

Examining the effects of understaffing on employee performance at the Forensic Pathology Division, Namibia Police Force

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Abstract: The study sought to examine the effects of understaffing on employee performance at the Forensic Pathology Division of Namibia Police Force. The other objectives of the study were to establish the factors that led to understaffing and the effects of staff shortage on employee workload at the Forensic Pathology Department. The study used both quantitative to qualitative research approaches in which questionnaires and interviews were the main data collection instruments. After application of the Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size calculator, 103 questionnaires were administered in the Police Department in Oshakati. Probability sampling and non-probability sampling methods were used to select the participants from the sample frame. The data was analysed using SPSS which helped in data presentation. The content analysis method was used to gain better understanding of qualitative data from interviews. The results concluded that excessive workload, lack of incentives at the mortuary section, poor working conditions and lack of understanding on the essence of working at the mortuary as well as lack of opportunities for growth and advancement were amongst the key reasons why staff shunned the Forensic Pathology Division leading to understaffing. The study further concluded that understaffing had an effect on employee performance in terms of the hectic working environment which increased staff dissatisfaction and decreased staff morale leading to poor performance. It was also concluded that understaffing leads to work overloads that lead to further abandonment of other tasks resulting in poor performance. The study recommended that the Forensic Pathology Division should find ways of improving remuneration and compensation schemes for employees in an endeavour to minimise labour turnover. The Division was also advised to recognise good work and institute various motivation and retention strategies which make staff happy while attracting new members to join the Forensic Pathology Division.

Keywords: Understaffing, employee performance, Forensic Pathology, workload.

1. INTRODUCTION

The word ‘forensic’ is derived from Latin word which means ‘public’,) and ‘pathology’ comes from the Greek word for “suffering” (Choo & Choi, 2012). The Pathology Forensic Division is central in fulfilling the functions of any police force and the judicial system, lest the pain and suffering of the public may continue unabated. Organisations around the world identify understaffing as a major stressor in their daily work, but despite this, relatively few empirical studies have been carried out to ascertain the effects of understaffing on employee performance (Hudson and Shen, 2015).

1.1 Background of the study

The National Forensic Science Institute of Namibia (NFSI) was established on 23 June 1993, with the aim of creating a national body tasked with the examination of evidence from crime scenes, as part of the Namibian judicial process. It has

since successfully finalized and presented expert testimony in thousands of cases comprising millions of exhibits, establishing itself as an indispensable component of jurisprudence (NFSI, 2020). The NFSI is a highly specialized multi-disciplinary scientific research facility that applies to all aspects of natural sciences critical in solving crime as well as finding scientific solutions to problems (National Forensic Science Institute of Namibia (NFSI), 2020).

The issue of understaffing in different departments worldwide has been an issue that has been reported as having a tremendous impact on the mental and physical wellbeing of the employees (Davis, 2019). The question is, how then is the performance of employees affected by understaffing especially for the Forensic Pathology Division where one needs extreme attention to detail as backed by evidence. Like many other organisations around the world, the shortage of manpower at Forensic Pathology Division (FPD) of the Namibian Police Force has come to spotlight. FPD is well known by the name Police Mortuary (NFSI, 2020) and is critical in the justice delivery system.

Forensic pathology is a branch of medicine that applies the principles and knowledge of medical sciences to solve problems in the field of law (Choo and Choi, 2012). When there is death in a road accident, murder, homicide, poisoning to name but just a few examples, the judicial system cannot proceed without a detailed scientific report from the Forensic Pathology Division which would confirm with precision the scientific cause of the death. In criminology, it does not follow that if a body is found dismembered in a road accident, therefore the death was a result of the road accident. History has it that criminals can murder and stage manage an accident or make it highly complicated to find the real cause. This is where the Forensic Pathology Division comes in to give evidence and demystify to give evidence after laboratory analysis using the correct modern tools. Even after a brutal fight leading to broken limbs, the cause of death could be another terminal illness and this helps the judicial system in dealing with a case of homicide. The FPD is therefore indispensable in cases of aggravated assault, road accidents, homicide, (Peterson, Sommers, Baskin & Johnson, 2010)

The purpose of having a Forensic Pathology Division in the police is in the autopsy (post-mortem examination) of a dead body. The word 'autopsy' is derived from Greek language. It means "seeing for oneself". An autopsy is therefore a detailed medical examination of a person's body and its organs after death to determine the cause of death. In practice, there are two kinds of autopsies; the medical autopsy and the forensic (medicolegal) autopsy (Choo & Choi, 2012). Medical autopsy cases are performed on those who will have died of natural diseases to determine how the death occurred. On the other hand, Forensic autopsy is performed as a requirement of law in those circumstances where the death is suspicious.

