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# Relationship between Police Officers' Religiosity and Occupational Burnout in Arusha City, Tanzania

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**Abstract**: This study sought to establish the relationship between religiosity and occupational burnout among police officers in Arusha City, Tanzania using the sample of 218 participants through questionnaire. Data was treated through descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-moment Correlation, t-test and ANOVA. The study established that police officers experienced low level of occupational burnout. Much as they considered their occupation to be stressful and frustrating, their actual level of occupational burnout was low. The police officers possessed high level of religiosity. Selected demographic factors determined the difference in occupational burnout. Based on the conclusions, the study recommended that since religiosity has been established as a powerful way of reducing occupational stress, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should create opportunities for the police officers to be exposed to religious services such as devotional prayers before they embark on their daily routines. Furthermore, police officers should be granted opportunity to attend religious services at their respective religious institutions for reduced occupational burnout to be realized.

Keywords: Occupational burnout; religiosity; stress; police officers; Tanzania.

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## Introduction

Burnout is an exceeding encounter with stress in the work place. Greenberg and Baron (2000) described burnout as a condition when employees fail to control stressful situations in their working places. The authors report that some people manage to cope up with stressful situations at the work place while others do not manage. Those who manage, continue to function despite their daily encounters with various stressors. Others seem to be worn down by repeated exposure to stress. Such people are often considered as suffering from burnout by demonstrating several characteristics at their working place and even at other environments such as at home.

According to Mosley et al. (2008), burnout is one of most common results of excessive stress in the work place or even at some other places. The authors argued that burnout is a stress- related malady that generally originates from the settings where people invest most of their time and energy in fulfilling daily undertakings. They further argued that most hardworking employees are most likely to experience burnout cases than those who are less hardworking. They argued that candidates for job burnout have three distinguishing characteristics:

First, they experience stress caused predominantly by job related stressors. Secondly, they tend to be idealistic or rather self-motivated achievers. Finally, they tend to seek unattainable goals.

Studies of Robert and Robert as cited by Mosley et al. (2008) indicated that 40% of 12,000 people in 33 organizations suffered from advanced burnout. This finding suggests that burnout is a serious problem that if not addressed properly may affect the life of many employees in organizations. While this is true in various types of organizations, Police Force is reported to be one among most stressful occupations and therefore, it is most likely that police officers experience burnout levels due to failure to control experienced stressors. A recent study by Santa Maria et al. (2021) considered burnout as a serious health concern among police officers because the job of police officers is stressful and demanding, characterized with various and operational occupational stressors like confrontation with violence, negative citizen encounters or shift work. The study of Queirós et al. (2020b) demonstrated that policing is a stressful occupation and that the stress has a negative impact on police officers' mental and physical health, performance and interactions with citizens.

In Tanzania, Morice (2012 investigated on the effect of stress among police officers. The study revealed That Police is a stressful profession and it is among the world's most stressful occupations. A recent study by Njiro et al. (2021) investigated on depression, suicidality and associated risk factors among police officers in the country and concluded that around 19.8% of the police officers screened positive for depression and 15.4% for suicidality. Furthermore, a significant proportion was either moderately or severely depressed. Of those who experienced suicidal thoughts, 10.7% reported having daily suicidal thoughts.

The study of Alves et al. (2023) recommended that more attention must be paid to police officers' mental health in relation to possible factors that may reduce chances for burnout among the police officers. In response, this study sought to correlate religiosity and occupational burnout among the Police Officers. This attempt was prompted by the fact that previous studies indicated the power of religiosity as a panacea for burnout cases in various occupations. The study of Abdel-Khalek (2019), for instance, reported that religiosity reduces anxiety by providing buffering and coping mechanisms. The study of Misran et al (2021), on the other hand, revealed that religiosity serves as a preventive factor for depression. In that study, some religiosity components such as avoidance of sinful acts and frequent conduct of recommended acts were found to be a significant protective factor against anxiety and depression. The study recommended that incorporation of religious components may bring about good promising results in aiding the recovery process.

This study, therefore, sought to establish the relationship between religiosity and occupational burnout among the Police Officers in Tanzania, taking the Arusha City as a case. While previous studies indicated that burnout is negatively related to performance (Gomes, 2022), the head of the state in Tanzania, President Samia Suluhu Hassan disapproved the performance of Police Officers in the country due to their serious misconducts. The Head of State, on a number of occasions, publicly expressed her disapproval of the Police Force's general conducts including untimely delivery of justice, offensive language, corruption and the use of excessive force. These trends constitute poor performance, which has been linked by previous studies with burnout. Based on previous findings that religiosity could be a possible panacea for excessive anxiety, which leads into the burnout syndrome (Misran, et al, 2021; Njiro et al., 2021; Bal & Kökalan, 2021), this study sought to establish the relationship between burnout and religiosity of police officers in Arusha City.

