

**STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY KENYA POWER TO MANAGE
WORK-RELATED STRESS AMONG ITS EMPLOYEES**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) DEGREE, SCHOOL OF
BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

OCTOBER, 2014

DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree or any other quantification in any other university or institution.

Signature

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D61/7138/2006

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my family for unfailing encouragement and love. To my dear husband Maurice, and to my loving son Justin, who was a constant source of encouragement for me to strive on to the completion of this project.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank most sincerely all those whose contributions have made this project a success. To my supervisor Dr. Nzuve for his assistance and advice all through thus making this project a success. To my wonderful family for their support both morally and financially. Most of all I thank God for the gift of wisdom and strength to complete this project.

I feel indebted to the management of Kenya Power. To my classmates Doreen and Wangeci and all other people who in one way or another played a part in my entire MBA process. To my workmates Hope and Jonathan, thanks for holding forth for me the many times I was away pursuing this noble course. To all of you may the Almighty God bless you abundantly.

ABSTRACT

Stress can affect an individual emotionally, physically, socially as well as pose a threat to one's health if not dealt with or managed well. In most organizations, employees undergo stress, which affects their well-being and in turn affects their productivity and performance at the work place. Thus, each organization should be keen on implementing stress management strategies to solve work-related stress. The objective of the study was to determine the strategies for managing work-related stress among the employees of Kenya Power. The study adopted descriptive research design. The population of the study was all (6,500) the employees of Kenya Power. The study used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table to determine the sample size in which 361 employees was determined to be the sample size. The data was collected using self-administered questionnaires. Data was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences and the findings presented in tables, pie charts, percentages, mean and standard deviations. The study found that stress management strategies were primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary stress management strategies used were provision of office space that ensures adequate air circulation and lighting and ensuring that all the employees clearly understand their job description while other employee demands do not interfere with personal activities. Secondary stress management strategies were eating healthy diet and engaging in physical activities which are great protection against stress. Tertiary stress management strategies were found to be development of wellness and assistance programmes, employee involvement in stress management programmes, employees being given supportive feedback and employees having opportunity to discuss issues affecting their performance with the line managers. The study recommends that the company pursue strategies that will ensure that the employees work environment is conducive in order to deliver on their work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	2
DEDICATION	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	4
ABSTRACT	5
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	10
1.1 Background of the study	10
1.1.1 Work-related stress	11
1.1.2 Stress Management Strategies	13
1.1.3 Kenya Power	14
1.2 Research Problem	14
1.3 Research Objective	16
1.4 Value of the study	16
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	18
2.1 Introduction.....	18
2.2 Stress and its Causes	18
2.2.1 Job related causes of stress	19
2.2.2 Personal factors	20
2.2.3 Relational factors	21
2.2.4 External Stressors.....	22
2.2.5 Emotionally Induced Stress	23
2.3 Effects of stress on employees	24
2.4 Strategies for managing stress	25
2.4.1 Primary stress management strategies	25
2.4.2 Secondary stress management strategies	28
2.4.3 Tertiary stress management strategies	30
2.5 A Comparison of Stress Management Strategies.....	32
2.6 Conclusion	36
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	37
3.1. Introduction.....	37
3.2 Research Design.....	37

3.3 Population of the study	37
3.4 Sample Design	38
3.5 Data Collection	40
3.6 Data analysis	41
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	42
4.1 Introduction.....	42
4.2 Response Rate.....	42
4.3 Demographic Characteristics	42
4.3.1 Age of the respondents.....	42
4.3.2 Respondents' Gender	43
4.3.3 Respondents Marital Status.....	44
4.4 Stress Management Strategies	45
4.4.1 Primary Stress Management Strategies adopted by the Company	45
4.4.2 Secondary Stress Management Strategies adopted by the Company	47
4.4.3 Tertiary Stress Management Strategies used by the Company.....	48
4.5 Discussion.....	50
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	53
5.1 Introduction.....	53
5.2 Summary	53
5.3 Conclusion	54
5.4 Limitations of the Study.....	55
5.5 Recommendations.....	56
5.6 Suggestions for Further Research	57
REFERENCES.....	58
APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE	64

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Age of the respondents	43
Table 4.2: Respondents Marital Status	44
Table 4.3: Primary Stress Management Strategies	46
Table 4.4: Secondary Stress Management Strategies	47
Table 4.5: Tertiary Stress Management Strategies used by the Company	49

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Respondents Gender 44

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

During periods of economic hardships, you may find it harder than ever to cope with challenges on the job. Both the stress we take with us when we go to work and the stress that awaits us on the job are on the rise – and employers, managers, and workers all feel the added pressure. While some stress is a normal part of life, excessive stress interferes with your productivity and reduces your physical and emotional health, so it's important to find ways to keep it under control. Stress at work is one of the biggest problems in European companies. Unfortunately, even the African companies are now being faced with the same epidemic. Kenya therefore, is no exception. “Evidently, one of the major adverse influences on job satisfaction, work performance, productivity, absenteeism and turnover is the incidence of stress at work. Stress is a complex and dynamic concept. It is a source of tension and frustration, and can arise through a number of interrelated influences on behavior, including the individual, group, organizational and environmental factors.” (Segal, et al. 2013) Most Kenyan organizations have gone through things such as restructuring, downsizing, retrenchment of employees among other actions, which has resulted in the rise of stress levels.

The above are some of the things that may have caused employees in such organizations stress. The unfortunate thing is that in most organizations, little is done to help employees prepare emotionally for such drastic changes in their lives as employees. These are some of the things that lead to even greater effects of stress. The result is that employees perform poorly and the overall performance of the company goes down, yet stress is not taken seriously in the African

set up thus even in Kenya, as people believe that there are greater problems than stress. “Given that a certain amount of stress is required for peak performance the idea obviously is to manage the stress to maintain optimum levels of stress when required. This means that you should have periods of ‘no stress’ in a high pressure job too. The aim of managing workplace stress should be to manage stress levels and keep from a situation where stress starts to manage and manipulate you.” (Kagan et al. 1995) After several surveys on the work environment were carried out at the Kenya Power, stress levels were found to be increasing. The surveys are done bi-annually with the last reference made on March 2011. Management has been put to task to come up with strategies to lower the stress levels.

1.1.1 Work-related stress

“Work related stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work. Work related stress develops because a person is unable to cope with the demands being placed on them. It is important to note that there is a difference between pressure and stress as there is a tendency to confuse the two. There is a difference between pressure and stress. Pressure can be positive and a motivating factor, and is often essential in a job. It can help us achieve our goals and perform better. Stress occurs when this pressure becomes excessive. Stress is a natural reaction to too much pressure. Symptoms of work-related stress may include depression, anxiety, a drop in work performance, feelings of being overwhelmed, fatigue, headaches and an increase in sick days or absenteeism.”(WHO 2013)

World Health Organization (WHO) view work related stress as the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope. Work-related stress can be caused by poor

work organization (the way we design jobs and work systems, and the way we manage them), by poor work design (for example, lack of control over work processes), poor management, unsatisfactory working conditions, and lack of support from colleagues and supervisors. Research findings show that the most stressful type of work is that which values excessive demands and pressures that are not matched to workers' knowledge and abilities, where there is little opportunity to exercise any choice or control, and where there is little support from others. (WHO 2013)

“Workplace stress has been increasing so rapidly that occupational stress was termed as a ‘global epidemic’ by the International Labor Organization. High levels of stress at the workplace make the environment and ambience extremely tense. The stress impacts the overall business performance since the business actually comprises of individuals who run the show. However, all is not black in the context of stress. A certain amount of stress is required to achieve maximum performance. This is because the body is extremely alert and conscious during stress situations. It takes on the role of preparing for the imminent ‘fight or flight’ situation. Some jobs, by their very nature, are stress-causing. Sales, medicine, stock-broking and the like involve moments of high pressure that have to be dealt with in a calm manner. While momentary stress in such cases may not be avoidable, there is a need to control and manage continuous stress situations. There are also some other specific causes of stress. These include heavy pressure to perform, an inability to control events and circumstances, inherent natures that make people unorganized, lack of communication skills, unfriendly office or workplace environment and job insecurity (Vishal, 2012).

