

# EFFECTS OF CAREER PROGRESSION ON PERFORMANCE OF KENYA POLICE SERVICE OFFICERS IN MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA

Martin WanyamaKhaemba, Dr. Wilson MunaKamau

Department of Public Policy and Administration, Kenyatta University, Kenya

Department of Public Policy and Administration, Kenyatta University, Kenya

**ABSTRACT:** A rising body of evidence in Kenya, and Machakos County in particular, reveals that the police officers' career progression factors affecting their performance is under-researched and has a negative effect on their performance. In this research, the objective was to examine the effects of career progression on performance of the Kenya police service officers in Machakos County. Research was conducted using human capital management (HCM) theory and descriptive survey methodology. The targeted population was 678 police constables and 12 police station commanders. 203 police constables and four police station commanders were randomly sampled using a stratified random sampling technique. Officers in charge of the police stations were interviewed and data was gathered from their officers using questionnaires. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies and descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. The study revealed that career progression has a positive correlation with performance of the officers. The results indicated that lack of fairness in promotion and deployment, and inadequate training skills at work were the major aspects affecting their performance. To address these challenges, the researcher recommends the following measures; the Kenya police service should enhance its capacity building, develop suitable policies and practice on career progression of its officers.

**Keywords:** Career Progression Practices, Police Performance.

## I. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

Workplace career progression is one of the factors affecting performance of police officers' world over. Workers who are rewarded by their employers are more likely to behave positively toward their jobs because they know that their employers care about their well-being and career advancement (Korir and Kipkebut, 2016).

In the United Kingdom, the UK Police Regulations 2003 established the UK College of Policing for learning and career development, resulting in the implementation of Professional Development Review (PDR) as a guide for police officers to take part in their professional development and plan their career progression.

According to, Adogoke, (2014), career development strategies in Nigeria, have a significant impact on employee motivation. Although the need for Nigerian police forces has grown, Adogoke, (2014) found that they lacked the information and knowledge necessary to improve their performance and the necessary capabilities to carry out their tasks.

Organizational commitment is strongly linked to career advancement practices in Kenya (Chelangat and Gachunga, 2016). In their opinion, training and development can help to improve the working circumstances of organizations' employees. According to Ransly Report, (2009), Kenyan police personnel are dissatisfied with the current practice of career growth in the service notwithstanding the Service standing orders' (SSO's) provisions. Claims have been made that the selection criteria for career advancement are tainted by corruption and political meddling, favoritism and unnecessary bureaucracy, depressing officers and badly affecting their performance. This study was based on this background with a view to examine the impact of the implementation on the current career progression factors affecting performance of the police officers.

### 1.2. Statement of the problem

In spite of data suggesting that the limited attention paid to the police officers' career progression policies and practice has damaged their performance and has been connected to an increase in crime rates in Machakos County, research evidence on career progression factors affecting their performance remains poor.

When it comes to the performance of police officers in Machakos County, Kenya, there has been an investigation by Johana Kiplang'atTonui, (2020) that examined the impact of participatory supervision on their performance, but it did not take into account the environment in which they were working, such as their level of knowledge and motivation and ability to perform their duties. Because of this, the goal of this research was to find and close the hole that was identified.

### **1.3. Objective of the study**

The objective of this study was to examine the effects of career progression on performance of Kenya police service officers in Machakos County, Kenya.

### **1.4. Justification and significance of the study**

Performance of the police officers in Machakos County and across the country, according to previous studies, has been affected by career progression factors. A total of 1,421,932 people resides in Machakos County, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Population Census of 2019. Because of the region's rapid growth, crime rates have risen as a result of overpopulation, growing numbers of unemployed individuals living in the slums or migrating from other places in search of employment or alternative services, among other factors. It is difficult for police officers in the County to deal with the above issues without enhancing their level of knowledge, motivation and ability to work, which has hampered their performance. By addressing the issues that significantly impact on their performance, this study attempted to balance these expectations.

For the Kenyan police service in Machakos County, and the government of Kenya, the findings of this study may be useful in policy formulation as it relates to capacity building for the police officers, as well as in the development of reasonable career progression factors in the service. In addition, it would serve as a starting point for future studies of this nature.

## **II. Literature review**

### **1.5. Theoretical review**

The study was based on the Human Capital Management theory (HCM) advanced by Fusch and Gillespie, (2012) by focusing on both extrinsic and internal elements. Despite Gilbert's, (2013) assertion that performance improvement should focus on results rather than activities, Fusch and Gillespie offered an outline of how to investigate performance supports at the organizational level. Fusch and Gillespie argue that a company's vision, goal, strategy, and overall successes should be the starting point for any investigation into its performance.

