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Work-Life Balance and Service Delivery



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Abstract

Purpose: Police officers in Kenya face a wide array of stressors in the line of duty, including exposure to high levels of crime, violence, and the ever-present threat of traumatic incidents. Inadequate resources, long working hours, and the burden of meeting performance targets further contribute to elevated stress levels among officers. This study aimed to determine the effect of Work-Life Balance on service delivery at National Police Service in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study was grounded based on Servqual model.

Methodology: The study adopted desk review of empirical literature. Target population was National police officers working in Nairobi City County. The findings were derived from reviewed empirical literature.

Results: The findings show that Work-Life Balance impacted the service delivery. The inspector general of police should work closely with inspectors for regularly assess the workload.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The inspectors should conduct regular assessments of workload and staffing levels to ensure they are balanced and manageable.

Key Words: *Work-Life Balance and Service Delivery*

Background of the Study

Work-life balance within National Police Service is a pervasive concern worldwide, impacting the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in many countries. Employees working in the police service especially the police constables reported high levels of stress and increased levels of stress related illness. The global nature of this issue is characterized by common stressors such as long working hours, exposure to violence and traumatic incidents, administrative pressures, and public expectations. These stressors lead to burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and impaired service delivery. Police officers are more likely to endure stress than those in other occupations. Police officers are more prone to experience distress, which can lead to a decline in both their physical and mental health. Law enforcement personnel face a range of task- and occupational-related, internal, and external personal stressors, all of which can be harmful to their health if improperly handled. According to a World Health Organization report (2021), the police service has not addressed the issue of stress among its officers. This setback has hindered efforts to naturally establish a more robust human resource basis, which is essential for police development across the board. In response to these challenges, police organizations worldwide have implemented various work-life balance interventions. These

interventions can include mental health programs, stress management training, peer support networks, and changes in organizational policies. The effectiveness of these interventions varies from one region to another, often depending on the local context and available resources.

A study in United Kingdom by Jones, Turner and Barker (2021) revealed that national police services have developed comprehensive strategies to address work-life balance among their officers. These strategies often encompass psychological counseling, wellness programs, and initiatives to improve work-life balance. These interventions have shown some success in reducing stress-related issues, enhancing officer well-being, and, consequently, positively affecting service delivery. European police services benefit from relatively stable political environments, robust economies, and access to resources, which facilitate the implementation of such interventions.

In contrast, many African countries face unique challenges in addressing work-life balance within their national police services. Police officers in Nigeria often contend with insufficient resources, political instability, and high levels of violence (Ruwan, Shinkut, Ishaya & Iliya, 2020). These factors can significantly contribute to occupational stress. In many African nations, limited funding and inadequate infrastructure make it challenging to establish effective stress intervention programs. Additionally, political interference in policing can exacerbate stress and hinder the successful implementation of interventions. As a result, the impact of such interventions on service delivery is often limited in developing countries where Kenya is not exceptional. In Kenya, the National Police Service plays a pivotal role in maintaining law and order, ensuring public safety, and upholding the rule of law (Odoyo, Mamuli & Washika, 2022). The effectiveness and efficiency of the police service have been hindered by various challenges, with work-life balance emerging as a significant concern. Work-life balance among police officers in Kenya has the potential to undermine service delivery and compromise the well-being of both the officers and the communities they serve. Due to frequent transfers, Kenyan police officers must make significant adjustments to new workstations (Jonyo, 2015). Interpersonal relationships and job performance are strained as a result of their scarcity and the ensuing work stress.

According to Muchiri (2022) Kenyan police officers face a myriad of stressors in their daily duties. These stressors include high levels of crime and violence, inadequate resources, long working hours, public scrutiny, and the risk of encountering traumatic incidents. The pressure to meet performance targets and the need to balance these demands with personal lives contribute to elevated stress levels among police officers. The consequences of work-life balance within the Kenyan National Police Service are evident in the quality and efficiency of service delivery. Stress lead to reduced morale, increased absenteeism, impaired decision-making, decreased job satisfaction, and, in some cases, corrupt behavior. These issues have a direct impact on the public's perception of the police and their willingness to cooperate with law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, stress-related mental health issues may affect an officer's ability to interact with the community in a professional and empathetic manner, potentially leading to strained relationships. Addressing work-life balance effectively is a

critical concern for police services worldwide, and tailored approaches are essential to ensure the well-being of law enforcement officers and the communities they serve.

