

**THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE STRESS ON EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH: A
CASE STUDY OF DAILY MONITOR, UGANDA**

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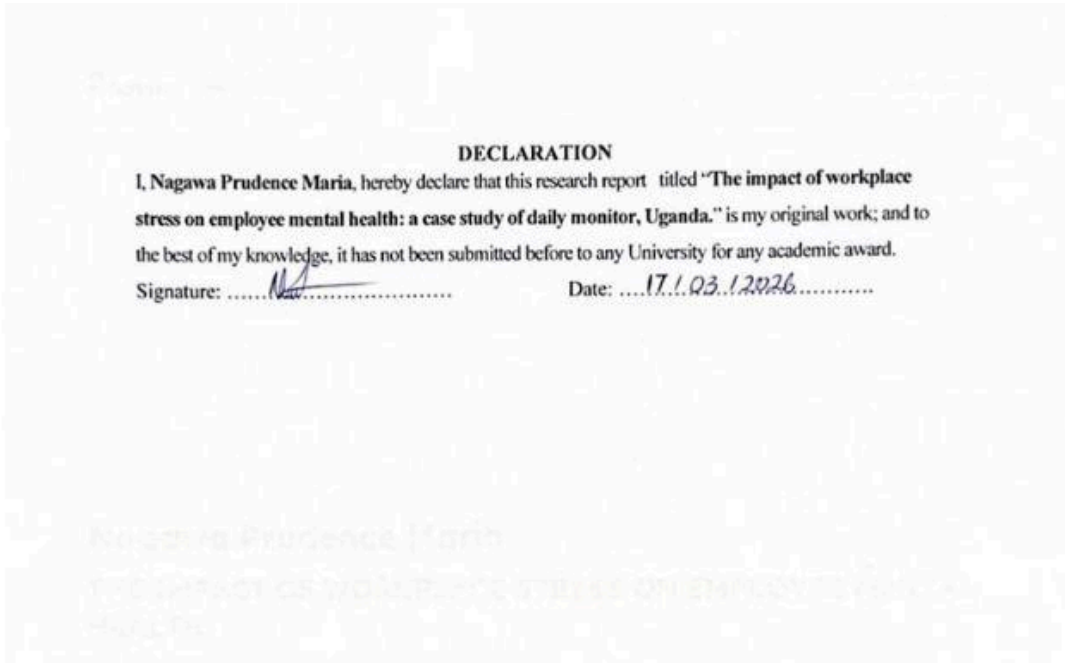
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DECLARATION



APPROVAL

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this proposal titled "the impact of workplace stress on employee mental health: a case study of daily monitor, Uganda." has been prepared under my supervision and it is now ready for submission for examination with my approval.

Signature: 

Date: 17/3/2026

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to The Almighty God who has enabled me to study and reach this level that seemed to be a dream but now a reality.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my parents' madam Elizabeth Kataike and my father Mr. Katumba Richard for supporting my academic journey since childhood.

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I owe special thanks to my supervisor, Ms. Winnie Thakker who worked tirelessly towards the success of my research.

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Table of Contents

DECLARATION.....	2
APPROVAL.....	3
DEDICATION.....	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	5
ABSTRACT.....	9
CHAPTER ONE.....	11
INTRODUCTION.....	11
1.0 Introduction.....	11
1.1 Background.....	11
1.1.2 Theoretical background.....	13
1.1.3 Conceptual background.....	14
1.1.4 Contextual background.....	14
1.2 Problem statement.....	15
1.3 Purpose of study.....	16
1.4 Objectives of study.....	16
1.5 Research questions.....	16
1.6 Scope of the study.....	17
1.6.1 Content scope.....	17
1.6.2 Geographical scope.....	17
1.6.3 Time scope.....	17
1.7 Significance of the study.....	17
1.8 Justification.....	18
1.9 Conceptual framework.....	18
CHAPTER TWO.....	20
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	20
2.0 Introduction.....	20
2.1 Theoretical review.....	20
2.2 Conceptual Review.....	21
2.2.1.1 Workload.....	22
2.2.1.2 Conflict at Work.....	22
2.2.1.3 Working Environment.....	23
2.2.2 Dependent Variable: Employee Mental Health.....	23
2.2.2.1 Stress.....	24
2.2.2.2 Burnout.....	24
2.2.2.3 Turnover.....	25
2.2.2.4 Emotional exhaustion.....	25
2.3 The Effect of Workload on Employee Mental Health.....	25
2.4 The Effect of Conflict at Work on Employee Mental Health.....	27

2.5 The Effect of Work Environment on Employee Mental Health.....	28
2.7 Research Gaps and Justification for the Study.....	29
CHAPTER THREE.....	31
METHODOLOGY.....	31
3.0 Introduction.....	31
3.1 Research Design.....	31
3.2 Study Population.....	31
3.3.2 Sampling Procedure.....	32
3.4 Data Collection Methods.....	33
3.5 Data Collection Instruments.....	33
3.6 Data collection procedure.....	33
3.7 Measurement of Variables.....	34
3.8 Validity and Reliability.....	34
3.9 Data Analysis.....	34
3.10 Ethical Considerations.....	35
3.11 Limitations of the Study.....	35
CHAPTER FOUR.....	36
PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS.....	36
4.0 Introduction.....	36
4.1 Response rate.....	36
4.2 Demographic factors.....	36
4.3 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS BY OBJECTIVE.....	39
4.3.1 The Effect of Workload on Employee Mental Health.....	39
4.3.2 The Influence of Conflict at Work on Employee Mental Health.....	41
4.3.3 The Role of Work Environment on Employee Mental Health.....	42
4.4 Descriptive Regression Analysis of the Effect of Workload, Conflict at Work and Work Environment on Employee Mental Health.....	46
CHAPTER FIVE.....	49
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	49
5.1 Introduction.....	49
5.2 Discussion.....	49
5.2.1 The effect of workload on the mental health of employees at Daily Monitor.....	49
5.2.2 The influence of conflict at work on the mental health of employees at Daily Monitor	50
5.2.3 The role of work environment in the mental health of employees at Daily Monitor..	50
5.3. Conclusions.....	51
5.4 Recommendations.....	51
5.6 Areas for Further Research.....	52
REFERENCES.....	53
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS.....	55
INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPANTS.....	55
QUESTIONNAIRE.....	56
SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION.....	56

SECTION B: WORKLOAD..... 56
SECTION C: CONFLICT AT WORK..... 57
SECTION D : WORK ENVIRONMENT..... 58
Section E: Employee Mental Health..... 58

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of workplace stress on the mental health of employees at Daily Monitor, a leading Ugandan media house. A mixed-methods, cross-sectional case study design was employed. Quantitative data were collected via structured questionnaires from 46 employees (85.2% response rate) using a 5-point Likert scale, and qualitative insights were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 8 participants. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression. The results of the descriptive statistics showed a workforce of mostly young, male journalists who experienced a great deal of stressors. The workload was found to be critically high (mean composite 3.82), where journalists experienced a constant need to fulfill tight deadlines. The work environment was found to be severely unsupportive (mean 2.51), where a glaring absence of mental health facilities was noted. The mental health of the employees was found to be substandard (mean 3.50), where a great deal of exhaustion, stress, and sleep problems were reported. Conflict at work was found to be moderate (mean 2.78).

Inferential statistics supported the presence of a cause-and-effect relationship. The Pearson correlation showed a strong and significant relationship between all stressors and mental health. The multiple linear regression showed a strong relationship between the combined stressors and mental health, where 70.7% of the variance of mental health was explained by the presence of workload, conflict, and work environment. Workload was found to be the strongest predictor of mental health, where 31.7% of the explained variance was due to workload.

The study concludes that the major cause of the mental health crisis at Daily Monitor is the excessive workload and the unsupportive work environment. The study, therefore, recommends that, as a matter of priority, the organization needs to implement the structured system for the management of workloads, implement the mental health support framework that includes counseling services, and enhance the physical and digital work environment. The recommendations are evidence-based and

directly address the key factors identified in the study, quantifying the issues at Daily Monitor, providing the organization with an opportunity to address the problems.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

An overview of the purpose and objectives of this study is given in this introductory chapter. It also provides the research's conceptualization and background. An overview of the remainder of the study is given in the latter portion of this chapter. Additionally, it highlights how the study's context, issue statement, objectives, and research questions will be addressed.