Given the critical role of the Forensic Pathology Division, one wonders why the understaffing has reached an alarming rate and one wonders how such understaffing has positively or negatively affected the FPD, the Namibia Police Force, the justice delivery system and the Namibian citizens at large. According to the FPD annual report for 2019, for some unexplained reasons, majority of the division's technicians were being transferred to other police departments almost every year since the year 2016 and there has been no replacement for them. At the same time the Division is currently confronted with an aging workforce, by the time of study, quite a number of staff members are expected to retire in two to three years' time and obviously this will exacerbate the situation (Commissioner, Mbandeka's communication, April 29, 2021). Many researchers among them Ganster and Dyer (2019), Trong and Davis (2012) have investigated the effects of manpower shortage on performance, but there has been no research to find out how understaffing of a critical wing such as the Forensic Pathology Division can affect performance of the division itself and other important sectors such as the justice delivery system of Namibia given that the division collects an average of 130 corpses needing urgent attention each month, with the help of only 2 pathologists (doctors) leading to neglecting and postponement of some other official duties at the FPD, such as preparing autopsy reports for court proceedings, compiling statistical reports and completion of inquest dockets (Commissioner Mbandeka, personal communication, April 29, 2021). These are things which affect the Gross National Happiness in a country. The words Gross National Happiness (GNH) were coined and popularized by the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck in the 1970s. According to Wangchuck, GNH implies that sustainable development should take a holistic approach and give equal importance to non-economic aspects and the general happiness of people. Wangluck argued that Gross National Happiness (GNH) is more important than GDP and GNP because GDP and GNP are only brought about by happy people and only happy people can be productive. The people of Namibia or any other country cannot be fully productive if justice delivery, funerals and mourning are extended or postponed for lengthy periods without burying their loved ones for the simple reason that a Forensic Pathology Division is not fully functional to meet the demands at hand.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Organisations the world over bank on human capital for them to be able to provide optimum goods and services to their clients (Ganster and Dyer, 2019). If organisations are understaffed, it will be impossible to offer quality service timeously. Public sector organisations such as the Police which are funded through the fiscus using tax payers' money are expected to be more answerable to their clientele and to meet public expectations lest they lose their relevance. The problem of understaffing in the Forensic Pathology Division of the Namibian Police Force has been a matter of record and it became more apparent during the Covid -19 pandemic which caused an increase in deaths and also during the festive season when accidents increase. Some deaths are sudden, others are a result of murder, road accidents, arson, poisoning and violence to mention but just a few. According to international law, such deaths need thorough investigations before a green light for burial can be given making the Forensic Pathology Division to be a very important player in achieving civil happiness, peace and tranquillity. The public and bereaved families are left to endure traumatic experiences when autopsies and investigations to allow them to bury their loved ones cannot be done for weeks on end, something which leads to emotional turmoil and high costs endured when funeral gatherings are extended (Naming, 2020). Mortuaries continue heaping corpses some of which will be in bad state of injury due to accidents. There has been no research in trying to understand the problem of late burials caused by shortage of staff at the FPD and the public continues to suffer. This study sought to close this knowledge gap by getting to the bottom of the matter using empirical evidence so as to achieve Gross National Happiness among the affected populace.

1.3 Research Objectives

- 1.3.1 To find out the effects understaffing on employee performance at FPD.
- 1.3.2 To assess out the factors that led to understaffing in the FPD.
- 1.3.3 To examine the effects of staff shortage on employee workload at FPD,

1.4 Hypothesis

- H1: Understaffing has positive effects on employee performance.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between understaffing and employee workload.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of key terms

2.1.1 Understaffing

Understaffing is a situation where there are too few employees to complete the required work expected of the group; it is an extension of under-manning the work domain (Hudson & Shen, 2016, p3). Trans & Davies (2016) add that understaffing is lack of enough people to carry out smoothly the essential program and maintenance tasks in a setting. Matemani & Ndunguru (2019) and Runeni (2015) believe that the major sources of understaffing are having a large number of elderly manpower, paying low salaries, poor government policy, lack of motivation and poor working conditions.

2.1.2 Forensic Pathology

In this context, pathology is a system of knowledge used to draw conclusions about an illness. This is supported by Choo & Choi (2012), Camies (2021) and Tshabalala (2020) who state that forensic pathology is a part of a broader field called forensic science which is comprised of a group of scientific disciplines which play a significant role in criminal, legal, and civil matters by answering specific questions in these arenas through the application of medical facts, scientific and technical knowledge. The American Academy of Forensic Sciences goes further to aver that there are eleven primary disciplines in the field of forensics: criminalistics, digital & multimedia sciences, engineering sciences, general, jurisprudence, odontology (science of teeth), pathology/biology, physical anthropology, psychiatry and behavioural forensics. Forensic pathology has become a vital tool in solving complex crime over recent years.

Hudson & Shen (2015) state that forensic pathology investigates the causes of disease (etiology) as well as the underlying mechanisms (pathogenesis) by analysing changes in the gross or microscopic appearance (morphology) of cells and tissues, and biochemical alterations in body fluids. Pathology is the science of the causes and effects of diseases, especially the branch of medicine that deals with the laboratory examination of samples of body tissue for diagnostic or forensic purposes

(Jones, 2016). Its relevance to the investigation of death is that when the police or a coroner is attempting to determine the probable cause of death, the services of a pathologist are often required.

2.2 The Role of Forensic Pathology

The Forensic Pathology Division is very important in the police set up. According to the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (2020) when a forensic pathologist is requested by police authorities to attend the scene of a suspicious death, he is 'briefed' as to the circumstances of the case by the Senior Investigating Officer (SIO), or his representative. A strategy for approaching the body, the collection of trace evidence from and around the body, and ultimately the recovery of the body from the scene, is agreed with crime scene investigators, forensic scientists and photographers. The forensic pathologist examines the body, noting its disposition, the surroundings in which the body lies and the presence of injuries that can be seen without disturbing the body or the scene (Faculty Forensic and Legal Medicine, 2020). Many pathologists supervise recovery of the body by crime scene investigators and funeral directors.

