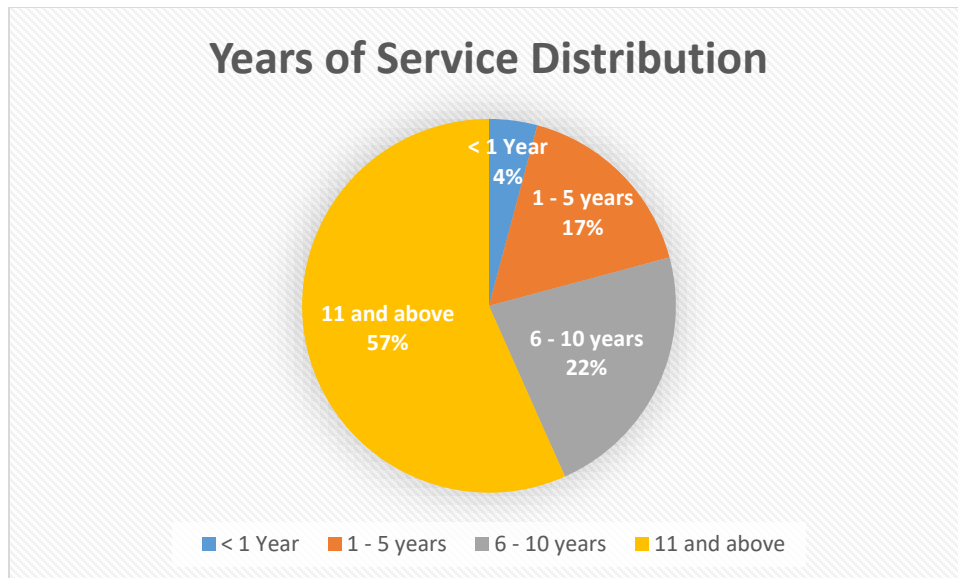


Figure 6: Years of Service Distribution

Consistent with the age distribution, the years of service data points to a highly experienced employee base. The most dominant group was those with 11 and above standing 57% of years of service. The remaining groups showed smaller, progressively decreasing numbers: 6-10 years 22%, 1-5 years 17%, less than 1 years standing at 4%. The high concentration of long-tenured employees suggests stability but also raises questions about potential burnout or resistance to change as stress contributors.



Figure 7: Frequency of Stress Experience

The data on stress frequency reveals that work-related stress is a common experience among employees. A total of 105 respondents reported feeling stressed Sometimes (63 responses) or Often (42 responses) in the past six months. Critically, 3 employees reported feeling stressed Always, and only 2 reported Never. This strongly suggests that stress is endemic, affecting nearly all employees to some degree.

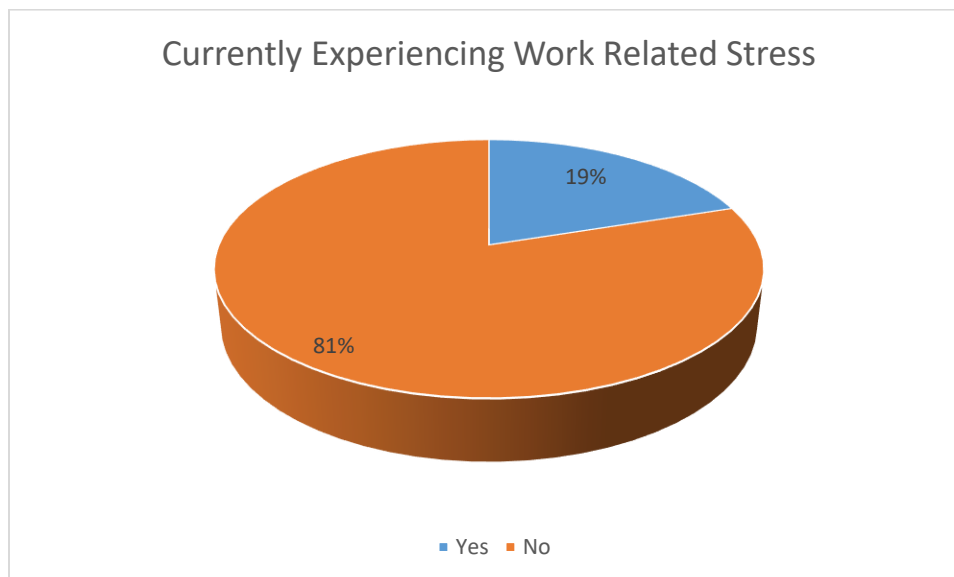


Figure 8: Experience Work Related Stress

Reinforcing the frequency data, 81% of respondents confirmed that they are Currently Experiencing Work-Related Stress. Only 19% reported 'No'. This high percentage confirms the immediate and pervasive nature of work-related stress in the organization.

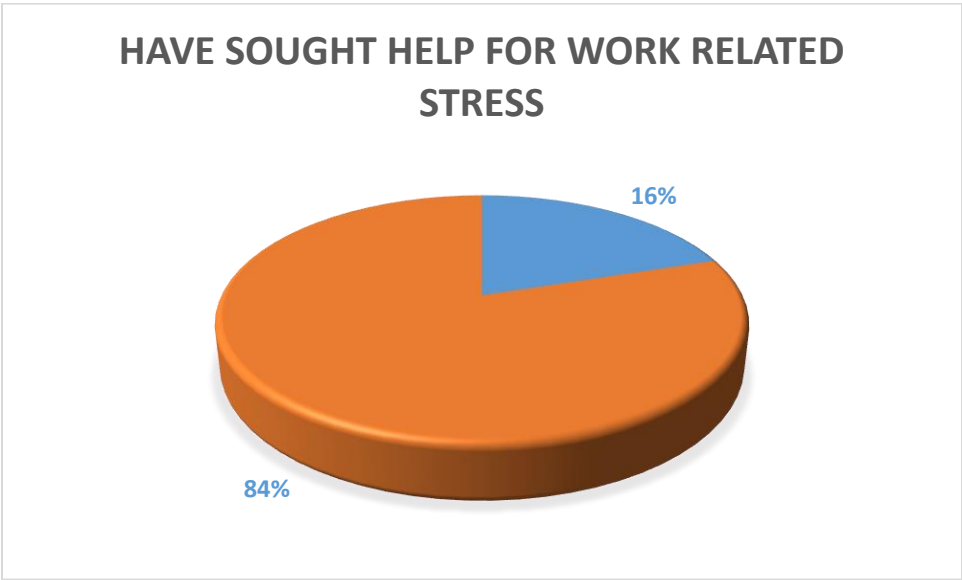


Figure 9: Seeking Help for Work Related Stress

Despite the high prevalence of stress, the data reveals a critical gap in support utilization: 84% of employees reported that they have Not sought help for work-related stress. Only 16% indicated they had sought help. This finding highlights a significant barrier to accessing or utilizing support structures, warranting further investigation into the perceived effectiveness, availability, or stigma associated with stress-management resources.

