

Examining the Effectiveness of Coping Strategies in Stress Management in Organization: A Case Study of the Judiciary of Zambia, Lusaka

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of coping strategies in managing workplace stress within the Judiciary of Zambia, Lusaka. Occupational stress is a pervasive issue in judicial institutions, stemming from factors such as heavy caseloads, limited human resources, administrative complexities, and the high expectations associated with delivering justice promptly. Prolonged exposure to such pressures can lead to burnout, reduced productivity, and diminished job satisfaction, ultimately affecting the efficiency of the judicial process. Adopting a case study design, data were collected from a purposive sample of judicial officers and administrative staff through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The analysis focused on identifying the coping mechanisms in place, assessing their perceived effectiveness, and exploring the challenges in their implementation. The study found that the Judiciary employs a combination of problem-focused strategies such as improved time management, workload redistribution, and continuous professional training and emotion-focused strategies, including peer support networks, counselling services, and wellness activities. These strategies have shown varying degrees of success in mitigating stress, improving morale, and enhancing overall organisational performance. However, the research also highlights significant barriers to effectiveness. These include inadequate funding for wellness programs, limited access to counselling services, inconsistent application of stress management policies, and a lack of awareness among staff about available resources. The findings suggest that while current coping strategies are valuable, their impact is limited by systemic and resource-related constraints. The study concludes that for stress management initiatives to be truly effective, the Judiciary of Zambia should adopt a more comprehensive, institutionalized framework that integrates policy, resource allocation, and continuous capacity building. Such an approach would not only safeguard employee well-being but also strengthen organizational efficiency and service delivery.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Occupational stress was increasingly recognized as a major challenge affecting employee health, productivity, and overall organizational performance. Employees in high-pressure environments such as the judiciary were especially vulnerable due to the demanding nature of legal work, strict deadlines, public scrutiny, and heavy caseloads (Mwansa, 2021). In Zambia, particularly in Lusaka, the judiciary faced additional stressors, including limited human resources, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and underfunding, which further strained the capacity of judicial officers and administrative staff (Makupo, 2022).

To manage stress, employees typically adopted coping strategies that were either problem-focused aimed at addressing the source of the stress or emotion-focused designed to alleviate emotional distress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Chitondo, 2020). These strategies were influenced by individual resilience, organizational support systems, and work environment dynamics. Evidence suggested that when coping mechanisms were well-structured and supported institutionally, employees demonstrated better psychological outcomes and work efficiency (Phiri & Banda, 2021).

In Zambia, various sectors reported high levels of occupational stress. For instance, a study conducted among undergraduate students at the University of Zambia showed that most respondents experienced moderate to high stress, with common coping mechanisms including attending religious services, exercising, and leisure activities (Zimba & Manda, 2022). Similarly, research on newly qualified teachers in Zambia revealed that many educators experienced burnout and stress due to unrealistic expectations and resource challenges, leading them to rely on informal peer support and recreational outlets for stress relief (Kalumba, 2020).

Despite the crucial role played by the judiciary, there was a notable lack of empirical studies focused on stress and coping strategies within this sector in Zambia. This research gap undermined the development of effective mental health and productivity interventions tailored to judicial institutions. A better understanding of the stressors faced by judiciary staff in Lusaka and the coping mechanisms they employed helped inform more strategic support programs (Ng'andu, 2019).

This study therefore examined the effectiveness of coping strategies employed by staff within the Judiciary in Lusaka. It assessed which strategies contributed meaningfully to reducing stress and enhancing well-being and job performance, and recommended organizational-level interventions based on these findings (Makupo, 2022).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Occupational stress is a growing concern in many professional sectors, especially within public service institutions like the judiciary. Employees in the judiciary were frequently exposed to high workloads, emotionally demanding cases, limited resources, and administrative inefficiencies, all of which contributed to heightened stress levels (Mwansa, 2021). Despite the presence of various coping strategies, the effectiveness of these mechanisms within Zambia’s judiciary particularly in Lusaka remained largely undocumented and under-researched (Makupo, 2022). While coping strategies such as seeking social support, engaging in recreational activities, or practicing religious faith were commonly used, there was insufficient empirical evidence on whether these strategies effectively reduced work-related stress and enhanced performance and well-being among judiciary staff (Chitondo, 2020). This lack of data impaired the development of targeted organizational interventions and mental health support programs tailored to the needs of the judicial workforce (Phiri & Banda, 2021). The absence of institutional support systems, such as counseling services and employee wellness programs, exacerbated the challenge, as employees were often left to manage stress individually without structured guidance or organizational backing (Ng’andu, 2019). If left unaddressed, persistent occupational stress led to decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, poor decision-making, and ultimately, a decline in the quality of justice delivered (Kalumba, 2020). Therefore, there was a critical need to examine the coping strategies that were employed by employees in the Judiciary of Lusaka and to assess their effectiveness in managing stress. Doing so provided essential insights into the psychological well-being of judiciary staff and informed policy-makers and administrators on how to improve support systems in this crucial public sector (Zimba & Manda, 2022).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study examined the effectiveness of coping strategies employed by employees within the Judiciary in Lusaka for managing occupational stress, with the aim of providing evidence-based recommendations to enhance employee well-being and organizational performance.

1.4 Specific objectives of the study

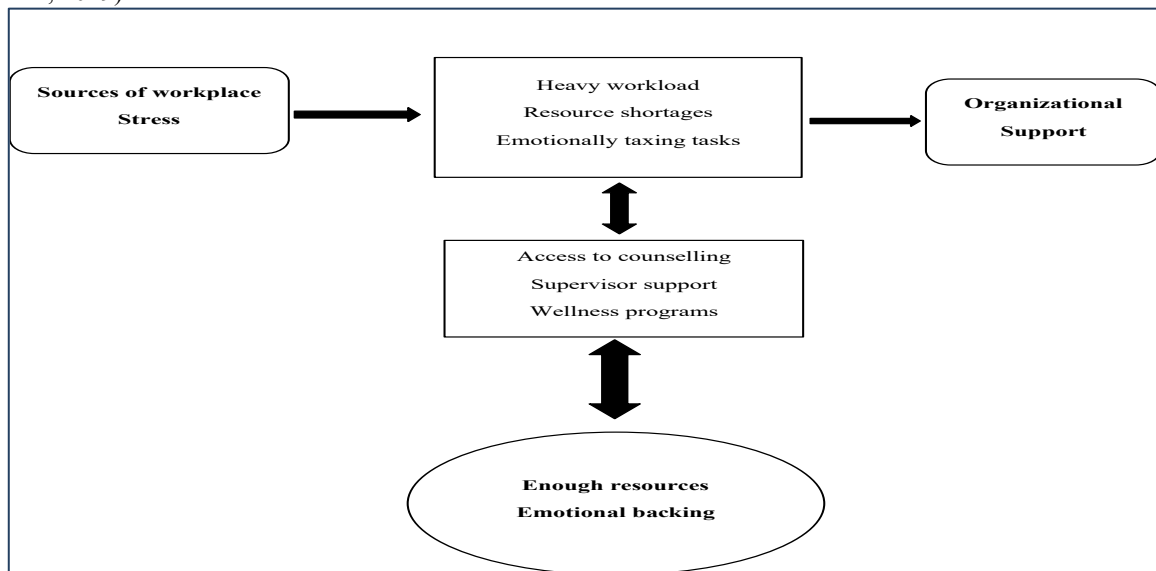
- To identify the most common sources of workplace stress among employees in the Judiciary in Lusaka.
- To investigate the effects of organizational support among Judiciary staff on employee mental health
- To determine the relationship workplace in stress management and performance

1.5 Research Questions

- What are the most common sources of workplace stress experienced by employees in the Judiciary in Lusaka?
- How does organizational support affect the mental health of Judiciary staff?
- What coping mechanisms do employees in the Judiciary use to manage workplace stress.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was grounded on the premise that workplace stress experienced by employees in the Judiciary in Lusaka was influenced by multiple factors, primarily the sources of stress and the level of organizational support available. Sources of workplace stress, such as heavy workload, resource shortages, and emotionally taxing tasks, were widely recognized as significant contributors to employee psychological strain (Mwansa, 2021; Makupo, 2022). At the same time, organizational support, including access to counseling, supervisor support, and wellness programs, played a critical role in moderating the impact of these stressors by providing employees with necessary resources and emotional backing (Phiri & Banda, 2021; Ng’andu, 2019).



