

PSYCHOLOGICAL WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT AS A PREDICTOR OF EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC AND FAITH-BASED HOSPITAL MORTUARIES IN KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Psychological workplace conditions shape how employees cope with stress, workload and emotional demands, yet empirical evidence from hospital mortuaries remains limited. This study examined the relationship between psychological workplace environment and employee performance in public and faith-based hospital mortuaries in Kiambu County, Kenya. Guided by the Job Demands-Resources theory, the Demand-Control model and the SERVQUAL model, the study adopted a pragmatist mixed-methods cross-sectional design with descriptive and explanatory elements. A census approach targeted staff working in public and faith based hospital mortuaries, and the article isolates the psychological workplace environment pathway from a broader thesis on occupational health and safety environment and employee performance. Of the questionnaires issued, 42 valid responses were returned and analysed. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and simple linear regression, while open-ended responses were coded thematically to contextualise the quantitative findings. Psychological workplace environment recorded a composite mean of 5.84 (SD = 0.87), while employee performance recorded a composite mean of 6.55 (SD = 0.85). Correlation analysis showed a positive and statistically significant association between

psychological workplace environment and employee performance ($r = 0.483$, $p = 0.001$). Regression results confirmed that psychological workplace environment significantly predicted employee performance ($B = 0.301$, $\beta = 0.483$, $t = 3.489$, $p = 0.001$), explaining 23% of the variance in employee performance. A one-unit increase in the psychological workplace environment score was associated with a 0.233 unit increase in employee performance. Qualitative findings complemented the statistical results by showing that workload pressure, understaffing, repeated exposure to death and grief, time pressure and limited psychosocial support shaped employees' psychological experience of work, while counselling, debriefing, spiritual support and personal coping strategies helped some staff sustain performance. The study concludes that psychological workplace environment is a significant predictor of employee performance in the hospital mortuaries. The study recommends review of staffing levels to ensure that employees are not overworked and that they are relieved from work pressure. The study further recommends review of work schedules to ensure flexibility.

Key words: Psychological workplace environment; Employee performance; Occupational health and safety environment; Hospital mortuaries; Kiambu County; Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

The study was anchored in the Job Demands-Resources theory, the Demand-Control model and the SERVQUAL model. The Job Demands-Resources theory explains that excessive job demands create strain and weaken performance, while adequate job resources support motivation, resilience and effectiveness (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Organizational effectiveness is driven by employees' application of their skills, knowledge, and competencies (Otoo, 2020). Employee performance is a great concern for organizations all over the world no matter the industry or the location of the organization (Anjum & Ming, 2018). In service settings, performance is not only an internal management concern; it also determines how accurately, efficiently and consistently organisations respond to client needs (Sendawula *et al.*, 2018). Mortuary employees face greater job demands and unique occupational hazards that impact their overall well-being and safety. Their job involves supporting those who have lost their loved ones, taking care of the bodies and dealing people and a society who stereotype their work (Turner & Caswell, 2020).

Empirical research in the OHS fields has consistently shown that a supportive workplace environment contributes to employees having an improved work performance (Massoudi & Hamdi, 2017; Rahman *et al.*, 2024; Putri & Garibaldi, 2018). In this article, the focus is the psychological workplace environment, understood through autonomy, workload, job intensity and working time and how these indicators affect employee performance. Additionally, the performance of employees was assessed through identification procedures, legal compliance, minimization of client delays, processing accuracy, timely service delivery, dignified handling of the deceased, teamwork, error minimization, and use of client feedback. SERVQUAL model informed the operationalization of employee performance by connecting performance of internal tasks with the responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and dignity that must be upheld in the delivery of services in the mortuaries (Oyoo, 2015; Al-Neyadi *et al.*, 2016).

RESEARCH MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

This article was developed from a broader thesis on occupational health and safety environment and employee performance in public and faith-based hospital mortuaries in Kiambu County, Kenya. It focuses specifically on the relationship between psychological workplace environment and employee performance. The study adopted a pragmatist mixed-methods cross-sectional design with descriptive and explanatory elements. The quantitative strand described respondents' perceptions and tested the association between psychological workplace environment and employee performance, while the qualitative strand explained how employees experienced workload, emotional exposure, time pressure, autonomy and coping support in daily mortuary work. Because this article reports the Objective Two pathway from the wider thesis, the analysis

was conducted to determine the direction, strength, and statistical significance of the bivariate relationships before regression analysis.

Study Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in public and faith-based hospital mortuaries in Kiambu County, Kenya. The target population comprised employees directly involved in mortuary operations and related support roles, including managers, pathologists, public health officers, administrators, records officers, receptionists, morticians, hearse crew and drivers. Because the population was small and specialised, a census approach was used. The wider study covered 13 mortuaries and out of the accessible sampling frame of 56 employees, 42 questionnaires were completed and returned achieving a response rate of 75%. The respondent profile was dominated by morticians, reflecting the cadre most directly involved in day-to-day mortuary service delivery.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Data were collected using a self-administered semi-structured questionnaire. The quantitative component consisted of closed-ended Likert-scale items used to measure the study constructs numerically. The final instrument used a seven-point response scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. These items provided the basis for descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis. The qualitative component consisted of open-ended items that allowed respondents to explain workload pressure, emotional strain, time demands and support systems available to them. This design made it possible to establish not only whether psychological workplace environment influenced employee performance, but also how that influence was experienced in daily mortuary work.