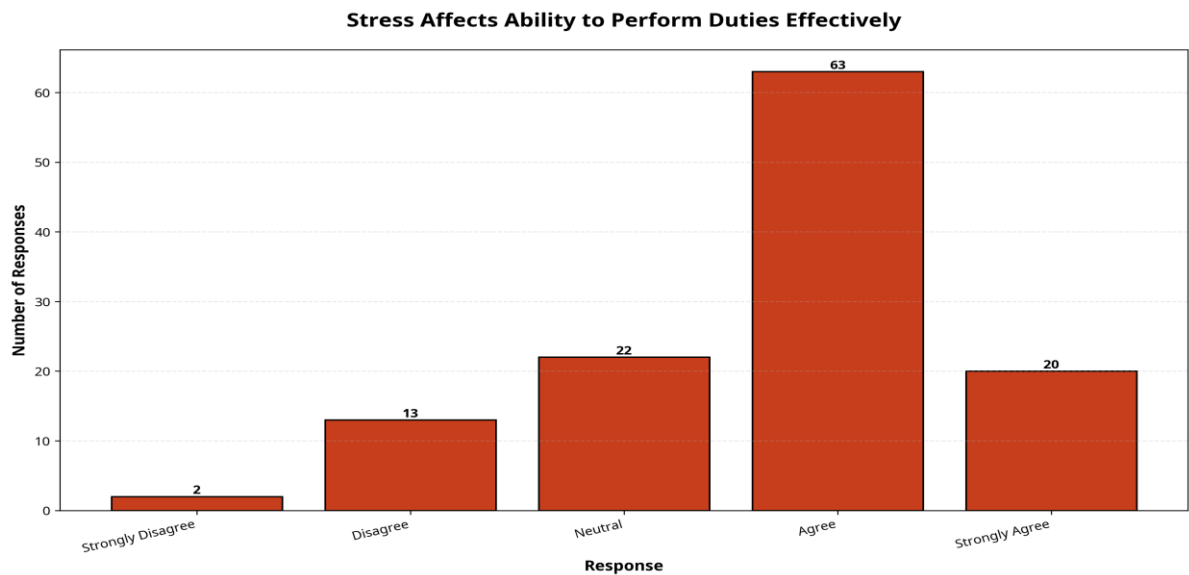


Figure 10: Effects of stress on Performance

The majority of respondents agree that stress negatively impacts their performance. Specifically, 63 respondents Agree and 20 Strongly Agree that stress affects their ability to perform duties effectively, totaling 83 respondents who concur with the statement. This collective response underscores the direct and detrimental link between the experienced stress levels (Figures 7 & 8) and organizational productivity.

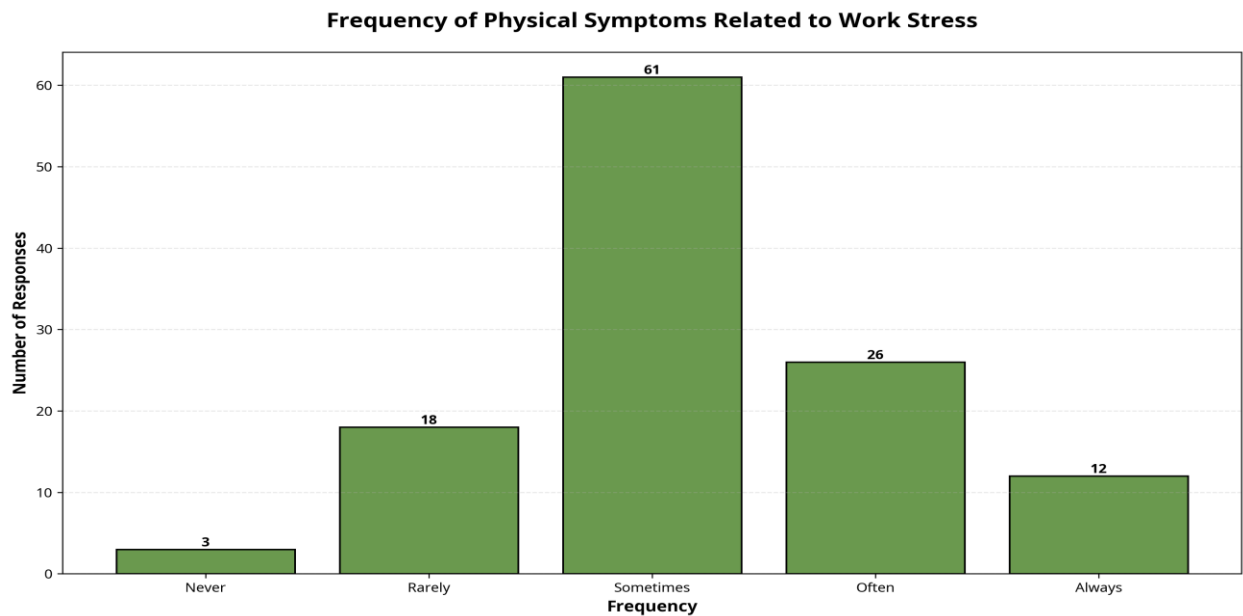


Figure 11: Physical Symptoms of work Stress

Work stress manifests physically for the majority of the workforce. Sixty-one (61) respondents reported experiencing physical symptoms Sometimes, with 26 reporting Often and 12 reporting Always. This indicates that 99 out of 120 respondents experience physical symptoms at least sometimes, suggesting that stress is not merely psychological but has substantial physiological consequences within the employee base.

