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The Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction among Administrators in International Schools, Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Occupational stress is a global concern, particularly among educational administrators. This study examined the levels of stress, levels of satisfaction, and the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among administrators in international schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Guided by Herzberg's two-factor theory and Lazarus' cognitive theory of stress, a correlational research design was employed. The study population comprised 33 international schools affiliated with the Kenya Association of International Schools (KAIS). Data were collected via questionnaires from 126 school administrators (30 principals, 30 heads of prep schools, 33 heads of kindergarten, and 33 deputy principals) and 9 quality assurance personnel (8 SCQASOs and 1 KAIS Quality Assurance Manager). Descriptive statistics (percentages, means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (correlation and chi-square analysis) were used to analyse the data. Results indicated that 78.4% of respondents experienced moderate to high levels of occupational stress, while 21.6% reported low stress levels. More than half of the respondents acknowledged the significance of relationships with co-workers, students, and parents. A significant relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction was found $\{\chi^2(2) = 18.435, p < 0.001\}$. The study recommends further research into additional factors influencing job satisfaction and the impact of occupational stress on workforce productivity in diverse educational settings.

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INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress is increasingly recognised as a major challenge facing educational administrators worldwide. Recent estimates indicate that approximately 30% of educators globally experience occupational stress during the COVID-19 pandemic (Tsfaye *et al.*, 2023). International school administrators, in particular, contend with multifaceted demands from stakeholders, including directors, parents, and students, which contribute to heightened stress levels. For example, Kelly (2017, 2023) found that 87% of international school administrators reported increased stress, largely attributed to the complex expectations inherent in their roles.

The prevalence and impact of occupational stress among educational leaders are not unique to one region. Studies in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States have documented that school administrators face higher stress levels and, in some cases, lower job satisfaction compared to professionals in other sectors (Travers & Cooper, 2018; Alvites-Huamaní, 2019; Redín & Erro-Garcés, 2020). While some research suggests a negative correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction, other studies have found that teachers and administrators may report high job satisfaction despite significant stress, indicating a complex and context-dependent relationship (Redín & Erro-Garcés, 2020).

In Africa, similar trends have been observed. School heads in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, and Tanzania report significant stress due to management challenges and stakeholder demands (Wadesango *et al.*, 2015; Gebrekirstos, 2015; Mkumbo, 2014). In Kenya, administrative duties and teacher shortages are

primary sources of stress for school leaders, a situation exacerbated by the additional pressures brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic (Njoroge, 2015; Kariuki, 2022). Despite these challenges, little research has specifically examined the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among administrators in international schools in Nairobi, Kenya.

The study addresses these knowledge gaps by investigating the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among administrators in international schools in Nairobi City County. By providing empirical insights into the experiences of these school leaders, the research aims to inform strategies to enhance administrator well-being and support effective school leadership within the unique context of international education in Kenya.

In this study, an international school refers to all private learning institutions registered by the Kenya Association of International Schools (KAIS) that follow a curriculum different from the government-led Kenyan system and promote global education in a multinational context (Kelly, 2017). Job satisfaction is defined as the psychological response to organisational working conditions and personal well-being about one's position of employment (Wang *et al.*, 2018), specifically, the contentment administrators derive from interactions with co-workers, students, and parents. Occupational stress refers to harmful psychological and physiological responses resulting from a conflict between job demands and an administrator's capacity to meet those demands (Bolliger *et al.*, 2022). For purposes of this study, low stress is defined as scores between 0 and 13, moderate stress as 14–26, and high stress as 27–40 on the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS–10). School administrators are

staff members of international schools with major managerial responsibilities, including principals, heads of prep schools, heads of kindergartens, and their deputies, responsible for instructional leadership and school management (Kelly, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

School administrators in international schools in Nairobi face increasing demands from multiple stakeholders, including school boards, parents, teachers, and students. These administrators are tasked with maintaining high academic standards, managing staff, adapting to curriculum changes, and responding to school crises. This complex work environment exposes them to significant occupational stress, which may adversely affect their job satisfaction, performance, and overall well-being. If left unaddressed, high levels of stress among administrators can contribute to burnout, decreased motivation, and ultimately hinder the effectiveness of school leadership, with potential negative consequences for the entire school community.

