

# Socio-Demographic Factors and Causes of Job Stress of Sports Personnel in Kenyan Universities

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**Abstract** The purpose of this study was to establish the causes of job stress of sports personnel in Kenyan Universities. Socio-demographic factors of age, gender, marital status and experience in sports administration were correlated with job stress. Data was collected through questionnaires from (n=40) sports personnel working in Kenya universities. Data was analyzed through t-test and One way ANOVA. Results revealed that causes of stress among sports personnel were decreased job mobility, large number of university students who don't take part in sports, lack of relationship between successful sports performance and promotion, and inadequate personnel. The least causes of stress were poor relationship with fellow sports administrators', working under pressure, pressure of university administrators to produce results, supervision of sport programs is low and lack of career development while administering sports. Socio-demographic factors of age and highest academic qualification elicited significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) on the causes of job stress. The study recommends that universities need to address some of the institutional sources' of stress among the sport personnel and future studies may unearth coping strategies used by sports personnel to mitigate stress.

**Keywords** Job stress, Sports Personnel, University

## 1. Introduction

Research on stress among academic and general staff of universities from across the globe indicates that the phenomenon of occupational stress in universities is alarming, widespread and increasing[1-2]. High levels of occupational stress left unchecked and unmanaged undermine the quality, productivity and creativity of employees work in addition to employee health, well-being and morale[2]. Research has also established that high levels of stress results in substantial costs to organizations through health care expenses, compensation, payments, lost productivity and turnover[3].

Sources of stress in universities staff include work overload, time constraints, lack of promotion opportunities, inadequate recognition, inadequate salary, changing job role, inadequate management and/or participation in management, inadequate resources and funding and student interaction. Other sources of stress such as high self expectations, job insecurity, lack of community and poor interactions with colleagues, inequality with the system, worries over amalgamations and lack of regular performance feedback[4-5].

Five major sources of occupational stress that were common to the universities and among both general and

academic staff included a lack of funding, resources and support services, task overload, poor leadership and management, a lack of promotion recognition and reward and job insecurity[2].

In Africa, Physical Education and Sports (PES) teachers generally act as sports coaches, umpires and organizers of intra and extramural sport events.

As the PES teachers pursue the dual roles of classroom teachers and coordinators of sports activities within and outside their institutions, they are likely to experience stress and dissatisfaction more than the other teachers. Singh, Sharma and Kaur[6] observed that PES teachers require a greater variety of talents than any other teaching area in order for them to survive in an educational institution.

PES teachers working conditions are far from similar in comparison to other school based teachers and in Kenyan universities PES lecturers double as sports officers. They are directly responsible for the sporting programmes in their universities in terms of supervision and coordination. Their job include coaching of teams in selected sport, administering sport programmes, travelling with teams, officiating and at times counseling both regular students and athletes. These situations may cause high level stress and burnout for sport officers amid heavy workload, emotional breakdown and heavy responsibilities[7]. Some sport officers have a dual role to teach and coach and they are frequently expected to fulfill these roles with minimal support from other lecturers. Singh *et al*[6] reported that PES and sport officers feel their workload is heavier, strenuous

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and difficult too. Some of them feel that in proportion to the expectations of the society, they are not given due place, recognition, autonomy, pay, working conditions, opportunities for growth and advancement and so on. All these lead to job stress which has been found to result into hypertension, negative effect on emotional well being and low levels of productivity. Kriacou,[8], reported that prolonged occupational stress could lead to both mental and physical ill health and it impairs the working relationship between a sports officer and athletes and quality of sports administration. The effects of this trend include reduced ability to meet student needs, significant incidences of psychological disorders leading to absenteeism and stress related illnesses[9].

In general, job stress has been viewed as an antecedent of job satisfaction[10] and an inverse relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among various populations has been reported[11]. Higher levels of stress were related to lower job satisfaction and reduced commitment to remain in the job for a long-term[12-13]. Within athletic environments, studies have identified the stressors experienced by referees and officials[14] as well as stressors of those management roles such as collegiate athletic directors[15]. However it is apt to investigate the causes of stress among sport officers in Kenyan universities.

