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Effect of Trauma Management on the Performance of Police in Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract:
A performing police service is crucial for any country in ensuring the enforcement of laws, maintaining public order, and preventing crime. Mental health among police officers is very important for their performance. However, mental health issue remains a major challenge within the police service in Kenya. The failure to prioritize mental health has led to increased suicide risk, increased stress and burnout, higher risk of mental health disorders, and reduced resilience and coping skills among police officers in Kenya. Therefore, the study sought to assess the effect of trauma management on the performance of police in Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi County. The study was anchored on the institutional theory of Stress. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population consisted of 104 respondents: 12 Administration police, 5 critical infrastructure police units, 8 Kenya police dog units, 4 general service units, 26 general duty police, 18 traffic police departments, and 30 criminal investigation department police from Kamukunji Sub County. A census design was employed to include all responders since the study population was manageable. The study sample included all 110 intended respondents. Primary data was gathered through structured questionnaires and interviews. A pilot study was conducted in Embakasi West Subcounty to test the equipment. Pre-tested questionnaires examined face validity to improve reliability. Cronbach's Alpha was used for internal consistency. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics. The analyzed data were presented using tables. The study concluded that there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between trauma management and the performance of police in Kamukunji Sub-County, which implies that better trauma management enhances the performance of police in Kamukunji Sub-County. The study recommended that authorities overseeing police departments should allocate sufficient resources to enhance existing mental support services, such as counseling and peer support programs, ensuring accessibility and effectiveness for all officers.

Keywords: Trauma management, performance of police

1. Introduction

Trauma management refers to the systematic approach of providing medical care to individuals who have experienced physical injuries or psychological distress due to a traumatic event (Pepra, 2020). Police officers are often the first responders to critical incidents such as accidents, natural disasters, and violent crimes where individuals may sustain traumatic injuries. Training in trauma management equips officers with the skills to provide immediate medical assistance, including CPR, controlling bleeding, and stabilizing injured individuals until medical professionals arrive (Skogan, 2020). Training in trauma management not only enables officers to provide aid to others but also enhances their ability to assess and manage their own injuries or those of their colleagues in high-stress situations. This contributes to the overall safety and well-being of law enforcement personnel, allowing them to perform their duties more effectively.

Effective trauma management by police officers can foster trust and positive relationships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve (Cunningham & Vanderveen, 2019). Proper training in trauma management includes strategies for coping with the psychological effects of these experiences, such as stress, anxiety, and PTSD. Trauma management training for police officers facilitates collaboration with community health services and emergency medical responders. By working together seamlessly during crisis situations, law enforcement and medical professionals can optimize resources, streamline communication, and provide more effective care to individuals in need. This integration strengthens the overall emergency response system and improves outcomes for both victims and responders.

In the United States, counseling policies, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), provide confidential counseling services to address the psychological and emotional needs of police officers (Regehr et al., 2018). These services often include trauma-focused counseling, resilience-building programs, and stress management resources. Access to counseling services through EAPs has been associated with reduced stress, increased job satisfaction, and improved mental health outcomes among police officers. Addressing the psychological impacts of trauma exposure and job-related stress contributes to the overall well-being and performance of officers.

In South Africa, the implementation of Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) programs provides counseling services, psychological assessments, and trauma support for police officers (Pretorius et al., 2020). These programs address the mental health needs of officers, particularly those who may be exposed to high levels of trauma and stress in their work. Research indicates that officers who utilize counseling services through EHW programs experience better mental health, reduced stress, and increased satisfaction with their work. The provision of specialized support for trauma-exposed officers contributes to enhancing their performance and resilience on the job.

In Kenya, counseling policies for police officers include the establishment of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) programs. These initiatives aim to provide counselling support, stress management resources, and ethical guidance for officers (Kenya Police Service, 2021). Ongoing evaluation and monitoring are needed to assess the performance of counseling policies in the Kenyan context. By providing mental health support and stress management strategies, these programs contribute to officers' well-being, resilience, and professionalism. A comprehensive counseling policy enhances the organizational culture, job satisfaction, and public perception of the police force, leading to improved performance, trust, and effective community policing. Therefore, the current study seeks to evaluate the implementation of trauma management on the performance of police in Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi County. Mental health issues among police officers significantly influence their ability to effectively serve and protect the public. Kenya National Police Service Commission (2021) found that approximately 1 in 5 police officers in Kenya exhibited symptoms of mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This alarming statistic raises concerns about the well-being of law enforcement personnel and its potential impact on their ability to fulfill their duties. The increased high level of stress hinders police from performing effectively. A report by the Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU, 2022) found that 45% of police officers reported feeling emotionally exhausted and disillusioned with their jobs. This diminished sense of purpose and satisfaction impacts their motivation and overall performance. Therefore, the study sought to assess the effect of trauma management on the performance of police in Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi County.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Review