1.1.2 Stress Management Strategies

While some workplace stress is normal, excessive stress can interfere with your productivity and impact your physical and emotional health. And your ability to deal with it can mean the difference between success and failure. You can't control everything in your work environment, but that doesn't mean you're powerless—even when you're stuck in a difficult situation. Finding ways to manage workplace stress isn't about making huge changes or rethinking career ambitions, but rather about focusing on the one thing that's always within your control: you. (Arnold and Feldman, 1986) Three main types of work-related stress management interventions have been identified in the scientific literature and are broadly termed primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention approaches seek to combat work-related stress by changing elements in the way work is organized and managed. Secondary prevention approaches aim to combat work-related stress by developing individual skills in stress management through training. Tertiary prevention approaches aim to reduce the impact of work related stress on workers' health by developing appropriate rehabilitation and 'return-to-work' systems and enhanced occupational health provisions. (Cox et al., 2000)

These strategies will enable Kenya Power attempt to manage the stress levels which are likely to be at different levels for the different employees. “There will be benefits that are likely to be felt once the stress management strategies are implemented. These include; Reduced symptoms of poor mental and physical health, Fewer injuries, less illness and lost time, Reduced sick leave usage, absences and staff turnover, Increased productivity, Greater job satisfaction, Increased work engagement, Reduced costs to the employer, Improved employee health and community wellbeing.” (Better Health Channel, 2013)

1.1.3 Kenya Power

Kenya Power (formerly known as Kenya Power & Lighting Company, KPLC) is responsible for ensuring that there is adequate line capacity to maintain supply and quality of electricity across the country. Kenya Power is a limited liability company which transmits, distributes and retails electricity to customers throughout Kenya. Kenya Power is a public company and is listed at the Nairobi Stock Exchange (NSE). Kenya Power has been in existence since 1922 when it was known as East African Power and Lighting Company (EAP&L). Its operations were in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. In 1983, the operations became confined to Kenya only and it changed name to KPLC. Later in 2011 it changed name to Kenya Power. Kenya Power has a staff complement of over 7,000 employees. What is today the Kenya Power Training School was started in 1957 at Nairobi South Power Station. In 1962, the school moved to its present site in Ruaraka. The aim of the school was to develop technical and supervisory skills amongst existing Company employees. Kenya Power has about 58 stations all over the country. (Kenya Power, History & Milestones, 2013)

1.2 Research Problem

Stress can affect an individual emotionally, physically, socially as well as pose a threat to one's health if not dealt with or managed well. In most organizations in Kenya, employees undergo stress, which affects their well-being and in turn affects their productivity and performance at the work place. Most people seem to believe that stress is a very personal experience and that it is also personal how one decides to deal with his or her stress. However stress is no longer a personal issue if it affects those around you and one's productivity and performance at the work place. "The word "stress" is one of the most frequently used words today. We live in a world developing fast, requiring constant adaptation. Technology is changing, so are social habits,

values, social structures and people. Everybody has to cope with those changes, not only individuals, but the organizations and government as well.” (Thompson, 2002) Thus, each organization should be keen on implementing stress management strategies to solve work-related stress.

Kenya Power has come a long way in terms of establishing itself to where it is now. Following rebranding and introduction of a new face to its name, definitely there have been expectations from the management to the employees and vice versa, and from the public to Kenya Power. With the intention of meeting these expectations, several pressures have been encountered and where the pressure has not been well managed, it has converted to stress. Cases of absenteeism, illnesses, job insecurity, discrimination, harassment, over supervision, a drop in work performance, fatigue, lack of work-life balance among other issues, have been witnessed. All these are reactions towards some form of, emotional and mental disturbances, all which amount from stress which is not dealt with.

Various studies have been done on stress management; European agency for Safety and Health (2000) did a Research on work-related stress. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also done a study through their Occupational Health team. The study was about Stress at the Work place. However, little has been done on work- related stress. A number of reviews of scientific literature on workplace stress prevention programmes show the dominance of prevention programmes which focus on the individual (DeFrank & Cooper, 1987; Van Der Hek & Plomp, 1997, Giga, Cooper & Faragher, 2003). Although they can be very useful, interventions focused on individuals deal with the effect of stress instead of preventing it. Moreover, without ongoing

support, the benefits associated with this type of intervention are likely to be temporary (Giga, Cooper & Faragher, 2003). As for interventions which aim to target stress at its source by intervening on psychosocial risks in the workplace, there is much less scientific evidence, although the existing results seem more promising. In order to prevent stress effectively, we need to identify the most effective strategies and appropriate means of implementing such interventions in order to achieve the desired results. This study was guided by the question; what are strategies that can be adopted by Kenya Power to manage stress among its employees?

1.3 Research Objective

To establish the strategies adopted by Kenya Power to manage stress among its employees.

1.4 Value of the study

This study will be geared towards bringing out the causes of stress at the work place in organizations. This study will also bring out the possible strategies that managers in organizations can adopt to minimize stress and remove the negative effects it has on the entire organization, thus an almost stress-free working environment. This will shed a light to the managers on the do's and don'ts when working with employees as they execute their day-to-day activities and thus minimize instances of stress at the work place.

Employees of Kenya Power will learn how to detect the symptoms of work-related stress and learn how to manage them before they get out of hand. They will be able to seek help in good time thus experiencing little or no stress at all. This study will be important in providing a point of information reference. Organizations that are dealing with work-related stress will find this study useful as the findings will offer a point of reference for management of work-related stress.

It is a study that cuts across every work environment in most if not all organizations as they are susceptible to work-related stress.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the information from different researchers on work-related stress. The key areas covered are the causes, effects and strategies managing of work-related stress.

2.2 Stress and its Causes

Arnold and Feldman (1986) defined stress as, “the reactions of individuals to new or threatening factors in their work environment.” Since our work environments often contain new situations, this definition suggests that stress is inevitable. This definition also highlights the fact that reactions to stressful situations are individualized, and can result in emotional, perceptual, behavioral, and physiological changes. Williams and Huber (1986) defined stress as, “a psychological and physical reaction to prolonged internal and / or environmental conditions in which individual’s adaptive capabilities are over extended. They argue that stress is an adaptive response to conscious or unconscious threat. Like McGrath (1979), they point out that stress is a result of a “perceived” threat, and is not necessary related to actual environmental conditions. The amount of stress that is produced by a given situation depends upon one’s perception of the situation, not the situation itself. In other words, stress is a realistic phenomenon.

Conditions that tend to cause stress are called stressors. Stressors can be divided into those that arise from within an individual (internal) and those that attribute to the environment (external). Internal conflicts, non-specific fears, fears of inadequacy, and guilt feelings are examples of stressors that do not depend on the environment. Internal sources of stress can arise from individual’s perceptions of an environment threat, even if no such danger actually exists.

Environment stressors are external beyond an individual's control. The major sources of employees' stress are evenly divided between organizational factors and the main work environment. When employees are faced with stressors, they react with either positive stress (which stimulates them) or negative stress (which distracts them from their efforts).