While numerous studies have highlighted the prevalence of occupational stress among teachers in Kenya (Musyoka & Mwanza, 2021; Wangui *et al.*, 2016), there remains a significant gap in research focusing on school administrators, particularly within international schools. Most existing literature primarily addresses teachers' experiences, often overlooking administrators who bear substantial managerial responsibilities and are subject to unique pressures from diverse stakeholders. This exclusion is notable, given that administrators play a critical role in shaping school environments and outcomes, and are equally, if not more, susceptible to occupational stress and its effects on job satisfaction.

Moreover, studies examining the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction have largely focused on teachers, revealing a negative correlation between the two variables (Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Baluyos *et al.*, 2019;

Mwakasangula & Mwita, 2021). However, the extent to which this relationship exists among school administrators in international schools in Nairobi, Kenya, remains underexplored. Addressing this gap, the current study seeks to investigate how occupational stress relates to job satisfaction among administrators in international schools in Nairobi City County. With the existing knowledge gap, the study sought to answer the question, "How does occupational stress relate to job satisfaction among administrators in international schools in Kenya's Nairobi County?"

LITERATURE REVIEW

Occupational Stress

Occupational stress has been conceptualised in various ways. Buunk *et al.* (2013) describe it as a persistent disturbance linked to workplace pressures and conditions, while Lazarus & Folkman's (1984) cognitive theory frames it as a psychological state resulting from the appraisal of environmental demands that exceed personal coping resources. These foundational definitions highlight both the environmental and personal dimensions of occupational stress. Bhui *et al.* (2016) expand on this by identifying a spectrum of workplace stressors, such as strict policies, poor support systems, and role ambiguity, which echo across developed and developing contexts.

Comparatively, Smith (2000) and Wadsworth *et al.* (2003) emphasise the severity of occupational stress relative to general life stress, citing widespread impacts on productivity, mental, and physical health among UK workers. This aligns with findings from educational settings, where stress prevalence is pronounced. However, these studies primarily focus on general or teaching staff, often neglecting the unique stressors faced by school administrators.

Importantly, there is little research on the specific experiences of administrators, especially in international schools in Kenya. This contextual and population gap underscores the importance of the present study, which operationalises occupational

stress using the PSS-10 and tailors measurement to the realities of international school administration.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a complex concept usually influenced by a significant number of different factors. Zhu (2013) views job satisfaction as a function of mood tendencies and work environment characteristics, while Alshmemri *et al.* (2017) and Yalin *et al.* (2022) highlight its affective and attitudinal components. Wang *et al.* (2018) provide a nuanced synthesis, framing job satisfaction as a psychological response to organisational conditions and personal well-being.

A key point of comparison among these definitions is the emphasis on intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Some scholars, such as Wang *et al.* (2018), stress the role of interpersonal relationships, while others focus on tangible elements like compensation and advancement (Zhu, 2013). These varying emphases reflect the complexity of the construct and the need for context-specific inquiry, particularly among administrators, whose sources of satisfaction may differ from those of teachers. Despite this breadth, many studies overlook the perspectives of school administrators, limiting generalizability. Therefore, this study closes the gaps in research by focusing on the satisfaction derived by administrators from their professional interactions and organisational environment.

Occupational Stress among School Administrators

Sabherwal *et al.* (2015) found that most university administrators in India experience low to moderate stress, which did not significantly impair job satisfaction or performance. In contrast, Wamae (2019) identified moderate to high stress among Kenyan university administrators, linking it to diminished workplace performance. This contrast highlights not only cross-cultural differences but also varying organisational demands. Bhuin's (2017) survey in India similarly reveals high stress levels among school administrators, with

demographic factors such as age and experience playing a significant role.

Meng & Wang (2018) in China reported that occupational stress among administrators is influenced by personal and workplace factors, and recommend recognising the positive and negative effects of such stress. However, their focus on higher education creates a population gap, as does Nitta *et al.*'s (2019) research in Japan, which links stress and depression among school principals to role ambiguity and workload.

Studies in African contexts, such as those by Omeke *et al.* (2023), Manabete *et al.* (2016) in Nigeria, and Mushoriwa and Dlamini (2015) in Zimbabwe, consistently report high stress levels among school administrators, with negative consequences for well-being and institutional effectiveness. Ngari *et al.* (2013) in Kenya found that principals experience the highest level of stress among school administrators, primarily due to their workload.