The study was guided by the institutional theory. The institutional theory was introduced by John Meyer and Brian Rowan in 1977. The theory states that organizations implement business practices because doing so enhances their legitimacy. In order to improve police service, institutional theory was applied to examine trauma management. The main theme of the institutional theory is found in Kondra and Higgins (1998), which highlights the role of institutional norms. An organization has its own social and cultural values that are within its norms and that are used in discharging its duties either internally or externally.

According to these norms, the organization or the institution is able to survive within the external environment. For example, an organization such as the police service has its own culture in undertaking its duties; there are procedures and laws to be followed. Failure to do that is dealt with in accordance with their standing orders. It is difficult to change the culture of the institution or take any performance measurements to add value to the organization, but the individuals are forced to meet the needs. Linking post-trauma management with institutional theory is important to closely assess the trauma management of each officer in order to adhere to the organizational culture. The individuals must be in a position to meet the organizational needs and serve their duties at their best level. Trauma is a constant occurrence for any officer, and an ideal project assists them in doing their duties.

2.2. Empirical Review on the Effect of Trauma Management and the Performance of Police

Irungu (2020) conducted a study on the influence of post-trauma management practices on the performance of national police service projects in Nyeri County, Kenya. The research employed a descriptive research design. Data from the study was edited, coded, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study established that staff training on trauma management practices has a profound effect on psychological aspects that have a far-reaching impact on the performance of national police service projects.

Salhi et al. (2022) conducted a study on how current police practices impact trauma care in the prehospital setting. PubMed, SCOPUS and Criminal Justice Abstracts databases were utilized to identify articles. The study concluded that police are often the first on the scene while responding to traumatic injuries and have an active role via scene clearance or, in some systems, patient transport. Despite the significant potential for impact on patient well-being, there remains a paucity of data examining and driving current practices.

Righa (2022) conducted a study on vicarious trauma and the performance of anti-crime police officers in the Kamkunji division in Nairobi city-county, Kenya. The primary data gathered was computed using the mean average to derive descriptive statistics. The data was presented in frequency distribution tables and percentages. The findings revealed that counselling aids not only the police department in the ways of handling officers suffering from vicarious trauma but also managers of other institutions as well.

Norflee (2022) carried out a study on a systematic review of the literature on post-traumatic growth in police officers after exposure to potentially traumatic events. The researcher utilized PRISMA to ensure a high-quality systematic review. The researcher used inductive content analysis through process and pattern coding to identify themes from the acquired data. Three themes were abstracted: adaptive coping skills, new beliefs, and working through. The results highlighted that PTG does not appear without active effort by the officer population.
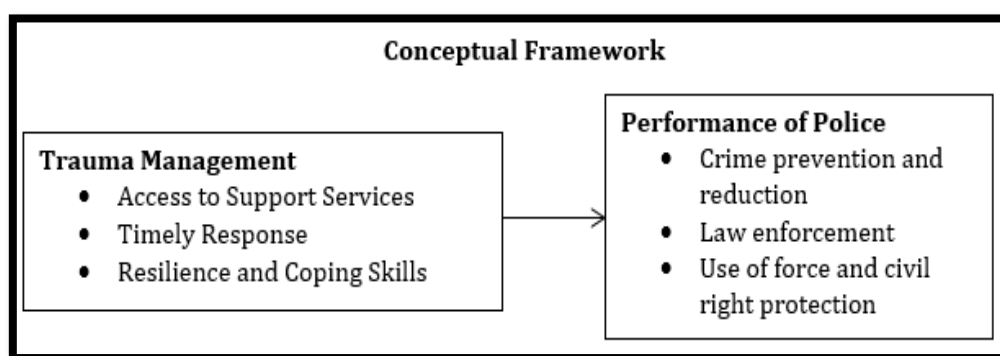
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study population was 104 respondents: 12 Administration police, 5 critical infrastructure police units, 8 Kenya police dog units, 4 general service units,26 general duty police, 18 traffic police departments and 30 criminal investigation department police from Kamukunji Sub County. It included senior officers and their juniors. All officers of different ranks were targeted for the population because it highly influenced the performance of the police service in the County. The researcher employed a census design to include all responders since the study population is manageable. The study gathered primary data through structured questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire had open and closed questions and utilized a multiple-item scale with five-point Likert Data. It consisted of four parts: Part A gathered background information, while Parts B, C, and D addressed research variables. The study employed the questionnaire due to its numerous benefits, such as easy dissemination, data collection, data analysis, question standardization, and cost performance. The questionnaire has face and content validity. Face validity is the probability of misinterpretation. Pre-testing the questionnaire with a non-study sample improved reliability. Cronbach's Alpha was used for internal consistency. Internal consistency reliability measured how well test items that probed the same concept provided identical findings.