Furthermore, besides the above explained duties of forensic pathologist, they also take part in body examination which can also require a lot of people for a task to be carried out. Careful examination of the body may require modern laboratory equipment and modern mortuary facilities and involves team-working with forensic scientists, crime scene investigators and photographers. Each examination is directed towards answering the general and specific questions that are likely to arise in the context of that individual case (Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine, 2020). The forensic pathologists are often assisted in their interpretation of the pathological findings when they have either been to, or have viewed videos or photographs of, the scene at which the body was discovered. The external examination of the body is of immense significance in a suspicious death. Post mortem examination may itself take several hours if there are multiple injuries. According to Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (2020), each stage of the examination is documented, both by notes taken by the pathologist and by photographs. All significant findings, both positive and negative, are recorded. Every organ and body cavity is examined in detail and samples are taken of organs and injuries for microscopy and samples of body fluids are retained for toxicology. Forensic pathologists interpret their pathological findings in light of the known circumstances of the case, the scene findings and the results of additional investigations by others such as toxicology, entomology and the results of forensic scientific examination of weapons and clothing (Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine, 2020).

All these duties indicate that the level of staffing in the Forensic Pathology Division is important. Understaffing renders the department ineffective. Forensic pathologists may be requested to perform a second post mortem examination on a body by the lawyers acting for the defendant or by the Coroner when no-one has been charged with an offence. The task itself might require 3 to 5 pathologists on a case so that there is no room for error. This shows that it is important to take staffing into consideration in the forensic department. Such service may occasionally be performed on behalf of the family of a deceased which will be eager to clear the air on the cause of death (Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine, 2020).

Forensic pathologists provide reports of their findings in a manner suitable for use by the criminal justice system. This requires careful use of language so that the pathological findings are presented in such a way as to be easily understandable to a lay audience, without compromising the precision of the meaning of those findings.

2.3 Empirical Review

In their study, Trans & Davis (2016) noted that understaffing puts pressure on staff in the organisation because the same jobs have to be done by fewer people. Hudson and Shen (2015) studied understaffing and noted that it is a major stressor in the lives of affected workers. Their findings were supported by a study in Europe which concluded that understaffing puts enormous pressure on the workforce which is expected to meet unrealistic performance targets (Camies, 2021). Working in an understaffed environment causes higher stress levels which can cause real damage to an employee's mental and physical health if it continues for a prolonged period of time. For example, the study indicated that more than 70% of nurses in Europe experienced burn out during Covid -19 and it affected the quality of their performance (Camies, 2021).

Besides Europe, the effects of understaffing can be reviewed in other continents like Asia who are technology based. According to the study in Asia, understaffing can lead to high staff turnover that has tremens effect on the performance of the organisation. According to Camies (2021) overworked staff feel understaffed, stressed and their morale lowers, it won't be long before such employees start looking for jobs elsewhere. This is the case with Namibia Forensic unit. The process of having to train and replace the employees who resign can be very long and expensive for the organisation which then affects the performance of the few serving employees (Camies, 2021).

Tshabalala, (2020) found that serious shortage of forensic pathology officials jeopardises accreditation and certification efforts and threatens the health of the individuals working in the medico-legal death investigation community. On the other hand, Kumari, & De Alwis, (2015) found that shortage of manpower results in working long hours. It is detected that most studies have focussed more on the negative effects than positive effects of understaffing, thus the current study would like to explore on both.

In another study about understaffing of nurses by Runeni (2015), a wide range of causes were singled out and they differ from country to country according to political situations, economic situations and management systems. The study concentrated on nurses specifically who are also part of the health field. Global trends identified change in disease patterns, demography and booming economies as major causes of understaffing of nurses. Improvements in the economy led to many people seeking medical attention (Runeni, 2015). The developed countries such as United States, Canada and Australia experienced nurse understaffing as a result of establishment of old people's homes. This affected their performance in terms of the quality of work that they had to provide to the patients. Some nurses even indicated that they found it hard to concentrate at work because they are always tired due issues of understaffing (Runeni, 2015). This led to some mistakes which could even cost the lives of the patients.

In the African context, a quantitative study carried out in Kenya by Mangedi (2018) specifically on the effects of understaffing on teachers noted that there was unfair distribution of teachers, high pupil-teacher ratio in the sub county and that affected teaching and learning in the schools. Mngedi (2018) found that teachers with high teaching workload were ineffective, a thing which negatively affected the quality of education thus linking understaffing to poor performance.

Moreover, the Kenyan study further indicated that there were many challenges associated with curriculum implementation and high pupil-teacher ratio encountered by teachers in understaffed schools and that fair distribution of teachers and review of staffing policies were some the effective measures of improving staffing in the schools (Mangedi , 2018). The study recommended regular recruitment and deployment of teachers within a specified period of time; ensuring fair distribution of teachers with regard to the staffing need; and provision of enough social services to the teachers in hardship areas.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Human Capital Theory (HCT)