In addition, Fusch and Gillespie categorized the model into information, instrumentation and motivation. When it comes to carrying out their civic obligations, police officers employ a variety of instruments; including information, instrumentation, and motivation, all of which allude to the messages they receive from the public.

HCM is a tool used to evaluate the criminal investigative skills of police officers. The HCM is also used to gauge the police department's level of skill. Expertise rather than formal evaluation of alternatives and expected consequences is commonly used by police officers to make decisions in the dynamic, fast-paced, and low-information circumstances that they meet with the public. The Machakos County police officers' performance was negatively impacted by a lack of good career progression practice, and this hypothesis suggests ways to improve their career progression policies and performance.

### **1.6. Empirical literature review**

Organizations around the world place a high focus on compensating employees to ensure that they perform well, Korir and Kipkebut, (2016). Police officers and personnel in Britain (UK) are encouraged to take charge of their professional development through the implementation of Professional Development Review (PDR) as a means of encouraging them to plan for their future advancement. Professional development reviews must be conducted for every police officer who is on salary progression up to the rank of Chief Inspector. For the PDR process, the college has established a set of principles and expectations. With the help of these meetings, police officers and their supervisors can address everything from welfare to performance to learning and development opportunities. The information gathered can be used for a variety of development initiatives to help police officers advance their careers.

When it comes to a company's commitment to its employees in Kenya, Chelangat and Gachunga, (2016) say that career development initiatives have a significant impact. An employee's needs can be met through training and development, which can benefit the firm. At Kiganjo, a training college for Kenyan police officers, Section 17 (1) of the National Police Service Standing Orders (SSO) mandates that "the Kenyan police services should strive to train police officers in the highest possible standards" and that training is a continuous process following a recruit's course completion. It has been found, however, that this provision is frequently flouted, and the selection process for trainees has become increasingly characterized by allegations of nepotism, political patronage; favoritism and corruption; and thus, the need for the study. Knowledge redundancy, which

affect the performance and morale of those who have worked for long periods of time without undergoing any additional training.

The UK Police Regulations (2003), which govern the deployment of police officers in the United Kingdom (UK), give officers a wide range of career options after they finish their probationary period, including positions in community policing, investigation, and operational support, among many others. The National Task Force on Police Reforms in Kenya found that police in Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Botswana are only deployed for their primary police responsibilities. In these countries, private security services are hired to provide security for various public buildings. In the United Kingdom and Sweden, the deployment of police officers is restricted to the recruitment region. Like Kenya, the Inspector-General of Botswana has the authority to send police officers to work in any area of the country, as is the case in Kenya.

Under chapter 72 section 12 (3) of the Service Standing Orders', "deployment shall not be utilized as a disciplinary consequence or a reward measure" within the Kenyan police service, deployment is regulated. National Task Force determined that the deployment of police personnel has not always been carried out in compliance with these standards, according to their findings. There have been several instances where senior officers have deployed personnel without regard to their specialization or lack thereof. A major source of concern for the Task Force was the use of officers in non-core roles such as receptionist, bodyguard, clerk, or driver for politicians or high-ranking officials of the government, and they noted that this practice jeopardizes the ability of the police department to carry out their duties as mandated.

Since the RanslyReport, (2009)estimated the number of such policemen to be roughly 3000, it has added to the issue of low police to population ratio. Task Force members pointed out that inactivity, frustration, a lack of order and lack of professionalism are all consequences of frequent deployments like this. Deployment to non-core tasks increases corruption, according to the report. As a result, it's not uncommon for people to influence promotions despite their lack of merit. A lack of opportunity to improve as a professional might demoralize an officer who spends long periods of time doing the same thing. An examination of traditional administrative and system performance of police officers, as well as the need for this study to ascertain whether there has been any notable development, was recommended in the report. Additional training and redeployment of non-core police officers was also proposed.

In the police force, there are numerous ways to advance your career. As a police constable in the United Kingdom (UK), you will be able to rise through the ranks after completing your probationary period. If a police officer wants to rise through the ranks in the UK, he or she must first demonstrate competence at the current level and then sit and pass examinations, the UK Police Regulations, (2003).

According to the Task Force's benchmarking experience as detailed in the Ransly Report, (2009), the promotion mechanism for police officers in Africa, such as Botswana, is the same as that in the United Kingdom. Chapter 34 Section (1) of the Service Standing Orders (SSO) stipulates that "all promotions should be based on merit where every officer shall be afforded equal opportunity for advancements" in Kenya's police service. According to the Ranslyreport, the selection process for promotions has become more tainted by allegations of nepotism, political patronage, favoritism, and bribery. This has left other deserving officers without the opportunity for advancement, which has demoralized them and negatively impacted on their work performance.

