

## Relationship between Work Stress and Performance of Employees: A Case Study of Transit Hotel in Nairobi City County

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### Abstract

Employees are the most important asset of any organizations and need to be guarded against factors that can hinder their performance at work. This is primarily the responsibility of the management in any organization, however; some managers ignore this issue and label it as unimportant, as a result employees in the hotel sector of Nairobi are increasingly exhibiting high levels of work stress and this has in turn affected their overall performance at work. The aim of this study is to determine the relationship that exists between work stress and performance of employees in the hotel sector in Nairobi. It also aimed to identify the various sources of stress and their effect on employee performance and to investigate the techniques employed by managers of these organizations to help the employees cope with work stress. The study was conducted in Transit Hotel in Ngara Nairobi City, County. It focused on a target population of 5 managerial and 55 non management staff. The research used descriptive research design and employed simple random sampling and stratified random sampling as the data collection techniques, resulting in a sample of 31 respondents. The data collection tool used was a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics using frequency tables was used to analyse the data while Chi square was used to analyse the inferential statistics. The findings showed a relationship between work stress and employee performance and that work stress significantly affects the performance of an individual and stress management techniques are not highly regarded or utilised by management.

**Key words:** Stress, Work stress, Eustress, Hotel, Employee Performance

### INTRODUCTION

Scientifically, stress can be described as the response of an individual as a result of outcomes in the external environmental conditions that place excessive psychological, behavioural and physiological pressures on an individual as pointed out by Ivancevich, Konapske and Matteson (2006). Stress is therefore the response of an individual or organism to these external pressures. Stress is therefore a normal and occurs in reaction to situations that make an individual or organism feel uncomfortable and it helps one rise to meet challenges. Hence stress is not always negative but can have a positive impact on individuals. Stress can therefore enable employees in an organization to improve their performance by resulting in increased employee motivation at work, innovations and problem solving.

According to research, good stress has been scientifically referred to as eustress. It is the positive result of stressful occurrences that creates motivation in people who in turn rise above challenges that they may face to succeed in life. (Deshpande and Chopra, 2007) as cited by Dr. Mary, Prof. Martin and Dr. Zachary (2013). However, stress can only be managed up to a certain extent after which, it becomes negative and negatively affects the performance of employees, Bloona (2007) concurs that such kind of stress can affect the physical and mental health of the employee. Stress can either be in the form of work stress and non-work stress. Non – work stress refers to pressures felt by an individual by stressful activities that are not related to work as cited by McShane, Glinow and Sharma, (2008) while work stress refers to stress that arises from the work environment.

There are many different sources of work stress such as for individuals working in a factory environment, stress is an outcome of having to work in a dangerous work environment that may cause harm to the individual while employees working in an office experience stress from dealing with other people of characters and behaviours different from theirs. A similar situation is experienced by employees in the hotel sector due to its service oriented attribute. All these factors are a cause of alarm for employers. This is because high stress levels impact on the performance of the employee at work negatively as portrayed by increased absenteeism, lack of innovation, lower concentration and productivity. (Meneze, 2005) This is the reason why it is important for managers to manage both work and non-work employee stress so as to avoid it from affecting the job performance of the employee.

In coping with work stress, some organization provide healthy meals from the staff cafeteria or health clubs to help employees keep fit, however, the management practices employed can also help employees cope with stress such as a proper work life balance, working from home and flexible hours, fair work load, open communication and providing a conducive working environment. However, managers ignore this issue and label it as unimportant and ignore the impacts of work stress on employee performance. These organizations have exhibited high rates of employee turnover as a result of employees continually leaving these organizations in search of better working conditions in other hotels. This can be attributed to stress levels in the work environment becoming unbearable.

It is important for human resource managers to monitor stress levels of employees within the hotel organization because an overly stressed employee is not able to perform well at work. This is even more important in a hotel environment that involves direct contact with customers as the stressed may act out their frustrations on the clients. This can ruin the image of the organization in the eyes of their clients. Stress management techniques that have proved helpful in managing employee work stress include: (EAP) Employee Assistance Program such as counselling services, alcohol and substance abuse and stress management training, while other services that have proved helpful include: HIV program health promotion, nutritional support services and day-care services.

Transit Hotel is a three star hotel in Parklands; it is a modern affordable medium sized hotel five minutes drive from Nairobi City Centre, at the junction of Limuru road, Kolobot road, opposite Jamhuri School in Ngara Nairobi. They aim to provide quality accommodation at affordable rates. It has fifty guest rooms, fully equipped business centre, three conference rooms, a spacious multi-cuisine restaurant, a deck bar and ample secure parking. The experience of work stress in Kenya is not a new aspect, Munali, (2005) and Ngeno (2007) point out that, hotel employees in Kenya experience stress arising from activities such as long working hours, low pay, irregular work hours and stressful working environments.

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

The stress response curve by Nixon (1979) clearly shows the relationship between work stress and employee performance as shown below.

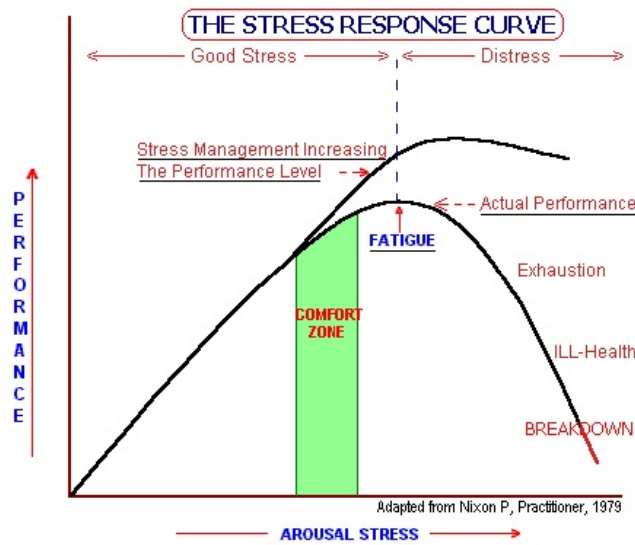


Figure i: The Stress Response Curve by Nixon (1979) retrieved from [www.explorable.com](http://www.explorable.com)

The curve shows that performance increases with the increasing level of stress however, at a certain level the stress becomes overwhelming and performance starts to decrease with increase in stress. The positive stresses that causes an increase in performance is what is known as eustress. According to Sarah (2012) extreme stress cause fatigue to an individual and cause burn out which affects the health of the individual.

