

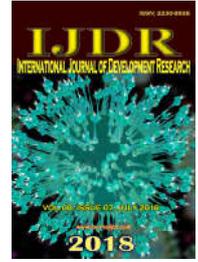


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THE KENYA NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE BURNOUT INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

*¹Ochieng Isaiah Abillah and ²Juma Richard

¹Researcher, School of Business and Economics, Department of Liberal studies, Murang'a University of Technology, Kenya

²Senior Lecturer, School of Business and Economics, Department of Liberal studies, Murang'a University of Technology, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to determine the burnout intervention strategies among Police officers in Matungulu Sub County, Kenya. The target population for the study was the police officers (N=250) stationed in various stations within Matungulu Sub- County. Out of the total population of 250, 100 (40%) police officers were from Kenya Police Service (KPS), 125 (50%) police officers from Administration Police Service (APS) and 25 (10%) police officers from Directorate of Criminal Investigation Department (DCI). Data was coded, entered into database and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS software. Continuous variables were analyzed using Chi-Square Tests and p values < 0.05 at 95% confidence interval was considered significant. Frequency responses were calculated and the results presented in tables, pie charts and bar graphs for ease of interpretation. The result shows that 94 per cent of those interviewed indicated that burnout intervention strategies within Matungulu Sub-County were ineffective due to lack of outstanding counseling centre, functioning psycho-social support unit, efficient communication, systematic feedback and there is no monitoring program for job enlargement and job rotation. The paper thus recommends the improvement on the capability of the burnout intervention strategies among police officers in National Police Service, provision of enabling work environment, sufficient equipment, enhanced managerial skills among commanders, motivation and adequate, well trained and well remunerated human resource.

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INTRODUCTION

When developing a burnout intervention strategy, it is important to consider the time aspect of the syndrome (Maslach and Laiter, 2006). The two opposing views come into consideration automatically, that's the one looking upon burnout as social problem and the other view looking burnout as medical diagnosis (Kristensen et. al., 2005). Most existing literature speaks about burnout as a process which develops in some one's life over time, Burke and Richardsen, (1999) supports this notion, while Cherniss (1980) shows three stages of burnout development where in the first stage, an individual holds the view that there is an unbalanced situation between the job demand and the individual's resources to meet these demands.

The second stage is characterized by an immediate and short lived emotional response to the ill-balanced situation in which fatigue, anxiety, stress and exhaustion are manifest. In the third stage of burnout process, a number of behavioral and attitudinal changes crop up, most notably are the impersonal and distant ways in which clients are treated (Omeja and Githigaro, 2010). Burnout intervention strategies focus on the person or on the job, although it is generally acknowledged that a combination of person and organization directed interventions lead to significant positive changes in burnout. Awa and Walter (2010) observe that a participatory burnout intervention strategy improves mental health. However, the last few decades have seen a growing call for rethinking and redefinition of work procedures. For example, task restructuring, work evaluation, and supervision aimed at decreasing job demands, increasing job control or the level of participation on making decisions (Andersen and Diderichsen,

*Corresponding author: Ochieng Isaiah Abillah,

2010). Some of the burnout intervention strategies especially in the National Police Station (NPS) include:

Organization Burnout Intervention: Work place organization interventions are carried out to reduce stress and burnout. Purposes targeted include but not limited to increased productivity, efficiency, cost effectiveness, organizational flexibility, smooth communication and increased awareness. Existing literature shows that organization burnout interventions are rare than individual intervention, however, their effectiveness are seldom evaluated. There are three main approaches to organization intervention strategies which include but not limited to improving the social environment. Social environment is a very important aspect of the organization as it influences the behaviour of employees in an organization (Miller, 2007). The police NPS have many ways of improving social environment and these include communication network, clarity in roles and responsibilities, pointing at the pivotal role commanders play within the police service, regular lectures in which problems at work place are discussed, provision of adequate and systematic feedback not only when things go wrong but also when subordinates performs exemplary well through debriefing after work, social support to reduce burnout among other intervention measures (Rajan *et al.*, 2016).

respondents reported lack of social support in their work environment as the relationship among junior officers and their senior commanders was unpleasant. Findings from key informant indicated that gaps among junior officers in ranks and their seniors was the reason for segregation as one set issue orders while the other set receive the orders. Murray and Gregoire (1990) hold a different views that effective social work environment may be useful in determination of variance in job satisfaction, involvement and turnover intentions. Morale is the degree to which an employee feels good about his or her work and work environment (McKnight *et al.*, 2001). Staff work morale is based on factors such as intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction work mindfulness, organizational commitment and work pride (Mc Knight *et al.*, 2001). Police officers indicated that poor leadership, distrust of management, poor interpersonal relations, inflexible working conditions, unclear expectations, frequent transfers and changes in leadership, lack of opportunities for personal growth leads to a notion of ‘‘God for us all and everyone for himself’’, hence, high prevalence level of staff burnout.