2. Literature Review

2.1 Sources of Workplace Stress Among Employees in the Judiciary in Lusaka.

Workplace stress is defined as the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when job demands do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker (World Health Organization, 2020). It arises when employees perceive an imbalance between what is expected of them and the support or capacity available to meet those expectations. This mismatch often leads to a variety of negative outcomes, including decreased job satisfaction, mental health issues, and lower organizational performance.

Over the past several years, research has identified persistent and emerging sources of stress within the workplace. One of the most cited causes is work overload situations where employees face excessive workloads and unrealistic deadlines. Yildirim and Cicek (2021) found that employees under constant pressure to meet high performance standards without sufficient time or resources are more likely to experience burnout and emotional exhaustion.

Another major source of stress is role ambiguity and role conflict. These occur when employees are unclear about their job responsibilities or receive contradictory instructions from different supervisors. Toscano and Zappalà (2020) reported that ambiguity in job expectations significantly contributes to anxiety, decreased motivation, and disengagement, especially in hierarchical or bureaucratic work environments.

Interpersonal relationships at work play a critical role in employee stress. Poor communication, lack of recognition, and conflicts with colleagues or supervisors are known to damage workplace morale. Lee and Ashforth (2021) emphasized that low levels of social support and trust within teams are associated with increased psychological strain and job dissatisfaction.

Job insecurity and organizational change such as layoffs, restructuring, or shifting job roles are increasingly common stressors in modern workplaces. A study by Green et al. (2022) found that uncertainty about the future of one's role or employment status can lead to chronic stress, especially in organizations that lack transparent communication during times of change. The most common sources of workplace stress are multifaceted, spanning from individual workload and role clarity to broader organizational practices and evolving work arrangements. As the nature of work continues to evolve, especially in the post-pandemic era, it is essential for organizations to identify these stressors early and implement strategies to reduce their impact on employee well-being.

On a Global perspectives Workplace stress is not limited to a particular region or industry—it is a global phenomenon-affecting workers across both developed and developing economies. However, the sources and intensity of stress vary depending on socioeconomic conditions, labor policies, cultural norms, and technological advancement. In developed countries, stress is often driven by high job demands, constant connectivity, and performance pressures in fast-paced, competitive environments. For instance, in the United States and much of Western Europe, employees frequently report stress due to long working hours, digital overload, and job insecurity in rapidly evolving industries (American Psychological Association, 2021). The widespread adoption of remote and hybrid work in countries like the U.S., Canada, and the UK has also introduced unique stressors such as isolation, lack of work-life balance, and blurred boundaries (Kniffin, 2021).

2.2 Effects of Organizational Support by Judiciary staff on Employee Mental Health.

Organizational support is broadly defined as the degree to which employees believe their organization values their contributions and cares about their psychological and emotional well-being. Across different countries and industries, the link between organizational support and employee mental health has become a critical focus of occupational health research, especially in light of global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic instability, and the rise of remote work.

From a global standpoint, the importance of supportive organizational practices is well-documented. In the United States, Ahmed Musa (2022) examined post-pandemic stress levels in healthcare workers and found that when management actively provided emotional support and access to mental health services, burnout and anxiety were significantly lower. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, Rachel Smith and Jackson Tambo (2021) found that flexible work policies implemented during the pandemic led to improved mental well-being among tech industry employees. They concluded that autonomy and control over one's schedule are critical forms of non-monetary support in modern workplaces.

In Asia, particularly India and China, rising workplace stress due to long hours and job insecurity has brought organizational support into sharper focus. Meena Rajagopal (2023) observed that although many Indian companies introduced employee wellness programs, uptake remained low due to stigma and fear of professional consequences. Meanwhile, Li Wei (2021) found that in Chinese manufacturing firms, employees with high levels of perceived supervisor support reported better sleep quality and lower rates of depression.

In Africa, research highlights the cultural dimension of organizational support. Lerato Kente and Thabo Makamu (2021), working in South Africa, emphasized the role of culturally sensitive leadership. Their study found that employees responded positively to leaders who not only offered formal support systems, such as EAPs, but also engaged in informal, culturally respectful communication. Similarly, in Nigeria, Chukwuemeka Onoh (2023) noted that the presence of supportive religious or community-based practices within the workplace reinforced employees' trust in their organization, contributing to mental resilience.

International bodies have also weighed in on the matter. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023) stated in its report that while global awareness of workplace mental health has increased, there remains a gap between policy and practice especially in low- and middle-income countries where organizational support structures are either underfunded or poorly implemented. Furthermore, the World Health Organization (2022) emphasized that stigma, lack of confidentiality, and inconsistent leadership buy-in continue to prevent employees from accessing available support services.

2.3 Coping Mechanisms Employed by Employees to Manage among Judiciary employees.

Workplace stress is a significant concern globally, and employees adopt various coping mechanisms to manage stress. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the strategies used to cope with workplace stress are influenced by socio-cultural and economic factors, as well as

the unique challenges faced in the work environment. Studies show that employees in this region employ a mix of problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies, reflecting both individual and organizational coping approaches.

2.3.1 Coping Mechanisms in the Sub-Saharan African Context

Workplace stress in Sub-Saharan Africa is a common issue due to challenges such as poor working conditions, long hours, low wages, job insecurity, and limited organizational support (Mulenga, 2022). According to Kente and Makamu (2021), employees often experience stress from financial instability, workplace discrimination, lack of career advancement, and high workloads, all of which can impact their mental and emotional well-being.

Coping strategies are categorized into two broad types: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. While problem-focused coping involves efforts to change or manage the stressful situation, emotion-focused coping aims to reduce emotional distress caused by the situation (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Both strategies play a crucial role in managing workplace stress, but their effectiveness can vary depending on the work environment and available resources.

2.3.2 Problem-Focused Coping Mechanisms

Problem-focused coping mechanisms aim to address the source of stress directly. These strategies are more effective when employees have some control over the stressful situation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, common problem-focused strategies include seeking social support, time management, task delegation, and organizational interventions.

Seeking Social Support: In many African countries, employees rely heavily on family and peer support to manage work-related stress. This support is often informal, involving discussions with colleagues, friends, and family members about workplace challenges. Coker and Ighodaro (2020) found that employees in Nigeria frequently turn to colleagues and friends for advice or simply to share their emotional burdens. This support network provides both emotional relief and practical advice on how to deal with workplace issues.

Time Management: Many employees, especially in healthcare and education sectors, use time management techniques to manage heavy workloads. This involves prioritizing tasks, breaking down complex projects into manageable components, and setting clear goals to ensure tasks are completed efficiently (Kente, 2021).

Task Delegation: Delegating tasks to colleagues or team members is another common coping mechanism, particularly in team-based environments. Employees in organizations with a strong team culture often share the workload, which helps reduce stress. Onoh (2023) notes that task delegation is particularly prevalent in public sector organizations, where employees may face a heavy administrative burden.

Organizational Interventions: Many employees also seek structural support from the organization, such as requesting additional resources, training programs, or changes in work schedules to alleviate stress. For example, leadership training and mentorship programs are commonly used to empower employees to cope with job demands more effectively (Makamu & Kente, 2021).