A positive effect as shown by the graph is the increase in performance levels when stress management is effective such as a short deadline which pushes an employee to perform at their best within this short time limit. Stress that is left unmanaged results in negative effects such a slow performance and low enthusiasm and if not managed well may lead to burnout. The National Health and Safety Committee (2005) describes burn out as a state that arises as a result of exposure to difficult situation which results in exhaustion in an individual and a lack of motivation to accomplish desired goals. Burn has a high chance of occurrence in a social work environment of human service workers such as those in the hotel industry.

Research by the National Health and Safety Committee on the operational health and safety effects of stress (2005) cites that the job demand control (JDC) or Demand Control (DC) as developed by Karasek (1979) is useful in understanding work stress. According to this theory, work stress emanates from the work environment rather than the demographics or a person's attributes. According to George and Andrew (2008) strain occurs as a result of a combination of high job demand and low job control in the work environment while (Bickford, 2005) stated factors that cause strain to occur as conflict in demands, a lack of control, lack of fairness, insufficient reward and work overload. Employees in the food service industry, service and factory workers experience the highest levels of stress as well as individuals with big responsibilities such as executives. (National Health and Safety Committee, 2005) Criticisms of the DCS model include its assumption that although individuals may desire to exhibit some control over their work environment, the need to have control may become a stressor in itself. (George and Andrew, 2008)

The Person Environment (PE) by French (1973) argues that stress arises as a result of a misfit between a person and the environment surrounding them such as work environment. These

factors however, have to relate to each other as opposed to acting separately. Strain occurs when individuals feel dissatisfied with their work environment as a result of work demands and an increase in discrepancies between the individual and environment, strain occurs. (Bickford, 2005) Environmental demands may include group and organizational demands, difference in role expectations and job requirements.

### **EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW**

A study done by Dr. Ashfaq and Dr. Muhammad (2013) revealed the impact of work stress on job performance. The study used a target population of 144 respondents consisting of graduate employees, customer service officers of managers of banks in Pakistan. The aim of this research is similar to that of Ashfaq and Muhammad, (2013) which was to determine the relationship between work stress and job performance of employees. This study is expected to achieve similar results as the one done in Pakistan, where work stress had a negative relation with job performance in that when stress occurs it affects performance negatively. Ashfaq and Muhammad, (2013) cited Stamper and Johlke, (2003) that management support helps in reducing work stress. His research seeks to support the objective of this research that stress management techniques have an impact on helping employees manage stress. However Ashfaq and Muhammad (2013) research does not point out specific ways that management can assist employees in coping with stress at the workplace. This is a good area for further research.

A study done by the Tourism Concern Foundation, (2013) on the impacts of working conditions in all inclusive hotels in Kenya, Barbados and Tenerife. However, in Kenya the study was conducted along the coastline. The sample size consisted of 269 respondents. The data collection tool used was questionnaires and the study revealed that, staffs in all types of hotels have to cope with situations such as low wages and unfavourable working hours. Amongst the respondents, employees were offered short term contracts hence did not receive benefits and had low job security and prolonged contact with guests was seen to be stressful. This study is relevant to this particular research as it proves the importance of carrying out a stress research on hotel employees. This is due to the stressful nature of the hotel environment as proved from the findings of the above stated study. It however, also did not cover techniques employed by hotel human resource managers, in helping employees cope with work stress.

Mary et.al (2013) did a research the impact of stress on company performance, specifically those listed in the Nairobi security exchange. The target population was 32 corporations listed in the Nairobi security exchange using descriptive and multivariate techniques. The results found that stress had a positive influence on corporate performance. The study basically emphasized on the importance of understanding stress and how it affects performance. Mary et.al (2013) pointed out the following recommendations: firstly, managers must understand how stress affects their employees because stress is becoming a source of concern especially as Kenyans face economic hardships. Secondly, managers need to review policies on health care as employers have a duty to care for their workers both physically and psychologically. Stress audits need to be conducted frequently to determine whether stress levels are getting out of control and leading to chronic stress, which affects corporate performance negatively.

George et al. (2008) research on stress models provided a review of various stress models and suggested new direction. The research was done in Britain on 1200 nurses and university employees. The research was on how there has been an increase in levels of stress due to changes in work environments which can be considered as stressful. The findings proved demands of the work environment can be used to predict stress levels.

Warraich, Raheem, Nawaz and Imamuddin (2014) did a research on the impact of stress on job performance. The research was done on 133 employees of private Universities of Karachi, Pakistan. The data collection tools involved use of questionnaires which was analysed using multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed potential sources of stress as low monetary reward, excessive workload and conflict of roles. Recommendations were that the employer needs to reduce workload, offer fair rewards set clear job descriptions and offer stress management techniques for the employees. (Warraich, 2014)