After obtaining all the necessary permission, the researcher visited the police stations in Kamukunji Sub County for introductions with the letter. The researcher explained the study's purpose to the respondents and requested a data collection appointment. The researcher distributed the printed questions to responders at their offices on predetermined dates. After two weeks, the researcher provided study participants with questionnaires. Since the sample size was limited, this period for respondents to fill out questionnaires was intended to increase response rates, drop-and-pick questionnaire distribution and collection. Data analysis involved summarizing, identifying trends, and employing statistical methods. Quantitative data was collected for this study, and SPSS 24 was utilized to analyze it. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Descriptive statistics included percentages, frequencies, mean, and standard deviation. The analyzed data were presented using tables.

4. Results

4.1. Response Rate

The study administered 104 questionnaires for data collection. However, 73 questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This represented 70% overall successful response rates.

4.2. Trauma Management on the Performance of Police

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the effect of trauma management on the performance of police in Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi. The findings are presented in table 1.

Statement	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %	Mean	Std
Kamukunji police have mental support services like counselling and peer support programs, which enhance police performance.	26	47	17	10	0	3.887	0.907
Support services mitigate the risk of burnout among police officers	37	45	13	5	0	4.113	0.870
Support services foster resilience by providing officers with tools to manage stress, trauma, and critical incidents effectively	55	42	3	0	0	4.516	0.565
Timely response to traumatic incidents allows for efficient crisis management among police officers	57	37	6	0	0	4.500	0.621
Prompt response and intervention can reduce the risk of secondary trauma among officers who may be affected by witnessing traumatic events.	39	44	11	6	0	4.145	0.866
Officers with strong coping skills and resilience	49	39	10	2	0	4.351	.767

Statement							
are better equipped to perform under high-stress situations.							
Resilient officers are less likely to succumb to the negative effects of stress and trauma, leading to reduced rates of absenteeism and sick leave.	48	39	6	4	3	4.345	.692
Focus on resilience and coping skills promotes a positive organizational culture that values the well-being of officers	44	38	7	7	4	4.273	.689
Average Mean and Std						4.266	0.7471

Table 1: Trauma Management on the Performance of Police
Source: Research Data (2024)

According to the findings, the majority of the respondents (73%) agreed that the Kamukunji Police has mental support services like counselling and peer support programs, which enhance police performance with a mean of 3.887 and a standard deviation of 0.907. The findings further indicated that the majority of the respondents (82%) agreed that support services mitigate the risk of burnout among police officers, with a mean of 4.113 and a standard deviation of 0.870. In addition, the majority of the respondents (97%) agreed that support services foster resilience by providing officers with tools to manage stress, trauma, and critical incidents effectively, with a mean of 4.516 and a standard deviation of 0.565. The study findings are in tandem with the findings of Salhi (2022), who found that support services for police officers play a crucial role in fostering resilience by providing them with tools to manage stress, trauma, and critical incidents effectively. These services offer specialized training and resources to enhance officers' coping skills and psychological resilience in the face of adversity.

The findings further indicated that the majority of the respondents (94%) agreed that timely response to traumatic incidents allows for efficient crisis management among police officers, with a mean of 4.500 and a standard deviation of 0.621. In addition, the majority of the respondents (83%) agreed that prompt response and intervention can reduce the risk of secondary trauma among officers who may be affected by witnessing traumatic events, with a mean of 4.145 and a standard deviation of 0.866. According to the findings, the majority of respondents strongly agreed that officers with strong coping skills and resilience are better equipped to perform under high-stress situations (mean=4.351, SD=0.767). In addition, the majority of the respondents agreed that resilient officers are less likely to succumb to the negative effects of stress and trauma, leading to reduced rates of absenteeism and sick leave (mean=4.345, SD=0.692). Moreover, the majority of the respondents (82%) agreed that focusing on resilience and coping skills promotes a positive organizational culture that values the well-being of officers (mean=4.273, SD=0.689). The study findings are in tandem with the findings of Norflee (2022), which revealed that focusing on resilience and coping skills within law enforcement agencies promotes a positive organizational culture that values the overall well-being of officers.