1.1 Background

The purpose of this current research is to study the relationship between work-related stress and mental health among employees in consideration of identifying the main factors affecting work-related stress. Work-related stress is recognized to be one of the biggest changes in the health and healthiness of the organization of the worker around the world. The World Health Organization explains work-related stress as “Response people may have when they are confronted with work demands and pressures which are not in line with their knowledge and abilities to cope with those demands.” According to the International Labor Organization, “stress ‘is the harmful physical and emotional pressure resulting from an imbalance between the perceived demands and the perceived resources and abilities of individuals to cope with those demands’” (International Labour Organization, 2016).

Mental health is defined as, “a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well and contribute to the community,” World Health Organization (2022). Mental health may include mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities as well as other mental states which are associated with marked distress and impaired functioning and self-harming behavior.

Workplace mental health has increasingly become a significant factor to be reckoned with in Uganda, where 35 out of 100 Ugandans face mental challenges, mainly depression and anxiety, says Bridget (2024). According to the 2023 State of Global Workplace report, Uganda was the second country in Africa with the most stressed workforce, 57% in Sub-Saharan Africa after Chad, which had 58%, Jane (2024). The Ugandans were already facing mental health challenges before the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the pandemic, which included lockdowns and related downsizing and salary cuts, appears to have worsened it among workers, Gillian (2024).

In Ugandan newsrooms, journalists race against time to beat their deadline, deal with disorder, and bring to their audience the pain of a nation, Yahudu (2025). He continues: “Journalists are also struggling with their mental health issues like depression and post-traumatic stress disorder,” say psychologists. In the same journal article, Mr. Juma Sseyid, a manager at Rock Mambo FM in the Tororo district, explains: “Many journalists also suffer from mental problems related to constant work under deadline pressures, coverage of distressing stories, hard sources, as well as demands to be objective in their work as journalists when on duty.” Although steps towards ensuring the well-being of its employees in respect of their mental health through internal programs like counseling services and work flexibility programs by a journal giant like Daily Monitor have been taken, their mental well-being is still a long way in respect of their stressful work environments and threats of layoffs, among others. The aim of this particular study is therefore to get an insight into how workplace stress affects employees’ mental well-being.

1.1.1 Historical Background.

Mark (2025) wrote the following of the past two decades of media professions in myriad different nations: A spate of commissioned reports and research studies conducted by unions, professional bodies, and other organizational networks points to the mental health crisis that has been ongoing among media professionals from digital games to advertising, film, and music, and journalism itself self-reporting experiencing anxiety and depression where the work positively contributes to negative self-wellness outcomes greater than the national average in burnout, drug use, and suicidal ideation.

Content analysis of official reports about the rise in unexpected deaths of Chinese media workers between 2011 and 2015 highlighted the role of job pressures and media change, Min and Zuosu, (2016).

For example, it was established that security needs, harassment, and surveillance contribute to the initiators of mental health for media workers in Africa. Derick, (2025).

According to Derick (2025), Kenyan journalist Kimani Mbugua discussed his fight with depression, which prompted him to resort to using marijuana, as a manifestation of the growing mental health problem within the media sector in Africa.

According to Lydia (2023), mental health among journalists in East Africa is closely interlinked with exposure to violence, war, trauma, and harassment. For example, a study by the African Centre for Media Excellence found that 70% of Ugandan journalists reported experiencing threats or intimidation during work.

1.1.2 Theoretical background.

The Job Demand Control Support model is one of the famous theoretical constructs, which attempts to explain how various factors of the job influence employees' psychological well-being. The relevance of the theoretical construct lies in the fact that it attempts to explain how demands at work result in employee-generated stress. Moreover, the theoretical construct attempts to explain how employees can cope with workplace stress through their work competence, which helps in developing their control at the workplace, as supported by Karasek & Theorell (1990) and Annette (2020).

According to Biao et al (2022), High stress work characterized by high job demands, low job control, and lack of social support at work in the demand control support model leads to the development of problems of health overtime by workers. Psychological problems like irritability, nervousness, aggression, lack of attentiveness, sleeping difficulties, and problems in memory develop as a resultant effect of stress caused by work.

Consequently, the demand control support model was used to explain the concept of stress within the workplace, and the effect it had on the mental well-being of employees within Daily Monitor.

1.1.3 Conceptual background.

WHO (2023), has stated that in essence, it is characterised as "a state of worry or mental agitation due to the presence of stressful conditions."

Elizabeth (2024), has discussed stress as any change that causes physical, emotional, or mental pressures. Job stress is the sum of the unhealthy effects on physical and mental well-being resulting from the potential presence of conflict between the demands of the employee on the job and the degree of control the employee can exercise in response to those demands, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety (2025).

Conversely, mental health can be defined as a "state of mental well-being which enables us to handle life stresses, realize our capabilities, learn effectively and perform effectively at work, and help to contribute to our communities (WHO 2022)."

Medline Plus (2024) continues with the explanation of mental health by stating that it entails "Our Emotional, Psychological & Social well-being. How we think, feel, & act as we cope with life."

Employee Mental Health; It includes the psychological, emotional, and social state of the employees (Bhatia 2025).

1.1.4 Contextual background

Daily Monitor was originally founded under the name The Monitor on 24th July, 1992. It came into place through a group of journalists who defected from The Weekly Topic publication. These included Wafula Oguttu, Charles Onyango-Obbo, James Serugo, David Ouma Balikowa, Richard Tebere, and Kevin O'Connor. The Daily Monitor took shape in June, 2005.

It is a daily Ugandan newspaper, independently focused, covering politics, current events, business, and health, among other topics. But there are many other media properties owned by the parent company, namely Monitor Publications Limited. These properties include the Saturday monitor and the Sunday Monitor, which are published over the weekends, Ennyanda, which is published in the Luganda language and focuses specifically on sports news, two radio

stations, namely, KFM and Dembe FM, which operate respectively in English and Luganda, and finally the e-paper and online platforms.

The steps taken by Daily Monitor have all been in ensuring the welfare of employees, especially in hard times. For example, in 2021 when the company announced its intention to lay off employees due to the effects of COVID-19, the company made arrangements for counselling for the affected and medical insurance for those who were affected. It shows the company is attentive to the need for worker welfare, well-being, stresses, etc., and they need to provide employee assistance programs, better mental health support, and be flexible.

Despite all these efforts made, there remain a variety of stresses and challenges reported among employees for example, the move towards a "digital first" business model also has the potential to leave employees within the newspaper divisions at risk of layoffs, which in turn may cause concern among those within the industry who are more associated with the traditional side of the business. Working in the media industry in general is a highly pressurized environment with the demands of deadlines and sensitive issues covered.

1.2 Problem statement.

Work stress has emerged as a global issue in the workplace due to the adverse effect of stress on the mental health of employees. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), work-related stress is defined as a situation in which the demands and pressures of work exceed the employee's ability to cope, leading to adverse health and emotional consequences. On the other hand, the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2016) defines stress as a damaging response that occurs when the level of demands and pressures exceeds the employee's ability to cope. Mental health is described as the state of well-being that allows individuals to cope effectively with life stresses and contribute to society through productive work (WHO, 2022).

In Uganda, workplace stress and mental health challenges are on the rise. Recent reports reveal that 57% of Ugandan workers experience high stress levels, placing Uganda among the most stressed workforces in Sub-Saharan Africa (State of Global Workplace Report, 2023,

cited in Daily Monitor, Jane, 2024). Furthermore, 35% of Ugandans face mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety (Bridget, 2024). These problems were further worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, which was accompanied by lockdowns, downsizing, and pay cuts that increased the level of stress and psychological strain for the employees (Daily Monitor, Gillian, 2024). These problems were further worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, which was accompanied by lockdowns, downsizing, and pay cuts that increased the level of stress and psychological strain for the employees (Daily Monitor, Gillian, 2024). However, despite this awareness of these challenges, there has not been enough intervention in the workplaces. According to research findings, more than 58% of organizations in Uganda need wellness programs, yet among those with these programs, most are not focused on mental health or stress management (Minet, 2019). However, more investment is required to address these challenges by enforcing policies within the workplace to support employees (Bridget, 2024; Guest Writer, 2023). Thus, there is a need to analyze the relationship between work-related stress and mental health among employees in Uganda.