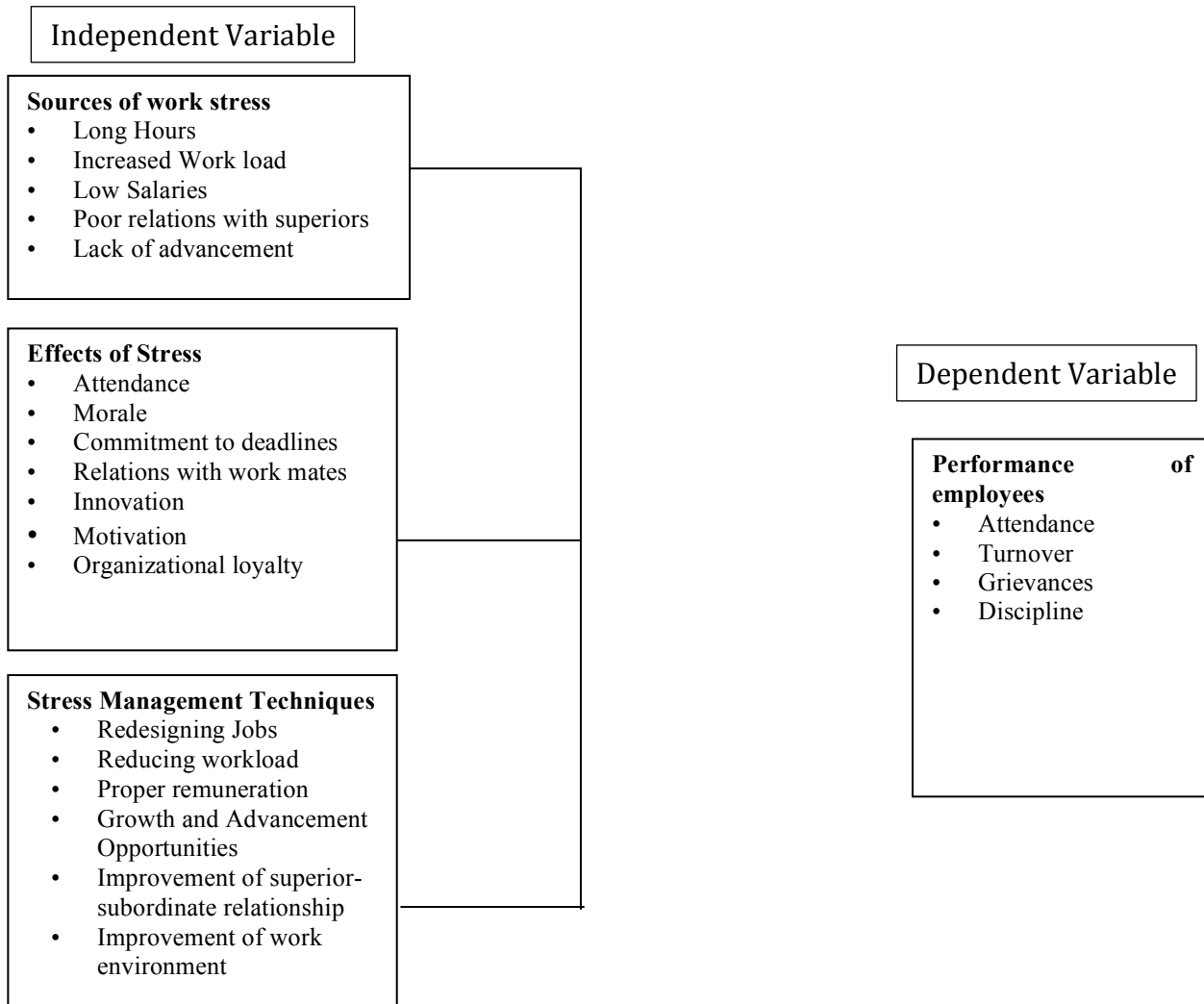
### **Summary of Literature Review and Research Gap**

Mary et al (2013) and Ashfaq and Muhammad (2013) researches supported the Person – Environment fit theory (1973) and Demand Control theory (1979) showing that the work place has significant impact on stress of employees which exhibit a similar impact on their health and performance of the specific individual. The Tourism Concern Foundation (2013) research portrayed the stressful nature of the hotel environment thus the need of carrying out a research on stress and its impact on hotel employees. Previously researched on sectors of the economy include the banking sector, medical sector and educational sector with limited research on stress being conducted on the hotel environment. A gap also exists where previous researches did not cover the view of human resource managers on work stress and techniques employed by these human resource managers, in helping employees cope with work stress, specifically in the Transit Hotel, Ngara Nairobi.

The purpose of the study was to determine whether there was a relationship between work stress and performance of employees of Transit Hotel in Ngara Nairobi, the various sources of work stress and their effect on employee performance, and the techniques employed by human resource managers of these organizations to help the employees cope with work stress. This study helped in better understanding the perspective of human resource managers on stress and how they manage it, in hotels in Nairobi.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The dependent variable of the research is employee performance while the independent variables consisted of sources of work stress, effects of work stress on employee performance and stress management techniques.



**Figure ii: Work Stress Conceptual Framework**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a positivists approach. This approach concerns testing of hypothesis derived from the measured variables in the population. Focus is mostly on measurement using quantitative method, statistical analysis and experiments and it emphasizes on gathering facts. (Flowers, 2009) The research design adopted was descriptive design which was used to give information on current phenomena by selecting samples and analyzing it. The study population included 5 managers and 55 non-managerial staff of the Transit Hotel located in Ngara, Nairobi County. Systematic random sampling was used to select the non- managerial employees in the hotel organization from the general population. Simple random sampling techniques was used was to select the top managers. The names of the five managers was placed in a bowl and three names picked at random. From list of staff 55 non managerial employees to be provided, the Kth member was selected, Kth being the second name, resulting in a total of 31 respondents.

$$k = \frac{N}{n} \longrightarrow \begin{matrix} 2= 55 \\ n = 27.5 \text{ rounded off to } 28 \end{matrix}$$

Sample size (managers and non-management) = 28 + 3=31 respondents  
 n=sample size N=population size

The research utilised questionnaires as the data collection tool. These were hand delivered and sent via mail delivery. The mail delivered questionnaires will have clear guidelines on how to

answer the questions for individuals that not are available during the previous instance. A maximum time period for returning the questionnaires was three days.

Reliability refers to consistency in the research this was measures using Cronbach’s Alpha that was calculated using Microsoft Excel 2007. The Cronbach’s Alpha value was mostly 0.7, according to Cooper and Schindler (2008) 0.7 is an acceptable reliability coefficient.

**Table i. Summary of Reliability Test from Employee Responses**

Scale	Number of items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Section A Sources of work Stress	3	0.888340064
Section B Effects of Work Stress	5	0.717089002
Section C Stress Management Techniques	2	0.743725325

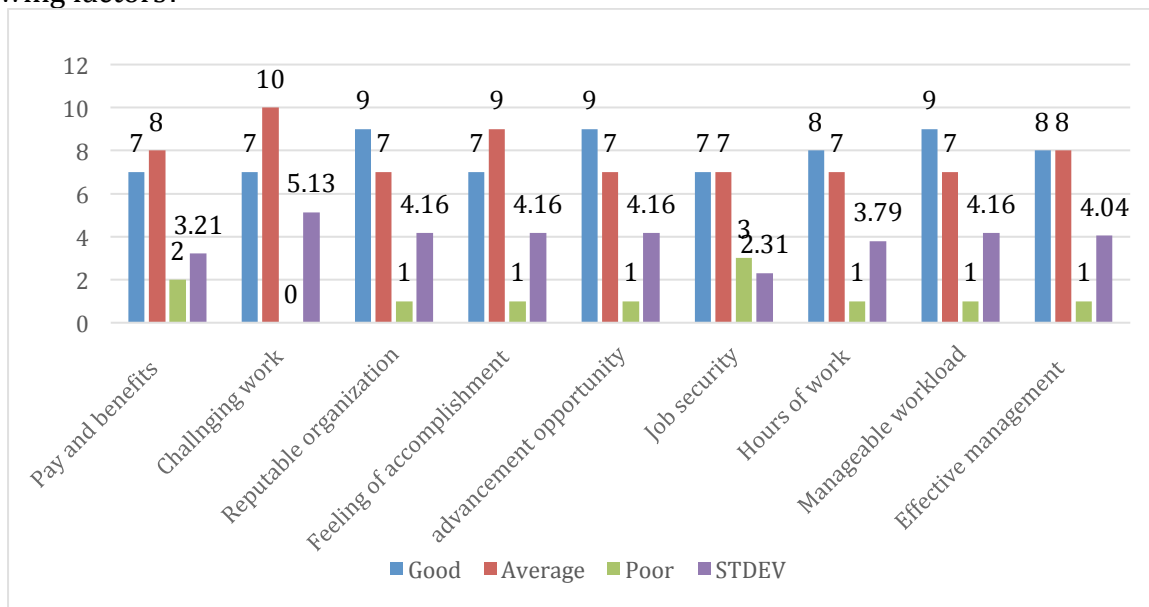
Source: Field data, (2015)

