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Critical Incident Stress Management and Job Satisfaction among National Police Service Officers

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the moderating effect of employee wellbeing on the relationship between critical incident stress management and job satisfaction among the same officers. The study was guided by Two Factor Theory of Motivation. An explanatory research design was employed to explain the cause-effect relationship between the variables. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used to collect data from a sample size of 328 respondents derived from Yamane's formula, with a target population being 1297 police officers using a structured, closed ended questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted in national police service in Nandi County to ascertain validity and reliability of the research instruments. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Inferential analysis was carried out through correlation to ascertain the relationships between variables and regression analysis to test the hypotheses. The study findings revealed that critical incident stress management ($\beta_1=0.185$, $p=0.000$) had a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction among national police service officers in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. In addition, results indicated that employee wellbeing moderates the relationship between critical incident stress management ($\beta_5= -0.067$, $p=0.000$, $R^2=.511$, $\Delta R^2=.016$) and job satisfaction among the national police service officers. The study recommended that the National Police Service (NPS) should enhance mental health services to improve officers' job satisfaction.

Keywords: Critical Incident, Stress Management, Job Satisfaction and Police Service

Introduction

Background of the Study

Job satisfaction is a crucial factor in the effectiveness of the police service worldwide (Mugambi, 2023). Job satisfaction is the level of contentment employees feel with their job (Dziubaet al., 2020). It measures workers' contentment with their job, whether they like the

job or individual aspects or facets of jobs, such as the nature of work or supervision. There are two types of job satisfaction: affective and cognitive. Affective job satisfaction is a subjective construct representing individuals' emotional feelings about their job. In contrast, cognitive job satisfaction gauges the extent to which the job holder judges those job facets as satisfactory compared to objectives they set or with other jobs (Joanna & Jerzy, 2020).

Critical incident stress management (CISM) is a critical aspect of supporting the psychological well-being of police officers following traumatic incidents. A study conducted by Mitchell and Everly (2018) in the United States assessed the impact of CISM programs on job satisfaction among police officers. The research found that officers who received CISM interventions reported higher job satisfaction levels. CISM played a crucial role in helping officers cope with the psychological aftermath of traumatic incidents, ultimately contributing to greater job satisfaction and overall well-being (Sutton & Polaschek, 2022).

Job satisfaction among police service globally has been affected by various factors such as workload, working conditions, compensation, and management practices (Ojwang, 2020). Basinska and Dårderman (2020) showed that police officers with adequate resources, support, and autonomy tend to be more committed to their jobs and organization. Conversely, police officers facing high work demands, poor working conditions, and inadequate compensation tend to have lower levels of commitment.

The determinants of job satisfaction among police service vary across countries and continents (Ruf, 2019). For example, in developed countries such as the United States and Europe, police officers tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and psychological empowerment than their counterparts in developing countries such as Africa and Asia (Huynh & Hua, 2020). This disparity includes differences in cultural values, economic development, and political stability. Corruption is one of the significant challenges facing the police service in Africa, and it significantly impacts job satisfaction. Police officers who perceive their colleagues and superiors as corrupt tend to have lower trust and job satisfaction (Carr & Maxwell, 2018).

In Africa, the critical incident stress management programmes for police officers have not been consistent across different countries. Some African countries have adopted modern workplace counselling programmes to improve job satisfaction, while others still rely on traditional practices that hinder commitment (Halawi & Haydar, 2018). Such traditional practices include a lack of career advancement opportunities, low salaries, and poor working conditions. In contrast, countries adopting modern workplace counselling programmes have experienced a boost in job satisfaction levels, resulting in better organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Labrague & de Los Santos, 2021).

In Kenya, the police department has undergone significant reforms to improve critical incident stress management programmes that have translated into higher job satisfaction levels (Hofer & Savell, 2021). The reforms have focused on pay raises, introducing corporate social responsibility programs pension schemes to ensure hiring individuals with the right skills and dedication to their work. These changes have led to a significant reduction in the turnover rates of employees and an increase in collective morale, ultimately resulting in improved organizational performance (Demouet al., 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Job satisfaction is critical for police officers, as it directly influences their engagement, problem-solving capabilities, and overall effectiveness in maintaining law and order (Paoline & Gau, 2020). Satisfied officers are more proactive, leading to improved community relations and trust, which is vital for effective policing, especially in African contexts where public trust in law enforcement can be fragile. High job satisfaction also reduces turnover, absenteeism, and corruption, ultimately contributing to a more efficient and trustworthy police force. However, police officers in many regions, including Uasin Gishu County in Kenya, face significant challenges that hinder job satisfaction. Factors like inadequate pay, heavy workloads, and political interference lead to stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction (Cetrulo, Guarascio & Virgillito, 2022). These issues affect the morale of officers, potentially leading to negative outcomes such as increased absenteeism, corruption, and misconduct.

