

An Evaluation of Factors Influencing Perception of Job Satisfaction among Police Officers in Kenya

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Abstract

Many observers believe that men and women bring to policing differences in attitude, values and perceptions that influence the way they do their work. Female police officers have been assumed to have greater commitment to public service, more calming and reassuring demeanours, and less violent encounters with citizens (Bell 1982), and others have recently argued that the inclusion of women in policing is particularly relevant to the current emphasis on community policing and the *Nyumba Kumi* initiatives in Kenya. More directly, Wilson (1991) asserts that not only should there be more women police, but that there also should be room for women's perspectives on what policing ought to be (which assumes that such perspectives already exist among women, if not yet among women police officer). Studies have shown that differing socialization experiences of males and females incline men and women to adopt differing perspectives on justice for men, predominantly a morality of justice, and for women, predominantly a morality of care. For many, this perspective has become a starting point for much of the debate on criminal justice administration including policing (Jack & Jack 1989; Menkel-Meadow & Diamond 1991; Wilson 1991). Extrapolations from this theory have led to the assumption that men and women differ in their conception of the police role, with men concentrating on law enforcement and women likely to perceive the role more broadly as service and community oriented. It has also been suggested that men may be more at ease than women with the rules, hierarchy and discipline of police organizations (Worden, 1993). There is little empirical work in the literature confirming the suggested differences between male and female officers' perceptions, attitudes or behaviours, but this recent study in Western Kenya supports the beliefs about differences between male and female police officers that observers such as Bell (1982) espouse.

Keywords: Perceptions, Job Satisfaction, Police Officers

1.1 Background

Although the concept of job satisfaction has been extensively investigated in other professions, empirical research conducted on job satisfaction among police officers has been limited (Bennett, 1997; Dantzker, 1994; Zhao et al., 1999). Hackman and Oldham (1975) suggest that changes in intrinsic work environments lead to higher levels of motivation and satisfaction among employees. Their theory includes three constructs: (1) core job characteristics, (2) critical psychological states, and (3) outcomes. Core job characteristics include: (a) skill variety, (b) task identity, (c) task significance, (d) autonomy, and (e) feedback. If employers adequately provide these five job characteristics, employees will experience three critical psychological states: (1) meaningfulness of the job, (2) responsibility of outcomes of work activities, and (3) knowledge of work outcomes. These three critical psychological states then lead to positive outcomes, such as: (a) higher internal motivation, (b) higher growth job satisfaction, (c) higher general job satisfaction and d) increased productivity and less absenteeism and turnover.

They also argued that employees experience satisfaction when they have autonomy and discretion on the job. Timely and/or positive feedback regarding their job activities as well as the knowledge that their work outcomes are helpful for others also promotes job satisfaction. In addition, job challenges that require a variety of skills enrich and enlarge the job and elevate job satisfaction. Hackman and Oldham (1980) developed a measurement scale, the Job Diagnostic Scale (JDS) to measure job satisfaction levels of employees using the five core job characteristics.

Prior research regarding the major determinants (demographic and organizational variables) on police job satisfaction is inconsistent. Consensus has not been reached about which demographic variables significantly predict job satisfaction. Zhao et al. (1999) pointed out that there has been very limited research on the relationship the work environment has on police and their job satisfaction levels. The most commonly used demographic variables in police job satisfaction are: age, gender, race, educational attainment, rank, and length of service (Zhao et al., 1999). For example, while some researchers maintained that age is significantly

correlated with job satisfaction among police officers (Dantzker, 1994), other researchers offered mixed findings (Buzawa et al., 1994). Similarly, researchers reported inconsistent findings with gender (Aremu & Adeyolu, 2003; Bennett, 1997; Burke & Mikkelsen, 2004; Buzawa et al., 1994; Dantzker, 1994; Grant, Garrison & McCormick, 1990).