Measures and Operationalisation

This article focuses on two constructs: psychological workplace environment and employee performance. Psychological workplace environment was conceptualised through work autonomy, workload, job intensity and working time. In the final instrument, the scale comprised six items covering control over work, trust to make independent professional decisions, workload reasonableness, staffing adequacy, manageability of mental and emotional demands and adequacy of personal time within the work schedule on performance. Employee performance was measured through effectiveness, efficiency and service delivery. The construct was captured through nine items covering work accuracy, timeliness, teamwork, legal compliance, respectful handling of the deceased, reduction of errors and improvement through feedback. Higher scores reflected more favourable psychological conditions or stronger employee performance.

Pilot Study

The questionnaire was pilot tested before the main survey at Murang'a Level 5 Hospital Mortuary. Ten questionnaires were used in the pilot study. The pilot was intended to identify ambiguity, improve clarity, test practicality and strengthen internal consistency before the main fieldwork. It

also helped refine item wording, standardise the seven-point scale, improve section flow and strengthen the open-ended prompts. Pilot respondents were excluded from the final study.

Validity and Decision Criteria

Face and content validity were established by aligning the questionnaire items with the study objectives and conceptual framework. In order to achieve reliability, the research tool was tested by comparing its results across repeated trials with standardized measures. Cronbach's alpha was employed to evaluate internal consistency, especially appropriate for Likert-scale based items (Singh, 2017).

Reliability and Decision Criteria

A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.700 or above was considered acceptable while values between 0.600 and 0.699 were treated as moderate and interpreted cautiously rather than rejected automatically. Average inter-item correlations between 0.150 and 0.500 were regarded as generally acceptable, with values from 0.200 to 0.400 considered desirable. Values above 0.500 were examined for possible item overlap. Psychological workplace environment had a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.652 indicating a moderate internal consistency and an average inter item correlation of 0.251 which was found to be a desirable inter-item association.

Data Collection Procedure

Formal data collection began after the researcher obtained an introductory letter from Kenyatta University, secured the required research approval and obtained permission from participating hospitals. Eligible respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and issued with informed consent before completing the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, confidentiality was assured and only validly completed responses were retained for analysis. This procedure supported ethical compliance, institutional access and the quality of the final dataset.

Data Preparation and Composite Scoring

The final dataset contained 42 valid cases. Screening confirmed that there were no duplicate cases, no out-of-range responses in the quantitative items and no missing values that materially affected the closed-ended analysis. One non-response appeared in an open-ended item, but this did not affect the quantitative analysis. Composite scores were computed for the major study variables using the cleaned final dataset. For this article, psychological workplace environment and employee performance were treated as continuous composite scores derived from their respective questionnaire items.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data were analysed thematically. Open-ended responses were read closely, coded, grouped into recurring categories and condensed into themes relevant to the psychological workplace environment. The main themes included workload and staffing pressure, emotional

exposure to death and grief, time pressure, demanding schedules, stigma and psychosocial support mechanisms such as counselling, debriefing, spiritual guidance and personal coping strategies. The qualitative strand did not replace statistical testing; it deepened interpretation by showing how psychological conditions shaped morale, concentration, fatigue and the capacity to sustain performance in mortuary operations.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise ratings on psychological workplace environment and employee performance. Means indicated central tendency, while standard deviations showed dispersion around the mean. This stage established the general condition of the psychological workplace environment before inferential testing and allowed comparison with employee performance.

Diagnostic Tests

Data for this study were prepared and assessed before the descriptive and inferential analyses focusing on data completeness, coding accuracy, response consistency, and the assumptions relevant to regression analysis, namely normality, linearity, and multicollinearity. Dataset for this study was comprised of forty two (42) completed and returned questionnaires, consistent with the valid responses reported earlier in the response rate and demographic sections. Initial screening showed that the data were clean and suitable for analysis and there were no duplicate cases, and all closed-ended items were coded correctly and consistently.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the direction and strength of the association between psychological workplace environment and employee performance. Because both constructs were analysed as continuous composite variables, Pearson's r was appropriate. A p -value below 0.05 was treated as statistically significant, while a positive coefficient indicated that more favourable psychological workplace conditions were associated with better employee performance.

Regression Analysis

Objective Two was tested using a simple linear regression model in which employee performance was regressed on psychological workplace environment:

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PsWE + \epsilon$$

where EP denotes employee performance, β_0 the intercept, β_1 the regression coefficient for psychological workplace environment, PsWE the psychological workplace environment score and ϵ the error term. In this model, β_1 represents the expected change in employee performance associated with a one-unit change in psychological workplace environment. A positive β_1 indicates that improvement in psychological workplace environment predicts improvement in employee performance. The coefficient was treated as statistically significant if $p < 0.05$. Model fit was assessed using the F-statistic and R^2 .

Test of Hypothesis

The article tested the following null hypothesis:

H₀₂: Psychological workplace environment has no significant effect on employee performance in public and faith-based hospital mortuaries in Kiambu County, Kenya.

The hypothesis was tested first through correlation analysis and then through bivariate regression. The decision criterion was $p < 0.05$. If the p-value for the correlation coefficient or the regression coefficient for psychological workplace environment was below 0.05, H₀₂ was rejected. If the p-value was 0.05 or above, H₀₂ was not rejected. In the final analysis, the hypothesis for Objective Two was rejected, indicating that better psychological workplace conditions were associated with stronger employee performance.

Methodological Limitations Relevant to this Article

Three limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, both psychological workplace environment and employee performance were measured through the same self-administered questionnaire at one point in time; therefore, common-method and social-desirability bias cannot be ruled out. Second, the article intentionally used bivariate regression to isolate the Objective Two pathway from the wider thesis, and the estimates were not adjusted for role, facility type, workload, staffing level or other organisational factors. Third, staff working in the same mortuary may share similar conditions and support systems, but respondent-level facility identifiers were not retained in the anonymised article dataset. The findings should therefore be interpreted as evidence of a statistically significant association and predictive pathway rather than as a fully controlled causal estimate.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Descriptive Findings

The descriptive analysis for psychological workplace environment was based on 42 valid questionnaires. Psychological workplace environment was assessed through work autonomy, independent professional decision-making, workload reasonableness, staffing adequacy, mental and emotional demands and work scheduling.