A critique of much of this literature is the focus on either higher education or primary school leadership, with limited attention to international school administrators across educational levels. By targeting administrators at different levels and using contextually relevant tools, the current study connects and extends existing findings to the international school context in Kenya's Nairobi County.

Job Satisfaction among School Administrators

Darmody & Smyth (2016) found that Irish primary school heads experienced low job satisfaction, which was closely tied to stress and working conditions. Baluyos *et al.* (2019) in the Philippines noted that satisfaction is crucial for head teachers' performance, yet their study focused more on teacher perceptions than administrators themselves. Smith *et al.* (2017) found that autonomy, support, and professional growth drive satisfaction among administrators in urban and rural settings, though these studies are limited to public schools in Western contexts.

Wang & Zhang (2021) in China identified leadership style as a key determinant of administrator satisfaction, with transformational leadership fostering higher satisfaction. Maforah & Schulze (2012) in South Africa highlighted the challenges of policy expectations and organisational support, critiquing the limited scope of existing theories and calling for broader conceptual models.

Although all these studies offer valuable insights, they often overlook international school settings and the unique challenges administrators face there. The present study bridges these conceptual and contextual gaps by applying Herzberg's two-factor theory and focusing on international schools in a major African city.

Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction among Administrators

Travers & Cooper (2018) established that school heads in the UK experience high stress and low job satisfaction, but their study left the precise nature of the stress-satisfaction relationship underexplored. Systematic reviews by Cansoy (2019) and empirical work by Josanov-Vrgovic & Pavlovic (2014) and Ertürk (2021) further connect leadership behaviours with job satisfaction but rarely integrate occupational stress as a core variable.

Recent studies, such as Anastasiou & Papakonstantinou (2024) in Greece *et al.* (2021) in Ghana, highlight the interplay between stress, satisfaction, and organisational factors, but context and population differences limit their generalizability to Nairobi's international schools. Mwakasangula & Mwita (2021) in Tanzania and Koros *et al.* (2018) in Kenya confirm a negative relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among teachers and head teachers, reinforcing the need to extend this inquiry to international school administrators.

While the reviewed literature collectively underscores the significance of occupational stress and job satisfaction among educational administrators, much of it is geographically,

institutionally, or conceptually limited. Many studies focus on public sector schools or university settings, neglecting private international institutions. This study not only fills these gaps by focusing on international schools in Nairobi but also critiques the overreliance on Western-centric models and extends the literature by using contextually appropriate measures and theoretical frameworks.

Theoretical Framework

Lazarus' Cognitive Theory of Stress and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory together provide a robust framework for understanding the experiences of school administrators facing occupational stress and evaluating their job satisfaction. Lazarus' theory explains stress as a transactional process involving primary appraisal, where an administrator assesses how threatening or significant a workplace stressor is, and secondary appraisal, where one evaluates available coping resources and strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Melgosa, 2004). For example, two administrators might encounter similar demands but experience differing stress levels, depending on how they interpret these demands and what coping mechanisms they can access. Problem-oriented coping, such as taking actionable steps to address issues, is generally more effective than emotion-oriented coping, which focuses on managing emotional responses (Kasayira *et al.*, 2007). However, Lazarus' model has been critiqued for not adequately considering how feedback from coping outcomes shapes future stress appraisals and strategies, an aspect especially relevant for administrators who must adapt to evolving school environments.

Complementing this, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between motivators (intrinsic factors like achievement and recognition) and hygiene factors (extrinsic conditions such as salary, policies, and working conditions) in determining job satisfaction (Herzberg *et al.*, 1959). Motivators foster satisfaction when present, while poor hygiene factors cause dissatisfaction if absent. For school

administrators, motivators might include opportunities for professional growth or recognition from leadership, while hygiene factors encompass fair policies, supportive relationships, and adequate working conditions (Alshmemri *et al.*, 2017). One limitation of Herzberg's theory is its rigid division between motivators and hygiene factors; in practice, these categories can overlap, and extrinsic factors like pay may influence motivation more than the model suggests. Additionally, the theory does not fully address personal or broader contextual influences on satisfaction.

Applied together, these theories illuminate why administrators may experience and respond to workplace challenges differently, and how their perception of stress and the structure of their work environment shape their job satisfaction. While Lazarus' theory helps explain variance in stress experience and coping, Herzberg's framework clarifies which aspects of the job foster satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Using both theories clarifies the link between occupational stress and job satisfaction and improves administrators' well-being and effectiveness in international schools.