### 1.7. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework's diagrammatic depiction illustrates the links among the framework's key variables. Performance of the police officers was directly influenced by organizational career progression factors as independent variables.

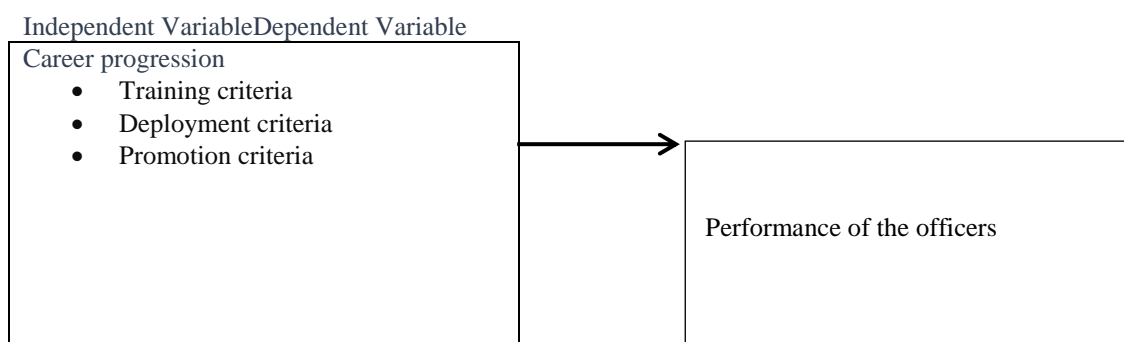


Fig 1: conceptual framework

### III. Research methodology

This research employed a descriptive survey research design to gather, synthesize and present the data. There are many ways to conduct descriptive research, according to Mugenda and Mugenda, (1999). Because the researcher collected and reported the data as it was, the study met the requirements of descriptive survey research design.

Machakos County Police Authority in Machakos County served as the study site. County policing authorities have been established in all 47 counties by Section 41 of the National Police Service Act, (2014). A result of this is that the Inspector General has delegated responsibility for maintaining order in the counties to County Police Commanders (CPC). Other officers of the levels listed in the Act will assist the County Police Commanders in maintaining law and order, as required by the Act and necessary for efficient implementation. There are 47 Counties Policing Authorities in Kenya. SCPCs are in charge of nine sub-county police commands, in contrast, O.C.S oversee police stations around the county. For example, Machakos, Kathiani, Masii, Matungulu, Mulolongo, Kangundo, Mwala, KBC, Kamulu, Kakuyuni, Athi-River and Yatta are all police stations in the County under study.

A total of 690 members of the Machakos County police, including 12 OCSs and 678 PCs, were reviewed as the target population (Machakos County Police Commander's Annual Report of December, 2018). In order to be eligible for consideration, respondents must have served in the police for at least five years, either as an OCS or a police constable because these officers are more likely to have had previous experience, training, and knowledge of the subject at hand. The criterion for selection of the respondents was based on this reality.

The study used stratified random sampling technique to choose a representative sample of the police officers. In light of the officers' rating, stratified random selection was an appropriate method because each stratum reflects a distinct group within the study's intended audience. This approach ensured that every segment of the target population had an equal and independent chance of being represented in the sample (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). A researcher should pick just those participants who have particular criteria, according to Kothari, (2004). These findings have been bolstered by the assertion that stratified random sampling should be supplemented by purposeful sampling in cases where the sample shows strong evidence of giving the researcher with the information he or she is seeking.

More specifically, the sample size was 207 police officers in Machakos County, including 203 police constables and four stations commanders. 30 percent of the respondents were selected using stratified sampling approach. According to Mugenda&Mugenda, (2003), for a population of less than 1,000 people, a sample of 10% to 30% is sufficient. Because the population falls in the bracket and dispersed across a wide area, we sampled 30% of the target population of 678 police constables and 12 stations commanders respectively in Machakos County for this study.

Questionnaires and interviews were used as research instruments to gather the study's primary and secondary data, with the questionnaires going out to police constables (PCs) and an interview schedule going out to officers in charge of police stations (OCS). There were questionnaires guides in use as data collecting devices from constables because constables' work is frequently in the field and entails a lot of movement in the area in which they are deployed.

