

## **Causes of Occupational Stress In Relation To Level of Occupational Stress among Police Constables in Kisumu County, Kenya**

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**Abstract:** *Stress is a major global health challenge affecting the well-being of service providers especially those working in the human service sectors like; police officers, teachers, health care providers and media specialists. This study was prompted by emerging information from studies that, stress is a silent killer that affects the health of service providers leading to; mental, physical, and emotional disorders. The study adopted the Causal Comparative ex-post facto research design. The target population was 451 police constables and 12 Officers Commanding Stations in the four police divisions in Kisumu County. Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample 105 police constables and 4 Officers Commanding Station (OCS). The data was collected using a Police Constable Questionnaire and an Officer Commanding Station Interview Schedule. The instruments were validated by experts while reliability was estimated by use of Cronbach Alpha method for internal consistency. The questionnaire yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.88. Quantitative and qualitative data were obtained. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows (Version 20). Descriptive statistics and inferential statistical (Chi-Square) were used in data analysis. The key findings of the study were that: police constables in Kisumu County were experiencing occupational stress. Working environment, work overload and work schedule were causes of occupational stress. The study recommends that: Police service commission should develop a policy on stress management to guide the induction, operations and counselling of Police Constables on their day to day duties.*

**Keywords:** *Level of Occupational stress, Police Constables.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Stress in the work place is a worldwide issue. A report by the World Health Organization, (2005) revealed that the police service has failed to address the matter of stress among police officers. This failure has stifled natural efforts towards building a stronger human resource base which is invaluable for development in all its spheres in the police. Gul, Serder and Kenan (2008); Mostert and Joubert (2005) conducted studies in the USA, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and France. The study findings have indicated that in terms of levels of occupational stress, police officers experience incidences of depression, neurotic disorders and stress. It is therefore likely that high levels of stress among police officers seem to be threatening and varying in terms of levels of job experience. A study in South Africa shows that the police profession was the most stressful (Govender, 2008). What is happening in the other countries is not different from Kenya. Kimani (2010) who carried out a study in Kenya among the police officers' found out that police officers stress is on the increase. There is need to establish causes of stress and its effects on police constables in Kenya and Kisumu County in particular. Melgosa (2004) defines stress as a condition of being subject to external forces or pressures and can either be positive/pleasant (eustress) or negative/unpleasant (distress). Ornelas and Kleiner (2003) argued that stress is the by-product of modern life that results from our efforts of trying to balance the demands of the workplace and family life. Occupational stress refers to stress experienced as a direct result of a person's occupation. Shift work, the paramilitary structure of many police departments, and lack of administrative support for individual officers, autocratic management styles, the inconsistent enforcement of rules, the excessive or unnecessary paperwork, workload, equipment deficiencies lack of resources, shortages of staff poor inter-personal relationships are factors most often cited as causes of occupational stress (Rothmann & Strijdom, 2002). However, in the developing countries in Africa, Kenya inclusive, similar sentiments of police officers exhibit stress related issues.

Numerous studies have identified Police work as one of the most psychologically stressful and critical profession in the world (Govender, 2008; Kayal, 2004). Malach-Pines and Keinan, (2007) noted that due to the inherent nature of police work, this profession was likely to be one of the most stressful occupations in the world. Water and Ussery (2007) argued that hazards associated with the occupational stress as dangerous. They attributed stress to the nature of policing. The dangers and trauma associated with policing therefore differentiates police work from other occupations. The Health Service Executive (HSE) (2004) state that

500,000 million people in the UK experience work-related stress illness. Up to 5 million people feel extremely stressed by their work and work-related stress costs about £3.7 billion each year. 150,000 people have taken at least a month sick off due to work related stress and altogether 6.5 million sick days/offers have been taken during the year under stress related incidences. It is estimated that every day, 270,000 people take time off for stress related illnesses at a cost of £10.2 billion to the economy annually.