Service Delivery

The role of National police service is essential; they provide traffic safety, order, and crime prevention, as well as drug and human trafficking surveillance (Chepkemoi & Wabala, 2022). Morale within the police department is a good indicator of its health or dysfunction, and it can be tracked with the aid of an efficient performance appraisal tool. Furthermore, the police executives can manage issues like police corruption, tribal bias, poor customer service, and public reports of officers' abusive behavior when they use performance metrics that are integrated into the processes. Additionally, the performance appraisal tool defined the activities and values that the service expects from its officers, as well as what is meant to be measured. Every officer is also given the chance to evaluate the consequences for non-conformance. According to Sagwa (2021), in order to improve service delivery, policing must adopt a more diverse approach and there must be general citizen-police cooperation in order to effectively track crime rates and maintain oversight of surveillance.

Problem Statement

Police officers in Kenya face a wide array of stressors in the line of duty, including exposure to high levels of crime, violence, and the ever-present threat of traumatic incidents. Inadequate resources, long working hours, and the burden of meeting performance targets further contribute to elevated stress levels among officers (Muraguri & Kiilu, 2019). The resulting work-life balance have detrimental effects on the mental and physical well-being of police officers, affecting their overall job performance and job satisfaction (Mutinda & Kabiru, 2018). The consequences of work-life balance are manifest in the quality and efficiency of service delivery within the Kenyan National Police Service. Stress-related issues can lead to reduced morale, increased absenteeism, impaired decision-making, and, in some cases, corrupt behavior (Wanjohi & Mugo, 2020). Officers experiencing high levels of stress may also struggle with building positive relationships with the community, potentially leading to strained interactions and a lack of cooperation from the public (Owino, Lusweti & Gitau, 2020). The effectiveness of these interventions is influenced by various challenges and gaps. Limited resources, political interference in police affairs, and the need for culturally sensitive mental health approaches are among the key hurdles facing these interventions (Njoroge, Muiruri & Njagi 2021). Furthermore, the persistent issue of corruption within the police service in Kenya may be exacerbated by occupational stress, undermining public trust and further hindering service delivery (Kinyanjui & Okech, 2019). In light of these issues, there is a pressing need to critically examine the impact of work-life balance on service delivery in the Kenyan National Police Service in Nairobi City County, and to explore evidence-based approaches that can be tailored to the unique context of Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

To determine the effect of work-life balance on service delivery in National Police Service in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

Servqual model

The SERVQUAL model was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in the late 1980s, is a widely used framework for measuring and evaluating service quality. It's a popular tool for assessing the perceived quality of services and identifying areas for improvement. According to Raza, Umer, Qureshi and Dahri (2020) SERVQUAL stands for Service quality, and it is based on the idea that service quality can be assessed through the evaluation of five key dimensions: Tangibles: refers to the physical appearance of facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials associated with the service. It includes factors like cleanliness, organization, and the professionalism of service providers. Reliability: Relates to the ability of a service provider to consistently deliver accurate, dependable, and promised services. It involves keeping commitments, delivering services as agreed upon, and minimizing errors or mistakes. Responsiveness: It pertains to the willingness and ability of a service provider to help customers and provide prompt service. This dimension reflects the service provider's eagerness to assist customers, answer their questions, and address their needs in a timely manner. Assurance: This is about the competence, courtesy, credibility, and ability to instill confidence in customers. It encompasses the service provider's ability to convey trust and competence to customers. Empathy: Refers to the provider's ability to understand, care for, and show concern for customers. It involves providing personalized attention and treating customers with respect and sensitivity to their individual needs. This research model shows that service quality is comparable to demeanor from a variety of perspectives. As a result, researchers and managers of organizations are urged to develop their measuring methods to align with a conceptualization that is based on a state of mind. By using the SERVQUAL model in this study, the National Police Service can identify areas that need improvement, develop action plans to address the gaps, and ultimately enhance the quality of service delivery, trust, and confidence in law enforcement.