2.3.3 Emotion-Focused Coping Mechanisms

Emotion-focused coping mechanisms focus on managing the emotional distress caused by stress, rather than attempting to change the stressful situation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, these strategies often involve religion, physical activities, and psychological distancing.

Religious Coping: Spirituality and religion are key components of coping in Sub-Saharan Africa. Njeri (2021) found that in countries like Kenya and Nigeria, employees frequently rely on prayer, religious rituals, and church activities as a way to manage stress. Religion provides emotional comfort, a sense of community, and a way of framing stress as part of a larger spiritual journey, which helps individuals regain emotional stability.

Physical Activities and Exercise: Physical activities such as exercise, sports, and recreational activities are also common coping strategies. According to Mulenga (2022), employees in Zambia and Uganda use physical activities as a way to relieve stress. Participating in team sports or individual exercise routines allows employees to release built-up tension, improve mood, and enhance their physical and mental well-being. In addition, workplaces that encourage team-building exercises or provide access to fitness programs contribute to stress reduction (Onoh, 2023).

Psychological Distancing and Disengagement: Employees in high-stress environments often adopt disengagement strategies to cope with emotional stress. This involves psychologically distancing oneself from the problem by either mentally checking out or "shutting down" after a stressful day. Although this strategy may provide short-term relief, it may lead to burnout if used consistently. In the healthcare sector, where employees face emotionally draining situations daily, disengagement can serve as a defense mechanism to protect oneself from burnout (Kente & Makamu, 2021).

Social Support Networks: While social support is also a problem-focused coping mechanism, it can also serve as an emotion-focused strategy. In community-based settings, employees rely on close-knit social networks for emotional support. These networks are crucial in the face of cultural stigmas surrounding mental health, where discussing stress openly with colleagues may not always be encouraged.

2.4 Personal critique on Literature reviewed

Stress in the workplace is an inevitable phenomenon, particularly in organizations such as the judiciary, where employees encounter high workloads, complex cases, tight deadlines, and public pressure. Coping mechanisms are therefore essential strategies that employees adopt to manage, reduce, or adapt to stressors in order to maintain both psychological well-being and professional performance. The coping mechanisms employed by judiciary employees vary across individuals and contexts, but they generally fall under problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidance strategies. Understanding how these mechanisms

function is important in enhancing employee resilience, sustaining productivity, and promoting a supportive organizational climate within the judiciary system.

2.5 Research Gap

Alongside problem-focused strategies, judiciary employees also adopt emotion-focused coping mechanisms. These mechanisms involve efforts to regulate emotional responses to stress rather than directly tackling the stressors. For example, many employees engage in relaxation techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, or short breaks during demanding court sessions. Others turn to social support systems, sharing their frustrations with trusted colleagues, friends, or family members. Emotional expression through conversations allows employees to release pent-up tension and gain reassurance.

3. Methods and Procedures

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive case study design to explore the effectiveness of coping strategies in stress management among employees of the Judiciary in Lusaka. A descriptive design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to systematically describe the characteristics, patterns, and relationships of workplace stress, coping mechanisms, and organizational support within the specific context of the Judiciary (Makupo, 2022). The case study approach, in particular, enabled an in-depth examination of real-life situations and experiences of Judiciary employees, offering a comprehensive understanding of how stress was managed in this institutional setting (Zimba & Manda, 2022).

The study was conducted within the Judiciary system in Lusaka District, Zambia. It included selected courts and administrative offices that represented a cross-section of Judiciary staff, both judicial and non-judicial.

3.2 Target population

The target population for this study consisted of employees working within the Judiciary in Lusaka District. This included judicial staff as well as supporting administrative personnel. These individuals represented a diverse group exposed to varying levels and sources of occupational stress due to the nature of their responsibilities, workload, and organizational hierarchy (Makupo, 2022).

3.3 Sampling technique

This study employed a stratified random sampling technique to ensure that the sample adequately represented the different categories of employees within the Judiciary in Lusaka. This stratification ensured that the perspectives and experiences of both judicial and non-judicial staff were proportionally represented in the study (Phiri & Banda, 2021).

The sample size for this study was 37 participants and was determined using Yamane's formula (1967), which is suitable for calculating a sample size from a finite population. The formula was stated as:

$$n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$$

Where:

n = the required sample size

N = the total population size

e = the margin of error (commonly set at 0.05 for a 95% confidence level)

The total number of Judiciary employees in Lusaka District was obtained from official human resource records prior to data collection. Once the population size (N) was established, the formula was applied to calculate an appropriate and statistically valid sample size. An additional 10% of the calculated sample was added to account for non-response or incomplete responses, as is commonly recommended in field research (Phiri & Banda, 2021; Ng'andu, 2019).

3.5 Techniques for data collection

Data for this study were collected using a combination of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Structured questionnaires were distributed to Judiciary staff in Lusaka to gather quantitative data on sources of stress, coping strategies, and organizational support. To complement this, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected employees to obtain deeper qualitative insights into personal experiences with stress and coping. Additionally, relevant institutional documents, such as wellness policies and human resource manuals, were reviewed to assess the presence of formal support structures. This mixed-methods approach allowed for triangulation of data, thereby enhancing the validity and depth of the study's findings (Makupo, 2022; Phiri & Banda, 2021; Chitondo, 2020).

3.6 Human Instrument

Uniquely different from non-human instruments, a human instrument is capable of adapting to the various contexts encountered in the study, to interpret and evaluate the interactions. The human factor is indispensable in qualitative research because contextual inquiry demands a human instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 2019, p. 187). Therefore the human instruments that will be used in the study is the researcher herself and 1 research assistant.

3.7 Procedure of data collection

Data is one of the most important and vital aspect of any research and data is a basic unit in statistical studies. Therefore data for this study will be collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data is data that will be collected by the researcher particularly for the purpose of this study and will be essential to the study as the researcher tries to answer the problem for which the study was initiated. For this reason, primary data will be customized according to the requirements of the researcher and will be collected directly by the person who will analyze the data. Primary data will be important in this study because primary data is more accurate since it will be directly collected from the population and by using primary data the researcher will be able to get latest

and up to date information about the topic under study and the information might be unbiased since it collected and process by a researcher,

On the other hand, secondary data relates to information that will be collected by others for their own purposes, but is found to be useful in linking up the study. Such data is cheaper and more quickly available when primary data cannot be obtained. Secondary data is also Cost saving, helps to improve the understanding of the problem and it provides a basis for comparison for the data that will be collected by the researcher.

3.13 Document review

This involved collection, studying and analysis of existing written (submitted and un-submitted) material. Documents to be reviewed will include official institutional reports (agency reports, statistics and figures); published books on accountability and public sector management; as well as data displayed in the software. Document review is an unobtrusive (non-reactive) method that will allow collection of information without any direct interaction with individuals/respondents. In this case, certain types of errors such bias, emotions and attitude will be avoided. It will also enable the researcher to be independent of the organization under investigation, and reduces reliance on the memory of individuals (common with questionnaire and interview), which can at Costs lead to inaccurate information. However, the document review method is associated with problems of retrieval, display of author subjectivity and limitations on accessibility, which may lead to incomplete information and portrayal of the wrong picture.

3.14 Data analysis techniques

After gathering data, there is need to process the data before it is analyzed. This involved data 3organization in line with the above themes set to capture the research's specific objectives. Data organization in this study will involve 4 stages as follows:

3.15 Pre-processing

The primary purpose of pre-processing was to correct problems identified in the raw data such as elimination of unusable data, interpretation of ambiguous answers and contradictory data from related questions.

3.16 Development of coding schemes

After correcting the errors that may influence data analysis, the researcher will formulate a coding system. The core function of the coding will be to create codes and scales from responses which will then be summarized and analyzed in various ways. The coding will also help in addressing challenges of missing data in that the missing data will be given its own code hence making analysis easy.

