



Influence of work-related stress factors on leadership practices at National Construction Authority, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Lack of a conducive working environment results to stress and challenges in the practice of leadership. Work related stress factors makes leadership to be a cumbersome undertaking and this hinder productivity of an organization. The four objectives were; to establish the influence of job demands on practice of leadership, to evaluate influence of work life balance on practice of leadership, to assess influence of role ambiguity on practice of leadership and to examine influence of organizational stressors on practice of leadership. The study used descriptive research design. The target population was 423 employees. The study adopted simple random sampling technique in selecting 206 respondents from the entire population. The findings revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between work-related stress factors and practice of leadership, job demands had a positive relationship with leadership practice and undefined organization roles in job description jeopardizes a leader's ability to execute tasks. Balancing personal and professional objectives fulfils a leader's ability to practice leadership. The recommendations are; job descriptions should be clearly defined, mandated and stated well within the organization, Leaders to delegate certain tasks for them to focus on key tasks. Organizations to have well-articulated set of guidelines for them to reach a specific goal that is sustainable, measurable, attainable, reachable and time bound ensuring that leaders understand the external and internal aspect of how the organization work by providing a pleasant working environment to reduce experiences that lead to organizational stress, while at the same time create a thriving environment for leaders to continuously improve their performance and leadership skills.

Key Words: Performance, Organizational Stressors, Leadership, Productivity, Work-Related Stress, Work Environment, Work Life Balance.

INTRODUCTION

Working as a leader involve working stressing hours, enduring heavy work load, coping with difficult employees and dealing with conflicting demands. The various results of stress are seen in various ways such as errors, increased medical bills lateness reduced productivity and much sick leaves. According to International Labor Organization (ILO,2017), 30% of organizations in Kenya report increased sick leaves from leaders, 12% report low productivity from the managers and other leaders while 25% report lateness of high ranked employees to work. Even though there has been negative occupational stress on human body and the work output, few organizations have put in measures to address the stress triggers

Various studies on stress have been done both globally and locally. Globally, Abbasi's study of (2018) on moderating effect of leadership styles on job stress and health in Pakistan. The study however did not explain the stress factors that affect leaders hence a knowledge gap was realized. A study conducted on occupational stress and its effects on job performance in Koforidua Polytechnic in Ghana. The study however did not capture on the aspects of stress factors in leadership hence revealed a knowledge gap. Fonkeng examined the effects of job-stress on employee performance in a Microfinance Institution in Cameroon. The study however did not touch on the aspects of stress in leadership.

Shell and Bonny, (2018) in their study on the Effect of Stress Performance and Job Satisfaction in the Banking Industry. The study however did not bring out the aspect of stress in leadership hence a knowledge gap was brought out. Locally, Omar ^[2] analysed the impact of employee stress and performance of tours and travel companies. The study was not specific on stress among leaders but rather general to stress among employees hence a knowledge gap was realized. From the above findings, the

knowledge gap was clearly brought out. Moreover, the context of the reviewed studies was different from this study hence limiting the application of the findings on the current study. This study therefore sought to research on the knowledge and contextual gaps studying stress factors and their influence on the practice of leadership in public institutions.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Good leadership is a necessity for effective running of any organization. Effective leaders are able to bring out the best in an organization by creating positive organizational cultures, motivating employees, developing clear visions, missions and core values that drive the organizations into achieving high performance (Borins,2016). However, despite the positivity that comes with effective leadership, leaders are faced with various stress factors in their daily operations. There has been increasing concerns over performance levels in the public sector which has made leadership a dreaded job. Public sector leaders are straining a lot to deliver in accordance with people's expectations with limited resources and technologies^[4]. Executives in the public sector are of significance in the government since they help in the achievement of their goals. Consequently, these public sector leaders are subjected to high stress conditions in the execution of these difficult roles.

Globally, studies show that in every organization, relationships are a central theme. Leaders have the responsibility of ensuring that good relationships are maintained. This means that life stressors are likely to be on the rise causing stress among leaders. The most common stressful life stressors among leaders is to master the methods of dealing with the various negative aspects of relationships. Leadership stress arises as a result of interpersonal conflicts, dishonesty and political maneuvering amongst leaders. Maintenance of interpersonal relationships is stressful because of job related constraints (Somers, 2017).

As demand increases in an organization as a result of exceeding resources, leadership becomes a stressful undertaking. Research done in Harvard University reveals that indeed when there is resource struggle in an organization leaders face the challenge of allocating them and hence a stressful undertaking Sherman (2012.)

Role ambiguity is the level in which the responsibilities of a leader are unclear. Leaders who experience role ambiguity are uncertain about their roles and the behaviors that are not appropriate in their operations (Rönnerberg, 2016). This will always make them ponder on whether the kind of work that they are doing is appropriate which leads to distress. Also, insufficient guidelines make a leader end up not understanding his roles. Organizational context is also a major issue that affects leadership behaviour and outcome. Organizational bureaucracies, culture, change and structure can be used to measure the organizational context. Organizational bureaucracies are the policies and practices that define what leaders can do or not do.

Stress is slowly increasing in the world of business. Leaders in organizations encounter stress in their day to day running of the organizations. Stress among leaders in their practice of leadership can be caused by; job demands, role ambiguity, organizational stressors among others. Job demand comprises of physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require continual physical or mental effort and are therefore this exposing leader to certain physiological and psychological effects on the leaders. Life stressors among leaders are the ones reacted with the characteristics of the relationships that confront people in organizations or that affect the individual leaders. Examples of life stressors among leaders include; interpersonal conflicts, personal insecurity and work-life balance. Role ambiguity in leadership refers to the lack of a clear set of guidelines to lead the leader's actions towards the employees to reach a specific goal. Organizational stressors are measured by organizational change, organizational bureaucracies, technology, and the size of the structure, organization, culture and the working climate of the organization. All these measures of organizational stressors, if they do not support or are not effective for the work that leaders do, will cause stress.