In Uasin Gishu County, research indicates that over 60% of police officers are dissatisfied with their jobs, with key contributing factors including low pay, poor working conditions, and inadequate resources (Wakonyo & Muchemi, 2020; Polo, 2021). This dissatisfaction negatively impacts their performance and the safety of the community. While various studies have examined police job satisfaction and the role of wellbeing, there remains a gap in identifying specific interventions to improve outcomes for officers. This research introduces the concept of employee wellbeing as a moderating factor in the relationship between critical incident stress management and job satisfaction among National Police Service officers.

Research Objective

To determine the effect of critical incident stress management on job satisfaction among national police service officers.

Research Questions of the Study

H₀: Employee wellbeing has no moderating effect on the relationship between critical incident stress management and job satisfaction among national police service officers.

Literature Review

The Two Factor Theory of Motivation

Two-factor theory initially proposed in 1959 by Herzberg. The concept argues there exists some specific workplace factors which ignites satisfaction and are found in the job itself. He called them motivators (Yousaf, 2020). There is another set of factors whose absence makes employees not work hard enough and they surround the job. He referred to them as hygiene factors. Poor hygiene factors decrease employee job satisfaction, causing dissatisfaction. The theory examined the concept of motivation in terms of job content and context prism. Herzberg findings resonate by influencing staff attitudes and strategies administrators apply to improve job satisfaction. Herzberg (1974) suggested that employees' contentment is not measured by achievement of lower hierarchy needs at work, like having minimum pay levels or tolerable work conditions but they are interested and motivated by attaining higher level needs like being recognized, career success and holding position of responsibility (Singh & Aggarwal, 2018). This contradicts Maslow's (1943) law theory on hierarchical structure of human needs.

The two-factor concept of employee motivation was foundation of study. It was premised on widely acknowledged facts on how satisfaction of employees can be enhanced through application of specific factors, counselling or conflict resolution. Career success entails a perpetual achievement or refinement of competencies or skills improvement or having more industrial exposure including growing career, molded by proactive career charting efforts (Zhang et al., 2020). Career growth involves proactive career planning, based on performance assessment of each employee, identifying capacity gaps and bridging them. This capacity building is done by skills enhancement training, career planning activities, counselling, and mentoring, coaching, induction and on boarding. Thus, following the motivation theory, it is argued that by adopting appropriate career counselling programs, organization improves job satisfaction of workers, organizational effectiveness and productivity.

Critical Incident Stress Management and Job Satisfaction

In the modern society, police officers are faced with social, economic, and political challenges that would create an imbalance in their profession. However, authors such as Sonnenstuhl and Trice (2018) have recommended employee counselling programs as a tool that could aid workers to balance work and personal life such that they are able to resolve conflicts arising from both work and personal life. On the other hand, employee stress management programs benefit the organization in a number of ways. A study by Tuzovic and Kabadayi (2021) notes that, employees are able perform their work better due to these stress management programs while the organization is able to record low numbers of absenteeism and reduced employee turnover.

While these stress management programs are related to improving job satisfaction, their focus is also channelled to address the psychological and behavioral issues affecting employees. A study by Ajayi (2018) found out that, problems such as substance abuse and stress among employees are associated with poor job satisfaction. Such outcomes according to Kelly et al. (2020) lead to reduced productivity, increased absenteeism and health care costs. It is also revealed by Hagemester and Volmer (2018) that employees always experience symptoms that weaken their job satisfaction.

Therefore, such outcomes call for an organizational supervisor, who is well trained, to identify employees with psychological or behavioral problems and refer them to the stress management programs (Holman et al., 2018). The sooner a problem is identified and addressed, the sooner an individual employee overcomes them. This is echoed by Mintzberg (2019) that the success of employee stress management programs depends largely on the supervisor. However, Nisar and Rasheed (2020) note that, not all employees with job satisfaction problems are troubled employees, and that, not all employees with personal problems experience trouble functioning on their job. This presents one of the major challenges employee stress management programs encounters. Besides the challenge, employee counselling programs have put in place structures that encourage employees to seek assistance voluntarily rather than being referred.