In Kenya, Police constables are charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order hence preserving peace in the society. Kisumu County is a cosmopolitan town characterized by high crime rates, high population, upsurging in the number of slums, high unemployment rates among others. Police constables in Kisumu County are constantly confronted with challenges from the public like drug and alcohol consumption. Violence meted to persons, political hooliganism during party electioneering and destruction of property. Responding and seeing gruesome road accidents scenes, cattle rustling and cross-border raids appear to be a life-long security challenge in Kisumu County. According to the Kenya Police Annual Report (2010), there were 389 police officers who died in one year either in the line of duty or were killed by fellow officers. Some of these police officers had exhibited harsh and aggressive treatment to suspects, victims and members of public whom they were supposed to protect and serve. Some of the police officers have been arraigned in court for killing, allegations of involvement in robbery, car hijacking, aiding and abetting crime. Given the forgoing, a module on guidance and counseling, sociology and psychiatry has been introduced in the revised curriculum for training of Kenya police officers.

The police department also uses the service of a psychologist who provides welfare and counseling services to its officers specifically counseling (Government of Kenya, 2007). Police officers are given pre-service physical tests to determine their health status prior to employment, but still there was evidence suggesting that the officers developed stress disorders (Waters & Ussery, 2007). There is concern over cause of the rising number of incident where junior police officer are killing their seniors, colleagues, family members and committing suicide in Kenya. In light of this scenario, there was need for research to be done on causes of occupational stress among police officers in Kenya and Kisumu County. Study conducted on occupational stress and gender shows that there was no difference between male and female with regard to work related stress (Regan, 2008).

## **II. Literature Review**

### **1.1 Concept of Occupational Stress**

There are occasions, situations and experiences that upset people's equilibrium and sometimes cause serious consequences to persons' physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being and may require remedies. According to Willis (2005) society has coined a term to describe these occasions as stress. A considerable number of police constables may share the same job experience but police constables with varied levels of job experience react in a different way to it. In support of the fact that these situations are not conducive Selye (1984) who did his research in Australia, has it that the term 'stress' is borrowed from the word of mechanics and physics where stress is described as the physical pressure exerted upon, and between parts of a body. Furthermore, Willis (2005) adds that, historically, Dr. William Bradford Cannon who lived between 1871 -1945 in the U.S.A was the first clinician to identify the physical characteristics of the initial phase of stress. In every occupation that has a goal to be achieved, a deadline to be met, a superior to report to and to be supervised, normally is not stress free. It is a concern to the novice and experienced employees, employers and administrators alike.

Stress in the work place is a worldwide issue. A report by WHO (2005), revealed that the Police service in the world all over has been ineffective and has failed to address the matter of police stress. This failure however, has stifled natural efforts towards building a stronger human resource base which is invaluable for development in all its spheres in police service. Studies carried out in the United Kingdom by Miller (2007), found out that employee working in law enforcement especially police officers reported high levels of stress and increased levels of stress related illness. What is happening in the United Kingdom and South Africa is not different from Kenya. Akololo (2011) who carried out a study in Kenya among the police officers found out that police officers stress is on the increase.

### **2.2 Causes of Occupational Stress in the Police Service**

Previous research indicates that stress results from interactions at work (Waters & Ussery, 2007). The amount of stress a person experiences at work results from the interplay of the work environment and the employee's coping resources (Malach-Pines & Keinan, 2007). However, Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright and Donald (2005) indicate that different occupations would have different basic stressors and people working in the same occupation experience different levels of stress due to the interplay of many factors. In many countries police work is often considered most stressful profession. In the last two decades, intensive researches have

been carried out in USA and Europe concerning the causes and effects of police stress (Roberts & Levenson, 2001; Waters & Ussery, 2007).

### **2.2.1 Work Environment in the Police Service**

The police work in Western European, North American, South Africa and Kenya inclusive is considered to be more dangerous and stressful. The working environment for police officers is marked by increasing violence, high crime rates and execution of police officers on and off duty (Omeja & Githigaro, 2010). The environment in which police officers operate is an important factor to consider as the environment holds stressors. Killing of police officers in line of duties has raised concern. The first major cause of stress identified in police work is associated with the unique work environment; lack of resources and killing were among the top stressors. Other stressors often mentioned in the literature include making violent arrests, inadequate equipment, unpredictable incidents and gruesome scenes, exposure to traumatic events; murder, assaults, shootings dealing with crime victims and perpetrators and also the criminal justice system (Ellison, 2004; Mikkelsen & Burke, 2004).