2.2.1 Job related causes of stress

Work overload, under load and time deadlines put employees under pressure and lead to stress. This often arises from management and a poor quality of management e.g. an autocratic supervisor, an insecure job climate and inadequate authority to match one's responsibilities. Overload is frequently created by excessive time pressures where stress increases as a deadline approaches, and then rapidly subsides. Work overload can be both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative overload stress occurs when employees are asked to do more work, in a limited period, than they are able to do. Qualitative overload stress occurs when employees believe they lack the required skills, ability or resources to perform a given job. Similarly, stress is related to both types of under-load. Under load is the result of an insufficient quantity or an inadequate variety of work. Quantitative under-load leads to boredom that occurs when boring, routine, repetitive jobs are associated with chronic lack of mental stimulation (Potgieter, 1996). Both overload and under load can result in low self-esteem and stress related symptoms.

Role ambiguity (stress resulting from uncertainty) can occur when employees are uncertain about several matters relating to their jobs, such as the scope of their responsibilities, what is expected of them, mergers, acquisitions and restructuring, and how to divide their time between various duties. Sometimes, ambiguity results from not having clear job descriptions, goals or specified responsibilities, but often it is attributable to changes occurring in the organization or the

marketplace at large. Rice (1992) Arnold and Feldman (1986) emphasize the delirious effects of role ambiguity, conflict, and overload and under load in causing stress.

The organizational culture can also be a contributing factor for job-related stress. The organizational culture includes the management styles, communication, and company politics among others. If the organizational culture is tainted, there is poor communication, poor leadership and lack of clarity on organizational objectives and structure. These contribute towards feeding the stress gaps among the employees. (Clarke & Cooper, 2000: 174)

2.2.2 Personal factors

Personal factors can often range from career growth to financial matters. Career related concerns such as job security and advancement as well as financial and family concerns. Where career growth is dependent on performance appraisal, work related stress may occur. One, by not receiving any appraisals, one does not know how they are doing. Two, being given negative feedback without being told how to improve one's performance. Stress can also be caused by stress from being stuck at the same level or beneath the "glass ceiling". Most organizations at least hold out the carrot of career development based on a mixture of performance and seniority. As a result, employees and managers build up expectations about their career development. Having these realistic (or unrealistic) expectations disillusioned is indeed a source of stress and frustration. Financial or pay related factors may be a great source of stress, especially where employees feel that they are not paid for the much contribution they give to an organization (Furnham, 2005; Potgieter 1996).

2.2.3 Relational factors

Arnold and Feldman (1986) cite three types on interpersonal relationships that can evoke a stress reaction. One, too much prolonged contact with other people, two, too much contact with people from other departments and three, an unfriendly or hostile organizational climate. Other interpersonal relationship related problems include: inadequate, inconsiderate or unsupportive supervision, poor relationships with co-workers, bullying, harassment and violence, isolated or solitary work, no agreed procedures for dealing with problems or complaints.

Relationships with supervisors, peers and subordinates can also cause stress. Depending on the nature of the relationship, stress may occur. Lack of social support – having friends and supporters in times of difficulty helps managers see stressful events as less threatening and more controllable than if they had little or no support. They can provide emotional, financial and information support at different times. Friends and supporters can also often suggest useful strategies for dealing with the sources of stress. In addition, they can also help reduce the negative feelings that often accompany exposure to stressful events. Social support is of course also qualitative and quantitative. Usually it is better to sacrifice quantity for quality, although ideally one would have both in liberal amounts to prevent stress (Rice, 1999).

Some people experience stress because they are detached from the world around them; they lack warm interpersonal relationships. Individuals with a driving ambition and a strong need for independence may fail to develop close attachments to friends and colleagues. To achieve success, they often sacrifice fulfillment of their social needs. Their lack of social attachments may result in anger, anxiety, and loneliness-all producing stress in their lives. A powerful

antidote to this problem lies in the presence of social support at work. Social support is the network of helpful activities, interactions and relationships that provides employees with the satisfaction of important needs. Social support systems seem to be extremely effective in preventing or relieving the deleterious effects of stress. Friends and family can provide a nurturing environment that builds self-esteem, and makes one less susceptible to stress. (Newstrom and Davis, 1989)

2.2.4 External Stressors

Bhagat (1983) has reported that work performance can be seriously impaired by external stressors. There are many aspects of organizational life that can be sources of external stressors. These include; issues of structure, management's use of authority, monotony, a lack of opportunity for advancement, excessive responsibilities, ambiguous demands, value conflicts, unrealistic workloads. "Frequently employees tend to ignore problems created by external stressors because they feel that the problems are trivial, petty, or don't (or won't) merit the attention of the employer. However, often these problems have an easy solution. For instance, stress can be caused by something that seems as trivial as an incorrectly positioned chair or computer screen. Other examples of external stressors include loud or continuous noise, nosy or noisy co-workers, demanding bosses, and complaining customers. If external stressors are causing problems for you, the worst thing you can do is ignore them. Identifying and examine external stressors for possible solutions. Even if all of them aren't resolved, any positive change you will result in a happier, healthier you" (Rice, 1999).

2.2.5 Emotionally Induced Stress

A person's non-working life (e.g. family, friends, health and financial situations) can also contain stressors that negatively impact on job performance. Albrecht (1979) argues that nearly all stressors are emotionally induced. These are based on people's expectations or "the beliefs that something terrible is about to happen." Thus emotionally induced stress arises from one's imagination. Albrecht believes that our society's number one health problem is anxiety and that emotionally induced stress can be classified into four categories. Time stress- always created by a real or imaginary deadline; Anticipating stress – is created when a person perceives that an upcoming event will be unpleasant; Situational stress – can occur when a person is in an unpleasant situation, and they worry about what will happen next; and Encounter stress – is created by contact with other people (both pleasant and unpleasant).

Several studies have found that individuals who believe they have control over their own fate (internal) perceive less stress in their work than those who believe their future is determined by other factors (external). Thus having an internal locus of control helps to minimize the likelihood of one being stressed. Some studies have reported that males seem to be more prone to stress-related illness than females. Men report more ulcers and have high rate of heart attacks than women (Albrecht, 1979). Other studies have found no differences. Friedman and Rosenman (1974) found that type A women suffered from cardiovascular diseases and heart attacks as often as their male counterparts. Women in managerial positions suffer heart attacks at the same rate as men in similar positions.

Lawless (1992) reported that men suffered 15% more stress related illness than women. Lawless proposed that this is a result of unequal pay sales and a failure of organizations to adopt policies sensitized to family issues. As more enter the work force the effects on their health are becoming increasingly apparent. Lawless (1992) identified five most common causes of worker stress: Too much rigidity in how to do a job, substantial cuts in employee benefits, a merger or change of ownership, requiring frequent overtime, reducing the size of work force.

2.3 Effects of stress on employees

Stress can have effects such as poor work relations among various levels of the organization, poor productivity or reduced work performance, reduced or lack of motivation, absenteeism and high labor turnover, alcoholism, it leads to costly mistakes that could have implications such as a financial, poor concentration among the employees which could mean that targets take longer to be met within the organization, financial problems or funds mis-management, hatred among employees leading to poor interpersonal relations, increased disciplinary cases, health problems like depression, for example due to fatigue, Lack of family-work life balance. Another effect is occupational burnout which is described as a condition where the employee's coping resources have been consumed by work and life demand, to the point of poor job performance and exhaustion (Ben-Zur and Yagil, 2005).

