

**EFFECTS OF STRESS CONTROL TECHNIQUES BY MIDDLE LEVEL
EMPLOYEES ON STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OF
MURANG'A COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Business Administration (Strategic Management Option) of
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and to the best of my knowledge has not been presented for a degree award in this or any other university.

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APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my family for their love, support and encouragement. To my dear parents and my brothers who have been my rock and a great source of pillar by their unveiling support for me to strive to complete this project.

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ABSTRACT

Globally, employees experience stress at the workplace. It has become a real exertion in most organizations especially in the developing countries where the significance amount of stress at the workplace has had influence on employees' strategic performance. Organizations need employees to get the job done because employee's strategic performance is important to the success of the organization. Stress control techniques are designed to help employees reduce stress at the workplace. The impact of stress on the employee performance has a direct impact on the implementation of organizational strategies. Despite having stress control techniques in the organizations, research studies show that stress at the workplace has not been controlled effectively, thus affecting employee strategic performance management. Increased stress levels have led to reduced work performance and subsequently the strategic goals and objectives of the organization are not met. Thus, the study sought to address the issues that cause stress at the workplace and their influencing factors and therefore focused on job design, training, employee welfare programs and incentives as the key stress control techniques. The general objective is to establish the effect of stress control techniques by middle level employees on strategic performance management of Murang'a County Government. The research study adopted descriptive survey which is the method of research which concerns itself with the present phenomena in terms of conditions, practices, beliefs, processes, relationships, or trends. The study was confined to Murang'a county government in Murang'a County. This is where the strategic decisions and the central planning of Murang'a County are operated. The middle-level employees of Murang'a County Government were the target population, which they comprised of 4,254 respondents. Stratified random sampling was used as the most appropriate sampling technique, since the population is not a homogeneous group. Systematic sampling was used in each group to come up with the respondents which involves selecting the samples at regular intervals from the sampling frame. A sample size of 366 respondents were selected and administered with questionnaire as a data collection instrument by the researcher. Out of those served with questionnaires, 346 filled and returned the questionnaires. The response rate therefore was 94.5%. The study findings inferential statistics correlation and regression analysis depicted that there is a significant positive effect on job design ($\rho=0.6530$, p -value <0.05), training ($\rho=0.608$, P value <0.05), employee welfare programs ($\rho=0.514$, p value <0.05), incentives ($\rho=0.521$, p value <0.05) and middle-level employees' strategic performance. Therefore, county government should endeavour to address and adopt stress control techniques focusing on job design, training, employee welfare programs and incentives to improve employee strategic performance for the organisation to achieve their strategic objectives.

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DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

Stress technique	The process of acquiring and practicing a variety of behavioural and cognitive techniques to manage and cope stress. (Romas & Sharma, 2022).
Performance	The accomplishment of a given task or job with the aim of producing productive results. (Robert & Gurau, 2022)
Performance Management	The process of ensuring that the outputs and of the organizational goals meet in an effective and efficient manner. (Robert & Gurau, 2022)
Burnout	A condition among stressed workers that bring about a feeling of exhaustion. (Prescott & Rathbone, 2022).
Employee Assistance Programs	Refers to the company or organization sponsored program designed to help an employee with cases such as stress, depression, financial and personal problems, and work-related issues. (Hughes, 2022).
Job Demands	A task carried out in batch modes that require either psychological or physical effort. Example, work pressure (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).
Job Resources	Refers to social organizational aspects of the job that function to achieve goals at the strategic and reduce job demands. (Mahapatro, 2022).

Motivation	Refers to the willingness of an action especially in a behaviour to satisfy some individual need and achieve an organizational goal. (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).
Stress	To be agitated to an aggression toward an organism resulting in a response to restore previous conditions. (Romas & Sharma, 2022).
Work-related stress	Refers to a condition that arises from of interaction of people and their job which is brought about by change which deviates them from their normal functioning. (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).
Strategic plan	This is an organization's process of defining its strategy or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to attain strategic goals (Kotler, 2000)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Globally, employees experience stress at the workplace. It has become a real exertion in most organizations especially in the developing countries where the significance of stress at the workplace may have an influence on employees' strategic performance management (Becker, 2013). Work-related stress is an indication that occupational differences play a significant role in stress-related problems at work. According to (Amayi & G.M, 2016), stress is brought about by either external demands made on individuals or reasonable orders being made by which individuals are ill-equipped to cope. Stress makes people not to be able to respond the external stimuli without having psychological or physical damage, such as one's health.

Studies have been done on stress management but little has been done on the effect of stress management regarding strategic performance management at the strategic. Research was done by the World Health Organization about stress at the strategic (WHO, 2013). Scientific literature reviews on the stress management that show the dominance of prevention programs, which only focuses on the individual at the strategic (Cheng, 2017). In Kenya, studies done on stress management include a study done by Nzuve (2012) was on stress management strategies influencing employees' commitment at the strategic, a study done by Kamau (2014) on the strategies that adopted to manage work-related stress among its employees. But none has considered the effect of stress control techniques has on middle-level employees' strategic performance management at the workplace.

Organizations need employees to get the job done because employee's strategic performance is important to the success of the organization (Ahmad, 2014). When employees do not perform effectively, the organization feels that the strategic goals will not be achieved and therefore it will seek aid elsewhere. Strategic performance is the way employees carry out their duties which are mandated to them through their job descriptions (Nassazi, 2013). Changes in the work environment, financial constraints, work overload, poor communication, leadership wrangles, have become reasons as to why stressors are taking a toll on many employees' performance at their workplace (Tanveer, 2015). A case that was recently in Kenya, whereby an employee from Price Water Coopers office building in Westlands, jumped from the 17th floor to the ground. Piercing to the last moments, the man had some work-related stress issues before his untimely death (Odongo, 2018).

Stress control techniques are designed to help employees reduce stress at the workplace (Imran, 2015). The coping techniques available used to address the symptoms of stress includes, taking regular breaks from work, having enough sleep to avoid a state of jetlag and relaxation classes. However, some of the coping techniques have a negative effect. This may include excessive alcohol consumption, procrastinating work, angry outbursts, withdrawal and zoning out. According to (Ringa, 2016) outlines that some aspects responsible for work-related stress among county government employees are such as undefined job description, poor communication, work overload, lack of employee participation during decision making and a hostile working environment. Stress contributes to 10% work time off by the employed population, with an average of 36 working days lost (Corin, 2016).

The impact of stress on the employee performance has a direct impact on the implementation of organisational strategies. Armstrong, & Taylor, (2020), showed that by enhancing management of human resource in an organization, the execution of strategic plans within the organization has higher success rates. The competitive advantage that comes about from the optimized human resource management translates to better outcomes for organizations as there is a significant effect across the organization. In the study by Boon (2018) further showed that a paradigm shift from human resource management to strategic human capital led to improved strategy execution. It was shown that through effective management of capabilities held by human capital, organizations are better able to achieve their goals. Through managing stress levels in employees, the human capital is more effectively utilized leading to improved outcomes in strategic execution.

The overall contribution of the organization is strategic performance management that Murang'a County Government will adopt to improve employee's strategic performance. To effectively prevent stress, it is necessary to identify the appropriate stress control techniques suitable to be adopted at the workplace. The techniques to be adopted in this case will include training, job design, employee welfare programs and incentives. These techniques will enable Murang'a County Government to manage the stress issues that are likely to be experienced by middle-level employees. Adopting these control techniques will ensure that there will be productivity in the employees hence improved strategic performance in the organization (Ahmad, 2014).

In the year 2010, Kenya became devolved leading to the formation of 47 County Governments, Murang'a County Government being one of them. The county is among

other counties of Kenya's former Central Province. Murang'a is the largest town. To the North, it is bordered by Nyeri County, Kiambu County to the South, Nyandarua County to the West and to the East it is bordered by Kirinyaga, Embu and Machakos Counties. Murang'a County Government Headquarters located in Murang'a town (County annual progress, 2017).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite having stress control programs in the organizations, research studies show that stress at the workplace has not been controlled effectively, thus affecting employee strategic performance management (Bjork, 2016). Increased stress levels lead to reduced work performance and subsequently the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation are not met.

The problem is that stress tends to accumulate with what goes on in the workplace, which deteriorates the performance of an employee. Previous research has highlighted various causes of stress which include unclear job descriptions, differed job promotions, delay of salary payments and limited resources such as office equipment among others. Hence this has led to absenteeism and turnover, a decrease in job performance and job insecurity has been witnessed. (County Annual Progress – Murang'a, 2017).

The study sought to address the issues that cause stress at the workplace and their influencing factors. The stress levels of the employees need to be reduced to improve strategic employee performance and increase work productivity to the organization (Ringa, 2016). This study therefore focused on job design, training, employee welfare programs and incentives as the key stress control techniques.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective is to establish the effects of stress control techniques by middle level employees on strategic performance management of Murang'a County Government.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To assess effect of job design on middle-level employees' strategic performance management of Murang'a County Government.
- ii. To determine the effect of training on middle-level employees' strategic performance management of Murang'a County Government.
- iii. To determine the effect of employee welfare programs on middle-level employees' strategic performance of Murang'a County Government.
- iv. To ascertain the effect of incentives on middle-level employees' strategic performance of Murang'a County Government.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

- i. H01: There is no significant effect of job design on strategic performance in Murang'a county government.
- ii. H02: There is no significant effect of training on strategic performance in Murang'a county government.
- iii. H03: There is no significant effect of employee welfare programs on strategic performance in Murang'a county government.
- iv. H04: There is no significant effect of incentives on strategic performance in Murang'a county government.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The results of this research will guide the administrative and human resource management of Murang'a County Government and other County Governments in Kenya in making strategic decisions that will be adopted to enhance a stress-free working environment that will influence the effectiveness of the employees in the organization.

The research will also will assist the management to review policies that incorporate how employees should be managed at the workplace and ensure that any issues relating to work stress will be handled effectively. Further, this will form a basis of reference in development of holistic guidelines of stress on employees and the impact it has on the strategic plan of the county.

The counsellors through this research will offer support through counselling thus controlling ill-health stress arising from the working conditions. Employees from Murang'a County Government and other County Governments in Kenya will learn more about the effects of stress at the workplace and how it should be managed. It will help improve the employees' participation in work engagement activities.

This study will be important to the scholars and academicians since it will provide beneficial material that will act as reference and contribution to the already existing knowledge base relating to strategic performance management and stress control techniques.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study will focus on employees from three departments: Finance, Human Resource and Information Technology department at County Government of Murang'a.

1.7 Limitations of the study

This study faced some limitations that include: Employees might not be open to giving the required information because it might be confidential; some employees could be under oath; hence, they cannot provide full data as required by the researcher. The researcher will endeavor anonymity and confidentiality of the respondent and response.

Employees who will be answering questionnaires might be a challenge due to their busy working schedules; hence, they might not find the time to fill the questionnaire. The researcher will adopt to the respective respondent working time schedule.