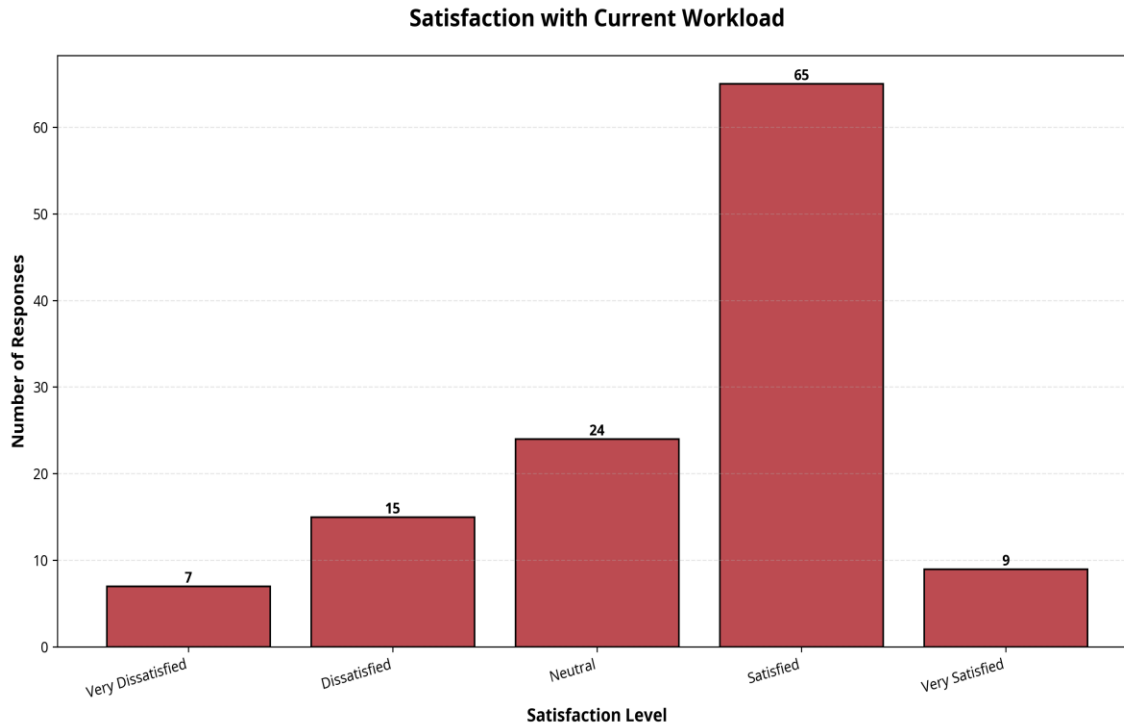


Figure 12: Satisfaction with Current Workload

The highest number of responses, 65, indicated that employees were Satisfied with their current workload, while 24 were Neutral. However, a combined 22 respondents were either Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied. While overall satisfaction is leaning positive, the presence of nearly a fifth of the workforce expressing dissatisfaction suggests that workload distribution or complexity is still a source of strain for a significant minority.



Figure 13: Satisfaction with Work life balance

While the largest group (48 responses) is Satisfied with their work-life balance, a very substantial number (39 responses) were Neutral. Furthermore, a combined 26 respondents reported being Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied. The high 'Neutral' score is a key finding, often suggesting instability or a non-optimal balance, and indicates that work-life balance remains a soft point that could be optimized to further reduce stress.



Figure 14: Support for stress management

There is overwhelming support for the implementation or continuation of stress management and wellness programs, with 97% of respondents affirming 'Yes'. This near-unanimous agreement signals a clear mandate and strong perceived need from the employees for organizational intervention and dedicated resources to address the high levels of work stress identified in preceding figures. Those who were not sure also had a number of responses give us 3%.

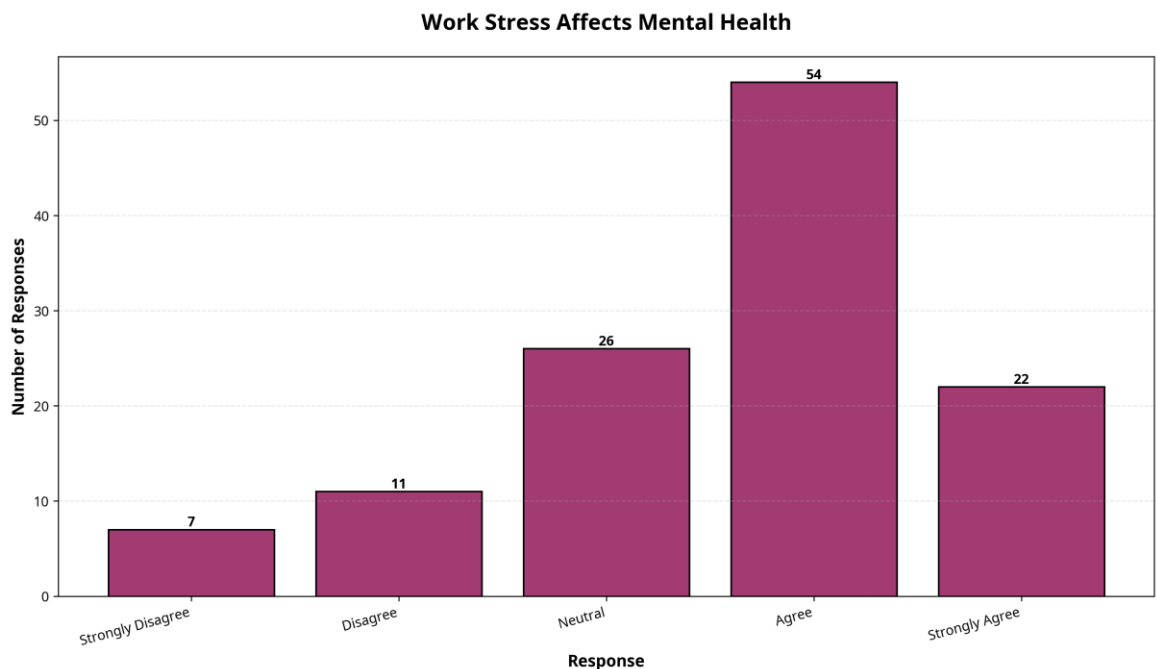


Figure 15: Work stress effects on Mental Health

The belief that work stress negatively affects mental health is widespread among the respondents. Fifty-four (54) respondents Agree and 22 Strongly Agree, totaling 76 employees who affirm the negative link. This finding, alongside the high incidence of stress (Figure 7 & 8), suggests that the organization is facing a potential mental health burden directly attributable to the work environment.