Job stress lowers employee's productivity and can make them more susceptible to major illnesses and health problems. Extreme products or effects of stress are burnout and trauma. Burnout is a situation in which employees are emotionally exhausted, become detached from their clients and their work, and feel unable to accomplish goals. Trauma occurs following a

major threat to one's security. Work place trauma is the dis-integration of employees' self-concepts and beliefs in their capabilities. It can arise from harassment from work, wrongful termination, discrimination or an employee's perceived incapability to meet evolving performance expectations. (Lawless, 1992)

2.4 Strategies for managing stress

Psychologists have spent considerable effort in describing and categorizing different coping strategies, some of which are thought to be successful and adaptive and others not. These strategies are stress-specific concepts; hence they tend to be better predictors of occupational stress than broadband stress concepts. One distinction made by Folkman & Lazarus (1980) was between problem-focused coping (aimed at problem-solving or doing something to alter the source of stress) and emotion-focused coping (aimed at reducing or managing the emotional distress that is associated with a particular set of circumstances).

According to Jick and Payne, (1980), there are essentially three strategies for dealing with stress in organizations. These are; treat the symptom, if the person is already suffering from stress; change the person, by instilling some stress management skills; and remove the cause of the stress. In this study the strategies will be addressed in three parts; primary, secondary and tertiary stress management strategies.

2.4.1 Primary stress management strategies

Primary stress management strategies are concerned with taking action to change or eliminate sources of stress inherent in the work environment and thus reduce their negative impact on the individual. This approach to stress depicts stress as the consequences of the "lack of fit" between the needs and demands of the individual in his/her environment. The focus of primary stress

management strategies is in adapting the environment to “fit” the individual (Manshor, Fontaine & Choy, 2003). Rice (1992) mentions a useful range of possible strategies to reduce and manage work related stress: redesign the task; redesign the work environment; establish flexible work schedules; encourage participative management; include the employee in career development; analyze work roles and establish goals; provide social support and feedback; build cohesive teams; establish fair employment policies; and share the rewards.

Work environment strategy refers to the current work environment and how redesigning the work environment can help to reduce primary stress management. There is no significant research that redesigning the work environment can reduce stress and help with the management of work related stress this change can be directly synthesized (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997). This strategy will curb factors such as too much noise, exposures to undesirable light sources, inferior air quality, and dust, among others.

Job engineering and job redesign are recent concepts that attempt to minimize job-related stress. Job engineering takes into account the values and needs of the worker, as well as the production objectives of the organization. (Albrecht, 1979) Demands (both physical and mental) should be adequate with the capabilities and resources of workers, avoiding under load as well as overload. Provisions should be made to allow recovery from demanding tasks or from increased control by workers over characteristics such as work pace of demanding tasks (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997; McShane & VonGlinow, 2000). The work load should be adapted to people's differing physical and mental aptitudes

Work schedules should be compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job. Flexi-time, a compressed work week, and job sharing are examples of positive steps in this direction. When schedules involve rotating shifts, the rate of rotation should be stable and predictable. (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997; Rice, 1999)

In career development, job stress mirrors the developmental peaks and valleys in the employee's career. "According to one national study of work stress, people bring several specific hopes to a job. They hope for rapid, or at least steady, advancement. They hope for some freedom in the job and increased earning power. Preferably, they hope to learn new things and work at new jobs. Finally, they hope to find solutions to certain work problems." (Veniga & Spradley, 1981) For some employees, the promotion does not come. The job that once looked so secure may be eliminated. Then they respond in ways that reveal building stress. When their hopes and dreams only flicker faintly, employees often lose a sense of accomplishments and self-esteem. Minor irritants they would have casually brushed aside when the dream was fresh now irate and fester inside.

Most people think of home as a sanctuary, a place that is private and quiet and where one can be alone. It is a retreat that allows rebuilding and regrouping of inner strengths to meet outside demands. When pressure invades that sanctuary, however, it may magnify the effects of stress at work. Rousseau (1978) provided evidence of spill over from events at work to events at home. Rousseau believes that work experiences are positively related to non-work experiences. If a person has a job that diminishes self-esteem and produces low satisfaction, that person will have

similar experiences in social life. There is therefore need for a stable home-work connection all the time.

Job tasks should be designed to have meaning and provide stimulation and an opportunity to use skills. Job rotation or increasing the scope of work activities are ways to improve narrow, fragmented work activities that fail to meet these criteria (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997; Rice, 1999; Michael Armstrong, 2006). The employee should be given the opportunity to participate in the design of his/her own work situation, and in the processes of change and development affecting his/her work. In conclusion, primary stress management strategies are often a vehicle for cultural change. Evidently, as the type of action required by an organization will vary according to the kinds of stressors operating, any intervention needs to be guided by some prior diagnosis or specific audit or risk assessment to identify the organizational-, site-, or departmental-specific stressors responsible for employee stress (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997: 8).

2.4.2 Secondary stress management strategies

Secondary stress management strategies are essentially concerned with the prompt detection and management of experienced stress by increasing awareness and improving the stress management skills of the individual through training and educational activities. Individual factors can alter or modify the way employees exposed to work related stressors perceive and react to this environment. Each individual has their own personal stress threshold, which is why some people thrive in a certain setting and others suffer. This threshold will vary between individuals and across different situations and life stages. “Secondary stress management strategies can focus on developing self-awareness and providing individuals with a number of

basic relaxation techniques. Health promotion activities and lifestyle enhancement and modification programmes also fall into this category.”(Williams & Spur, 2007:30-31)

Stress education and stress management training serve a useful function in helping individuals to recognize the symptoms of stress, and to overcome much of the negativity and stigma still associated with the stress label. Awareness activities and skills training programmes designed to improve relaxation techniques, cognitive coping skills and work/lifestyle modification & enhancement skills (e.g. time management courses or assertiveness training) have an important part to play in extending the individual’s physical and psychological resources. They are partially useful in helping individuals deal with stressors inherent in the work environment that cannot be changed and have to be lived with, for example, job insecurity. Such training can also prove helpful to individuals in dealing with stress in other aspects of their life that is non-work related (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997: 9).

Although this “trend” or “perks” of lifestyle management is still new in Kenya, some top listed companies like Safaricom Limited are providing staff with services ranging from gym, spa facilities to crèches to help them deal with work related stress and achieve balance in their lives. (Safaricom, HR Manual, 2012ed.)In return these companies retained their best staff, boosted productivity and reduced absenteeism. But balancing work and non-work roles requires a purposeful appraisal of one’s career goals, strategies and conception of success. “Time-based conflicts extend beyond employees with families and it has become important to address the “balancing” of these roles. Planned rest periods after a period of high stress is a useful technique. This could be used on an hourly, daily, weekly and monthly basis. For every “peak” period,

employees must build in a “valley” area where they can rest, relax and restore themselves for the next challenge. Personal leave, “timeout” (e.g. lunchtime gym session) or paid sabbaticals are used frequently for this purpose.” Potgieter (1996) Taking sabbatical leave is also another way that can be used to manage work related stress. Newstrom and Davis (1989) advocate for health maintenance that stresses the necessity for proper diet, exercise and sleep.

2.4.3 Tertiary stress management strategies

Tertiary stress management strategies is concerned with the treatment, rehabilitation and recovery process of those individuals who have suffered or are suffering from serious ill health as a result of stress. Intervention strategies at the tertiary level typically involve the provision of counseling services for employee problems in the work or personal domain. Stress management programmes are developed in organizations to acquaint the employees with various techniques. These techniques can be used to improve certain practices within the organization that are likely to cause stress. These practices include; organizational restructuring, communication, health and safety risk management, induction, recruiting, and task management (Stephens & Long, 2000).