Studies done by March and Weiner reveal that at the international level, stress factors are important in leadership practice in any organization. Their studies were also confirmed by Sapolsky (2005), studies which he did in New York. His studies aimed at understanding how stress factors affect leadership. He ascertained that indeed, role ambiguity and organizational stressors affect practice of leadership. With this in mind, we can therefore see that stress factors really affect practice of leadership and organizations need to come up with strategies to deal with the issue. Other studies done regionally show that although stress factors influence leadership, it is the role of the leaders to challenge the issues and take the bull by its horns. According to Pearce, In Africa, the working and organizational context is a major throwback when it comes to matters on leadership exercise. Also, the inability for workers to be able to balance between work and life issues becomes a major setback and a major cause of stress. The context of Africa may not be similar to the global context due to different cultural aspects and also socioeconomic lifestyles. Indeed, it is clear that in Africa, stress factors can be pointed to the economic and lifestyle of most workers.

In Kenya, a number of studies has been done to relook into how stress factors affect practice of leadership in organization. Indeed, studies have found that there is need for measures to be put to help organizations deal with work related stress. Kamau (2014).

Periods of economic hardships and struggles tend to cause a severe challenge when it comes to practice of leadership. It has been pointed out that all these stress factors affect productivity which eventually influence practice of leadership. Work related stress caused by role ambiguity, organizational stressors and job demands have been pointed to affect practice of leadership. Research done in Kenya Power and Lighting workers found that indeed, most workers and leaders get affected by both external and internal work-related stressors. Kamau (2014).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To establish how job demands, influence the practice of leadership in National Construction Authority.
- ii. To assess the influence of role ambiguity on the practice of leadership in National Construction Authority.
- iii. To examine the influence of organizational stressors on the practice of leadership in National Construction Authority.
- iv. To evaluate influence of work and life balance in an organization on the practice of leadership in National Construction Authority.

THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Horizontal leadership theory was invented in 1970's with an idea to reduce the need for formal organizational leaders. In horizontal leadership, firms and organizations utilize their employees through effective problem solving, capacity building, training and creation of self-managed teams (Wachhaus, 2017). Therefore, horizontal leadership is formed on the basis of teamwork, partnering and networking. This theory emphasizes the significance of leadership as a process which involves everybody in the chain. Therefore, horizontal leadership is an essential approach for reduced workload, learning organization, organic structure, change at the lowest level possible, social integration and putting other stakeholders into consideration^[10]. In horizontal leadership, the management strategy is converted to innovation. Leadership is democratized, and everyone is invited to participate in contributing ideas and making decision. In horizontal leadership, policies are set to remove hindrances on participation and team contribution. This leadership philosophy encourages an environment of openness and there it is possible for leaders and their follower to come up with novel ideas which can push the organization forward (Walkers & Walkers, 2016).

This leadership philosophy is shaped around Loop model of observe, orient, decide and act. Accordingly, the philosophy encourages faster decision making, thereby encouraging faster implementation of projects and strategies. Democratic decision-making process ensures that everyone is involved and motivation is maintained. Tokekam,^[12] avers that that the process eliminates micromanagement and encourage scalability, improved output, greater job satisfaction, and skill enhancement

The Horizontal Leadership theory is relevant to the "job demands" variable of this study because it addresses the aspects of job demands such as big workloads and unreal expectations. The horizontal approach reduces the workload of leaders and causes them to focus on strategic issues and power sharing within the organization (Wachhaus, 2017). With employees encouraged to participate in leadership, the organizational leaders are released to concentrate on strategic and more pressing issues (Wachhaus, 2017). For this philosophy to take effect, organizational are obliged to unblock flow of information to groups, and encourage internal networking, lateral information flow, and embrace non-hierarchical association. VanWart,^[10] organizations which have successfully implemented this leadership philosophy have empowered employees, enhanced internal accountability, sense of ownership and reduced job demands.

Role Theory

The role theory was proposed by Bidden (1986). It explains the tendency of human behavior to form homogenous group which he voluntarily subscribes to. The group is defined by distinct socio-economic characteristics which the members of the group voluntarily subscribe to. The person feels he belong because he occupies distinct position which enables him to play a role, which contribute to the existence of the group.

Role theory is especially useful in explaining role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is a situation where an individual lacks clear job description and responsibility (Beehr & Glazer). For some time, role ambiguity has fascinated scholars. Shalley & Gilson, asserted creativity, role expectation and goals which if not handled well may lead to confusion and role ambiguity. Mumford,^[14] notes that goals are important in leadership though he admits they are often ambiguous so that they can induce stress. When goals are not carefully defined and communicated, it can be a source of confusion and ambiguity, leading to stress for organizational leaders. This will lead to unproductivity and in extreme cases lead to employees abandoning their jobs.

For organizations to discourage role ambiguity, Amabile (2016), suggest organizational leadership need to develop organizational goals. Organizational goals are motivational tools which help in reducing role ambiguity. In terms of motivation, organizational leaders use organizational goals to communicate expectations and to set performance objectives which help in motivating staff in their work. In terms of output, well-articulated goals encourage creativity and innovation, so that leaders are able to deal with complicated problems which require a high level of concentration.

Moreover, role clarity is also positively related to success in leadership. Leaders spend a lot of time communicating role expectation to their staff, which include role clarity. Jansen & Gaylen (2015), define role clarity as the process of communicating clearly a set of activities expected from an individual or a group. Role ambiguity is the reverse of role clarity. Role clarity leads to role understanding which is important in performance improvement and meeting organizational goals^[16]. This implies that role ambiguity negatively and significantly contributes to occupational stress.

In terms of conflict, it is an acknowledged fact that role ambiguity leads to role conflict. Role conflict occurs when colleagues don't have clear role parameters and responsibility. As a result, organizational leaders are exposed to stress which leaves them demotivated, diminished creativity and reduced performance output. Motivated staff will go beyond their call of duty to ensure that the task is accomplished even if the job requires them to work beyond the working hours. Taggar, adds that role conflict indirectly distracts a leader from the assigned goal. The leader is unable to visualize how his work contributes to the overall organizational goal. Role conflict is therefore a source of stress to organizational leaders.