### 1.1. Theoretical Framework

The theory of Person Environment Fit (P.E Fit) argues that stress arises from the fit-or more precisely misfit between an individual and his or her environment[16]. This misfit occurs at different levels such that stress can occur, if there is mismatch between the demands placed on an individual and his or her abilities to meet those demands. Misfit between the objective reality of the work environment and individual's subjective perceptions of the work environment also can result in stress. Outcomes of stress include psychological strains such as job dissatisfaction which indicates negative feelings that people have regarding their jobs[17].

## 2. Review of Literature

Job stress among faculty members in higher education has become a critical issue for faculty members and administrators[18]. Researchers have sought to identify sources of stress among post-secondary teachers. Findings have indicated that time pressures, high self expectations, research and publication demands produce stress for post secondary teachers[19-20].

Murad[21] found that the causes of stress for PES teachers include pupils behavior, problems related to the curriculum, school facilities, workload, time pressure, role conflict work routine, low supervision, the relationship between PES teachers and school administration and parents, relations with colleagues, the professional stress itself, lack of professional satisfaction, low status of PES teaching, societal attitude towards PES, low salary/inadequate income from

teaching.

Smith *et al*[18] analyzed the quantity of stress at work as a measure of mental health that stands to be one of the major problems of the group of intellectuals. Results showed that the participants had disagreements and indecision quantity, pressure on the job, job description conflict, communication and comfort with supervision level, job related health concerns, work overload stress, and boredom induced stress, problem of job security, time pressure and job barriers stress.

Al-Khalefa[22] found the major causes of stress for PES teachers to be work conditions, salaries, bonuses and allowances, status of PES, supervision school facilities, work overload and career development. Tsigilis and Koustelios [23] examined whether PES teachers working in primary and secondary schools experience the same burnout levels. Results showed that PES teachers working in primary schools reported significantly and meaningfully higher levels on burnout dimension of emotional exhaustion in comparison to their colleagues' in secondary schools. Moreover the association among the three burnout components was more prominent in primary physical educators than in secondary schools. They concluded that the educational level in which PES teachers are working represents important job characteristics that influences burnout levels and should be taken into consideration when the syndrome is examined. Consequently the relationship between burnout, job stress and satisfaction is worth investigating among sports personnel in Kenyan universities.

Alay and Kocak[24] examined the sources of stress and symptoms of stress among PES teachers, identify the methods which are used to cope with stress and explore the relationships between stress and performance of PES teachers. They found that lack of educational equipment, not being able to use abilities in the job and not to get equivalent of work were stress sources of physical educators.

In addition to the detrimental impact that stress can have on individuals and organizations health, stress can have negative effects particular to higher education[25-27]. High levels of stress have been associated with decreased productivity and intention to leave academia[28].

Literature contains evidence that the frequency to stressors impacts levels of perceived stress as well as job satisfaction [29]. There is also evidence that intensity of stressors has a large impact on job satisfaction than does frequency[30]. However, stress levels were found to vary with biographical variables such as gender, age, and experience in teaching, school size and location[31]. Further variables such as gender might impact perceptions of intensity and frequency of certain stressors[32]. Singh *et al.*,[6] found that PE teachers working in government schools had better job satisfaction than their counterparts in public and private schools. This was attributed to factors such as better service conditions, job security and prestige along many more. These teachers may have a better position in the job in terms of higher pay scales, job security, more freedom, decision-making power and, less interference by management. Thus the purpose of this study was to

determine the sources of stress among sports personnel in Kenyan universities and to establish whether the sources of stress varied based on some selected socio-demographic factors of age, gender, level of training and marital status.

### 3. Methods and Procedures

#### 3.1. Research Design and Sampling

The design of the study was descriptive survey research design as the variables under investigation were not being manipulated in any way. Secondly, the manifestations of the independent variables (selected socio-demographic variables) had occurred on the dependent variable (causes of stress).