METHODOLOGY

Table 1: Population and Sample Size

Respondent	Target Population	Sample size (%)	Sample
Principals	30	100%	30
Heads of Prep School	30	100%	30
Heads of Kindergarten	33	100%	33
Deputy Principals	93	35%	33
SCQASOs	17	50%	8
KAIS Quality Assurance Manager	1	100%	1
Totals	204		135

Data were collected using standardised quantitative questionnaires, enabling efficient collection of comprehensive information from all respondents. The instruments included the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), a validated 10-item measure of occupational stress, and the Teachers' Job Satisfaction Scale (TJSS-9), which evaluates

This study employed a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among administrators in international schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The correlational approach was chosen as it allows for the systematic examination of the association between variables without inferring causality, making it well-suited for understanding patterns within a defined educational population.

The target population comprised 204 administrators drawn from 33 international schools registered under the Kenya Association of International Schools (KAIS). This included 30 principals, 30 heads of prep schools, 33 heads of kindergarten, 93 deputy principals, 17 Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SCQASOs), and 1 KAIS Quality Assurance Manager.

To obtain a representative sample, a mixed sampling technique was applied: a census approach was used for principals, heads of prep and kindergarten, and the KAIS quality assurance manager, while stratified random sampling selected deputy principals and SCQASOs. Using Slovin's formula for sample size determination, 135 respondents were selected, ensuring broad representation across all administrative roles.

satisfaction across co-workers, students, and parents. Piloting of the instruments took place with administrators in KAIS member schools in Nakuru County, involving 21 participants. Feedback from the pilot study facilitated refinement of the questionnaires, correcting any ambiguities or errors to improve clarity and reliability.

Before data collection commenced, ethical approval was secured from the university's Ethics and Review Committee. Two trained research assistants supported the data collection process, adhering strictly to ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring participant confidentiality and anonymity. Respondents were fully briefed on the aims, benefits, risks, and voluntary nature of participation, and all data were stored securely to protect privacy.

The reliability and validity of the data collection tools were established through previous research, with the PSS-10 demonstrating strong internal consistency ($\alpha > 0.80$) and the TJSS-9 also exhibiting robust reliability (α between 0.73 and 0.89) and construct validity in various contexts. As these metrics were well established, additional reliability testing was not conducted for this study.

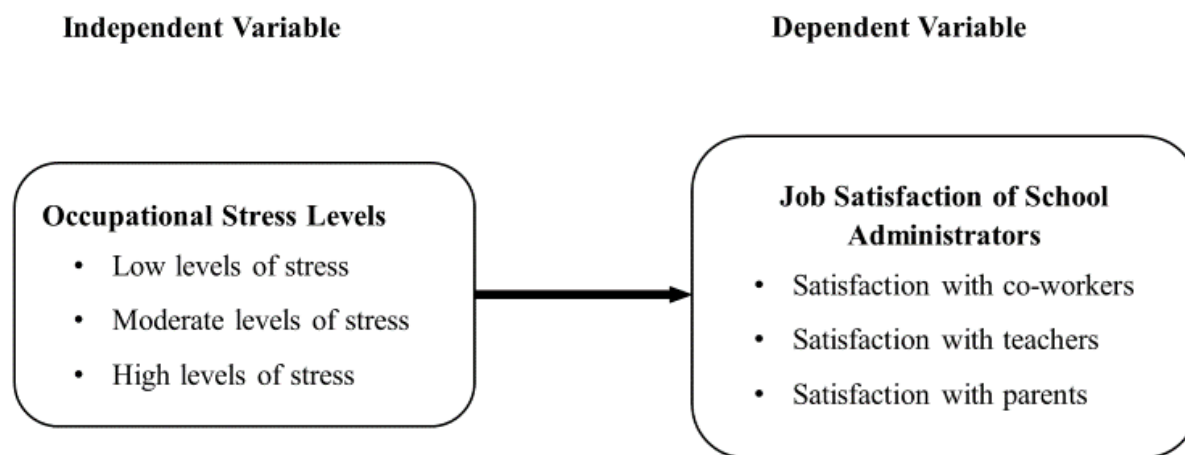
Once collected, the data were sorted, coded, and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Means and standard deviations were calculated to summarise levels of occupational stress and job