Empirical Literature Review

Work-Life Balance and Service Delivery

A study done in Sri Lanka by Arunashantha (2019) on relationship between work life balance and job satisfaction of the ABC Company Employees. A total of 360 workers from the shipping and logistics division of the ACB Maritime Agencies in Colombo, Sri Lanka, were used as a sample for this study. A self-administered questionnaire was dispersed to a sample of 360 full-time workers of ABC Maritime Agencies (Pvt) Ltd at random. Both factor analysis and the structural equation model were used to analyze the data. According to the findings, the majority of workers don't seem to be happy in their positions, which prevents them from having a healthy work-life balance. The majority of employees are working on highly sought-after jobs with

tight deadlines. Additionally, these workers have to move right on to another challenging assignment after completing one of them. In Nigeria, Kuranga (2020) studied on relationship between work life balance and service delivery among women entrepreneurs in South-Western Nigeria. Using multistage sampling techniques, a total of 379 respondents were chosen from a population of 25,122 Nigerian Union of Tailors members in Lagos. A systematic self-administered questionnaire was used to gather primary data, and the structural equation model (SEM-PLS) was used for analysis. The study also discovered that there would be a 0.792 unit change in service delivery for every unit change in work-life balance. Consequently, the study comes to the conclusion that women entrepreneurs' ability to provide services is greatly impacted by work-life balance. According to the survey, in order for women entrepreneurs to provide good customer service and achieve overall business performance, they should successfully balance their duties as mothers and workers, foster innovation and flexibility in their line of work, and look for support.

In Kenya, Tuwei (2020) conducted a study on effect of work-life balance on service delivery in selected county referral hospitals. The study focused on a population of 431 employees where 367 participants were sampled using stratified random sampling. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to evaluate the data, and a multiple regression model was employed to test the hypotheses. The results of the study demonstrated that service delivery is significantly and favorably impacted by work-life balance ($\beta_3=0.402$, $p<0.05$). Work-life balance improves service delivery, the study found. By providing components of quality of work life that employers may reciprocate to improve employee service delivery, the study advances the idea. The study's findings will be used by managers to create policies that enhance workers' quality of work lives and, as a result, lead to the provision of high-quality services.

Ombaka and Merecia (2021) studied on effect of work life balance on the performance of National Police Service officer in Kwale County, Kenya. Descriptive survey research design was employed in this study to determine how police officers' performance is impacted by work-life balance. There were 748 police officers in Kwale County who made up the study's target group. In order to choose 261 officers for the study, the research used a multi-stage selection approach that included clustering subdivides, rank-based stratification, and proportionate random sampling. The primary data for this study was gathered through the use of both closed-ended and open-ended structured questionnaires. The study used SPSS version 20 for both descriptive and inferential statistics, primarily regression, to evaluate the data. The study's findings demonstrate that work-life balance affects NPS performance in Kwale at R^2 , or a coefficient of determination of 0.755, in terms of work performance. This indicates that 75.5% of the variation in the work performance of the National Police Service personnel in Kwale County, Kenya, may be attributed to leave, employee support programs, and wellness initiatives. Based on these results, the study suggests that the National Police Service's top leadership adopt good work-life policies and prioritize work-life strategies like paid time off, employee assistance programs, and wellness initiatives to improve performance.