**Table 1.** Demographic Details of the Participants

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	29	75.5
Female	11	27.5
<b>Age (yrs)</b>		
21 – 30	5	12.5
31 – 40	16	40
41-50	13	32.5
51 – 60	6	15
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	5	12.5
Married	32	80
Divorced	1	2.5
Widow (er)	2	5
<b>Experience in Sports Administration</b>		
< 2 years	1	2.8
2 – 5 years	7	19.4
6-10 years	8	22.2
> 11 years	20	55.6
<b>Academic Rank</b>		
Coach	20	50
Ass.games tutors	11	27.5
Games tutors	5	12.5
Senior Games Tutor	4	10
<b>Academic qualifications</b>		
Diploma	7	17.5
Bachelors	15	37.5
Masters	9	22.5
Not Indicated	9	22.5

During the time of the study, Kenya had seven public and fifteen universities. Each of the universities together with their constituent colleges and satellite campuses has the departments of sport and games to take care of the student's recreational and competitive needs. These departments have sports officers either as games tutors or coaches to organize for the students sport needs. However, the number of sports officers in a given university is dependent on the size of the university, the recognition attached to sports in the university,

the available sports infrastructure and the enthusiasm by the students to take part in sports. The targeted to collect information from the sports officers who volunteered to take part in the study. Consequently, questionnaires were retrieved from 49 respondents. During the cleaning of responses the 9 questionnaires could not be processed and the results of 40 sports officers are presented in subsequent sections. The demographic details of the respondents are shown in table 1.

#### 3.2. Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires on job stress which had two major sections were used to collect data. Section A captured demographic information of the respondents such as age, gender, teaching experience, marital status, academic and professional qualifications. Section B dwelt on causes of job stress. Section B had 20 items which had been derived from studies on stress. These items were weighted on a 5 point likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided(U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). They were scored from 5 to 1 and negatively stated items were scored on the reverse. The questionnaire on job stress of sports officers had been used in previous studies of [23-25] with a reliability index of above 0.78. However to take care of the socio-cultural and institutional differences from the west, the instruments was piloted among 11 sports officers from five Teacher Training colleges in Kenya. The results after split-half method yielded a reliability of 0.72 which was considered adequate for the study.

#### 3.3. Data Analysis

Data was coded into frequencies, means and percentages. Inferential statistics of t-test of independent measures and ONE way analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Post-hoc tests of Tukey Honestly significant Difference (HSD) was utilized to trace the source of significant differences after significant f-ratios.

## 4. Results

#### 4.1. Demographic Details of the Respondents

Table 1 shows that majority of the participants were males 75.5% while females were 27.5%, 40% of the participants were aged between 21 – 30 yrs, 80% were married and majority of 80% had experience in sports administration of over 11 years. Half or 50% of the participants were coaches and 37.5% had a bachelor's degree.

#### 4.2. Causes of Stress

The causes of stress among sports personnel is presented in table 2.

**Table 2.** Means and standard deviations on the causes of stress to the participants

CAUSES OF STRESS	mean	Sd
Students behavior during training sessions	3.35	1.25
Sport facilities are not adequate for successful implementation of sport programmes	4.15	1.08
There is too much work	3.68	1.23
I experience role conflict while coaching and administering sports	3.12	1.20
Supervision for sport programmes is low	3.10	1.08
Poor relationship with fellow sports administrators	2.75	1.41
Lack of professional satisfaction	3.12	1.11
Marginal status of sports in the university	3.50	1.13
Lack of support from the lecturers	3.43	1.20
Lack of career development while administering/coaching sports	3.38	1.10
Maintaining students discipline during sports outings/tournaments	3.28	1.22
Heavy work load in comparison with the salaries and remuneration	4.00	0.99
Lack of effective communication in the university	3.53	1.28
Low/insufficient remuneration (salaries, allowances)	3.95	0.96
Lack of involvement in decision-making	3.70	1.22
Lack of relationship between successful sport performance and promotion	4.25	0.81
Lack of facilities and equipment	4.15	0.89
Decreased job mobility	4.35	0.86
Physical and mental abuse by students who don't want to follow procedures	3.15	1.25
Inadequate sport personnel	4.55	0.68