3.17 Deciding on data storage

After coding the data, the researcher wade a decision about the short and long term storage of the data gathered bearing in mind that this will determine the form of analysis to be used and how easy it will be to transfer the data into systems for more complicated analysis. In this study, both electronic and non-electronic (paper) forms will be used. The coded data will be written on paper before analysis due to the following advantage: paper has low cost, allows speedy retrieval and easy to distribute despite it having the challenge of being bulk and non-extensible. On the other hand, the use of electronic storage will make help in overcoming this challenge since it will make the data extensible and low volume.

3.18 Choosing a statistical software package

After storing the data, the next step was deciding on the statistical software package relevant in data analysis. The software's that will be used in the study are word processor (micro soft word), spreadsheet, data base, statistical systems (SPSS) and graphical systems. This will allow versatile analysis and interpretation of data

3.19 Data analysis

After organizing the data, the researcher finally conducted data. The researcher executed two types of data analysis, one during the data collection process at the research site and one following the completion of data collection. Data analysis will involve examining what will be collected and making deductions and inferences. It will also involve uncovering underlying structure, extracting important variables, detecting any anomalies and testing any underlying assumptions, it further goes to involve scrutinizing the acquired data and making inferences to address the initial objectives or propositions of the study.

Therefore, the data obtained from secondary sources was evaluated against and compared with the data gathered from primary sources in order to support the balance of evidence and interpretations that will be made in the thesis. The analysis of secondary sources will begin before and during the interview process. The preliminary review and analysis of documents will enable the researcher to identify the key thematic issues; and later during the interviews, will help in redesigning the questions in order to capture the analytical constructs. The secondary sources will provide some elements of quantitative data in the form of statistical tables, charts and graphs, which will enrich the analysis and help to describe, translate and provide meaning to issues captured from the interview.

4. Presentation of Findings

4.1 Gender

The study sought to find out the gender of those who participated in the study. Figure 4.1.1 shows the recorded responses from 37 participants, of which 21 (57%) were male and 16 (43%) were female. This distribution shows a fair gender representation within the Judiciary workforce. The slightly higher number of male respondents may reflect the existing gender structure within the organization.

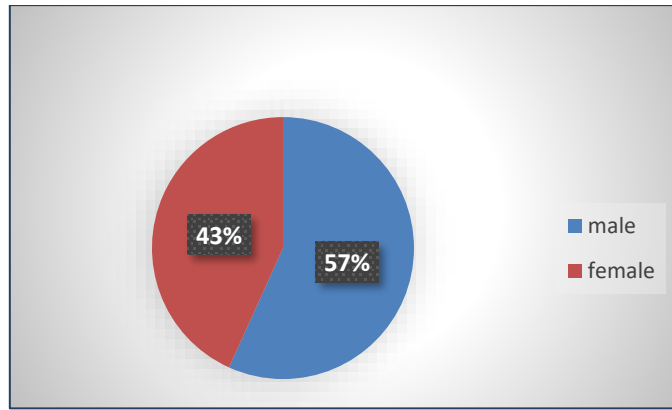


Fig 4.1 Gender

4.2 Age

The researcher sought to find out the age groups of the participants who took part in the survey. Figure 4.1.2 show that the majority of respondents (15, representing 41%) were between the ages of 40 and 60. This was followed by 12 respondents (32%) aged between 25 and 30, while 10 respondents (27%) were in the 30 to 40 age group. The results suggest that the Judiciary workforce in Lusaka is composed of a significant number of middle-aged employees, many of whom are likely to have substantial work experience.

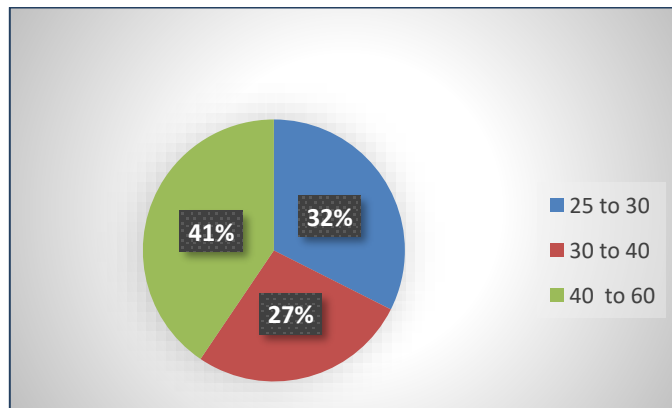


Fig 4.2 Age

4.3 Qualifications and level of education

The researcher sought to find out the qualifications and level of education of those who took part in the survey. Figure 4.1.3 reveal that the majority of respondents (16, representing 43%) had attained a degree qualification. This was followed by 9 respondents (24%) who held a diploma, 7 respondents (19%) with a certificate, and 5 respondents (14%) who had completed secondary education. The results suggest that most employees in the Judiciary of Zambia, Lusaka, are well-educated, with a considerable proportion possessing higher academic qualifications.

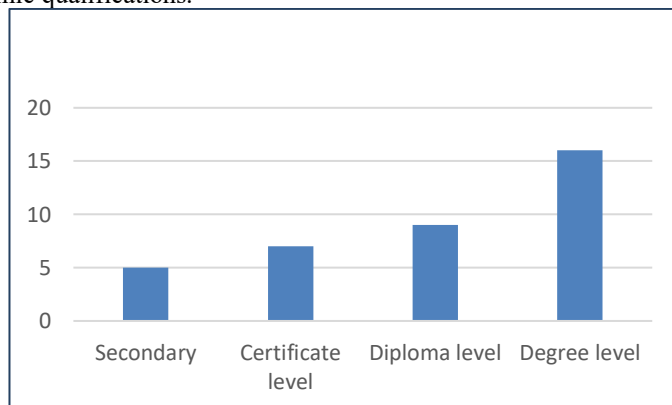


Fig 4.3 Qualifications and level of education

4.4 Position Occupied

The researcher sought to find out position occupied for those who took part in the study. Figure 4.1.4 indicate that the largest group of respondents were registry clerks, accounting for 9 (24%) of the participants. This was followed by office assistants with 7 (19%), employees in the Human Resource department with 6 (16%), and secretaries with 3 (8%). Security officers also represented 3 respondents (8%), while other roles such as painter, marshal, magistrate, bricklayer, and auto-mechanic each accounted for 1 respondent (3%) respectively.

The findings highlight that the sample was largely composed of administrative and support staff, with fewer professional and technical officers represented.

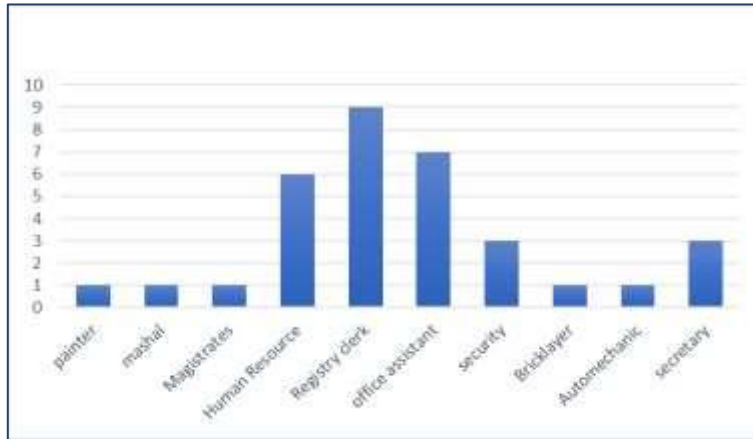


Fig 4.1.4 Work experience

4.5 Length of Service in the Judiciary

The researcher sought to find out length of service. Figure 4.1.5 show that the majority of respondents (16, representing 43%) had been working in the Judiciary for between 5 and 10 years. This was followed by 15 respondents (41%) who had served between 1 and 5 years. Only 3 respondents (8%) had worked between 10 and 15 years, while 2 respondents (5%) had less than 1 year of service, and just 1 respondent (3%) had served for more than 15 years. The findings suggest that most of the workforce in the Judiciary of Lusaka is relatively experienced, with a significant proportion having between 1 and 10 years of service.