The relevance of role theory cannot be overemphasized. This study as it points out various issues as regards role ambiguity such as role clarity, role guidelines and conflicting signals. Leaders ought to vouch for clear and concise instructions from the organization board regarding their tasks. Organizations which have clear roles for their employees are healthy, releasing leaders to perform their roles effectively and make decisions which enable the staff to execute their role. Organizations with clear roles significantly reduce conflict in its rank, encourage an environment of brotherhood and support, so that accountability is embraced. Consequently, organizational stress is reduced and productivity is enhanced.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally, organizational stress is one of the leading causes of stress for workers in most organizations. The concept of organizational stress is complex in nature hence it lacks a unified consensus definition. A number of organizations in the USA for example have put attention to the notion of organizational stress.

Several studies on stress have revealed a number of sources of organizational stress. However, there are main factors that have been identified as the sources of organizational stress; intrinsic factors in relation to an individual role in the organization, factors related to career development work relationships factors, organizational structure factors (McVicar, Munn-Giddings, & Seebom, 2016).

In Sweden, burnout is a notion that many leaders relate to both in their personal and professional life^[19]. As a consequence, there has been so much interest among researchers to understand this concept and look for ways to deal with it. Therefore, within the Swedish Organizational and Social Work Environment Authority, stress among leaders is as a result of several factors; the demands that are put on them in their respective roles, role ambiguity, organizational stressors among others^[20]. Hence, in a bid to set up a good working environment and prevent mental illness among leaders, Swedish Organizational and Social Work Environment Authority has stipulated policies on systematic work management, which provide rules that ought to be followed by employers in assigning duties to the leaders^[21]. The above global perspective on organizational stress will help us in relating the findings with the Kenyan context since the developed nations differ from developing ones in many aspects such as culture and environment, economy and political goodwill.

Regionally, an example of Nigeria's banking sector, has seen a series of problems related to work stress among leaders and employees. Employees agree to join an organization in whichever level of employment, either a leadership position or a normal employee with the aim of fulfilling their personal needs and organizational objectives at large (Obirih, 2016). However, there have been continuous strains attached to leadership roles which may undermine the potential of the leader to deliver the expected results. The rating of a leader's performance is the ability of their juniors to deliver the desired results and meet the expected targets. However, when the employee fails to deliver as expected, more stress will be placed on the leaders which will then be transmitted to the rest of the (Adjei & Amofa, 2017). The above regional study points to banking as an organization it however does not look familiar with our research since we aim to research at a construction authority not a bank. the findings will help us in understanding the relationship between general work conditions and can help us to derive the various stress factors associated with organizational leadership.

In the recent years in Kenya, there have been much interests by researchers to explore the aspect of stress among employees in organizations. The much-developed interest is as a result of a discovery of stress becoming a threat to employees' wellbeing.^[24] Additionally, employees are reporting an increased level of stress. The aspect of globalization has made Kenyan suppliers face tough competition and too much cut of costs of supply. This rise in cost sometimes has led to organizations making losses and this causes unsettlement among leaders. (Ngeno, 2018). Stress among leaders in Kenya arises from the various situations which are too much demanding and related to the organization. These include, organizational politics, cultures that are demanding, work life balance, role ambiguity, role conflict and poor leadership styles which creates friction, and cause increased competition among individuals hence causing stress to the leaders themselves. Role conflict among leaders refers to the occurrence of two or more tasks simultaneously that cause pressure such that adherence to one role will make it difficult to adhere to the other role. Role conflict among leaders in Kenya has led to heightened job tension and job dissatisfaction (Ongori & Agolla, 2018).

The leaders in public institutions in the public sector are by its nature stressful. They have to contend with public expectations viz a viz political demands which come with such positions. In some cases, they are not properly equipped with the right training, which in itself makes it hard for them to respond to the ever-growing demands. Additionally, sometimes they don't have the support of their superiors and the loyalty of their juniors (Cooper & Marshal, 2017). High performance is also a ticket to favor from superiors and respect from superiors and juniors, further adding to the stress associated with occupational leadership. The senior leadership role also attracts role-conflicts among team members (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2015).

Job Demands

Leadership often requires that difficult and painful decisions be made. It can require that the leaders make personal sacrifice and ostracized decisions that make them get alienated from other employees in an organization. Leaders are faced with the unrealistic expectations of having to put the organization as priority over their personal needs (Bass & Cigularov, 2017). Other aspects of job demand like high expectations affect practice of leadership in that it creates tension among workers who then find themselves struggling to achieve a set goal while straining. Most leaders ought to have a tough skin so as to succeed. Most organizations and employees have very high and ambiguous expectations over their leaders. Leaders are expected to have more control and influence over a situation than they actually do. Research on organizations' expectations on leaders show that 50% of extreme success or failure is attributed to leaders while they actually explain only 15% of the variation in success. This means that organizations believe leaders have more impact than they actually do. It is expected of leaders to be smart, decisive, creative, consistent, empowering, and inspirational, among others and in most occasions these leaders will disappoint given these high expectations^[29]. All these induces stress among leaders

Lack of resources such as machinery and time also cause stress among leaders. Stress is normally brought in when one wants to do a task using less resources with an increased speed. The three potential functions of job resources are achieving work related goals, promoting growth at the individual levels as well as reducing job demands. Examples of job resources includes characteristics that are job related, horizontal and vertical feedback and psychosocial aspects of the work environment like supervisor and co-worker support. Job resources are believed to influence employee work engagement by stimulating employees' intrinsic motivation and satisfying core psychological needs like the need to belong or the need for competence (Anderson, et al., 2017). Failure to provide these resources induces stress to leaders.