Malach-Pine and Keinan (2007) cited emotionally demanding situations such as informing relatives of sudden deaths, dealing with suicide, fatal accidents and criminal or sexual offences against children as some of the stressors. Claire (2006) observed that dealing with annoying and dirty people for example drug addicts, drunkards, use of violence by officer, dangers associated with the violence and aggression against officers were causes of occupational stress. The criminal justice system itself was also reported as a source of stress among police officers. Police officers often perceive the judicial process as being too sympathetic and lenient on criminals and conversely, too insensitive to police concerns. Gul, Serder and Kenan (2008) noted that police officers who make violent arrests were more likely to feel stressed about their work environment. Although most of the mentioned researches bear relevance to Kenya Police, one cannot ignore the specific causes within which police officers have operated.

Omeja and Githigaro (2010) argued that Kenyan police officers are exposed to traumatic and violent work environment. They are in constant confrontation with drug and alcohol addicts, violent persons and political hooliganism during party electioneering. The officers on several occasions are forced to disperse the youths and organized gangs. Police officers in the Kenya are often victims and the main targets of violent criminals including outlawed groups for instance the 'Mungiki' menace has reached dangerous unprecedented proportions as well as "Inchikororo", "Amachuma" and "Sungusungu", "Taliban" "Jeshi la Mzee", "Baghdad boys" "Angola Msumbiji" "Republican Revolutionary Council", "SLDF" in other parts of Kenya. Police officers also deal with people who engage in oath taking, rituals, extortion and sharking. Officers work with inadequate resources and lack of adequate trained human resource. Operational preparedness of police officers is still weak and the quality of police operations has been undermined by lack of adequate staff and suitable working equipment that would enable them to function humanely and professionally (Report of National Task Force Reforms, 2009). Gershon (2000) argued that working under continuously stressful conditions leads to the dissatisfaction and exhaustion of police officers. The stressful conditions that law enforcement officers are exposed to can affect both their work-related and physiological wellbeing. Martinussen, Richardsen and Burke (2007) found that burnout was one of the effects of work related stress because of its exponential impact on professional relationships.

### **2.2.2 Work Load in the Police Service**

Work overload refers to the relationship between the demands of the work and the time available to fulfill those demands. Numerous studies conducted on occupational stress have identified workload as a work-related stressor and workload of a police officer is high (Keinan & Malach-Pines, 2007). In a study conducted in Dutch, between 65% and 75% of the police; officers reported that they were under strain as result of heavy workload. Studies conducted in Australia by Rollinson, (2005) showed a positive relationship between workload and burnout. Those with high workload reported psychological distress, job dissatisfaction and more physical symptoms. In a study conducted in South African, police officers performed tasks that did not make up the normal job description. They covered work for other employees where there were insufficient personnel (Botha & Pienaar, 2006). In a study conducted in Israel, work overload was one of the four stressors that appeared to be significantly affecting police officers work (Moon & Maxwell, 2004). Kenya has a police force of 40,000 police officers. The internationally acceptable police to civilian ratios are 1:450 (one police officer to four hundred fifty civilian); the situation in Kenya currently is 1:1150 (one police officer to one thousand, one hundred and fifty civilian). The community policing partnership initiative was expected to address the low police to population ratio in comparison to the United Nations recommended standard (Report on National Task Force on Police Reform 2009). Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2002) noted that too much work produces the greatest stress. The issue of insufficient staff and its effects has caused many police officers to experience stress in carrying out their responsibility.

Staff shortages with increasing workload raise concerns on police officers ability to cope and deliver adequate service, which in turn create a stressful environment within the police profession. Burke and Mikkelsen (2006) observed that work overload comes when police officers experience increased responsibilities. Water and Ussery (2008) pointed out that police work involves enforcing law, peace keeping, protecting of people and properties, and finally investigating and interrogating criminals. Police officers are expected to respond to situations that may arise when they are on duty. More over police officers have to maintain law and order and consequently report to the higher authority. They also acknowledge that the police profession has become increasingly stressful having to meet many almost impossible deadlines and responsibilities. The nature of the police workload is demanding and is likely to be stressful. Agolla (2008) asserts that work overload creates stress and was associated with smoking, alcohol consumption, high cholesterol levels, increased heart rate, and low self-esteem.