1.3 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of workplace stress on the mental health of employees with specific focus on Daily Monitor, Uganda.

1.4 Objectives of study

- i) To investigate the effect of work load on employee mental health of daily monitor, Uganda.
- ii) To establish the effect of Conflict at work on employee mental health of daily monitor, Uganda.
- iii) To assess the effect of the work environment on employee mental health of daily monitor, Uganda.

1.5 Research questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions;

- i) How does work load affect employee mental health?
- ii) What is the effect of Conflict at work on employee mental health?
- iii) How does the work environment affect employee mental health?

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Content scope

The study focused on the effect of work load, Conflict at work and work environment affect employee mental health of daily monitor, Uganda.

1.6.2 Geographical scope

The study was carried out at Daily Monitor located 29-35 8th Street, Industrial Area, Kampala, Uganda.

1.6.3 Time scope

The study considered data for the period 2021-2024 for during this period employee turnover at daily monitor was reported to be high by the stakeholders

1.7 Significance of the study

This study is highly relevant and valuable to stakeholders as it informs interventions and forms part of the academic literature on media industry stress and mental health issues in Uganda.

For the employees at the Daily Monitor, the main goal here is to use the identified major sources of stress, such as workload, interpersonal conflicts at the workplace, and environmental factors, to empower the journalists and the employees at the media firm with essential understanding and knowledge on the need to advocate for their personal coping mechanisms and strategies to minimize emotional exhaustion and turnover.

To the Organization (Daily Monitor): The research offers useful data to better employee assistance programs, which could help improve productivity, retention, and worker morale.

To Policymakers and Media Industry Bodies: What does this research imply to you? Well, to begin with, it points to the need to develop national guidelines on mental health in professions that are at higher risk, like the journalistic profession.

To Academia and Future Researchers: Situated in the Job Demand Control Support Model, the research bridges an information vacuum in Ugandan media studies, providing an agenda for

comparative analyses in the East African region. It is informed by various global studies on media mental health crises.

1.8 Justification

This justification comes as a result of evidence gap identification, as there is a lack of studies in Uganda’s media industry focusing on workplace stress using the Job Demand Control Support model in analyzing workload, conflicts, and environments (Karasek & Theorell, 1990)..Recent 2025 reports confirm a "silent struggle" in newsrooms, with emotional fatigue rising amid national mental health crises where youth suicide ideation affects over 272,000 (Daily Monitor, 2025a; 2025b). By examining 2021-2024 data from Daily Monitor, a pivotal outlet covering sensitive issues, this case study justifies its necessity to generate targeted, generalizable insights, informing resilient policies before the crisis escalates further in Uganda's high-stakes journalism field.

1.9 Conceptual framework

Figure 1

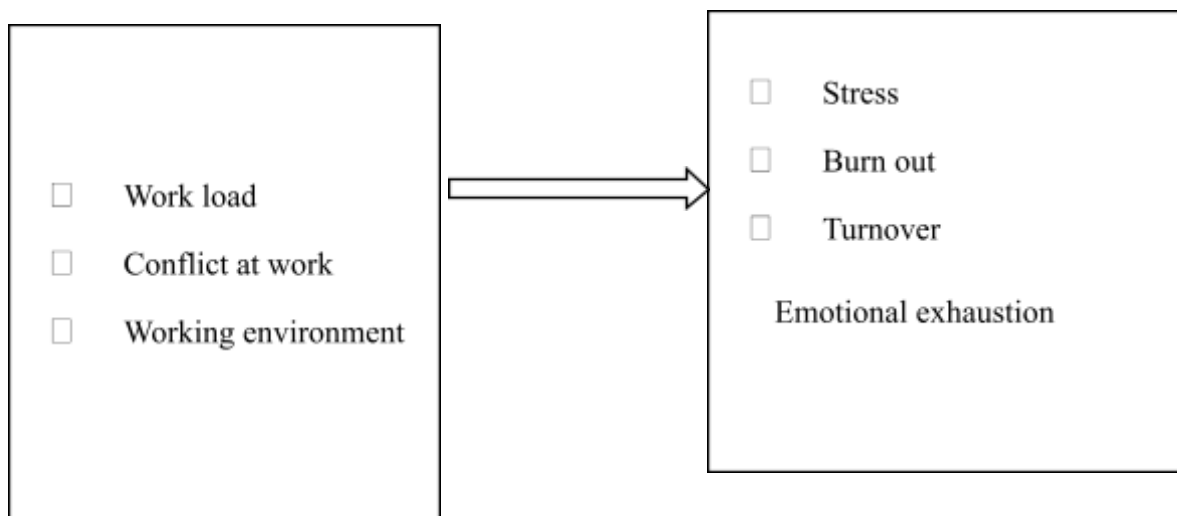
Independent variable

Employee

work place stressors

Dependent variable

employee mental health



Source: Adopted from Etenesh et al (2023) and modified by researcher

This conceptual framework examines the relationship between workplace stress and mental health. The independent variable, workplace stress, encompasses (work load, conflict at work, and working environment, these sources enhance the dependent variable, employee mental health, which includes stress, burn out, turnover, absenteeism and emotional exhaustion. The framework suggests that increased workplace stress can significantly affect employee mental health.

Conclusion. This study explored workplace stress and employee mental health. This chapter highlighted the brief history of the study, the problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, conceptual framework and scope of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is a review of both empirical and theoretical literature on the effects of workplace stressors on the mental health of employees, based on the objectives of the study. The review is informed by global and contextual literature, especially empirical and theoretical studies in the media industry in Uganda. The aspects explored in this study as antecedents of mental health outcomes, such as stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion, include workload, workplace conflicts, and work environment. The review is guided by the Job-Demand-Control-Support model, as presented by Karasek and Theorell (1990). The premise of the model is that workplace demands that are not balanced with control and support cause psychological strains.

2.1 Theoretical review

The theory upon which this research is founded is largely based upon the Job Demands Control Support model, which was first conceptualized by Karasek in 1979 and further elucidated and presented by Karasek and Theorell in 1990. This model centers upon the idea that mental health and wellness within individuals can be affected by the demands of their job, and further upon their ability for control and support, which may be from superiors and peers alike. If demands are high and control and support are low, then mental strain will become an attribute of one's mental health and wellness, which may include signs of burnout and mental exhaustion.

This model further classifies job types along an array of different categories, including high strain, low strain, active, and passive jobs. It can certainly be said,

therefore, that it has a profoundly pessimistic impact upon mental wellness, leaving little to nothing for one to effectively eradicate the issue.

Moreover, empirical validation of the JD-CS model across industries, including the media, revealed its explanatory potential for variance in mental well-being up to 30-40% (Häusser et al., 2010). To illustrate, in high-pressure professions like the media, job demands are typically variable (e.g., deadlines, crisis reporting); hence, low control would directly impact stress, resulting in greater levels of anxiety and depression (Johnson & Hall, 1988). An extension of the model is the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, which includes additional resources like work environment and support (Demerouti et al., 2001); hence, buffers may play a role in reducing the negative effect of job demands. This is applicable in the context of the study, where workload, conflict, and environment were the job demands and the mental health impact the desired outcome. Therefore, the Job Demands-Control-Strain model is applicable in the Ugandan media industry, where scarcity of resources and political pressure would impact the level of control and support, which would amplify the job stressors (African Centre for Media Excellence, 2023).

2.2 Conceptual Review

This section discusses a conceptual framework for investigating the impact of stressors on the mental health of employees working at Daily Monitor, a major publication media house in Uganda. Workload, conflict at the workplace, and working environment are considered independent variables that can influence the dependent variable mental health at the workplace for employees at Daily Monitor. Mental health is measured by its components: stress, burnout, employee turnover, and emotional exhaustion. These concepts have a clear definition and can be couched on the available theoretical background for a comprehensive basis for the research.