Table 1: Descriptive Findings of psychological workplace environment and employee performance

Study variable category	Mean	Std. deviation
PsWE 1: I have meaningful control over how I perform my work.	6.45	0.74
PsWE 2: I am trusted to make independent professional decisions.	6.48	0.71
PsWE 3: The workload expected of me is reasonable.	5.60	1.62
PsWE 4: There are sufficient staff to manage the workload.	5.07	1.99
PsWE 5: The mental and emotional demands of my work are manageable.	6.00	1.04
PsWE 6: My work schedule allows adequate personal time.	5.45	1.93
PsWE Composite	5.84	0.87
EP 1: Procedures for identification of the deceased are followed	6.79	0.42
EP 2: Legal requirements are adhered to	6.74	0.50
EP 3: Client delays are minimized	6.33	0.95
EP 4: Processing accuracy is high	6.43	0.83
EP 5: Services are delivered on schedule	6.52	0.74
EP 6: The deceased are treated with dignity	6.81	0.40
EP 7: Teamwork is effective	6.76	0.69
EP 8: Errors are minimized through checks	6.52	0.86
EP 9 Client feedback is used for improvement	6.07	1.47
EP Composite	6.55	0.85

Note: Item-level statistics are based on 42 responses. The aggregate mean and standard deviation were calculated from respondent-level composite scores across the six retained items.

The analysis of psychological workplace environment data shows that the psychological workplace environment was rated positively overall, with an aggregate mean of 5.84 and a standard deviation of 0.87. The psychological workplace environment was rated favourably overall ($M = 5.84$, $SD = 0.87$). Professional trust recorded the highest mean ($M = 6.48$, $SD = 0.71$), closely followed by control over work methods ($M = 6.45$, $SD = 0.74$). Respondents also viewed the mental and emotional demands of mortuary work as broadly manageable ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 1.04$). The ratings for workload reasonableness ($M = 5.60$, $SD = 1.62$) and adequate personal time ($M = 5.45$, $SD = 1.93$) were positive but more dispersed.

Contrary, the mean rating for adequate staffing was relatively low ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.99$), signaling lack or less confidence on the issue of the number of staff available to manage the workload and a high standard deviation indicating varying experiences among mortuary employees. Autonomy, trust, and the manageability of emotional demands domains were found to be an area of clear strengths. Staffing adequacy and work scheduling as comparatively weaker areas. These findings are in agreement with previous studies that identified workload, staffing and emotional demands as central features of employees' psychological work environment (Stone and Oakman 2020; Prince, 2018; Amadhila 2022).

Employee performance was rated very highly, with an aggregate mean of 6.55 and a standard deviation of 0.85. The highest-rated performance indicator was treating the deceased with dignity ($M = 6.81$, $SD = 0.40$), followed by adherence to identification procedures ($M = 6.79$, $SD = 0.42$), effective teamwork ($M = 6.76$, $SD = 0.69$), and adherence to legal requirements ($M = 6.74$, $SD = 0.50$). These results show strong performance in ethical conduct, procedural compliance, teamwork, and respect for the deceased.

Other performance indicators were also rated favourably; services delivered on schedule ($M = 6.52$, $SD = 0.74$), minimization of errors through checks each recorded a mean of ($M=6.52$, $SD =0.86$) while processing accuracy recorded a mean of ($M=6.43$, $SD = 0.83$) and minimization of client delays recorded a mean of ($M =6.33$, $SD = 0.95$). These findings suggest that respondents perceived mortuary employees as generally effective, accurate, and timely in service delivery. However, the use of client feedback for improvement recorded the lowest performance mean ($M = 6.07$, $SD = 1.47$). Although still favourable, this scoring suggests that feedback-based improvement was less developed than procedural and compliance-related aspects of performance. These findings are in agreement with previous studies that found low client satisfaction, and the absence of documented feedback mechanisms (Yegon & Kipkorir, 2023; Owino *et. al.*, 2019).

Qualitative Analysis

Overall, the qualitative findings showed that psychological workplace environment influenced employee performance through several recurring pathways, notably workload and staffing pressure, emotional exposure to death and grief, time pressure and demanding schedules, coping

and counselling support, stigma associated with mortuary work and variation in individual psychological experience. These themes show that psychological workplace environment was not an abstract organisational condition; rather, it was a lived emotional and cognitive context that either supported or constrained employees as they carried out mortuary work.

Table 2: Summary of Qualitative Themes for Psychological Workplace Environment

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Manageability and personal resilience	18	42.9%
Workload and understaffing	17	40.5%
Emotional exposure to death and grief	7	16.7%
Burnout, fatigue and distress	6	14.3%
Counselling, debriefing and support	4	9.5%
Stigma and social neglect	2	4.8%
Autonomy and independence	2	4.8%

Source: Field Data (2026). Frequencies are not mutually exclusive.

As shown in Table 2, manageability and personal resilience was the most common theme at 42.9%, with respondents describing themselves as generally able to cope with the emotional demands of mortuary work. Workload and understaffing followed closely at 40.5% emerging as the primary operational strain. Emotional exposure to death and grief was reported by 16.7% while burnout or fatigue was reported by 14.3%. Counselling and debriefing support was reported by 9.5%, stigma by 4.8% and professional autonomy by 4.8% indicating less frequency but substantively important. Respondents associated stronger performance with stress tolerance, autonomy, and access to psychosocial support. Understaffing, tight schedules, and repeated grief exposure were linked to reduced concentration and resilience. This pattern converged with the quantitative results, where the psychological workplace environment recorded a positive aggregate (mean = 5.84, SD = 0.87) against an employee performance (mean = 6.55, SD = 0.85), indicating that psychological support remained variable even as overall performance stayed high.