satisfaction. To examine the association between the two variables, Chi-square analysis was conducted, with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$. This approach enabled a thorough exploration of the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among international school administrators, ensuring findings that are reliable and contextually relevant.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 below demonstrates the relationship between the independent variable (occupational stress) and the dependent variable (job satisfaction of school administrators). Three indicators measure the levels of occupational stress among administrators in international schools using the PSS-10 tool. The three indicators are low, moderate, and high levels of stress. The researcher uses the TJSS-9 tool to measure the levels of job satisfaction among school administrators based on their satisfaction with co-workers, teachers, and parents.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents and interprets findings on the levels of occupational stress, levels of job satisfaction, and the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among administrators in international schools in Nairobi

City County. Of the 135 respondents targeted to fill out the questionnaires, 102 (75.6%) returned. This was a high return rate for an in-depth analysis as recommended by Glazer et al. (2018), where at least 60.0% of the questionnaires should be filled out.

Levels of Occupational Stress

Analysis using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) revealed that the majority of administrators

experienced moderate to high occupational stress. Specifically, 48.0% reported moderate stress and 30.4% reported high stress, with only 21.6% experiencing low stress, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Levels of Occupational Stress among School Administrators

Level of Occupational Stress	Frequency	Percentage
Low stress	22	21.6
Moderate stress	49	48.0
High stress	31	30.4
Total	102	100.0

Female administrators were disproportionately represented in the high-stress category, and less experienced administrators also reported higher stress levels. Further analysis showed significant

relationships between stress levels and demographic variables. Female administrators were more likely to report high stress than their male counterparts.

Table 3: Gender and Levels of Occupational Stress among School Administrators

Gender	Level of Occupational Stress				Chi-Square Statistics		
	Low	Moderate	High	n	p-value	χ^2	Df
Male	22 (100.0%)	29 (59.2%)	6 (19.4%)	57	0.001	34.362	2
Female	-	20 (40.8%)	25 (80.6%)	45			
Total	22(100.0%)	49(100.0%)	31(100.0%)	102	Significance level, $\alpha = 0.05$		

Of the 80 respondents with moderate to high stress, 45 (56.3%) were female and 35 (43.7%) were male. No female administrators reported low stress levels, so all 22 respondents with low stress were male. Notably, 25 (80.6%) of female administrators experienced high stress, compared to only 6 (19.4%) of males. These results indicate that female administrators had higher levels of occupational stress than their male counterparts. Due to small

sample sizes in some categories, Cramer's V was used instead of Chi-square, with a value of 0.410 at the 0.05 significance level, showing a significant relationship between gender and occupational stress levels.

Experience and age also played a role, with lower stress among older and more experienced administrators, as shown in Tables 4 and 5 below.

Table 4: Age and Levels of Occupational Stress among School Administrators

Age	Level of Occupational Stress				Chi-Square Statistics		
	Low	Moderate	High	n	p-value	χ^2	df
20-29 years	-	-	2 (6.5%)	2	0.024	14.561	6
30-44 years	-	12 (24.5%)	8 (25.8%)	20			
45-59 years	18 (81.8%)	34 (69.4%)	16 (51.6%)	68			
60 and above	4 (8.2%)	3 (6.1%)	5 (16.1%)	12			
Total	22(100.0%)	49(100.0%)	31(100.0%)	102	Significance level, $\alpha = 0.05$		

Table 4 shows that 18 (81.8%) of administrators aged 45–59 years reported low stress, while 34 (69.4%) had moderate stress and 16 (51.6%) had high stress. All administrators aged 20–29 years

experienced high stress, and those aged 30–44 years mostly reported moderate to high stress. These findings suggest that lower stress is more common among administrators aged 45 and above, likely due

to greater experience and coping skills. Because some age groups had small numbers, Cramer's V (0.267 at the 0.05 significance level) was used, indicating a significant relationship between age and stress levels.

Table 5 shows that 20 (64.5%) administrators with less than 3 years of experience had high stress, and none in this group reported low stress. Among those with 3–5 years of service, 28 (57.1%) reported moderate stress and 11 (35.5%) had high stress.