Validity refers to whether the research tool measures what it is meant to measure. This research tested reliability of the questionnaire by getting input from supervisors on whether the questions in the questionnaire are adequate to test the required variables. Descriptive statistics used included standard deviation, frequencies and percentages which were used to report the findings while the inferential statistics used to analyse the data was chi square. Quantitative data was sourced from the closed-ended questionnaire. The data from the findings was presented using pie charts, bar graphs and tables. This is because these two methods allow for a better visual presentation of the findings.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

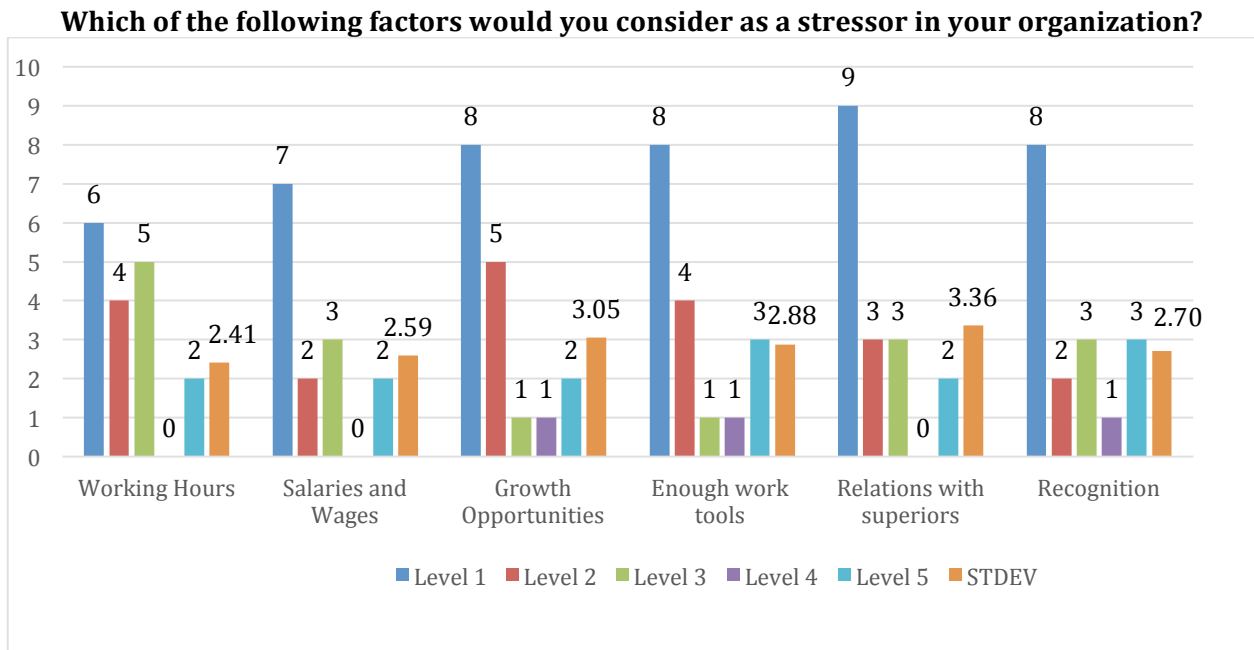
### Sources of Work Stress

Thinking about the job you currently have, how would you rate your current job against the following factors?



In relation to their current job, majority of respondents considered their organization to be reputable, advancement opportunities, manageable workload and hours worked per week to be good while challenging work was rated as average, followed by pay and benefits, feeling of accomplishment, pay and benefits and manageable workload. Some few respondents however considered job security and pay and benefits at their organization to be poor.

Pay and benefits and challenging work had the lowest and similar standard deviation meaning deviations on the issue from respondent to respondent was small followed by job security and effective management. Hours worked per week reputable, advancement opportunities, manageable workload and job security had the highest standard deviation respectively, meaning there was a higher rate of deviating views on these matters from the respondents.



Majority of the respondents rated poor relations with superiors as a level 1 stressor (low level stressor), followed by recognition, growth and enough work tools. However some of the respondents felt that recognition, work tools and salaries and wages rated equally as low stressors and hours of work as stressors in the organization.

Relations with superiors had the highest standard deviation; this means respondents had a wide variety of views on the issue followed by growth opportunities, presence of work tools, recognition, salaries and wages and hours of work which had small range of deviating values on the issue of possible job stressors.

Chi square statistics is as below:

Ho: There is no relationship between sources of work stress and employee performance

H1: There is a relationship between work stress and employee performance

Level of significance used is 0.05

Degree of freedom  $df = (r - 1) (c - 1) = (5 - 1) (6 - 1) = 20$

The critical value is 31.410: the decision rule is therefore:

Do not reject the null hypothesis if the computed value of  $X^2 \leq 31.410$ , reject Ho and fail to reject H1, if it is greater than 31.410