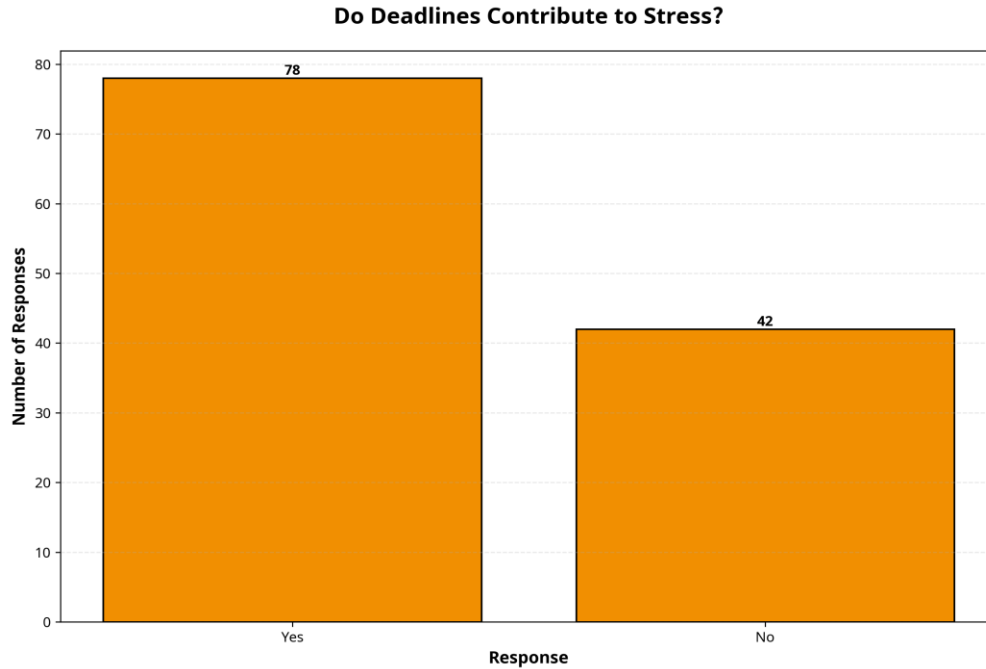


Figure 16: Stress contribution to not meeting deadlines

A decisive majority of respondents, with 78 'Yes' responses, confirmed that deadlines Do Contribute to Stress. In contrast, 42 respondents answered 'No'. Given the prevalence of stress and the high percentage of technical staff (Figure 2), this finding specifically identifies deadlines as a key and tangible organizational stressor that should be targeted for policy or workflow adjustments.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the study's findings as analyzed in Chapter Four. The purpose is to interpret the results in line with the study objectives and to relate them to existing literature on work-related stress, employee wellbeing, and organizational performance. The chapter critically examines the demographic patterns of respondents, the prevalence of work-related stress, the nature and frequency of stress symptoms reported, the impact of stress on employee performance and mental health, and employees' perceptions of workload, work-life balance, and stress management support. The discussion provides an integrative understanding of how stress manifests within the organization and the extent to which organizational structures, job demands, and support systems influence employees' experiences. The chapter concludes with a summary that connects the implications of the findings to the broader context of workplace wellbeing.

5.1 The impact of Employee position and gender distributions on work stress

The study revealed a participant pool largely dominated by support staff, who accounted for 72% of respondents. This indicates that the findings are most representative of individuals engaged in operational or technical functions. These roles are often associated with high workloads, tight schedules, and repetitive tasks, which can cumulatively increase stress levels. Literature suggests that support staff typically experience higher emotional strain due to limited decision-making authority and increased task pressures, making them more vulnerable to workplace stress (Khuong, 2015). Individuals in operational or support functions often face increased task pressure and limited autonomy in decision-making, which are recognized factors that significantly raise the risk of work-related stress (NIOSH, 2024). The relatively small representation of management and specialized personnel implies that stress experiences may vary significantly across hierarchical levels. Literature suggests that support staff typically experience higher emotional strain due to limited decision-making authority and increased task pressures, making them more vulnerable to workplace stress.

Furthermore, the gender distribution showed a near-equal representation, with males at 52.5% and females at 47.5%. This balanced representation strengthens the generalizability of the outcomes

across both genders. The nearly even split also suggests that the high levels of stress reported cannot be attributed to gender imbalance but rather to organizational structures and working conditions that affect all employees uniformly. This interpretation is strongly supported by contemporary research. Academic models, such as the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, focus on the universal impact of job demands (e.g., workload, role ambiguity) and lack of job control on stress, which are typically neutral to gender. In this context, modern discourse frames workplace stress as a business-critical risk derived from the environment, not a personal or gendered issue (Chomse et al., 2025). Therefore, this study aligns with prior findings that stress is often influenced by work environment factors irrespective of gender.

5.2 Education level, expectation and reporting stress

The majority of respondents were well educated, with 46% holding bachelor's degrees and 25% holding diplomas. In addition, a total of 22% holds master's degree or higher. A highly educated workforce may possess greater expectations regarding job clarity, career progression, and organizational support. When such expectations are unmet, stress often increases. Furthermore, educated employees may be more aware of stress symptoms, making them more likely to report them accurately. This aligns with scholarly arguments that education enhances awareness and interpretation of psychological and physical stress indicators.