Conceptual Framework

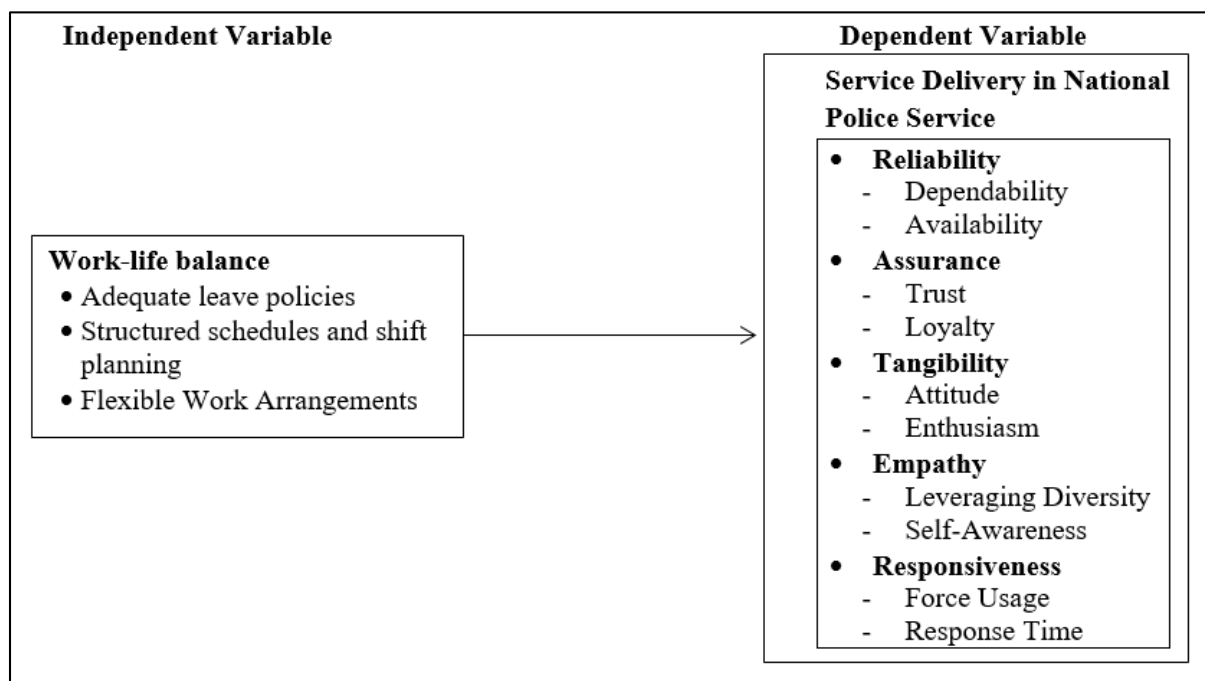


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Research Methods

The study adopted desk review of empirical literature. This methodology allows summary of literature based on synthesis of concepts, theories and results to come out with conclusion. The study used academic databases, libraries, and other scholarly sources to identify existing literature related to your research question. The study reviewed the identified studies and select those that meet the inclusion criteria. The selected studies provided the empirical evidence, meaning they were based on the collection and analysis of real-world data, theoretical or conceptual discussions.

Target Population

The study targeted police officers working in Nairobi City County, Kenya. This group consists of individuals employed by the national police service. The researcher was interested in studying how work-life balance, conflict resolution, counseling and team building impacted their service delivery.

Discussions

Researches done by Tuwei (2020) and Ombaka and Merecia (2021) established that achieving a satisfactory work-life balance positively influences job satisfaction among employees. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is associated with reduced burnout and stress levels among employees. Individuals who effectively manage their work and personal responsibilities are likely to be more productive and deliver higher-quality services. The results from reviewed

studies show that effective conflict resolution contribute to a positive organizational climate within the National Police Service. A supportive work environment is crucial for enhancing morale and motivation among employees, potentially leading to improved service delivery (Agusioma, Nyakwara & Mwitii (2019; Syengo, 2022).

Conclusions

The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between the work-life balance and the quality of service provided. A balanced work-life schedule is associated with improved mental health among employees. Fostering work-life balance contributes to a positive organizational culture. This culture promotes a supportive and healthy environment, which, in turn, positively influence teamwork, communication, and service delivery.

Recommendations

The inspector general of police should work closely with inspectors for regularly assess the workload. The inspectors should conduct regular assessments of workload and staffing levels to ensure they are balanced and manageable. They should also address any issues related to excessive workload promptly to prevent burnout.

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