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## Career Planning and Performance of Uniformed Employees at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

Over the years, there have been documented cases of low prosecution of criminal cases attributed to weaknesses or failures in the office of DCI in Kenya and especially cases involving serious crimes such as murder, rape, defilement, corruption, assault and economic crimes. Loss of cases has been linked to poorly conducted investigations, corruption, and insufficient procured evidence to convict the perpetrators, leaving the blame to investigative officers. Some studies have attributed the challenges in the office of the DCI to include infrequent training, low support from senior officers, and lack of sufficient information on career pathways and plans for DCI officers. However, these studies have glaring gaps in terms of concept, context and methodology. Accordingly, this study intended to fill the gap by researching the career planning and performance of uniformed employees at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. In specific focus, the study investigated the effects of opportunity analysis, periodic review of the plan, career goals, and occupational options on the performance of uniformed employees at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. This study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population comprised a total of 943 uniformed employees working at DCI headquarters. The sample size of 272 was determined scientifically aided by Kothari formula. The study collected primary data by use of a structured questionnaire that had closed-ended questions. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 28) was used in the data analysis. The collected quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found a positive and significant association between career planning and performance outcomes of the assessed uniformed employees at DCI. This confirms that career planning contributed to the improved employee performance at the DCI headquarters in Kenya.

### INTRODUCTION

Career planning is a structured plan used in making management choice on an individual's professional career through assessing one's skills, talents, interests, values, available work opportunities and jobs (Widarko, 2023). The planning of an individual's career involves the process of selecting an occupation or organization on the career ladder, and it changes careers, workstations, and planning for retirement. Career planning involves setting career goals and taking action to meet the identified career plans. According to Rizanuddin (2020), career planning, leadership and organizational culture was simultaneously found to contribute to work effectiveness for the Majalengka civil service agency.

Muriithi and Muo (2023) study career planning programs and the influence of employee performance in milling industries and the case of Unga Group Limited in Kenya. The study employed the career choice theory as the theoretical framework and used descriptive survey design. The data was collected from permanent and casual workers of Unga Group across its five locations in Kenya. The structured questionnaires were self-administered to the respondents, and interviews were conducted with the company management team. Descriptive and inferential statistics were done for the quantitative data and content analysis for the qualitative

data from the interviews. The findings revealed the role of career planning improved employee performance. Career planning dimensions of leadership and management support for career development, goal setting, personal career planning, researching and exploring available options and supervisor's inclusion in career planning resulted in improve employee performance. The study concluded that career planning enhanced employee productivity, service delivery, commitment, and the attainment of set goals.

Lartey (2021) researched on career planning, autonomy of employees and recognition by managers and its influence on employee engagement in SMEs in the USA. The study objectives were analyzed using the social exchange theory viewpoint. The research employed a survey approach and collected data from 120 employees working in the SMEs that was later analyzed using the multiple regression format. The results confirmed existence of a positive and significant relationship between career planning, employee autonomy and management recognition and employee engagement in all activities of the SMEs in USA. The results supported the theoretical model based on social exchange theory and empirical hypothesis of the study. The conclusions is such that career planning greatly improved employee engagement, followed by employee autonomy and lastly manager recognition.

Awino and Kipsang (2020) did research on career planning's

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influence on employee commitment in manufacturing firms in Kenya. The reward system was adopted as a moderator in the relationship between career planning and employee commitment in the selected manufacturing firms. The study adopted the Greenhaus model of career development as the theoretical foundation. There was use of explanatory research design and use of Slovin's formula to sample 435 employees from 3,617 workers of the manufacturing firms. The respondents filled the structured questionnaire and the quantitative data was entered into SPSS and analyzed. The findings indicate that career planning had significant association and effect to employee commitment. Addition results established that reward systems moderated the relationship that career planning has on employee commitment. The study's conclusions revealed that career planning moderated by a reward system contributed to high employee commitment levels.