5.3 Employee age and years of service distributions and their impact on stress

The age distribution centered around mid-career individuals, with 42% between 36–45 years and 28% between 26–35 years. Individuals in this age range typically face heightened professional and personal responsibilities, including career advancement pressures and family obligations. These dual demands often contribute to elevated stress levels, consistent with findings from occupational stress research. The high proportion of mid-career employees (70% between 26–45 years) facing dual pressures of professional advancement and family obligations aligns with occupational stress research that continues to associate this age range with higher stress levels (Glaveli & Kounenli, 2022).

Additionally, the high proportion of long-serving employees (57% with more than 11 years of service) further suggests that chronic exposure to workplace pressures may compound stress over time. Long tenure is often associated with role fatigue, burnout, or stagnation, reinforcing the observed high prevalence of stress in the study. This is consistent with recent evidence, which

indicates that prolonged exposure to chronic psychosocial stressors leads to compounded stress, fatigue, and eventual burnout (Job Burnout, 2024).

5.4 Prevalence and Frequency of Work-Related Stress

The study established that work-related stress is highly prevalent within the organization. A combined 105 respondents reported experiencing stress "Sometimes" or "Often," and only two reported never experiencing stress. This reveals that stress is nearly universal among employees and is not confined to isolated individuals or departments. Furthermore, 81% confirmed that they are currently experiencing work-related stress, which indicates that stress levels are not only historic but ongoing and immediate. Recent reports confirm that workplace stress has reached an all-time high, with a staggering 77% of workers experiencing work-related stress (Altura Recovery, 2024). This pervasive nature suggests that the issue stems from systemic organizational factors rather than isolated incidents (Calm Health, 2022). Such a pervasive stress burden can have profound implications on morale, productivity, and employee retention.

These findings resonate with global studies which show that modern workplaces, particularly those experiencing rapid organizational changes or increased workloads, tend to exhibit high stress levels among employees. The high prevalence suggests systemic stressors rather than individual factors. The organizational culture, workload distribution, lack of support systems, and time pressure may be contributing significantly.

5.5 Help-Seeking Behaviour

Interestingly, despite the high levels of stress, 84% of respondents reported not seeking help for stress. This is indicative of a culture where help-seeking may be stigmatized, resources may be inadequate, or employees may lack knowledge of existing support services. This reluctance mirrors academic discourse that highlights the cultural stigma surrounding mental health in the workplace (Supporting Mental Health at Work, 2024). Employees frequently internalize stress due to fear of professional judgment, which is exacerbated when an organization treats stress as a personal failing rather than a quantifiable business risk (Chomse et al., 2025). The gap between stress experience and help-seeking behavior is therefore consistent with international evidence that organizational support structures are often underutilized.

5.6 Impact of Work-Related Stress on Performance

The findings revealed that stress significantly affects employee performance, with 63 respondents agreeing and 20 strongly agreeing that stress reduces their effectiveness. This supports the well-documented relationship between stress and productivity. Stress can impair concentration, reduce motivation, increase absenteeism, and hinder decision-making—factors that collectively weaken overall performance.

The confirmation that stress reduces employee effectiveness is consistent with the direct negative relationship between chronic stress and reduced professional efficacy described in burnout models (Job Burnout, 2024). The finding that deadlines are a major stress contributor supports research identifying unrealistic deadlines and high job demands as key sources of anxiety and reduced performance (NIOSH, 2024). Excessive workload, which frequently manifests as deadline pressure, can be detrimental to an employee's ability to maintain high performance over time (Oriarewo et al., 2018).

The high agreement among respondents demonstrates a clear recognition of stress as a direct obstacle to optimal job functioning.

These findings align with the effort-reward imbalance theory, which suggests that when job demands exceed available support or rewards, productivity declines. Employees facing frequent stress are likely to experience fatigue, diminished problem-solving capacity, and heightened irritability, all of which negatively influence work output. Additionally, the organization may incur hidden costs through presenteeism—employees being physically present but mentally distracted or overwhelmed, thereby contributing suboptimal results.

Moreover, the data on deadlines as a contributor to stress further illustrates performance pressures. Seventy-eight respondents acknowledged that deadlines contribute to stress, reinforcing the notion that time pressure is a major stressor within the organization. The literature supports this, noting that unrealistic deadlines or poorly planned workflows often elevate employee stress and hinder productivity.

5.7 Physiological and Psychological Manifestations of Stress

The study revealed that 99 respondents (82.5% of respondents) experience physical symptoms of stress at least “sometimes,” demonstrating that stress is not merely psychological but also

manifests physically. Symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, muscle tension, and sleep disturbances are common physical indicators of chronic stress. The high reporting rate aligns with physiological responses outlined in occupational health literature, which emphasizes that prolonged stress activates the body's stress pathways, leading to both short-term discomfort and long-term health risks. Chronic stress is consistently linked to a higher risk of developing clinical anxiety and depression (T. Psychiatry Associates, 2025). A 2024 scoping review found a "remarkable consistency" in the significant association between work-related stress measures, such as effort-reward imbalance, and the development of depressiveness (The Relationship Between Work-Related Stress and Depression, 2024). The physical symptoms reported are recognized as the psychosomatic stage of burnout, where psychological strain converts into physical ailments like insomnia and gastro-intestinal disorders (Job Burnout, 2024; Altura Recovery, 2024).

Psychologically, the respondents strongly acknowledged the negative impact of stress on mental health. Seventy-six employees either agreed or strongly agreed that stress affects their mental wellbeing. This finding is consistent with research indicating that chronic workplace stress can lead to anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, and reduced self-esteem. Mental health challenges not only affect individual employees but also have ripple effects across teams, influencing communication, collaboration, and workplace climate.

The coexistence of both physical and psychological stress symptoms reinforces the need for holistic stress management interventions. The dual manifestation of stress suggests that employees are reaching levels of strain where their health and wellbeing are significantly compromised.