Regular Lectures: Lectures are only held when something has gone terribly wrong like when a police officer has gone wild open fire and short his colleagues or has turned the gun to him. Findings from key informants indicated that disciplinary

Table 1. Organizational Burnout Intervention Strategy

Organizational	Totally Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither	Slightly Agree	Totally Agree	Total
Communication	59%(91)	30%(47)	8%(13)	3%(4)	-	100%(155)
Social Environment	57%(89)	30%(47)	9%(14)	3%(4)	1%(1)	100%(155)
Regular Lectures	49%(76)	34%(53)	8%(13)	7%(10)	2%(3)	100%(155)
Feedback	57%(89)	24%(37)	12%(18)	6%(9)	1%(2)	100%(155)

Source: Field data (2017)

Table 2. Individual Burnout Intervention Strategy

Individual	Totally Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither	Slightly Agree	Totally Agree	Total
Counseling Centre	62%(95)	22%(34)	12%(19)	1%(2)	3%(5)	100%(155)
Frequent Training	54%(83)	34%(53)	8%(13)	3%(4)	1%(2)	100%(155)
Psycho-Social Units	66%(103)	26%(41)	7%(10)	1%(1)	-	100%(155)

Source: Field data (2017)

Critical analysis of organizational Burnout Strategies based on field data: The respondents were assessed on the organizational burnout intervention strategies. As indicated in Table 1, majority 89% disagreed with the statement that the NPS has a smooth and effective communication channel to address burnout issues, 87% disagreed that the NPS has a very improved social environment, 83% disagreed with the statement that there is a mechanism in place for regular lectures in which problems at work are discussed, meanwhile 81% also disagreed with the statement that there is provision for systematic feedback to police officers at the division.

Communication Channels: Several respondents reported that apart from normal police communication radios, there was also use of mobile phones, smart phones and emails which was being embraced by the police department. A smart phone is with extended features to manage your calendar, browse the internet, games and have access to social media and email. Good communication channel based on awareness and sensitivity and confidentiality, is often the key to addressing burnout related issues effectively. Management suspicion can be reduced through regular and open communication. Social environment is the employee’s negative or positive feelings, attitudes or perceptions towards work place associates which include peers subordinates and supervisors (Moore, 2000). The

practices were normally taken during lectures and there was poor communication relationship among senior officers and junior officer’s which compared to Llyod (2003), results to reduced organization performance.

Systematic Feedback: Job resources such as social support, performance feedback, autonomy, opportunities for development can mitigate the impact of job demands on strain including burnout. A culture where all police officers contribution in decision making would be valued within the division and may also help in combating burnout. The findings from the key informant interviews indicated that there was a big discrepancy on staff regular feedback on the areas staff do well than on the areas that needs improvement.

Individual Burnout Intervention: Individual directed approach to prevent or reduce burnout includes cognitive behavioural techniques such as psychotherapy, counseling, communication skill training, social support and exercise for relaxation, In addition, other measures have been recommended to combat burnout, such as time management, balancing work and private life. Van der Klink *et al.*, (2001) suggests that cognitive intervention approach is relevant because burnout is often as a result of wrong cognitions such as unrealistic expectations.

Critical analysis of individual Burnout Intervention Strategies based on field data:

The respondents were assessed whether Matungulu police Division had an outstanding counseling centre for the staff experiencing burnout, if there were frequent trainings on how to deal with burnout and whether there was a well functioning psycho-social support unit in all police divisions. As indicated in Table 2, majority, 84% disagreed with the statement that the NPS has an outstanding counseling centre for those officers experiencing burnout, 88% disagreed with the fact that there is frequent training of police officers on how to deal with burnout and 92% disagreed with the statement that the NPS has a well-functioning psycho-social support unit in all its divisions. Findings from key informants indicated that whenever an officer was working under burnout, techniques such as counseling, social support, time management and individual cognitive intervention measures were available but not effective. As a result, police officers turn to duty withdrawal, absenteeism, uncontrolled alcoholism and drug abuse (Maslach *et al.*, 1996). The station commanders were asked to indicate how job performance was affected in terms of temporary and chronic disabilities where the officer was unable to work due to hospitalization as server consequences of burnout. Majority (50%) of the station commanders indicated that sickness absenteeism was a major factor affecting performance, 30% indicated temporary insane by those officers under burnout, while 20% indicated that significant number of police officers were confined in hospitals due to burnout health complications and as a result, man-hours are lost in visiting them in hospital, withdrawal behaviors to physical illness to chronic work disabilities leads to a decline organizational output. Change in health behavior such as alcohol consumption and drug abuse is a serious concern in relation to service delivery (Ahola *et al.*, 2006).