### Statement of the Problem

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) 2021 report that one-third of murder cases in all the high courts in Kenya gave a no-conviction outcome in 2020. In addition, Ndege (2021) documents on crime research that there is low prosecution of criminal cases and especially cases involving serious crimes such as murder, rape, defilement, corruption, assault and economic crimes. Loss of cases was linked to poorly conducted investigations, corruption and insufficient procured evidence to convict the perpetrators; leaving the blame to investigative officers. Kariuki (2023) found there are infrequent trainings, low support from senior officers and lack of sufficient information on career pathways and plans for DCI officers. Rizanuddin (2020) in a study that simultaneously linked career planning, leadership and culture on their impact on effectiveness of work for employees. The study found that career planning, leadership and organizational culture simultaneously contributed to work effectiveness for the Majalengka civil service agency. Nonetheless, the study creates a conceptual gap since career planning was not singularly linked to employee performance and contextual gap as the study was done in Indonesia and not Kenya. Again, DCI Kenya was not the subject of the study. While Muriithi and Muo (2023) concluded that career planning enhanced employee productivity, service delivery and commitment and attaining set goals. Their study created a contextual gap as it covered the manufacturing sector's milling firms and was also carried out as a case study. It created a methodological gap. Accordingly, this study sought to bridge the conceptual, contextual and methodology gaps identified in the related past studies.

### Objectives

#### Overall Objective

- To investigate the effect of career planning on uniformed employees' performance at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

### Specific Objectives

- To determine the effect of opportunity analysis on uniformed employees' performance at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya
- To evaluate the effect of periodic review of the plan on uniformed employees' performance at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya
- To establish the effect of career goals on uniformed employees' performance at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya
- To assess the effect of occupational options on uniformed employees' performance at the Directorate of Criminal Investigation Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya

### Theoretical Framework

The study approach was guided by the Goal Setting Theory. The theory was developed by Locke (1968) and states that setting goals is linked to performance and execution of tasks. The main construct of the theory is that it operates effectively when clear goals are set and expectations are communicated to the employees. This motivates employees to work hard and attain the set goals hereby increasing the performance outcomes in the organization. The proponents and supporters of this theory include Swann *et al.* (2021) sharing that specific and demanding goals and objectives are included in individual employees' responses that result in better productivity and performance. The theory operates based on these principles including setting clear goals, and targets for each employee, work group, department and overall organization; the goals are set to be delivered within a specified time frame and the supervisors communicate the expectations and deliverables. Goal setting is akin to planning for resources and their utilization in different functional units for success. When the goals are clearly defined and communicated, they operate as a motivational factor for improvement in delivery outcomes (Locke & Latham, 2019).

According to constructs of this theory, whenever the employees attain the set goals and deliver as per the expectations and communicated deliverables; it indicates mastery of the level and symbolizes the need and readiness to advance to the next level (Lunenburg, 2011). The goals serve as an incentive and motivational factor for higher productivity and performance outcomes by the employees. Training, planning, and networking can improve the competencies of an employee, which results in enhanced capacities in handling the set goals and meeting organizational expectations. Therefore, improving the directorate of criminal investigation officer's performance can be attained by clearly defining and communicating the goals, expectations, and deliverables. The goals help the DCI uniformed officers to center their efforts and concentrate on meeting the set goals that are part of the mandate of DCI and improve performance outcomes. The leadership at the DCI also structures and plans for resource needs to meet its mandate even in the future.

The theory is often criticized for encouraging unethical conduct by employees in their quest to meet the set goals and reap the attached rewards. When the goals are difficult and takes too much effort, time and resources to attain, it can be a demotivating factor to employees. Every time the employee fails to meet the set goals, they become discouraged and lose morale and unable to execute even simpler tasks (Welsh & Ordóñez, 2014). Whenever the organizational goals and employee goals clash, it causes confusion and conflict, which leads to commitment issues that have a negative effect on the performance of the employee. Even with these limitations and criticism, the theory has been used in different researches and encourage perseverance when dealing with difficult assignments. Latham and Locke (2018) shared that demanding goals can be met when the employees get acknowledged, promoted and rewarded for previously attained goals.

Therefore, this theory is significant in this study, as it explains how organizations can boost employee productivity. When the leadership at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations sets goals and clearly communicates what is expected of each employee, and when it sets structures and provides needed resources, it will result in better employee performance. Additionally, the theory speaks on planning aspect by identifying present and future resource needs and aligning the needs to set goals and expectations. Planning for resource needs through analyzing the present skills, future opportunities, and changes in operations can help prepare the DCI to take advantage of its available resources. Thus, the theory is relevant in this study in explaining how the directorate of criminal investigation can implement career planning for its employees' careers to improve their performance outcomes.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a descriptive research design (Lo, Rey-Martí & Botella-Carrubi, 2020). The justification for adopting this descriptive design is that it helped to provide an accurate state of affairs and description of career management practices on employee performance at the Directorate of Criminal Investigation (DCI) Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The target population comprised a total of 943 uniformed employees working at DCI headquarters. The sample size of 272 was determined