4.3. Performance of Police in Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi County

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the performance of police in Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi County. The findings are presented in table 2.

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std.
The criminal incidents in Kamunji Sub-county have reduced compared with the past five years	64	29	2	5	0	4.403	0.778
The police officers frequently collaborate with other departments and agencies to address crime-related issues	54	30	8	5	3	4.307	0.738
Officers prioritize backlog cases and appropriately address them alongside current cases	38	38	4	11	9	4.145	0.807
The Number of backlog cases has reduced for the past five years	43	34	7	5	11	4.387	0.869
Officers utilize mental health services like counseling, support groups, and stress management tools, which has reduced stress and burnout	30	54	5	8	3	4.181	0.513
Average Mean and Std						4.284	.638

Table 2: Performance of Police in Kamukunji Sub-County, Nairobi County
Source: Research Data (2024)

According to the findings, with a mean of 4.403 and a standard deviation of 0.778, the majority of respondents agreed that the number of criminal incidents in Kamukunji Sub-county has decreased compared with the past five years. Furthermore, with a mean score of 4.307 and a standard deviation of 0.738, the majority of respondents strongly agreed that police officers frequently collaborate with other departments and agencies to address crime-related issues. Moreover, the majority of the respondents agreed that officers prioritize backlog cases and appropriately address them alongside

current cases, with a mean of 4.145 and a standard deviation of 0.807. Further, the majority of the respondents also agreed that the number of backlog cases has reduced for the past five years, with a mean of 4.145 and a standard deviation of 0.807.

From the findings, the majority of the respondents agreed that officers utilize mental health services like counseling, support groups, and stress management tools, which have reduced stress and burnout by a mean of 4.181 and a standard deviation of 0.513. According to Mongo, Fwaya and Sewa (2020), officers who utilize mental health services such as counselling, support groups, and stress management tools experience reduced levels of stress and burnout. By accessing these resources, officers are able to learn effective coping strategies, receive emotional support, and develop skills to manage job-related stressors more effectively. Counseling sessions provide a safe and confidential space for officers to discuss their concerns, process traumatic experiences, and receive guidance from mental health professionals.

4.4. Correlation Analysis

4.4.1. Trauma Management and Performance of Police
The study sought to establish the correlation between trauma management and the performance of the Police in Kamukunji Sub-County. The findings are presented in table 3.

		Performance of Police
Trauma Management	Pearson Correlation	.443[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	73

Table 3: Trauma Management and Performance of Police
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
Source: Research Data (2024)

As indicated in table 3, the study indicates that there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between trauma management and performance of police in Kamukunji Sub-County (r=0.443; p<0.05). This implies that better trauma management enhances the performance of police in the Kamukunji Sub-County. The study findings are in tandem with the findings of Irungu (2020), which revealed that staff training on trauma management practices has a significant psychological effect on national police service project performance, that successful execution of post-trauma administration practices affects project performance, and that legal framework and resources help officers' welfare by boosting efficiency.

5. Discussion

The findings revealed that the presence of mental support services, such as counselling and peer support programs, positively influenced police performance. Additionally, support services were seen as effective in mitigating burnout among officers and fostering resilience by equipping them with tools to manage stress and critical incidents efficiently. Timely responses to traumatic incidents were believed to facilitate crisis management within the police force, and interventions to reduce the risk of secondary trauma were considered important. Moreover, officers with strong coping skills and resilience were perceived as better equipped to handle high-stress situations, leading to reduced absenteeism and a positive organizational culture that values officers' well-being.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that mental support services, timely response to traumatic incidents, and fostering resilience are vital components. Additionally, promoting coping skills and addressing organizational culture positively impact officers' well-being and performance. The study concluded that there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between trauma management and the performance of police in Kamukunji Sub-County (r = 0.443; p < 0.05). This implies that better trauma management enhances the performance of police in the Kamukunji Sub-County.

The study recommended that authorities overseeing police departments to allocate sufficient resources to enhance existing mental support services, such as counseling and peer support programs, ensuring accessibility and performance for all officers. Implement comprehensive training programs focused on trauma management and resilience-building techniques, equipping officers with the necessary skills to handle high-stress situations effectively. Foster a supportive organizational culture that prioritizes officers' well-being by developing and implementing policies and initiatives aimed at promoting mental health and resilience within the police force. Establish clear protocols and procedures for timely responses to traumatic incidents, ensuring efficient crisis management and support for affected officers.

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