As the number of demands placed upon leaders goes high, the stress rate as well goes up. This means that if the workloads are big, then the level of stress will go up. Mostly, many organizations end up being caught fighting for bottom-line profits which adds to the leader feeling stress. They must therefore have the drive to complete the work expected of them. Leaders can be overwhelmed when pushed upon certain limits that can cause them to become overwhelmed with stress (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2015). This can result in some undesirable consequences including; less productivity, increased errors, poor work-life balance, risk of burnout, negative impact on health and higher level of absence.

The above studies on job demands seems to confirm that indeed demands at the work place affect leadership. Although this research was not carried out in Construction Authority of Kenya, they will help us in finding the relationship between job demands of various contexts and thus enable us to weigh our findings with what is already at hand.

Role Ambiguity

It is obvious that lack of a clear set of guidelines for a leader and actions towards the employees to reach a specific goal can really affect performance (Eys & Carron., 2016). Role ambiguity, contribute to leadership stress and results in decreased commitment and low job performance. Studies done in Austria reveals that lack of clarity, insufficient guidelines and conflicting signals are just an example of how ambiguity affects practice of leadership (Shenkar & Zeira, 2017). Leaders who sometimes get ambiguous

instructions which sometimes inconsistent with their job description. This decreases the level of job satisfaction and increases occupational stress among organizational leaders. Such leaders may probably leave the organization or withdraw their enthusiasm, thus slowing down on delivery on their roles. Eventually, role ambiguity leads to a slowdown in productivity and eventually lead to the failure of the organization (Beard, 2019).

Decisions around roles employees and other stakeholders (Murphy, Baker, & Gibbons, 2015). Unless all of these areas of clarity are sorted out, some leaders might end up stepping into other territories without meaning to. Questions may come from others regarding the purpose of the team and how the team's actions link to what the organization is trying to achieve (Robbins, Judge, Millett, & Waters-Marsh, 2018). Furthermore, if the organization does not bring out clearly defined roles, it causes stress among leaders as they try and find out what their roles are exactly. After looking at different studies concerning role ambiguity, we therefore ask ourselves if the situation can be different at a Construction Authority and one which is in Kenya. Our research will therefore aim to bring some more emphasis on another context which is different from the one done by other scholars. Construction involves skills and with this in mind, we will try to see the connection between role ambiguity in technical works and other office works as the above studies have shown.

Organizational stressors

Organizational leadership has really affected the practice of leadership (Rousseau, 2018). Johns (2017) in this research on how context affect leadership identified that cultural background and functional relationships between leaders and employees affect practice of leadership. He states that organizational stressors can be caused by either external or internal aspect. Armstrong, in his studies found out that organization context when not clearly defined leads to organizational stress. The organizational internal context include culture, technology, employees while the external environment include pressures and globalization. These impact on the way people work and relate in the organization and inform bureaucracy, structure organizational structure and organization change (Armstrong (2017). For example, inadequate technology can delay the launch of a new product into the back, making it hard for an organization to cope with competition. Parker & and Ohly (2018) include, the management style, nature of tasks, informational system, the strategy and the history of the organization as part of internal contextual factors. As far performance management is concerned, the contextual stressors which qualify the contextual variables qualifying performance management include employee relations and strategic human resources. In terms of human resource management, Haines & St-Onge (2017) mention performance management and staff training, horizontal and vertical feedback and employee recognition. These human resource characteristics help in defining the feel of the organizational working environment. A pleasant working environment is policies are well defined and implemented with the objective of reducing unpleasant experiences which lead to organizational stress.

Inclusion, empirical evidence show that job demand puts pressure on organizational leaders. These factors affect the employee motivation, and contribute to a leader 'stress. When an organization is not able to arrest the situation, stress interferes with the health of a leader, leading to absenteeism. At the tail end, an organization's productivity is curtailed and profitability is reduced. The study has also touched on job demands, which exert pressure on a leader beyond endurance level leading to stress. The chapter has also discussed role ambiguity, which is responsible for blurred lines of authority and confused reporting structure. Lastly, the study has discussed on internal and external organizational context which are the tools needed to do the job. The internal organizational context helps in defining policies, thus creating a pleasant environment for job performance.

Work life balance

Any organization needs to have its own mechanics that guides various processes in the process of meeting a certain goal. It is therefore prudent for organizations to be fast in identifying the relationship between work at the organizational level and how employees should balance it with home life to bring a positive result. Although Maloney & McFillen (1987), did a study on how the foreman's role affect practice of leadership in any construction authority, there is need to look at work life balance in a different context- Kenya which has different ways of undertaking various procedure. This is core in informing us where and how various mechanics affect various people in different conditions. As Ioan clearly shows, there is the need for a deliberate action to be made in order to have a clear understanding on how work life balance can be achieved. Many research done have not been in a position to solve the main issue at hand since they have been done in different environments meaning that what is practiced in one organization may not necessary be the one being practiced in the other. This has informed us about the many indicators of work life balance that will guide us during the study. Few scholars have looked into the ways work life balance affect leadership performance in the construction authority and they will be of great benefits when we will be looking at how the variables relate to one another. Various indicators as pointed out by Loan have been studied under work life balance including time flexibility, integration and work place culture. Hudson used the term work family balance as which has been come to be known or rather evolved to be work life balance thus including more aspects that our study will be looking at.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

