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Effects of reduced personal accomplishment on delivery of professional functions among University Lecturer's in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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Abstract

The study sought find out the effects of reduced personal accomplishment and delivery of professional functions among university lecturers in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The study adopted the Multidimensional Theory of burnout by Christina Maslach (1946). The study used embedded research design in the mixed method approach and Ex Post Facto approach. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 178 lecturers. Three counselors were sampled using purposive sampling from the sampled universities. Qualitative research was analyzed in theme derived from the in-depth interviews while quantitative data was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science Version 26.0. Using descriptive statistics and presented using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The study found out that reduced personal accomplishment had a moderate level (66%) of burnout. The hypotheses were tested using linear and multiple regression which showed that reduced personal accomplishment, $F(1, 95) = 16.935, p = 0.02$ had statistically significant relationship with the delivery of professional functions. The study will be beneficial to the Ministry of Education, university lecturers and the counsellors. The study recommends that university administration regularizes the workload and working schedules to ensure that lecturers are not overwhelmed by workload to reduce work burnout.

Keywords: Reduced Personal Accomplishment; Burnout; Delivery of Professional functions; Workload; Lecturers

1. Introduction

Psychological burnout is a state of mental, physical and emotional exhaustion which occurs mostly among highly motivated and self-driven individuals who come to feel that their work is not recognized or that they are not accomplishing their goals (Yousefy & Ghassemi, 2006). Work burnout is a type of strain resulting from prolonged exposure to chronic job-related stressors (Maslach et al., 2001). Professionals like health care givers, social workers, teachers and people in other service professions are the ones likely to suffer burnout (Moore, 2000). In the struggle to live, people become confronted with barges and streams of life's demands which cause a great deal of stress (Anazodo et al., 2012). For instance, problems at home or in one's personal life can affect an employee's ability to be productive at work. It is therefore a prolonged response to emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job. Psychological burnout has been linked to demographic characteristics such as age, gender, years of experience, and academic rank. In regards to age, researchers have found conflicting results with some stating that age does influence various aspects of burnout and with some arguing that it does not impact on lecturers' burnout. Studies showed significant connection between age and psychological burnout among lecturers (Toker, 2011).

Reduced personal accomplishment is a dimension of psychological burnout which was examined. This was characterized by procrastination, easily angered, poor interpersonal relationships, no relaxation, restlessness and

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inability to understand clients. The individual showed signs like frustration, helplessness, failure due to lack of success or recognition in one's work. It is also associated with a decrease in motivation and enthusiasm, a lowered sense of self-esteem and a decrease in satisfaction in one's accomplishment (Maslach, 2021). Such individuals had no control over self and may not achieve much.

Smith et al. (2023) investigated the impact of reduced personal accomplishment, as a dimension of psychological burnout, on various aspects of professional functioning among lecturers. Findings showed that lecturers experiencing higher levels of reduced personal accomplishment exhibit symptoms such as procrastination, irritability, poor interpersonal relationships, and decreased motivation. Additionally, participants reported feelings of frustration, helplessness, and decreased satisfaction in their work due to lack of recognition or success. The study emphasizes the critical importance of recognizing reduced personal accomplishment as a fundamental element of burnout and implementing interventions to enhance educators' feelings of fulfillment and job satisfaction which the current study undertook

In Tanzania, it was revealed that female lecturers with fewer years of teaching experience and low job satisfaction experienced higher level of job burnout compared to their male counterparts (Henny, et al., 2014). It further showed that females were 4 times more likely to experience burnout compared to males. In Kenya it was found that there was no significant difference in the levels of burnout among male and female lecturers (Musakali et al., 2014). These researchers have revealed that there is a substantial relationship between gender and burnout among lecturers around the world, it thus made it vital for the present study to evaluate the effect of gender difference on psychological burnout.

A systematic review investigated the factors contributing to psychological burnout among university lecturers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through a comprehensive search of the existing literature, the authors identified various factors, including workload, inadequate rewards, and lack of autonomy, lack of job satisfaction and support, lack of resources, and a lack of recognition of academic achievements. The findings of this review indicated that university lecturers in Sub-Saharan Africa are at an increased risk of psychological burnout due to a combination of factors related to the work environment, job role, and the broader socio-political context (Adesegun & Esiebo, 2021). It is important that this study investigated the effects of these factors among lecturers in Kenyan Universities.

There was a significant prevalence of burnout syndrome among lecturers, with 65.1% of them experiencing severe levels of burnout and 34.9% experiencing average levels of burnout (Muriungi, 2008). These alarmingly high levels of burnout among instructors are a call to action that must be taken to solve the problem. In light of the fact that prior research has shown that professors are suffering significant levels of psychological burnout, it is essential to investigate whether or not these burnouts have an effect on the lecturers' ability to carry out their professional tasks. In the present research, the consequences of psychological burnout on the delivery of professional responsibilities among university lecturers were explored, as well as the ways in which burnout impacted lecturers at their place of employment.