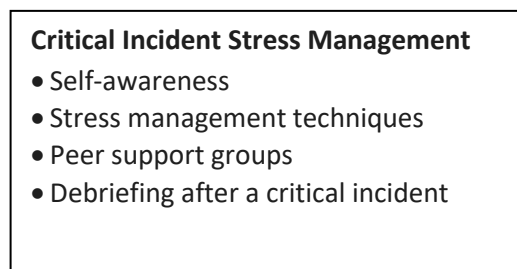
Ashton (2018) recommended that employee stress management programs should strive to improve employees' job satisfaction so as to determine their effectiveness. In other words, employee counselling programs should ensure their services not only help employees overcome personal challenges, but also help them channel their new self and energy to

increasing their job satisfaction (Sonnenstuhl & Trice, 2018). Likewise, emotional and social assistance through employee counselling programs in the police service is to yield positive outcomes in terms of job satisfaction.

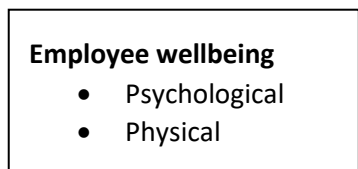
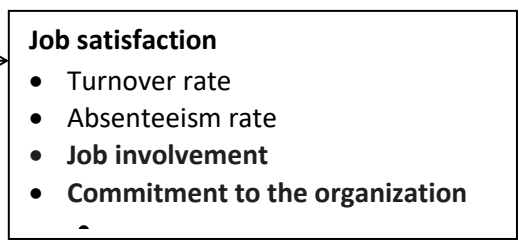
The National Police Guidance and Counselling Policy (2009, Section 1) describe police profession as a stressful occupation (Papazoglou & Tuttle, 2019). Police officers therefore often require assistance which aims at increasing their motivation, commitment, and relationships at work. Authors such as Monaet al. (2019), brings out clearly the role and outcomes of employee stress management programs. Positive outcomes from their studies present the benefits of stress management programs to individual employee as well as the organization. However, it is not clear on the program’s effectiveness especially when employees continue to display behavior patterns that negatively relate to reduced performance (Masson & Moodley, 2020). This study is therefore informed by the positive outcomes of employee stress management programs to find out whether similar outcomes were observed in the Kenya Police Service.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables



Dependent Variable



Moderating Variable

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study utilized an explanatory research design. Explanatory research is a form of investigation employed to understand the causal factors and mechanisms behind a phenomenon (Hoddy, 2019).

Target Population

The target population was; 6 sub county police commanders (SCPC), 24 officers commanding station (OCS), 6 Staff Officers’ Administration (SOA), 6 Staff Officers’ Operations (SOO), 6 Staff Officers’ Branch (SOB), 57 sergeants, 221 corporals and 971 police constables as per the six sub counties (Uasin Gishu County Nominal Roll, 2024).

Sample Size

A sample is any number of cases less than the total number of cases in the population from which it is drawn (Ingule & Gatumu, 1996). The study did not do sampling calculation for SCPC,

SOA, SOO and SOB because they were purposively. The sample size for officer commanding station, sergeant, corporal and police constable was calculated based on Yamane’s (1967) formula:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2) \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation 1}$$

Where; n=the sample size

N= the size of population

e= the error of 5 percentage points. Thus, for the study;

$$n = 1273 / (1 + (1273 \times 0.05^2)) = 304 \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation 2}$$

Therefore, the sample size was 328 comprising of 304 calculated sample and 24 for SCPC, SOA, SOO and SOB as distributed in Table 1.

Table 1
Sample Size

Category	Ainabkoi	Kapseret	Kesses	Moiben	Soy	Turbo	Total
SCPC	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
SOA	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
SOO	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
SOB	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
OCS	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Sergeant	2	2	1	2	1	5	13
Corporal	7	8	5	7	9	18	54
Police constable	43	46	14	21	27	80	231
Total	57	61	25	35	42	108	328

Source: Researcher (2024)

Staff officer operations, sub county police commanders, staff officer administration, staff officer branch, were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher selects the sample based on their judgment of which participants are most likely to provide the information they need (Pace, 2021).