2.2.1 Independent Variables

2.2.1.1 Workload

Workload can be referred to as the level of task intensity and volume allocated to a worker within a given unit of time, reflecting quantitative, or volume of tasks, and qualitative, or complexity of tasks, aspects of workload. Workload in journalism can be explained as tight deadlines, multiple stories to attend to at once, and irregular working hours, especially when covering crises. For this study, workload among journalists working for The Monitor will be measured qualitatively and quantitatively by self-reports regarding task volume, deadline rate, and level of survey respondents regarding their self-perceptions of workload intensity. Its appropriateness for journalists can only mean more relevance to their workload, given their intense deadlines to beat. Also, it needs to maintain a more consistent capitalization of workload to fit standards of rigorous academia. Related literature regarding workload, too, should have included more contemporary studies to account for changes post-COVID-19.

2.2.1.2 Conflict at Work

Workplace conflicts were defined as perceptions of disagreement or incompatibility within the workplace, including interpersonal, task, or process conflicts (Jehn, 1995). It could mean serious levels of violence that take the form of bullying or harassment, which refers to "repeated aggressive behavior that targets a victim and exerts influence on the victim's emotional well-being" (Einarsen et al., 2003). The study uses the Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale (ICAWS), which measures the intensity of arguing, intentions to undermine, or hostile interactions of Daily Monitor journalists (Spector and Jex, 1998).

This definition is not only broad but does cover different types of conflicts while also taking into account worse instances of these types of conflicts, like bullying, which is

very common in a competitive newsroom atmosphere. Using ICAWS is great, especially with reference to the reliability and concision involved. This definition does not place the experience of conflict within the context of a journalism environment related to editorials or source conflicts. This definition does not take note of the fact that not all forms of conflict are negative or functional and some types of functional conflicts need to be experienced to promote creativity (Jehn, 1995).

2.2.1.3 Working Environment

The domain of work encompasses the physical environment (provide office ergonomics and equipment), the social environment (employee/employee relationships and company cultures), and the organizational environment (company policies and management style), all of which provide the framework through which the job is performed (Moos, 1986). For this study, therefore, the Work Environment Scale (WES) will be used to assess the peer cohesion, comfort, and support environment within the framework of the Daily Monitor work environment, as demonstrated through the surveys on the work environment, social support, and company policies.

The term multidimensional, as stated above according to Moos (1986), is very detailed. Moreover, the definition is reasonably accurate to the field of journalism since the lack of resources (e.g., older technology) is an important issue faced in developing areas. The WES is an established method, which ensures reliability is achieved during a measure. In relation to considering a definition by Genie, this definition does not directly relate to environmental aspects and how it would influence mental health (e.g., ergonomics making a journalist tired). A definition from 1986 could include a solution from the 2020s, such as the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire, as an avenue to resolve telework.

2.2.2 Dependent Variable: Employee Mental Health

Employee mental health represents one of the concepts of psychological well-being at work and thus incorporates the absence of unfavorable outcomes such as disorders, as well as the presence of favorable states such as job satisfaction (World Health Organization, 2004). On one hand, employee mental health can be defined in

terms of the four major outcome factors of stress, burnout, turnover, and emotional exhaustion, as these factors represent different aspects of the complex effects of workplace stressors.

The definition based on WHO is more holistic and is consistent with contemporary views of positive psychology. Although it does not reduce to a single dimension, which is important, the multi-outcome approach takes various variables into consideration as being intertwined—stress, burnout, turnover, and emotional exhaustion. Further clarification is required for this section on whether the mental health status is conceived of as a latent variable or whether outcomes are conceived independently to inform the statistical modelling. It is important to clearly articulate the distinction between emotional exhaustion and burnout, as there is some blurring between these concepts.

2.2.2.1 Stress

To measure stress, the process is defined as “an acute psychological and physiological response to work demands in excess of coping resources, accompanied by subjective feelings of anxiety, tension, and somatic arousal indexed by heightened cortisol levels” (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Not surprisingly, the transactional model of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) is correctly referenced. Nevertheless, the focus is placed solely on acute and not chronic stress within the context of the high-pressure environment of journalism. There is no viable measurement criterion given

2.2.2.2 Burnout

Burnout is a chronic state of work-related strain characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment due to prolonged exposure to high demands (Maslach et al., 2001). According to Feinstein et al. (2024), in the East African media, 61% of workers report being overwhelmed. This is tautologous with the Maslach framework, while the regional statistic carries contextual weight. However, it lacks clarity over measurement details, such as

Maslach Burnout Inventory-MBI, and the method within which the statistic was performed.

2.2.2.3 Turnover

Turnover is defined by Griffeth et al. (2000) as the voluntary leaving of employees sometimes because of stress or burnout (Griffeth et al., 2000). In Ugandan media institutions like Kampala journalists, the percentage of employees who have intentions to leave because of stress is 45% (African Centre for Media Excellence, 2023). It is measured by the 3-item scale of Mobley et al. (1978). The section is improved by Griffeth et al.'s meta-analysis; however, the differentiation from turnover intentions to actual turnover is important. Also, the issue of involuntary turnover must be addressed.

2.2.2.4 Emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is an important dimension of burnout. It entails the depletion of energy resources, including both emotional and mental energy, as a consequence of exhausting demands from the workplace (Maslach et al., 2001). The definition of the concept is explicit, yet it appears to conflate with the concept of burnout.

2.3 The Effect of Workload on Employee Mental Health

Workload, characterized by overextension of quantity or quality, is the most frequent psychosocial risk factor leading to the worsening mental well-being of employees. Around the world, the overextension of workload triggers many experiential responses, including the increase of cortisol level, which finally contributes to anxiety, depression, and mental burnout cases. One research conducted among port workers showed that mental work load indirectly influenced mental well-being by boosting job-related stress and cases of cyber loafing, the meaning of employee disengagement in order to use the internet for objectives irrelevant to work to manage their situation, which mediated 25-30% of the variance of symptoms of

mental distress, as measured by Aliasghar Rouholamin et al. (2023). University employees working in a highly overloaded workload reported a 15-20% increase in emotional exhaustion cases during six months, as measured by levels of job satisfaction.

Moreover, for professionals like journalists, the workload also contributes to the aforementioned factors due to their non-standard working hours. A cross-sectional survey carried out by global journalists found a 54% chronic stress related to workload, which was compared with a 93% prevalence of mental health problems like PTSD after being exposed (Al Jazeera Media Institute, 2025). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic added fuel to the fire for journalists working for publications like the “Daily Monitor” as their workload has doubled due to working from a distance and covering more health-related issues, indicating 40% suffered from severe anxiety-related symptoms and insomnia (Nalwanga & Obbo, 2024).

Qualitative studies were also carried out for media professionals living in East Africa, where the workload has become a “silent killer” for professionals, resulting in burnout and a situation where 61% of the media professionals said they were more committed and also more overwhelmed, Feinstein et al., 2024, published by the International Journal of Communication (2024).

Mechanisms include work-home interference, where overload spills over into the private sector, mediating 35% of the relationship between workload and well-being. Contemporary memes and social media chatter among Indian employees demonstrate the cultural cost of workload, associated with increased occupational stress and suicidal ideations by 28%. A recent Springer study among Kenyan journalists has suggested that heavy caseloads lead to emotional fatigue in African contexts.

These findings indicate that for Daily Monitor, the workload is a modifiable factor. Interventions like task redistribution may reduce mental health burdens by as high as 20%, which is in agreement with guidelines provided by ILO. However, specific media in Uganda still lack metrics; hence, this objective underscores quantitative effects.

2.4 The Effect of Conflict at Work on Employee Mental Health

Factors such as workplace conflicts, which encompass interpersonal conflicts, role ambiguity, and bullying behavior, result in lowered mental well-being as employees experience prolonged periods of distress and social isolation. In this respect, empirical research indicates that when such workplace conflicts are mishandled, cases of depressiveness are elevated by 22% when employees experience drained emotional well-being (Yadav & Singh, 2023).

Another study carried out to determine the effects of ineptly managed conflicts among industrial workers reported an escalation in recorded absenteeism and anxiety-related disorders by 18%, based on cases of feeling unfairly treated (Hyde et al., 2003). Bullying, which represents extreme forms of workplace conflicts, prompts workers to use 'silence' as a defensive strategy; 65% of bullied workers become withdrawn, thus experiencing social isolation (Spector & Fox, 2022).