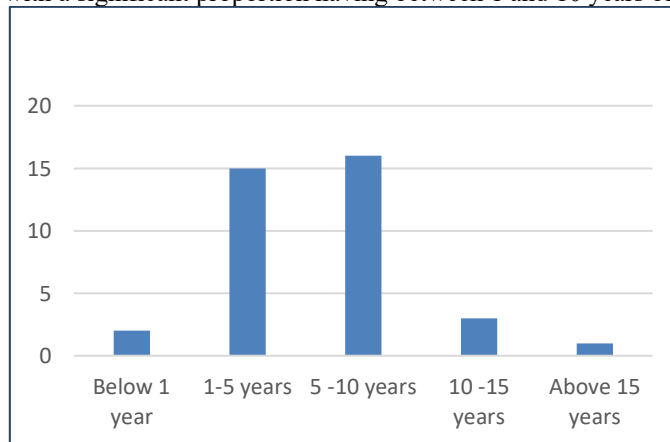


Fig 4.1.5 Length of Service in the Judiciary

4.6 Information on Work-Related Stress

Figure 4.2.1 reveals that the majority of respondents (20 out of 37, representing 54%) reported experiencing stress due to long working hours, making it the leading cause of workload-related stress in the Judiciary. This is followed by case backlog and complexity of cases, each reported by 5 respondents (14%), while paperwork and documentation was identified by 3 respondents (8%). High caseload per officer and inadequate staffing were the least cited causes, with 2 respondents (5%) each. These findings indicate that long working hours are the primary stressor among Judiciary employees, highlighting the impact of extended working periods on employee well-being.

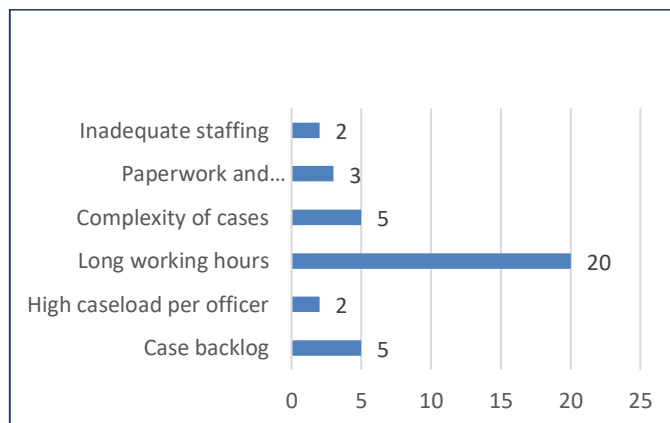


Fig 4.2.1 Employees Stressed Due to Judicial Workload

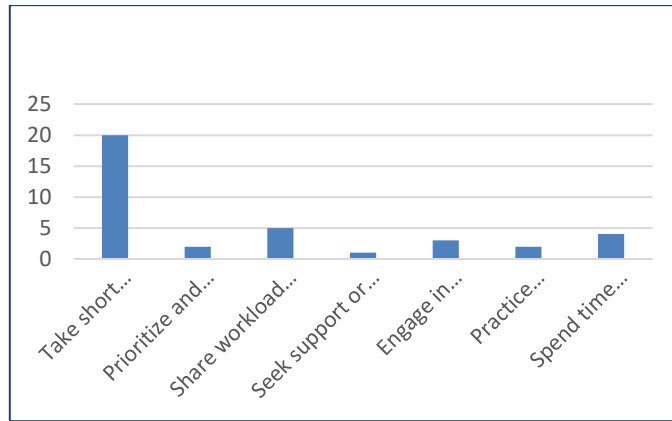


Fig 4.2.2 Coping Strategies Used to Manage or Reduce Stress

Figure 4.2.2 shows that the majority of respondents (20 out of 37, representing 54%) cope with stress by taking short breaks or resting, making it the most commonly used stress management strategy. Sharing workload with colleagues was reported by 5 respondents (14%), while spending time with family or friends was mentioned by 4 respondents (11%). Engaging in physical exercise was selected by 3 respondents (8%), and both prioritizing and planning work and practicing relaxation or meditation were reported by 2 respondents (5%) each. Seeking support or counselling was the least utilized strategy, with only 1 respondent (3%) indicating its use.

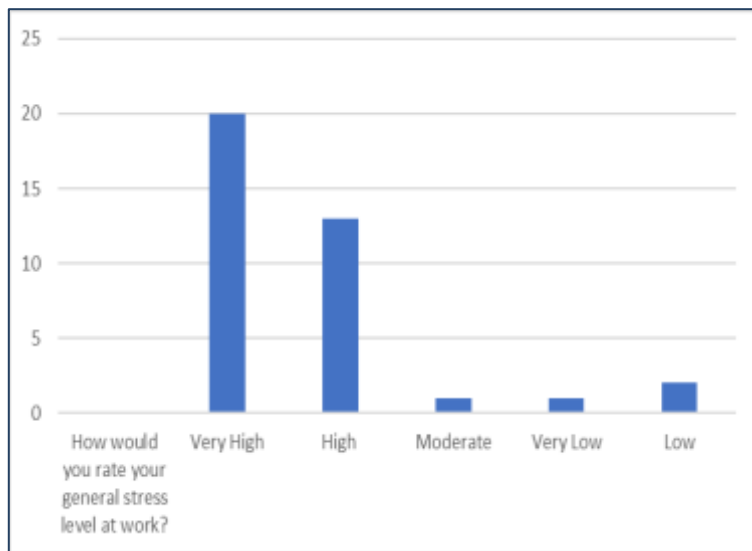


Fig 4.2.3 General Stress Level at Work.

Figure 4.2.3 indicate that a significant proportion of respondents (20, representing 54%) rated their stress level at work as very high, while 13 respondents (35%) described it as high. Only 1 respondent (3%) rated their stress level as moderate, another 1 respondent (3%) as very low, and 2 respondents (5%) as low. These findings suggest that the Judiciary work environment in Lusaka is largely associated with elevated stress levels, with almost nine out of ten employees reporting either high or very high stress.

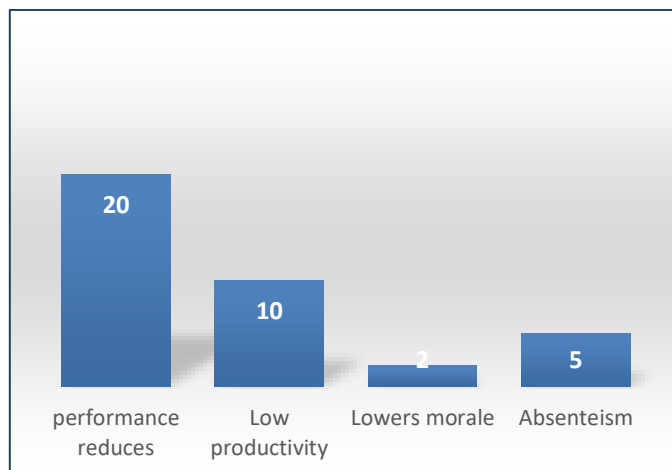


Fig 4.2.4 Opinions on How Stress Affects Job Performance

The results in Figure 4.2.4 reveal that the majority of respondents (20, representing 54%) indicated that stress reduces their performance. This was followed by 10 respondents (27%) who stated that stress leads to low productivity, 5 respondents (14%) who associated stress with absenteeism, and 2 respondents (5%) who believed that stress lowers morale. The findings demonstrate that stress has a predominantly negative effect on employees' job performance in the Judiciary of Lusaka.