Methods of Data Collection

The study collected data using questionnaires. According to Kombo and Trump (2006), a questionnaire is a set of printed or written questions with a choice of answers, devised for the purposes of a survey or statistical study. The structured (closed-ended) questionnaires were used so as to get the uniform responses from officer commanding station, sergeant, corporal and police constable.

Data Analysis Procedures

After data collection, the researcher performed data cleaning to identify and correct incomplete or inaccurate responses, ensuring data quality. The data was then coded and analyzed using SPSS Version 25, yielding quantitative data (Taguchi, 2018). Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyse

demographic data and other descriptive variables, helping to identify patterns and trends (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Inferential analysis, including correlation and regression analysis, was employed to test the direct and indirect effects of the study variables.

Results and discussion

Descriptive Statistics for Critical Incident Stress Management

The study sought to establish the effect of critical incident stress management on job satisfaction among national police service officers in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Critical Incident Stress Management

Statements		SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
1. I feel comfortable accessing CISM services offered by the NPS after experiencing a critical incident	F	91	133	8	40	16	3.84	1.17
	%	31.6	46.2	2.8	13.9	5.6		
2. Having a clear understanding of your own thoughts, feelings, and physical reactions to stress	F	100	118	14	44	12	3.87	1.17
	%	34.7	41.0	4.9	15.3	4.2		
3. Knowing and practicing methods to manage stress, such as deep breathing, relaxation exercises, and healthy lifestyle habits	F	104	124	11	35	14	3.93	1.15
	%	36.1	43.1	3.8	12.2	4.9		
4. Connecting with colleagues who have shared experiences and can offer empathy and understanding	F	89	135	13	28	23	3.83	1.20
	%	30.9	46.9	4.5	9.7	8.0		
5. Participating in structured discussions with a trained professional to process and share your experience	F	113	116	8	39	12	3.97	1.16
	%	39.2	40.3	2.8	13.5	4.2		

Source: Field Data (2024)

According to the results in Table 2, the descriptive statistics findings showed that 91(31.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they feel comfortable accessing CISM services offered by the NPS after experiencing a critical incident while 133(46.2%) representing majority of the respondents agreed that they feel comfortable accessing CISM services offered by the NPS after experiencing a critical incident. A small proportion 40(13.9%) of the respondents disagreed and 16(5.6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that they feel comfortable accessing CISM services offered by the NPS after experiencing a critical incident. The study findings further revealed that they feel comfortable accessing CISM services offered by the

NPS after experiencing a critical incident with mean rating of 3.84 and standard deviation of 1.17.

Furthermore, 218(75.7%) of the respondents agreed and 56(19.5%) of the respondents disagreed that having a clear understanding of your own thoughts, feelings and physical reactions to stress. However, respondents agreed that having a clear understanding of your own thoughts, feelings and physical reactions to stress with mean rating of 3.87 and standard deviation of 1.17. The mean rating indicates a moderate to high level of agreement among the respondents, and the standard deviation suggests that there is some variability in the responses but that, on average.

Further, 228(79.2%) of the respondents agreed that knowing and practicing methods to manage stress, such as deep breathing, relaxation exercises and healthy lifestyle habits and those who disagreed that knowing and practicing methods to manage stress, such as deep breathing, relaxation exercises and healthy lifestyle habits are 49(17.2%). The study findings revealed that participants agreed with the statement that knowing and practicing methods to manage stress, such as deep breathing, relaxation exercises, and healthy lifestyle habits with mean rating of 3.93 and the Standard deviation of 1.15.

Similarly, 224(77.8%) of the participants agreed that connecting with colleagues who have shared experiences and can offer empathy and understanding. However, 51(17.7%) of the respondents disagreed that connecting with colleagues who have shared experiences and can offer empathy and understanding. Further, the study findings revealed that participants agreed towards the statement that connecting with colleagues who have shared experiences and can offer empathy and understanding with mean rating of 3.83 and the standard deviation of 1.20.

Finally, 229(79.6%) of the respondents agreed that participating in structured discussions with a trained professional to process and share your experience and on the other hand 51(17.7%) of the respondents disagreed that participating in structured discussions with a trained professional to process and share your experience. Additionally, the study results further revealed that the respondents agreed that participating in structured discussions with a trained professional to process and share your experience them with mean rating of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 1.16.