Diagnostic Testing Results

The review focused on data completeness, coding accuracy, response consistency, and the assumptions relevant to regression analysis, namely normality, linearity, and multicollinearity. Dataset for this study was comprised of forty two (42) completed and returned questionnaires, consistent with the valid responses reported earlier in the response rate and demographic sections. Initial screening showed that the data were clean and suitable for analysis and there were no duplicate cases, and all closed-ended items were coded correctly and consistently.

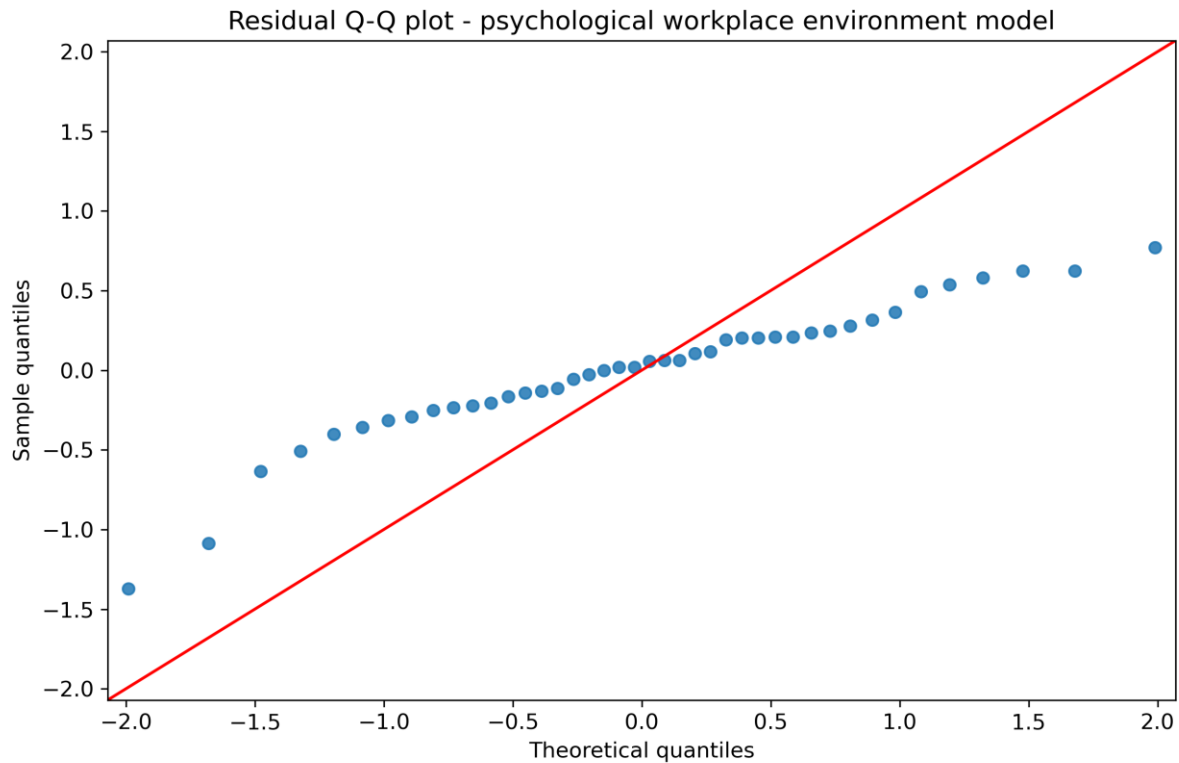


Figure 1: Normal Q-Q Plot of Regression Residuals

The Q-Q plot shows that the residuals followed the normal reference line reasonably well, with mild departures at the tails. This supports the decision to retain the linear model for inferential analysis with ordinary caution.

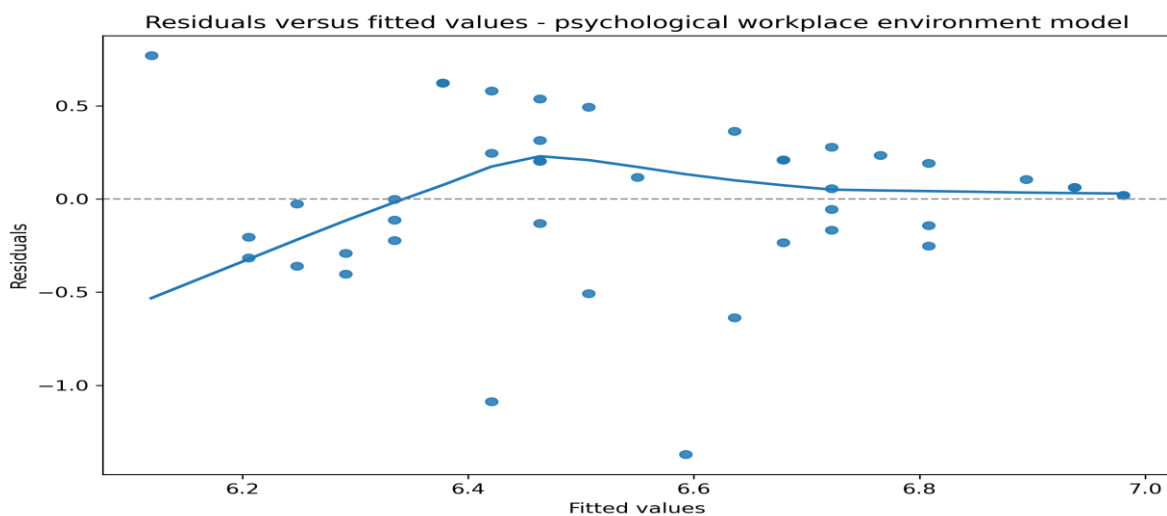


Figure 2: Residuals versus Fitted Values

The residual pattern shows no severe systematic distortion. Although mild curvature is visible, the spread remains broadly acceptable for OLS interpretation.