Dantzker's (1994) job satisfaction survey of twelve police departments in six states (N = 552) indicated that police officer participants had low overall job satisfaction levels. They reported the greatest dissatisfaction with the pay and the least dissatisfaction with supervisory support. Police officers between the ages of 20 and 25 were more satisfied than other age groups. The male police officers had higher job satisfaction levels than female police officers. The men were more likely to change police departments, while the women were more likely to accept a job offer different from policing. Police officers with the rank of sergeant had the lowest satisfaction level compared to other police officers. While the education level of police officers did not have a significant impact on job satisfaction levels, the findings indicated a weak relationship between education and job satisfaction. Finally, ethnicity/race and age had the greatest impact on the police officers' perceptions of job satisfaction. Black officers reported greater satisfaction than did their white colleagues.

Other studies found that education had an inconsistent affect upon police job satisfaction. Some researchers found a positive correlation between education level and job satisfaction relationship between job satisfaction and education level of police officers. Other researchers reported that education level did not have a significant effect on job satisfaction among police officers (Griffin, Dunbar, & McGill, 1978). The same inconsistent pattern was present for rank and length of service. Some researchers reported a negative relationship between rank and length of service and job satisfaction among police officers (Buzawa et al., 1994; Dantzker, 1992, 1994; Hoath, Schneider & Starr, 1998; Brunetto & Farr-Wharton, 2003) while others reported the opposite (Burke, 1989) or no relationship (Bennett, 1997).

Organizational psychologists have investigated job satisfaction and its influence on different organizational factors, such as absenteeism, employee turnover, productivity, pay, skill variety, task identity, autonomy, supervision, and promotion. Commonly used organizational variables to measure job satisfaction perceptions among police officers: a) equipment, b) pay, c) promotion, d) work environment (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback), e) supervisor relations, f) work-family conflict, g) stress, and h) management policies (Dantzker, 1994). These organizational variables have had differing impacts upon police job satisfaction.

Slovak (1978) found that work satisfaction among police officers was multidimensional and was mostly determined by: (a) equipment/preparation, (b) compensation /advancement, and (c) management/organization. Dantzker and Surette (1996) determined that the police officers were least satisfied with pay and availability of in-service training but they were most satisfied with their present assignment and immediate supervisor support. Dantzker (1997) reported that organizational size had an impact on police officer job satisfaction. Police officers from agencies that employed less than 100 sworn officers had the highest job satisfaction levels among the three groups of agencies. Police officers from agencies that employed more than 500 sworn officers had the lowest job satisfaction levels among the three groups of agencies. Brunetto and Farr-Wharton (2002) found that pay, dealing with clientele, and organizational management practices (promotion, appraisal, and other procedures) decreased police officer job satisfaction. Howard, Donofrio and Boles (2004) reported that work-family conflict was a strong predictor of different aspects of police job satisfaction.

Mire (2005) surveyed 87 police officers from Lafayette, Louisiana to determine correlates of their job satisfaction. In addition to demographic variables, organizational (e.g., task identity, skill variety, task significance, autonomy, and feedback), and personality variables (e.g., neuroticism, extraversion, and openness) were considered. Age, years of service, and rank was significantly correlated to job satisfaction. Also, all of the five organizational variables had significant correlations with job satisfaction, explaining 13% of the variance. Personality variables could explain only 10% of the variance in police job satisfaction. Another organizational variable is the stated purpose of the department. Innovations in policing, such as community policing, have contributed to job satisfaction. The relationship between the two, however, is complex. Some studies have examined the impact of community oriented policing upon job satisfaction. Adams, Rohe, and Arcury (2002) found that community police officers were more positive about their assignments, more accepting of different policing strategies, more optimistic about the impact of COP on police-community relations, and were more satisfied with their jobs compared to traditional police officers. Halsted, Bromley, and Cochran (2000) reported that deputies with strong orientations for community service had higher job satisfaction levels than deputies with strong crime control orientations. Ford and his colleagues (2003) determined that a sample of Midwestern police officers' job satisfaction was directly related to their commitment to their organization. Yet, their level of commitment to a community policing strategy was unrelated to their job satisfaction but strongly related to their behaviors in support of the strategy. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate gender differences in police officers perception of job satisfaction in Kenya.