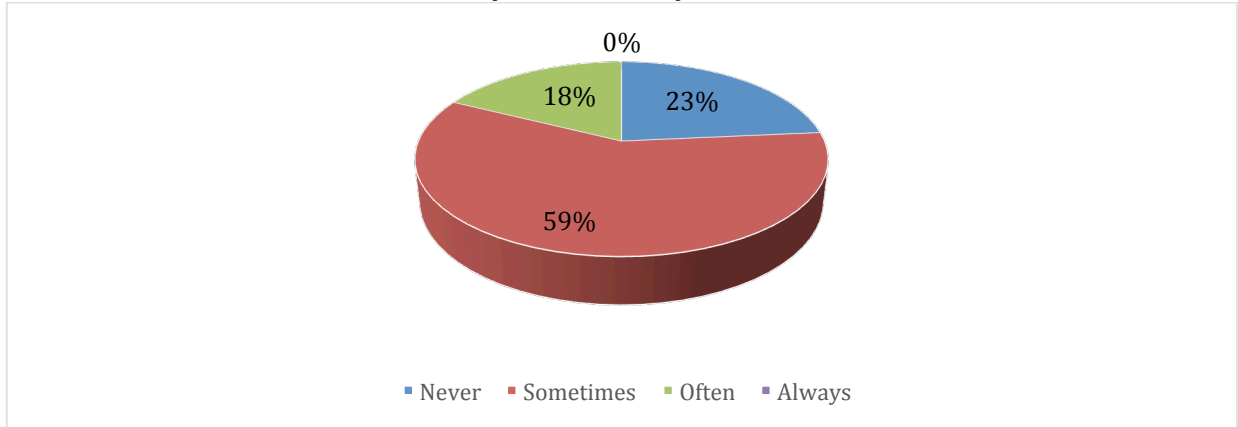
**Table ii Sources of work stress Chi Square Statistics Question 3**

Stress Levels	Sources of Stress												Total
	Working Hours		Salaries and Wages		Growth Opportunities		Enough Work Tools		Relations with Superiors		Recognition		
	Fe	Fo	Fe	Fo	Fe	Fo	Fe	Fo	Fe	Fo	Fe	Fo	
1	6	7.7	7	7.7	8	7.7	8	7.7	9	7.7	8	7.7	46
2	4	3.3	2	3.3	5	3.3	4	3.3	3	3.3	2	3.3	20
3	5	2.7	3	2.7	1	2.7	1	2.7	3	2.7	3	2.7	16
4	0	0.7	0	0.7	1	0.7	2	0.7	0	0.7	1	0.7	4
5	2	2.5	2	2.5	3	2.5	3	2.5	2	2.5	3	2.5	15
Total	17	16.9	17	16.9	17	16.9	17	16.9	17	16.9	17	16.9	101

$$\begin{aligned}
 \chi^2 &= \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e} \\
 &= \frac{(6 - 7.7)^2}{7.7} + \frac{(7 - 7.7)^2}{7.7} + \frac{(8 - 7.7)^2}{7.7} + \frac{(8 - 7.7)^2}{7.7} + \frac{(9 - 7.7)^2}{7.7} + \frac{(8 - 7.7)^2}{7.7} + \\
 &+ \frac{(4 - 3.3)^2}{3.3} + \frac{(2 - 3.3)^2}{3.3} + \frac{(5 - 3.3)^2}{3.3} + \frac{(4 - 3.3)^2}{3.3} + \frac{(3 - 3.3)^2}{3.3} + \frac{(2 - 3.3)^2}{3.3} + \frac{(5 - 2.7)^2}{2.7} + \frac{(3 - 2.7)^2}{2.7} + \frac{(1 - 2.7)^2}{2.7} + \frac{(1 - 2.7)^2}{2.7} + \\
 &+ \frac{(3 - 2.7)^2}{2.7} + \frac{(3 - 2.7)^2}{2.7} + \frac{(0 - 0.7)^2}{0.7} + \frac{(0 - 0.7)^2}{0.7} + \frac{(1 - 0.7)^2}{0.7} + \frac{(2 - 2.7)^2}{0.7} + \frac{(0 - 0.7)^2}{0.7} + \frac{(1 - 0.7)^2}{0.7} + \frac{(2 - 2.5)^2}{2.5} + \\
 &+ \frac{(2 - 2.5)^2}{2.5} + \frac{(3 - 2.5)^2}{2.5} + \frac{(3 - 2.5)^2}{2.5} + \frac{(3 - 2.5)^2}{2.5} \\
 &= 11.74
 \end{aligned}$$

The computed value of chi-square (11.74) lies in the region to the left of 31.410 hence we reject the null hypothesis and fail to reject H1 hence conclude that there is a relationship between employee performance and sources of work stress.

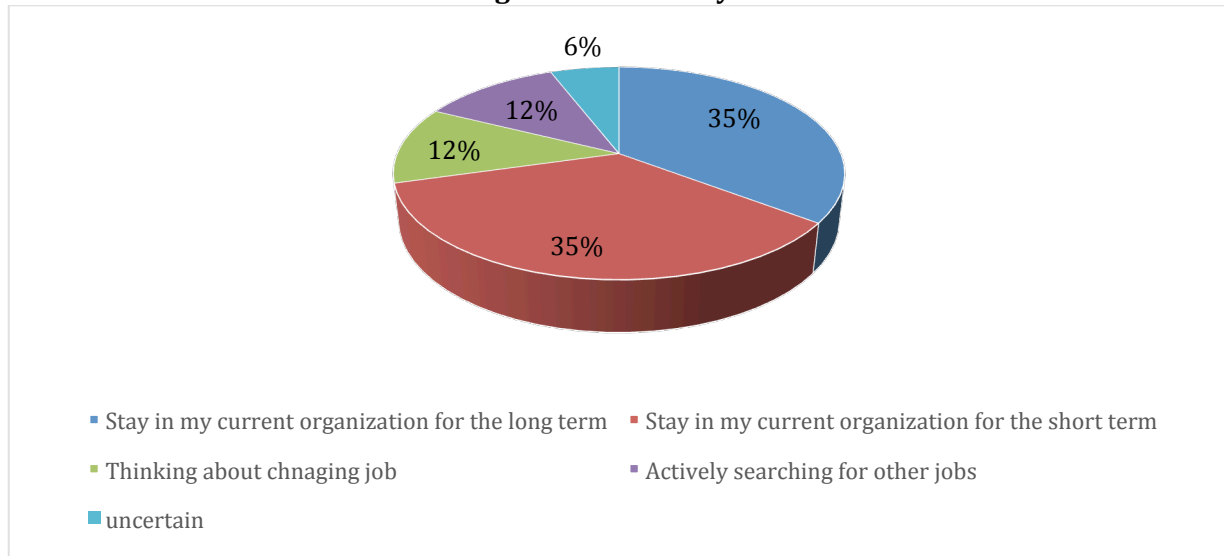
**EFFECTS OF WORK STRESS**  
**How often do you feel overly stressed at work?**