Historically, a lecturer was perceived as a knowledgeable person whose main duty was to dispense information or knowledge to students. They were expected to apply the same teaching method to teach students from generation to generation. Generally, lecturers were well respected by communities and they were expected to stand in front of the class delivering the same lessons year after year (Lanier, 1997). As at the year 2020, with massive revolution in knowledge, information technology, and public demand for better teaching and learning quality, lecturers have been experiencing tremendous pressure to equip, themselves to live up to such demands. Apart from disseminating knowledge, the day-to-day job of a lecturing encompasses exposing and directing students to different learning opportunities (Lanier, 1997).

There are increasing demands for qualified lecturers who can provide future generations with quality education in a cyber-environment (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Kirby et al., 2006). In addition, lecturers have been subjected to higher pressure by community to expand their roles beyond education. For example, since lecturers are considered front liners in dealing with students, therefore, they are expected to have frequent interactions with students to correct their social problems such as family problems, relationship problems, and addictions to drug or alcohol. All these demanding expectations can ultimately lead lecturers feeling demotivated towards their jobs (Maslach et al., 1996).

At the University of California, two groups were investigated on the effects of burnout on performance. One group involved individuals who reported feeling burnout from stress of their work and one group reported feeling relatively stress free. The group with burnout exhibited decrease in their ability to concentrate, increase in errors and mistakes, and a decrease in their ability to stay organized and complete tasks. Furthermore, this group demonstrated a decrease in their ability to effectively interact with colleagues, leading to a decrease in the quality of their work. This suggested that burnout had a negative effect on the delivery of professional functions and that those who experience burnout need

to seek support to reduce its effects (Sim, 2020). Incorporating these findings into the current study can enhance our understanding of how psychological burnout manifests among university lecturers and its subsequent impact on their delivery of professional functions. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of implementing support mechanisms and interventions to address burnout among lecturers, ultimately promoting their well-being and ensuring the maintenance of quality teaching. It is for this reason that the current study sought to examine the effects of reduced personal accomplishment on delivery of professional functions among university lecturers in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

The University Academic Staff Union (UASU) showed that Kenyan universities are facing a crisis in staffing due to inadequate funding and the lack of a clear career progression structure for academic staff. The University Academic Staff Union has called for improved payment of staff, improved working conditions, and greater recognition of their role in university administration (UASU, 2019). In most cases the university lecturers become disillusioned, frustrated and unproductive at the workplace due to high levels of stress. The pressures include the teaching and research workload, paper writing for conferences, seminar and workshops, marking of scripts, meeting deadlines, supervising students' projects and other practical work, attending and making meaningful contributions at post graduate thesis and dissertation defense, emergency meetings at departmental and faculty levels as well as membership of various personnel committees (Anazodo et al, 2012). This means that the lecturer is always on the move. A Lecturer in a university serve as a registrar, a teacher, administrator and counselor roles which call for dedication, transparency and lots of commitment (Bada & Falana, 2012).

This study was motivated by several factors. Firstly, Uasin Gishu County serves as a significant educational hub in the region, hosting universities and multiple tertiary institutions. The Universities include Moi University, The Catholic university of Eastern Africa, Mount Kenya, and the University of Eldoret (Uasin Gishu County Government Overview, 2020). The concentration of educational institutions in the county has attracted a large student population and influenced rural- urban migrations, providing an ideal setting to examine educational and social dynamics in relation to psychological burnout among lecturers. Secondly, the rapid economic growth in Eldoret, the county's commercial center, enhances its appeal to students, lecturers and migrants, highlighting the necessity to address the personal and social concerns of the expanding student community which has also attracted Lecturers and other human resource personnel. The expansion of learning institutions paves way for college counselors to begin addressing personal and social concerns of lecturers in a counseling contexts (Uasin Gishu County Education Report (2020). This context underscores the importance of studying levels of psychological burnout and its effects on delivery of professional functions among lecturers within this dynamic environment.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The demand put on lecturers to meet crazy deadlines while dealing with a large number of students could have them stressed and even burned out which in turn affects their delivery of professional functions (Njoroge et al., 2020). Apart from workload, lecturers are involved in other functions which include mentorship, supervision of postgraduate students, research, publishing, setting, moderating and administering exams, administrative work and coordinating university programs (Anazodo et al., 2012). All these functions have timelines and therefore the lecturer is always under pressure in the process of carrying out these duties. This may have led to ineffective delivery of these functions by the lecturers. A study conducted in Kenya by Ochieng et al. (2020) examined the relationship between psychological burnout and the delivery of professional functions of lecturers in Kenyan universities. The study found that psychological burnout was associated with a decrease in the delivery of professional functions of lecturers. The study further found that workload, lack of administrative support, and lack of job satisfaction were the main predictors of psychological burnout for the lecturers in the sample. Therefore, it is for this reason that this current study sought to find out the effects of psychological burnout on delivery of professional functions among lecturers in Uasin Gishu County. The general aim of this study was to find out the effects of reduced personal accomplishment on delivery of professional functions among university lecturers in Uasin Gishu County.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Research design