Notably, administrators with more than 6 years of experience mostly reported low to moderate stress, and none in the 6–10 or over 10 years categories had high stress. This suggests that longer service duration is associated with lower stress, likely due to better coping and management skills developed over time. Since some groups were small, Cramer's V (0.430 at the 0.05 significance level) was used, indicating a significant relationship between service duration and occupational stress levels.

Table 5: Service Duration and Levels of Occupational Stress among School Administrators

Service Duration	Level of Occupational Stress			Chi-Square Statistics			
	Low	Moderate	High	n	p-value	χ^2	Df
< 3 years	-	13 (26.6%)	20 (64.5%)	33	0.001	37.788	6
3-5 years	11(50.0%)	28 (57.1%)	11 (35.5%)	50			
6-10 years	5 (22.7%)	5 (10.2%)	-	10			
> 10 years	6 (27.3%)	3 (6.1%)	-	9			
Total	22(100.0%)	49(100.0%)	31(100.0%)	102	Significance level, $\alpha = 0.05$		

The results of this study revealed that the majority of international school administrators in Nairobi experience moderate to high levels of occupational stress, with only a small proportion reporting low stress. This pattern suggests that occupational stress is a pervasive challenge among school leaders in this context. These findings align with prior research by Wadesango *et al.* (2015), who reported similarly high levels of stress among school principals in Zimbabwe, and Darmody & Smyth (2016), who documented substantial stress among Irish school heads. Such consistency across diverse educational settings highlights that the issue of occupational stress among administrators is both widespread and persistent.

Furthermore, the current study's results echo those of Sabherwal *et al.* (2015), where factors like workload, relationships, and organisational

structure contributed significantly to administrators' stress. This suggests that, regardless of geographical region, school administrators are exposed to comparable stressors, including heavy demands, limited resources, and high expectations from stakeholders.

Overall, these findings underscore the need for targeted support systems and stress management interventions for school administrators, especially for groups found to be at higher risk, such as women and less experienced leaders.

Levels of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction, measured using the Teachers' Job Satisfaction Scale (TJSS-9), yielded a mixed profile. While 46.3% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied, a notable proportion reported dissatisfaction or neutrality.

Table 6: Responses on Levels of Job Satisfaction among School Administrators

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Standard Deviation
The quality of your relations with co-workers	10.1%	29.5%	28.8%	18.7%	12.9%	2.95	1.188
The extent to which co-workers encourage and support you at work	11.5%	18.7%	15.1%	28.1%	26.6%	3.40	1.360
Your overall satisfaction with your co-workers	13.7%	19.4%	14.4%	28.1%	24.4%	3.30	1.387
The extent to which students act in a self-disciplined manner	11.5%	18.7%	15.1%	28.1%	26.6%	3.40	1.360
Your satisfaction with the behaviour of students in your school	10.1%	29.5%	28.8%	18.7%	12.9%	2.95	1.188
Your overall level of satisfaction with student discipline	13.7%	19.4%	14.4%	28.1%	24.4%	3.30	1.387
The degree of interest shown by parents in educating their children	10.1%	29.5%	28.8%	18.7%	12.9%	2.95	1.188
The extent to which parents are supportive of the school programs	11.5%	18.7%	15.1%	28.1%	26.6%	3.40	1.360
Your overall level of satisfaction with parents where you work	13.7%	19.4%	14.4%	28.1%	24.4%	3.30	1.387
Aggregate	11.8%	22.5%	19.4%	25.0%	21.3%	3.22	1.312

Analysis of job satisfaction levels among administrators revealed a varied distribution: 11.8% were very dissatisfied, 22.5% dissatisfied, 19.4% neutral, 25.0% satisfied, and 21.3% very satisfied. The mean scores indicate that relationships with co-workers ($M=2.95$, $SD=1.188$), students ($M=3.40$, $SD=1.360$), and parents ($M=3.30$, $SD=1.387$) played a central role in shaping job satisfaction. While a majority of respondents reported satisfaction with student discipline and parental support, responses regarding relationships with colleagues were more mixed, with some

administrators expressing neutrality or dissatisfaction.

The aggregate mean score of 3.22 reflects moderate overall job satisfaction, suggesting that while positive interpersonal relationships contribute significantly, not all administrators benefit equally from these dynamics. These results underscore the importance of strengthening professional relationships within international schools.