This study will purposively target middle level employees due to the involving nature of their job and also are the majority in Murang'a county government.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed the following: Humans are resources that are an asset to an organization, hence providing competitive edge to an organization strategically, Occupations have specific risk factors, which can be classified into job demands and job resources. There are two psychological processes that impact development of job strain and motivation: physical and social resources, and personal resources.

1.9 Contribution of the Thesis

1. The research identified the stress control techniques that would be adopted to help employees improve their work performance at the organization.
2. Employees would be offered counselling sessions to help control ill health stress which arise from the working conditions.

3. Training of employees was important to an individual because their skills, knowledge and abilities are needed when the tasks are done.
4. A paper containing the results of the study has been published.

1.10 Structure of the Thesis

The content of this research is divided into five chapters as highlighted below:

1. Chapter one is the introduction. It discusses the background of the research, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research hypotheses, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the limitations of the study and the contribution of the thesis.
2. Chapter two represents literature review. The chapter discusses theoretical framework, review of literature on variables and the conceptual framework.
3. Chapter three is the research methodology. This chapter is divided into subsections that include the research design, location of the study, target population, sampling procedures and sample size, data collection, data analysis and presentation and ethical considerations.
4. Chapter four presents the results of the research findings and discussion. This chapter focuses on data analysis, presentation, interpretation, and discussion. The first section in this chapter is on the response rate of the respondents, profiles of respondents, test of statistical assumptions, analysis, presentation, interpretation, and discussion of the relationships under investigation.
5. Chapter five covers the conclusion made by the study findings, the suggestions of the researcher and the recommendations of future works

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections which are theoretical framework, review of literature on variables and conceptual framework.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This study was guided by three theories. Job demands resource theory which focused on job enlargement, job engagement and job enrichment. Resource based theory which focused on identification of training needs, planning and evaluation. Strategic performance measurement theory which considered the impact of performance measure, strategic plans and performance targets.

2.2.1 Job Demands Resources Theory

The Job Demands Resources theory (JD-R) was developed in 2006 by Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti. It suggests that employees who experience high demands at the workplace are likely to have psychological strain which leads to poor physical and mental state of the health (Bakker, 2014). Job demands experienced at the workplace are job insecurity, unclear role descriptions, work overload and role conflict. The theory assumes that when the job demands are high, a vigorous action must be exerted by the employee to achieve the organizational goals to prevent the decline of work performance (Schaufeli, 2014).

Employees who experience this extra energy should recover by performing fewer demanding activities and taking a relaxation break. However, if the employee's

recovery is insufficient, it will lead to exhaustion (Tahir, 2014). Job resources are those social organizational aspects of the job that function to achieve goals at the workplace and reduce job demands. Examples of job resources are social support, feedback, and job control (Demerouti *et al.*, 2014).

The model suggests that job demands leads to burnout hence employees' turnover and health complication problems. According to (Bakker *et al.*,2014), a revised version of the JD-R theory gave a positive psychological twist. The theory not only explains the negative state, which is burnout, but also its positive state which is work engagement. Work engagement is fulfilling, dedication and absorption to the job that is characterized by the vigour in the work-related state of mind. The revised theory assumes that burnout results from inadequate job resources and excessive job demands, except that now burnout will be identified and treated.

Burnout is assumed that it will lead to work pressure from the employees and result to health problems such as depression. Following the effort-recovery theory, it is assumed that if resources are offered by the work environment, then the employees will be willing to dedicate their abilities and efforts to the job task. Thus, job resources play a motivational role to reduce job demands and achieve goals attainment. They, job resources, also satisfy basic human need for competence and autonomy (Tahir, 2014). For instance, social support satisfies need for autonomy and feedback which will increase job competence. In turn, the affective motivational states with the foster positive outcomes in the organization are such as work performance among the employees.

In summary, JD-R has two categories, job resources and job demand, which influence each other in every job working features occupation. Job burnout develops when the job demands are high and the job resources are limited. Hence, different types of job

resources and high job demands may lead to employee burnout and work performance will be greatly affected.

2.2.2 Resource-based theory

The knowledge-based theory of the organization contemplates that knowledge as the most strategically valuable resource of an organization. Its advocates and argue that because knowledge-based resources are usually difficult to imitate and socially complex, heterogeneous knowledge bases and capabilities among organization are the major determinants of sustained competitive advantage (Lockett and Thompson, 2004).

This knowledge is entrenched and carried out through multiple entities including organizational culture and distinctiveness, policies, procedures, and employees. Originating from the strategic management literature, this perspective builds upon and extends the resource-based theory view of the firm initially promoted by Penrose (1959).

The theory according to Rugman and Verbeke's (2002) suggests that people use their capacity-to-act in order to create value in mainly two directions; by transferring and converting knowledge externally and internally at the workplace. The value grows each time a knowledge transfer or conversion takes place. The strategy formulation issues are concerned with how to utilize the leverage and how to avoid the blockages that prevent sharing and conversion. Organization objectives which are a backbone of a knowledge-based strategy are to be aimed at improving the capacity-to-act both inside and outside the organization

2.2.3 Strategic Performance Measurement Theory

Strategic performance measurement theory (SPM) are important for translating strategy into measurable objectives and, if appropriately designed and communicated, can facilitate strategy implementation, align management decisions and actions with strategic goals, and enhance organizational performance (Bisbe and Malagueno, 2012; Franco-Santos, Lucianetti, and Bourne, 2012; Micheli and Manzoni, 2010). A key factor in the execution of strategy is the utilization of human capital effectively and efficiently. A research study done by Poister (1999) investigated the effects performance measurement in municipal governments and found that a key factor is the difference between practice and policy as regards measure to assist workforce in understanding their roles and dealing with stressors associated with them.

Productivity has been shown to reduce in a strategic environment is perceived as uncomfortable (Roelofsen, 2000). Strategic performance measures were found to improve as the wellbeing of the employees, leading to better outcomes in implementation of strategy. Organizations that consider culture when dealing with job stressors are associated with positive returns on strategy implementation (Paais, 2018). With increased dynamism of work environments, organizations are increasingly under the pressure to ensure the wellbeing of their employees, ensure effective and efficient outcomes are achieved (Bisbe, 2012). This necessitates holistic consideration of strategy in line with the needs of employees to increase probability of success and reduce time taken to quickly adapt.

2.3 Review of Literature on Variables

This section focuses on strategic performance management as a dependent variable, while job design, training, employee welfare programs and incentives as independent variables.

2.3.1 Strategic Performance Management

The strategic performance of an organization is impacted by the ability of the employees dealing with their stress levels (Paais, 2018). Improved strategic performance at the organizational level is enhanced with the consideration of interventions in dealing with stress, particularly at the governmental level (Agu, 2021). Studies have been carried out at a local government level that show that job stressors have a negative impact on service delivery (Agu 2021; Amaefule 2021). Subsequently the ability of the local government to be able to meet its strategic directives is curtailed leading to missed opportunities, reduced impact of strategy or implementation challenges (Chelangat 2017).

A study by Agu and Amaefule (2021) considered stress management intervention measures and their impact on the ability of the users to improve their performance. The interventions were geared towards firstly identifying the aspects of the environment that were stressful. Secondly, whether there were communication mechanisms in place to enable the organization to get feedback on stressors. Thirdly, the introduction of intervention measures into the environment for the specified measures. Finally, frameworks to measure the progress of the measures.

From these steps, they identified that breakdown when it comes to dealing with stressors in an organization usually happens at the first level, where stressors are often

not identified. The workers are not sought regarding those factors that have a negative impact on their ability to perform. Understanding of the impact of stress on work performance is lacking at management levels. Communication in organizations in Nigeria specifically is highly one directional, with subordinates unable to raise issues for addressing.

A study by Chelangat (2017) found out the ability of the county government employees to carry out their tasks and meet the strategic objectives in place was indicated through regression analysis. This indicates that by improving job stressors. The effect of such an improvement allows the local government to better serve for its inhabitants and improve outcomes.

2.3.2 Job Design

Job design refers to designing tasks for employees to complete the job. This is through combining the employees' needs and aspirations (Frey, 2017). Some jobs require the employee to follow certain procedures, and if not, it may lead to role ambiguity among the employees, yet other jobs give freedom to the employee on how to do their work (Kiruja, 2018). It is significant that when there is job control, among the employees, then stress reduces.

Some intercessions aim to redefine the employee's role, to reduce work overload and reduces the cases of role ambiguity. To a large extent, employees' involvement in job design is necessary to improve performance, and the ability of the organization to effect strategic intent (Kamau, 2014). The approach towards achieving job effectiveness and satisfaction at the strategic are job enrichment and autonomous work groups. Job enrichment implies taking job tasks to enable the employee to have more responsibility at the strategic.

According to (Sushil, 2014) job enrichment builds motivation into a job. The difficulty associated with job enrichment is the job hierarchy. Employees such as supervisors may find that their work responsibility has been shifted to other members (Ahmad, 2014). Opportunities such as motivation, recognition and accountability are the key focus in a person's career. Organizations benefit if the employees are aware of their job roles, hence cases such as absenteeism, negative morale and unstandardized work are reduced. Additionally, productivity increases come about from improved environment (Roelofsen, 2002).

The autonomous work groups, jobs can be enhanced to effectiveness if the employees have morale to work together as a group to achieve their goals (Kiruja, 2018). The idea of job design results from the efforts of the employees with different skills and abilities to design jobs with their preferences to have a form of job satisfaction.

Organizations such as the county governments should adopt an approach to motivate employees by giving clear contents and job specifications to improve the nature of the job. There will be better and improved performance when the jobs are well designed, hence stressful situations will be avoided and the tasks will be performed with enthusiasm (Kamau, 2014).

Globally, there are challenges in ensuring that there is adequate measurement of performance following strategic plan. Human resource element and its impact on the execution of strategy shows significant effects (Kloot, 2000).

2.3.3 Training

Organizations need human resources to get the job done. Training is important to an individual because their skills, knowledge and abilities are needed when the tasks are done (Amayi & G.M, 2016). Training of the employees attempts to improve their work

performance. Training is essential since technology is rapidly changing and the skills need to be up to par with the new changes (Keep, 2014). To reduce the deficiencies in the performance of the employees, there is need for training. The significance amount of stress in the work environment is caused by lack of effective training.

Research work by Bananuka (2017), when employees are not well trained in the work duty and do not have support for career growth, this may affect their performance. Employees can excel in the service of working for an organization if their work performance is of good quality. If the training needs of an individual are identified, the existing skills will be improved then the employees will have greater commitment at the workplace.

There is a relationship between training and strategic performance. Employees will be satisfied with their job when they are well trained and they will use the necessary skills to complete the required job. When work performance develops, there will be effectiveness of work output in the organization (Nzuve, 2012). Training is a valuable tool which enables employees to do their task accordingly, and it leads to long term benefits for the individuals and the organization.

Nowadays, few people would argue against the importance of having employees trained is important for the success of the organization. Employees are essential to the organization but also can be an expensive resource.