1.2 Problem Statement

The rapid increase in nature and extent of gender diversity in the National police Service in Kenya; the increase in prior educational achievement amongst police recruits; and changes to the philosophy of policing (an emphasis on community policing and service over law and order issues) are factors which should not be underestimated in so far as their influence on perceptions of job satisfaction is concerned. It seems likely that not only will conceptions of the police role have changed, but the reasons that recruits hold for joining the police may also have changed. In addition, given the rapid increase in recruitment of women, it is appropriate to ask whether males and females differ in their reasons for wanting to become a police officer, and whether males and females differ in the role perceptions that they have of policing and if those perceptions have any bearing on their perceived job satisfaction. Moreover, the role perceptions and reasons for joining held by new recruits differ from those of longer serving officers of either gender.

A variety of job characteristics have been studied to investigate the extent to which police officers differently value various aspects of their jobs. These characteristics include occupational prestige, feedback, earnings, education, job complexity, level of authority exercised, how closely the worker is supervised, job pressure, being held responsible for things outside, one's control, how frequently one has to get dirty on the job, being underemployed, workplace size, and level of optimism about one's future at the current job. These and related measures of job and organizational characteristics have a long history of use in the literature on job satisfaction and have been consistently identified as major determinants of job satisfaction (Parries, Shea, Spitz, and Zeller 1970; Quinn, Staines, and McCullough, 1974). It is upon this background that this study sought to investigate factors influencing perceptions of job satisfaction among police officers in Kenya.

1.3 Study Objective

To investigate the factors influencing Perceptions of Job Satisfaction among police officers in Kenya.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.4.1 Theoretical Review

This study was guided by the role conflict theory. According to Baron (1983), role conflict theory suggests that individuals experience role conflict when others' expectations for their behaviour are inconsistent with the individual's own expectations. Chusmir and Koberg (1986) propose that such conflict may arise from intra-personal, intra-role or inter-role incongruities. When such conflict, irrespective of the source of the incongruity, results largely from quite different expectations based on gender, the conflict is sex role conflict. Sex role conflict is the degree of conflict expressed between an individual's treatment based on gender versus that person's treatment as an individual (intra-role or inter-role incongruity). It also involves the impact of the private self-concept of the person's sex role versus the self defined by one's society and work organization: Chusmir and Koberg (1986) refer to this as intra-personal incongruity.

1.4.2 Major determinants of job satisfaction among Police Officers

One significant aspect of public sector organizations that has been addressed in recent years is job satisfaction. It has drawn this interest because of the complex issues that face governmental agencies in the coming years due to limited funding and the need for stability. Job satisfaction has an influence on productivity in different ways. As defined by Locke (1976), job satisfaction is a positive state originating from the appraisal of someone's work or work experiences. Positive changes in working groups, supervision, incentives, and the work itself can increase the productivity and the quality of services in organizations (Argyle, 1972). However, job dissatisfaction can lead to lower productivity, efficiency, effectiveness and poor employee morale (More, et.al. 2006). Although the concept of job satisfaction has been extensively investigated in other professions, empirical research conducted on job satisfaction among police officers has been limited (Bennett, 1997; Dantzker, 1994; Zhao et al., 1999). As Bennett maintained, job satisfaction is a "neglected but important and timely topic in police studies" (1997, p. 296). Buzawa et al. (1994) stated that research on job satisfaction in policing is newer than similar research involving other professions: only about 20 published articles treating job satisfaction as a dependent variable pertain directly to policing." Dantzker (1994) argued that police job satisfaction literature is methodically and topically limited. Griffin, Dunbar, and McGill noted that "job satisfaction, which has long been recognized in private industry as a prerequisite for successful job performance, has been merely a slogan in police organizations" (1978, p. 77). Even a decade later, most criminal justice researchers agree that research on job satisfaction among police officers is subject to further investigation.