#### **Literature Review**

This section dealt with both the theoretical and the empirical literature review to throw light on the variables under investigation and to expose findings of previous studies and how they relate with this study.

#### **Theoretical Underpinnings**

This study was underpinned by the Social Identity Theory which holds that joining a religious community leads to development of an individual's self-concept or beliefs about themselves. This may explain the benefits of religious participation on mental health. The theory holds that religion has an important effect on people's behaviors (Bal & Kökalan (2021). Literature has presented the power of religion in alleviating burnout. Maslach and Schaufeli (1993), for instance, argued that religion provides a better answer to existing work related issues. Out of the Social Identity Theory, it is believed that participation in religious affairs can be

a potential panacea for stress and subsequent burnout.

#### **Trends in Occupational Burnout**

Occupational Burnout is a common phenomenon at working places. According to Jaskani et al. (2014), burnout is an extreme level of negative emotions towards job; it is a state where employees usually are unable to work effectively. Farber (2000a) argued that while many definitions of burnout have been proposed, most tend to rely on Maslach and Jackson's delineation of three central factorsemotional exhaustion. lack of personal accomplishment and depersonalization. Grosch and Olsen (2000), contended that burnout is the result of external systemic factors such as bureaucracy, poor administrative support and difficult work conditions. Using teachers as a prototype, Farber (2000b) suggested that there are three types of burnout: wear out: wherein an individual gives up, feeling depleted in confronting stress, classic burnout: wherein an individual works increasingly hard in the face of stress, and under-challenged: wherein an individual is faced not with excessive degrees of stress but rather with monotonous and unstimulating work conditions.

According to Shirom (2010), burnout is an affective reaction to ongoing stress whose core content is the gradual depletion over time of individuals' intrinsic energy resources. The study of Fimian (1988) expressed predictors of classroom stress and burnout experienced by gifted and talented students. The study established that student's age, sex, birth order, IQ and achievement level bore little relationship to either stress or burnout. On the contrary, poor self-esteem, an externalized locus of control, high levels of state and trait anxiety, poor school life quality and tedium proved to be significant predictors of classroom stress. Similarly, Reiner and Hartshorne (1982) revealed that age, years of experience and sex were not significantly related to burnout. On the contrary, major identified stressors included excessive caseloads, lack of time and lack of support or appreciation. indicate These findings that surrounding environmental factors are critical predictors of one's being exposed to burnout.

Darwazeh (2016) studied on the impact of the internal work environment on the degree of job burnout among civil status and passports department employees. The study discovered a significant effect of internal work environment on

the degree of burnout. The study recommended the need to pay attention to workers and the creation of a strong social relationship environment so as to reduce the identified burnout among the employees.

#### **Occupational Burnout and Religiosity**

The essence of establishing the relationship between burnout and religiosity centers on the fact that the magnitude of depression and suicidality among police officers in urban Tanzania is alarming and study findings suggest a need for routine screening depression and suicidality among police officers and to design appropriate mental health responsive services. Empirical literature has indicated the relationship between religiosity and burnout in the sense that participation in religious affairs such as attendance to worship services reduces the burnout level of individuals. The study of Bal and Kökalan (2021), for instance, reported that religion has an important effect on people's positive behaviors. While religiosity has interesting implications toward mental health, the study of Misran et al. (2021) concentrated on religiosity and mental health crisis. The study revealed that mental health reduces psychological problems.

# Methodology

#### **Research Design**

This study used the descriptive research design which according to Kothari (2014) is also referred to as ex post facto research. In this design, the researcher has no control over the variables being investigated but he or she reports only what happened or what is happening. In this design, there is also a possibility of comparing or correlating variables. Therefore, the researchers in this study described the existing occupational burnout levels and the extent to which respondents engaged in religious activities. They also correlated religiosity and occupational burnout. The study used the quantitative research approach which is also referred to as positivism (Beuving & Geert, 2015).