An important factor for consideration is how employees are upskilled regarding strategy and the new metrics that are involved in measurement of its success (Pollanen 2018). Enabling employees to see their contribution towards the goals of the organization has positive effect on the overall performance of the organization.

2.3.4 Employee Welfare Programs

Employee service helps in taking care of employees through the workers participation in management, trade unions and non-governmental agencies. An employee having a unique working environment will have a sense of importance in belongingness and motivation in the organization in favour of the welfare (Ilciuc, 2016). Few employees are satisfied at their workplace, and this therefore suggests that employees will be enriched if they are fully satisfied with the welfare programs (Saltson, 2015). Organizations have tried to avoid employees' shortcomings that are not work-related. Although most of the employers are vigilant of the existing problems but they feel that they do not need to address the issues (Amayi & G.M, 2016). In the recent years, trade unions, government regulations and financial costs have changed this approach. It is an accepted view that an employee's problem is private until the employee decides to open.

Employee assistance programs help to reduce on the job accidents and grievances. Organizations may offer employee assistance programs in varying degrees, some may only offer an educational program while others may provide a complete diagnosis and treatment program. According to (Dhawan, 2017) stated that work-life programs increase the employee satisfaction in their work; there is work-life balance which increase a sense of responsibility. Increasing the satisfaction of an employee plays a crucial significant role primarily through communication (Berridge, 2016). Communication is necessary as it makes employees who are unrelated come together as a team to know what the organization goals are and how they will be achieved (Anderson et al., 2017). Employees will high morale to perform if they are satisfied with their job. The organization provides all the employee welfare programs which are of safety and health to produce better performance in the work (Kiruja, 2018).

Other welfare measures such as grievance handling department, better working conditions, worker compensation programs and the organization's policies are giving a satisfactory employee level at the workplace. It allows the organization to grow faster. Through the data collected by these measures, organizations can develop competitive advantage of their strategic human resource capabilities (Mathur, 2015).

2.3.5 Incentives

Employees join and work in organizations to satisfy their personal needs (Kihara L.N & Mugambi, 2017). Incentives are used by organizations to influence an employee in the workplace. Incentives are used to mainly motivate the behaviour an employee has towards the job. According to (Barret-Cheetham & Bednall, 2016), the complexity of incentives links in predicting and changing human behaviour. In contrast, (Frey, 2017) explains that employees have decreased motivation and that their achievement will be harmful once the incentive strengths are taken away. Incentives are without a doubt solidly and wholly related to individual performance and further appeared to have no negative bearing on motivation (Bailey, 2014).

According to (Iliciuc, 2016) intrinsic motivation is when something is done to obtain an outcome. Linking performance towards the reward, an employee will feel motivated. Research was done by (KS, 2016), whereby some employees were asked if they had experienced satisfaction or unsatisfactory feelings about their jobs in the workplace. After they were interviewed, it was concluded that some certain factors tend to front to job productivity and satisfaction whereas other factors lead to the dissatisfaction of the job. The elements that give rise to job satisfaction were motivators which include responsibility, career growth and recognition, while the other factors leading to job dissatisfaction are the hygiene factors which comprise of

the working conditions, supervision and interpersonal relationships. These hygiene factors are some of the reasons that lead to individual stress at the workplace (Dhawan, 2017). These factors not only contribute to job motivation but also can lead to the stress of an employee.

Stress at the workplace is a great concern in the organization. If employees do not perform as expected, it will be a concern to the employer and other stakeholders of the organization. According to (Nzuve, 2012), performance is greatly affected by the work demands. An employee facing high work demands will have burnout which will result to psychological strain. An organization that motivates its employees by having proper work timelines, fair policy and administration rules, and fair payment of salaries will have a significant effect on employees' performance in the organization.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Stress control techniques are the independent variables which was measured by job design, training, employee welfare programs and incentives. The dependent variable, which is strategic performance management, was expected to be influenced by the independent variables. It was on this interaction of those specific objectives and research questions were derived as shown on Figure 1 below.

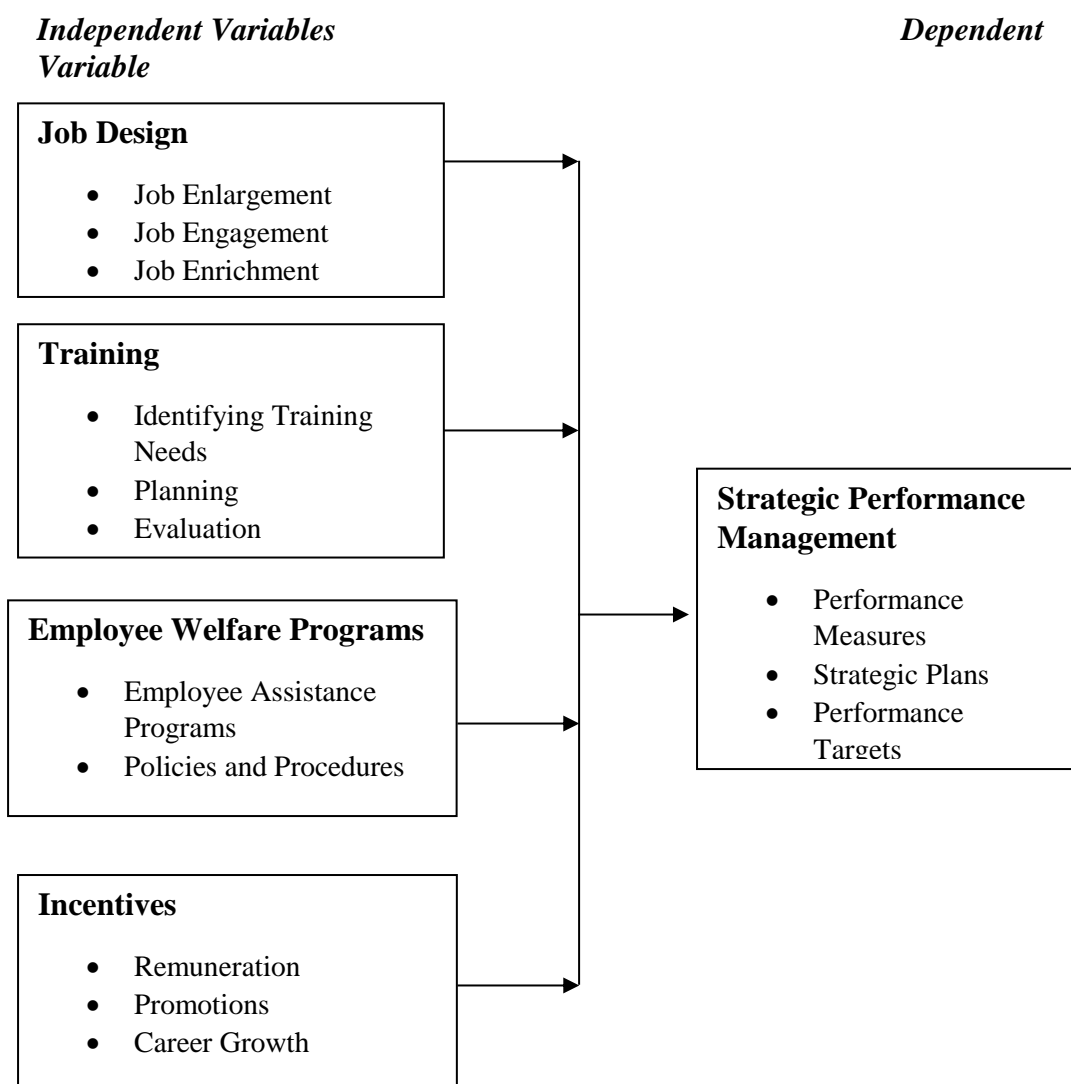


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

2.5 Summary

This chapter was guided by three theories which discussed the theoretical framework of the research. Review of previous works done on literature, among the several studies which had been done in the Kenyan perspective, majority have not examined the causal joint effect of stress control techniques on middle-level employees' strategic performance. As such, the impact of human resource capabilities in execution of organizational strategy is not considered. The conceptual framework showed the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into sub-sections that include the research design, location of the study, target population, sampling procedures, data collection, data analysis and presentation and ethical issues.

3.2 Research design

Research design has been well-defined by different scholars, as the plan and structure of analysis organized to obtain answers to research questions (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). According to Orodho (2003) defines research design as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. Kombo & Tromp (2006) also define research design as an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance with the research purpose.

The research study adopted descriptive survey which is the method of research which concerns itself with the present phenomena in terms of conditions, practices beliefs, processes, relationships, or trends (Salaria, 2012). The survey research according to Ganiyu, Okonkwo, & Okoh (2012) is a non-experimental method commonly used in descriptive research in social science. They also interpret the meaning of the data by relating results of the statistical test back to past research studies. The purpose of survey research is to generalize from sample population so that the inferences can be made about some characteristic, attitude or behavior of the population (Creswell, 2003). They are thus a very cost-effective and relatively quickly way of finding out what people do, think and want (Creswell, 2008).

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was confined to Murang'a county government in Murang'a County. This is where the strategic decisions and the central planning of Murang'a County are operated. The County Headquarters oversees the sub-counties operations, which make up Murang'a County. (County Annual Progress, 2017).

3.4 Target Population

Target population is defined as the population about which information is wanted or the totality of elements which are under discussion and about which information is desired. According to Berg (2001), the target population refers to the larger population to which the study ultimately would like to generalize the results. The middle-level employees of Murang'a County Government were the target population, which they comprised of 4,254 respondents.

3.5 Sampling procedure and Sample size

The study adopted the probability sampling which is commonly associated with survey in which individual in the population has an equal probability of being selected with randomization.

3.5.1 Sampling procedure

A representative sample from a population provides ability to generalize to a population (Creswell, 2012). Stratified random sampling was used as the most appropriate sampling technique, since the population is not a homogeneous group. Under stratified sampling the population is divided into several sub-populations that are individually more homogenous than the total population and when the population

reflects an imbalance on a characteristic of a sample. (Creswell, 2012). The population was divided into 3 sub- population, finance, information technology and human resource departments.

3.5.2 Sample size

To get sample size from the target population Taro Yamane simplified formula was adopted, it provided a simplified formula to calculate sample size (Yamane, 1973). It's a random sampling technique formula to estimate sampling size and is used to calculate the sample size (n) given the population size (N) and a margin of error (ϵ) (Israel, 2013).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N\epsilon^2}$$

It is computed as

Whereas:

n = no. of samples

N = total population

ϵ = error margin / margin of error at 95 percent confidence level

$$n = \frac{4254}{1+(4254*0.05^2)} = 365.62 \text{ Approximate } 366 \text{ respondents}$$

Systematic sampling was used in each group to come up with the respondents which involves selecting the samples at regular intervals from the sampling frame. The researcher attained the items from each stratum stratified by applying sampling formula $i = n (N/P)$,

Where i are the number of items in the stratum to be sampled, n is the sample size N is the population of the specific stratum, P is the population.