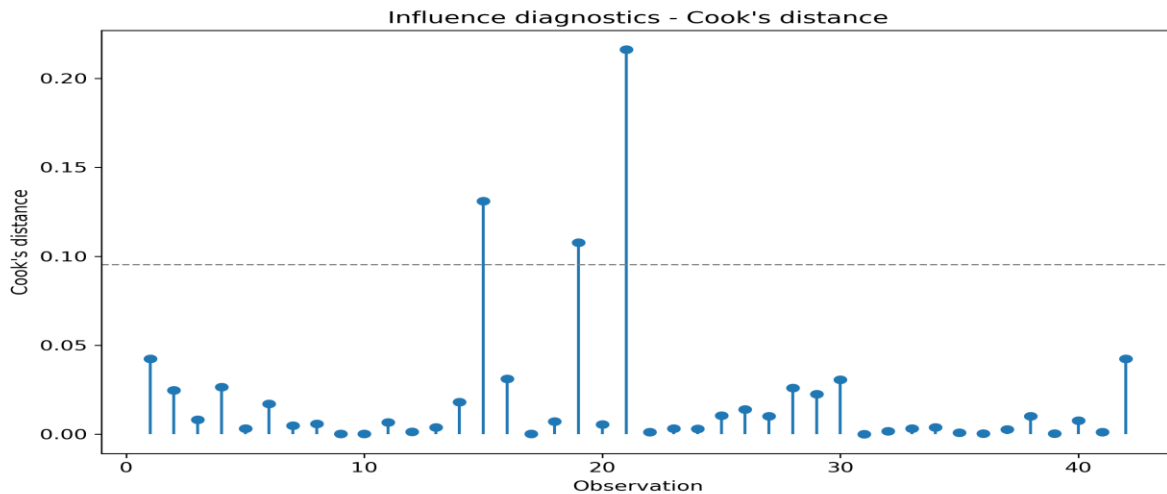


Figure 3: Influence Diagnostics

The influence diagnostics show that a small number of observations merit review, but none is sufficiently extreme to justify automatic exclusion from the analysis.

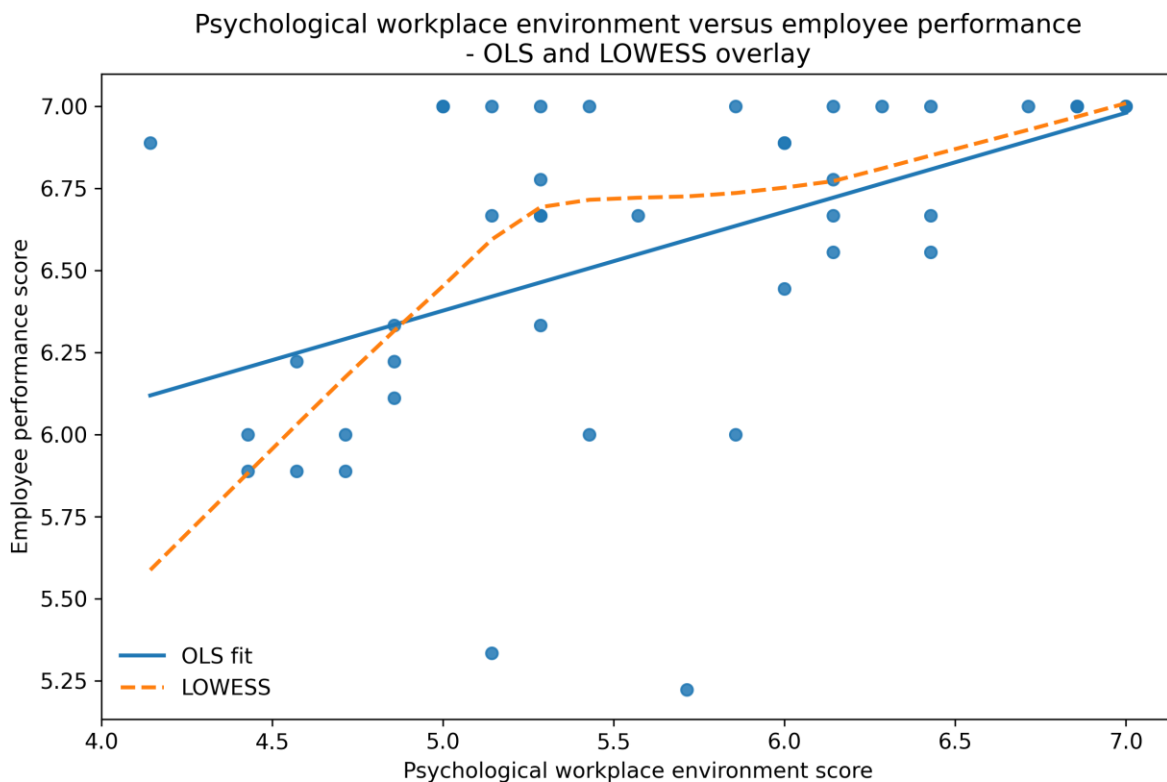


Figure 4: Linearity Check of Predictor Scores versus Employee Performance

The fitted and smoothed lines indicate an overall positive association between psychological workplace environment scores and employee performance. The pattern supports use of a linear specification with ordinary caution.