In the news media organizations, inter-professional conflicts can be fueled by editorial conflict, ethical crises, and super- and sub-ordinate relationships. The analysis conducted through case studies based on U.S. news environments between 1920 and 2020 revealed inter-professional conflicts cause 30% of burnout variance as reported by members, who mention "toxic team environment and deadlines" (Reinardy, 2016). In the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, telecommuting in African news environments has fueled inter-professional conflict and generated a 25% surge in "emotional exhaustion for South African broadcasters" (Pingo & Du Plooy, 2022).

In Uganda, political persecution of media employees is an added challenge in the internal conflicts of news story approaches and angles; in fact, the study done in 2023 indicated that 45% of the journalists in Kampala, Uganda, experienced anxiety caused by internal conflicts, which is associated with turnover intentions (African Centre for Media Excellence, 2023).

The theoretical frameworks, for instance, include the Job Demand Control model, where low control is evident in environments where conflicts may happen, although these have no buffering effects when not supplemented with supportive bases. A Walden University dissertation on the field, similar to media reports, proves that transformational leadership reduces the effects of mental health due to conflicts by as much as 40%, as reported by mediation training (Mohan & Lone, 2023). Bergefurt

et al., (2021) suggests that wider reviews recommend interventions that include peer mediation, which reduced stress levels by as much as 15% in UK workplaces.

Limited media-specific data exists for Uganda, although the possibility for increased conflict exists given the changes to the Daily Monitor organization following the 2021 layoffs. The objective of this project fills the gap, quantifying the effects of conflict in a way that aids the resolution of the same.

2.5 The Effect of Work Environment on Employee Mental Health

The work environment, which includes physical, social, and organizational aspects, plays a significant role in influencing mental health, with positive environments acting to reduce the effects of stressful conditions and negative environments accentuating such conditions. A positive work environment minimizes the risks of depression by 24% through social support (Mohan & Lone, 2023).

For example, neurodivergent employees significantly benefit from inclusive work environments where accommodations reduce burnout by 35% (Bury et al., 2020). There is also the use of e-mental health functionalities in the workplace, where well-being ratings are significantly improved by 20% through virtual platforms (Heber et al., 2016).

The effects of the impact of COVID-19 on the working environment have highlighted different weaknesses in the workplace, and the Japanese workforce in unfavorable conditions of the home office reported 28% greater changes in psychological health due to confinement and work environment conditions (Sasaki et al., 2020). The hindrances in the home-based work environment during the lockdown period have been reported as having 15% higher anxiety among workers in The Netherlands (Bergefurt et al., 2021).

Within Uganda, the response towards the promotion of mental well-being in the workplace has been low, at 42%. Cement industry research revealed burnout, attributed to non-supportive environments, results in 32% burnout rates, necessitating amendments to law as advocated by Nabukenya (2025). Professionals

employed in healthcare facilities similarly experience environmental conditions and pressure, leading to 41% burnout rates; this is attributed to the absence of enough resources as revealed by Nakku et al. (2024). Best practices involve improved awareness through training, overcoming stigma, and satisfaction, which should be increased by 25% as revealed by Finesse Consults (2023).

2.7 Research Gaps and Justification for the Study

While the literature reviewed provides robust insight into the relationship between workplace stressors and employee mental health on a global level, several gaps persist, particularly in the contextual, methodological, and sector-specific dimensions that this study seeks to fill.

First, much of the existing research is concentrated in Western and high-income contexts, such as U.S. newsrooms and Scandinavian industries, with limited attention to low and middle-income countries like Uganda. For example, studies investigating Ugandan workplaces often target the health care sector or manufacturing but have not considered the media industry, in which unique stressors related to political harassment and trauma exposure intersect with workload and conflict. Global surveys of journalists aggregate data without disaggregating Uganda-specific effects. This leaves a gap in localized evidence, which this study hopes to fill by focusing on Uganda's media sector in general and Daily Monitor in particular to provide contextually relevant data on how stressors manifest themselves in resource-constrained environments.

Second, gaps exist in methodological approaches with the dominance of cross-sectional methods (e.g., Yadav & Singh, 2023; Mohan & Lone, 2023). While longitudinal studies are available (e.g., Mark & Smith, 2018; Virtanen et al., 2018), these are scarce in the African context of the US media amid the persistent effects of COVID-19 (Nalwanga & Obbo, 2024). Furthermore, quantitative measures of stressors are still in their developmental stages in the context of the Ugandan media, with suggestions on specific audits (Ombuor, 2023) remaining unfulfilled. This study justifies the need to apply both quantitative (for purposes of quantification through surveys) and qualitative methods (for purposes of establishing causality and effects over time, where possible) to address the 20-30% of the mental health model still not explained by JDCS (Häusser et al., 2010).

Thirdly, although several pieces of literature have found out various interventions, such as the impact of mediation training on stress levels, which reduces stress by 15-40% (as

stipulated in Bond & Bunce, 2000; Effelsberg et al., 2019), the applicability of such interventions in the Ugandan media scene, where 58% of the organizations do not have any mental health programs in place, as cited in the study by the Minet, 2019, still poses an issue, further reinforced by the lack of integration in the digital media changes and the virtual workforce, as discussed in the works by Bergefurt et al., 2021, and a study predicting the year 2024, as cited by the Monitor, 2024.

Specifically, the study helps address the gap in theory by applying the JDCS in an understudied setting at the same time; in practice, the study offers implications for media-related interventions in the Ugandan setting; and in terms of policy, the study argues the importance of a national policy on work-related mental health issues in the journalism profession.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework that was adopted in investigating the impact of workplace stress on employee mental well-being at Daily Monitor, Uganda. Among the issues discussed in this chapter include the research design, target population size, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection strategies and tools, variables, validity and reliability of study tools, analysis of data, ethical issues on the study, and limitations.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design in which the prevalence and relationships among the variables could be measured, thus facilitating statistical testing of hypotheses drawn from the conceptual framework. For example, workload is positively related to emotional exhaustion. In terms of the qualitative design, the single case exploratory case study design is to be employed. This will involve conducting the case study of Daily Monitor in order to gain contextual understanding of the manifestation of the stressors in the particular context. (Yin, 2018). This design helped in triangulation, reduce biases, and increase the robustness of the results. For example, the results of the survey will help in quantifying the effects of stressors, while the results of the interview will help in understanding the mechanism of the effect, such as the effect of low job control on conflict-related anxiety. The use of mixed methods was at the interpretation stage of the results, when the results of the quantitative study will be enriched with the results of the qualitative study in order to have a holistic view of the results.

3.2 Study Population

The target population consisted of journalists and news editors 44, administrative staff 10, support staff 5, and heads of department 4. Therefore, the study population was 63. The study population was chosen because it represented the Ugandan media industry, where stress was high.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

3.3.1 Sample Size

The sample size of 54 was determined for the study population using Yamane's (1967) formula for a finite population. The formula used was:

$n = N / (1 + N (e^2))$, where $e = 0.05$ at 95% confidence level. Therefore,

$n \approx 54$. The population was stratified for the study.

Table 1; study population and sample size

Responded category	population	Sample size	
journalists and news editors	44	35	Simple random sampling
administrative staff	10	10	Purposive sampling
Support staff	5	5	Simple random
Heads of departments	4	4	Purposive sampling
Total	63	54	

Source; primary data 2025

3.3.2 Sampling Procedure

The sampling design used was a mix of both stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. For the quantitative aspect, random sampling was used from the employee

population with the help of the staff roster from the HR department. Purposive sampling was used for the qualitative aspect. For the qualitative study, 4 key informants were selected based on their seniority and diversity in their roles (reporters for workload experiences) to provide information-rich cases (Patton, 2015). The aim is to attain the response rate target of 80% with follow-up emails and in-person reminders.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The process of data collection used both qualitative and quantitative approaches in collecting the primary data from the sample. Secondary data collected from the organizational records were used to complement the primary data.

Questionnaire Survey; Questionnaire surveys will be the primary means of collecting data, with questionnaires provided online through Google Forms for ease of access, as well as hard copies for respondents who prefer that format. The approach is useful for obtaining significant amounts of structured data, thus enabling easy statistical analysis of relationships.