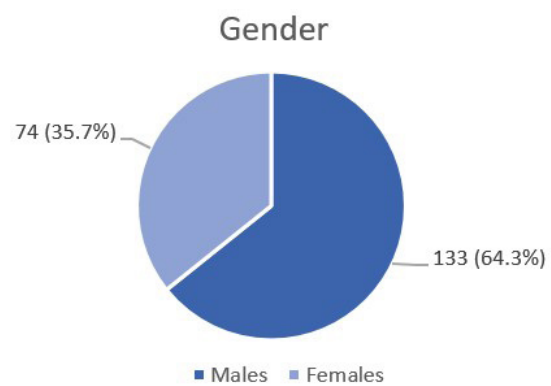
scientifically, aided by Kothari's (2004) formula. The study collected primary data by use of structured questionnaire that had closed ended questions. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 28) was used in the data analysis. The collected quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Study Findings**

**Demographic Information of the Respondents**

This study sought to gain information on the demographic particulars of respondents. The following sections present information on the gender, the rank, the length of service in the rank, and the period the officer has worked at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, headquarters in Nairobi.

**Gender of Respondents**



**Figure 1:** Respondents' Gender

Figures 1 shows that the majority of the respondents were males at 64.3% with female respondents being 35.7%. The differences in gender can be explained as traditionally within African communities, security and safety functions were a male dominated role and could account for the number of males the uniformed employees being higher. However, the study included both genders to avoid bias and discrimination and to provide balanced data from both genders.

**Rank of Respondent**

The respondents were asked to indicate the current rank they hold at the directorate of criminal investigations. Their responses are presented in Figure 2



**Figure 2:** Respondent's Rank

The results in Figure 2 shows that majority of the respondents were constables, accounting for 40.1%, the corporals were 20.3% of the respondents, the respondent ground also included 9.6% of sergeants and another 9.6% for the senior sergeants. There were 10.1% of inspector of police that formed this study's response group, chief inspectors were only 6.8% and senior superintendent and superintendent officers were 3.4% of the respondents. The respondents were spread out covering all the ranks as per the statues of National Police Act and confirms the inclusion of different perspectives on career management practices and performance of DCI officers.

### Length of Service in the Rank

The respondents shared on the length that they have been serving in the same rank. The responses are as given in Figure 3

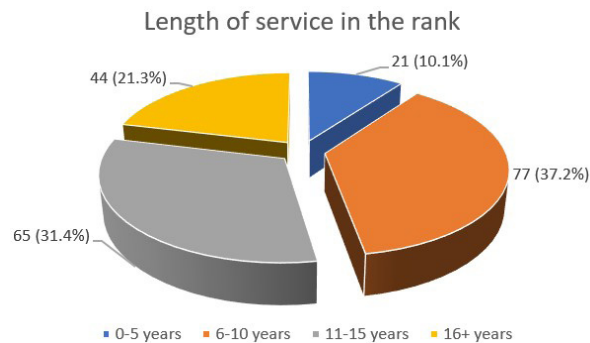


Figure 3: Length of service in the rank

The respondents were asked to further indicate how long they have served in the position. The results indicated in Figure 3 show that many of the DCI officers at 37.2% stated they have been serving in the indicated position for 6 -10 years, followed by 31.4% of officers who have been serving in the same rank for between 11 and 15 years. Additionally, some 21.3% of DCI officers have been in the same rank for more than 16 years and the least at 10.1% of the respondents have held the same position for between 0-5 years. On average many of the DCI officers have been serving in the same position for a long time of more than 5 years. It implies that the respondents understand their role, have sufficient knowledge and experience, and can share the same in this research.