5.8 Workload, Work-Life Balance, and Employee Satisfaction

The study found that 65 respondents were satisfied with their workload, yet a considerable minority expressed dissatisfaction. This indicates that while workload may not be the primary stressor for all employees, it remains a significant concern for some. The mixed responses highlight varied experiences across job roles and departments. Employees in operational roles may face higher task load and complexity compared to administrative or managerial staff. The mixed to negative employee perception of work-life balance reflects a wider societal challenge driven by the "Always-On Digital Culture" (Altura Recovery, 2024). Contemporary research indicates that high workload is a strong predictor of work-life conflict (WLC), which then mediates the positive relationship between workload and stress (Workload, Work-Life Conflict, and Stress, 2025).

Difficulty in cognitively detaching from work due to WLC is a key mechanism through which employees and their families suffer reduced wellbeing (Full article: Work–family conflict, 2024). Work-life balance showed even more complex results. Although 48 respondents were satisfied, 39 remained neutral, and 26 were dissatisfied. The high neutral responses suggest uncertainty or inconsistency in achieving a harmonious balance between work and personal life. This aligns with global studies showing that increased digitalization, long working hours, and blurred boundaries between work and home contribute to moderate to high levels of work-life conflict. Work-life imbalance is a recognized predictor of stress, burnout, and employee turnover intentions. Employees who struggle to separate work demands from personal life often report reduced emotional wellbeing, lower job satisfaction, and increased stress—patterns reflected in the current study's findings.

5.9 Employee Perceptions of Stress Management Support

An overwhelming 97% of respondents expressed support for the implementation or strengthening of stress management programs. This shows a strong desire for institutional intervention and indicates that employees recognize the need for structured support systems.

The near-unanimous support underscores the urgency of improving wellness initiatives.

This aligns with organizational behavior literature, which emphasizes the role of employee-assistance programs, wellness initiatives, counseling services, and stress-reduction training in improving morale and reducing absenteeism. Employees are more likely to feel valued and supported when the organization invests in enhancing their emotional and psychological wellbeing.

The strong support for wellness programs also reflects an acknowledgment that internal coping mechanisms may be insufficient. Given that the majority of employees do not seek help, formalized programs may serve as more accessible and less stigmatizing avenues for assistance.

This finding is consistent with research that advocates for formalised interventions, such as resilience training, which has been shown to successfully improve resilience and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety among vulnerable employees (Improving resilience among employees, 2022).

5.9 Implications of the Findings

5.9.1 Organizational Implications

The widespread nature of stress among employees indicates a systemic challenge that demands institutional responses. High stress levels undermine productivity, create unhealthy work environments, and may lead to increased employee turnover. The demand for stress management programs suggests that current provisions, if any, are inadequate, inconsistent, or not communicated effectively.

5.9.2 Operational Implications

Departments with high operational workloads may require workflow reforms, redistribution of tasks, or improved scheduling. Deadline-induced stress highlights the need for realistic planning, enhanced coordination, and better resource allocation.

5.9.3 Employee Wellbeing Implications

The strong association between stress and mental health concerns calls for immediate attention to psychological support services. Failure to address these issues may result in increased absenteeism, burnout, and deterioration of team cohesion.

5.9.4 Policy Implications

The findings provide empirical justification for developing or revising workplace policies on stress prevention, workload regulation, mental health support, and employee assistance programs.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by synthesizing the core findings and discussions from the preceding chapters into definitive conclusions. It then addresses a set of targeted, actionable recommendations aimed at mitigating the identified stressors and improving organizational health and performance.

6.1 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that work-related stress is a systemic and acute challenge within the organization, impacting the vast majority of the workforce (87.5% reported feeling stressed sometimes or often), particularly the core Technical Staff segment. This pervasive stress has been found to have a direct and negative operational impact, as employees overwhelmingly confirm that it significantly impairs their ability to perform duties effectively, and it extends beyond productivity, manifesting as substantial well-being consequences, including reported physical symptoms and negative effects on mental health (Figure 15). The most identifiable and actionable stressor contributing to this issue is the pressure from deadlines (Figure 16). Despite this high level of need, a critical support paradox exists where 85.0% of employees have not sought formal help for their stress, pointing to significant cultural or structural barriers. However, this is balanced by a near-unanimous mandate for action, as 96.7% of employees support the enhancement of stress management and wellness programs, providing a clear directive for organizational intervention.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the empirical findings and derived conclusions, the following concrete recommendations are provided to the organization:

6.2.1 Address the Deadline Stressor through Process Re-engineering

- Recommendation 1: Conduct a Time Audit: Implement a systematic audit of high-stress project cycles to identify common bottlenecks, resource constraints, and sources of unrealistic time estimates that lead to deadline-driven stress.

- Recommendation 2: Mandate Buffer Time: Institute a policy requiring the allocation of mandatory buffer time (e.g., 10-15% of project duration) for unforeseen technical issues in all project planning, particularly for Technical Staff.

6.2.2 Implement Proactive and De-Stigmatized Wellness Programs

- Recommendation 3: Launch a Confidential EAP Re-launch Campaign: Re-launch the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) with an explicit, high-visibility campaign focusing on absolute confidentiality and framing stress management as a skill-building exercise (not a sign of weakness).
- Recommendation 4: Integrate Wellness Micro-Practices: Introduce and normalize stress-management practices into the workday (e.g., mandatory short breaks, mindfulness minutes during team meetings) to signal organizational support and reduce the stigma associated with taking time for mental health.

6.2.3 Bridge the Support Gap and Foster a Trusting Culture

- Recommendation 5: Manager Training on Stress Recognition: Provide mandatory training for all managers and supervisors on recognizing signs of chronic stress and burnout (especially in long-tenured employees) and on how to proactively, confidentially, and non-judgmentally refer employees to support resources.
- Recommendation 6: Formalize Flexible Work Policies: Review and formalize flexible working arrangements and work-from-home options to give employees greater autonomy over their schedules, directly addressing the underlying tension found in work-life balance satisfaction (Figure 13).

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should expand upon this study by:

- Employing a longitudinal design to track stress levels and support utilization across different project cycles.
- Conducting qualitative interviews with employees who have and have not sought help to understand the specific cultural barriers and fear of professional repercussions.
- Segmenting the analysis to compare stressor differences between Technical Staff, Management, and Support roles to provide a more nuanced organizational view.