4.6 Examining the Effectiveness of Coping Strategies in the Workplace

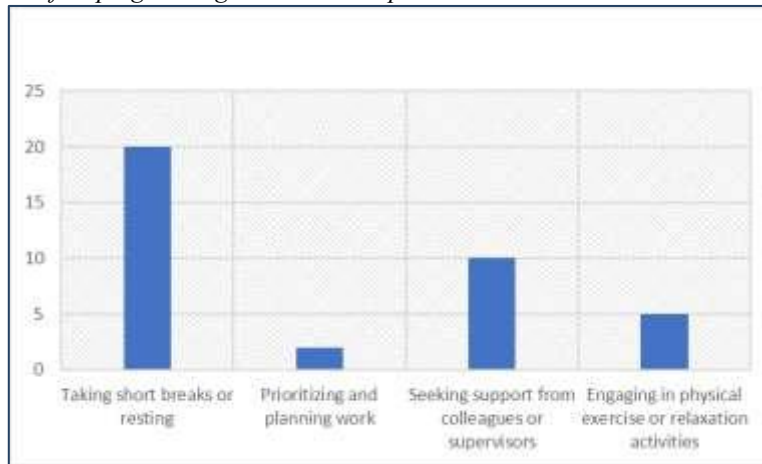


Fig 4.3.1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Views on the Effectiveness of Coping Strategies

Figure 4.3.1 reveals that the majority of respondents (20 out of 37, representing 54%) reported taking short breaks or resting as their primary method of managing stress in the workplace. Seeking support from colleagues or supervisors was the second most common strategy, indicated by 10 respondents (27%), while engaging in physical exercise or relaxation activities was used by 5 respondents (14%). Prioritizing and planning work was the least employed strategy, reported by only 2 respondents (5%). These findings suggest that Judiciary employees in Lusaka favor immediate and practical coping strategies, such as resting and seeking peer support, over more structured approaches like planning or exercise.

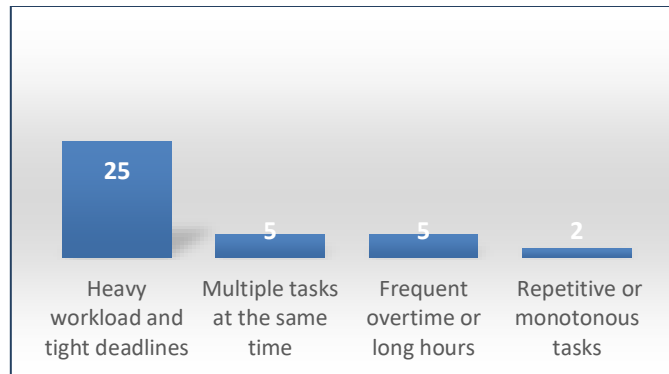


Fig 4.3.2 Whether Workload Contributes Significantly to Stress Levels

Figure 4.3.2 shows that the majority of respondents (25 out of 37, representing 68%) indicated that heavy workload and tight deadlines contribute most significantly to their stress levels. Multiple tasks at the same time and frequent overtime or long working hours were each reported by 5 respondents (14%), while repetitive or monotonous tasks were the least cited, with 2 respondents (5%). These findings indicate that high workload intensity, especially tight deadlines, is the predominant source of stress among Judiciary employees in Lusaka.

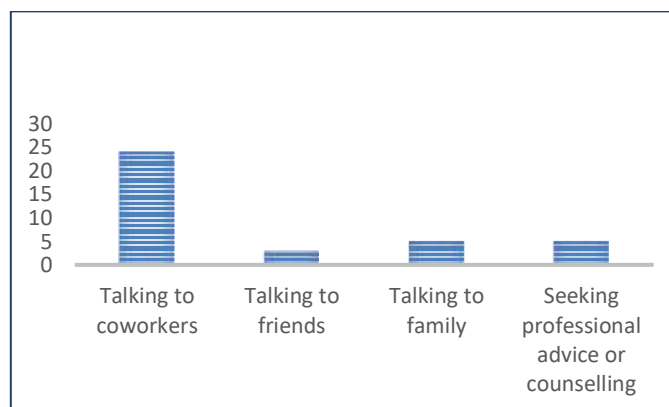


Fig 4.3.3 Social Support to Cope with Stress

Figure 4.3.3 reveals that the majority of respondents (24 out of 37, representing 65%) cope with stress by talking to coworkers, making it the most commonly used social support strategy. Talking to family and seeking professional advice or counselling were each reported by 5 respondents (14%), while talking to friends was mentioned by 3 respondents (8%). These findings suggest that Judiciary employees in Lusaka primarily rely on immediate workplace support from colleagues to manage stress, while external or professional support mechanisms are less frequently utilized.

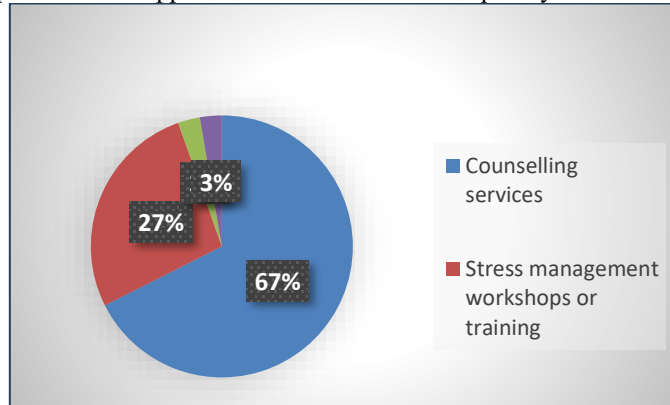


Fig 4.3.4 Effectiveness of Stress Management Support Provided by the Judiciary

Figure 4.3.4 reveals that the majority of respondents (25 out of 37, representing 68%) reported using or finding counselling services helpful as a form of stress management support provided by the Judiciary. Stress management workshops or training were cited by 10 respondents (27%), while peer support or mentoring programs and flexible work arrangements were the least utilized, each mentioned by only 1 respondent (3%). These findings indicate that formal support mechanisms, particularly counselling services, are the most valued and utilized by Judiciary employees in Lusaka.

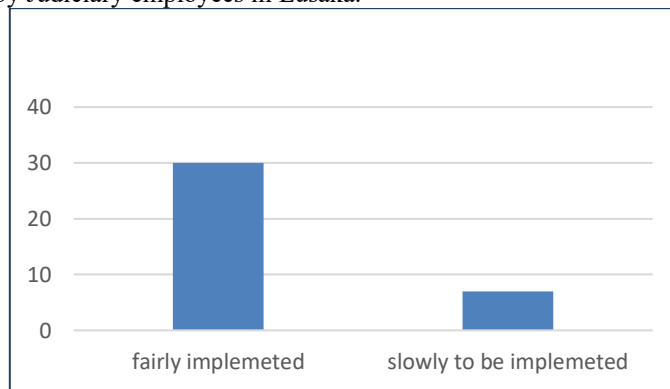


Fig 4.3.5 Reasons for Ineffectiveness of Judiciary Stress Management Support

Figure 4.3.5 indicate that the majority of respondents (30, representing 77%) felt that the stress management support provided by the Judiciary is fairly implemented, while 7 respondents (18%) reported that it is implemented slowly. These findings suggest that the ineffectiveness of stress management support in the Judiciary is largely due to incomplete or inconsistent implementation of policies and programs.