Table 2 shows that the causes which had the highest means were decreased job mobility, large number of university students who don't take part in sports, lack of relationship between successful sports performance and promotion, and inadequate personnel. The least causes of stress were poor relationship with fellow sports administrators, working under pressure, pressure of university administrators to produce results, supervision of sport programs is low and lack of career development while administering sports. The study was interested in establishing whether the causes of stress were mediated by selected socio-demographic factors of gender, age, marital status, academic rank and experience in sports administration. Results indicated that gender, academic rank did not return significant differences on the causes of stress of sports personnel. However, age, marital status and highest level of education returned significant differences on the causes of stress of the sports personnel. ANOVA results on age and causes of stress were significant on student behaviour during training sessions ( $f=6.318$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), physical and mental abuse by students who don't want to follow procedures ( $f=7.27$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Secondly,  $f$ -ratio returned significant differences on the causes of stress of pressure of university administration ( $f=3.708$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.020$ ), lack of career development ( $f=2.961$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.045$ ), lack of professional satisfaction ( $f=4.006$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.015$ ), lack of effective communication in the university ( $f=3.122$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.038$ ), too much work ( $f=3.016$ ,  $df=3$ ,

$p<0.042$ ), and low supervision of sport programs ( $f=4.012$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.015$ ). Highest Academic Qualification returned significant influences on inadequate sports personnel ( $f=4.866$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.005$ ), while experience in sport administration returned significant differences on sport facilities ( $f=3.387$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.030$ ) and interruption during training sessions ( $f=3.308$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p<0.032$ ). The status of the university (private or public) had significant influences on low marginal status of sports in the university ( $t=2.499$ ,  $df=38$ ,  $p<0.017$ ) and physical and mental abuse by students ( $t=-2.27$ ,  $df=38$ ,  $p<0.029$ ).

## 5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to establish the causes of stress among sport personnel in Kenyan universities. Results on the demographic details of the participants reveals that males were 75.5% while females were 27.5%. This was expected as sociological literature has always shown that women are under-represented as participants in competitive and recreation sports, sports leadership and sport related academic fields in Kenya[33]. Majority of the respondents were aged between 31 – 50 yrs (72.5%). The sport personnel in Kenyan universities need some level of experience in order to cope with the demands of university student-athletes. Most of the respondents 55.6% had experience in sports administration spanning for over 10 years. Thus, they had adequate experience in sport administration and it may be speculated that they may have served as games teachers in secondary schools or teacher training colleges before getting recruited in the universities as sports officers. Secondly, games tutors have limited opportunities to work elsewhere due to their specialization in Physical Education and sport management. Indeed, 50% of the participants in the study were coaches and are often recruited on part-time basis and the ones recruited at permanent/pensionable terms are placed at lower job grades. This is not remote as Universities may not wish to spend a lot of finances on the sports department which is normally seen as a major expenditure area. The promotion criteria for games personnel are not well-defined and this justifies the low number of respondents who were senior games tutors at 10%. Indeed, 37% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree possibly in P.E. and sport. This corroborates Shehu[34] findings that personnel in the university sport centers' in Nigeria were composed of men and women with at least a diploma and Bachelors degree in P.E. with relatively few of them having a masters degree.

The major five causes of stress to the participants were inadequate sports personnel, decreased job mobility, lack of relationship between successful sports performance and promotion, lack of facilities and equipment and large number of students who don't participate in sport yet they are talented. These causes of stress among sport personnel have been reported elsewhere. For instance, Sayymane & Smuts [35] found recreation and sport managers reported frustration, over burdening, worry, tension and uncertainty in their work

environment as the causes of stress. Al-Khalefa[22] found that the causes of stress among PES teachers were work conditions, salaries, bonuses and allowances, school facilities, work overload and career development.