### **2.2.3 Bureaucracy in the Police Service**

Bureaucracy in the police service was identified as a major cause of occupational stress among police officers. Mc Carty, Zhao and Garland (2007) defined bureaucracy as events that are precipitated by police administration that are bothersome to police officers. Esterhuysen and Heineken (2012) observed that in America, Europe and Africa, Police service structure was hierarchical, authoritarian and assertive. The Police service structure was similar to the structure of the military. The nature of bureaucracy is based on hierarchical structure where there are clear demarcated lines of authority: for instance Sergeant, lieutenant, captain and constables among others. The position of the constable is the lowest of the ranks. These authorities come along with orders and internal communications which are passed through delegating and re-delegating. Bureaucracies have rigid hierarchical power control structures, where the greatest degree of control resides at the top of the organization. Therefore police constables at the lowest level have the highest demands and the least amount of control hence suffer from the highest levels of occupational stress (Shane, 2008). Heineken and Van der Waag-Cowling, (2009) pointed out that the hierarchical nature of the police service was characterized by rigid rank, command system and strict disciplinary codes. Cowper (2000) argues that Police officers are also trained on classic Weberian bureaucracy principles which entail discipline and respect for the chain of command. They are indoctrinated to be conformist and authoritarian. Esterhuysen and Heineken (2012) raised concern about chains of command and rank structures as causative factors of stress.

He, Zhao and Lorch (2002) assert that the nature of bureaucracy in the police structure tends to breed alienation among police officers. They are required to exercise considerable discretion while being controlled tightly by their supervisors. He, Zhao and Lorch (2002) points out that stress and burnout emerges as a result of tension that exists between the discretion given to officers and the seemingly tight, endless litany of rules held by the police service. Other specific stressors mentioned in literature include; excessive paperwork, enduring repetitive tasks, and red tape for any action to be taken out of the range of standard operating procedures, conflicting policies and legislation, too much procedure to follow and an inconsistent leadership style (He et al., 2002). The authoritarian, centrally controlled concept of the military still persists in the minds of police officers.

### **2.2.4 Work Schedules in the Police Service**

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2005) reports that approximately 3.2 million people perform shift work. In the United States there are approximately 860,000 police officers represented by 17,784 agencies. Despite the large size of this workforce and strain of this occupation, the police are understudied in terms of the impact of extended work hours, shift work, and fatigue on health and stress (Reaves, 2006). In developing countries in Africa, Kenya inclusive, working on shift and working overtime have become increasingly common. Relationship between work schedules and stress are only partly understood (Steenland, 2000). Caruso, Lusk and Gillespie (2004) pointed out that working on shift was a potential occupational stressor associated with health consequences such as increased risk of injuries, gastrointestinal symptoms, disruption of family and social lives, and mental disorder.

Water and Ussery (2007) pointed out those Police officers are always on duty and the officers always keep vigilance, even when off duty. Although police officers are given time off, they are sometimes required to sacrifice those days off to attend court proceedings, meeting during free time as well as to volunteer on weekends. Sufficient time must be given to those individual who come from night shift. Sutherland and Copper (2002) says that burnout occurs if sufficient time is not given for recovery. In addition, a police officer may develop occupational stress especially when expected to work during free time. The police complain of sleep, fatigue, appetite loss and constipation. They also experience family and marital difficulties since the affects work productivity, health and interpersonal relationships. Waters and Ussery (2007) further observed that work schedule changes shifts around so that the burden of working in shift is spread out among officers. Whether the police service changes work shifts weekly or every other week, there are still serious health issues affecting officers. Just when officers start to get used to going to sleep at a certain time, they are forced to readjust to

sleeping at a different time. Changing sleep patterns can add stress to officers' already stressful lives. The changes have both psychological and physical effects on officers. Unlike the average job, law enforcement officers often work for twelve hour shifts in a row. Miller (2007) pointed out that the human body was not designed to constantly stay awake during night time hours. Consequently, adjusting to abnormal work hours interrupts the cycle of sleeping, eating and working. The Police work in 12 hour shifts while the labour law provides for an 8 hour shift. In view of the shortage of man power heavy crime work and uncertain law and order duties, policemen have to work for 16 hours at a stretch.