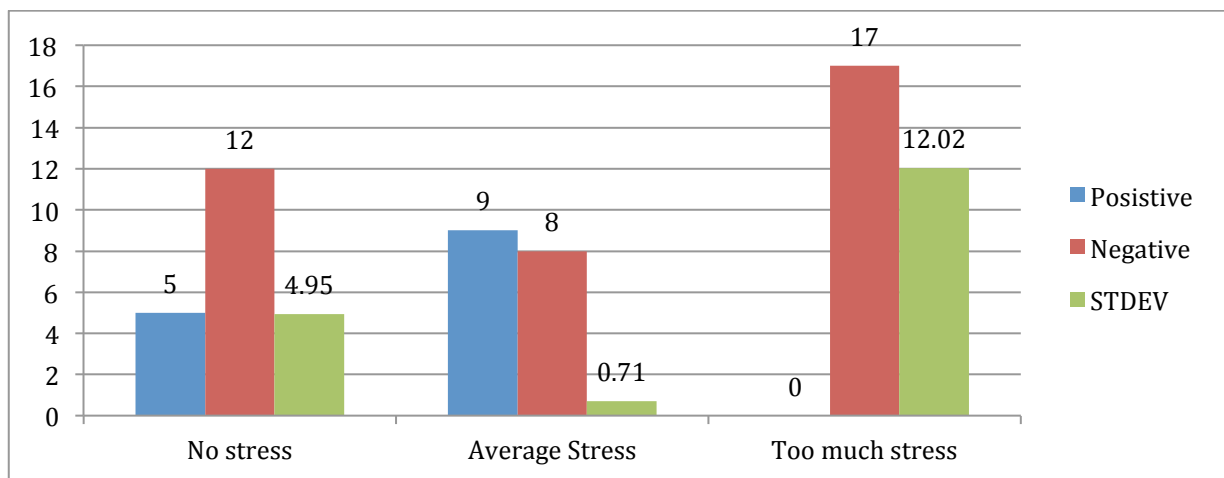
Majority of respondents 59% felt they are sometimes overly stressed at work, followed by 23% never feel stressed at work and 18% often feel stressed while none of the respondents

considered to be always stressed at work. The responses achieved an average standard deviation that was neither high nor low meaning the respondents views regarding how often they were stressed at

**Which of the following best describes your current situation?**



The research found that majority of respondents 35% would continue to stay in their current organization in the short term, while 35% are planning to stay in their current organization for the long term, followed by 12% respondents who are actively looking for other jobs and 12% are How do you feel the level of stress affects the quality of your work?



Majority of respondents replied that too much stress has a negative impact on their performance, average stress can either be positive or negative and no stress having a negative impact.

The impact of average stress on quality of work had the lowest standard deviation hence respondents had similar views while too much stress had the highest standard deviation followed by the impact of average stress on quality of work This means there was a large deviation between respondents who felt this levels of stress had a positive impact on performance and those who felt these levels of stress had a negative impact on quality of work.

Chi square statistics is as below:

Ho: There is no relationship between employee performance and work stress

H1: There is a relationship between employee performance and work stress

Level of significance used is 0.05

Chi square X2 will be used

Degree of freedom  $df (r-1) (c-1) = (2-1) (3-1) = 2$

The critical value is 5.991: the decision rule is therefore:

Do not reject the null hypothesis if the computed value of  $X^2 \leq 5.991$ , reject  $H_0$  and fail to reject  $H_1$ , if it is greater than 5.991

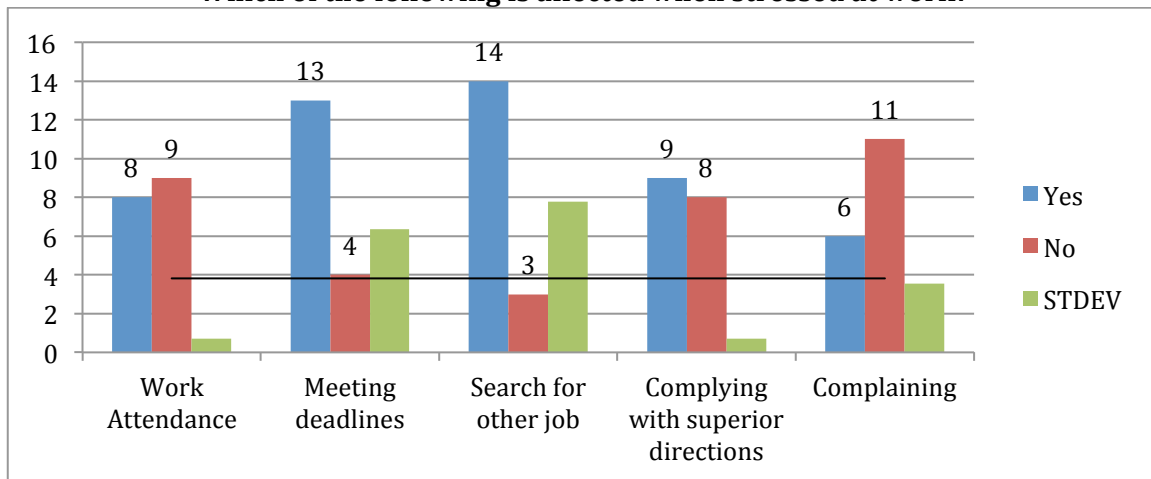
**Table iii Effects of Work Stress Frequency Table Question 10**

Stress Effect	No Stress		Average Stress		Too Much Stress		Total
	Fo	Fe	Fo	Fe	Fo	Fe	
Positive	5	4.7	9	4.7	0	4.7	14
Negative	12	12.3	8	12.3	17	12.3	37
Total	17	17.0	17	17.0	17	17.0	51

$$\begin{aligned}
 \chi^2 &= \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e} \\
 &= \frac{(5 - 4.7)^2}{4.7} + \frac{(9 - 4.7)^2}{4.7} + \frac{(0 - 4.7)^2}{4.7} + \frac{(12 - 12.3)^2}{12.3} + \frac{(8 - 12.3)^2}{12.3} + \frac{(17 - 12.3)^2}{12.3} \\
 &= 16.2848
 \end{aligned}$$

The computed value of chi-square (16.2848) lies in the region to the right of 5.991 hence we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a relationship between employee performance and work stress.

**Which of the following is affected when stressed at work?**



From the research, majority of the respondents rated searching for other jobs as a reaction to being stressed at work followed by meeting work deadlines and complying with superior directions. However most respondents did not raise complaints when stressed at work and they did not have a great impact on their work attendance.