The study employed embedded design in the mixed methods approach. The mixed methods approach involved philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection, analysis, and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases of the research process. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provided a better understanding of research problem than either approach alone (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The current study used mixed method research approach. Quantitative research approach is driven by the researcher with the need to quantify data (Creswell, 2003). In a quantitative approach, the

study employed Ex Post Facto research design. Ex-post facto was employed because the researcher did not manipulate the independent variable which in this current study is reduced personal accomplishment.

2.2. Location of the study

This study was undertaken in Uasin Gishu County which is one of the 47 counties in Kenya. Uasin Gishu County was chosen for this study because it attracts a large number of students and lecturers given the Universities and many tertiary institutions in the county.

2.3. Target population and sample size

The target population included all counselors and all lecturers in both public and private universities in Uasin Gishu County. The total population of lecturers in both public and private universities in Uasin Gishu County is 1,700 (Commission for University Education, 2019). The researcher adopted simple random sampling procedure to select the lecturers and purposive sampling to obtain the counselors from the sampled public and private universities. To determine the actual sample size for the lecturers, Nassiuma formula by Nassiuma (2000) was used as follows:

$$n = \frac{Nc^2}{c^2 + (N-1)e^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size,

N= Target population (1700)

c= Coefficient of Variance (0.3)

e= standard error (0.02)

Therefore:

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{1700 \times (0.3)^2}{0.3^2 + (1700-1)0.02^2} \\ & = 178 \end{aligned}$$

The sample size used was 178 lecturers.

2.4. Data collection and analysis

The study employed questionnaires for lecturers and in-depth interview guide for counselors. The data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis processes. Qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed through themes, for quantitative data analysis, the researcher first defined variables and assign numeric values and labels to the variables. SPSS version 26 was used to key in the variables. Data was presented by use of tables.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Reduced Personal Accomplishment on Delivery of Professional Functions

To determine the influence of reduced personal of accomplishment on delivery of professional functions in Kenya. In this section, both descriptive statistics and inferential analysis of the data is presented. The researcher wanted to assess the frequency of reduced personal accomplishment using the following key: 0 (never), 1 (a few times per year), 2 (once a month), 3 (a few times per month), 4 (once a week), 5 (a few times per week), and 6 (every day). Table 1 gives the responses.

Table 1 Effect of Reduced Personal Accomplishment on Delivery of Professional Functions

Statement	Never	A few times per year	Once a month	A few times per month	Once a week	A few times per week	Everyday
I accomplish many worthwhile things in this job	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.0%)	23 (23.7%)	25 (25.8%)	23 (23.7%)	14 (14.4%)	11 (11.3%)
I am easily able to understand what my patients/clients feel	4 (4.1%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (11.3%)	29 (29.9%)	19 (19.6%)	29 (29.9%)	5 (5.2%)
I look after my patients/client's problems very effectively	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.0%)	10 (10.3%)	11 (11.3%)	44 (45.4%)	18 (18.6%)	13 (13.4%)
In my work, I handle emotional problems very calmly	1 (1.0%)	1 (1.0%)	13 (13.4%)	31 (32.0%)	32 (33.0%)	12 (12.4%)	8 (8.2%)
Through my work, I feel that I have a positive influence	0 (0.0%)	6 (6.2%)	24 (24.7%)	34 (35.1%)	23 (23.7%)	10 (10.3%)	0 (0.0%)
I am easily able to create a relaxed atmosphere with my patients/clients	0 (0.0%)	9 (9.3%)	2 (2.1%)	25 (25.8%)	45 (46.4%)	11 (11.3%)	5 (5.2%)
I feel refreshed when I have been close to my clients/patients	0 (0.0%)	6 (6.2%)	2 (2.1%)	10 (10.3%)	56 (57.7%)	15 (15.5%)	8 (8.2%)

Results on the item "feeling that they have accomplished little in their work", majority of respondents 25 (25.8%) said that they accomplish many worthwhile things "A few times per month suggesting that most of the respondents agreed that they felt like having accomplished little in their work a few times in a month. Table 1 displays that 23 (23.7%) of respondents stated that they accomplish many worthwhile things "Once a month." This reaffirms the positive perception of job satisfaction and the meaningfulness of their work. The results show that suggesting that most of the respondents agreed that they felt like having accomplished little in their work.