The need for counseling arises from a variety of employee problems, including stress. Counseling seeks to improve employee mental health. Good mental health means that people feel comfortable about themselves, right about other people, and to meet the demands of life. Counseling also helps the organization become more human and considerate of people’s problems. Employee Assistance Programmes EAPs provide counseling, information and/or referral to appropriate counseling treatment and support services. Counseling is discussion with an employee of a problem that usually has emotional content in order to help the employee cope with it better. Originally introduced in the United States of America (USA) to tackle alcohol

related problems, the concept of workplace counseling has since assumed a significantly wider focus. Such services are confidential and usually provide a 24-hour telephone contact line. Employees are able to voluntarily access these services or in some cases are referred by their occupational health function. Like stress management programmes, counseling services can be particularly effective in helping employees deal with workplace stressors that cannot be changed and non-work related stress (i.e. bereavement, marital breakdown, etc.), but which nevertheless tend to spill over into work life (Arthur, 2000; Clarke & Cooper 2000).

Corporate wellness centers may include disease screening, health education, and fitness centers. Health care specialists can recommend practices to encourage changes in lifestyle, such as meditation, yoga, breathing regulation, muscle relaxation, positive imagery, nutrition management, and exercise enabling employees to use more of their full potential. Clearly a preventive approach is better than reducing the causes of stress. Emotional wellness should also be taken care of for employees. Wellness programmes fall under the occupational health care programme for workers. The focus is on the improvement of emotional, physical and spiritual wellness of employees (Cooper & Cartwright, 1997; Potgieter, 1996). Emotional wellness is defined as a stage of complete well-being and not only the lack of symptomatic behaviour of employees (Matlala, 1999). Salutogenic (healthy) workplace behaviour is synonymous with the current concept of “wellness”, a term that refers to a conscious behavioural strategy that will optimize all areas of the employee’s life, including work, family, self, intellectual and social domains. Some characteristics of salutogenic work behaviour are goal directedness, productivity, acceptance of responsibility, dynamics, flexibility, initiative, concentration and creativity (Potgieter, 1996).

2.5 A Comparison of Stress Management Strategies

Whereas there is considerable activity at the secondary and tertiary level, primary strategies are comparatively rare. This is particularly the case in the USA and the UK. Organizations tend to prefer to introduce secondary and tertiary level stress management strategies for various reasons: There is relatively more published data available on the cost benefit analysis of such programmes, particularly EAPs (Berridge, Cooper & Highley, 1992); Those traditionally responsible for initiating interventions, that is, the counselors, physicians, and clinicians responsible for health care, feel more comfortable with changing individuals than changing organizations (Ivancevich, Matteson, Freedman & Philips, 1990: 253); It is considered easier and less disruptive to business to change the individual than to embark on any extensive and potentially expensive organizational development programme – the outcome of which may be uncertain (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994: 455); and They present a high profile means by which organizations can be seen to be doing something about stress and taking reasonable precautions to safeguard employee health.

Overall, evidence as to the success of interventions which focus at the individual level in isolation suggests that such interventions can make a difference in temporarily reducing experienced stress. Generally evidence as to the success of stress management training is confusing and imprecise, which possibly reflects the distinctive nature of the form and content of this kind of training. Some recent studies that have evaluated the outcome of stress management training have found a meek improvement in self-reported symptoms and psychological indices of strain (Reynolds, Taylor & Shapiro, 1993: 101), but little or no change in job satisfaction, work stress or blood pressure. Participants in a company-wide programme, for example, reported

improvements in health in the short term, but little was known about its long-term effect. Similarly, as discussed, counselling appears to be successful in treating and rehabilitating employees suffering from stress, but as they are likely to re-enter the same work environment as dissatisfied in their job and no more committed to the organization than they were before, potential productivity gains may not be maximized.

Firth-Cozens and Hardy (1992: 83) have suggested that, as symptom levels reduce as a result of clinical treatment for stress, job perceptions are likely to become more positive. However, such changes are likely to be short term if employees return to an unchanged work environment and its indigenous stressors. If such initiatives have little impact on improving job satisfaction, then it is more likely that the individual will adopt a way of coping with stress which may have positive individual outcomes, but may have negative implications for the organization (i.e. taking alternative employment). The evidence concerning the impact of health promotion activities has reached similar conclusions. Research findings which have examined the impact of lifestyle changes and health habits provide support that any benefits may not necessarily be sustained. Lifestyle and health promotion activities appear to be effective in reducing anxiety, depression and psychosomatic distress, but do not necessarily moderate the stressor-strain linkage. According to Inancevich et al (1990: 254-255), after a few years 70% of individuals who attend such programs revert to their previous lifestyle habits.

Furthermore, as most stress management programmes or lifestyle change initiatives are voluntary; this raises the issue as to the characteristics and health status of these participants who elect to participate. According to Cooper (1983: 371), participants tend to be the “worried well”

rather than the extremely distressed. Consequently, those employees who tend to need most help and are coping badly are not reached by these initiatives. In addition, access to such programmes is usually restricted to managers and relatively senior personnel within the organization. Given that smoking, alcohol abuse, obesity and coronary heart disease are more prevalent among the lower socioeconomic groups, and that members of these groups are likely to occupy positions within the organizational structure which they perceive afford them little or no opportunity to change or modify the stressors inherent in their working environment, the potential health of arguably the “most at risk” individuals are not addressed. Finally, the introduction of such programmes in isolation may serve to enhance employee perceptions of the organization as a caring employer – interested in their health and well-being – and so may contribute to create a “feel good” factor which is unlikely to be sustained if the work environment continues to remain stressful.

Secondary and tertiary stress management strategies have a useful role to play in stress prevention but as “stand alone” initiatives, they are not the complete answer unless attempts are also made to address the sources of stress itself (Cooper, 1983: 361). Cardiovascular fitness programmes may be successful in reducing the harmful effects of stress on the high-pressured executive, but such programmes will not eliminate the stressor itself, which may be over promotion or a poor relationship with his/her boss (Cooper, 1983: 365). Identifying and recognizing the problem and taking steps to tackle it, perhaps by negotiation, might arguably arrest the whole process. If, as has been discussed, experienced stress is related to the individual’s appraisal of an event or situation, an organization can reduce stress by altering the objective situation(e.g. by job redesign).A further limitation of secondary and tertiary stress

management strategies is that they do not directly address the important issue of control. This is particularly critical in terms of the health of blue-collar workers. Research has shown (Cooper, 1983: 376) that jobs which place high demands on the individual, but at the same time afford the individual little control or discretion, are inherently stressful. Stress management training may heighten the awareness of workers to environmental stressors which may be affecting their health, but because as individuals they may lack the resource or positional power to change them, they may arguably even exacerbate the problem.

Again there is not a great deal of research evidence which has evaluated the impact of primary stress management strategies on employee health and wellbeing. However, what exists has been consistently positive, particularly in showing the long-term beneficial effects. Treatment may often be easier than prevention, but it may only be an effective short-term strategy. In focusing at the outcome of the stress process (i.e. poor mental and physical health) and taking remedial action to redress that situation, the approach is essentially reactive and recuperative rather than proactive and preventative. In summary, secondary and tertiary stress management strategies are likely to be insufficient in maintaining employee health without the complementary approach of primary/stressor reduction initiatives. Secondary and tertiary level interventions extend the physical and psychological resources of the individual, particularly in relation to stressors which cannot be changed, but those resources are ultimately limited. Tertiary level interventions are likely to be particularly effective in dealing with non-work related stress. Evidence from workplace counselling programmes indicates that approximately a quarter of all problems presented concerned relationships outside of work (Arthur, 2000: 221). Organizations

considering counseling schemes should recognize that counselling is a highly skilled business and requires extensive training.