Factor Analysis for critical Incident Stress Management

Principle Component Analysis was conducted to verify item loadings through which redundant items were identified and omitted from analysis. Results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Component Matrix for critical Incident Stress Management

		Component
		1
1	I feel comfortable accessing CISM services offered by the NPS after experiencing a critical incident.	.585
2	Having a clear understanding of your own thoughts, feelings, and physical reactions to stress.	.797
3	Knowing and practicing methods to manage stress, such as deep breathing, relaxation exercises, and healthy lifestyle habits.	.772
4	Connecting with colleagues who have shared experiences and can offer empathy and understanding.	.678
5	Participating in structured discussions with a trained professional to process and share your experience.	.648
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.710
Approx. Chi-Square		325.919
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	10
Sig.		.000
Total Variance Explained		
Total		2.454
Cumulative %		49.083

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

1 component extracted.

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 3 showed that five items were proposed to measure incident stress management. The KMO value of incident stress management was 0.710 indicating that sampling was adequate. The significant chi-square value for Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 325.919$, $p < 0.05$) confirmed that data collected for incident stress management was adequate (Table 4.12). Rotated component matrix for incident stress management indicators was run. The five incident stress management statements explained cumulatively 49.083% of the variance in rotation sums of squared components associated with the factors. None of the statements was deleted all were retained, computed and renamed for assurance further analysis.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to identify the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables (Senthilnathan, 2019). Table 4 present the results.

Table 4
Correlation Analysis

		Job satisfaction	Incident stress management
Job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	
Incident stress management	Pearson Correlation	.536**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0. 01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table 4 showed that Incident stress management was positively associated with job satisfaction among national police service officers in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya ($r=0.536^{**}$; $p<0.01$).

Model Summary

The coefficient of determination (R^2) and correlation coefficient (R) showed the degree of association between dependent and independent variables. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Interpretation of Multiple Regression Models

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.685	.470	.462	.64129

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 5 displays the regression findings, which showed an R^2 of 0.470 and an R-value of 0.685. The high linear correlation between the dependent and independent variables was indicated by the R-value of 0.685. According to the coefficient of determination (R^2), the independent variables provided 0.470 of the total explanation. The regression model accounted for roughly 47.0% of the observed variation in the independent variable.

Regression Model Fitness Test

The model's fitness was checked to test if it provided the best possible fit for the data. Table 6 showed the outcomes of the investigation.

Table 6
Fitness of Regression Model

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	103.144	4	25.786	62.701	.000b
Residual	116.386	283	.411		
Total	219.530	287			

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 6 displayed an F-statistic of ($F=62.701$), which was statistically significant at the $p=0.000$ level, demonstrating that the model was accurate. This means that the data were well-fit by the multiple regression model. That is why it was important considering the independent variables while designing the system.

Regression Model Coefficients

Running a regression model yielded coefficients for use in the regression equation. Table 7 details the study's findings.

Table 7

Regression Model Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.767	.196		3.914	.000
Critical incident stress management	.185	.052	.197	3.566	.000

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 7 showed that the Critical incident stress management had a positive linear effect on job satisfaction among national police service officers ($\beta_1=0.185$, $p=0.000$). This showed that a 0.185-unit improvement in on job satisfaction among national police service officers can be attained by instituting a more stress management.

Hypothesis testing of effect of critical incident stress management on job satisfaction among national police service officers

Hypothesis H_{01} stated that there is no significant effect of critical incident stress management on job satisfaction among national police service officers in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Results in table 7 showed that critical incident stress management has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction among national police service officers ($\beta_1=0.185$, $p<0.05$). Basing on the results the null hypothesis is rejected suggesting that critical incident stress management had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction among national police service officers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The positive reception towards Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) highlights the importance of accessible mental health services and stress management techniques. Officers expressed comfort in utilizing these services and emphasized the value of understanding and managing stress, peer support, and professional counseling.

Recommendations

The study recommends that that enhancement of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Programs by Ensuring that all officers are aware of and have easy access to CISM services. Regularly communicate the availability and benefits of these services and also conduct regular training sessions focused on stress management techniques such as deep breathing, relaxation exercises, and maintaining healthy lifestyle habits.

Suggested Areas of Further Study

The future researchers to focus on how to promote awareness and encourage participation in all counselling programs which can address any stigma associated with seeking help.

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