Results on the statement that they are easily able to understand what their patients/clients feel high frequencies were reported in the categories of "A few times per month" and "A few times per week," both at 29 (29.9%). The findings align with research emphasizing the significance of empathy in effective communication and relationships within various professional settings, including healthcare and education. Empathy has been associated with enhanced patient satisfaction, improved patient outcomes, and stronger interpersonal relationships (Hojat et al., 2016). As pertains whether respondents struggled with looking after client's problems, 45 (45.4%) reported that they effectively handle their patients' or clients' problems once a week. This means that most of the respondents agreed that they struggled with caring for the problem of their students This is an indication that lecturers were experiencing low levels of sense of accomplishment. Results on if respondents find it a challenge to handle emotional problems calmly, 33 (33%) reported that they handle emotional problems very calmly once a week. This implies that most of the respondents did not find it a challenge to handle emotional problems with calmness. In terms of whether respondents felt they have a positive influence on people. One-third of the respondents, 34 (35.1%) reported that they felt that way once a week. The study findings indicate that most of the lecturers perceive that they are making a positive impact on others in their roles. Lecturers who feel they have a positive influence once a week exhibit a consistent sense of purpose and impact. This level of perceived influence can contribute to job satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment, as they believe their work positively affects the lives of others.

Results on statement "I am easily able to create a relaxed atmosphere with my patients/clients" 46 (46.4%) reported that they are easily able to create a relaxed atmosphere with their patients or clients once a week. Findings on if respondents felt refreshed when they are close to the students 57 (57.7%) reported that they feel refreshed when they have been close to their clients or patients once a week, which implies that on average, lecturers in the university do feel refreshed when in the presence of students. This designates a consistent experience of rejuvenation from daily interactions. This indicates a consistent approach to emotional regulation in their daily interactions. Lecturers who handle emotional problems calmly every day demonstrate a high level of reduced personal accomplishment. This skill is essential for navigating the emotional demands of patient or client interactions without becoming overwhelmed.

Effective emotional regulation contributes to patient-centered care and improved healthcare outcomes (Salovey et al., 2018).

3.2. Hypothesis Testing

3.2.1. *There is no significant difference between personal accomplishments on delivery of professional functions among university lecturers in Uasin-Gishu County*

An analysis was performed to establish the significance of personal accomplishment and delivery of professional functions and calculated the analysis of variance (ANOVA) showing the significance personal accomplishment and delivery of professional functions. The following null hypothesis was tested which stated that *there is no significant difference between reduced personal accomplishment and delivery of professional functions among University lecturers in Uasin-Gishu County* was tested a simple linear regression was conducted. A simple linear regression uses the presence of a linear relationship to determine how much variation in the dependent variable can be attributed to the independent variable.

Table 2 Model Summaryb on Reduced Personal Accomplishment and Delivery of Professional Functions

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.305a	0.093	0.083	7.094	1.699

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reduced personal accomplishment; b. Dependent Variable: Professional functions

From the findings on Table 2, reduced personal accomplishment accounted for 8.3% of the variation in delivery teaching functions as shown by the adjusted R square value, while the remaining variation on delivery of professional functions could be accounted by other factors. These findings imply that reduced personal accomplishment had statistical significant effect on the delivery of professional functions among university lecturers in Uasin-Gishu County. These findings are supported by past studies that have already established the impact of reduced personal accomplishment on delivery of professional functions among university academic staff. The findings agreed with observation made by Staub and White (2020) who did a study in New York and examined the effects of reduced personal accomplishment on the delivery of professional functions of lecturers and illustrated those lecturers with reduced personal accomplishment experienced decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, higher levels of stress, and decreased performance in the classroom.

4. Conclusion

The findings concluded that reduced personal accomplishment had a statistically significant effect on professional functions. This suggests that lecturers experiencing higher levels of burnout are likely to encounter difficulties in fulfilling their professional responsibilities effectively. Addressing these aspects of burnout is crucial for safeguarding the well-being of lecturers and ensuring the quality of education provided to students. Implementing targeted interventions to mitigate burnout and support lecturers in managing stress and maintaining job satisfaction is essential for promoting a positive and productive academic environment.

Recommendation

Counselors should work closely with university administrations to establish regular counseling sessions for lecturers. These sessions should provide a safe space for lecturers to discuss their challenges, manage stress, and develop coping strategies to deal with reduced personal accomplishment

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest in the authorship of this research.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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