2.6 Conclusion

The previous sections has emphasized the importance and potential cost benefits to the organization of introducing initiatives and strategies to reduce and manage stress and promote employee health and well-being in the workplace. Action to reduce stress at work is usually prompted by some organizational problem or crisis, for example, escalating rates of sickness, absence or labour turnover. Consequently, actions then to be driven by a desire to reduce or arrest costs rather than the desire to maximize potential and improve competitive edge. The danger of this type of approach is that once sickness absence or labour turnover rates stabilize at an acceptable level, intervention strategies may lose their momentum and be considered no longer necessary. It has to be recognized that stress is dynamic and in a rapidly changing environment, is unlikely to ever disappear completely, but needs to be regularly monitored and addressed. Organizations need to consider stress prevention not only as a means of cost reduction or containment but also as a means of maintaining and improving organizational health and increasing productivity. The costs of stress and the collective health and wealth of organizations and their employees are of great importance to society as a whole. Occupational stress is not just an organizational problem but a wider societal problem which should ultimately be shared by all organizations.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the study described the target population, outline the sampling techniques, define the research instruments, and detail the data collection procedures and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

Research design consisted of methods or procedures used to collect and analyse the data. The researcher used descriptive survey design which involved collecting data in order to answer the research questions.

3.3 Population of the study

The target population was all the employees of Kenya Power which at the time of the study stood at 6,509 employees. The respondents were employees from the different departments.

Table 3.1 Population by department

Department	Total number of employees	Percentage
Marketing	346	5.3
Finance	450	6.9
Human Resources	600	9.2
Customer Service	810	12.4
Engineering	950	14.6
Projects	745	11.4
Security	500	7.7
Transport & Dispatch	575	8.8
Information Technology	400	6.1
Public relations	305	4.7
Support staff	314	4.9
Procurement	200	3.1
Telecommunications	314	4.9
Total	6509	100.0

Source: Kenya Power, 2013

3.4 Sample Design

A sample is a sub-set of the target population while sampling is a process of selecting subjects or cases to be included in the study of the representative of the target population (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). The researcher used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table generated using the following formula.

$$s = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}.$$

s = required sample size.

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05)

From the table the population of 6,509 resulted in a sample of 361 employees based on the population in each department.

Table 3.2 Sample by department

Department	Population	Percentage	Sample size
Marketing	346	5.3	19
Finance	450	6.9	25
Human Resources	600	9.2	33
Customer Service	810	12.4	45
Engineering	950	14.6	52
Projects	745	11.4	41
Security	500	7.7	28
Transport & Dispatch	575	8.8	32
Information Technology	400	6.1	22
Public relations	305	4.7	17
Support staff	314	4.9	18
Procurement	200	3.1	11
Telecommunications	314	4.9	18
Total	6509	100.0	361

3.5 Data Collection

The sources of primary data were the questionnaires which were distributed randomly to the sample respondents. The questionnaire was semi-structured and comprised of both closed-ended and open-ended questions because the combination enabled the researcher to get the

objective responses and also provide alternatives for respondents to choose from. This method was preferred to others because of the large number of the respondents.

3.6 Data analysis

The data was analyzed by means of descriptive statistics. To summarize and relate variables which were obtained from the administered questionnaires. The data was classified, tabulated and summarized using descriptive measures, percentages and frequency distribution tables while tables and graphs were used for presentation of findings. However, before final analysis was performed, data was cleaned to eliminate discrepancies and thereafter, classified on the basis of similarity and then tabulated. In accomplishing all analysis details with efficiency and effectiveness, the researcher utilized the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The research objective was to establish strategies for managing work related stress among the employees of Kenya Power. This chapter presents the analysis, findings and discussion. All completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. The findings are presented in percentages and frequency distributions, means and standard deviations.

4.2 Response Rate

The study targeted a total of 361 employees as the respondents. However, a total of 285 questionnaires were returned, thus the response rate was 78.9%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a response rate of 70% and over is excellent and adequate for analysis and reporting. The findings were presented using frequency tables, graphs, mean and standard deviation.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics considered in the study were the respondents' age bracket, gender and the marital status. This was done so as to understand the background of the respondents and their work ability to give relevant data useful to the study.

4.3.1 Age of the respondents

The study sought to find out the age bracket of the respondents. This information was important since the respondents' age influences the strategies used to manage of stress. The findings were presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Age of the respondents

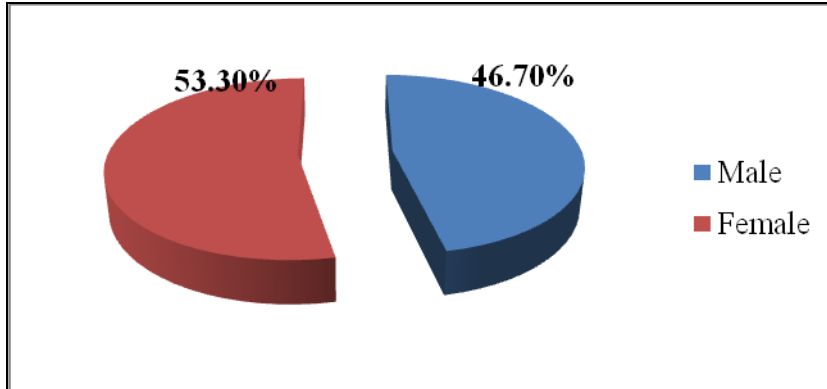
Years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
21 – 30	101	35.3	35.3
31 – 40	127	44.7	80.0
41 – 50	50	17.7	97.3
51 – 60	7	2.3	100.0
Total	285	100.0	

The results on the respondents age bracket indicate that 44.7% of the respondents age bracket was between 31 and 40 years, 35.3% of the respondents indicated that their age bracket was 21 to 30 years, 17.7% of the respondents said that their age was between 41 and 50 years while 2.3% of the respondents indicated that they were over 51 to 60 years. The results indicate that all ages were represented although majority of the employees' were middle aged and therefore and therefore the views of all ages was taken into consideration on the strategies used by the company to manage work related stress.

4.3.2 Respondents' Gender

The study sought to find the gender of the respondents in order to ensure that the results obtained captures the views of both gender. The results are presented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Respondents Gender



The findings indicate that 53.3% of the respondents were female while 46.7% were male. The findings indicate that the study had almost equal ratios of males and females and hence the study was not skewed towards any gender.

4.3.3 Respondents Marital Status

The respondents were requested to indicate their marital status. This was important for the study in order to determine the influence that the marital status has on work related stress and the success of the strategies adopted by the company to combat stress as shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Respondents Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Single-Never married	109	38.3	38.3
Single- divorced	38	13.4	51.7
Single-widow	24	8.30	60.0
Married/living together	114	40.0	100.0
Total	285	100.0	

The findings indicate that 40% of the respondents are married and living together with their spouses, 38.3% of the respondents indicated that they have never married, 13.4% of the respondents indicated that they were single as a result of divorce while 8.3% of the respondents noted that they were widows. The results indicate that the marital status of the employees differed and therefore the strategies put in place by the management of the company have to consider the status of the employees.

4.4 Stress Management Strategies

While some workplace stress is normal, excessive stress can interfere with one's productivity and impact on physical and emotional health. Finding ways to manage workplace stress is not about making huge changes or rethinking career ambitions, but rather about focusing on the one thing that's always within employee control. The measurement items were rated on a five point Likert scale with 1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = sometimes; 4 =often; and 5 = always. The mean scores were computed for each item. Means below 3.0 indicate low levels of influence by the strategy on work related stress while means above 3.0 indicate high level of influence by the strategy on work related stress.