Work attendance and complying with superior directions had the lowest standard deviation followed by complaining. This means respondents had only a small range of deviating views on the issue of how stress affects their work attendance, complying with superior directions and complaining. Searching for other jobs had the highest standard deviation followed by meeting deadlines. Respondents had varying views on how stress affects these activities.

Chi square statistics is as below:

Ho: Stress does not affect employee performance negatively

H1: Stress affects employee performance negatively

Level of significance used is 0.05

Chi square X2 will be used

Degree of freedom df = (r -1)(c-1) = (2-1) (5-1) = 4

The critical value is 11.070: the decision rule is therefore:

Do not reject the null hypothesis if the computed value of X2 ≤ 11.070, reject Ho and fail to reject HI, if it is greater than 11.070

**Table iv Effects of Work Stress Frequency Table Question 11**

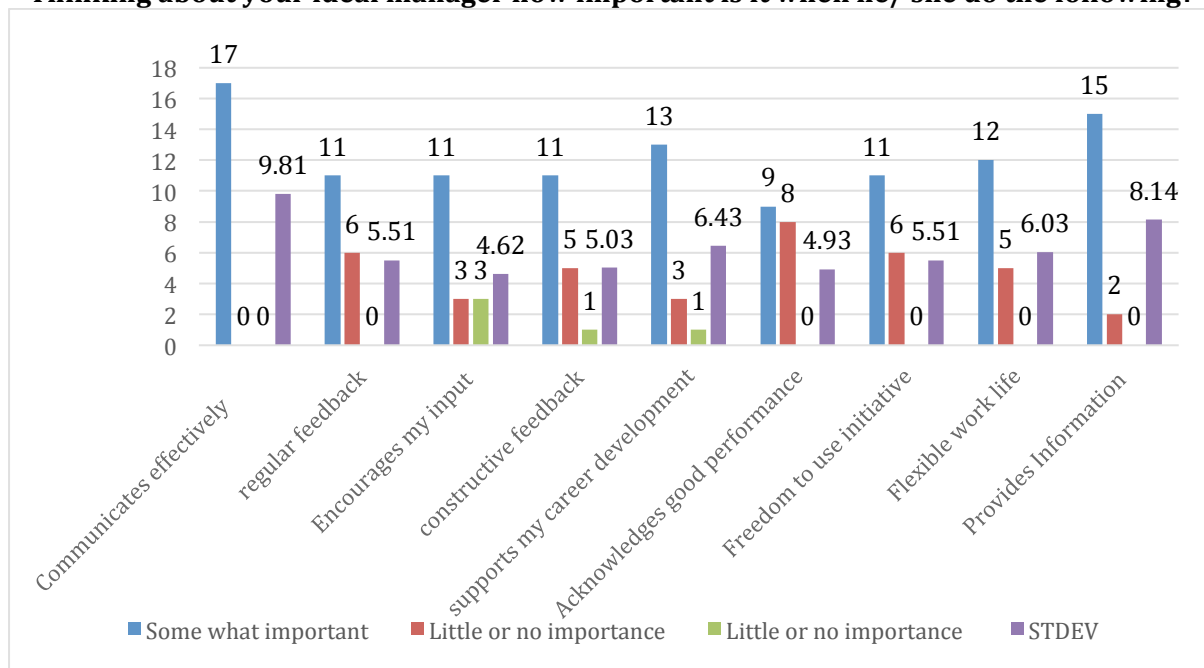
Stress Effect	Work Attendance		Meeting Deadlines		Search for other jobs		Complying with superior Directions		Complaining		Totals
	Fo	Fe	Fo	Fe	Fo	Fe	Fo	Fe	Fo	Fe	
Yes	8	10	13	10	14	10	9	10	6	10	50
No	9	7	4	7	3	7	8	7	11	7	35
Total	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	85

$$\begin{aligned}
 \chi^2 &= \frac{(Fo-Fe)^2}{Fe} \\
 &= \frac{(8-10)^2}{10} + \frac{(13-10)^2}{10} + \frac{(14-10)^2}{10} + \frac{(9-7)^2}{7} + \frac{(6-7)^2}{7} + \frac{(9-7)^2}{7} + \frac{(4-7)^2}{7} + \frac{(3-7)^2}{7} + \frac{(8-7)^2}{7} + \frac{(11-7)^2}{7} = 9.9714
 \end{aligned}$$

The computed value of chi-square (9.9714) lies in the region to the left of 11.070 hence we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that stress does not affect employee performance negatively.

**STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES**

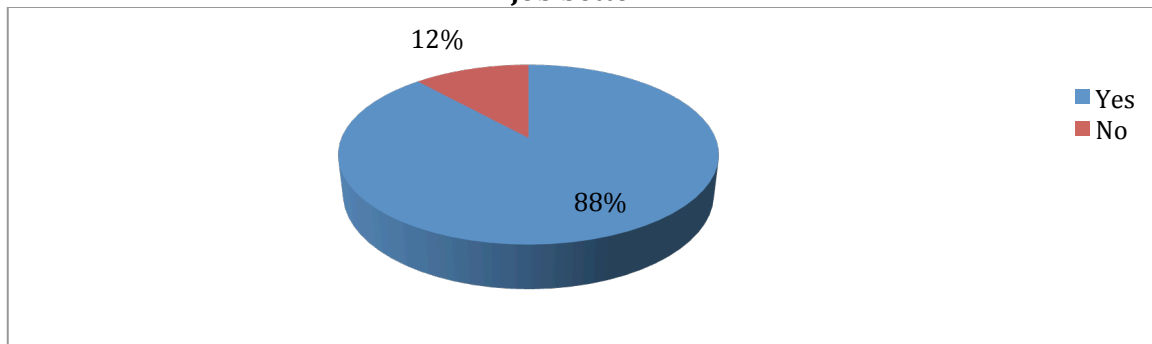
Thinking about your ideal manager how important is it when he/ she do the following?



Majority of respondents selected effective communication as the most important aspect of a manager, followed by supporting the employees career development and taking a serious approach to issues arising between work and family, provision of constructive feedback, encouraging employee input and provision of information to perform job, followed by provision of regular feedback on job performance, freedom to use initiative in performing a job and acknowledgement of work done well.

Responses regarding a manager that communicates effectively as being important had the highest standard deviation meaning views regarding if the factor was highly, somewhat or of little importance varied greatly among respondents followed by provision of information to do work effectively and supporting of career development. Construction feedback, flexible work life, freedom to use initiative, regular feedback, acknowledgement of performance and encouraging input had a lower standard deviation respectively,

**Do you think a formal employee stress management program would assist you to perform your job better?**



Majority of respondents 88% felt that having a formal stress management programme would help them in performing their job, while 12% of respondents felt that having a stress management programme would not help them in performing their job.