There are several reasons why job satisfaction is important to police organizations. First, negative attitudes toward work can adversely affect job performance in both the quantity and quality of services provided. Thus, poor performance can impact police-community relations by adversely affecting public attitudes toward the police (Buzawa, Austin, & Bannon, 1994).

In addition to a moral obligation to demonstrate concern for its employees and promote positive work-related attitudes, job satisfaction promotes lower stress levels and, accordingly, fewer symptoms of stress (e.g.,

absenteeism, burnout, and alcoholism) (Hoath et al., 1998: 338). Police officers can experience high rates of employee turnover due to their low job satisfaction (Zhao et al. 1999). Loo's (2004: 162) study of 135 male Canadian police managers determined that a substantial portion of the respondents (34.1%) fit the profile of high burnout "distressed police managers" that warranted some significant type of organizational intervention. As a result of high employee turnover, increased recruitment and training expenses for new police applicants may harm the limited budgets of law enforcement agencies, thus endangering the effectiveness of public safety. Consequently, research on job satisfaction among police officers may provide valuable information that can improve the quality of police services.

According to Herzberg (1959), different factors combine to create job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among employee. He identified these as either motivators or hygiene factors. Motivators promote job satisfaction. They include: (a) achievement, (b) responsibility, (c) the work itself, (d) recognition, and (e) advancement/promotion. Hygiene factors do not directly lead to job satisfaction among employees. However, their absence may lead to job dissatisfaction. They consist of: (a) organizational policies, (b) supervision and leadership, (c) pay or salary, (d) work conditions, (e) communication with supervisors/work partners.

Herzberg contended that employees need to reach an acceptable level of hygiene factors to feel neutral about their jobs. Therefore, employers should seek ways of eliminating dissatisfaction resulting from hygiene factors and focus on improving the motivators in the work environment to increase job satisfaction. Zhao and his colleagues (1999: 154) stated that Herzberg's (1968) two-factor theory of job satisfaction "provides a useful theoretical framework for empirically assessing officers' job satisfaction." They further suggested that

Studies have sought to provide reasons why women may hold more positive job attitudes is that women may rely on the family as an alternative source of satisfaction and therefore, evaluate work-related concerns in a softer light. The role of children in moderating women's attachment to work has been a focus of much research (Crosby 1982), but tests of this hypothesis have met with mixed results. Quinn, Staines, and McCullough (1974) find that working women with children under six are less satisfied than those without young children. More recently, however, Crosby (1982) reports that single workers and married workers without children are less satisfied with their jobs than are married workers with children. She argues that this is because the problems and joys associated with children shift attention away from work concerns and toward the family.

Different expectations that men and women bring to the workplace provide another possible explanation for women's greater reported job satisfaction. Complaints about work result not just from objective problems at work, but also from the expectations brought to the work situation (Hodson 1985). Educated workers, for example, report greater dissatisfaction with a given job than do less educated workers in the same job (Glenn and Weaver, 1982). What are the relevant expectations that workers bring to the job? Crosby (1982) report that most workers compare themselves to someone of the same sex in appraising their jobs. Women's relative job satisfaction, then, may be more easily understood if we are able to assume that women workers compare themselves to other women but not to male workers.

Under this assumption, the employment situation of women's own mothers when they were growing up may provide a meaningful referent. If a woman's mother was not employed outside the home when she was growing up, her reference group is likely to be women who work at home. This reference point may make paid work outside the home seem relatively desirable, regardless of its limitations. More specifically, the income and status associated with paid work outside the home may compare favorably with unpaid household work. Conversely, if a woman's mother was employed outside the home when she was growing up, her reference group is more likely to be paid employees and her expectations of work may be higher. Research by Kessler and McRae (1982) indicates that employment outside the home is associated with improved mental health among women, providing tentative support for the hypothesis that women experience outside employment as a relatively favorable opinion. Women may also compare their situation with those of their sisters or female friends as relevant others. Again, comparisons with significant others who work at home may make women relatively satisfied with whatever paid work they have.