Interview schedules were used to talk with the OCS in order to acquire information from them. Closed-ended and open-ended questions were used in the study to guarantee that the questions were capable of obtaining the necessary information from the study participants, Kombo and Tromp, (2006). Respondents were given them to fill out, and the researcher collected them after three days.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research tools, a pilot study was conducted in Kasarani police Sub-County in Nairobi County which was not among the selected sub-Counties. The selected sample population of 73 police officers comprising of 73 police constables and 2 OCS was selected using the split half method. As a result, test takers' input was used to clarify questions that were first deemed unclear or unnecessary. The supervisor then assessed the amended instruments to ensure that they were consistent with the research questions being answered, Kothari, (2011).

During the piloting phase, the questionnaires were administered to a representative sample of the study's population to ensure their validity and reliability. After analyzing the questions and responses, some questions that were deemed to be irrelevant, uncertain and ambiguous were amended to get meaningful responses and thereafter taken to the supervisor to determine and make any required revisions which he did and I reframed them to be in line with answering the research questions before the study's launch.

For this study, quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions and percentages, were necessary for analyzing numerical data, Mugenda and Mugenda, (1999). Content analysis was utilized to uncover patterns, themes and biases in the qualitative data for closed-ended responses to questionnaire items. Simple regression analysis technique was used to check the relationships between the two variables under study, that is, career progression (independent)

and performance (dependent) variables. In the end, SPSS was utilized to generate important statistics for further investigation.

#### IV. Findings and discussions

The study data that was analyzed was obtained by use of questionnaires and interviews schedules from 150 respondents out of the targeted sample of 207 respondents. The study response rate was 72.4% which was acceptable and conforms to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) recommendation that a response rate of 70 percent and above is good as it is more than two third of all the respondents which is statistically acceptable.

The gender representation of the respondents was, 116 were male with 77.3% and 34 were female with 22.7%. This was a significant number capable of delivering service with gender sensitivity issue. This is an indication that both genders were fairly represented in the study despite the fact that the Service is still struggling with the issue of gender imbalances linked to low ratio of female officers as compared to male officers.

The study also established that 102 respondents had O level or KCSE qualification representing 68.0%, which is the minimum academic requirement set to join the Service. Those with education level of Diploma were 34 with 22.7%, followed by 14 respondents with Bachelor degree representing 9.3%. The researcher observed that all were found to have had necessary knowledge and skills to examine the variables under study. The questions that aimed at finding out how various factors of career progression affects performance of the police officers were analyzed and revealed the following results;

##### 1.8. Summary of the study findings

###### 1.8.1. Promotion and performance of the police officers

The results indicated that 72.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of fairness in promotion affected performance of the police officers. They were followed by 26.0% of the respondents who agreed with the least being .7% of the respondents who strongly disagreed and .7% disagreed respectively.

###### 1.8.2. Deployment and performance of the police officers

The study results also indicated that 64.0% strongly agreed that lack of fairness in deployment at work affected performance of the police officers. They were followed with 52 respondents, with 34.6% who agreed. The least respondents were .7% who strongly disagreed and .7% disagreed respectively.

###### 1.8.3. Training skills and performance of the police officers

The results of the study showed that 52.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that inadequate training skills affected performance of the police officers. They were followed by 46.0% of the respondents who agreed on the same. Others were .7% who strongly disagreed and .7% disagreed respectively.

###### 1.8.4. Frequent transfers and performance of the police officers.

The study revealed that 70.0% of the respondents disagreed on the issue of whether frequent transfers at work affected performance of the officers. 13.3% strongly disagreed. 9.3% of the respondents agreed and 6.0% strongly agreed.

###### 1.8.5. Inadequate job experience and performance of the police officers

The results of the study showed that 63.3% of the respondents disagreed that it affects performance of the police officers. They were followed with 16.0% who strongly disagreed. 13.4 % of the respondents strongly agreed and 7.3% agreed respectively.

In separate interviews with officers commanding the police stations (OCS), it was established that there was a problem with the aspects of career progression of the police officers in terms of the current practice for selection process for in-service training, promotion and deployment of the officers and that it had significant effect on their performance. It was also noted that were not adequately equipped with training skills for detecting and preventing most of the emerging technology related crimes, hence this had affected their performance as they could not properly investigate the crimes.

##### 1.9. Regression analysis for career progression and performance.

The objective of regression analysis was determining the statistical relationship between the variables under study. The study used simple regression analysis in determining the relationship between the two variables under investigation, that is career progression (independent) and performance (dependent) variables.