4.4.1 Primary Stress Management Strategies adopted by the Company

The respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which the company uses primary stress management strategies to manage work related stress. This was important to the study as the work environment influences the performance of employees.

Table 4.3: Primary Stress Management Strategies

Primary Stress Management Strategies	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees have insufficient office space while carrying out their duties	2.6167	1.3415
Air circulation is not adequate	2.3526	1.3125
Employees struggle visually as the lighting is poor	2.1319	1.2817
Employees feel that they have too heavy workload which they cannot possibly finish during the normal workday	3.3297	1.0651
Employees do not clearly understand their job description	2.0833	1.2794
Employees have other demands that interfere with other personal activities	2.7185	1.1542

The findings presented in Table 4.3 indicate the distribution of responses on the level of agreement with the primary stress management strategies at Kenya Power. The findings indicate that the respondents were in agreement that sometimes the company employees feel that they have too heavy workload which they cannot possibly finish during the normal workday with a mean of 3.3297. The respondents who agreed were 37.8% while those who disagreed were 32.2%. They disagreed that employees have other demands that interfere with other personal activities with a mean of 2.7185. The employees who agreed were 23.4% of the respondents while 76.6% of the respondents disagreed. They further disagreed that employees have insufficient office space while carrying out their duties and that air circulation was not adequate with a mean of 2.6167 and 2.3526 respectively.

The results further established that the respondents disagreed that the employees struggle visually as the lighting is poor with a mean of 2.1319 and that employees do not clearly understand their job description with a mean score of 2.0833. From the findings, it can be concluded that the company employees are satisfied with the office space that ensures adequate air circulation and lighting while other employee demands do not interfere with personal activities. The employees however are affected by heavy workload which they cannot possibly finish during the normal workday and this needs to be relooked by the management in order to ensure that the employees are not stressed.

4.4.2 Secondary Stress Management Strategies adopted by the Company

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the company uses secondary stress management strategies as prompt detection and management of stress enables the company to come up with ways of managing stress among the employees.

Table 4.4: Secondary Stress Management Strategies

Secondary stress management strategies	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees engage in physical activities which are great protection against stress and stress related illness	3.6149	1.0871
Employees eat healthy diet towards having healthy lifestyle	3.9735	1.2414
Employees are recommended to use medication for many diseases connected with stress	2.0516	1.2679
Employees practice yoga which enables them to control stress on a physical and mental level	2.1159	1.3148

From the findings, the respondents noted that the company employees eat healthy diet towards having healthy lifestyle with a mean 3.9735. The results in show that 82.6% of the respondents agreed while 17.4% of the respondents disagreed. They further agreed that the employees engage in physical activities which are great protection against stress and stress related illness with a mean score of 3.6149. On the percentage of the respondents who agreed, the study found out that 71.4% of the respondents agreed while 28.6% of the respondents disagreed.

The respondents disagreed that employees practice yoga which enables them to control stress on a physical and mental level with a mean of 2.1159 and that the employees are recommended to use medication for many diseases connected with stress with a mean of 2.0516. On the percentage form, 83.9% of the respondents disagreed that employees practice yoga which enables them to control stress on a physical and mental level while 16.1% of the respondents agreed. On whether the employees are recommended to use medication for many diseases connected with stress, 88.7% of the respondents disagreed while 11.3% of the respondents agreed with the statement. From the findings, it can be concluded that the company employees ensures that they eat healthy diet and engage in physical activities which are great protection against stress and this ensures that the employees are fit both physically and mentally.

4.4.3 Tertiary Stress Management Strategies used by the Company

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the company uses tertiary stress management strategies to tackle work related stress. The results are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Tertiary Stress Management Strategies used by the Company

Tertiary stress management strategies used by the Company	Mean	Std. Deviation
Employees are involved in stress management programmes developed in organizations to acquaint the employees with various techniques such as meditation, yoga, relaxation training, managing of lifestyle	3.3189	1.3109
Wellness programmes have been developed to help employees to maintain their physical and mental health	3.8364	.9943
Wellness programmes help to reduce employee stress	3.9613	1.1344
Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) support employees facing problems such as career planning, counseling, financial and legal advice	3.6672	1.0245
Employee assistance programmes help to reduce employee stress	4.0500	1.0644
Employees can talk to line manager about something that has upset or annoyed them about work	3.1835	1.3056
Employees are given supportive feedback on the work they do	3.6547	1.1323

The findings indicate that the respondents were in agreement that employee assistance programmes and wellness programmes help to reduce employee stress with a mean of 4.05 and

3.9613 respectively. The respondents further noted that wellness programmes have been developed to help employees to maintain their physical and mental health with a mean of 3.8364. They further noted that employee assistance programmes support employees facing problems such as career planning, counseling, financial and legal advice with a mean of 3.6672. The respondents established that the employees are given supportive feedback on the work they do and involved in stress management programmes developed in organizations to acquaint the employees with various techniques such as meditation, yoga, relaxation training, managing of lifestyle with a mean of 3.6547 and 3.3189 respectively. The respondents further indicated that the employees can talk to line manager about something that has upset or annoyed them about work with a mean of 3.1835.

From the findings, it can be concluded that the company manages stress among the employees through wellness and assistance programmes, employee involvement in stress management programmes, employees being given supportive feedback and employees having opportunity to discuss issues affecting their performance with the line managers. This will ensure that the employees participate in the management of stress in the company thus resulting in desirable outcomes.

4.5 Discussion

An organization's success or failure is highly determined by effective and efficient utilization of resources at its disposal, such as human, material, financial, and information resources. Among these four resources, the human resource is the most important part and crucial of all resources for the survival of an organization or business firms. The study found that the company

employees are satisfied with the office space that ensures adequate air circulation and lighting while other employee demands do not interfere with personal activities. The results corroborates Rice (1992) findings that primary stress management strategies used to reduce and manage work related stress includes: redesign the task; redesign the work environment; establish flexible work schedules; encourage participative management; include the employee in career development; analyze work roles and establish goals; provide social support and feedback; build cohesive teams; establish fair employment policies; and share the rewards. At the same time it confirms Lawler's (2003) argument that different theories questioning why people prefer certain careers, why they seek particular rewards and why they feel satisfied or dissatisfied with their work and rewards are inextricably linked.

Competitive advantages stemming from human resources are vital for firms' success in the contemporary, dynamic, business environment. The stress impacts the overall business performance since the business actually comprises of individuals who run the show. Williams and Spur (2007) noted that secondary stress management strategies focus on developing self-awareness and providing individuals with a number of basic relaxation techniques. Health promotion activities and lifestyle enhancement and modification programmes also fall into this category. This was consistent with the findings of the study which were that the company employees ensures that they eat healthy diet and engage in physical activities which are great protection against stress. Cooper and Cartwright (1997) further noted that awareness activities and skills training programmes designed to improve relaxation techniques, cognitive coping skills and work/lifestyle modification and enhancement skills (e.g. time management courses or

assertiveness training) have an important part to play in extending the individual's physical and psychological resources.

Problems encountered by firms nowadays could be attributed to an extent to the inadequate alignment between a firm's strategies and its human resources thereby resulting into an ineffective response to the continuous changes taking place in the international and complex, environment where firms nowadays operate. The study found out that the company manages stress among the employees through wellness and assistance programmes, employee involvement in stress management programmes, employees being given supportive feedback and employees having opportunity to discuss issues affecting their performance with the line managers. Stress management programmes are developed in organizations to acquaint the employees with various techniques. These practices include; organizational restructuring, communication, health and safety risk management, induction, recruiting, and task management (Stephens and Long, 2000). Cooper and Cartwright (1997) further noted that wellness programmes focus on the improvement of emotional, physical and spiritual wellness of employees.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to give an overview of findings, conclusion and recommendation.