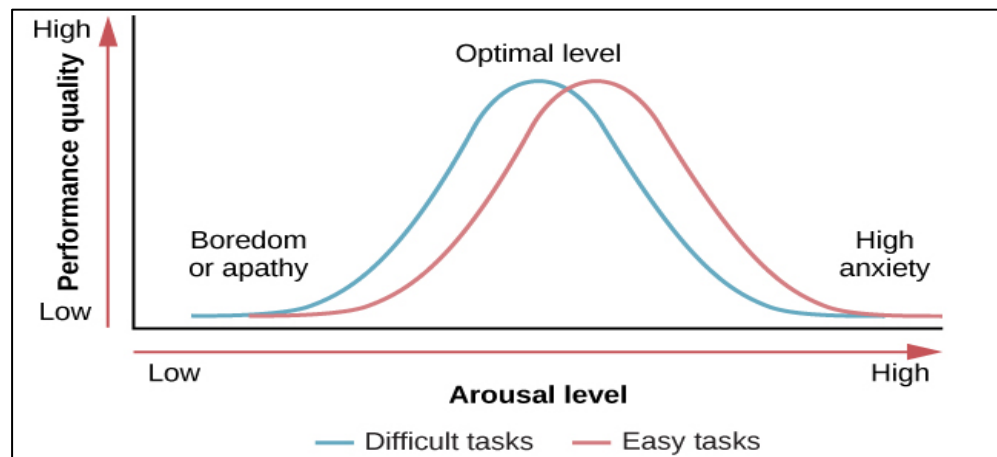
Human capital theory rests on the assumption that formal education is highly instrumental and necessary to improve the productive capacity of a population (Armendariz, 2011). In short, human capital theorists argue that an educated population is a productive population. Human capital theory emphasizes how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human capability, which is a product of innate abilities and investment in human beings. Reflecting to this theory, the understaffing at Forensic Pathology Department can be explained. The provision of formal education is seen as an investment in human capital, which proponents of the theory have considered as equally or even more worthwhile than that of physical capital (Armendariz, 2011).

HCT concludes that investment in human capital will lead to greater economic outputs and quality performance. According to Armendariz (2011) in the past, economic strength was largely dependent on tangible physical assets such as land, factories and equipment. Labour was a necessary component, but increases in the value of the business came from investment in capital equipment. Modern economists seem to concur that education and health care are the key to improving human capital and ultimately increasing the economic outputs of the nation (Armendariz, 2011). The Human capital theory rests on the assumption that formal education is highly instrumental and necessary to improve the productive capacity of a population.

2.4.2 Optimal Arousal Level Theory

This a psychological theory that explains how motivation of human beings work. According Cheryl (2020, p. 23) the basic assumption of the optimal arousal theory of motivation is that environmental factors influence one's brain's level of arousal. People engage in certain actions for the purpose of attaining an optimal arousal level by either decreasing or increasing the amount and type of stimulation received from the environment. This concept is commonly referred to as the Yerkes-Dodson Law (Cheryl, 2020). The law states that increased levels of arousal will improve performance, but only up until the optimum arousal level is reached. At that point, performance begins to suffer as arousal levels increase. This relationship is known

as Yerkes-Dodson law, which holds that a simple task is performed best when arousal levels are relatively high and complex tasks are best performed when arousal levels are lower. Based on the complexity of the work in the forensic department the optimal level theory can be used to explain the lack of motivation in relation to how negative the environment is leading to understaffing. The diagram below illustrates the point.



Source: Cheryl (2020)

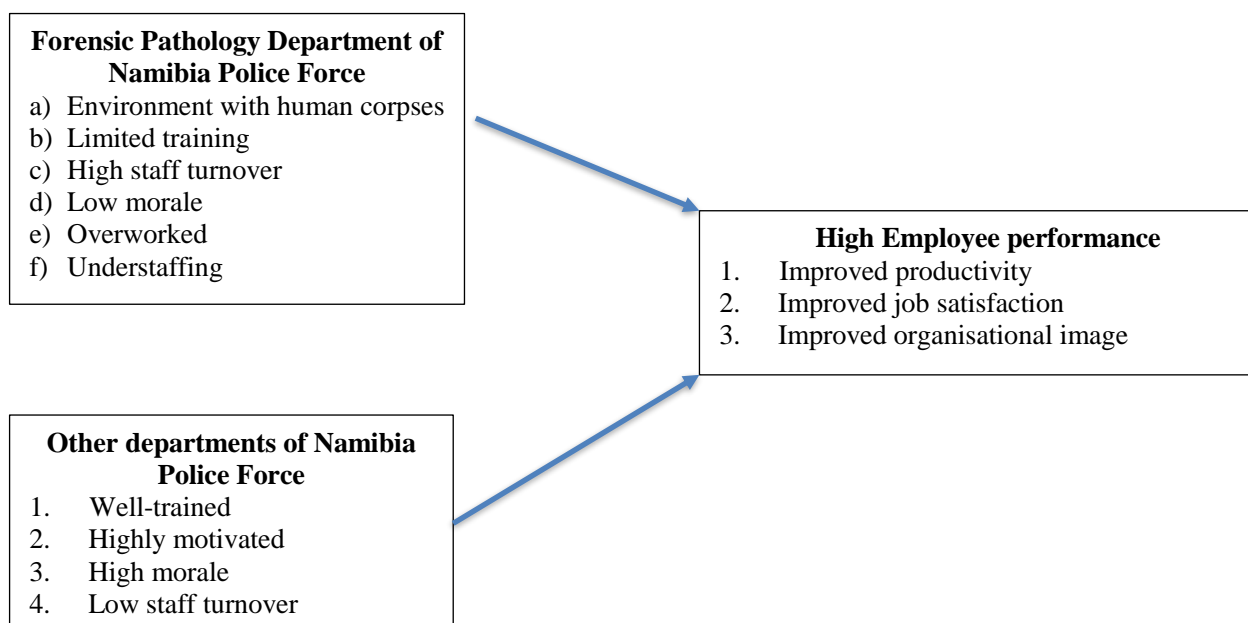
Figure 1: Optimal Arousal Level Theory

2.4.3 Staffing Theory

Staffing theory is explained as a social psychology theory that explores the effects of behaviour settings being either understaffed or overstaffed (Cheryl, 2020). Understaffing refers to the idea that there are not enough people for what the behaviour setting promotes, whereas overstaffing is the overabundance of people (Cheryl, 2020). The term staffing theory was previously known as manning theory, but was renamed. Staffing theory focuses on the idea that when there are fewer people available for a number of behaviour settings, there is pressure on individuals to take on responsibilities.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