#### Population and sampling

This study was addressed to Police Officers. The total number of Police Officers in Arusha city is around 546. The researchers used the simple random sampling procedure to determine the sample. According to Henry 2010), simple random sampling is one that allows equal chances of selection for each unit in the population. For that matter, the 546 Police Officers were randomly selected using a simple random sampling procedure

to attract 218 (40%) of the population, which the researchers deemed satisfactory. The response rate was 198 (90.8%).

#### Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to two research experts from the Institute of Accountancy Arusha to read and advise whether it can measure what is intended to be measured. After this stage, the instrument was administered in the field for checking whether actually respondents managed to understand the questions and answer them

accordingly. Based on the findings, the questionnaire was adjusted prior to the actual data collection. On the other hand, after collection of the pilot data, a statistical analysis was run through the SPSS to measure the reliability using the Cronbach's Alpha with .700 as a cutting point for acceptable reliability. The result of the pilot study data yielded the Cronbach's alpha of .876 for occupational stress and .948 for religiosity as appears in table 1. This suggests that the questionnaire was reliable for data collection.

Table 1: Reliability Test								
SN	Variable	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation				
1	Occupational Stress	8	.876	Reliable				
2	Religiosity	10	.948	Reliable				
	Table 2: D	emograp	hics of Respondents					
SN			f	%				
1	Gender							
	Male		79	39.8				
	Female		119	60.1				
	TOTAL		198	100				
2	Age							
	20 to 30		54	27.3				
	31 to 40		62	31.3				
	41 to 50		45	22.7				
	51 and Above		37	18.7				
	TOTAL		198	100				
3	Religious Affiliation							
	Christian		98	49.5				
	Muslim		96	48.5				
	Any Other		4	2				
	TOTAL		198	100				
4	Worship Attenda	nce						
	Every Week		79	39.9				
	Once in a While		83	41.9				
	Never		34	18.2				
	TOTAL		36	100				

#### **Ethical Considerations**

The researchers made sure that ethical issues are cleared before the collection of data. One of key ethical issues in research is agreement of respondents to participate in the study, which is referred to as informed consent whereby respondents agree to participate in a study after being informed of its purpose and procedures (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). This was accomplished through a face to face session with the respondents at their place of work whereby the researchers used five to ten minutes to explain that. Before data collection, the researchers obtained a research permit from the Institute of Accountancy Arusha which was taken to the Arusha Regional Administrative Secretary for allowing the researchers to conduct the survey. Finally, names of respondents were not exposed.

#### **Results and Discussion**

Presentation of results begins with demographic characteristics of respondents and then moves into the analysis of research questions that guided the study.

#### **Demographics of Respondents**

Table 2 presents demographic characteristics of respondents in terms of gender, age, religious affiliation and worship attendance.

In terms of gender, 79 (39.8%) were males while 119 (60.1%) were females. Therefore, the majority of those who participated in the study were females as compared to their male counterparts. Whereas respondents were classified according to age, 54 (27.3%) were in the age group of 20 to 30 years old. On the other hand, 62 (31.3%) were in the age group of 31 to 40. Furthermore, 45 (22.7%) were in the age group of 41 to 50 and 37 (18.7%) were in the age group of 51 and above. Therefore, respondents were scattered in various age groups. In terms of religious affiliation, 98 (45.9%) were Christians while 96 (48.5%) belonged to Islam religion. On the other hand, 4 respondents (2%) belonged to other religions apart from Christianity and Islam. Therefore, respondents came from a variety of religions.

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of burnout among the Police Officers in Arusha City?

In response to this research question, the questionnaire had four options: (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree and 4= strongly agree) to which respondents had to tick the best option per item in the questionnaire. The interpretation of the mean scores was as follows: 1.00-1.49= strongly disagree (very low burnout), 1.50-2.49= disagree (low burnout), 2.50-3.49= agree (high burnout) and 3.50-4.00=strongly agree (very high burnout).

Table 3 indicates the overall mean score of 2.2841 which is between 1.50 and 2.49 signifying low level of burnout.