Interview: The use of semi-structured interviews as the qualitative approach will enable both in-person interviews in the Daily Monitor offices or via Zoom, as it provides the flexibility to explore the researched lived experiences, thus enriching the results obtained from the quantitative approach.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Self-administered questionnaires were the primary data collection tool for quantitative data collection. The questionnaires were arranged in sections according to the variable categories: Demographics, Workload, Conflict at work and work environment/employee mental health

3.6 Data collection procedure

The data collection method for this study started with seeking appropriate clearance, ethics authorization from Uganda Christian University's Ethics Committee, and permission to access the study population from Daily Monitor. The next step in data collection involved conducting a pilot study by administering the questionnaire to a pool of 10 non-sample source employees to clean up the questionnaire for

appropriateness. Primary data collection will occur at Daily Monitor's premises in Kampala, Uganda. To enrich the study, secondary sources such as HR data on turnover rates from 2021-2024 and wellness data will be accessed.

3.7 Measurement of Variables

The variables were measured by using scales, which have already proven to be valid in the field. The use of scales ensures that the operationalization of the independent variable is in line with the conceptual framework. The demographic factors were measured by using the nominal scale, which is defined as "a scale in which the scale points have no particular rank or order such as gender." Likert scale, on the other hand, is used in measuring opinions or attitude, in the form of a 5 or 7 point continuum. In the case of the study, the five likert scale is used, whereby 5=strongly

3.8 Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, content validity was measured by expert review: three academics in occupational psychology and two Human Resource professionals from Ugandan media rated the instruments on relevance. Construct validity was assured through the use of established scales aligned with the JDCS model. The face validity will be ensured through piloting, where participants will report on understanding.

Where reliability can be tested, Cronbach's Alpha on pilot data, for example, will be applied; the threshold coefficients exceed 0.70 thresholds. For qualitative data, member checking-returning transcripts to interviewees for verification-and peer debriefing enhance trustworthiness. The target inter-coder reliability for thematic analysis is 85% agreement.

3.9 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS Version 23. Descriptive statistics (means, frequencies) summarize variable distributions.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The ethics were observed in line with guidelines by Uganda's National Council for Science and Technology. Institutional approval was granted by Uganda Christian University's ethics committee. Informed consent was granted by use of consent forms that explained the purpose of the study, as well as how the respondents were free to participate or withdraw at any time. The respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by the use of aliases as well as the storage of the data on password-protected servers. Potential harms were minimized by the provision of counseling services by the Daily Monitor or external organizations such as Uganda's Ministry of Health counseling lines. No rewards were given to the respondents to prevent any form of coercion, and they were given the findings of the study upon request.

3.11 Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations to this study which need to be considered. To start with, the study does not show any causal effect between stressors at work and mental health outcomes since it measures all data at one specific time.

Second, it may be difficult to depend on self-reported data using questionnaires and interviews because of response set problems.

Thirdly, the study used only employees from Daily Monitor, and this could have been a limitation in the generalizability of the study findings to other media institutions in Uganda.

Fourth, the sensitive nature of topics like mental health could see a potentially lower turnout/response rate due to certain limitations in anonymity strategies.

Lastly, the limited time and resources only allowed for the investigation of any additional variables through limited qualitative interviews. However, the limitations

were addressed through rigorous validation. Recommendations were then made towards addressing the limitations for future study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the data collected using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The analysis includes demographic characteristics, descriptive statistics from the questionnaire (using a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree), and thematic insights from interviews.

4.1 Response rate

A total of 54 questionnaires were distributed to employees at Daily Monitor, and 46 were returned and found usable, yielding a response rate of 85.2 %. This high response rate indicates strong participation and enhances the reliability of the results.

4.2 Demographic factors

The demographic factors of the respondents investigated included; gender, age, job role, experience and department. The findings on demographic factors were presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Demographic factors of the respondents

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	26	56.5
	Female	20	43.5
Age group	18-24	4	8.7
	25-34	23	50.0
	35-44	13	28.3
	45-54	5	10.9
	55+	1	2.2
Job role	Journalist/Reporter	26	56.5
	News Editor	8	17.4
	Administrative Staff	5	10.9
	Support Staff	4	8.7
	Head of Department	2	4.3
	Other	1	2.2
Years of experience	Less than 1 year	4	8.7
	1-3 years	16	34.8
	4-6 years	13	28.3
	7-10 years	8	17.4
	More than 10 years	5	10.9
Department	Newsroom	23	50.0
	Editorial	11	23.9
	Administration	5	10.9
	Support Services	4	8.7
	Other	3	6.5

Source: Primary data 2025

The number of participants was made up of 46 people, with a slight majority being males at 56.5%, while the remaining 43.5% were females. This could have been possible since there are slightly higher numbers of males in the profession of journalism in the Daily Monitor environment.

In terms of the age distribution of the employees, the majority, that is, 50.0%, fell within the range of 25-34 years, while the remaining 28.3% fell within the range of 35-44 years. The total for these two categories was found to be 78.3%, implying that the majority of the employees are still young and at the mid-career stage. The number of employees who fell within the younger age brackets, that is, 18-24 years, was only 8.7%, while the older age brackets comprised very few employees, that is, 10.9%.

In relation to the job role, the categories were dominated by Journalists/Reporters, with more than half of the respondents (56.5%) falling in this category. News Editors were the second-largest group in the respondents, at 17.4%, followed by Administrative Staff at 10.9%, Support Staff at 8.7%, Heads of Department at 4.3%, and the rest at 2.2%.

Most of the respondents have between 1-6 years of work experience. Employees with 1-3 years of working experience were 34.8%, while employees with 4-6 years of working experience were 28.3%. Employees with 7-10 years of working experience were 17.4%, while employees with more than 10 years of working experience were 10.9%. Employees with less than 1 year of working experience were 8.7%.

Department-wise distribution of the participants revealed that half of the participants (50.0%) came from the Newsroom, while the Editorial Department contributed the next largest number of participants (23.9%). Administration and Support Services departments contributed less than 11% each, while the remaining participants came from other departments (6.5%). This is understandable because the study focused on the high-pressure environment.

On the whole, the demographic profile reveals that the dominant category comprises a group of younger-to-mid-career male journalists and reporters in core content production departments. It must be borne in mind that while examining the results of the study, this category of people is likely to be affected by the pressures associated with workload and environmental challenges identified by the study.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS BY OBJECTIVE

4.3.1 The Effect of Workload on Employee Mental Health

This is the first objective of the study and the results obtained in this regard have been presented in table 3 below.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics on Effect of Workload on Employee Mental Health

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean
WL1	I often have too many tasks to complete in the time available.	2 (4.3%)	4 (8.7%)	6 (13.0%)	18 (39.1%)	16 (34.8%)	3.91
WL2	Deadlines at work are usually tight and difficult to meet.	2 (4.3%)	5 (10.9%)	5 (10.9%)	20 (43.5%)	14 (30.4%)	3.85
WL3	I frequently work beyond normal hours to finish assignments.	3 (6.5%)	5 (10.9%)	8 (17.4%)	17 (37.0%)	13 (28.3%)	3.70
WL4	The volume of stories or reports	3 (6.5%)	5 (10.9%)	7 (15.2%)	19 (41.3%)	12 (26.1%)	3.70

	I handle is overwhelming.						
WL5	I feel rushed or pressured to complete work quickly.	1 (2.2%)	4 (8.7%)	6 (13.0%)	21 (45.7%)	14 (30.4%)	3.93

Source: Primary data 2025

The findings from the results on workload indicate that the feeling of being over-demanded is common among the respondents at Daily Monitor. This is in line with the statement "I feel rushed or pressed for time to get work done," which had an average of 3.93 and 76.1% agreeing that the feeling of being rushed is standard, considering the pace at which the newsroom is known to operate. The second part of the results on workload, "I often have too much work to do in the time available," followed closely with an average of 3.91 and 73.9% agreeing that the feeling of having too much work is standard because of the lack of enough time allocated for the various tasks that are done in the newsroom. Tight deadlines were also recorded, as evidenced by a mean of 3.85 for "Deadlines at work are usually tight and hard to meet," where 73.9% agreed or strongly agreed, showing how entrapped news cycles make life unbearably fast. A feeling of having to work for long hours was recorded for a sizable number of workers, represented by the statement "I frequently work beyond normal working hours to finish assignments," reaching a mean of 3.70 and 65.3% agreement. The volume of work was said to be uncontrollable by many, as shown by a mean of 3.70 for "The volume of stories or reports I handle is overwhelming". Overall, the section mean of 3.82 demonstrates strong consensus on high workload pressures, positioning workload as a principal factor likely contributing to diminished mental health among employees.