According to the conceptual framework, employee training leads to improved employee performance, which leads to improved productivity, job satisfaction and improved organizational image.



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was based on Pragmatism, being a mixture of Positivism and Interpretivism. This was done for ease of triangulation which was set to improve the validity and reliability of the findings. According to Kelly & Corderio (2020) Pragmatism is premised on the idea that research can steer clear of metaphysical debates about the nature of truth and reality and focus instead on 'practical understandings' of concrete, real-world issues. While this approach is compatible with qualitative-dominant interpretivist understanding of socially constructed reality, the emphasis is on interrogating the value and meaning of research data through examination of its practical consequences.

A population of 140 staff in the Forensic Pathology Division yielded a sample size of 103 according to Krejcie and Morgan sample size (1970). This study was based on non-probability sampling in the form of purposive sampling method.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DATA PRESENTATION

4.1. Response Rate

Response rate (also known as completion rate or return rate) in survey research refers to the number of people who answered the survey divided by the number of people in the sample (Creswell, 2012). This implies that the response rate gives an insight on the turn-out and compliance of respondents during a research. Response rate to research instruments that were used in this research is revealed hereunder.

Table 1: Response Rate Tabulation

Sub Strata	Questionnaires Distributed	Completed & returned Questionnaires	Response Rate%
Charge Office	63	61	97%
Crime Investigation Sub-Division	15	15	100%
Serious Crime Unit	15	14	93%
Forensic Pathology Sub-Division	10	8	80%
Total	103	98	95%

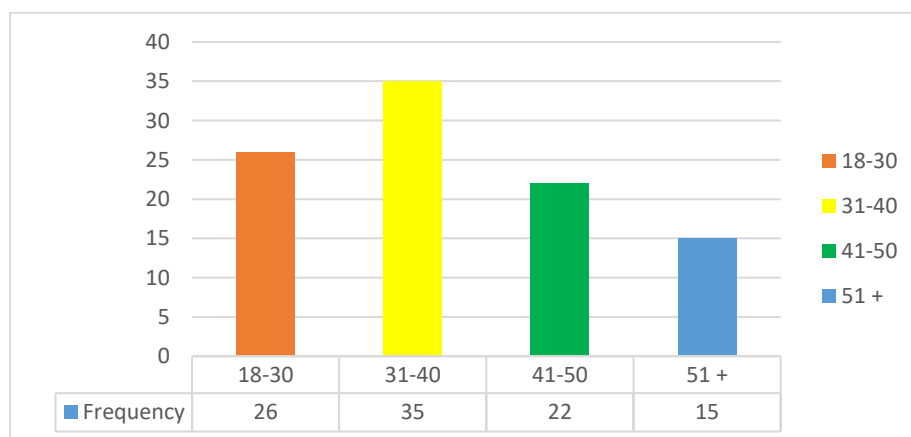
Source: Primary Data (2022)

The response rate of 95% is a high feedback rate. It gives greater confidence in the research findings. According to Robertson (2009) a 50% response rate is acceptable as it fundamentally gives a picture of the reality that would be discovered if response rate is one hundred percent.

4.2. Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

4.2.1. Respondents Age Distribution

The first socio-demographic aspect that was incorporated in the first section of the questionnaire was age. In this regard, four classes were considered, namely; the '18-30' class, the '31-40' class, the '41-50' class as well as the '51 and above' class.



Source: Primary Data (2022)

Figure 2: Respondents' Age

61% of the respondents were aged 40 or below. This distribution also reveals the diversity of the respondents who cut across all the prescribed age classes.

4.2.2. Respondents' Education Levels

Table 2: Respondents' Education Level

Highest Education Level	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
Grade 10	28	29%	29%
Grade 12	38	39%	68%
Undergraduate	21	21%	89%
Post Graduate	11	11%	100%
Total	98	100%	

Source: Primary Data (2022)

Table 2 reveals that 68% of the respondents had attended school at least up to grade 10 and not proceeded beyond Grade 12. Additionally, 32% of the participants to the research possessed a university degree or better. The researcher deduced that respondents of the research were arguably literate enough to understand the research questions. Thus, the research's results can be relied upon on this basis.

4.2.3. Respondents' Working Experience

Table 3: Respondents' Working Experience

Working Experience	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
≤ 5 Years	16	16%	16%
6 - 10 Years	46	47%	63%
11 - 15 Years	23	23%	87%
≥15 Years	13	13%	100%
Total	98	100%	

Source: Primary Data (2022)

The table above shows that only 13% have been with the FPD for more than 15 years. This points to high turnover rates as staff had been leaving for greener pastures.