Decision Matrix Summarizing Diagnostic Tests and Reporting Decisions

The matrix consolidates the three diagnostic tests; normality, linearity and multicollinearity. The tests were conducted using the 42 valid questionnaires retained for analysis and were completed before the correlation and regression procedures.

Table 3: Decision Matrix Summarizing Diagnostic Tests and Reporting Decisions

Diagnostic Assumption	Procedure and Evidence Examined	Decision Rule	Obtained Result	Diagnostic Decision
Normality	Shapiro-Wilk test applied to the residuals from the employee-performance regression model	The normality assumption is satisfied where $p > 0.05$	Shapiro-Wilk $W = 0.954$, $p = 0.092$	The null hypothesis of normally distributed residuals was not rejected; the normality assumption was satisfied.
Linearity: Psychological workplace environment and employee performance	Scatter plot supported by Pearson correlation	The relationship is approximately linear where the scatter plot shows no pronounced curvature	$r = 0.272$, $p = 0.082$; weak positive pattern with no material curvature	The relationship was approximately linear, although comparatively weak.
Multicollinearity: Psychological workplace environment	Tolerance and variance inflation factor	Tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10	Tolerance = 0.464; VIF = 2.16	No problematic multicollinearity was detected.

Normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The test examined whether the residuals from the employee-performance regression model approximated a normal distribution. The null hypothesis for the test was that the residuals were normally distributed; therefore, a probability value greater than 0.05 indicated that the normality assumption was not violated. Since the probability value was greater than 0.05, the residuals did not depart significantly from normality. The normality assumption was therefore considered satisfied, and the regression results were retained for inferential interpretation. This conclusion is confined to the Shapiro-Wilk procedure stated in Chapter Three and does not introduce additional diagnostic tests.

Linearity was assessed graphically using a scatter plot. The scatter plot compared psychological workplace environment as a predictor with employee performance to determine whether the direction of association was approximately linear and whether there was evidence of pronounced

curvature. Pearson correlation coefficients are reported only as supporting descriptive statistics and not as separate diagnostic tests.

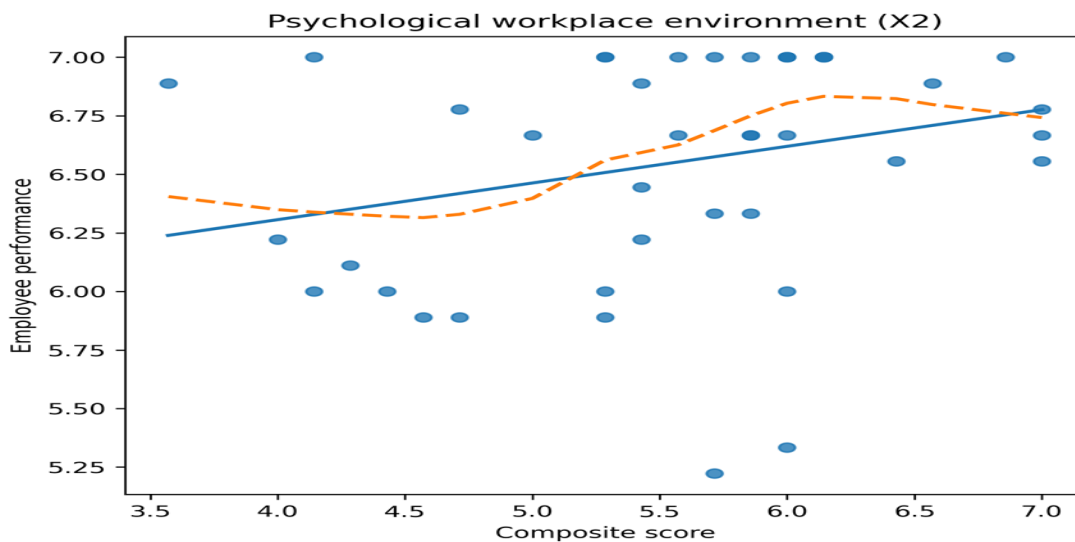


Figure 5: Visual diagnostics results for Psychological workplace environment

Psychological workplace environment exhibits a positive but comparatively shallow relationship with employee performance. The smoothed and fitted lines remain broadly aligned, indicating that the linear specification is adequate despite the weaker bivariate association.

Multicollinearity was assessed using tolerance values and variance inflation factors. The methodology established that multicollinearity would not be considered problematic where tolerance values were greater than 0.10 and VIF values were below 10.

Inferential Analysis of Psychological Workplace Environment and Employee Performance

Inferential analysis was conducted to determine whether psychological workplace environment was significantly associated with, and predictive of, employee performance in public and faith-based hospital mortuaries in Kiambu County, Kenya. Composite scores were computed from the psychological workplace environment and employee performance items. Pearson correlation analysis first examined the direction, strength and statistical significance of the bivariate relationship. Simple linear regression was then used to test whether psychological workplace environment significantly predicted employee performance. The null hypothesis tested was that psychological workplace environment has no significant effect on employee performance in public and faith-based hospital mortuaries in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between psychological workplace environment and employee performance. The results showed a positive and statistically

significant association between the two variables ($r = 0.483$, $p = 0.001$, $n = 42$). This indicates that better psychological workplace conditions were associated with higher employee performance. The relationship was moderate in strength, suggesting that psychological conditions mattered meaningfully in the performance context, although they did not account for all variation in employee performance. The result provides initial inferential support for the view that supportive psychological conditions contribute to stronger mortuary service performance.

Table 4: Correlation between Psychological Workplace Environment (PsWE) and Employee Performance (EP)

Variables	n	Pearson r	p-value	Direction	Significance	Interpretation
Psychological workplace environment and employee performance	42	0.483	0.001	Positive	Significant at 5% level	Better psychological workplace conditions were associated with higher employee performance.