The conclusions are made from the analysis and the objective of the research.

5.2 Summary

The objective of the study was to determine the strategies for managing work-related stress among the employees of Kenya Power. The study established that the all the age bracket were represented and therefore the views of all ages was taken into consideration on the strategies used by the company to manage work related stress. The findings indicate that the study had almost equal ratios of males and females and hence the study was not skewed towards any gender. The results indicate that the marital status of the employees differed and therefore the strategies put in place by the management of the company have to consider the status of the employees.

Stress is a complex and dynamic issue and it can arise through a number of interrelated influences on behavior, including the individual, group, organizational and environmental factors. The study established that primary stress management strategies used by the company includes office space that ensures adequate air circulation and lighting and ensuring that all the employees clearly understand their job description while other employee demands do not interfere with personal activities. The employees however are affected by heavy workload which they cannot possibly finish during the normal workday. Secondary stress management strategies

were found further to have been used by the company to manage employee stress. The strategies used were eating healthy diet and engaging in physical activities which are great protection against stress. The study found out that the employees does not practice yoga and employees being advised to use medication for many diseases connected with stress.

Strong relationship among organizations and employees is an instrument for success in fulfilling the needs of changing work environment for both the parties as a great amount of worldwide wealth occurs in a form of human capital. Therefore managing human resources plays a crucial role in a process of increasing companies' effectiveness. Tertiary stress management strategies were found to be used mostly by the company to manage employee stress. The strategies used was found to be development of wellness and assistance programmes, employee involvement in stress management programmes, employees being given supportive feedback and employees having opportunity to discuss issues affecting their performance with the line managers.

5.3 Conclusion

With the changing competitive business environment the effective and efficient use of resources is very important for the survival of organization in market. Employees' performance and efficiency is among the factors that affect the success of these businesses. Since ultimately it is the human resources that determine the success and failure of the organization, the management of human resources plays a very crucial role in the overall management system of the organization. Attracting and selecting the most competent employees to the organization is not enough. Getting the maximum benefit from its employees is the aim of organizations and managers. This, of course, requires a very good understanding of human behavior by the

company in the organizational settings through management of the employees stress level which are likely to be at different levels for the different employees.

The study revealed that management of work related stress was being pursued by the company through the primary, secondary and tertiary stress management strategies. Primary stress management strategy was achieved through office space that ensures adequate air circulation and lighting and ensuring that all the employees clearly understand their job description while other employee demands do not interfere with personal activities and therefore the working environment of the employees has to be designed in such a way that will ensure employees are comfortable thus improving their performance. Stress management cannot be tackled without the support of both the company and the employees and therefore when the company comes up with strategies that will ensure that employees stress level is minimized the employees also should play their part and therefore by eating well and engaging in physical activities the employees were playing their role. The company ensured that the stress level was minimized in the company through the development of wellness and assistance programmes, employee involvement in stress management programmes, employees being given supportive feedback and employees having opportunity to discuss issues affecting their performance with the line managers.

5.4 Limitations to the Study

Despite the research having met its objectives, there were challenges that were experienced by the researcher. The respondents did not have enough time to answer the questions and thus led to the delay in receiving the same. This therefore might have comprised on the quality of the

response from the researcher. Since this researcher was a case study carried out within the working culture and environment of the Kenya Power, perhaps a survey of more companies should be undertaken to get a much representative results. Other companies may therefore have different cultures, structures, competencies and resource capabilities and hence display different reactions to work related stress.

5.5 Recommendations

This study makes several recommendations for policy implementation and also suggest for further research.

First and foremost, the study established that the company ensured that the employees have adequate space that ensures adequate air circulation and lighting. It is therefore recommended that the company should ensure they pursue strategies that will ensure that the employees work environment is conducive in order to deliver on their work. Other organizations should also pursue the primary strategy in order to ensure that the employees' performance is not hindered by the work environment.

Secondly, the study revealed that secondary stress management strategy was utilized in the company to manage employees stress and it is recommended that the company should organize regular stress education and stress management training as it serve a useful function in helping employees to recognize the symptoms of stress, and to overcome much of the negativity and stigma still associated with the stress label.

Lastly, the company was found to be using tertiary stress management strategy, it is therefore recommended that the company should stress management programmes that will help employees

deal with workplace stressors that cannot be changed and non-work related stress. The finding provides an important reference and new insight for practitioners in understanding how work place stress is managed through the provision of the foundation of the study. As organizations compete for human resource, results from the present study offer some implications for both research and practice. As for practical implications, the findings from present study offer important insights for executives in formulating strategies that ensures that the organization human resource stress level is minimized.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

The study confined itself to Kenya Power. This research therefore should be replicated in other sectors to establish the strategies used for managing work related stress among employees. Further studies needs to be undertaken on the factors that causes stress in the organizations. Further research is required on the effect of work related stress to enable a comparison to be made between the strategies and effects of work related stress to assist the company in making amendments where necessary in order to achieve the desired performance.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section of the questionnaire is used for statistical purposes only.

1. Indicate your **age** by making an X in the appropriate box:

Under 21	<input type="checkbox"/>	31 – 40	<input type="checkbox"/>	51 – 60	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 - 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	41 – 50	<input type="checkbox"/>	61 or over	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Indicate your **gender** by making an X in the appropriate box:

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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3. Indicate your **marital status** by making an X in the appropriate box:

Single – never married	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single – Widow	<input type="checkbox"/>
Single – divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>	Married/ Living together	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Indicate your position in the organization.

SECTION B: STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Indicate by marking X in the appropriate box:

1-Never

2-Seldom

3-Sometimes

4-Often

5-Always

Primary Stress Management Strategies		1	2	3	4	5
<i>Primary stress management strategies are concerned with taking action to change or eliminate sources of stress inherent in the work environment.</i>						
1	I have insufficient office space while carrying out my duties					
2	The air circulation is not adequate					
3	I am struggling visually as the lighting is poor					
4	I feel that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal workday					

5	I do not clearly understand my job description					
6	I have job demands that interfere with other personal activities (e.g. family, recreation)					
Secondary Stress Management Strategies						
<i>Secondary stress management strategies are concerned with the prompt detection and management of experienced stress by increasing awareness and improving the stress management skills of the individual through training and educational activities.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5
1	I engage in physical activities such as jogging, walking, dancing, swimming and cycling are a great protection against stress and stress related illnesses.					
2	I eat a healthy diet towards having healthy lifestyle					
3	Physicians recommend meditation for many diseases connected with stress such as heart conditions, shortness of breath and problems with the stomach. Do you meditate?					
4	Yoga is an Indian method that enables individuals to control stress on a physical and mental level. Do you practice yoga?					

Tertiary Stress Management Strategies

Tertiary stress management strategies is concerned with the treatment, rehabilitation and recovery process of those individuals who have suffered or are suffering from serious ill health as a result of stress.

		1	2	3	4	5
3	I am involved in stress management programmes developed in the organization to acquaint the employees with various techniques such as meditation, yoga, relaxation training & managing of lifestyle.					
4	Wellness programmes have been developed to help employees to maintain their physical and mental health. These programmes consist of workshops that train employees how to perform some of the stress reducing individual behaviors, such as losing weight, exercising and giving up smoking. Does your organization provide such programmes?					
5	Do you think wellness programmes would help to reduce your stress?					
6	Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) support employees assistance in facing problems such as career planning, counselling, financial and legal advice. Does your organization provide such a programme to you?					

7	Do you think employee assistance programmes would help to reduce your stress?					
8	I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work.					
9	I am given supportive feedback on the work I do.					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.