Section B of the questionnaire that was distributed to respondents focused on questions relating to the various contributing factors of understaffing. In this section, the study's aim was to get insights on what really causes understaffing.

4.2.4. Respondents' answers to Question B (1): How would you rate the level of understaffing in the Forensic Pathology Division?

Prior to asking questions directed on the causes of understaffing, respondents were first asked to rate the level of understaffing within the division. This would then assist in establishing, in the first place, whether or not understaffing is a challenge in the organization.

Table 4: Respondents' answers to Question B (1)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Very High	46	46.6	46.6	46.6
High	19	19.3	19.3	65.9
Average	10	10.2	10.2	76.1
Low	13	13.6	13.6	89.7
Very Low	10	10.2	10.2	100.0
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data (2022)

Table 4 shows the respective ratings that were attached to the forensic pathology division's level of understaffing by the respondents. Above 65% of the respondents rated the level of understaffing as high to very high.

4.2.5. Respondents' answers to questions on Section B (2) of the questionnaire

Part 2 question of the questionnaire's section B, had a series of statements on what causes understaffing in the organisation that was put under study. Respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement to the statements and the results thereof are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5: Analysis of responses to section B questions

Cause of Understaffing	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Undecided (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean Answer
	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	μ
Not getting along with commanders	12 (12.2%)	15 (15.3%)	36 (36.7%)	16 (16.3%)	19 (19.4%)	3.3 (Undecided)
Excessive workload	10 (10.2%)	16 (16.3%)	21 (21.4%)	24 (24.5%)	26 (26.5%)	3.5 (Agree)
Lack of understanding on the essence of working at the mortuary	7 (7.1%)	10 (10.2%)	19 (19.4%)	29 (29.6%)	33 (33.7%)	3.9 (Agree)
Minimised opportunities for growth and advancement	9 (9.2%)	9 (9.2%)	18 (18.4%)	34 (34.7%)	28 (28.6%)	4.2 (Agree)
Fear of being stigmatised	21 (21.4%)	19 (19.4%)	21 (21.4%)	27 (27.3%)	10 (10.2%)	4.5 (Agree)
Fear of psychological effects post working at the mortuary	8	23 (23.5%)	27 (27.6%)	19 (19.4%)	21 (21.4%)	3.4 (Undecided)
Inadequate salaries	4 (4%)	17 (17.3%)	49 (50%)	21 (21.4%)	7 (7.1%)	3.1 (Undecided)
Mismatch between worker qualifications and mortuary duties	1 (1%)	19 (19.4%)	64 (65.3%)	13 (13.2%)	1 (1%)	3.1 (Undecided)
Lack of incentives at the mortuary	3 (3.1%)	14 (14.3%)	25 (21.4%)	27 (27.6%)	29 (29.6%)	3.9 (Agree)
Poor working conditions at the mortuary	3 (3.1%)	4 (4.1%)	18 (18.4%)	40 (40.8%)	31 (31.6%)	4.2 (Agree)
Advanced Age	4 (4.1%)	27 (27.6%)	43 (43.9%)	22 (22.4%)	10 (10.2%)	3.3 (Undecided)
Lack of awareness about the nature of the job	6 (6.1%)	14 (14.3%)	30 (30.6%)	29 (29.6%)	19 (19.4%)	3.4 (Undecided)
Failure to get along with co-workers	3 (3.1%)	21 (21.4%)	48 (49%)	19 (19.4%)	7 (7.1%)	3.1 (Undecided)

Source: Primary Data (2022)

Table 5 shows that the respondents were in agreement with the notion that the following factors are the causes of understaffing in their organisation: excessive workload, lack of incentives at the mortuary, fear on being stigmatised, poor working conditions at the mortuary, lack of understanding on the essence of working at the mortuary as well as minimised opportunities for growth and advancement. The respondents, on average, were undecided on the causal nature of the following factors in relation to understaffing; advanced age, lack of awareness about the nature of the job, failure to get along with co-workers, fear of psychological effects post working at the mortuary, inadequate salaries, mismatch between worker qualifications and mortuary duties as well as not getting along with commanders. However, if the study disregarded the 'Undecided' employees and reviewed only those respondents who decided not to sit on the fence, it was clear that except for 'Mismatch between worker qualifications and mortuary duties' the respondents agreed to all the above as causes of understaffing at the Forensic Pathology Department.

4.3. Section C: Effects of Understaffing

The third section of the questionnaire that was distributed to respondents focused on the effects of understaffing on employee performance at the forensic pathology division.

Responses to question C (2): How does understaffing affect employee performance?

Table 6: Analysis of responses to Section C (2)