4.7 Organizational Support in Stress Management

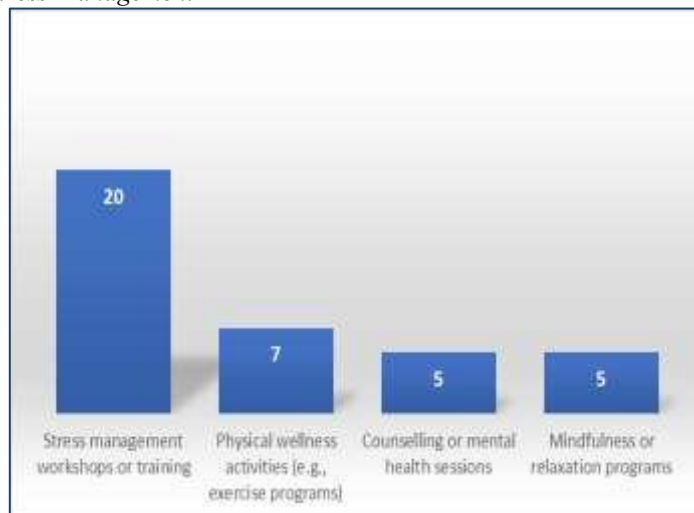


Fig 4.4.1 Percentage Distribution of Respondents Who Have Attended Stress Management or Wellness Sessions

Figure 4.4.1 reveals that the majority of respondents (20 out of 37, representing 54%) reported attending stress management workshops or training, making it the most commonly participated session. Physical wellness activities, such as exercise programs, were attended by 7 respondents (19%), while counselling or mental health sessions and mindfulness or relaxation programs were each reported by 5 respondents (14%). These findings indicate that Judiciary employees in Lusaka primarily engage in structured workshops to manage stress, while other wellness programs are less frequently utilized.

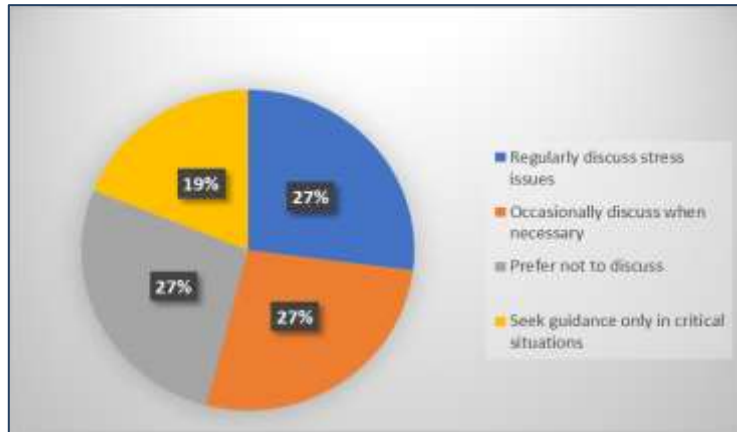


Fig 4.4.2 Comfort in Discussing Stress-Related Concerns with Supervisors

Figure 4.4.2 reveals that respondents were fairly evenly distributed in how they engage with supervisors regarding stress. 10 respondents (27%) reported regularly discussing stress issues, another 10 respondents (27%) occasionally discuss when necessary, and a similar 10 respondents (27%) prefer not to discuss stress concerns with their supervisors. 7 respondents (19%) seek guidance only in critical situations.

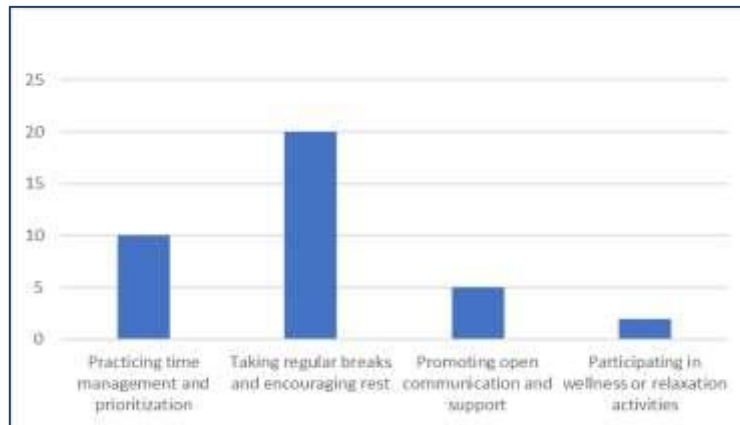


Fig 4.4.3 Supervisors and Managers Modeling Healthy Stress Management Behaviors

Figure 4.4.3 shows that the majority of respondents (20 out of 37, representing 54%) reported that supervisors and managers demonstrate healthy stress management behaviors by taking regular breaks and encouraging rest. Practicing time management and prioritization was noted by 10 respondents (27%), while promoting open communication and support was mentioned by 5 respondents (14%). Participating in wellness or relaxation activities was the least observed behavior, reported by only 2 respondents (5%).

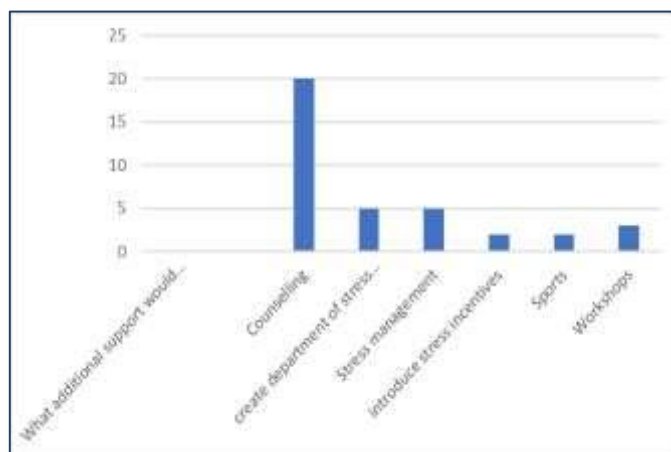


Fig 4.4.4 Suggestions for Additional Stress Management Support

Figure 4.4.4 indicate that the majority of respondents (20, representing 54%) suggested counselling services as additional support for managing stress. Other recommendations included the creation of a dedicated department for stress management (5 respondents, 14%), implementation of stress management programs (5 respondents, 14%), workshops (3 respondents, 8%), introduction of stress-related incentives (2 respondents, 5%), and promotion of sports and recreational activities (2 respondents, 5%).

4.5 Strategies to Reduce Workplace Stress

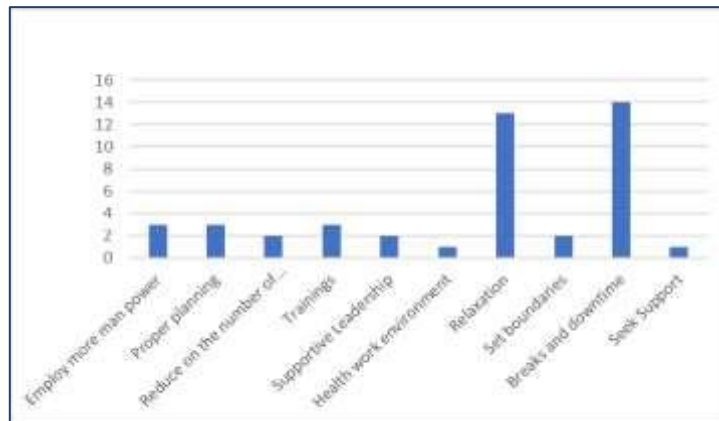


Figure 4.5.1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Suggested Strategies to Reduce Stress.

The results in Figure 4.5.1 reveal a range of strategies suggested by respondents to reduce stress in the Judiciary of Lusaka. The most frequently mentioned strategies were taking breaks and downtime (14 respondents, 38%) and relaxation techniques (13 respondents, 35%). Other strategies included employing more manpower (3 respondents, 8%), proper planning (3 respondents, 8%), trainings (3 respondents, 8%), supportive leadership (2 respondents, 5%), reducing working hours (2 respondents, 5%), setting boundaries (2 respondents, 5%), creating a healthy work environment (1 respondent, 3%), and seeking support (1 respondent, 3%).

