

FACTORS OF WORK-RELATED STRESS: THE IMPACT OF WORK STRESS ON THE PERFORMANCE AND WELL-BEING OF PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

Work stress is a common issue in modern workplaces, especially in the public sector. Public employees face a lot of pressure due to factors like complicated bureaucratic processes, public observation, political pressures, and heavy workloads (McHugh & Brennan, 1994). If these stressors are not managed, they can seriously affect how employees perform and their overall health. Therefore, studying work stress and its effects is important for helping public organizations improve productivity while also taking care of their workers. This study aims to identify the key factors that lead to work stress in the public sector and examine how these factors influence employee performance and well-being. It uses a descriptive literature review approach to systematically look at existing

academic research on this topic. By pinpointing stress sources and analyzing their impacts, the research hopes to offer insights that can help create targeted strategies to reduce stress in public organizations. Occupational stress, according to various theories (Maxwell, 2006; Ganster & Rosen, 2013), happens when there is a mismatch between job demands and employees' ability to meet them. In the public sector, stress sources can be different from those in the private sector. Public employees often deal with changing political climates, job security worries, strict hierarchies, and limited control over their tasks (West & West, 1989). Additionally, these organizations are usually responsible for providing essential services, which adds more pressure (Xanthopoulou, 2020). Several models help explain occupational stress. Notable ones include the transactional model of stress by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), the Job Demand-Control (JDC) model, and the Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) model. These frameworks help to understand how work demands interact with the resources available to employees, affecting their stress levels. The JD-R model focuses on how resources like autonomy, support, and feedback can reduce the effects of high job demands, while the Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) theory addresses the need for fair compensation and recognition for employees' efforts. The main goal of this research is to find and analyze the factors that cause work stress in the public sector and how this stress affects employee performance and well-being. The study looks at organizational, personal, and social stressors that impact public servants and how these stressors can hinder their performance, including effects on thinking, decision-making, job satisfaction, and productivity. It also examines how work-related stress affects public employees' well-being, revealing issues like burnout, health problems, and work-life imbalance (Xanthopoulou & Plimakis, 2021). Finally, the study provides suggestions for managing and reducing work-related stress. Strategies proposed include increasing job autonomy, improving leadership support, nurturing positive workplace relationships, and encouraging mental health and wellness initiatives. A descriptive literature review methodology is used to analyze current research on work stress in the public sector. This review utilizes academic databases such as Google Scholar and includes peer-reviewed articles, government documents, and organizational studies (Hart, 1998). Key search terms included "occupational stress", "stress in the public sector", "performance and stress", and "employee well-being". Sources chosen were based on how well they fit the research goals and how they help understand occupational stress better. A total of over 50 peer-reviewed articles and reports were looked at, covering issues like stress management techniques, how leadership helps reduce stress, and how workplace culture affects employee well-being. The literature review showed that work-related stress in the public sector comes from various organizational, personal, and social factors. Organizational stressors include heavy workloads, tight deadlines, and rigid structures that limit

employee independence, along with public oversight and political pressures that raise stress levels (Piore, 2011). Personal factors, such as differences in emotional intelligence, coping styles, and overall health habits, also matter greatly in how workers manage stress. Social factors, mainly relationships with colleagues and supervisors, are important in either reducing or increasing stress, while difficulties in balancing work and life add to stress, especially for public workers who often have to be available at all hours. The literature clearly shows that work stress affects employee performance (Eldor, 2018). High stress can hurt thinking abilities, lower decision-making skills, and decrease motivation. It also leads to more absenteeism, lower job satisfaction, and higher turnover rates. These issues ultimately hurt organizational efficiency and the quality of public services offered to citizens (Xanthopoulou, 2022; Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005). On the well-being side, ongoing exposure to stress can cause both physical and mental health problems. Public workers who are under constant stress are more likely to face burnout, depression, anxiety, and heart issues (Faisal et al., 2019). Stress can also disrupt work-life balance, harming relationships and overall life satisfaction. The findings from this literature review highlight the need for specific actions to tackle occupational stress in the public sector (Economou et al., 2014; Xanthopoulou & Plimakis, 2021). Strategies like improving job autonomy, providing better support, and creating a positive work culture can lessen the impact of stress. Also, encouraging work-life balance through flexible work options and mental health programs can boost employee well-being (Skakon et al., 2010; Srivastava & Dey, 2020). Leadership is essential in managing stress in organizations. Managers who show empathy, give regular feedback, and promote open communication are more likely to create a supportive work atmosphere that lessens stress. Moreover, training sessions that teach employees stress management skills, like mindfulness and resilience techniques, can help public workers better handle job pressures (Vella & McIver, 2019; Michie, 2002). Regular health checks and wellness programs can also lead to better physical and mental health outcomes. This research underscores the importance of addressing occupational stress to improve organizational success and support the well-being of public employees.

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