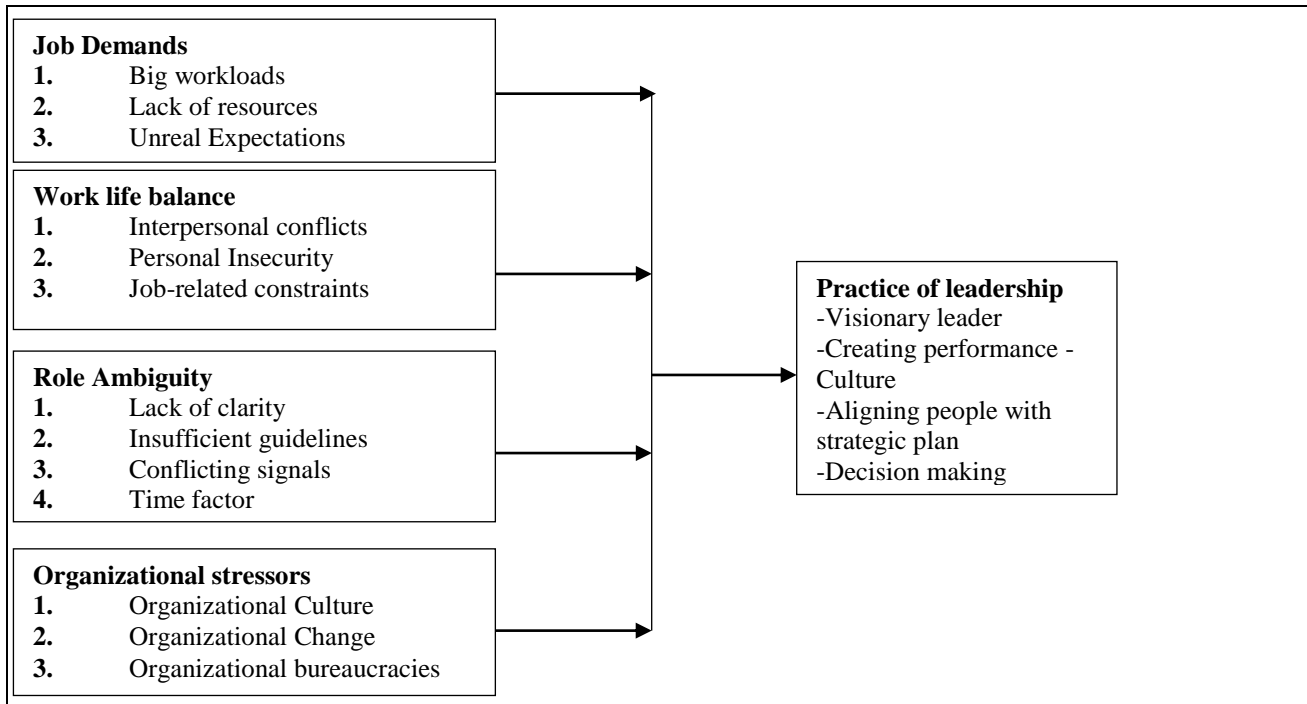


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Source: Researcher 2023

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This is a general guide used in gathering, process of measuring and analysing data with the aim of solving the research problem under study. This study used descriptive research. It enabled the researcher to describe the characteristics of the variables of this study. This study sought to establish the impact of work-related stress factors on the practice of leadership at National Construction Authority.

Independent variables of this study were; job demands, life stressors, role ambiguity and organizational stressors while the dependent variable is the practice of leadership and its various indicators as indicated in the conceptual framework. Practice of leadership was measured using different techniques after data collection. This included regression analysis and descriptive analysis.

This study was conducted at the headquarter of National Construction Authority.

Target population being a collection of various entities for generalizing results of the study and include observable attributes ^[46]. Additionally, Fraenkel observes that population refers to entire interest of a group which consist of common attributes. The study was conducted in National Construction Authority. The National Construction Authority has a total of four hundred and twenty-three employees. The study therefore targets 423 respondents who include the management and the general staff who directly report to the management because these employees are in a position to provide accurate information when prompted to. The researcher also applied the 360 degrees’ appraisal model to ensure all of the target respondents get to play a vital role in data collection.

Table 1 Target Population

Category	Population
Management	23
Staff	400
Total	423

Source: Researcher (2023)

Samples of a population being investigated should be sufficiently represented by a good sample size. Egbert (2015), state that adequate data on a population should be given by the best sample and the data, however should be sufficient and also be able to be easily analysed. The researcher applied Slovin’s formula to calculate the sample size. The formula was used in this study since it enabled the researcher to sample the targeted audience with desirable degree of precision.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + NE^2}$$

Where by:

n = number of study’s samples

N = targeted audience

E = error margin (0.05)

$$n = \frac{423}{1 + (423 \times 0.05^2)}$$

$$n = 206$$

Table 2 Sample Size

Category	Population	Sample Size
Management	23	20
Staff	400	186
Total	423	206

Source: Researcher (2023)

This study used simple random sampling technique which retains homogeneity, which means every element in the population has equal chance of being selected. (Russel, 2016). Moreover, simple sampling technique helped in representing the entire population being investigated, thus eliminating biasness.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section comprised of analysis of response rate, respondents’ demographic status, descriptive statistics on work related stressors and inferential statistics using SPSS software. Moreover, a comprehensive overview of how data was analyzed, interpreted and presented in relation to the theme of the current study was statistically shown

Response Rate

The researcher issued 206 questionnaires to the respondents. Out of which 152 of them were dully filled and returned while the remaining 54 of them were not returned. This represents a 74% response rate which is ideal for the current study. The response agrees with Mugenda (2003), that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over. Based on the author’s sentiments, the response rate was satisfactory.

Table 3 Response Rate Analysis

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Returned	152	74
Not returned	54	26
Total	206	100

Source: Researcher (2023)

Reliability Test

The pilot tests were done to determine the reliability threshold of the questionnaires.

Table 4 Reliability Test Results

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
Job Demands	0.75	5
Role Ambiguity	0.71	5
Organization Stressors	0.73	5
Work Life Balance	0.70	5
Leadership Practices	0.78	5

Source: Researcher (2023)

Table 4 shows the reliability coefficients of the study variables whereby job demands, role ambiguity, organization stressors, work life balance and leadership practices had a Cronbach coefficient of 0.75, 0.71, 0.73, 0.70 and 0.78 respectively. The coefficients agree with Kothari (2009) who asserted that a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of more than 60% means that the questionnaires were reliable.

Demographic Analysis

The study analyzed the demographic characteristics of the respondents to understand their background and their relevance to the current study. This section considered the respondents gender, age and marital status.

Gender Analysis

The study sought to analyze respondents’ views to capture their understanding of the theme of the study based on gender representation as shown in table 5.