Effects of understaffing on employee performance	Not at all (1)	Small extent (2)	Moderate Extent (3)	Large extent (4)	Very large extent (5)	Mean Answer
	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	μ
Understaffing leads to work overloads, abandonment of other tasks & subsequently result in poor performance.	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	4 (4.1%)	5 (5.1%)	90 (91.8%)	4.7 (Very Large Extent)
Work overloads leads to poor docket completion, that will eventually cause delays in court proceedings.	0 (0%)	5 (5.1%)	18 (18.4%)	31 (31.6%)	44 (44.9%)	4.1 (Large Extent)
Increased risk of missed deadlines: which can seriously hurt the Division's credibility.	4 (4.1%)	8 (8.2%)	21 (21.4%)	33 (33.7%)	32 (32.7%)	3.7 (Large Extent)
Decreased customer satisfactions: grieving families tend to wait for longer periods before they get their deceased ready for burial.	14 (14.9%)	17 (17.3%)	35 (35.7%)	21 (21.4%)	11 (11.2%)	2.98 (Small Extent)
Understaffing at the Division can cause elevated stress among employees who are expected to do more with less, work long hours, or endlessly multitasked.	6 (6.1%)	13 (13.3%)	19 (19.4%)	29 (29.6%)	31 (31.6%)	3.67 (Large Extent)
Increased stress due to workloads can make the body more susceptible to illnesses, which can hurt productivity/performance.	10 (10.2%)	11 (11.2%)	21 (21.4%)	34 (34.7%)	22 (22.4%)	3.6 (Large Extent)
Being understaffed enhances employee satisfaction.	72 (73.4%)	21 (21.4%)	5 (5.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1.32 (Not at all)
Work overload leads to increased absenteeism that will results in poor employee performance at the Division.	2 (2%)	5 (5.1%)	15 (15.3%)	41 (41.8%)	35 (35.7%)	4.25 (Large Extent)
Being understaffed causes delays in compiling of post-mortem reports and medical certificates of causes of death	15 (15.3%)	13 (13.3%)	38 (38.8%)	16 (16.3%)	16 (16.3%)	3.1 (Moderate Extent)
Being understaffed reduces stress among members.	43	34 (34.7%)	15 (15.3%)	4 (4.1%)	2 (2%)	1.33 (Not at all)
Being short-staffed, can increase morale that further leads to high employee performance.	57 (58%)	21 (21.4%)	12 (12.2%)	8 (8.1%)	0 (0%)	1.7 (Small Extent)
Being short staffed, decreases morale that leads to poor performance.	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	7 (7.1%)	25 (25%)	63 (64.3%)	4.5 (Very Large Extent)
This hectic environment (understaffed environment) can increase staff dissatisfaction	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	10 (10.2%)	31 (31.6%)	55 (56.1%)p	4.5 (Very Large Extent)
Overworked employees, with intent to meet deadlines can lead to emotional stress that further results in employee turnover which may disrupt quality service delivery at the Division.	4 (4.1%)	7 (7.1%)	11 (11.2%)	36 (36.7%)	40 (40.8%)	4.4 (Large Extent)

Source: Primary Data (2022)

Table 6 reveals that the respondents generally showed a conviction that, to a very large extent, understaffing had an effect on employee performance in terms of the following facts; the hectic environment (understaffed environment) can increase staff dissatisfaction, being short staffed, decreases morale that leads to poor performance as well as understaffing leads to

work overloads that leads to further abandonment of other tasks and subsequently result in poor performance. In addition, the respondents credence that the following statements were true to a large extent in relation to the effect of understaffing on employee performance; Increased stress due to workloads can make the body more susceptible to illnesses, which can hurt productivity/performance of the individual in particular and eventually the Division as a whole, work overloads leads to poor docket completion, that will eventually cause delays in court proceedings, increased risk of missed deadlines: which can seriously hurt the Division's credibility, understaffing at the division can cause elevated stress among employees who are expected to do more with less, work long hours, or endlessly multitasked. Respondents were, on average, of the idea that understaffing had a moderate impact on employee performance when taking the following statement into cognizance; being understaffed causes delays in compiling of post-mortem reports and medical certificate of causes of death due to work overloads. The statement that; being understaffed enhances employee satisfaction, was found not to be true at all. Thus, understaffing does not in any way improve the performance of employees, in actual fact it might do the opposite as prescribed by the previously given statements.

4.3.1. Strategies that can be employed to ameliorate the challenges at the Forensic Pathology Division

The last section of the research instrument was aimed acquiring insights into ways of ameliorating understaffing and other related problems at the Forensic Pathology Division.

4.3.2 Responses to Question D1

Question D (2) comprised of a series of strategies wherein respondents were required to indicate the extent to which each of the strategies would aid in curbing understaffing and employee turnover.

Table 7: Analysis of responses to Section D (2)

Managing employee turnover	Not at all (1)	Small extent (2)	Moderate extent (3)	Large extent (4)	Very large extent (5)	Mean Answer
	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	μ
Offer a competitive remuneration to the employees at the Division.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	7 (7.1%)	88 (89.8%)	4.9 (Very Large Extent)
Invest more in employee education, training to increase moral of employees	2 (2.1%)	6 (6.1%)	13 (13.3%)	42 (42.9%)	35 (35.7%)	4.12 (Large Extent)
Staff members should be recognized when they achieve goals.	3 (3.1%)	7 (7.1%)	16 (16.3%)	31 (31.6%)	41 (41.8%)	4.02 (Large Extent)
Creating conducive work environment for staff members at the Division.	1 (1%)	6 (6.1%)	25 (25.5%)	37 (37.8%)	29 (29.6%)	3.9 (Large Extent)
Implement or create more attractive referral programs.	15 (15.3%)	21 (21.4%)	43 (43.9%)	23 (23.5%)	19 (19.4%)	3.2 (Moderate Extent)
Harness the potential of older staff. (Find ways to retain older employees).	10 (10.2%)	11 (11.2%)	21 (21.4%)	38 (38.8%)	18 (18.4%)	3.95 (Large Extent)
Invest in promoting employees at the Division, thus will attract more members.	9 (9.2%)	9 (9.2%)	42 (42.9%)	18 (18.4%)	20 (20.4%)	3.31 (Moderate Extent)
Employee with educational qualifications should be paid accordingly, to reduce staff turnover	3 (3.1%)	16 (16.3%)	33 (33.7%)	23 (23.5%)	23 (23.5%)	3.3 (Moderate Extent)
Create awareness program to attract new members.	9 (9.2%)	12 (12.2%)	26 (26.5%)	35 (35.7%)	16 (16.3%)	3.37 (Moderate Extent)
Automate where possible.	20 (20.4%)	23 (23.4%)	35 (35.7%)	17 (17.3%)	3 (3.1%)	2.59 (Moderate Extent)