The sample size of 366 respondents was represented as follows; 158 Finance staff, 180 Human resource staff and 28 Information technology staff as shown in the Distribution of Population sample Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Distribution of population sample

Category	size of stratum (N)	sample size $i_{I= n} (N/p)$
Finance staff	158	113
Human resource staff	180	123
Information technology Staff	28	27
Total	366	263

3.6 Data Collection

The researcher obtained permission from the Murang'a county government the right of entry and had the questionnaires distributed to the respondents. The structured questionnaire was distributed by the researcher to the respondents by taking to their individual departments and then collected the completed questionnaires from the respondents. The researcher let respondents know that their responses were anonymous and confidential. Other sources of data collection tools were the secondary data from government records, periodical from libraries, journals, manuals, articles and online source.

3.7 Research Instruments

The main data gathering tool was a structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was closed properly formatted with questions adopting a five-point

Likert scale with a view to uniformed information. Questionnaires was given out to the sampled respondents and each item addressed a specific objective. The questionnaires were in structured and non-structured questions because the combination enables the researcher to get the objective responses and also provide alternatives for respondents to choose. This method is preferred to others when having many respondents (Kotus, 2015).

3.8 Pilot study

To guarantee the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher randomly selected sample of 15 respondents from the targeted population as respondents, each from the stratum to ensure the same chance in contributing in the pilot study. The objective of pilot survey was to pre-test for content, construction validity, and reliability of the questionnaire to minimize on cost and time wastage (Creswell, 2008).

3.9 Validity of the instrument

Validity is used to measure the accuracy of the specific concept that the research is attempting to measure (Creswell, 2008). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) observed that validity is the degree to which results obtained from analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study. To ensure the validity of the research questionnaires, the researcher used face validity where a panel of experts and the supervisors gave their input and confirmed that the instrument met the criterion.

3.10 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient which is used to assess the internal consistency or homogeneity among the research

instrument items. As a rule of the thumb, Bryman & Belt (2007) state that Alpha should be between (1 and 0), the nearer the result to -1 and preferably at closer ranges to 1 the more internally reliable the results are. Garson (2009) similarly states that the cut-off criteria for internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.60 for exploratory research and that alpha of at least 0.70 or higher is required to retain an item in an adequate scale. As indicated in the scale statistics in Table 3.2 below, all constructs for the study were found “substantially reliable” scoring alphas above 0.61 confirming the internal consistency of the constructs.

Table 3.2: Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach Alpha Score	No. of items	No. of cases
Job Design	0.687	9	113
Training	0.740	7	113
Employee Welfare Programs	0.715	9	113
Incentives	0.753	11	113

3.11 Data analysis and presentation

Data collected was processed and analyzed statistically using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics was used and the regression was used to develop a self-weighting estimating equation by which predicted values for a criterion valuable from the values for several predictor variables. Regression model equation leads to the derivation of an equation in which each independent variable has its own coefficient and the dependent variable is predicted from a combination of all the variables multiplied by their corresponding coefficients plus a residual term (Field, 2000).

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Researchers need to safeguard their research respondents, cultivate trust with them, uphold integrity of research, guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organization and cope with new challenging issues. Ethical issues include personal disclosure, authenticity and credibility of the research report (Israel & Hay, 2006).

The researcher endeavored the contribution of the respondents in the survey was totally voluntary and put into consideration for the vulnerable respondents. The researcher sort consent to undertake the research from county government authority through a letter of intent and sort introductory letter from the university, and further obtain approval and permit from National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI). All sources of secondary data were appropriately acknowledged through their words being paraphrased, summarized, cited or quoted and referenced to avoid any case of plagiarism. In analysis and reporting the researcher aimed to report the exact results of the findings either positive, negative, null finding or no difference outcome.

3.13 Summary

The research study adopted descriptive survey. The study was confined to Murang'a county government. The middle-level employees of Murang'a County Government were the target population, which they comprised of 4,254 respondents. A sample size of 366 respondents were selected and administered with questionnaire as a data collection instrument by the researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on data analysis, presentation, interpretation, and discussion. The first section in this chapter on the response rate of the respondents, profiles of respondents, test of statistical assumptions, analysis, presentation, interpretation, and discussion of the relationships under investigation.

4.2 Response rate

The questionnaires were served to the employees of Murang'a county government as the respondents. A sample size of 366 respondents were selected and administered with questionnaire by the researcher. Out of those served with questionnaire, 346 filled and returned the questionnaires, the response rate therefore was 94.5%. A response rate of 50 percent is adequate, 60 percent is good and 70 % and above very good (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Therefore, 70% response rate in this study was adequate for analysis. The documented response rate can be accredited to the data collection procedures, where the researcher utilized structured questionnaire.

4.3 Demographic Information

This highlights the demographic information of the respondents that includes gender, age, education level and job tenure. The study sought to assess the demographic information of the respondents. Demographic information aides in the laying of social,

economic foundations that might influence the direction of the investigation. The findings are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic Information

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	220	65.4
	Female	126	34.6
	Total	346	100
Age	21-30	11	2.9
	31-40	122	36
	41-50	130	38.2
	50 and above	83	22.8
	Total	346	100
Level of Education	O/A Level	136	31.6
	Certificate/Diploma	175	9.6
	Bachelors	51	44.9
	Postgraduate	14	14
	Total	346	100
Years' Work Experience	Less than 2 years	105	28.7
	3-5 years	40	11.03
	6-7 years	174	52.94
	8-10years	27	7.35
	Total	346	100

Table 4.1 above presents the distribution of the gender of respondents. The table indicates that the majority 220 (65.4%) were male while 126 (34.6%) were female. This can be deduced that Murang'a county government is in line with the Kenyan constitution of 2010 and addressed the problem of gender inequalities in the county.

The constitution sets a framework stating that not more than two-thirds of the members of public institutions should be of the same gender.

Most of the respondents 130 (38.2%) were in the age bracket of 41-50 years, 83 (22.8%) were over 50 years, 122 (36.8%) were in the age bracket of 31-40 years and 11 (2.9%) were between 21 to 30 years. It can be said that most of the middle level employees are in the age bracket of 31 to 50 years.

The study sought to establish the respondents' level of education. 136 (31.6%) of the respondents had O/A levels, 175 (44.9%) of the respondents had certificate/Diploma, 35 (9.6%) had a Bachelor's degree while 51 (14%) of the respondents had post graduate degree.

The term of number of years of experience of Murang'a county employees showed that most of the respondents had worked there for 6-7 years that is 174 (52.94%), 105 (28.7%) were less than 2 years, 40 (11.03%) were for 3-5 years and 27 (7.35%) were between 8 to 10 years.

4.4 Relationship between main variables

4.4.1 Effect of job design on strategic performance

The study sought to determine the effect of job design on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. This objective was measured using the following indicators, Job enlargement, job engagement and job enrichment in the opinion statements given. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the effect of job design in term of stress control techniques on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. This was on a Likert scale of not at all, small extent, moderate, large

extent and very large extent. Thus, in this study the scale of not all and small extent meant disagree while large and very large extent meant agreed.

Table 4.2: Effect of job design on strategic performance

Statement	SA%	A%	N%	D%	SD%	MEAN	STD DEV
Am familiar with my job design practices according to job description of Murang'a County	22.2	68.4	7	2.5	0.0	4.2	0.6
Job should be designed so that the employees perform work with enthusiasm and avoid stressful situations	13	27.2	9.5	24.1	26.3	3.2	1.4
Job should be enrichment to involve a wider range of more interesting and challenging tasks surrounding a complete unit of work to give a greater sense of achievement for the employees	11.4	18	14.2	47.8	8.5	3.2	1.2
Job enrichment provides the employee with variety, decision-making, responsibility and control in carrying out the work	26.9	41.1	11.1	18	2.8	2.3	1.1
Job design facilitating the interest of employees towards the job and enhancing their satisfaction	22.2	68.4	7	2.5	0.0	4.2	0.6
Murang'a County allows an appropriate provision for the autonomy of doing a work in the job design	13	27.2	9.5	24.1	26.3	3.2	1.4

From Table 4.2 above indicated that 250 (68.4%) of the respondents agreed that they are familiar with their respective job design according job description, 82 (22.5%) strongly agreed. With a mean score of 1.9 and standard deviation of 0.6, it can be concluded that middle level employees in Murang'a County government are familiar with their job description.

The results also showed that 100 (27.2%) of the respondents agreed that jobs should be designed so that the employees perform work with enthusiasm and avoid stressful situations and 48 (13%) of the respondents strongly agreed on the same. This makes 146 (40%) of the respondents cumulatively in an agreement that job should be designed so that the employees perform work with enthusiasm. With a mean score of 3.2 and standard deviation of 1.4, the study concluded that most of the middle level respondents agreed that jobs should be designed so that the employees perform work with enthusiasm.

Further, 175 (47.8%) disagreed that job should be enrichment to involve a wider range of more interesting and challenging tasks surrounding a complete unit of work to give a greater sense of achievement for the employees. This has also been confirmed by a value of 3.2 and 1.2 for both the mean score and standard deviation respectively.

A section of 150 (41.1%) agreed that job enrichment provides the employee with variety, decision-making, responsibility, and control in carrying out the work, 98 (26.9%) strongly agreed on the same. The study therefore concluded that most of the middle level respondents are in an agreement that job enrichment provides the employee with variety in decision-making, responsibility, and control in carrying out the work. This has been corroborated by the mean score of 2.3 and 1.1 standard deviation.

On job design 205 (56%) agreed that job design facilitating the interest of employees towards the job and enhancing their satisfaction, 81 (22.2%) strongly agreed. This cumulatively translates to 285 (78%) of the respondents. This result indicates that most of the respondents were in an agreement that job design facilitating the interest of employees towards the job and enhancing their satisfaction, 219 (59.8%) agreed that Murang'a county government allows an appropriate provision for the autonomy of

doing work in the job design, 71 (19.3%) strong agreed. This result pointed out that many of the middle level respondents were in an agreement that Murang'a county government allowed an appropriate provision for the autonomy of doing work.

4.4.2 Effect of training on strategic performance

The second objective of the study sought to establish the effect of training by middle-level employees on strategic performance of county government of Murang'a. Percentages, mean score, and standard deviation were used to summarize the findings as summarized in Table 4.3 below

Table 4.3: Effect of Training on Strategic Performance

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
I am familiar with training that reduces workforce stress in the county	38.0	56.3	5.7	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.6
Training gives the managers and employees the skills they need to perform effectively under high job pressure	16.5	47.2	15.5	18	2.8	4.4	1.1
The training is a method for learning and development that may help employees to manage stress and thus improve employees' commitment.	24.4	38.9	36.7	0.0	0.0	4.1	0.8
The training help individuals set job-related goals, identify and implement adequate behavioral strategies to accomplish the goals, and provide feedback and evaluation of the progress towards the goals	21.8	34.8	30.4	13.0	0.0	3.3	1.0
Training increases employees stress management abilities, improves work-life balance, and reduces psychological stress	10.8	60.1	19.0	10.0	0.0	3.3	0.8
The training and personnel development increases employees' self-esteem, commitment and motivation and helps to curtail levels of stress among the employees	4.1	30.4	31.0	27.2	7.3	3.0	1.0

The results showed that 206 (56.3%) agreed that they are familiar with training that reduces workforce stress in the county, 139 (38%) strongly agreed on that are familiar

with capacity building practices that reduces workforce stress in the county, 21 (5.7%) were neutral, that is to say that they were not sure whether they are familiar with training that reduces workforce stress in the county or not while none of the respondents neither disagreed nor strongly disagreed with this fact. With a mean score of 1.7 and standard deviation of 0.6, the study can conclude therefore that many of the respondents were familiar with the practices.