Further analysis explored how job satisfaction varied by age, gender, and duration of service, as presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Gender and Levels of Job Satisfaction among School Administrators

Gender	Level of Job Satisfaction				Chi-Square Statistics		
	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	n	p-value	χ^2	df
Male	10 (28.6%)	15 (75.0%)	32 (68.1%)	57	0.000	16.393	2
Female	25 (71.4%)	5 (25.0%)	15 (31.9%)	45			
Total	35(100.0%)	20(100.0%)	47(100.0%)	102			

Table 7 indicates that 71.4% of female administrators and 28.6% of male administrators reported dissatisfaction with their jobs. Conversely,

68.9% of male administrators were satisfied with their relationships with students, parents, and coworkers, compared to only 31.9% of females.

These results suggest that job satisfaction levels were notably higher among male than female administrators in international schools in Nairobi City County. The association between gender and job satisfaction was statistically significant, as reflected by the chi-square statistic $\chi^2 (2) = 16.393$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 8 further reveals age-related differences in job satisfaction. Among administrators aged 45 to 59 years, 71.4% were dissatisfied, while 51.6% were

satisfied with their work. All administrators in the 20–29 age group reported dissatisfaction. Overall, job satisfaction varied considerably across age groups, with some administrators expressing neutrality and others reporting either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Due to small cell counts in some categories, Cramer's V was used, yielding a value of 0.228 at the 0.05 significance level, indicating a significant relationship between age and job satisfaction.

Table 8: Age and Levels of Job Satisfaction among School Administrators

Age	Level of Job Satisfaction			n	Chi-Square Statistics		
	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied		p-value	χ^2	df
20-29 years	2 (5.7%)	-		2	0.103	10.562	6
30-44 years	4 (10.4%)	8 (40.0%)	8 (25.8%)	20			
45-59 years	25 (71.4%)	10 (50.0%)	33(51.6%)	68			
60 and above	4 (8.2%)	2 (10.0%)	6 (16.1%)	12			
Total	35(100.0%)	20(100.0%)	47(100.0%)	102	Significance level, $\alpha = 0.05$		

Table 9 shows that 42.6% of administrators with less than 3 years of experience were satisfied with their jobs, while a large proportion (90.0%) of those with 3–5 years of service reported neutral satisfaction levels. Among administrators with more than 6 years of experience, most reported being satisfied, suggesting that greater experience is associated with higher job satisfaction in

international schools. Due to small sample sizes in some groups, Cramer's V was used, yielding a value of 0.408 at the 0.05 significance level, indicating a significant relationship between duration of service and job satisfaction. These findings suggest that job satisfaction tends to increase with longer tenure as administrators.

Table 9: Service Duration and Level of Job Satisfaction among School Administrators

Duration of Service	Level of Job Satisfaction			N	Chi-Square Statistics		
	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied		p-value	χ^2	df
< 3 years	13 (37.1%)	-	20 (42.6%)	33	0.001	33.924	6
3-5 years	21(60.0%)	18 (90.0%)	11 (23.4%)	50			
6-10 years	1 (2.9%)	1 (5.0%)	8 (17.0%)	10			
>10 years	-	1 (5.0%)	8 (17.0%)	9			
Total	35(100.0%)	20(100.0%)	47(100.0%)	102	Significance level, $\alpha = 0.05$		

Job satisfaction among school administrators was measured across three dimensions: satisfaction with coworkers, students, and parents. The results indicated that over half of the respondents recognised the importance of these relationships in shaping their overall job satisfaction. This finding aligns with Baluyos *et al.* (2019), who reported that positive interpersonal relationships and intrinsic

aspects of the job significantly contribute to the satisfaction of school leaders.

Similarly, Maforah & Schulze (2012) found that while principals in South Africa faced challenges related to policy and unrealistic expectations, they derived satisfaction from collegial relationships and intrinsic elements of their work. Notably, Maforah

and Schulze focused on rural and suburban schools, whereas the current study extends this line of inquiry to administrators in urban international schools in Kenya, thus addressing a contextual gap in the literature.

Additionally, the current research broadens the perspective by including quality assurance officers in the assessment of job satisfaction, a group often overlooked in previous studies that focused solely on school heads. By capturing a wider range of administrator experiences in an urban, international school setting, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction and enhances the generalizability of findings across diverse educational contexts.

Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

Table 10 presents the results of the Chi-square analysis examining the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among administrators in international schools in Nairobi City County. The analysis tested the null hypothesis that no relationship exists between these variables. The computed chi-square statistic was $\chi^2 (2) = 18.435$, $p < 0.001$, indicating a statistically significant association. This suggests that higher levels of occupational stress are linked to lower levels of job satisfaction among school administrators.

Table 10: Chi-Square Analysis for Relationship between Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

Variables	Low	Moderate	High	n	p-value	χ^2	df
Level of Occupational Stress	22	49	31	102	0.001	18.435	2
Level of Job Satisfaction	35	20	47	102			

Significance level, $\alpha = 0.05$

The analysis revealed a significant relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction among administrators in international schools ($\chi^2 = 18.435$, $p < 0.001$). This finding underscores that higher levels of occupational stress are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction within this population. These results are consistent with previous studies, such as Koros *et al.* (2018), who observed a negative correlation between stress and job satisfaction among primary school head teachers in Kenya. Their research highlighted that reducing occupational stress can enhance both job satisfaction and productivity.

Similarly, Muguongo *et al.* (2015) demonstrated that a supportive and low-stress work environment is essential for headteachers to achieve high job satisfaction and effective performance. Mwakasangula & Mwita (2021) also found that increased workplace stress, particularly from unfavourable working conditions, leadership

challenges, and heavy workloads, leads to decreased satisfaction among Tanzanian head teachers. They recommend measures such as leadership training, improved recruitment, manageable workloads, and enhanced working environments to foster greater job satisfaction. Together, these studies and the current findings highlight the critical need to address occupational stress as a pathway to improving administrator satisfaction and effectiveness in international schools.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the levels of occupational stress, levels of job satisfaction, and the relationship between these two variables among administrators in international schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The findings indicate that the majority of school administrators experience moderate to high levels of occupational stress, pointing to a widespread challenge within this professional group. Job satisfaction was found to be

moderate overall, with positive relationships with co-workers, students, and parents emerging as key contributors. Importantly, the analysis revealed a significant inverse relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to support administrators' well-being and effectiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed for practice and future research:

- School boards, the Kenya Association of International Schools (KAIS), and international school management should prioritise the development and implementation of comprehensive stress management programs, with particular focus on supporting female and less experienced administrators.
- Efforts to foster positive relationships among staff, students, and parents should be strengthened, as these are central to administrator satisfaction. Leadership development and peer support initiatives are recommended.
- Future research should critically review and, where possible, refine or supplement the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) and Teachers' Job Satisfaction Scale (TJSS-9) to ensure they capture the unique experiences of school administrators and address any potential gender or contextual biases.
- Scholars should explore additional variables affecting job satisfaction, such as organisational culture, leadership style, and resource adequacy. Longitudinal and comparative studies, across different school types and regions, would enrich understanding of how occupational stress and job satisfaction evolve and impact school performance.

- The Ministry of Education and KAIS should use these findings to inform policy updates, ensuring that administrator well-being is a key consideration in school evaluation and support frameworks.

By addressing these areas, stakeholders can help create more supportive, effective, and satisfying work environments for school administrators in international schools across Kenya and beyond.

Research Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for policy, practice, and future research in international education.

First, the results can guide school boards, policymakers, and organisations like the Kenya Association of International Schools (KAIS) in developing stress management and support programs for school administrators. By identifying the specific stressors administrators face, this study provides evidence for policies aimed at reducing occupational stress, increasing job satisfaction, and promoting healthier work environments.

In terms of leadership development, these insights can shape professional development programs that help school leaders build coping strategies, resilience, and work-life balance. Such training can ultimately enhance leadership effectiveness and improve overall school performance.

Regarding resource allocation, the demonstrated impact of stress on administrators' well-being and job satisfaction highlights the need for greater investment in mental health and wellness programs within international schools. Ensuring administrators have access to adequate support and resources can help maintain high standards of leadership and student achievement.

This study also creates a foundation for further research. As such, it identifies opportunities for comparative studies across various types of schools, regions, or educational systems, and encourages

longitudinal research on the long-term effects of occupational stress on school leadership. The findings also contribute to refining theoretical models of occupational stress and job satisfaction, especially in the context of international education in low- and middle-income countries.

Ultimately, this research can support evidence-based decision-making for stakeholders, including KAIS, the Ministry of Education, school administrators, and counsellors—helping foster a more supportive and effective educational environment for all.

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