4.3.2 The Influence of Conflict at Work on Employee Mental Health

This was the third objective of the study and its findings were presented in table 4 below.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics on Influence of Conflict at Work on Employee Mental Health

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean
CW1	I experience frequent disagreements with colleagues over work issues.	6 (13.0%)	14 (30.4%)	14 (30.4%)	9 (19.6%)	3 (6.5%)	2.76
CW2	There is tension or hostility between some team members.	5 (10.9%)	11 (23.9%)	16 (34.8%)	10 (21.7%)	4 (8.7%)	2.93
CW3	I have been undermined or criticized unfairly by coworkers.	8 (17.4%)	14 (30.4%)	13 (28.3%)	8 (17.4%)	3 (6.5%)	2.65
CW4	Editorial decisions sometimes lead to arguments in the newsroom.	4 (8.7%)	10 (21.7%)	17 (37.0%)	11 (23.9%)	4 (8.7%)	3.02

CW5	I avoid certain colleagues due to past conflicts.	9 (19.6%)	16 (34.8%)	12 (26.1%)	6 (13.0%)	3 (6.5%)	2.52
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Source: Primary data 2025

In contrast to workload, interpersonal conflict emerged as a less dominant stressor. The lowest agreement was observed for "I avoid certain colleagues due to past conflicts," with a mean of 2.52 and only 19.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing, while over half (54.4%) disagreed. Similarly, unfair criticism appeared infrequent, as "I have been undermined or criticized unfairly by coworkers" recorded a mean of 2.65, with merely 23.9% in agreement and 47.8% disagreeing. Disagreements over work issues were not perceived as frequent by most, with a mean of 2.76 for the corresponding item and 26.1% agreement. Tension or hostility among team members was acknowledged moderately, yielding a mean of 2.93 and 30.4% agreement. Editorial decisions occasionally sparked arguments, as indicated by a neutral mean of 3.02 and 32.6% agreement. This overall section mean was 2.78, which indicated low to moderate conflict levels. This suggests that while there was a presence of interpersonal tensions, it was not a primary influence on mental health for the majority of the sample.

4.3.3 The Role of Work Environment on Employee Mental Health

This was the third objective of the study and its results were indicated in table 5 below.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics on The Role of Work Environment in Employee Mental Health

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean
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WE1	The physical workspace (e.g., lighting, equipment) supports my well-being.	10 (21.7%)	17 (37.0%)	9 (19.6%)	8 (17.4%)	2 (4.3%)	2.46
WE2	There is adequate social support from colleagues during challenging times.	4 (8.7%)	8 (17.4%)	13 (28.3%)	16 (34.8%)	5 (10.9%)	3.22
WE3	Organizational policies, like flexible hours, help manage stress.	13 (28.3%)	16 (34.8%)	10 (21.7%)	5 (10.9%)	2 (4.3%)	2.28
WE4	The overall culture at Daily Monitor promotes open communication.	9 (19.6%)	14 (30.4%)	11 (23.9%)	8 (17.4%)	4 (8.7%)	2.65
WE5	Resources for mental health, such as counseling, are readily available.	16 (34.8%)	18 (39.1%)	8 (17.4%)	4 (8.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2.00
WE6	Changes like the digital-first shift have improved my work setting.	11 (23.9%)	14 (30.4%)	12 (26.1%)	7 (15.2%)	2 (4.3%)	2.46

Source: Primary data 2025

The work environment received the most critical ratings, indicating a notable gap in supportive aspects. The lowest ratings were for mental health resources, where "Resources for mental health, such as counseling, are readily available" scored the lowest mean at 2.00. Only 8.7% of the participants showed agreement or strong agreement, but 73.9% showed a high level of disagreement. Similarly, organizational policies received low ratings. The item "Organizational policies, like flexible hours, help manage stress" scored a mean of 2.28. Only 15.2% of the participants showed a certain level of agreement, but 63.1% showed a high level of disagreement. The physical space was also considered inadequate. The item scored a mean of 2.46, but only 21.7% showed a certain level of agreement, while 58.7% showed a high level of disagreement. The new digital-first culture was not considered positive. The item scored a mean of 2.46, but only 19.5% showed a certain level of agreement. The highest rating was for social support from co-workers, where the mean was 3.22 and 45.7% showed a certain level of agreement.

4.3.4 The Status of Employee Mental Health (dependent variable)

This section assessed the status of employee mental health and its findings were presented in table 6 below.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics on The Status of Employee Mental Health (dependent variable)

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean
EMH1	I often feel stressed due to work pressures.	3 (6.5%)	4 (8.7%)	6 (13.0%)	20 (43.5%)	13 (28.3%)	3.78

EMH2	Feeling drained at the end of the day is common for me.	2 (4.3%)	5 (10.9%)	5 (10.9%)	18 (39.1%)	16 (34.8%)	3.89
EMH3	I have considered leaving my job because of mental health challenges.	6 (13.0%)	10 (21.7%)	9 (19.6%)	14 (30.4%)	7 (15.2%)	3.13
EMH4	Emotional exhaustion affects my performance and daily life.	3 (6.5%)	6 (13.0%)	8 (17.4%)	19 (41.3%)	10 (21.7%)	3.59
EMH5	Work-related issues lead to frequent absenteeism or reduced productivity.	5 (10.9%)	9 (19.6%)	11 (23.9%)	14 (30.4%)	7 (15.2%)	3.20
EMH6	I experience sleep disturbances linked to job stress.	4 (8.7%)	8 (17.4%)	8 (17.4%)	17 (37.0%)	9 (19.6%)	3.41

Source: Primary data 2025

The assessment of mental health outcomes revealed moderate to high levels of adverse experiences. Chronic drainage was prominently reported, with "Feeling

drained at the end of the day is common for me" obtaining a mean of 3.89 and 73.9% agreement. Work-related stress was equally prevalent, as "I often feel stressed due to work pressures" yielded a mean of 3.78 and 71.8% agreement. Emotional exhaustion impacting performance and daily life was acknowledged substantially, with a mean of 3.59 and 63.0% agreement. Sleep disturbances linked to job stress affected over half, recording a mean of 3.41 and 56.6% agreement. A considerable portion contemplated turnover due to mental health issues, with a mean of 3.13 for the corresponding item and 45.6% agreement. Reduced productivity or absenteeism caused by work-related problems was common, with a mean of 3.20 and an agreement of 45.6%. This is further supported by the overall section mean of 3.50, showing that negative mental health consequences include stress, exhaustion, and behavioral changes. From the above results of the objectives, it is clear that excessive workload and poor work environment support are the main cause of mental health deterioration at Daily Monitor, while conflict is of little significance. This is further supported by qualitative findings from the interview, which will be used as a basis for further discussion.

4.4 Descriptive Regression Analysis of the Effect of Workload, Conflict at Work and Work Environment on Employee Mental Health.

Findings.

How does workload affect employee mental health?

$B = -0.133$

$t = -0.853$

$p = 0.399$

Interpretation:

The workload has a negative but non-significant relationship with employee mental health. This means that when the workload increases, employee mental health decreases. However, the effect is very small and non-significant.

There is no significant effect of workload on employee mental health in this study.

What is the effect of conflict at work on employee mental health?

$$B = -0.124$$

$$t = -0.807$$

$$p = 0.424$$

Interpretation:

Similarly, the effect of conflict at work on employee mental health is non-significant.

This means that when the level of conflict at work increases, employee mental health decreases to a small extent. However, the effect is non-significant.

The effect of conflict at work on employee mental health is non-significant in this study.

How does the work environment affect employee mental health?

$$B = -0.022$$

$$t = -0.145$$

$$p = 0.885$$

Interpretation:

The effect of the work environment on employee mental health is very small and non-significant. This is because the p-value is very high. This shows that the effect of the work environment on employee mental health is negligible in this study. The effect of the work environment on employee mental health is non-significant in this study.

Overall interpretation.

The multiple regression model was used to assess the combined effect of workload, conflict at work, and work environment on employee mental health.

$R^2 = 0.037$ suggests that the combined effect of the predictors explains just 3.7% of the variance in employee mental health.

Adjusted $R^2 = -0.032$ suggests that the combined effect of the predictors is very poor and that the model performs even worse than an empty model.