On the other hand, 60 (16.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that training gives the managers and employees the skills they need to perform effectively under high job pressure, 173 (47.2%) agreed on the same while 57 (15.5%) were not sure of the same. Cumulative figure of 76 (20.8%) disagreed that training gives the managers and employees the skills they need to perform effectively under high job pressure. With the mean score of 2.4 and standard deviation of 1.1, the study can thus have concluded that the majority of the middle level employees 233 (63.7%) agreed that training gives the managers and employees the skills they need to perform effectively under high job pressure.

The third item that was also analyzed on whether the training is a method for learning and development that may help employees to manage stress and thus improve employees' performance. In this case, 142 (38.9%) of the respondents agreed that training is a method for learning and development that may help employees to manage stress and thus improve employees' commitment, 89 (24.4%) agreed, 134 (36.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed whether training is a method for learning and development that may help employees to manage stress and thus improve employees' performance. Having scored a mean of 2.1 and a standard deviation of 0.8, the study can indicate that most of the respondents 232 (63.3%) agreed that training is a method

for learning and development that may help employees to manage stress and thus improve employees' performance.

The fourth item on the training was to set job-related goals, identify and implement adequate behavioural strategies to accomplish the goals and provide feedback and evaluation of the progress towards the goals. On this item however, 80 (21.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed with this fact, (127) 34.8% agreed, 111 (30.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 13% disagreed. This item of the study achieved a mean of 2.3 and standard deviation of 1.0. This result therefore indicated that the majority of the middle level employees 207 (56.6%) of the respondents agreed that training helped individuals set job-related goals, identify, and implement adequate behavioural strategies to accomplish the goals, and provide feedback and evaluation of the progress towards the goals.

The fifth item was on whether training increases employees stress technique abilities, improves work-life balance, and reduces psychological stress where (40) 10.8% and 220 (60.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that training increases employees stress technique abilities, improves work-life balance, and reduces psychological stress, 70(19%) neither agreed nor disagreed, (37)10.1% disagreed on the same. This item scored a mean of 2.3 and 0.8 as a standard deviation. With these results, most of the middle level respondents 259 (70.9%) agreed that training increased employees stress technique abilities, improved work-life balance, and reduced psychological stress.

Lastly, the sixth item was on the training and personnel development increases employees' self-esteem, and motivation and helps to curtail levels of stress among the employees where 15 (4.1%) strongly agreed and 111 (30.4%) agreed that training and personnel development increases employees' self-esteem, commitment and

motivation and helps to curtail levels of stress among the employees. 113 (31%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 126 (34.5%) cumulatively disagreed that this is the fact. With a mean of 3.0 and a standard deviation of 1.0.

4.4.3 Effect of Employee Welfare Programs on Strategic Performance

The third objective of the study sought to establish effect of employee welfare programs by middle-level employees' strategic performance of county government of Murang'a. Results of the study were summarized as in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Effect of employee welfare programs on strategic performance

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
I am familiar with employee welfare programs offered middle-level employee's strategic of county government of Murang'a	35.1	60.8	2.8	1.3	0.0	3.7	0.6
The employees' welfare programs provide better physical and mental health to workers for a healthy work environment and thus enhances employees' performance	42.0	47.2	9.4	1.3	0.0	3.7	0.7
Employees' welfare programs enhance a feeling of involvement and participation among workers and therefore they take active interest in their jobs	30.7	38.3	31	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.8
Facilities like housing schemes, medical benefits, and education and recreation facilities for workers' families help in raising their standards of living; making workers to pay more attention towards work and thus increase their commitments	43.0	54.4	2.5	0.0	0.0	3.6	0.5
Placing and maintenance of the worker in an occupational environment adapted to his physiological and psychological capabilities	5.7	67.1	24.4	2.8	0.0	4.2	0.6
Pension scheme gives a feeling of power by having some control over planning for retirement	26.3	68.7	51	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.5

On welfare 223 (60.8%) of the respondents agreed that they were familiar with employee welfare programs in Murang'a County followed by 128 (35.1%) who strongly agreed. 10 (2.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed on the same. This first item of the study variable scored a mean of 1.7 and a standard deviation of 0.6. Cumulatively, 351 (95.9%) of which they were familiar with employee welfare programs offered to middle-level employees of county government of Murang'a. These results therefore indicated that most of the middle level respondents were familiar with employee welfare programs offered at the county government of Murang'a.

In addition, 173 (47.2%) of the respondents agreed that employees' welfare programs provide better physical and mental health to workers for a healthy work environment and thus enhances employees' performance followed by 154 (42%) who strongly agreed. 34 (9.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed on this item of the study while 5 (1.3%) disagreed on this fact. Having achieved a mean score of 3.7 and a standard deviation of 0.7, the study can conclude therefore that the majority 326 (89.2%) of the respondents agreed that employees' welfare programs provide better physical and mental health to workers for a healthy work environment and thus enhanced employees' strategic performance.

Results on welfare 140 (38.3%) respondents agreed that employees' welfare programs enhanced a feeling of involvement and participation among workers and therefore they take active interest in their jobs similarly 112 (30.7%) strongly agreed. 113 (31%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed while none of the respondents disagreed to this item. With a mean score of 4.0 and standard deviation of 0.8, the study can indicate that the majority of the middle level employees 253 (69.0%) of the respondents were in an agreement that employees' welfare programs

enhanced a feeling of involvement and participation among workers and therefore took an active interest in their jobs.

The fourth item that was tested was on facilities like housing schemes, medical benefits, and education and recreation facilities making workers to pay more attention towards work. Here, 199 (54.4%) of respondents agreed that there is facilities like housing schemes, medical benefits, and education and recreation facilities for workers' families helped in raising their standards of living, making workers to pay more attention towards work and thus increased their commitment at the workplace. Similarly, 157 (43%) strongly agreed, 9 (2.5%) neither agreed nor disagreed while none of the respondents refuted this fact. These results therefore indicate that most of the respondents 356 (97.4%) agreed that facilities like housing schemes, medical benefits, and education and recreation facilities for workers' families help in raising their standards of living, making workers to pay more attention towards work and thus increased their commitment at the workplace with a mean score of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 0.5.

The fifth item focused on placing and maintenance of the worker in an occupational environment adapted to his physiological and psychological capabilities where 246 (67.1%) agreed that there is presence of pricing carbon credits and 21 (5.7%) strongly agreed on this fact, 89 (24.4%) neither agreed nor disagreed while 10 (2.8%) of the respondents disagreed. Looking at the results of the study, the majority of the middle level employees agreed to the fact that there is placing and maintenance of the worker in an occupational environment adapted to this physiological and psychological capabilities scoring a mean of 3.2 and a standard deviation of 0.6.

The sixth item in this category was on pension scheme gives a feeling of power by having some control over planning for retirement where 251 (68.7%) agreed that

pension scheme gives a feeling of power by having some control over planning for retirement, 96 (26.3%) strongly agreed, 19 (5.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed while none of the respondents disagreed. With a mean score of 3.8 and a standard deviation of 0.5, the study indicated that most of the middle level respondents agreed that pension scheme gives a feeling of power by having some control over planning for retirement.

4.4.4 Effect of employee incentive programs on strategic performance

The fourth objective of the study sought to determine the effect of employee Incentive programs on middle-level employees' strategic performance at county government of Murang'a. Percentages, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize the findings as shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Effect of employee incentive programs on strategic performance

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	STD
I am familiar with employee Incentive programs policy in Murang'a county.	26.3	41.1	24.1	8.5	0.0	3.2	0.9
Incentive plans were created for the express purpose of urging employees to motivate themselves to higher achievement levels.	27.0	16.9	27.4	28.7	0.0	3.6	1.2
Employees regularly look for new employment opportunities when they feel they are under-compensated or unappreciated.	13.6	75.9	10.4	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.5
Incentive plans are a way of rewarding middle-level performing employees and showing them you appreciate their contributions to the county	31.6	65.8	2.6	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.5
When employees work together on team incentive plans, they establish a sense of camaraderie, pulling together for the common good and hence facilitate stress management	37.0	57.9	5.1	0.0	0.0	3.7	0.6

The results indicated that 150 (41.1%) of respondents agreed that they were familiar with employee incentive programs policy in Murang'a County government. 90 (26.3%) strongly agreed, 88 (24.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed on the same while 31 (8.5) disagreed. With these results and a mean score of 3.2 and a standard deviation of 0.9, the study can authoritatively indicate that most of the respondents were familiar with employee incentive programs policy in Murang'a County government.

Secondly, 105 (28.7%) disagreed that incentive plans were created for the express purpose of urging employees to motivate themselves to higher achievement levels and 99 (27%) strongly agreed, 10 (16.9%) agreed while 100 (27.4%) were neutral. This item achieved a mean score of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 1.2. Cumulatively therefore, majority of the middle level respondents 205 (56.1%) did not know what this item was and disagreed that incentive plans were created for the express purpose of urging employees to motivate themselves to higher achievement levels.

Thirdly, 278 (75.9%) of the respondents agreed that employees regularly look for new employment opportunities when they feel they are under-compensated or unappreciated. 50 (13.6%) strongly agreed it was inspiring. This item scored a mean of 3.0 and a standard deviation of 0.5. It was therefore evident enough that most of the middle level respondents agreed to the fact that employees regularly look for new employment opportunities when they felt they were under-compensated or unappreciated.

Results on incentives 241 (65.8%) agreed that incentive plans were a way of rewarding middle-level performing employees and showing them, that their contributions were appreciated to the organisation while 116 (31.6%) strongly agreed to this fact. Having achieved a mean score of 3.7 and a standard deviation of 0.5, majority of the middle

level respondents agreed that incentive plans were a way of rewarding middle-level performing employees and showing them that their contributions were appreciated.

A segment of 212 (57.9%) and 135 (37%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that as when employees work together on team incentive plans, they establish a sense of camaraderie, pulling together for the common good and hence facilitate stress management, 19 (5.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed and this item attracted none of the opposition view from the respondents. This is a clear indication that many of the middle level respondents agreed that when employees work together on team incentive plans, they establish a sense of camaraderie, pulling together for the common good and hence facilitate performance at the workplace.