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APPENDIX 1: Ghant Chart

ACTIVITY	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	Nov
Chapter 1 of Proposal							
Chapter 2 of proposal							
Chapter 3 of proposal							
Proposal Defense							
Submission of Final proposal							
Review of Chapter four							
Review of Chapter Five							
Review of Chapter Six							
Final Submission of Dissertation							

APPENDIX 2: Budget for the study

	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE ZMK	TOTAL COST ZMK
1	Transport	Transport during data collection	460.00	460.00
3	Printing and binding of research Proposal	Four copies	140.00	440.00
4	Stationery	6 reams of bond paper, flash disc, , pens, pencils rubbers, stapler and staple	400.00	400.00
5	Printing and binding of final report	Four copies	110.00	440.00
6	Contingency at 10%			384.00
7	Training and remuneration of Research Assistant	Research material and programs	600.00	600.000
8	Grand Total			2,724

APPENDIX 3: Participant general information sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study titled "Prevalence and Factors Associated with Work Stress among Members of Parliament and Staff at the National Assembly of Zambia, Lusaka." This study is being conducted to better understand the extent of work-related stress and its contributing factors among individuals working within the National Assembly. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and the information you provide will be invaluable in contributing to efforts aimed at improving occupational health and well-being in the workplace.

The purpose of this research is to assess how common work-related stress is among staff and Members of Parliament at the National Assembly of Zambia. It also aims to explore various work-related factors that may influence stress levels, identify key sources of job stress, and examine how such stress affects the performance and overall well-being of those working in this environment. Through this research, we hope to generate evidence that can guide the development of policies and interventions to improve mental health and working conditions in the institution.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to respond to a questionnaire that includes questions about your demographic background, your work environment, your experiences with work stress, and its perceived impacts on your personal and professional life. The questionnaire is expected to take approximately 20–30 minutes to complete. There are no physical risks associated with participating in this study, and all efforts will be made to ensure that your responses remain confidential and are used only for research purposes. Your name or any other identifying information will not appear in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to refuse to answer any question or to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The data collected will be stored securely, and only the research team will have access to it. If you have any concerns or questions about the study, you are encouraged to contact the principal investigator or a member of the research team.

By participating in this study, you will be contributing to an important effort to better understand and address work stress within the National Assembly of Zambia. We greatly appreciate your time and willingness to share your experiences in support of this important research.

APPENDIX 4: Participant informed consent

Dear Participant,

I am a student and my names is **Lawrence Shawa**, I am pursuing a bachelor of science in Public Health at the University of Lusaka. I am very interested in determining the prevalence and factors associated with work stress among Members of Parliament and staff at the National Assembly of Zambia, Lusaka.

The interview time will take about 10- 15 minutes and the questionnaire is anonymous that is your name will not be asked for and no identification number will be used to identify you. If you agree to participate in this survey, all of the collected information will be kept in confidential. If you decide to withdraw yourself from this survey, all of the information will be destroyed. So, participation is entirely voluntary.

I would really appreciate your valuable time for this interview because your opinions are very important to me as a student and researcher. The findings of this study will be made available to you. If you have any questions before and during the study, please feel free to ask.

I declare that oral and written information will be given as well as the declaration of consent to the participant.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

For participant:

I hereby confirm that, after receiving the above information, both by talking and by writing, I agree to participate in this survey. My information will only be used for research purposes by Lawrence Shawa (researcher). I am informed that participation is voluntary, and that I can withdraw my participation at any time.

Data: _____ Signature: _____

APPENDIX 5: UNILUS Research Ethics Committee Approval Certificate



UNIVERSITY of LUSAKA

Passion for Quality Education: Our Driving Force

**UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
(UNILUS-REC)**

Plot No. 37413, Off Alick Nkhata Mass Media. P. O Box 36711, Lusaka.

Phone: +260211258505, 258409 Fax +260211233409; Cell +260976075850,961917862,

E-mail: unilus@zamnet.zm, ictar@zamnet.zm

UNILUS-RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Ref no: FWA00033228-843(08)/(08)/{2024}

Date: 22 September 2025

STUDENT NAME: **Mr. Lawrence Shawa**

DETERMINING THE PREVALENCE AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH WORK STRESS AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA, LUSAKA

The above research was submitted to the research ethics committee for review. The study has no major ethical problems and is approved subject to the following:

1. The study cannot be changed without express permission of the UNILUS research ethics committee.
2. Approval from the necessary authority should be sought.



Professor Kasonde Bowa

MSc(Glasgow),M.Med(UNZA),FRCS(Glasgow),FACS,FCS,DPH(LSTMH),MPH(UCL)

Chairman- UNILUS REC

Professor of Urology and Consultant Urologist

Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Research and Innovation

Executive Dean - School of Medicine and Health Sciences

APPENDIX 6: National Health Research Authority Approval Certificate



NATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH AUTHORITY

Lot No. 18961/M, off Kasama Road, Chalala, P.O. Box 30075, LUSAKA
Tell: +260211 250309 | Email: znhrasec@nhra.org.zm | www.nhra.org.zm

NHRA10671/30/09/2025

The Principal Investigator,

Lawrence Shawa, UNILUS,

Dear Lawrence Shawa,

Re: Request for Authority to Conduct Research

The National Health Research Authority Is in Receipt of Your Request for Authority to Conduct

Research Titled “**DETERMINING THE PREVALENCE AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH WORK STRESS AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA, LUSAKA**”

I wish to inform you that following submission of your request to the Authority, our review of the same and in view of the ethical clearance, this study has been **approved** on condition that:

1. The relevant Provincial and District Medical Officers where the study is being conducted are fully appraised.
2. Progress updates are provided to NHRA bi-annually from the date of commencement of the study.
3. The final study report is cleared by the NHRA before any publication or dissemination within or outside the country.
4. After clearance for publication or dissemination by the NHRA, the final study report is shared with all relevant Provincial and District Directors of Health where the study was being conducted, University leadership, and all key respondents.