Source: Primary Data (2022)

As revealed in Table 7, offering a competitive remuneration to the employees at the Division would, to a very large extent leads to an improvement on labour turnover problems within the organisation. The respondents, on average, were of the idea that the following strategies would, to a large extent help in bringing a halt to the understaffing challenge at the Division; staff members should be recognized when they achieve goals, creating a conducive work environment for staff members, harness the potential of older staff. More so, the responses also show that the following strategies would have a moderate effect on turning around the understaffing predicament at the division; implement or create more attractive referral programs, invest in promoting employees at the division, thus will attract more members, employee with educational qualifications should be paid accordingly, to reduce staff turnover and eventually manage the effects of understaffing, create awareness program to attract new members, automate where possible.

4.4. Correlation analysis

By way of performing person's coefficient correlation analysis between responses to section b and c, the researcher managed to get an insight into the gnarl relationship that link understaffing to individual employee performance and consequently the overall performance of a business.

Table 8: Analysis of the relationship between understaffing and employee performance

		Understaffing	Employee Performance
Understaffing	Pearson Correlation	1	-.654**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	98	98
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	-.654**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	98	98

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

Source Primary Data (2022)

Table 8 reveals the Pearson correlation analysis for the two variables that were put under study wherein understaffing was the independent variable and employee performance was the dependent variable. Two tailed correlation analysis (using SPSS V16) revealed that the calculated 'r', -0.654 was significant at the 0.01 level, a figure which does not lie within the range $0 < 'r' \leq +1$ but $'r' < 0$. This according to PMCC decision criteria implies that understaffing is negatively correlated to employee performance. Thus, when understaffing heightens, employee performance subsequently decreases and vice-versa. This implies that; if the Forensic Pathology Division is to improve on managing understaffing and brining it down, employee performance would subsequently improve thereby improving the overall performance of the Division.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Through primary, secondary and tertiary sources of data and the use of research analysis tools, the study arrived at the following findings and conclusions:

5.1.1 Factors that lead to understaffing in the FPD

Through research established that excessive workload, lack of incentives at the mortuary, poor working conditions at the mortuary, lack of understanding on the essence of working at the mortuary as well as minimised opportunities for growth and advancement were amongst the key causes of understaffing at the Forensic Pathology Division. The purpose for identifying the causal factors was to establish a base upon which understaffing could be dealt with without focusing much on its symptoms but rather on the root causes.

5.1.2 Effects of staff shortage on employee workload at FPD

It was established through research that employees in an understaffed organisation tend to lack a sense of control over their rapidly increasing workload. This hectic work environment can lead to poor work performance and can be detrimental to

the organisation as a whole. Simply put, it was found that overworked employees tend to suffer from high levels of stress. Remaining employees are asked to cover duties that extend their normal and official duties and responsibilities as espoused in their job descriptions and this was found to be the key reason why understaffing leads to increased work load for employees.

5.1.3 Establishing the impact of understaffing on employee performance at FPD

The primary objective of the research project was to establish the nature of the relationship between understaffing and employee performance. It was established that understaffing had an effect on employee performance in terms of the following; the hectic environment (understaffed environment) can increase staff dissatisfaction, being short staffed decreases morale and that leads to poor performance. Understaffing leads to work overload and that leads to further abandonment of other tasks and subsequently results in poor performance. Increased stress due to workloads can make the body more susceptible to illnesses, which can hurt productivity/performance of the individual in particular and eventually the Division as a whole, work overloads lead to poor docket completion and that eventually causes delays in court proceedings, increased risk of missed deadlines and this seriously hurts the Division's credibility, understaffing at the division and cause elevated stress among employees who are expected to do more with less, working long hours, or endlessly multitasked. Additionally, correlation analysis brought up a -0.654 value was significant at the 0.01 level, revealing that there exists a significantly negative relationship between understaffing and employee performance. Thus, this research upholds that when understaffing increases followed by an increased workload for remaining employees, the performance of individual employees and consequently that of the organisation as a whole dwindle.

5.2 Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations were proffered.

5.2.1 The leadership at the Forensic Pathology Division should find ways of improving remuneration and compensation schemes for employees in an endeavour to retain staff and minimise labour turnover.

5.2.2 Organisations should recognise employees for good performance in order to achieve intrinsic motivation.

5.2.3 The Forensic Pathology Division's leadership should work on enhancing the working conditions of staff at the Division as way of encouraging other employees to join the FPD.

5.2.4 The Forensic Pathology Division's leadership must focus on formulating and implementing robust retention strategies aimed at minimising labour turnover such as prioritising work-life balance of employees, introduction of fringe benefits, recognition and rewarding of loyal and long serving employees as well as investment on employees' careers and advancement.

5.2.5 Employees should be trained because training has a direct relationship with employee retention.

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