Source: Study data, 2026.

Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression model was estimated to assess whether psychological workplace environment significantly predicted employee performance. Psychological workplace environment had a positive and statistically significant relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.483$, $p = 0.001$). These findings agree with previous studies by (Putri and Garibaldi 2018; Mworira *et al.* 2021).

The model summary showed $R = 0.483$ and $R \text{ Square} = 0.233$, indicating that psychological workplace environment accounted for 23.3% of the variation in employee performance. The adjusted $R \text{ Square}$ of 0.214 suggests that the model retained explanatory value after accounting for sample size and model simplicity. The ANOVA result further showed that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 40) = 12.171$, $p = 0.001$. The regression equation therefore fitted the data better than a model with no predictor and confirmed that psychological workplace environment made a meaningful contribution to predicting employee performance.

Practically, the results indicate that employee performance was stronger where staff experienced more supportive psychological conditions, including greater autonomy, manageable demands and better coping support. The estimated regression equation was $EP = 4.870 + 0.301(PsWE)$, where EP denotes employee performance and PsWE denotes psychological workplace environment. In simple terms, better psychological workplace conditions were associated with improved employee performance in the mortuary setting.

Table 5: Regression Results for Psychological Workplace Environment (PsWE) Predicting Employee Performance (EP)

Section	Statistic	Value
Model summary	R	0.483
	R Square	0.233
	Adjusted R Square	0.214
	Std. Error of the Estimate	0.430
ANOVA	F Statistic	12.171
	df	1, 40
	Sig.	0.001
Coefficients	Constant	4.870
	Unstandardized B	0.301
	Std. Error	0.086
	Standardized Beta	0.483
	t	3.489
	Sig.	0.001

Estimated regression equation: $EP = 4.870 + 0.301(PsWE)$.

Source: Study data, 2026.

Decision to Test the Hypothesis

The null hypothesis stated that psychological workplace environment does not significantly influence employee performance in public and faith-based hospital mortuaries in Kiambu County, Kenya. The null hypothesis was rejected because the regression coefficient for psychological workplace environment was positive and statistically significant ($p = 0.001$). This result confirms that adequate statistical evidence existed to show that psychological workplace environment significantly influenced employee performance across the mortuaries included in the study.

In practical terms, the result implies that strengthening supportive psychological conditions at work is likely to improve employee performance. More manageable workloads, stronger coping support and psychologically healthier work systems are therefore not peripheral concerns; they are directly relevant to sustaining morale, focus, engagement and service delivery in mortuary operations. The hypothesis decision is summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Hypothesis Decision for H₀₂

Hypothesis	Key evidence	Decision	Implication
H ₀₂ : Psychological workplace environment does not significantly influence employee performance in public and faith-based hospital mortuaries in Kiambu County, Kenya.	beta = 0.483, B = 0.301, p = 0.001	Reject H ₀₂	Strengthening psychological workplace conditions is likely to improve employee performance.

Source: Study data, 2026.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

The results indicate that psychological workplace environment is a significant predictor of employee performance in public and faith-based hospital mortuaries in Kiambu County, Kenya. Supportive psychological conditions were associated with stronger employee performance, and the effect was moderate, positive and statistically significant. This means that psychological workplace environment matters, although it does not provide a complete explanation of employee performance. Other factors such as staffing levels, facility conditions, leadership support, role differences and broader organisational systems may also shape performance.

The interpretation is deliberately bounded. The article tests the psychological workplace environment pathway only and should not be read as a fully adjusted causal model. Both psychological workplace environment and employee performance were measured through self-report at one point in time, and respondent-level facility identifiers were not retained in the anonymised article dataset. The results therefore provide evidence of a statistically significant predictive relationship, but not a fully controlled causal estimate.

The descriptive findings clarify the pattern of this relationship. Professional autonomy and trust were the strongest psychological dimensions, suggesting that many employees retained room for judgement in their work. Mental and emotional demands were also rated positively overall. By contrast, staffing adequacy, workload reasonableness, schedule flexibility and time pressure were weaker areas. The qualitative evidence reinforced this interpretation. Respondents linked psychological strain to understaffing, high workload, repeated exposure to death and grieving families, time pressure and limited opportunities for recovery. Counselling, debriefing, spiritual support and personal coping methods helped some employees continue to perform well.

These results fit closely with the Job Demands-Resources theory. Workload pressure, emotional exposure, understaffing and time demands operated as job demands because they increased strain and made sustained performance more difficult. Autonomy, trust, counselling, debriefing and other

psychosocial supports operated as job resources because they helped employees cope with pressure and maintain performance. The findings therefore support the central JD-R proposition that performance is stronger when demands are manageable and resources are available (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

The results are also consistent with the Demand-Control model. Mortuary employees work under conditions that involve emotional exposure, time sensitivity and procedural responsibility. However, the high ratings for autonomy and professional trust help explain why employees maintained high performance despite evidence of workload pressure and emotional strain. Control did not remove the demands associated with mortuary work, but it appeared to reduce their adverse consequences by allowing employees to exercise judgement and pace their work where possible. The findings further align with the service-quality logic of SERVQUAL. In this study, employee performance was reflected in effectiveness, efficiency and service delivery. In mortuary work, these outcomes depend partly on whether employees can remain attentive, calm, accurate and respectful while handling the deceased and interacting with bereaved families. The high scores for dignity, identification procedures, teamwork and legal compliance show that staff maintained strong service standards. However, the qualitative evidence indicates that those standards were harder to sustain where workload pressure, emotional exposure and time pressure were high.