Shane (2008) conducted studies in America and reported that police officers worked for a 6-day, 8-hr schedule, rotating shifts every 8 days in a counterclockwise direction. This work schedule resulted in a state of cumulative sleep deprivation for most officers that reduces performance and safety. Police officers work during weekly holidays, forgoing their leave and the other gazetted holidays. Police officers working under rotating shifts suffer from sickness, absenteeism, and reduced sleep quality. It may result in fatigue, increased blood pressure and sleep deprivation. Shane (2008) argued that monotony and boredom are inevitable during night shift. Boredom raises and lowers physiological responses creating fatigue. Boredom may also impair judgment and slow down reaction time. With this in mind, the police service should seriously consider providing an optimal work shift plan for the sake of the health and psychological well-being of its personnel.

### **2.2.5 Interpersonal Relationships in the Police Service**

Keinan and Pines (2007) say that working conditions for police officers involve working on shift, working overtime, and working distances away from home. These often create an intense discord that can disrupt the obligations of an officer's home life. Lambert, Hogan, Camp and Ventura (2006) argue that work-family conflict occurs when the work domain and family domain are incompatible with each another. This may contribute to stress. Demorout, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2004) supported that police officers have difficulty in combining work with domestic obligations. Problems may arise from work spilling into the family or from family conflicts intruding in the work place. Shane (2008) observed that peer support, colleagues and supervisors within the police organizations may buffer or aggravate occupational stress. Peer support is especially salient to police officers because of the nature of their work which requires them to put their life in the hands of colleagues during dangerous situation. Occupational stress may occur to police officer who perceives themselves as having a strong peer relation.

Cancino and Enriquez (2004) noted that peer influence is an exceptionally important social force. Shared work experiences allow officers to develop mutual understanding of work stressors that can serve as a protective factor. Peer support provides a defensive function which allows the officer to tolerate high levels of anger, hostility and abuse. Peers frequently become a source of hostility, stress, discrimination, and cynicism. Govender (2008) pointed out that peer bonds within law enforcement lead to extreme secrecy and solidarity among police officers. Furthermore, police officers who report their peers for use of excessive force, violence, or substance abuse may be either marginalized or subjected to retaliation from other police officers.

## **III. Objective Of The Study**

To identify causes of occupational stress in relation to level of occupational stress among police constables in Kisumu County.

## **IV. Hypothesis**

There is no statistically significant relationship between causes of occupational stress and level of occupational stress among police constables in Kisumu County.

## **V. Methodology**

This study adopted an ex-post factor design . Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample 105 police constables and 4 Officers Commanding Station (OCS). The data was collected using a Police Constable Questionnaire and an Officer Commanding Station Interview Schedule. The instruments were validated by experts while reliability was estimated by use of Cronbach Alpha method for internal consistency. The questionnaire yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.88. Quantitative and qualitative data were obtained. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows (Version 20).

## **VI. Findings And Discussions**

The objective of this study was to identify causes of occupational stress in relation to the level of occupational stress among police constables. The data was first computed by adding the scores of 25 items on causes of occupational stress to determine the level of occupational stress. Every level had different scoring criterion that was used to produce a range of total scores. The total score ranged from 7 and 35. Using the total score, the levels of occupational stress were classified into four levels as shown below:

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- From score 33 - 35 indicated Very High level of occupational stress,
- From 25 -32 was High level of occupational stress,
- From 18 - 24 represented moderate of level of occupational stress
- From 7-17 indicated low level of occupational stress

These levels of occupational stress were as shown in Figure 1.