Yours sincerely,

National Health Research Authority

Prof Victor Chalwe,

Director and Chief Executive Officer

APPENDIX 7: Lusaka Province Health Office Research Approval Letter

*All correspondence should be addressed to the
Provincial Health Director
Telephone: +260 211 256813
Fax: +260 211 256814
Telephone: +260 211 256815
Cell: +260 974 787873
+260 963 908260*



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

In Reply please quote:

LSKPHO/401/8/1.....

13th October, 2025.

The Principal Investigator
Mr. Lawrence Shawa
University of Lusaka,
Lusaka.

Lusaka Provincial Health Office
P.O. Box 32573
LUSAKA

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My office is in receipt of your letter requesting for permission to conduct a study titled
**"Determining the prevalence and factors associated with work stress at the National
Assembly, Lusaka"**

My office is glad to inform you that it has no objection to your request provided that:

1. The relevant institutions Directors where the study is being conducted are fully appraised;
2. Progress updates are provided to Lusaka Provincial Health Office and the District Health Office biannually from the date of commencement of the study;
3. The final study report is cleared by NHRA before any publication or dissemination within or outside the country;
4. After clearance for publication or dissemination by NHRA, the final study report is shared with all relevant Provincial and District Directors of the Health where the study was being conducted.

Kindly ensure minimum interruption in health service delivery at selected health facilities.

By copy of this letter, the District Health Office / Institution are advised to allow you undertake the above-mentioned research and provide you with the relevant support.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Simulyamana Aspha Choonga,
**Provincial Health Director,
LUSAKA PROVINCE.**

CC: District Health Director - Lusaka

Physical Address: 3 Saise Road, Longacres, Lusaka, Zambia.

APPENDIX 8: National assembly of Zambia Research Approval Letter

Telephone : +260 211 292 425 - 36
Fax : +260 211 292 252
E-mail : info@parliament.gov.zm
Website: www.parliament.gov.zm



National Assembly
Parliament Buildings
P.O. BOX 31299
Lusaka, 10101
Zambia

Reference No **STA/2106 (Conf)**

3rd November, 2025

Mr Lawrence Shawa
National Assembly
Parliament Buildings
P O Box 31299
LUSAKA

Dear Sir

RE: REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I refer to your letter dated 22nd October, 2025 regarding your request to conduct a research entitled **"Determining the prevalence and factors associated with work stress at the National Assembly of Zambia, Lusaka"**.

I am pleased to inform you that your request to undertake research was approved with effect from 29th October to 30th November, 2025.

In this regard, liaise with the Learning and Development Section on how you will approach the research. You will also be required to submit a copy of the research findings to Management upon completion.

Yours faithfully

For/CLERK OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

cc: The Senior Learning and Development Officer

/bm

VISION:

A Legislature that is more responsive to the people's needs and aspirations

MISSION:

To execute the legislative, oversight, representative and budgetary functions

APPENDIX 9: Data collection tool (Questionnaire)

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your current position at the National Assembly?
 - a) Member of Parliament
 - b) Support Staff
 - c) Administrative Staff
 - d) Other (please specify): _____
2. What is your age group?
 - a) 18–29
 - b) 30–39
 - c) 40–49
 - d) 50–59
 - e) 60 and above
3. What is your gender?
 - a) Male
 - b) Female
 - c) Prefer not to say
4. What is your highest level of education?
 - a) Secondary
 - b) Diploma
 - c) Bachelor's degree
 - d) Master's degree or higher
5. How many years have you worked at the National Assembly?
 - a) Less than 1 year
 - b) 1–5 years
 - c) 6–10 years
 - d) More than 10 years

Section B: Prevalence of Work Stress

6. In the past 6 months, how often have you felt stressed because of work?
- a) Never
 - b) Rarely
 - c) Sometimes
 - d) Often
 - e) Always
7. Do you believe you are currently experiencing work-related stress?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Not sure
8. Have you ever sought help for stress related to your job at the National Assembly?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
9. Do you feel that stress affects your ability to perform your duties effectively?
- a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
10. How frequently do you experience physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, fatigue) related to work stress?
- a) Never
 - b) Rarely
 - c) Sometimes
 - d) Often
 - e) Always

Section C: Work-Related Factors Contributing to Stress

11. How satisfied are you with your current workload?
- a) Very dissatisfied
 - b) Dissatisfied
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Satisfied
 - e) Very satisfied
12. Do you feel that your responsibilities are clearly defined?
- a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
13. How often do you work beyond official working hours?
- a) Never
 - b) Rarely
 - c) Sometimes
 - d) Often
 - e) Always
14. Do you feel you have control over how your work is done?
- a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
15. How would you rate the level of support you receive from your supervisors or colleagues?
- a) Very poor
 - b) Poor
 - c) Fair
 - d) Good
 - e) Excellent

Section D: Sources of Job Stress

16. Which of the following is a major source of stress for you? (Select all that apply)

- a) Heavy workload
- b) Long working hours
- c) Lack of support
- d) Poor communication
- e) Job insecurity
- f) Political pressure
- g) Lack of resources

17. Do deadlines contribute significantly to your stress levels?

- a) Yes
- b) No

18. How often do you experience conflict with colleagues or supervisors?

- a) Never
- b) Rarely
- c) Sometimes
- d) Often
- e) Always

19. Do you believe that workplace politics contribute to your stress?

- a) Strongly disagree
- b) Disagree
- c) Neutral
- d) Agree
- e) Strongly agree

20. Is job-related travel a source of stress for you?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not applicable

Section E: Impact of Work Stress

21. Has stress ever caused you to miss work?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
22. Has stress affected your relationship with family or friends?
- a) Not at all
 - b) Slightly
 - c) Moderately
 - d) Severely
23. Do you feel that stress at work affects your mental health (e.g., anxiety, depression)?
- a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
24. How satisfied are you with the work-life balance you currently have?
- a) Very dissatisfied
 - b) Dissatisfied
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Satisfied
 - e) Very satisfied
25. Would you support the introduction of formal stress management or wellness programs at the National Assembly?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Not sure

Thank you