### Period Working at DCI

The study sought to know the period that the respondents had been working at the DCI , and their responses are summarized and shared in figure 4

The results shown in Figure 4 indicate that 33.3% of the respondents had worked at DCI for a period of 6 to 10 years, another 28.9% of the respondents indicated as having working at DCI for 11 to 15 years, while others at 19.9% had worked for less than five years with only 17.9% stating as having worked for more than 16 years in the organization. It is then clear that these respondents have worked long enough at the DCI headquarters in Nairobi,

### PERIOD WORKING AT DCI

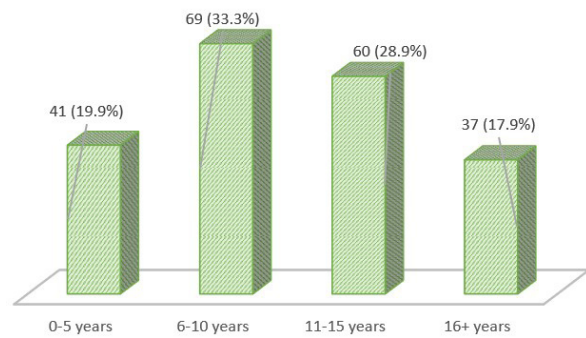


Figure 4: Period working at DCI

Kenya and therefore, they have sufficient knowledge on the workings in that organization. It also implies that these respondents shared valuable and credible data on career management practices adopted at the DCI headquarters and its impact on employee performance. The respondents were able to give a trend on performance outcomes and different career management practices employed in the organization.

### Descriptive Analysis Results

The descriptive analysis was conducted, where the respondents were asked to indicate the extent of agreement with various statements. The employed rating scale ranged from 1-5 with its meanings as 1 =Strongly Disagree, 2 =Disagree, 3 =Neutral, 4 =Agree and 5 =Strongly Agree. the descriptive analysis generated the Mean [M] and Standard Deviation [SD] for each of the independent variables. The interpretation of the means is that mean was as follows: 0-1 show strong disagreement with the statement, 1.1 – 2 imply a disagreement, 2.1 – 3 show moderate or neutrality, 3.1 – 4 indicate the respondent agreed with the statement, and 4.1 -5 show that respondents strongly agreed with the statement. On standard deviation, 0-2 imply confirmation of respondents agreeing with the same opinion of the statement and more than 2 affirm the respondents' disagreement or stating a different opinion. The results are presented in Table 1, with the interpretations and discussions presented after the tables.

### Career Planning and Performance of DCI Uniformed Employees

The study sought to assess the extent of agreement that respondents had on effect of career planning and performance. The responses are summarized and presented in Table 1

Table 1 shows an aggregate score of [M=3.73, SD =1.03] as respondents' agreement in general on career planning causing a high-performance outcome for the DCI officers in their headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The findings show that the respondents agreed on the presence of a formal career pathway [M=3.83, SD=1.02], there was agreement on senior officers periodically reviewing the career goals

**Table 1:** Career Planning and Performance of DCI Uniformed Employees

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
The DCI embraces a formal career pathway for all its officers	3.83	1.02
The senior officers periodically review career goals of the junior officers	3.75	0.93
There is assessment of skills in line with the available opportunities at the DCI	3.77	1.05
The officers select their assignments based on competency levels	3.68	0.99
The DCI officers know of all available career options	3.81	1.08
There is clear communication whenever there is change in work assignment/station	3.65	1.04
The officers' analyses career opportunities that they fit in at the DCI	3.73	1.04
Effective career planning improves performance outcomes for the DCI officers	3.57	1.14
<b>Aggregate Scores</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>1.03</b>

[M=3.75, SD =0.93] and respondents agreed on assessing skills to align with current available opportunities [M=3.77, SD =1.05] and respondents showed an agreement with selection of assignments as based on competency [M=3.68, SD =0.99]. The findings also indicate that respondents agreed on officers knowledge of the available career options [M=3.81, SD=1.08], the respondents agreed on clear communication when there is change of assignments and work stations [M=3.65, SD=1.04], there was agreement by the respondents on officers analyzing the career opportunities [M =3.73, SD =1.04] and effective career planning was agreed by the respondents to improve performance of the DCI uniformed employees [M =3.57, SD =1.14].

These results are consistent with what Muriithi and Muo (2023) found, sharing that setting of career goals, researching on available career growth options, and support from leaders and supervisory team in career planning are what led to improved employee performance. Lartey (2021) echoes the above sentiments by stating that career planning improves engagement and involvement of employees in organizational activities and it also creates autonomy that result in better performance outcomes for the employees. According to Rizanuddin (2020) career planning accompanied by leadership functions and organizational culture are imperative in delivery of quality and effective work outcomes by the employees. Similarly, Awino and Kipsang (2020) found that rewarding top performers with higher ranked positions improved commitment levels of the employees

and impacted positively on employee performance outcomes. It is clear that planning the careers of DCI uniformed employees in a formal structure, aligning tasks with individual skills and sharing information on career opportunities and career options, led to the recorded improved employee performance.