Table 5 Gender Representation

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	114	75
Female	38	25
Total	152	100

Source: Researcher (2023)

The study findings from table 5 indicate that majority of the participants at 75% were male respondents while 25% of the respondents were female respondents. The analysis implies that more male respondents participated in the study compared to female respondents. This also indicates a male dominated workforce. Analysis of gender was key since it depicts work related stress factors based on genders. ^[50]Spector affirms that female employees are vastly vulnerable to work related stress due to issues emanating from work and home.

Respondents Age

Table 6 Age of the Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 30 years	26	25
31 – 40 years	25	24
41 – 50 years	29	28
51 years and above	24	23
Total	152	100

Source: Researcher (2023)

The study sought to find out the age of the respondents who participated in the study. The findings depict that 25% of the respondents were aged 29 years and below, followed by 24% were between 30-39 years, 28% were between 40-49 years and 23% of the respondent were 50 and above years old. The analysis implies that the age distribution was well crafted by the organization since majority of the respondents were between 40-49 years of age.

Marital Status

The respondents were asked to state their marital status. Marital status was key in determining work related stress factors that affects leadership practice in the construction industry as depicted in table 7.

Table 7 Respondent Marital Status

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Married	97	64
Single	55	36
Total	152	100

Source: Researcher (2023)

The findings indicate that 64% of the respondents working within the organization are married while 36% of the respondents are single. The findings imply that majority of the organization's workforce is comprised of married respondents. Thus, marital status provided a divergent view on topical issues concerning work-related stress factors and its effect on leadership practice to both married and single respondents. These divergent views fit well with the current theme of the study.

Job Demand Stress Factor and Leadership Practice

The study analyzed respondents' views on how job demand influenced practice of leadership in the organization. Using five-point Linkert scale options, the respondents' views were summarized in the table 8 in form of mean and standard deviation.

Table 8 Effect of Job Demand Stress Factor on Leadership Practice

Specific Statement	Mean	Std Dev
Big workloads serve as major causes of stress on practice of leadership in National Construction Authority.	2.624	1.342
Organizational lack of resources serves as a source of stress in on practice of leadership in National Construction Authority in National Construction Authority.	2.357	1.312
Organizational unreal expectations which are not SMART causes stress which affect practice of leadership in National Construction Authority	3.322	1.065
Time pressure on workload performance as a stress factor affect leadership in National Construction Authority	2.788	1.279
Working hours as a stress factor affect practice of leadership in National Construction Authority	2.712	1.154

Source: Researcher (2023)

Based on the findings, it is evident that majority of the respondents agreed that the organizations unreal expectations which were not SMART affected their practice of leadership with a mean score of 3.322. The respondents who agreed with these sentiments were 23% and those who disagreed were 14%. The respondents further agreed that time pressure on workload performance and working hours as a stress factor affected the practice of leaderships with a mean score of 2.788 and 2.712 respectively. The findings relate to study that states that leaders are faced with the unrealistic expectations of having to put the organization as priority over their personal needs. The study further reveals that other aspects of job demand like high expectations affect practice of leadership in that it creates tension among workers who then find themselves struggling to achieve a set goal while straining. In agreement, a study by Wilmar (2014) states that most organizations and employees have very high and ambiguous expectations over their leaders. In relation to time pressure and working hours as a stress factor Fonkeng, (2018). In the study of study effects of job-stress on practice of leadership microfinance institution in Cameroon observed that leaders go through some significant stress which affect their performance as they are under pressure by their superiors to perform. On the other hand, majority of the respondents were undecided as to whether big workloads and organizations lack of resources served as a stress factor towards practice of leadership at National Construction Authority. However, studies by Alarcon & Bowling, Anderson, et al., (2017) support the notion that lack of resources such as machinery and time also cause stress among leaders.

Role Ambiguity Stress Factor and Leadership Practice

The study analysed respondents' views on how role ambiguity influenced practice of leadership in the organization. Using five-point Linkert scale options, the respondents' views were summarized in the table 9 in form of mean and standard deviation.

Table 9 Effect of Role Ambiguity Stress Factor on Leadership Practice

Specific Statement	Mean	Std Dev
Lack of clarity on role to be performed as a stress factor affect practice of leadership in National Construction Authority.	3.615	1.087
Inadequate guidelines on roles to be performed as a stress factor affects practice of leadership in National Construction Authority.	3.974	1.241
Lack of adequate time to perform a role as a stress factor effect on practice of leadership in National Construction Authority	2.051	1.267
Complex skills required on role to be performed as a stress factor affects practice of leadership in National Construction Authority in National Construction Authority.	2.115	1.314

Source: Researcher (2023)

The findings presented in table 9 indicate that majority of the respondents at a mean score of 3.974 agreed that inadequate guidelines on roles to be performed served as a stress factor toward the practice of leadership. In agreement, majority of the respondents at a mean score of 3.615 agreed that lack of clarity on role to be performed was also a stress factor towards the practice of leadership. The findings are in agreement with studies done.^{[33] [34]} It was observed that lack of a clear set of guidelines for a leader and actions towards the employees to reach a specific goal can really affect performance. They further noted that role ambiguity contributes to leadership stress and results in decreased commitment and low job performance. Alternatively, Shenkar and Zeira’s study done in Austria reveals that lack of clarity, insufficient guidelines and conflicting signals are just an example of how ambiguity affects practice of leadership.

On the contrary, majority of the respondents disagreed that lack of adequate time to perform and complex skills required on role to be performed as a stress factor affected the practice of leadership with a mean score of 2.051 and 2.115 respectively. They further asserted that leaders should be well equipped to handle complicated tasks and manage their time effectively since these attributes are well articulated on the job description. However, the current study did not find sufficient empirical evidence to support evidence that lack of adequate time to perform and complex skills required affected practice of leadership. Based on this, respondents’ sentiments were considered satisfactory only to the theme of the current study.

4.7 Organization Stressors and Leadership Practice

The study analysed respondents’ views on how organization stressors influenced practice of leadership in the organization. Using five-point Linkert scale options, the respondents’ views were summarized in the table 4.8 in form of mean and standard deviation.