	Table 3: The Rate of Occupational Burnout						
SN	Item in the Questionnaire	Mean	Std. Dev Interpretation				
1	My job is stressful and frustrating		1.1185 High burnout				
2	I find it hard to concentrate in my duties		.97890 Low burnout				
3	I experience lack of energy to fulfil professional duties		1.04043 Low burnout				
4	I experience excessive physical tiredness at workplace		.95213 Low burnout				
5	I experience emotional exhaustion at workplace		.96096 Low burnout				
6	My general performance of duties is not satisfactory	2.2020	1.10816 Low burnout				
7	I experience emotional exhaustion at workplace	2.1515	.94910 Low burnout				
8	I experience physical pain and stomach upset while at work	2.1212	1.12446 Low burnout				
	Overall	2.2841	.76721 Low burnout				
Table 4: The Rate of Religiosity							
SNIte	em in the Questionnaire	Mean	Std. Dev. Interpretation				
1 Pe	1 People who visit me mention God as source of help		.81869 High Religiosity				
2 I a	.92646 High Religiosity						
3 Th	e presence of faithful/ religious people brings hope	3.1061	.95793 High Religiosity				
4 W	orship service gives me courage to carry on	3.0808	.97353 High Religiosity				
5 I f	ind time to pray alone or in groups	3.0606	1.01580 High Religiosity				
6 Ia	ttend worship services regularly	3.0556	1.09078 High Religiosity				
7 I p	articipate in family worship time	3.0202	1.05176 High Religiosity				
8 Th	e love of fellow believers I associate with strengthens me	2.9899	1.01256 High Religiosity				
9 I a	I actively participate in religious activities at a place of worship 2.9394 1.06935 High Religios						
10 I f	LO I find time to read religious literature 2.8434 1.12684 High Religion						
	/erall	3.0631	.81447 High Religiosity				

Table 3: The Rate of Occupational Burnout

The first item scored the mean of 2.5130 which suggests high level of burnout in the sense that the police officers considered their job stressful and frustrating. The perceived stress and burnout by the police officers match previous study findings by Queirós (2020b) which revealed that policing is a stressful occupation, which impairs police officers' physical and mental health and elicits burnout, aggressive behaviors and suicide. However, the rest of the items in the table scored between 1.50 and 2.49 which means that the police officers generally had lower level of occupational burnout. These results concur with the findings of Queirós et al. (2020a) who presented a literature review study regarding burnout and stress measurement among the police officers and discovered moderate values of operational stress, distress and burnout among police officers.

**Research Question 2:** What is the religiosity level of the Police Officers in Arusha City?

As reflected in table 4, the questionnaire had four options (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree and 4= strongly agree) to which respondents had to

tick the best option per item in the questionnaire. The interpretation of the mean scores were as follows: 1.00-1.49= strongly disagree (very low religiosity), 1.50-2.49= disagree (low religiosity), 2.50-3.49= agree (high religiosity) and 3.50-4.00=strongly agree (very high religiosity).

The overall mean score was 3.0631 signifying high level of religiosity among the police officers in Arusha City. This fact is supported by the demographics of respondents which indicated that all respondents belonged to a certain religion, majority being Christians, followed by Muslims and a few of them belonging to some other religions. This is a noteworthy finding as previous studies recognized religiosity as one of the best ways to combat occupational burnout, which was the major concern for this study and somewhat existed as reported in the first research question's findings. The study of Ngussa, et al. (2020) reported reduced anxiety among university students who tended to be religious. Therefore, it is assumed that the established high level of religiosity could be a possible panacea for the established lower occupational burnout among the police officers under investigation.

**Research Question 3:** Is there is a significant relationship between religiosity and occupational burnout among the police officers in Arusha City?

This research question called for testing of the following null hypothesis: there is no significant relationship between religiosity and occupational burnout among the police officers in Arusha City. The null hypothesis was tested through Pearson Product-moment Correlational Coefficient as appears in table 5.

				Burnout	Religiosity
Burnout	Pearson Co	rrelation		1	266**
	Sig. (2-taile	d)			.000
	Ν			198	198
Religiosity	Pearson Co	rrelation		266**	1
	Sig. (2-taile	d)		.000	
	Ν			198	198
	**. Corre	lation is significant	at the 0.01 le	evel (2-tailed).	
	Table 6:	Difference in Occup	ational Burn	out by Demogra	phics
SN	Variable	Mean scores	p-value	Interp	retation
1	GENDER			Sign	ificant
	Male	2.1519	0.041*		
	Female	2.3718			
2	AGE				
	20.20	2.5370			
	20-30	2.5570			
	20-30 31-40	2.1996	0.024*	Sign	ificant
			0.024*	Sign	ificant
	31-40	2.1996	0.024*	Sign	ificant
	31-40 41-50	2.1996 2.0972	0.024*	Sign	ificant
3	31-40 41-50 51 and	2.1996 2.0972	0.024*	Sign	ificant
3	31-40 41-50 51 and above	2.1996 2.0972	0.024*	-	ificant mificant