5. Discussions

Figure 4.1.1 shows the recorded responses from 37 participants, of which 21 (57%) were male and 16 (43%) were female. This distribution shows a fair gender representation within the Judiciary workforce. The slightly higher number of male respondents may reflect the existing gender structure within the organization. Figure 4.1.2 show that the majority of respondents (15, representing 41%) were between the ages of 40 and 60. This was followed by 12 respondents (32%) aged between 25 and 30, while 10 respondents (27%) were in the 30 to 40 age group. The results suggest that the Judiciary workforce in Lusaka is composed of a significant number of middle-aged employees. Figure 4.1.3 reveal that the majority of respondents (16, representing 43%) had attained a degree qualification. This was followed by 9 respondents (24%) who held a diploma, 7 respondents (19%) with a certificate, and 5 respondents (14%) who had completed secondary education. The results suggest that most employees in the Judiciary of Zambia, Lusaka, are well-educated. Figure 4.1.4 indicate that the largest group of respondents were registry clerks, accounting for 9 (24%) of the participants. This was followed by office assistants with 7 (19%), employees in the Human Resource department with 6 (16%), and secretaries with 3 (8%). Security officers also represented 3 respondents (8%), while other roles such as painter, marshal, magistrate, bricklayer, and auto-mechanic each accounted for 1 respondent (3%) respectively. Figure 4.1.5 show that the majority of respondents (16, representing 43%) had been working in the Judiciary for between 5 and 10 years. This was followed by 15 respondents (41%) who had served between 1 and 5 years. Only 3 respondents (8%) had worked between 10 and 15 years, while 2 respondents (5%) had less than 1 year of service, and just 1 respondent (3%) had served for more than 15 years.

Figure 4.2.1 reveals that the majority of respondents (20 out of 37, representing 54%) reported experiencing stress due to long working hours, making it the leading cause of workload-related stress in the Judiciary. This is followed by case backlog and complexity of cases, each reported by 5 respondents (14%), while paperwork and documentation was identified by 3 respondents (8%). High caseload per officer and inadequate staffing were the least cited causes, with 2 respondents (5%) each. These findings indicate that long working hours are the primary stressor among Judiciary employees, highlighting the impact of extended working periods on employee well-being. Figure 4.2.2 shows that the majority of respondents (20 out of 37, representing 54%) cope with stress by taking short breaks or resting, making it the most commonly used stress management strategy. Sharing workload with colleagues was reported by 5 respondents (14%), while spending time with family or friends was mentioned by 4 respondents (11%). Engaging in physical exercise was selected by 3 respondents (8%), and both prioritizing and planning work and practicing relaxation or meditation were reported by 2 respondents (5%) each. Seeking support or counselling was the least utilized strategy, with only 1 respondent (3%) indicating its use. These findings suggest that Judiciary employees in Lusaka rely primarily on simple, accessible strategies such as resting and sharing workload to manage stress, while formal support mechanisms like counselling are underutilized. Figure 4.2.3 indicate that a significant proportion of respondents (20, representing 54%) rated their stress level at work as very high, while 13 respondents (35%) described it as high. Only 1 respondent (3%) rated their stress level as moderate, another 1 respondent (3%) as very low, and 2 respondents (5%) as low. Figure 4.2.4 reveal that the majority of respondents (20, representing 54%) indicated that stress reduces their performance. This was followed by 10 respondents (27%) who stated that stress leads to low productivity, 5 respondents (14%) who associated stress with absenteeism, and 2 respondents (5%) who believed that stress lowers morale. The findings demonstrate that stress has a predominantly negative effect on employees' job performance in the Judiciary of Lusaka.

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Figure 4.3.5 indicate that the majority of respondents (30, representing 77%) felt that the stress management support provided by the Judiciary is fairly implemented, while 7 respondents (18%) reported that it is implemented slowly. These findings suggest that the ineffectiveness of stress management support in the Judiciary is largely due to incomplete or inconsistent implementation of policies and programs. Figure 4.4.1 reveals that the majority of respondents (20 out of 37, representing 54%) reported attending stress management workshops or training, making it the most commonly participated session. Physical wellness activities, such as exercise programs, were attended by 7 respondents (19%), while counselling or mental health sessions and mindfulness or relaxation programs were each reported by 5 respondents (14%). These findings indicate that Judiciary employees in Lusaka primarily engage in structured workshops to manage stress, while other wellness programs are less frequently utilized. Figure 4.4.2 reveals that respondents were fairly evenly distributed in how they engage with supervisors regarding stress. 10 respondents (27%) reported regularly discussing stress issues, another 10 respondents (27%) occasionally discuss when necessary, and a similar 10 respondents (27%) prefer not to discuss stress concerns with their supervisors. 7 respondents (19%) seek guidance only in critical situations. Figure 4.4.3 shows that the majority of respondents (20 out of 37, representing 54%) reported that supervisors and managers demonstrate healthy stress management behaviors by taking regular breaks and encouraging rest. Practicing time management and prioritization was noted by 10 respondents (27%), while promoting open communication and support was mentioned by 5 respondents (14%). Participating in wellness or relaxation activities was the least observed behavior, reported by only 2 respondents (5%). Figure 4.4.3 shows that the majority of respondents (20 out of 37, representing 54%) reported that supervisors and managers demonstrate healthy stress management behaviors by taking regular breaks and encouraging rest. Practicing time management and prioritization was noted by 10 respondents (27%), while promoting open communication and support was mentioned by 5 respondents (14%). Figure 4.4.4 indicate that the majority of respondents (20, representing 54%) suggested counselling services as additional support for managing stress. Other recommendations included the creation of a dedicated department for stress management (5 respondents, 14%), implementation of stress management programs (5 respondents, 14%), workshops (3 respondents, 8%), introduction of stress-related incentives (2 respondents, 5%), and promotion of sports and recreational activities (2 respondents, 5%). Figure 4.5.1 reveal a range of strategies suggested by respondents to reduce stress in the Judiciary of Lusaka. The most frequently mentioned strategies were taking breaks and downtime (14 respondents, 38%) and relaxation techniques (13 respondents, 35%). Other strategies included employing more manpower (3 respondents, 8%), proper planning (3 respondents, 8%), trainings (3 respondents, 8%), supportive leadership (2 respondents, 5%), reducing working hours (2 respondents, 5%), setting boundaries (2 respondents, 5%), creating a healthy work environment (1 respondent, 3%), and seeking support (1 respondent, 3%).

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that workplace stress is a significant issue within the Judiciary of Zambia, with workload identified as the primary source. Employees experience high levels of stress, which negatively affects their performance, productivity, morale, and attendance. While informal coping strategies, particularly social support from colleagues, friends, and family, are widely used and moderately effective, formal organizational support is largely perceived as inadequate.

The study further reveals that organizational initiatives, such as stress management programs and wellness sessions, are limited in reach and effectiveness, with employees reporting discomfort in discussing stress-related concerns with supervisors and inconsistent modeling of stress management behaviors by leadership. Employees have suggested several improvements, including counselling services, structured workshops, and practical measures like breaks, relaxation, and supportive leadership.

6.2 Recommendations

Promoting a supportive work environment is critical. Supervisors and managers should model healthy stress management behaviors to encourage employees to adopt effective coping strategies, and leadership training on emotional intelligence.

Workload management should be addressed through proper task allocation, reasonable working hours, and recruitment of additional staff where necessary.

Informal coping strategies should be encouraged alongside formal interventions. Social support networks among colleagues can be fostered through team-building exercises and peer support groups.

Establishment of a dedicated stress management department could centralize efforts, monitor employee well-being, and coordinate both preventive and reactive stress interventions.

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