**Performance of DCI Uniformed Employees**

The study sought to assess performance outcomes of DCI uniformed employees and the view of the respondents is given in Table 2

**Table 2:** Performance of DCI Uniformed Employees

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
The DCI officers conduct timely criminal investigations	3.71	1.04
The officers are presenting accurately recorded investigative reports	3.76	1.02
The DCI officers have effectively detected and prevented crimes	3.62	1.14
The officers gather intelligence on different issues across the nation	3.82	1.01
The DCI officers have effectively maintained law and order in their jurisdiction	3.74	1.00
<b>Aggregate Scores</b>	<b>3.74</b>	<b>1.04</b>

The findings in Table 2 indicate that respondents agreed that there was an improvement in performance outcomes of the DCI uniformed employee, based on the aggregate mean score of [M=3.74, SD=1.04]. The respondents agreed on timely conduction of criminal investigations [M=3.71, SD=1.04], the respondents agreed that investigative reports from the investigations were accurate [M=376, SD=1.02] the respondents also agreed on effective detection and prevention of crimes [M=3.62, SD=1.14], the respondents agreed that DCI uniformed employees gathered intelligence on various issues across the country [M=3.82, SD=1.01] and the respondents also agreed on DCI uniformed employees effectiveness in maintaining law and order [M=3.74, SD=1.00].

Measuring employee performance used metrics such as accurate collection and analysis of data, detect and prevent crimes, maintaining law and order and reducing crime rates, as shared by Kipngetch (2021). While Mlewa (2023) used performance measurement indicators of accurate reporting, timely conclusion for the conducted investigations and use of modern ICT tools to detect and prevent crimes. Muyego (2019) viewpoint was on effectiveness, productivity levels and efficiency in handling tasks as the measures of employee performance. In addition, Gravina *et al.* (2021) says that assessing the performance of employees can use general metrics such as quality of services, efficient and satisfaction rates or specific metrics as per industry/sector or organization's practice and standards. In the incidence of DCI uniformed

employees, the measurement indicators such as accuracy of reports, timeliness in completing investigations and preventing crimes, were based on mandate of DCI in Kenya.

## CONCLUSION

This study sought to investigate how career planning affected performance of uniformed employees at DCI headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The study specifically focused on opportunity, periodic review of the plan, career goals and occupational options as the influencers of performance outcomes of uniformed employees at the DCI. Through a descriptive research design, primary data was collected using structured questionnaires that was filled by respondents who were uniformed employees working at DCI headquarters. The respondents were drawn from all the six ranks ranging at the lowest rank of constable to the highest of senior superintendent. The collected quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and multiple regression analysis. The study found that career planning affected employee performance, as explained by DCI uniformed employees who formed the response group in this study that there was embracement of formal career paths, the officers were informed on career options and the available opportunities were given on basis of skills. The respondents also agreed to their seniors conducting periodic review of career goals, they communicated on changes including work station or work assignments and assigned work assignments as per competency levels of the uniformed employees. The study further found a positive and significant association between career planning and performance outcomes of the assessed uniformed employees at DCI. This confirms that career planning contributed to the improved employee performance at the DCI headquarters in Kenya. Further, the study reported improvement in employee performance as recorded in terms of timely conduction of criminal investigations, gathering intelligence on various issues that occur across the country and accurately reporting it. There was also maintaining of law and order and detecting and preventing of crimes as conducted by the DCI uniformed employees. The study established that improved performance amongst the uniformed employees at the DCI was largely influenced by career planning as based on the beta coefficient values. Thus, concluding that career planning was the most influential practice that led to better employee performance.

## RECOMMENDATION

### The Study Suggests That the Government

- Should enact and implement policies that promote principles like openness, diversity, merit, equality of treatment, and nondiscrimination.
- Should Establish the proper conditions for the service to be sustainable in accordance with career pathways and options for both vertical and horizontal mobility.
- Should establish a connection between an officer's performance and their ability to progress in their career.

Adopt a new job classification system based on the skill levels and skills necessary to perform tasks at different levels

- Should enable integration with other HR processes and systems, including performance management, training needs assessment, HRM planning, competency provision, and skills determination.

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