**Table 1: model summary for career progression and performance.**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Lack of fairness in promotion	.042 <sup>a</sup>	.002	-.005	.392
Lack of fairness in deployment	.029	.001	-.006	.392



Inadequate training skills	.006	.000.	-.007	.392
Frequent transfers	.050	.002	-.004	.392
Inadequate job experience	.003	.000	-.007	.392

The study's results established that there is a strong relationship between performance and lack of fairness in promotion of the officers. That means that, lack of fairness in promotion of the officers significantly affects their performance. The study also revealed that there is a positive relationship between lack of fairness in deployment and performance of the officers with results implying that lack of fairness in deployment of the officers has a significant effect on their performance.

The study's results showed that there is a strong positive relationship between inadequate training skills and performance of the officers which implied that inadequate training skills of the officers significantly affect their performance. The results also show that there is moderate relationship between frequent transfers and performance of the officers which implied that it had no significant effect on performance of the officers under study.

From the study results it was established that there is a weak positive relationship between inadequate job experience and performance of the officers which implied that it had no significant relationship with performance of the officers under study. The questions that aimed at finding out how frequent transfers and lack of job experience affect performance of the police officers were not tenable. However, the data from the respondents did not justify any reasonable comparative study.

In general, the study revealed that career progression has a positive correlation with performance of the police officers and thus affects their performance. The results also indicated that lack of fairness in promotion and deployment, and inadequate training skills at work were the major aspects affecting performance of the police officers. However, the in-service training for the police officers remains a challenge as it was observed that most police constables have never attained any training after their basic recruit's course which had affected their performance due to having inadequate training skills for delivering their work. Nevertheless, notable observations were made. These were: -

- a) Career progression issue is a perennial problem in the whole police service in Kenya. Therefore, transfer of the police officer(s) to other stations has not shown any evidence of how it affects performance of the affected officers at their new stations unless for personal reasons.
- b) Lack of job experience was not tenable as an effect on performance of the officers, may be because the selected respondents were officers who had worked for a period of five years and above and considered to have had the experience for their job. This study results were similar to those results found out by the following scholars;

Saud, Tulus, Asri, Riani, Sri and Mugi, (2017), who conducted studies on the impact of career development on public employees' performance in Indonesia. In their study they observed that organizational ability to provide perceived organizational support has a significant impact on career growth of public employees in Indonesia.

Adogoke, (2014) who conducted studies in Nigeria and found out that career development strategies in Nigeria, have a significant impact on employees' motivation. According to the researcher, although the need for Nigerian police force has grown, he found out that they lacked the information and knowledge necessary to improve their performance and the necessary capabilities to carry out their task.

Korir and Kipkebut, (2016), who conducted research in Kenya on the effects of reward on employees' commitment in the Universities in Nakuru County- Kenya, and found out that workplace career advancement is one of the major factors affecting performance of workers' world over. According to them workers who are rewarded by their employers are more likely to behave positively toward their jobs because they know that their employers care about their well-being and career advancement.

#### 1.10. Conclusions

The overall objective of the study was to examine the effects of career progression on performance of Kenya police service officers in Machakos County. From the findings of the study, it was generally concluded that the status of the existing career progression policies and practice in Machakos County had a positive and significant correlation with performance of the police officers and had a negative impact on their performance resulting to an increase in crime rate that has been witnessed in the County. The study also concluded that most of the reforms process on career progression in the Service has not been implemented at the stations level consequently affecting performance of the officers.

#### 1.11. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the current career progression practice in the Kenya police service in Machakos County particularly at the stations' level had failed to encourage positive action to ensure a more effective and efficient police service through enhancement of the officers' level of knowledge, motivation and ability to perform their mandate.

The researcher therefore recommends that in order to resolve the identified issues, capacity building in the service should focus on attaining and sustaining a continuous in-service training for the police officers. The police officers will only be motivated and their competency enhanced if the selection process for training is done fairly and equitably.

Secondly, the Service should develop a set of principles and process expectations on promotions which will provide opportunity for the police officers and their officers' in-charge to discuss and review a range of topics including; identifying training and promotion opportunities, reviewing performance and competency for the police officers to progress up the ranks as it is the practice in the UK. The service should also consider establishing an attractive scheme of service for career progression of the police officers.

Thirdly, the Service should develop a set of policies and strategies on deployment of the police officers which will ensure that the officers in the service are strictly deployed to core police duties only. The deployment of the police officers should also be done fairly and equitably.

#### 1.12. Suggestions for Further Studies

This is a study about assessment of the effects of career progression factors on performance of Kenya Police Service officers in Machakos County. The focus of the study was limited to assessing the status of the existing career progression policies and practices in the service and its effects on performance of the police officers in the context of their level of knowledge, motivation, and ability to perform their duties. The researcher suggests that further studies should be carried out to the service or other law enforcement agencies.

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