Table 5: Correlation between Oc	cupational Burnout and Religiosity
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As seen in the table, the Pearson Correlation is -.266 while the p-value is 0.00 which is lesser than the critical value (0.05). With these results, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the authors concluded that there is a significant negative yet weak correlation between occupational burnout and religiosity. This implies that religiosity reduces occupational burnout. The more one engages into religious activities, the lesser the person experiences the occupational burnout. Therefore, religiosity is an

effective strategy to reduce occupational burnout among the police officers. The findings are in harmony with empirical literature which indicates the relationship between religiosity and burnout in the sense that participation in religious affairs such as attendance to worship services reduces the burnout level of individuals. The study of Bal and Kökalan (2021), for instance, reported that religion has an important effect on people's behaviors. The study of Ngussa et al. (2020) revealed a negative

correlation between psychological issues and religiosity. Therefore, the findings in this study are supported by previous study findings, which adds the credibility of the study.

**Research Question 4:** Is there is a significant difference in occupational burnout by police officers categorized according to gender, age and religious affiliation?

As seen in table 6 (p. 6), this research question called for testing of the following null hypothesis: there is no significant difference in the occupational burnout by police officers categorized according to gender, age and religious affiliation.

The null hypothesis was tested through t-test for gender and religious affiliation and ANOVA for age. The religious affiliation aspect ignored the minority who belonged to some other religions and dealt with the main two groups of Christians and Muslims who constituted the biggest portion of the police officers who participated in this study.

In terms of gender, the female police officers with the mean score of 2.3718 outperformed the male police officers with the mean score of 2.1519. With the p-value of 0.041, which is lesser than the critical value (0.05), the difference is significant. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. It is concluded that female police officers had a significantly higher mean score for occupational burnout than their male police officer counterparts. Therefore, gender determines the difference in occupational burnout among the police officers, male police officers having a significantly lower level of the occupational burnout.

In terms of age, the police officers in the age group of 20 to 30 years scored 2.5370 which is a high level of occupational burnout based on the interpretation in the first and second research questions. The rest of the age group police officers scored between 1.50 and 2.49, which is lower level of occupational burnout. With the p-value of 0.024, which is lesser than the critical value (0.05), the difference is significant. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and it is concluded that the younger police officers in the age bracket of 20 to 30 experienced a significantly higher level of occupational burnout than the older police officers. Therefore, younger police officers tended to have a significantly higher occupational burnout than their older police officer counterparts. The findings are contrary to those by Reiner and Hartshorne (1982) who revealed that age, years of experience and sex did not significantly related with burnout.

## Conclusions and Recommendations Conclusions

The study came up with the following conclusions based on study findings:

Police officers in Arusha city experienced low level of occupational burnout. Much as the police officers considered their occupation to be stressful and frustrating, their actual level of occupational burnout was low.

Police officers possessed high level of religiosity. The established religiosity among the police officers was indicated by the fact that they asked for divine help when in trouble, they found time to pray alone or in groups, they attended worship services, they found time to read religious literature and they participated in family worship. This is a powerful finding as previous studies recognized religiosity as one of the best ways to combat occupational burnout.

Religiosity reduced level of occupational burnout among the police officers. The more the police officers engaged into religious activities, the lesser the persons experienced the occupational burnout. Therefore, religiosity is an effective strategy to reduce occupational burnout among the police officers.

Some demographic factors determined the difference in occupational burnout among the police officers. For instance, male police officers had a significantly lower level of occupational burnout than their male counterparts. Similarly, younger police officers tended to have a significantly higher occupational burnout than their older police officer counterparts.

#### Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the researchers came up with two types of recommendations. Firstly, what needs to be done to regulate occupational burnout among the police officers and secondly, further studies that need to be done to explore more about occupational burnout among the police officers:

Since religiosity has been established as a powerful way of reducing occupational stress among the police officers, it is recommended that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should create opportunities for police officers to attend religious services such as devotional prayers before they embark on their daily routines.

Police officers should be granted opportunity to attend religious services at their respective religious institutions. Finally, the ministry of home affairs should make arrangements for availability of chaplains at the police officer working stations for guidance and counseling when the police officers feel like receiving such kind of services.

Similar studies should be conducted both in Arusha City and in other parts of the country. The future studies should employ various strategies like involving more than one region and using qualitative or mixed approach.

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