Table 10 Effect of Organization Stressors on Leadership Practice

Specific Statement	Mean	Std Dev
Does your organizational culture hinder you from practicing leadership in National Construction Authority?	3.319	1.310
Does the structure of the organization affect you in practice of leadership in National Construction Authority?	3.837	.990
Does formal and informal changes affect practice of leadership in National Construction Authority?	3.961	1.134
Do bureaucracies play a part in affecting practice of leadership in National Construction Authority?	3.662	1.025

Source: Researcher (2023)

According to table 10, organization change serves as a clear organizational stressor that affects the practice of leadership. In agreement, majority of the respondents at a mean score of 3.961 agreed that formal and informal changes within the organization affected the practice of leadership. Majority also agreed structure of the organization affected practice of leadership. The findings concur with Parker and Ohly (2018) who states that the management style, nature of tasks, informational system, the strategy and the history of the organization as part of internal contextual factors the practice of leadership. The findings imply that factors such as management style, nature of tasks, informational system, the strategy and the history of the organization does contribute towards informal and formal changes and the structure of the organization. In agreement as well, majority of the respondents stated that organization culture and bureaucracies hindered the practice of leadership with a mean score of 3.319 and 3.662 respectively. The findings concur with Johns (2017) who identified that cultural background and functional relationships between leaders and employees affect practice of leadership. He further states that organizational stressors can be caused by either external or internal aspect. In agreement, Armstrong (2017) in his studies found out that organization context when not clearly defined

leads to organizational stress. The organizational internal context include culture, technology, employees while the external environment include pressures and globalization. These impact on the way people work and relate in the organization and inform bureaucracy, structure organizational structure and organization change.

Work Life Balance and Leadership Practice

The study analysed respondents’ views on how work life balance influenced practice of leadership in the organization. Using five-point Linkert scale options, the respondents’ views were summarized in the table 4.9 8 in form of mean and standard deviation.

Table 11 Effect of Work Life Balance on Leadership Practice

Specific Statement	Mean	Std Dev
Poor home life as a stress factor affects practice of leadership in National Construction Authority	4.050	1.064
Personal development as a stress factor affects practice of leadership in National Construction Authority	3.184	1.306
Lack of control as a stress factor affect practice of leadership in National Construction Authority	3.655	1.132
Attitude as a stress factor affect practice of leadership in National Construction Authority	3.254	1.113
Conflict of interest affect practice of leadership in National Construction Authority	3.237	1.134

Source: Researcher (2023)

The findings on table 11 indicate that majority of the respondents at a mean score of 4.050 agreed that poor home life as a stress factor affecting practice of leadership. Majority of the respondents who agreed to these sentiments were female. They affirmed that after maternity leave, it becomes difficult for them to balance work and practice leadership at the same time compared to their male counterparts. The respondents were also in agreement that lack of control was a stress factor affecting practice of leadership with a mean score of 3.655. The findings further revealed that attitude and conflict of interest significantly influenced the practice of leadership at a mean score of 3.254 and 3.237 respectively. On the contrary, majority of the respondents at mean score of 3.184 disagreed that personal development as a stress factor affected practice of leadership. They further stated that organizational roles are clearly defined within the organization and leaders should strive to update their skills to meet organizational demands. In agreement, Lewis (2001) states that it is prudent for organizations to be fast in identifying the relationship between work at the organizational level and how employees should balance it with home life to bring a positive result. However, the current study found out that there were few studies linking work-life balance as a stress factor affecting the practice of leadership.

Regression Analysis

The study employed regression analysis to find out association between work related stress factors (Job demand, role ambiguity, organization stressors and work-life balance) and the practice of leadership. To achieve this, various coefficients were used from model summary, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression coefficient.

Summary of the Model

Summary of the model depicts how statistical model employed is likely to predict future outcome. It defines co-efficient of determination as a square of sample correlated values between expected outcome and futuristic values as presented in table 4. 10.

Table 12 Model Summary

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error Estimation
1	0.789	0.701	0.623	0.27603

Source: Researcher (2023)

Table 12 indicate that the value for adjusted R squared was 0.623 which implies that 62% increase in work-related stress factor affects the practice of leadership at National Construction Authority while other factors have an influence of 38%. In terms of relationship between work-related stress and practice of leadership, the value correlation coefficient was 0.789 (78%) indicating a strong relationship.

Table 13 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	536.67	4	134.17	86.06	.001b
	Residual	229.14	147	1.559		
	Total	765.81	151			

Source: Researcher 2023

The study sought to analyse the variance between the independent variables and the dependent variable to determine the level of significance. Analysis from table 13 depicts that the significance level was 0.001, which is less than 0.05 and an F statistic of 86.06. Based on this, the regression model is considered statistically significant to the study. This implied that the independent variables (job demand, role ambiguity, organization stressors and work-life balance) were good predictors of dependent variable (practice of leadership)

Table 14 Regression Co-efficient

Model		Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.255	.224		5.603	.005
	Job Demand	.573	.094	.006	5.032	.007
	Role Ambiguity	.621	.098	.425	6.337	.003
	Organization Stressors	.634	.070	.062	9.057	.000
	Work-life Balance	.610	.082	.566	7.439	.001

Source: Researcher (2023)

From the regression findings, the study derived the following model:

$$Y = 1.255 + 0.573X_1 + 0.621X_2 + 0.634 X_3 + 0.610X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where, Y was the dependent variable (The Practice of leadership in National Construction Authority), B0 = Constant, X1 = Job Demands, X2 = Role Ambiguity, X3 = Organizational Stressors, X4 = Work-life Balance and ε = Error term. The model indicates that job demand, role ambiguity, organization stressors and work-life balance had a strong positive relationship with the practice of leadership with coefficients of 0.573, 0.621, 0.634 and 0.610 respectively. Additionally, the independent variables were statically significant with all having p-values less than 0.05. In agreement with the findings, a study by Ganster (2005) revealed that leaders in organizations encounter stress in their day to day running of the organizations. Furthermore, stress among leaders in their practice of leadership can be caused by; job demands, role ambiguity, organizational stressors among others. Job demand comprises of physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require continual physical or mental effort and are therefore this exposing leader to certain physiological and psychological effects on the leaders.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to determine influence of work-related stress factors that affect leadership practice at National Construction Authority. Research findings revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between work-related stress and practice of leadership represented by adjusted R² of 0.623. The value means that an increase in work-related stress factors (job demand, role ambiguity, organization stressors and work-life balance) by 62% influenced the leadership practice at National Construction Authority.