The findings agree with previous studies showing that psychological work conditions affect employee outcomes. They support Putri and Garibaldi (2018), who found that psychological work environment positively influenced job performance, and Dall'Ora *et al.*, (2016), who showed that demanding work schedules can weaken wellbeing and work outcomes. They also align with Talukder and Galang (2021), Mworio *et al.* (2021), and Wushe and Shenje (2019), whose studies linked supervisor support, job autonomy and occupational stress to employee performance. The present study extends that evidence into the under-examined context of hospital mortuaries.

A useful contribution of the study is that it explains why the psychological workplace environment had a significant but moderate effect. Staff maintained high performance partly through professional discipline, teamwork and personal coping, even when workload and emotional strain remained evident. This pattern shows both resilience and vulnerability. It indicates that mortuary staff can sustain performance under pressure, but also that performance built mainly on adaptation to pressure may not be sustainable over time without stronger psychosocial support and better workload management.

Overall, the findings show that psychological workplace environment is not a minor background condition in mortuary work. It is a specific performance condition. Where employees experience autonomy, manageable workload, emotional support and coping resources, performance is stronger. Where emotional demands intensify, staffing is limited and time pressure persists, performance becomes more vulnerable. The evidence therefore supports one clear conclusion:

improving the psychological workplace environment is linked to stronger employee performance in public and faith-based hospital mortuaries.

Policy Implications

The policy implication is clear: psychological workplace environment in mortuary units should be treated as a workforce-performance issue, not merely as a personal welfare concern. Performance was stronger where psychological demands were manageable and where employees experienced trust, autonomy and support. Priority should therefore be given to workload management, staffing adequacy, fair scheduling, time-pressure control and structured psychosocial support. At institutional level, hospital management, county health departments and faith-based hospital leadership should establish minimum standards for psychosocial support in mortuary practice, including regular workforce audits, scheduled debriefing after difficult cases, access to counselling, workload-sensitive deployment and protection of recovery time. Without such systems, staff are left to absorb psychological strain individually, a pattern that may sustain short-term performance but remains inefficient and unsustainable.

Research Implications

The study contributes to research on occupational health and safety environment and employee performance in three ways. First, it strengthens the argument for treating psychological workplace environment as a distinct and analytically meaningful predictor of employee performance in specialised health-service settings. Second, it broadens the operationalisation of psychological workplace environment by integrating autonomy, workload, staffing adequacy, emotional demands, scheduling and time pressure within one performance-oriented framework. Third, it demonstrates the value of integrating descriptive, qualitative and inferential evidence. The quantitative results established the statistical relationship, while the qualitative findings explained how that relationship operated in the routine practice of mortuary work. This mixed-methods approach is particularly relevant in specialised health contexts where lived experience cannot be fully captured by numerical measures alone.

Practical Implications

The practical implications are immediate. Mortuary staff are likely to perform better in work environments that are psychologically supportive, manageable and professionally sustaining. In practice, this means improving workload distribution, staffing adequacy, schedule design, autonomy, counselling access and structured debriefing after emotionally difficult cases. Managers should reduce avoidable workload concentration, review staffing gaps, provide regular psychosocial support and sustain a climate in which employees are trusted to exercise professional judgement. Particular attention should be given to time pressure and uneven recovery opportunities because these were among the clearest sources of psychological strain. High performance should not depend on staff resilience alone. Sustainable improvement requires work systems that protect employees' psychological capacity to perform.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that psychological workplace environment has a statistically significant effect on employee performance in public and faith-based hospital mortuaries in Kiambu County, Kenya. Its importance is therefore clear. What matters most is the adequacy, consistency and day-to-day quality of the psychological conditions under which mortuary staff work.

The results indicate that psychological workplace environment had a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance ($p < 0.05$), although the magnitude of the effect was moderate. This suggests that employees were generally sustaining strong performance even where psychological support remained uneven. In practical terms, performance was stronger where the work environment enabled employees to exercise professional judgement, manage emotional demands and cope with pressure effectively.

Autonomy and professional trust emerged as the strongest psychological dimensions, indicating that many employees retained a meaningful degree of control over how they performed their work. By contrast, workload reasonableness, staffing adequacy, schedule flexibility and time pressure were weaker areas. The central issue for mortuary management is therefore not whether psychological conditions matter, but how work can be organised so that those conditions become more stable, supportive and sustainable.

The evidence presented in this study supports the view that psychological workplace environment should be treated as a core operational issue in mortuary practice. Mortuary staff perform better where the work environment is psychologically supportive, workload is manageable, coping resources are available and employees have sufficient control over their work. Performance becomes more vulnerable where emotional demands intensify, staffing is limited, recovery time is inadequate and pressure persists without structured support. Improving performance in mortuary services therefore requires more than procedural compliance; it requires sustained attention to the psychological conditions under which mortuary work is carried out.

Future Study Directions

Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to trace changes in psychological workplace environment and employee performance over time and provide stronger causal evidence. Such an approach would help determine whether improvements in workload management, staffing adequacy, psychological support, recovery time and employee control produce sustained performance gains rather than short-term effects.

Subsequent studies should also incorporate more objective indicators of both employee performance and workplace conditions, including absenteeism, staff turnover, burnout levels,

counselling uptake, exposure to critical incidents, error rates, turnaround time and service complaints. Evidence of this kind would strengthen the empirical basis for assessing the operational value of psychological workplace environment in hospital mortuaries.

Further research may extend the analysis to private hospitals, county referral facilities, forensic pathology units and mortuaries in other counties in order to determine whether similar psychological workplace pressures persist across institutional contexts. Comparative studies across sectors and facility types would clarify whether the present findings are specific to public and faith-based hospital mortuaries in Kiambu County or reflect broader workplace-performance dynamics in specialised healthcare services.

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