1.5 Study Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design where 293 respondents were identified using simple random sampling amongst male and female police officers serving in Western Kenya Counties between April and July 2016. The study used a standard questionnaire to obtain information from respondents. Questionnaire method was found effective due to the large sample because is facilitated easy and quick collection of information within a short time as noted by Kerlinger (2004). The structured (closed-ended) and unstructured (open-ended) items were used so as to get the responses from respondents. The data obtained from the field was organized, edited to ensure completeness, comprehensibility and consistency, classified and coded according to research hypotheses and objectives for analysis. Study data was analyzed by use of both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures by the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 for windows. Each question related to a variable was assigned a score or numerical value by use of likert scale method. The number

on a likert scale was ordered such that they indicate the presence or absence of the characteristics being measured. All statistical measurements were performed at 95% confidence level.

1.6 Results

Both descriptive as well as inferential statistics were calculated and presented in this section.

Table 1.1: Descriptive Statistics for determinants of Job Satisfaction

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Skills variety	38.46	5.24
Autonomy	0.81	0.42
Task significance	4.93	0.79
Task identity	5.02	0.85
Feedback	5.83	1.22
Job Satisfaction	77.98	9.96

Descriptive statistics of the constructs of job satisfaction in the police service are presented in this section.

1.6.1 Skill Variety

The study adopted a skills variety measurement as used in Burke's (2007) job diagnostic scale. The items that make up our skill variety scale are: My job provides me much variety; While performing my job I get the opportunity to work on many interesting policing assignments; My job gives me the opportunity to use many new technologies for police work. The respondents indicated their responses to these items using a 5-point Likert -type scale that were described as strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) . Higher scores indicated more skill variety with a particular task. The internal consistency for this measure was 0.72 and was acceptable.

1.6.2 Autonomy

The study adopted a measure of autonomy that was a subscale from Burke's (2007) job diagnostic scale. The items that we used for this measure were: My job lets me be left on my own to do my own work; My job provides me the opportunity of self-directed flexibility of work hours; I am able to act independently of my supervisor in performing my police function. The respondents indicated their responses to these items using a 5-point Likert-type scale that was described as strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Higher scores indicated more autonomy with a particular task. The internal consistency for this measure was low 0.46, but this is consistent with the Burke's (2007) use of the measure.

1.6.3 Task Significance

This study adopted a measure of task significance as a subscale that came from Burke's (2007) version of the job diagnostic scale. The items that comprised this measure were: My job is one that may affect a lot of other people by how well the work is performed; My job has the ability to influence decisions that significantly affect the National Police Service; My job influences day-to-day work success. The respondents indicated their responses to these items using a 5-point Likert-type scale that were described as strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Higher scores indicated more significance with a particular task. The internal consistency for this measure was low 0.63, but this is consistent with the Burke's (2007) use of the measure.

1.6.4 Task Identity

The measure of task identity used in the study was subscale that came from Burke's (2007) version of the job diagnostic scale. The items that comprised this measure were: My job allows me the opportunity to complete the work I started; My job is arranged so that I have a chance and the ability to talk with customers/clients/and users; My job is arranged so that I have an understanding of how it relates to the mission of the National Police Service. The respondents indicated their responses to these items using a 5-point Likert -type scale that was described as strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Higher scores indicated more identification with a particular task. The internal consistency for this measure was low 0.43, but this is consistent with the Burke's (2007) use of the measure.