The study established that job demand a positive relationship with leadership practice with regression coefficient of 0.57 and p-value of 0.007 which is less than 0.05. The findings relate to Bass & Cigularov (2017) study that states that other aspects of job demand like high expectations affect practice of leadership in that it creates tension among workers who then find themselves struggling to achieve a set goal while straining. Alternatively, another study by Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, and Boudreau, (2015) posits that leaders can be overwhelmed when pushed upon certain limits that can cause them to become overwhelmed with stress. This can result in undesirable consequences including less productivity, increased errors, poor work-life balance, risk of

burnout, negative impact on health and higher level of absence. The study also found out that role ambiguity had a positive and significant effect on leadership practice with regression coefficient of 0.621 and p-value of 0.003 which is less than 0.05. These findings implied that role ambiguity as a stress factor influenced the leadership practice. Thus, undefined organization roles in job description jeopardizes a leader's ability to execute tasks in the long run. In support to these sentiments, Beard (2019) agrees that leaders who sometimes get ambiguous instructions which are inconsistent with their job description decreases the level of job satisfaction and increases occupational stress among organizational leaders.

Concerning organization stressors, the findings revealed a positive and significant effect on leadership practice with regression coefficient of 0.634 and p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This implies that organizational stressors which constitute internal and external forces influenced how leadership is practiced within an organizational setting.

The findings further revealed that work-life balance had a positive and significant effect on leadership practice with regression coefficient of 0.610 and p-value of 0.001 which is less than 0.05. The findings imply that work-life balance as a stress factor defined a leader's ability to withstand pressure from home and work, at the same time remain resilient and productive in the long run. Thus, balancing personal objectives and professional objective may fulfil a leader's ability to practice leadership.

CONCLUSIONS

Job demand as a stress factor affected the practice of leadership. Majority of the respondents stated that job demands with unreal expectations were not clearly defined to some extent and affected practice of leadership in the organizations. It was also evident that time pressure on workload performance and working hours hindered leader's ability to practice leadership. On the other hand, majority of the respondents were undecided as to whether big workloads and organizations lack of resources served as a stress factor towards practice of leadership.

Role ambiguity as a stress factor affected leadership practice. Majority of the respondents agreed that inadequate guidelines and lack of clarity on roles to be performed served as a stress factor toward the practice of leadership. They further noted that role ambiguity contributes to leadership stress and results in decreased commitment and low job performance among leaders. On the contrary, majority of the respondents disagreed that lack of adequate time to perform and complex skills required on role to be performed as a stress factor affected the practice of leadership. They further asserted that leaders should be well equipped to handle complicated tasks and manage their time effectively since these attributes are well articulated on the job description.

Organization stressors influenced leadership practice at National Construction Authority. Organization change served as a clear organizational stressor that affected the practice of leadership. Key issues such as formal and informal changes within the organization and structure of the organization influenced how leadership is practiced in the organization. The findings revealed that factors such as management style, nature of tasks, informational system, the strategy and the history of the organization shaped informal and formal changes and the structure of the organization. Furthermore, organization culture and bureaucracies hindered the practice of leadership.

Work-life balance had a positive and significant effect on leadership practice at National Construction Authority. Majority of the respondents agreed that poor home life and lack of control as a stress factor affecting practice of leadership. Majority of the respondents who agreed to these sentiments were female. They affirmed that after maternity leave, it becomes difficult for them to balance work and practice leadership at the same time compared to their male counterparts. The findings further revealed that attitude and conflict of interest significantly influenced the practice of leadership. On the contrary, some of the respondents felt that personal development as a stress factor does not practice of leadership in the organization. They further stated that leaders should strive to update their skills to meet organizational demands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) The study recommends that organization should ensure that resources such as machinery and time are available for managers to execute important tasks with ease. Job demand becomes a stress factor when leaders use less resources with an increased speed to perform demanding tasks that are timely executed. Leaders job descriptions should be clearly defined so that they understand their position, mandate and state within the organization and how to delegate certain tasks to junior staff. This ensures will that leaders focus on key tasks hence enhancing their ability to practice leadership with ease.

(ii) The organization should have a well-articulated set of guidelines for them to reach a specific goal that is sustainable, measurable, attainable, reachable and time bound. This eliminates cases of ambiguous instructions which sometimes are inconsistent with their job description. National Construction Authority should also ensure that a leader's role is clearly defined to

increase productivity and improve the success rate of the organization, minimizing stress of finding out what their roles are exactly.

(iii) National Construction Authority should ensure that leaders understand the external and internal aspect of how the organization works. For instance, inadequate technology can delay the implementation of key projects, makes it hard for an organization to cope with competition. Moreover, providing a pleasant working environment will reduce unpleasant experiences that lead to organizational stress, while at the same time create a thriving environment for leaders to continuously improve their performance and leadership skills.

(iv) The organization should have its own mechanics that guides various flexible working schedules that meet a certain goal. This can be achieved by identifying the relationship between work at the organizational level and how leaders can balance personal goals and professional goals to bring a positive result especially for married leaders. Also, having therapy sessions for leaders after work will help them to mentally relax and reflect on their personal goals.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The study suggests that further research should be done to find out key issues experienced with regards to work related stress among leaders to identify perceived impact it has on their career progression. The study should be done in a different government parastatal to provide a conclusive view of the topic in hand. This will add more knowledge to the field of study from a different perspective.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest was recorded by the authors

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