4.4.5 Effect of stress control techniques on strategic performance

Research findings in Table 4.6 below showed that 223 (60.9%) strongly agree that there is Murang'a county stress control techniques had enabled them to meet their annual work targets, while 214 (58.6%) of the stress control techniques had enhanced their punctuality in meeting their work deadlines. A total of 275 (75.2%) of the stress control techniques had also enhanced time management skills at work which made work plans and perform better. A total of 162 (44.3%) agreed that Murang'a county techniques had made the worker develop new work initiatives which enabled the worker achieve results faster. On efficiency a total of 187 (51%) agreed that the techniques always enhanced work output which was seen in their individual work outcomes. Majority at 219 (59.7%) agreed that the stress control techniques had also enhanced their interaction skills which enhanced their ability to perform better at work.

Table 4.6: Effect of stress control techniques on employee’s strategic performance

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	ME AN	STD
Murang’a county stress control techniques have enabled me to meet my annual work targets	7.9%	7.9%	23.3 %	54.9 %	6.0 %	3.43	1.00
The stress control techniques have enhanced my punctuality in meeting my work deadlines	9.8%	7.9%	23.7 %	53.9 %	4.7 %	3.36	1.04
The stress control techniques have also enhanced my time management skills at work which makes me plan and perform better	2.5%	14.9%	7.4%	51.1 %	24.1 %	3.80	1.05
Murang’a county’s strategies have made me develop new work initiatives that enable me achieve results faster	16.1%	3.1%	36.8 %	42.1 %	2.2 %	3.67	0.86
The strategies always enhance my work output which is seen in my individual work outcomes	7.7%	10.9%	14.9 %	39.7 %	26.8 %	3.75	0.93
stress control techniques have also enhanced my interaction skills which enhance my ability to perform better at work	7.7%	10.3%	22.3 %	37.8 %	21.9 %	3.96	1.03

4.4.6 Correlation Analysis

The study sought to establish the strength of the effect of stress control techniques (job design, training, employee welfare programs and incentives) by middle-level employees’ strategic performance management at Murang’a county government. To achieve this, Pearson’s correlation was carried out since both independent and dependent variables are in ratio scale. According to Kothari (2004), product moment correlation should be carried out if and only if both dependent and independent variables are in either ratio or interval scale. If the correlation coefficient is -1 then there is an inverse relationship and an increase in dependent variable is associated with a decrease in independent variable and +1 there is a perfect positive significant relationship and an increase in dependent variable is associated with an increase in independent variable (Kothari, 2011).

Table 4.7: Correlation Analysis

	Employees Strategic Performance	Job Design	Training & Development	Employee Welfare Programs	Incentives
Employees Strategic Performance	1				
Job Design	.653**	1			
Training & Development	.608**	0.441	1		
Employee Welfare Programs	.514**	0.403	-0.508	1	
Incentives	.521**	0.303	0.305	0.280	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The study findings depicted in Table 4.7 above indicated that there was a significant positive effect on job design and middle-level employees strategic performance ($\rho=0.6530$, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$). This implies that a unit change in job design increases middle-level employees' strategic performance by 65.3%. Secondly there was a positive and significant effect on training and middle-level employees strategic performance ($\rho = 0.608$, $P\text{ value} < 0.05$). This implies that a unit change in training increases middle-level employees strategic performance by 60.8%. Thirdly, there was a positive and significant effect on employee welfare programs and middle-level employees strategic performance ($\rho = 0.514$, $p\text{ value} < 0.05$). This implies that a unit change in employee welfare programs increases middle-level employees' strategic performance by 51.4%. Finally, there was a positive and significant effect on incentives and middle-level employees strategic performance ($\rho = 0.521$, $p\text{ value} < 0.05$). This implies that a unit change in incentives increases middle-level employees' strategic performance by 52.1%.

Results in Table 4.8 showed that there was no variable which was omitted in the model because the p value was less than 0.05. Therefore, we could not reject the null hypothesis.

Table 4.8: Ramsey Test for Omitted Variables

Ho: Model has no omitted variables Ha: Model has omitted variables

H₀ : Model has no omitted variables	H_a : Model has omitted variables
F (3, 308) = 3.98	Prob > F=0.0084

4.4.7 Regression Analysis of the effect of Job Design on Strategic Performance

The first objective of the study was designed to assess the effect of job design on strategic performance. The literature that was reviewed in this study as well as theoretical reasoning associated job design with Strategic performance in Murang'a County government. Following the theoretical arguments, the following hypothesis was formulated and tested:

H01: There is no significant effect of Job Design on Strategic Performance in Murang'a County Government.

The model summary in Table 4.9 below demonstrates the coefficient of determination as indicated by R squared to be 0.426 implying that 42.6% of the strategic performance in Murang'a County government was explained by job design while the other factors explained the remaining proportion.

Table 4.9: Model summary for job design and strategic performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.653a	0.426	0.396	0.117	2.298

Predictors: (Constant), job design

Dependent Variable: strategic performance

In Table 4.10 below shows the ANOVA used for the overall model significance. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05, then job design had a significant explanatory power on strategic performance in Murang'a county government (F = 16.466 and p value <0.05).

Table 4.10: ANOVA for job design and strategic performance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	372.007	1	372.007	16.466	.000b
Residual	3050.003	135	22.593		
Total	3422.009	136			

Table 4.11 below represents the Regression Coefficients for job design on strategic performance

Table 4.11: Regression Coefficients for job design on strategic performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	4.851	0.175		27.67	0.00
job design	1.087	0.176	0.33	6.189	0.00

Predictors: (Constant), job design

Dependent Variable: strategic performance

From Table 4.11 above regression equation can be written as:

Strategic performance = 4.851 + 1.087Job DesignEquation (i)

The regression equation (i) shows that when job design is held at a constant zero, strategic performance would be 1.087 units. There was a positive and significant effect on job design on strategic performance in county government of Muranga. A unit

increase in job design increased strategic performance in county government of Muranga by 1.087 units. Since the P-value was less than 0.05 then there was enough evidence to warrant rejection of the null hypothesis and conclude that there was a significant effect on job design and strategic performance in the county government of Muranga.

4.4.8 Regression Analysis of effect of training on strategic performance

Table 4.12 below represents the Model Summary of training on strategic performance

Table 4.12: Model Summary of training on strategic performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
2	.608a	0.370	0.362	0.141	2.069

Predictors: (Constant), Training

Dependent Variable: strategic performance

The second objective of the study was designed to assess the effect of training on strategic performance in Murang'a county government. The literature that was reviewed in this study as well as the theoretical reasoning associated training with strategic performance in Murang'a county government. Following the theoretical arguments, the following hypothesis was formulated and tested:

H02: There is no significant effect of Training on strategic performance in Murang'a county government.

The model summary in Table 4.12 below demonstrates the coefficient of determination as indicated by R squared to be 0.370 implying that 37.0% of the strategic performance in Murang'a county government was explained by training while the other factors explained the remaining proportion.

In Table 4.13, the ANOVA was used to show the overall model significance. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05, then Training had a significant explanatory power on strategic performance at Murang'a county government (F = 14.12 and p-value <0.05).

Table 4.13: ANOVA for Training on strategic performance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
2 Regression	324	1	324	14.12	.000b
Residual	3098.009	135	22.948		
Total	3422.009	136			

From Table 4.13 above regression equation can be written as:

Strategic performance= 4.85 + 1.01 TrainingEquation (ii)

The regression equation (ii) shows that when Training was held at a constant zero, work performance would be 1.01 units. There was a positive and significant effect on Training on strategic performance in Murang'a county government. A unit increase in Training increases strategic performance in Murang'a county government by 1.087 units. Since the P-value was less than 0.05 then there was enough evidence to warrant rejection of the null hypothesis and conclusion that there was a significant effect of Training on strategic performance in Murang'a county government.

Table 4.14 below represents the Model Summary Regression Coefficients for Training on strategic performance.

Table 4.14: Regression Coefficients for Training on strategic performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
2 (Constant)	4.851	0.177		27.46	0.00
Training	1.01	0.177	0.308	5.73	0.00

Predictors: (Constant), Training

Dependent Variable: strategic performance

4.4.9 Regression Analysis of the effect of the employee welfare programs on strategic performance

The third objective of the study was designed to assess the effect of the employee welfare programs on strategic performance in Murang'a county government. The literature that was reviewed in this study as well as theoretical reasoning associated employee welfare programs with strategic performance in Murang'a county government. Following the theoretical arguments, the following hypothesis was formulated and tested:

H03: There is no significant effect of the employee welfare programs on strategic performance in Murang'a county government.

The model summary in Table 4.15 below represents the coefficient of determination employee welfare programs and strategic performance in Murang'a county government.

Table 4.15: Summary for employee welfare programs and strategic performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
3	.514a	0.264	0.257	0.267	2.133

Predictors: (Constant), employee welfare programs

Dependent Variable: strategic performance

The model summary in Table 4.15 above demonstrates the coefficient of determination as indicated by R squared to be 0.264 implying that 26.4% of the strategic performance in Murang'a county government was explained by employee welfare programs while the other factors explained the remaining proportion.

In Table 4.16 below the ANOVA was used to show the overall model significance for employee welfare programs on strategic performance

Table 4.16: ANOVA for employee welfare programs on strategic performance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
3 Regression	70.148	1	70.148	2.825	.000b
Residual	3351.862	135	24.829		
Total	3422.009	136			

In Table 4.16 above the ANOVA was used to show the overall model significance. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05, then employee welfare programs had a significant explanatory power on strategic performance in Murang’a county government (F = 2.825 and p-value <0.05).

Table 4.17 below represents the Regression Coefficients of employee welfare on strategic performance

Table 4.17: Regression Coefficients of employee welfare on strategic performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
3 (Constant)	4.876	0.184		26.492	0.00
employee welfare programs	.531	0.207	0.143	2.563	11.00

Predictors: (Constant), employee welfare programs

Dependent Variable: strategic performance

From Table 4.17 above regression equation can be written as:

Strategic performance = 4.876 + 0.531 employee welfare programs.....Equation (iii)

The regression equation (iii) showed that when employee welfare programs is held at a constant zero, strategic performance in Murang'a county government would be 0.531 units. There was a positive and significant effect of the employee welfare programs on strategic performance in Murang'a county government. A unit increase in employee welfare programs increased strategic performance in Murang'a county government by 0.531 units. Since the P-value was less than 0.05 then there was enough evidence to warrant rejection of the null hypothesis and conclude that there was a significant effect of the employee welfare programs on strategic performance in Murang'a county government.

4.4.10 Regression Analysis of the effect of the incentive's programs on strategic performance

The fourth objective of the study was designed to assess the effect of the incentive's programs on strategic performance in Murang'a county government. The literature that was reviewed in this study as well as theoretical reasoning associated incentives programs with strategic performance in Murang'a county government. Following the theoretical arguments, the following hypothesis was formulated and tested:

Ho4: There is no significant effect of the incentive's programs on strategic performance in Murang'a county government.