1.6.5 Feedback

The measures of feedback used in the study were those adopted from Burke's (2007) job diagnostic scale. The items that we used for this measure were: My job by itself provides feedback on how well I am performing policing duties; My job provides me with the opportunity to both communicate with my supervisor and to receive recognition from them as well; I receive feedback from my fellow police officers about my performance on the job. The respondents indicated their responses to these items using a 5-point Likert-type scale that was described as strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Higher scores indicated more feedback. The internal consistency for this measure was low 0.59 and this is consistent with the Burke's (2007) use of the measure.

1.6.6 Job Satisfaction

The study used Dantzker's (1993) job satisfaction scale as the dependent measure for this study. The measure consisted of 14-items, and the respondents indicated their agreement to the items using a 5-point Likert scale that was presented as strongly disagree (1) through to strongly agree (5). The measure captured job satisfaction information on six dimensions of job satisfaction (i.e., supervision, salary, recognition, equipment, education,

and job position). Dantzker (1993) used this version of the measure as a unidimensional measure of job satisfaction. The internal consistency for the measure was appropriate 0.85, and higher scores indicated higher levels of job satisfaction.

Table 1.2: Regression analysis for determinants of Job Satisfaction

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	Tolerance
Seniority	-0.57*	0.35	-0.28	0.44
Skill Variety	0.69	1.21	0.06	0.58
Task Identity	-0.42	1.29	-0.05	0.66
Task Significance	1.59	1.31	0.15	0.64
Autonomy	1.33	1.02	0.11	0.73
Feedback	1.99*	1.09	0.19	0.57
Rank	0.93	1.29	0.03	0.71

Study findings in table 1.2 present the regression analysis for the determinants of job satisfaction. These results indicate that three measures had a link with job satisfaction. Seniority had the least significant effect on job satisfaction in the police service ($b=-0.57$, $\text{Beta}=-0.28$). As feedback increases job satisfaction increases ($b=1.99$, $\text{Beta}=0.19$). This finding was consistent with previous job satisfaction studies in policing. Demographic differences provide little or no explanation as determinants of job satisfaction among police officers (Zhao et al., 1996). This conclusion also appears to be true for senior police officers. Study results also revealed that the five organizational variables (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) could explain 29.8% (a medium effect size) of the variance in job satisfaction perceptions of police officers in Kenya. Feedback ($\beta= .513$, $p <.05$) was the only statistically significant predictor of job satisfaction among these variables. This pattern also was present in Mire's (2005) study. He determined that organizational variables explained 34% of the variance in job satisfaction, while reporting a much lower effect for demographic variables. Overall, the organizational variables were better predictors of job satisfaction among police officers than demographic variables – another finding that is consistent with the previous studies of junior officers in police service (Zhao et al., 1999; Chiou 2004; Mire, 2005).

1.7 Conclusions and Recommendations

This study focused on determinants of job satisfaction in the police service in Kenya. Generalizations about the research findings are limited by the nature of the sample itself. The previous studies on this subject were limited to rank and file. By virtue of their rank, police officers in Kenya enjoy some privileges along with their increased responsibility. For example, they may have better work conditions than junior level police constables. Such privileges may include; private work spaces, cars, equipment, greater autonomy, higher salaries and flexible work hours. Thus, these enhancements may account for their high level of job satisfaction. The study also found that police officers operating on a system of continuous shift work had low job satisfaction perceptions. Also, the participants' rank may provide them with status and good connections within the police national police service environment which may increase job satisfaction. Another possible explanation for the high job satisfaction perceptions of these police officers is related to their desire to excel. The majority of the participants in this study were police officers who were currently pursuing higher education and training in local academic institutions, mostly near their places of work. They pursue higher education with the expectation that may have a bright career in policing in the future. The first research finding was that demographic variables (age, gender, education, rank, and years in the present department) were not significant predictors of job satisfaction. The results indicate that feedback had a significant effect on job satisfaction among police officers hence the need to espouse it. Based on the study findings, autonomy in service delivery, timely feedback from superiors and colleagues, task variety and organizational support are recommended to be encouraged since they have been found to be related to perceptions of job satisfaction among police officers in Kenya.

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