Counseling Center: Approximately 84% disagreed with the statement that NPS has an outstanding counseling centre to assist officers experiencing burnout. The employee support program provides referral services, offer brief counseling for a variety of personal, family and work related issues and are based on the premise that the provisions of such services will promote organizational productivity. Such programs when in place adopt an individualistic approach and ignore organizational stressors. Station commanders indicated a pervasive stigma that officers should naturally be able to deal with stress and handle the pressure of the job. Failure to do so therefore often regarded as an indication of personal unsuitability for the job and leads to disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal of the affected police officer. The results of 84% was higher compared to a study conducted by Sergeant Corey Haines of Madison Heights police department in 2013 on police stress and the effects in family which indicated that developing counseling training programs offered about 64% relief to police officers working under burnout and results in an increased efficiency of the organization. Counseling of police officers should be confidential to enable them balance their private life and professional life. Results were corroborated by Piennar and Ruthman (2006) which indicated that lack of capacity and commitment by Police Service to offer counseling services was a contributory factor high prevalence level of burnout among police officers.

Frequent Training: From the study findings, 88% disagreed with the statement that there are frequent trainings of police officers on how to deal with burnout. The results were higher

compared with Carson (2006) in which 80% indicated non-existing of frequent training programs on self esteem and burnout. In the new economy, knowledge increment through training and development of employees is a resource as well as increasingly a product. Through training, employees acquire new skills, technical knowledge and problem solving capabilities, hence, facilitation of personal resources. Peterson, *et al.*, (2011) has shown a positive psychological capital in relation to positive change. Burnout is a problem of social environment but not an individual problem. Work place shapes the social interaction of people and how they carry out jobs. When a work environment does not recognize the human aspect of work, and there is a mismatch between the natures of initial training, on job-training and burnout management, then this leads to high risk of burnout.

Psycho-Social Support: Approximately 92% disagreed with the statement that the NPS has a well functioning psycho-social support unit in all its divisions. Several respondents reported that whenever they work under burnout, they do not share their problems with their supervisors and colleagues, they have very limited time to spend with their families and as a result keep to themselves.

Individual and Organization Burnout Intervention: Experimental study conducted by Murphy (1999) revealed that burnout intervention measures vary because of organizational uniqueness. Intervention is more effective when both individual and organizational is combined together. They stretch our imagination of affective and more specifically, cognitive-behavioural interventions which includes, relaxation, time management, balancing work and private life, physical training, dieting and increasing one's social skills. This activities promotes positive perception as data of the study conducted by Baldoni (2003) evidenced that negative meta perceptions of socially anxious individuals are due to their own negative self-perception than to the negative perception of others (Baldoni, 2003).

Critical analysis of individual and Organizational Burnout Intervention Strategies based on field data:

The respondents were assessed on both individual and organizational burnout intervention strategies. As indicated in Table 3, 89% disagreed with the statement that the NPS has a very effective mentoring program on burnout, 87% disagreed with the statement that there is job enlargement and appropriate job rotation, 86% disagreed with the statement that cognitive behaviour of all police officers is under close supervision and 92% disagreed with the statement that there is a provision of effective confidential support group in the NPS.

Mentoring Programs on Burnout: Mentoring programs is dedicated to all employees to carry out need assessment, organizational change survey, and burnout awareness, capacity building work environmental scanning, policies implications and then give recommendations. Even when monitoring programs on burnout exists, mental monitoring was not always done. Nearly one third of the police officers indicated that they were not aware of such existence.

Job Enlargement and Appropriate Job Rotation: Job enlargement and job rotation in organization has their roots in motivational theories. Employees work is designed in manner that they are challenging, interesting and meaningful and motivating, hence, an increase in organizational productivity.

Job enlargement increase employee's responsibilities and autonomy, their competency, career development and job satisfaction. Key informant interviews indicated lack of effective job enlargement application in burnout intervention strategy to alleviate burnout and support police officer's work skills, hence, making their work productive.