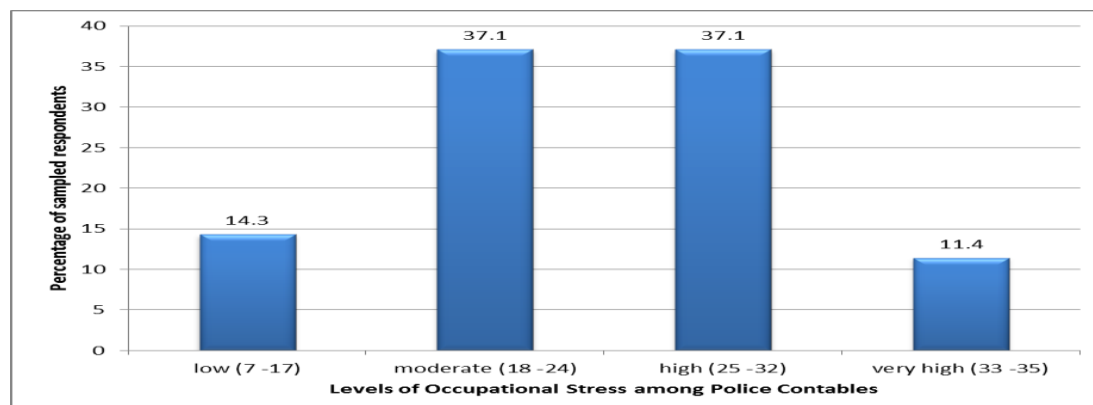


Figure 1: Level of Occupational Stress among Police Constables

The findings revealed that majority (37.1%) of respondents were experiencing moderate to high level of occupational stress. Up to 14.3% of respondent were experiencing low level of occupational stress, while 11.4% of the respondents were experiencing very high level of occupational stress. A Previous study conducted by Deb, Chattererjee, Srivatava (2005) among the West Bengal Police Officers reported 42% and 12% of the West Bengal Police Officers were suffering from moderate to high level of stress respectively. The findings were much higher for moderate and lower for high level of occupational stress. This was also in tandem with a study conducted by Deb, Chakraborty, Srivastava(2008) among West Bengal police officers. Their findings indicated that 79.4% of the traffic constables were experiencing moderate level of occupational stress and 2.9% high level of occupational stress. This was an indication that the police constables were experiencing high to moderate level of stress. The reasons attributed to this finding were that police working conditions were associated with shifts without breaks, having poor interpersonal relationship, following strict bureaucracy and excessive work overload among others. Their nature of work remains unchanged as a result, they may experience moderate to high level of stress (Anitha, 2007). The findings also showed that some police constables were experiencing moderate level of occupational stress.

The selected variables on causes of occupational stress were classified into five areas: work environment, workload, bureaucracy, work schedule and interpersonal relationship. A series of chi square tests were conducted to find out whether there was statistically significant relationship between selected variables on causes of occupational stress and level of occupational stress.

**Table 1: Relationship between Causes of Occupational Stress and Level of Stress**

Causes of Occupation Stress	Level of Occupation Stress $\chi^2$	Critical Value $\chi^2$
<b>Work Environment</b>		
Inadequate Equipments	105.629	24.943
Traumatic Incidence	76.143	24.943
Exposure to Physical Danger	102.657	24.943
Lack of Training	41.333	24.943
Imagination of Killing	49.905	24.943
<b>Workload</b>		
Work Frequent Changes	58.314	24.943
Going to Court	88.667	24.943
Too Much Work	68.571	24.943
Doing Someone Else's Work	76.528	24.943
Excessive Paper Work	49.238	24.943
<b>Bureaucracy</b>		
Rigid, Inappropriate Rules	89.904	24.943
Inconsistent Leadership Style(S)	108.571	24.943
Constant Changes in Policy	97.048	24.943
Procedure to Be Followed	139.714	24.943
Chain Of Command	117.143	24.943
<b>Work Schedule</b>		
Working on Shift	88.095	24.943
Working Overtime	88.667	24.943