Sports personnel in Kenyan universities are stressed by the large number of talented students who don't take part in sport. Murad[21] found that the causes of stress among PES teachers included pupils behaviour, problems related to the curriculum, school facilities, workload, time pressure, role conflict, work routine, low supervision relationship with P.E. teachers, relation with colleague etc. Kroll and Gundersheim [36] found that male high school coaches perceived their jobs to be stressful with interpersonal relationships (e.g. disrespect from players and not being able to reach athletes) were identified as the most significant stressors.

The above causes of stress among sports officers comes against a background which assumes that sport personalities don't experience stress. More conventionally, it is assumed that participation in sport either as an athlete or officer is a way of managing stress.

Research studies have reported that socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, academic qualifications and experience may influence the causes of stress among sports personnel[37]. Frey[37] identified four contextual factors that influenced college coaches' perception of stress as level of competition, person's success of progress, coaches' age and years of experience. Findings of this study revealed that causes of stress varied according to the age of sports personnel especially on student behaviour during training session, and, physical and mental abuse by students who don't want to follow procedures. This is not remote as majority of university students don't take part in sport due to diverse reasons. Secondly, university students enjoy unlimited freedom to choose their leisure activities as they are operating away from their parents and guardians. It was evident that younger sport administrators experienced more stress than older ones on the aspect of student behaviour during training sessions. This scenario could be explained by the fact that younger sports officers are full of energy, have a lot of expectations, may want to assert their authority over the student athletes and could be ambitious to satisfy the universities objectives of sports participation and seeking of excellence. The same applies to the aspect of physical and mental abuse by students who don't want to follow procedures.

Findings did not show any significant difference on the causes of stress of sport officers based on their gender, and academic rank. Similar findings that coaches' perceptions of stress were less affected by demographic factors of gender and age were reported elsewhere[38]. This is contrary to previous studies which have shown that female coaches frequently felt frustrated with their jobs and higher level of burnout[39,40,41]. Previous research has indicated that coaching causes of stress may be higher in men than women and that older coaches perceive less stress than younger coaches and that coaches working at elite-level may be

experiencing more pressures and demands than coaches working with college athletes[9,37,42].

Knight[38] found that coaches working in Canada with University College relatively identified levels of stress no higher than those observed in normative samples. In Kenyan universities, the promotion criteria for members of academic staff is pegged on teaching, research and publications and teaching while the promotion criterion for sports personnel is not definite. At one time, promotion could be pegged on the performance of university teams in competitions and other times it could be based on the number of years one has served at a given position. This possibly explains the significant number of sports officers are operating at lower grades and very few are senior games tutors.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to determine the causes of stress of sports personnel in Kenyan universities and to establish whether the causes of stress varied based on selected socio-demographic factors. An in-depth understanding of stressors among sports personnel will allow universities to design more appropriate interventions to manage the demands placed on the sports personnel. Findings of the study led to the conclusions that the main causes of stress among sports personnel in Kenyan universities were decreased job mobility, inadequate personnel and student behaviors. Thus there is need for universities to address the institutional causes of stress among sports personnel. For example the stress emanating from decreased job mobility can be addressed by having in place a promotion criteria specific to the sport personnel or according to the sport officers opportunities to enhance their careers. Equally, the inadequacy of sports personnel can be mitigated if number of recruited/employed sports personnel is in tandem with the ratio of student athletes in a given university. Some of these causes of stress were significantly influenced by selected socio-demographic factors of age, marital status, educational level and the status of university. There is need for universities to take cognizance of these socio-demographic factors when putting in place intervention measures to curtail stress among the sport officers. It will be worthwhile to allow sport officers who are married to travel with their spouses and children when honoring sports fixtures and competitions. The entire work environment of sports officers is different from that of lecturers and the general administrative staff. Thus universities need to extol the uniqueness of working conditions of sport officers by strategically refocusing on motivational practices specific to sports officers. More aptly universities need to address the causes of stress emanating from student behaviours and the working environment of sports departments within the universities. Future researchers need to unearth the coping strategies employed by the sports personnel to mitigate stress and also the possible consequences on stress on job performance of sports

officers. Ideally, it would be prudent to establish the correlates of job stress and satisfaction of sports personnel.

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