The model summary in Table 4.18 below demonstrates the coefficient of determination Model Summary for incentives programs and strategic performance.

Table 4.18: Model Summary for incentives programs and strategic performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
4	.521a	0.271	0.264	3.22	2.013

Predictors: (Constant), incentives programs

Dependent Variable: strategic performance

The model summary in Table 4.18 above demonstrates the coefficient of determination as indicated by R squared to be 0.271 implying that 27.1% of the strategic performance in Murang'a county government was explained by incentives programs while the other factors explained the remaining proportion.

In Table 4.19 below, the ANOVA was used to show the overall model significance. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05, then incentives programs had a significant explanatory power on strategic performance (F = 6.926 and p value <0.05).

Table 4.19: ANOVA for incentives programs and strategic performance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
4 Regression	166.994	1	166.994	6.926	.000b
Residual	3255.015	135	24.111		
Total	3422.009	136			

From Table 4.19 above, Since the p-value is less than the 0.05, then incentives programs had a significant explanatory power on strategic performance (F = 6.926 and p value <0.05).

Regression Coefficients of incentives on strategic performance is represented in the Table 4.20 below

Table 4.20: Regression Coefficients of incentives on strategic performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
4 (Constant)	4.851	0.181		26.785	0.00
Incentives Programs	.728	0.181	0.221	4.014	0.00

Predictors: (Constant), incentives programs

Dependent Variable: strategic performance

From Table 4.20 regression equation can be written as:

Employee performance= 4.851 + 0.728 incentives programsEquation (iv)

The regression equation (iv) shows that when incentives programs were held at a constant zero, strategic performance would be 0.728 units. There is a positive and significant impact of incentives programs on strategic performance. A unit increase in incentives programs increased strategic performance by 0.728 units. Since the P-value was less than 0.05 then there was enough evidence to warrant rejection of the null hypothesis and conclude that there was a significant effect of incentives programs on strategic performance.

4.4.11 Analysis of the Overall Model

In this section the findings were discussed focusing on the main objectives of this study which sought to determine the effect of stress control techniques (job design, training, employee welfare programs and incentives) by middle-level employees' strategic performance management of Murang'a county government, as determined by the strategic goals that are in place in the county government of Murang'a. To achieve this, four techniques were used which were job design, training, employee welfare programs and incentives against the middle-level employees 'strategic

performance management at Murang'a county government. Overall, it was found that stress control techniques had a significant positive effect on middle-level employees strategic performance at Murang'a county government measured thereby rejected the null hypothesis that was tested that is, stress control techniques have no significant effect on middle-level employees' strategic performance at Murang'a county government. To prove this, a multiple linear regression model was adopted for testing the significance of the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Therefore, the overall model for the study was:

$$BP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{job design}) + \beta_2 (\text{training}) + \beta_3 (\text{employee welfare programs}) + \beta_4 (\text{incentives}) + \epsilon$$

4.5 Inferential Analysis of the Overall Model

Sekaran (2003) argued that if the study seeks to analyse the data beyond means and standard deviations for example if there is need to examine the effect between variables then bivariate analysis such as correlation and regression analysis are the most appropriate. Thus, the researcher applied Pearson correlation analysis to examine the strength of the effect of stress control techniques (job design, training, employee welfare programs and incentives) on middle-level employees' strategic performance management of Murang'a county government. Moreover, regression analysis was used to examine the nature of the effect as well as tested the hypothesis of the study. The level of significance was tested at 5% and according to Oso and Onen (2009), with this significance level then the researcher had 95% chance of making the correct decision that existed a significant effect of independent variable on dependent variable.

The overall model shows that 66.3% of the variation in strategic performance can be jointly explained by job design, training, employee welfare programs and incentives. The remaining percentage can be explained by other factors which were excluded from the model. Summary is as shown in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: Model Summary for the Overall Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
5	.814a	0.663	0.639	0.845	2.259

Predictors: (Constant), Job Design, Training, Employee Welfare Programs and Incentives

Dependent Variable: Middle-level employees' strategic performance

The ANOVA results in Table 4.22 showed that job design, training, employee welfare programs and incentives all jointly had a significant effect on Middle-level employees' strategic performance at Murang'a county government and at least one of the slope coefficients was non-zero.

Table 4.22: ANOVA for the Overall Model

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
5 Regression	905.087	4	226.272	11.867	.000b
Residual	2516.922	132	19.068		
<i>Total</i>	<i>3422.009</i>	<i>136</i>			

Predictors: (Constant), Job Design, Training, Employee Welfare Programs, and Incentives

Dependent Variable: strategic performance

Results in Table 4.23 showed that there was a positive and significant effect of job design on Strategic Performance in County government of Murang’a. ($\beta = 1.06$, p value <0.05). This implied that a unit change in job design increases strategic performance by 1.02 units. Secondly, there was a positive and significant effect of Training on strategic performance in Murang’a county government. ($\beta = 1.06$, p value <0.05). This implies that a unit change in Training increased strategic performance at Murang’a county government by 1.06 units. Thirdly, there was a positive and significant effect of employee welfare programs on strategic performance in Murang’a county government ($\beta = 0.41$, p value <0.05). This implied that a unit change in employee welfare programs increased strategic performance at Murang’a county government by 0.41 units. Finally, there was a positive and significant effect of incentive on strategic performance at Murang’a county government ($\beta = 0.71$, p-value < 0.05). This implied that a unit change in incentive increased the strategic performance at Murang’a county government bank performance by 0.71 units.

Table 4.23: Regression Coefficients for the Overall Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
5(Constant)	4.87	0.16		30.39	0.00
Job Design	1.06	0.16	0.32	6.60	0.00
Training	1.02	0.16	0.31	6.35	0.00
Employee Welfare Programs	0.41	0.16	0.11	2.28	0.01
Incentives programs	0.71	0.16	0.22	4.42	0.00

Dependent Variable: Strategic performance at Murang’a county government

Strategic performance = 4.87+ 1.06 (job design) + 1.02 (training) + 0.41 (employee welfare programs) + 0.71 (incentives) + ϵ

This study hypothesized: -

- i. **H01:** Job Design has no positive significant effect on Strategic Performance in County government of Murang'a. (H0: $\beta_1 = 0$ vs H1: $\beta_1 \neq 0$)
- ii. **H02:** Training has no positive significant effect on Strategic Performance in County government of Murang'a. (H0: $\beta_2 = 0$ vs H2: $\beta_2 \neq 0$)
- iii. **H03:** Employee Welfare Programs has no positive significant effect on Strategic Performance in County government of Murang'a. (H0: $\beta_3 = 0$ vs H3: $\beta_3 \neq 0$)
- iv. **H04:** Incentives programs has no positive significant effect on Strategic Performance in County government of Murang'a. (H0: $\beta_4 = 0$ vs H4: $\beta_4 \neq 0$).

The hypothesis of the study which were tested, and the results also indicates all the hypotheses were rejected.

4.6 Summary

The study sought to test four hypotheses; there is no significant effect of Job Design on middle-level employees' strategic performance. There is no significant effect of Training on middle-level employee's strategic performance. There is no significant effect of Employee Welfare Programs on middle-level employee's strategic performance. There is no significant effect of employees Incentives on middle-level employee's strategic performance.

The findings of the study demonstrated that stress control techniques have effect on middle-level employee's strategic performance management and consequently on the ability of the county government to implement their strategic objectives.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The current study stemmed from the realization of the research problem in literature effect of stress control techniques on middle-level employee's strategic performance management of Murang'a county government. Empirically, most of the studies on the effect of stress management strategies on middle-level employee's strategic performance have been skewed towards use of primary data and only specific turn around strategies had been evaluated. Among the several studies which had been done in the Kenyan perspective majority have not examined the causal joint effect of stress management strategies on middle-level employees strategic performance. As such, the impact of human resource capabilities in execution of organizational strategy is not considered.

Consequently, the researcher's primary purpose was to examine the effect of stress control techniques on middle-level employee's strategic performance management. Further, the study sought to test four hypotheses; there is no significant effect of Job Design on middle-level employees' strategic performance. There is no significant effect of Training on middle-level employee's strategic performance. There is no significant effect of Employee Welfare Programs on middle-level employee's strategic performance. There is no significant effect of employees Incentives on middle-level employee's strategic performance.

Correlation analysis was used to examine the strength of the effect of stress control techniques on middle-level employee's strategic performance management of Murang'a county government and regression analysis was used to examine the nature

of the of stress control techniques on middle-level employee's strategic performance. On overall 66.3% of the variation in middle-level employee's strategic performance of Murang'a county government can be explained by Job Design, Training, Employee Welfare Programs and incentives while the remaining percentage can be explained by other factors excluded in the model. The findings of the study demonstrated that stress control techniques have effect on middle-level employee's strategic performance management and consequently on the ability of the county government to implement their strategic objectives.

5.1.1 Effect of job design on strategic performance management

The study hypothesized that there was no effect of job design on middle-level employee's strategic performance management of County Government of Murang'a. The study showed that there was a positive and significant effect of job design on middle-level employee's strategic performance management of County Government of Murang'a. This implies that both job enlargement, job engagement job enrichment had a positive significant effect on middle-level employee's strategic performance management of County Government of Murang'a as a stress control technique. This implies that a unit change in job design increases middle-level employee's strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a by 1.06 units and their ability to effectively implement strategic objectives. This implies that a unit change in job design increases middle-level employee's strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a by 65.3%. Descriptively, 68.4% of the respondents agreed that they are familiar with job design in their workplace, 22.5% strongly agreed. It can be concluded that the majority of the County Government of Murang'a do practice job design as a stress control technique. The null hypothesis was rejected and the study

found out that there is positive and significant effect of job design on middle-level employee's strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a.

5.1.2 Effect of Training on strategic performance management

Training had a significant explanatory power on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. There is a positive and significant effect of Training on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. A unit increase in training increases middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a by 1.01 units. This was also supported by correlation analysis. This implies that a unit change in training increases middle-level employees' strategic performance management of County Government of Murang'a by 60.8%. There was enough evidence to warrant rejection of the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant effect of training on middle-level employees' strategic performance management of County Government of Murang'a.

Training of the employees is essential in ensuring that as employees are carrying out their tasks, changes to their roles and responsibilities as necessitated by strategic initiatives are adequately accounted through up skilling.

5.1.3 Effect of employee welfare programs on strategic performance management

The study sought to examine effect of employee welfare programs on middle-level employees' strategic performance management of County Government of Murang'a. Both correlation and regression analysis were used to examine the relationship. There was a positive and significant effect of employee welfare programs on middle-level

employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. Regression analysis showed that there was a positive and significant effect of employee welfare programs on middle-level employees' strategic performance management of County Government of Murang'a. This implies that a unit change in employee welfare programs increases middle-level employees' strategic performance management of County Government of Murang'a by 0.531 units. There was a positive and effect of employee welfare programs on middle-level employees' strategic performance management of County Government of Murang'a. This implies that a unit change in employee welfare programs increases middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a.