Work Disruption	55.524	24.943
Quick Changes Over	88.667	24.943
<b>Interpersonal Relationship</b>		
Poor Relationships with Peers	28.571	24.943
Conflicts with Peers	24.381	24.943
Conforming with Peer Pressure	45.333	24.943
Lack of Enough Time with Family	161.048	24.943
Lack of Support from Friends	73.616	24.943

Chi-Square tests yielded results shown in Table 1. The results revealed that the chi-square values for selected variables on causes of occupational stress were greater than the critical value of 24.943 at three degrees of freedom tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results on Table 12 revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the work environment stressors and the levels of occupational stress. The results showed Chi-Square value for inadequate equipment ( $102.657 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ), exposure to physical danger ( $102.657 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ), traumatic incidents ( $76.143 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ).

The study further established that there was statistically significant relationship between exposure to workload stressors and levels of occupational stress. Chi-Square test yielded going to court ( $\chi^2 = 88.667 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ) and neglecting work ( $\chi^2 = 76.528 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ).

The study established that there was statistically significant relationship between exposure to bureaucracy stressors and levels of occupational stress. The results showed Chi-Square value for Procedure ( $\chi^2 = 139.714 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ), Chain of commands ( $\chi^2 = 117.143 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ), inappropriate rules ( $\chi^2 = 108.571 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ) and Inconsistent leadership style ( $\chi^2 = 97.048 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ).

The study further established that there was statistically significant relationship between exposure to work schedule stressors and levels of occupational stress. The results revealed Chi-Square value for working overtime ( $\chi^2 = 88.667 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ) and working on shift ( $\chi^2 = 88.095 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ).

It was also established from the study that there was a statistically significant relationship between interpersonal relationship and levels of occupational stress. The results showed Chi-Square value for lack of enough time with family ( $\chi^2 = 161.048 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ) and lack of support from friends ( $\chi^2 = 73.616 > 24.943$ ,  $df = 3$ ). The null hypotheses that state that there is no significant relationship between the selected variables on the level of occupational stress among police constables was therefore rejected for selected variables. Based on the results the null hypothesis was rejected and the conclusion made was that there was statistically significant relationship between selected causes and levels of occupational stress. This means that the presence of these causes led to increased levels of occupational stress among police constables.

This implies that work environment, workload, bureaucracy and interpersonal relationship, caused high levels of occupational stress. Melgosa defined stress as a condition of being subject to external forces or pressure and can be either positive or negative (Melgosa, 2004). Police constables attributed cause of occupational stress to inadequate equipment, exposure to unnecessary physical dangers, doing someone else's work, following too many procedures, following chain of command, inconsistent leadership style and lack of support and understanding from family members. This trend was noted to be similar to those studies done by Agolla, (2009); Taylor and Bennell, (2006) who identified the sources of occupational stress for police officers. The first category arise from the nature of the occupation; shift work, role conflict, and constant threat to the officer's safety, alternating periods of boredom and excitement, the responsibility of protecting others, continued exposure to traumatic incidents, the need to keep composed even if provoked and the limited opportunities.

The second category stems from the police service itself. These include administrative actions, policies developed without input from officers, poor equipment, and lack of off duty, poor supervision and lack of support from administrators, lack of recognition, training, career opportunities and excessive paperwork. The third category stems from the criminal justice system and society. This includes Police officers lack of consideration when scheduling court appearance. Levine and Ursin (1991) supported this on their Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress (CATS). They stated that whether a stimulus is pleasant or threatening, it depends on the individual appraisal of the situation from the input level.

## VII. Conclusion

It was concluded that Police constables in Kisumu County experienced high to moderate level of occupational stress. The study concluded that work environment, work load, bureaucracy, work schedule and interpersonal relationship were the causes of occupational stress..

## VIII. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that that police constables were experiencing high to moderate level of occupational stress. In view of this finding it was recommended that all the police training institutions should review their programmes to ensure that they include mandatory basic training in

guidance and counselling. The study established that work environment, work load, bureaucracy, interpersonal relationship was a cause of occupational stress. The study recommends that the government should mobilize resources to facilitate and support policing programs. The government should employ more police constables to reduce work load. The OCS should develop leave schedule for the entire officers under them..

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