A total of 31 questionnaires were issued and 17 were correctly filled and returned. This gives a response rate of 54.84% which is adequate. This is supported by Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) where a response rate of 50% is considered as adequate while 60% is considered as good and a response rate of 70% is considered as very good. Summary

The purpose of the study is to identify the relationship between stress and employee performance. From question 9, the computed value of chi-square (16.2848) lies in the region to the right of 5.991 hence we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there exists a relationship between employee performance and work stress. This study also sought to answer three research questions, sources of work stress among employees, the effects of work stress on employee performance, and, stress management techniques being employed and their effects on employee performance.

Regarding effect of work stress on employee performance, Chi square statistic revealed that stress does not affect employee performance negatively since the computed value of chi-square (9.9714) lies in the region to the left of (11.07) hence we failed to reject the null hypothesis in question 11. On the sources of work stress inferential statistics using Chi square revealed that there is a relationship between employee performance and sources of work stress since from question 3 the computed value of chi-square (11.74) laid in the region to the left of 31.410 hence we rejected the null hypothesis and failed to reject H1.

From the findings it was discovered that operational employees of the organizations only sometimes felt stressed at work and management never felt stressed at work. The respondents felt that too much stress negatively affects the quality of their work output and general performance while little stress positively affects the quality of their work output and general performance. The research revealed that work stress did not have a great impact on work attendance but it however impacted on employees' meeting of deadlines, search for other job and complying with superior directions. The respondents also did not raise complaints when stressed at work, and this might be because of the lack of a stress management programme in the organization or an avenue for employees to raise their concerns and receive counselling.

Majority of the respondents had a formal qualification either a trade certification, completed or partially completed an undergraduate degree or diploma. Hence they had the technical ability to perform their jobs well and therefore work stress arising from difficulty in performing job due to a lack of knowledge or training is not a stressor for employees of the organization. From the research conducted, majority of employees rated advancement opportunity as most important followed by pay and benefits, job security, working for a reputable organization, effective management and hours worked per week while challenging work and manageable work load came in as somewhat important. However, in relation to their current job, some respondents considered job security and pay and benefits at their organization to be poor. This shows that the hotel is not satisfying the employees' needs in the areas of job security and pay and benefits and as a result, their performance is affected negatively.

The operational employees stated working excess hours over and above those they are employed to work as a potential stressor. There also exists large gap between the earnings of the operational level staff and the management which is a cause of concern, however majority of the respondents stated that low salaries and wages had a low level impact on their stress at work. Poor relations with superiors, lack of growth opportunities and lack of recognition and enough work tools were also not factors to be considered as stressors for the employees within the organization. This is because they rated their superiors or managers as exhibiting good communication, providing employees with information to perform work and providing regular feedback on performance, average constructive feedback and average acknowledgement of work well done. The qualities of their superiors in terms of encouraging career development, ensuring flexible work life balance and encouraging input into decisions that directly affect the employee were rated as good hence did not cause stress for the employee hence performance was not affected.

It is clear from the research that there exists low level of loyalty from employees to the organization as majority of employees are looking to stay at the organization for the short term and others are actively applying for other jobs while majority of the employees had only worked at the organization for 1- 2 years. One of the factors that can be attributed to this is the lack of a stress management programme in the organization that would otherwise be beneficial to the employees in coping with any work stress that may occur. However, majority of the respondents felt that they would like access to a stress management programme within their organization and this would assist them in performing their jobs better.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study sought to answer three research questions, the sources of work stress among employees, the effects of work stress on employee performance, and, stress management techniques being employed. From the research objectives it was found out that too much stress negatively affects employee performance. This supports Dr. Ashfaq and Dr. Muhammad (2013) hypothesis that, work stress had a negative impact on performance of employees when it

reaches undesired levels. According Mary et al (2013) most managers are more comfortable taking care of the physical health because it is observable than the psychological health of their employees, this supports the findings of this research where majority of the respondents 88% believed that the organization did not have a formal stress management programme while 12% felt that the organization did have a formal stress management programme.

The research by Warraich, (2014) supports that an organization needs to develop techniques to help employees cope with work stress. According to this research majority of respondents 88% felt that having a stress management programme would help them in performing their job, while 12% of respondents felt that having a stress management programme would not help them in performing their job. The stress management techniques being employed at Transit Hotel Nairobi were, effective communication, provision of regular feedback, acknowledgement of good performance, freedom to use initiative, provision of information, encouraging input into decisions that directly affect the employees, provision of constructive feedback, supporting flexible work-life balance and career development, with effective communication, provision of regular feedback, acknowledgement of good performance, freedom to use initiative, provision of information being rated as the most effective and having the best influence on employee performance.

The Tourism Concern Foundation (2013) research portrayed the nature of the hotel environment, low wages and long working hours are some of the sources of stress for hotel employees. Similar results were achieved from the findings of this research. In the case of Transit hotel, Ngara Nairobi, the sources of stress explored were long working hours, low salaries and wages, lack of growth, lack of enough tools, poor relations with superiors and lack of recognition. Most employees rated these stressors as being low level stressors while a few others felt the highest level source of stress was lack of recognition, followed by lack of enough tools.

However research findings by Warraich, (2014) of role conflict and workload as a stressors differ from that of this research as poor relation with superiors was the lowest level stressor with most of the respondents rating it as level 1 and few respondents rating it as a level 5 stressor. Hence employees of Transit Hotel have good relations with superiors and did not experience role conflict and too much workload as stressors. Monetary reward as a source of stress for employees of Transit Hotel Nairobi was similar to the findings of Warraich, (2014).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The questionnaire's open ended questions revealed that respondents felt there was a need for the organization to review the salaries and wages for the operational staff. There is also a need to create a formal stress management programme that was found to be lacking in the organization, they also need to be provided with counselling in order to better cope with stress.

According to Mary et. al, (2012) stress audits need to be conducted frequently to determine whether stress levels are getting out of control and leading to chronic stress, which affects performance negatively. Managers must understand how stress affects their employees and how it may affect employee performance; they also need to review policies on health care because as employers they have a duty to care for their workers both physically and psychologically. The study was conducted only in the hotel industry hence in order to be able to properly generalize the study, it important for future researches to conduct a similar study in other industry sectors of Kenya as well.

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