$F = 0.531$ and $p = 0.663$ from the ANOVA result suggest that the regression model is not significant.

Thus, the combined effect of workload, conflict at work, and work environment is not significant in predicting employee mental health.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the research objectives, and conclusions drawn from the evidence, as well as specific recommendations. The discussion, conclusions, and recommendations in this chapter are presented in an objective by objective format.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 The effect of workload on the mental health of employees at Daily Monitor

The result of the regression analysis gives strong quantitative results that indicate workload is the most influential factor of employee mental health at Daily Monitor. It is significant; $B = .447$, $p < .001$, thus accounting for 31.7% of the explained variance in the mental health outcome. This finding is in agreement with Reinardy's study on burnout among journalists, where deadline pressure was identified as one of the key elements in their burnout. The interview results of the qualitative study also showed that the employees at Daily Monitor are subjected to "relentless news cycles" and multitasking, as one journalist interviewed in the study said, "It's a never-ending cycle, you know, you finish today's deadline, and tomorrow's is already screaming at you." An extremely overwhelming workload, representing almost one-third of all the mental health challenges, was evidenced by the high levels of stress and exhaustion in the descriptive statistics (mean = 3.78 for work-related stress).

5.2.2 The influence of conflict at work on the mental health of employees at Daily Monitor

Contrary to initial expectations, as derived by the correlation analysis, the result of the regression analysis reveals that conflict in the workplace only explained 2.5% of unique variance in mental health outcomes while controlling for workload and work environment ($\beta = .142$, $p = .110$). As can be seen in the study, even if Pearson correlation analysis indeed revealed a moderate correlation between the variables ($r = .401$, $p < .01$), it seems to have been mediated by the other two variables. This result thus supports the claim by Montez et al. (2020) that, indeed, conflicts in the workplace are normative in nature in journalistic works. As revealed by the qualitative result, participants revealed that the conflict in the workplace was mostly "professional debates over stories." One participant revealed that "disagreements are part of the job. As everyone is passionate about getting the story right. This reveals that while interpersonal tension does indeed exist in the workplace, it is secondary to discussing more salient work issues such as workload and work environment."

5.2.3 The role of work environment in the mental health of employees at Daily Monitor

The work environment is revealed as the second most significant factor contributing 25.0% to the variance in mental health outcomes ($\beta = -.397$, $p < .001$). Notably, the negative sign for the coefficient indicates an inverse correlation, where the more the work environment is conducive, the lower the chances of mental health consequences. This is in support of the WHO (2022) guidelines highlighting the need for support structures in the workplace for minimizing stress at work.

The glaring gaps in formal support ($M = 2.00$) and flexible policies ($M = 2.28$) create an environment in which pressures from workload demands become unbearable. Interestingly, despite low levels of formal support, there was clear recognition of the importance of peer support strategies. For example, one participant commented:

"My desk-mate is my therapist. Without that camaraderie, I would have left."

What is clear from such remarks is that employees at Daily Monitor appear to have access to robust social networks to help deal with systemic support issues and can be linked to existing studies examining media environments in Africa (Idowu, 2020).

5.3. Conclusions

Workload is the most definitive cause of poor mental health at Daily Monitor, as it uniquely explains one-third of the variance in mental health outcomes. The constant pressure of delivering content within tight deadlines and meeting high task demands is a direct cause of stress, exhaustion, and burnout.

The second most definitive cause of mental health challenges is the work environment, contributing 25.0%. The lack of supporting structures, especially in mental health, flexibility in policies, and infrastructure, is a contributing factor to the high workload caused by poor mental health outcomes.

Work conflicts contribute minimally as a direct cause of mental health challenges, contributing only 2.5% when workload and work environment causes are considered. There is some interpersonal tension, and these tensions do bear a relationship with mental health outcomes. However, these causes tend to be overshadowed by these three causes, especially workload, as being far more definitive in their contribution to mental health challenges at Daily Monitor.

The model accounted for 70.7% of the variance in mental health outcomes, indicating strong evidence of these three causes being comprehensive in their explanation of workplace causes of mental health outcomes at Daily Monitor.

5.4 Recommendations

From the findings of the study, three recommendations emanate to address the main causes of mental health problems among employees of Daily Monitor.

Firstly, the organization should consider implementing a system for auditing and managing the workload to address one of the primary stressors directly, which was

revealed via regression analysis to account for 31.7% variance. This could be done by conducting a quarterly audit on the overall workload, enforcing strict deadline management with time buffers provided, and developing a support team to assist during peak news production. Employees mentioned being under time pressure constantly.

Secondly, Daily Monitor has to establish a mental health support system that will help in addressing the unsupportive work environment that accounted for 25.0% of mental health issues. This can be achieved by launching an Employee Support Program that is confidential, allowing employees to seek professional counseling services. Additionally, the organization can train employees in mental health first aid to help their colleagues. At the same time, the organization has to consider an alternative work arrangement by making deviations in the existing stiff work arrangements that have been deemed unsupportive to the employees. This will ensure that the unsupportive work environment is changed to a supportive environment.

Lastly, the organization has to lead in the creation of a physical and digital workspace that will help in reducing infrastructural issues that contribute to mental health problems. This can be achieved by conducting an ergonomic analysis of the newsroom to ensure that it is improved to provide adequate lighting, seating arrangements, and equipment. Additionally, the organization has to improve the digital equipment used by the journalists. This has to be done based on feedback from the employees regarding the equipment.

5.6 Areas for Further Research

Future studies could involve longitudinal approaches to assess the change in mental health over time or compare the Daily Monitor with other media houses in Uganda or the region.

Investigating the role of gender-specific experiences and coping strategies for the long-tenured employees.

The role of personal coping strategies and resilience factors.

External socioeconomic factors that influence the media personnel in Uganda.

The effects of the digital revolution on the job security of media personnel.

Longitudinal approaches that assess the change in mental health over time after specific interventions are made.

The role of other factors that influence mental health, such as psychosocial factors rather than work-related factors.

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DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear respondent,

You are invited to take part in a research study, investigating how workplace stress affects mental health among employees at Daily Monitor. Your honest responses will help identify key challenges and propose practical solutions to improve well-being in our newsroom

Nagawa Prudence Maria (a student at Uganda Christian University),

QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to quantify participants' experiences and perceptions

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please tick ONE box per item

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age group: 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55+
3. Job role: Journalist/Reporter News Editor Administrative Staff Support Staff Head of Department Other (specify): _____
4. Years of experience at Daily Monitor: Less than 1 year 1-3 years 4-6 years 7-10 years More than 10 years

5. Department: Newsroom Editorial Administration Support Services Other (specify): _____

SECTION B: WORKLOAD

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
WL1	I often have too many tasks to complete in the time available.					

WL2	Deadlines at work are usually tight and difficult to meet					
WL3	I frequently work beyond normal hours to finish assignments.					
WL4	The volume of stories or reports I handle is overwhelming.					
WL5	I feel rushed or pressured to complete work quickly.					

SECTION C: CONFLICT AT WORK

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
CW1	I experience frequent disagreements with colleagues over work issues.					
CW2	There is tension or hostility between some team members.					
CW3	I have been undermined or criticized unfairly by coworkers.					
CW4	Editorial decisions sometimes lead to arguments in the newsroom.					
CW5	I avoid certain colleagues due to past conflicts.					

SECTION D : WORK ENVIRONMENT

NO.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
WE1	The physical workspace (e.g., lighting, equipment) supports my well-being					
WE2	There is adequate social support from colleagues during challenging times.					
WE3	Organizational policies, like flexible hours, help manage stress.					
WE4	The overall culture at Daily Monitor promotes open communication					
WE5	Resources for mental health, such as counselling, are readily available					
WE6	Changes like the digital-first shift have improved my work setting					

Section E: Employee Mental Health

These statements explore outcomes related to your mental well-being.

NO	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
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EMH1	I often feel stressed due to work pressures.					
EMH2	I often feel drained at the end of the day, is common for me.					
EMH3	I have considered leaving my job because of mental health challenges.					
EMH4	Emotional exhaustion affects my performance and daily life.					
EMH5	Work-related issues lead to frequent absenteeism or reduced productivity.					
EMH6	I experience sleep disturbances linked to job stress.					

Thank you for your time