The respondents were familiar with employee welfare programs and therefore practice this stress control technique in the County Government of Murang'a. The null hypothesis was rejected, and the study found out that there is positive and significant effect of employee welfare programs on middle-level employees' strategic performance management of County Government of Murang'a.

5.1.4 Effect of employees' incentives on strategic performance management

There was a positive and significant effect of incentives on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. This implies that a unit change in incentives increases middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. This implies that a unit change in incentives increases middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a by 0.71 units. There was enough evidence to warrant rejection of the null hypothesis and concluded that there is a significant effect of incentives on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a.

5.2 Conclusion

This section presents the conclusions made in the current study. Research objective one in this study was to assess the effect of job design on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. The indicators of job design were job enlargement, job engagement job enrichment. The indicators for strategic performance management in this case were performance targets, strategic plans and performance targets. Job enlargement, job engagement and job enrichment had a positive significant effect on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. It was therefore concluded that there was a positive and significant effect of job design on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. To improve on the middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a, it was therefore concluded that to some extent, some section in job design were not favorable in job enrichment and job engagement to which led to stressful work environment in job performance, which needs to be changed to create a good working condition. In addition, it was concluded that the job design as major stress control technique chosen must impact on the number of performance targets, strategic plans and performance targets.

Research objective two in the current study was to establish the effect of training on middle-level employees' strategic performance of county government of Murang'a. The pointers for training were identifying training needs, planning and evaluation. The pointers for strategic performance of in this case were performance targets, strategic plans and performance targets. Identifying training needs, planning and evaluation had a positive and significant relationship with middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. It was therefore concluded that there was a positive and significant effect of incentives on middle-level employees'

strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. To improve on strategic performance, it was concluded that the County Government of Murang'a should focus more on group level learning and business level learning to enhance the knowledge on middle-level employees' strategic performance.

Research objective three in the current study was to examine the effect of employee welfare programs on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. The indicators for employee welfare programs were employee assistance programs, trade unions, policies and procedures. In this case, the indicators for strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a were Performance targets, strategic plans and performance targets. Employee assistance programs, trade unions, policies and procedures had a significant positive effect with the middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. It was therefore concluded that there was a positive and significant effect of employee welfare programs on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. To improve on the middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a, it was concluded that the management of Murang'a county government need to engage more with employees in issues that dealt with employee assistance programs, trade unions, policies and procedures.

The last objective of this study was to determine the effect of the incentive's programs on middle level employees' strategic performance in Murang'a county government. The indicators for employee's incentives programs were remuneration, promotions and career growth while the strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a were Performance targets, strategic plans and performance measures. Remuneration, promotions and career growth had a significant and positive

relationship with middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. It was therefore concluded that there was a positive and significant the effect of the e incentives programs on strategic performance in Murang'a county government. To improve on strategic performance in Murang'a county government, it was concluded that Murang'a county government need to come up with new incentives programs that focused on stress control techniques.

5.3 Recommendations

With reference to the objectives of the study, the following recommendations were arrived at. Findings from the study depicted that job design as stress control technique is necessary for strategic performance in Murang'a county government. To improve on the strategic performance in Murang'a county government, it was therefore recommended that jobs should be broken into small component parts to improve the strategic performance of the employees and to assign specialists to do each part. Further, job design should link specific tasks to specific jobs and deciding what techniques, equipment, and procedures should be used to perform those tasks.

Training had a significant contribution on the strategic performance in Murang'a county government. Training as a stress control technique improves efficiency which would ultimately ensure smooth operations and consequently improve the strategic performance in Murang'a county government. It was therefore recommended that Murang'a county government should focus more on Training, group level learning and business level learning to enhance the knowledge on controlling stress. To conclude, training as a stress control technique need to be effective and more often conducted in the Murang'a county government. Also, the study recommends that training should be adapted by the Murang'a county government to enable the

employees accept changes with challenging business environment and technology for better performance, increase employees' knowledge to develop creative and problem-solving skills.

The study indicates that employee welfare programs as a stress control technique had significant effect on strategic performance in Murang'a county government. To improve on the strategic performance in Murang'a county government, it was a recommendation of this study that Murang'a county government need effective and efficient employee welfare programs for the comfort and improvement, intellectual or social being of the employees.

There was a positive and significant effect of incentives on middle-level employees' strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a. There is need to come up with motivating employee's incentives either monetary or non-monetary.

Researchers and academics working in the fields of public policy and public finance management will be the immediate beneficiaries of the research. The research documents good practices and challenges of the stress control techniques and employee's strategic performance of county government with reference to the Kenyan devolution model that help to inform teaching and research at universities and other research institutions in Kenya and around the world.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction



MURANG'A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (MUT)

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Murang'a

DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Ref: MUT/RL/PGS/14/2020/VOL.I

Date: 27th July 2022

Dear Ms. Sandra Waithira Kinuthia (BE401/5212/2017),

RE: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND SUPERVISORS

I am pleased to inform you that the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies on 26th July, 2022 considered and approved your Masters research proposal entitled “**Effect of Stress Management Strategies on Middle Level Employees Work Performance of Murang’a County Government**” and appointed the following as supervisors:

1. **Dr. Grace Wahinya - Murang’a University of Technology**
2. **Dr. Tabitha Karanja – Murang’a University of Technology**
3. **Dr. Evans Oteki – Murang’a University of Technology**

You may now proceed with your data collection subject to obtaining research permit from NACOSTI, if required. You should also begin consulting your supervisors and submit through them quarterly progress reports to the Director Postgraduate Studies through your CoD and School Dean. Progress Reports can be accessed in the University Website.

It is the policy and regulations of the University that you observe deadlines. The guidelines on Postgraduate supervision can be accessed in the post graduate Handbook.

Your responsibilities as a student will include, among others;



MUT IS ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED

- I. Maintain regular consultation with your supervisor(s), at least once a month
 - II. Submit quarterly reports on time, through your supervisors, CoD, Dean and to the Director of Postgraduate Studies;
 - III. Ensure quality work all through;
 - IV. Present your research findings at 2- 3 seminars/conferences prior to thesis examination.
 - V. Publish one article from your research findings in a refereed journal prior to thesis examination
- For any further clarification, please contact the undersigned.

Yours Sincerely,



Prof. Geoffrey Muchiri
Director, Postgraduate Studies

Cc
Registrar (ASA)
Dean (SBE)



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Appendix 2: Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS

This questionnaire has been designed to identify stress control techniques and how it can be managed in your organization. Read each of the questions and answer accurately. Note that the information and details will be kept confidential.

SECTION A

Please fill in your personal details by ticking () the appropriate option.

Job Designation

Gender Male () Female ()

Age

- a. Below 25 years ()
- b. 25 years – 35 years ()
- c. 36 years – 45 years ()
- d. 46 years – 55 years ()
- e. 55 years – 60 years ()

Education Qualifications

- a. K.C.P.E ()
- b. K.C.S.E ()
- c. Certificate ()
- d. Diploma ()
- e. Degree ()
- f. Ph.D. ()
- g. Other Qualifications ()

Work Experience

- a. Less than 5 years ()
- b. 5-10 years ()
- c. 11-15 years ()
- d. 15-20 years ()
- e. Over 20 years ()

SECTION B: STRESS CONTROL TECHNIQUES

Effect of job design by middle-level employee’s strategic performance of County Government of Murang’a

JOB DESIGN	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. Am familiar with my job design practices according to job description of Murang’a County					
2. Job should be designed so that the employees perform work with enthusiasm and avoid stressful situations					
3. Job should be enrichment to involve a wider range of more interesting and challenging tasks surrounding a complete unit of work to give a greater sense of achievement for the employees					
4. Job enrichment provides the employee with variety, decision-making, responsibility, and control in carrying out the work					
5. Does Job design help in facilitating the interest of employees towards the job and enhancing their satisfaction?					

Effect of training by middle-level employee’s strategic performance of County Government of Murang’a

Training	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I am familiar with training that reduces workforce stress in the county					
2. Training gives the managers and employees the skills they need to perform effectively under high job pressure					
3. The training is a method for learning and development that may help employees to manage stress and thus improve employees’ commitment.					
4. The training help individuals set job- related goals, identify and implement adequate behavioural strategies to accomplish the goals, and provide feedback and evaluation of the progress towards the goals					
5. Will Training increase employees stress management abilities and improve work-life balance?					

Effect of Employee Welfare Programs on middle-level employee's strategic performance of County Government of Murang'a

EMPLOYEE WELFARE PROGRAMS	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I am familiar with employee welfare programs offered middle-level employee's strategic of county government of Murang'a					
2. The employees' welfare programs provide better physical and mental health to workers for a healthy work environment and thus enhances employees' performance					
3. Employees' welfare programs enhance a feeling of involvement and participation among workers and therefore they take active interest in their jobs					
4. Facilities like housing schemes, medical benefits, and education and recreation facilities for workers' families help in raising their standards of living; making workers to pay more attention towards work and thus increase their commitments					
5. How will the placing and maintenance of the worker in an occupational environment help to adapt to his physiological and psychological capabilities?					

Effect of Incentive programs by middle-level employees' strategic performance of county government of Murang'a

Employee Incentive Programs	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I am familiar with employee Incentive programs policy in Murang'a County.					
2. Incentive plans were created for the express purpose of urging employees to motivate themselves to higher achievement levels.					
3. Employees regularly look for new employment opportunities when they feel they are under-compensated or unappreciated.					
4. When employees work together on team incentive plans, they establish a sense of camaraderie, pulling together for the common good and hence facilitate stress management					
5. How would incentive plans reward middle-level employees?					

Employees' strategic performance of county government of Murang'a

Employees strategic performance of county government of Murang'a	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. Murang'a county stress management strategies have enabled me to meet my annual work targets					
2. The stress management strategies have enhanced my punctuality in meeting my work deadlines					

3. The stress management strategies have also enhanced my time management skills at work which makes me plan and perform better					
4. Murang'a county's strategies have made me develop new work initiatives that enable me achieve results faster					
5. Will the strategies always enhance my work output which is seen in my individual work outcomes?					

THANK YOU FOR FILLING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix 3: Research Approval Permit

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 528250	Date of Issue: 14/October/2022
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
<p>This is to Certify that Miss.. sandra waithira kinuthia of Murang'a University of Technology, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Muranga on the topic: effect of stress management strategies on middle level employees work performance of murang'a county government for the period ending : 14/October/2023.</p>	
License No: NACOSTU/P/22/20756	
528250 Applicant Identification Number	 Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
	Verification QR Code 
<p>NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.</p>	
See overleaf for conditions	

Appendix 4: Publication(s)

Kinuthia S. W., Karanja T., Evans O., Ngugi B. (2022). *“Effect of Job Design as Stress Management Strategies on Middle-level Employees Workplace Performance of Murang’a County Government”*. International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research. ISSN 2348-3156 (Print), ISSN 2348-3164 (online). Research Publish Journals