Table 3. Individual and Organizational Burnout Intervention Strategy

Individual/ Organizational	Totally Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither	Slightly Agree	Totally Agree	Total
Mentoring	58%(90)	31%(48)	11%(17)	-	-	100%(155)
Job Enlargement	66%(102)	21%(33)	4%(7)	6%(9)	3%(4)	100%(155)
Cognitive	57%(88)	29%(45)	10%(16)	3%(4)	1%(2)	100%(155)
Confidential Support	59%(92)	33%(51)	6%(10)	-	1%(2)	100%(155)

Source: Field data (2017)

Organizations are today resting with continuous change and maintaining competitive advantage through various techniques such as job rotation and job enlargement. Job rotation can be defined as working at different tasks or in different positions for a period of time (Jorgensen, 2005). A Job rotation result in mobility, new skills, new experiences, professionalism, removes employee's boredom, increases morale and motivation (Adomi, 2006). Even though job enlargement and rotation policy existed within the division, results indicated that it was rarely practiced and even when practiced, laid down procedures were not followed as some police indicated that they had stayed in one station and in one duty allocation for more than the recommended period of time.

Close Supervision of Cognitive Behavior: Findings from key informants were probed of close monitoring of police officers cognitive behavior but they indicated non existence of such procedures. Situations Kurunka (2009) disagree with as he indicates a direct link between mental strain and individual's health. The findings were further justified by Hockey (1997) in the state model of compensatory control. In this model, individual employees strive to maintain performance levels in order to achieve the defined objective of the organizations, especially in high job demand situations and this leads to mental energy loss. Where demands is higher than the individual energy budget, efforts are further increased to a level higher than individuals reserve capabilities and such strategies to cope with extensive demands leads to unwanted side effects that manifest in an individual as cognitive behavior (Korunka, 2009). The study further probed a potential weakness where only valuable job factors were considered when dealing with police officers cognitive behavior, while avoiding early signs of mental strain which are related to early burnout warning. Meanwhile, Hobfoll et. al. (2003), observes that there is need to increase moderator resources to attenuate the negative impact of job demands on police officers well-being.

Confidential Support Group: Technically speaking, confidentiality is a state of not pilling over, discussing, or sharing any information or story with other people. Confidential support group comprised of employees who are trained in skills of psychology and guidance and who are entrusted to offer guidance and counseling to affected individual employees. Findings from key informants indicated lack of confidential support coupled with secrecy and solidarity to provide a defensive support which results in tolerating high level of anger, abuse and hostility.

Measurements of Burnout: Copenhagen burnout inventory holds that personal burnout has the degree of general physical or psychological fatigue experienced by an individual while the Maslach burnout inventory theory views burnout as a process with different stages.

Maslach and Jackson (1986) give three dimensions of measuring burnout namely; emotional exhaustion, depersonalizations, and personal accomplishment. Maslach and Leiter (2006), reports five types of individual level signals namely affective, cognitive, physical, behavioral, and motivational signals. The Maslach Burnout Inventory hold it that for affective signals, an individual show signs of depressed mood or changing moods, tearfulness, emotional exhaustion and increased tension or anxiety. In cognitive signals an individual shows signs of helplessness, loss meaning and hope, feeling of powerlessness or feeling of being trapped, sense of failure, poor self-esteem, guilt, suicidal ideas and inability to concentrate. In physical signals an individual shows signs of headache, dizziness, muscle pain, sleep disturbance, ulcer and chronic fatigue. Behavioral signals include hyperactivity or impulsivity, increased consumption of caffeine, tobacco, alcoholic, illicit drugs, abandonment of recreational activities, compulsive complaining and denial. Motivational signals include loss of zeal or loss of idealism, resignation, disappointment and boredom. These signs led to the development of burnout test (Maslach and Keinan, 2000).

Conclusion

This paper has clearly shown that the majority (94%) of the police officers indicated that there are no outstanding Counseling Centre's for the police officers experiencing burnout. The National Police Service (NPS) does not have a functioning Psycho social unit and there are no frequent training on issues related to burnout in terms of organizational intervention strategies, the NPS lack effective communication channel that can provide a systematic feedback of employees performance. The monitoring programs, job enlargement, and job rotation and provision of effective confidential group are ineffective. These have created a worse social environment for the police officers experiencing burnout. The growing demand for organizations efficiency calls for improvement of work environment, social support, counseling, communication skill, frequent training and other measures which have been embraced by other likeminded organizations such as time management, balancing work and family life. Employee's burnout cognitive and social environment intervention is relevant to all human service faculties.

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