

Training and Job Satisfaction among Mortuary Personnel in Selected Hospitals in Kenya: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: With the global healthcare landscape undergoing rapid transitions and countries striving to achieve Universal Healthcare Coverage (UHC), it is pertinent that they look for efficient and effective ways of delivering their health services and utilisation of their human resource. Therefore, the mere availability of mortuary attendants is not enough, it additionally calls for their occupational satisfaction and empowerment for them to deliver their services efficiently and effectively and this is influenced by training in their area of practice. The study aimed at determining the relationship between training and job satisfaction among mortuary personnel in the selected mortuary facilities in Kenya.

Methods: The study used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods where the former method captured such measurements as frequency of training while the latter determined the participants' experiences and perceptions on this subject. Quantitative data was collected using pretested open and closed ended questionnaires, whereas qualitative data was collected through Key Informant Interviews (KI) with mortuary superintendents. A sample size of 193 mortuary staff was selected from Public, Private (PM) and Institutional mortuaries (IM) in Nairobi City County. The study had a 79% response rate. Quantitative data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Inferential statistics were calculated using Chi-Square tests and results with $p < 0.05$ were considered significant outcomes. Qualitative data from the key informants was analysed using NVivo software.

Results: The study showed that the overall satisfaction level was 44.7%. From the respondents who were satisfied, a higher number 28(41.2%) of them disagreed with satisfaction with the opportunities for continued learning provided by the management. There was a significant statistical association between the relevance of training opportunities provided and job satisfaction ($p=0.017$).

Conclusions: The study showed that majority of the respondents felt that training influenced their job satisfaction to a high extent. It highlighted the need for constant and targeted training to ensure that the employees remain current with new technologies and techniques, enhancing their job satisfaction and effectiveness

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Training, Mortuary, Personnel

INTRODUCTION

Different definitions have been used to describe the job satisfaction concept, one of them being the fulfilment that an employee derives from one's job experience. ^[1] In many instances, job satisfaction has been seen to influence organizational variables such as productivity, quantity and quality of work. ^{[2],[3]} While many scholars have worked on investigating and ascertain job satisfaction levels across various cadres of healthcare workers in the world, one notable category that has been largely overlooked are the mortuary personnel. ^{[4],[5]}

Problem statement

In many Low and Middle Income Countries (LMIC) settings, mortuary staffs are largely neglected and work in deplorable conditions that may result to low morale while performing their duties. ^[6]The mortuary personnel and

the funeral industry at large is highly ignored by researchers partly because of the stigma surrounded in the topic of death.^[7] Additionally, very few people are willing to undertake profession in the funeral industry, hence those who are willing are overworked and their job satisfaction level is affected negatively.^[8]

Mortuary personnel, especially those in public facilities, operate in poor working environment with lack of proper equipment such as mortuary trolleys, body bags, and instruments such as scissors, adjustable retractors or PPEs such as gloves hence exposing them to health hazards and reducing their levels of job satisfaction.^{[9],[10]} To be an efficient mortuary worker requires possessing knowledge and abilities to perform one's duties efficiently and effectively.^[11]

Justification for the study

The current death rate in Kenya stands at 5.488 deaths per 1000 people and majority of them are preserved in morgues^[12] According to the Funeral Service Association of Kenya (FSAK), the current number of qualified mortuary attendants stands at approximately 200 against the targeted 1000 countrywide.^[13] This critical shortfall of morticians in the country leads to lack of regulation and professionalism. This number has also been deemed far less than sufficient to meet labor-turnover requirement.

Despite the progress made by African countries regarding studies on job satisfaction models, they are mostly based on theoretical grounds heavily borrowed from High Income Countries (HIC) including the US, UK and Asia.^[14] Additionally, majority of the existing literature on mortuary personnel narrowly focus on their occupational safety aspect, and few on their job satisfaction levels^[15]. These reasons justified the undertaking to carry out the study.

Study objective

The objective of this study was to determining the relationship between training and job satisfaction among mortuary personnel in Kenya.

METHODS

Study design

The study was carried out in the months of February through May of 2022. It utilized a descriptive cross sectional study design since this design gives an image of a population at that point in time. It also allows collection of data from large area by use of questionnaires to determine characteristics within the population.^[16]

Study area

The study was done in Nairobi City County which was purposively chosen since it is the most populated county in Kenya with population of 4,397,073.^[17] The county has more than ten mortuaries spread across public, private and non- governmental institutions with City mortuary being the largest funeral parlour with a capacity of more than 300 bodies.

Independent and dependent variables

The independent variable for the study was the training of the workers and it focused on Continuous Professional Development, Capacity Building and Opportunity for Advanced Training. Training was defined as the process that one gathers thoughts that influence their knowledge and how they handle responsibilities.^[18]

The dependent variable was job satisfaction which was defined as the level of feeling of fulfilment or enjoyment that a person derives from their job.

Inclusion Criteria

The study included all the mortuary staff working in the selected public, private and institutional mortuaries in

Nairobi City County for more than six months and was present during the time of the study.

Exclusion Criteria

The study excluded mortuary staff working in public, private and institutional mortuaries in Nairobi City County who had worked for more than six months but declined to consent to take part in the study.

Study population

The study respondents were 193 mortuary staff who had worked in the selected public, private and institutional mortuary facilities in Nairobi City County for more than six months were present during the time of the study and had given informed consent. Each mortuary facility was purposively selected and using the lists obtained from each of the facility, the study respondents were randomly selected using computer generated random numbers to ensure that they stood an equal chance of being picked.

Apart from the 193 respondents whose data was collected through questionnaires, additionally ten (10) Key Informant Interviews (KII) were carried out targeting one (1) mortuary superintendent from each of the ten facilities in order to obtain additional information that was used to inform the study.

Sample Size Determination

Statistical sample size was determined using a formula by Fisher *et al.*, (1998) as shown:

$$n=(z^2 pq)/d^2$$

Where;

n=Sample size

Z=Standard Normal deviate (1.96 for a 95% confidence level)

P= Proportion of sample population estimated to have characteristics being measured (0.5)

d=the level of accuracy desired, or the sampling error (Standard value of 0.05).

Therefore;

$$n=((1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5)/(0.05)^2 = 384 \text{ Respondents}$$

Since the population in the institutional, public and private mortuaries was less than 10,000 (The population of the mortuary personnel at the facilities is 320); the final sample size as with Cochran (1967) formula which adjusts it as:

$$n_f = n/(1+n/N) = 384/(1+384/320) = 175$$

An additional allotment of 10% of the approximated sample size (18 respondents) was included to cater for non-response translating to a total sample size of 193 respondents.

Sampling techniques

Cluster sampling procedure was applied to ensure representativeness with each mortuary facility, and further staff gender, constituting a stratum. The three clusters comprised of 6 Institutional mortuaries (190 personnel), the Public mortuary (28 personnel) and the 3 Private mortuaries (102 personnel). A total number of 193 mortuary staff randomly selected from each of the three clusters across the ten facilities is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Proportion of respondents selected from each hospital.

Institutional Mortuaries	No of Mortuary Staff			Sample Size		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
A	54	10	44	33	6	27
B	43	13	30	26	8	18
C	22	5	17	13	3	10
D	19	3	16	11	2	9
E	17	7	10	10	4	13
F	35	11	24	21	7	14
Total	190	49	141	114	30	84
Public Mortuary	No of Mortuary Staff			Sample Size		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Q	28	12	16	17	8	9
Total	28	12	16	17	8	9
Private Mortuaries	No of Mortuary Staff			Sample Size		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
X	42	17	25	25	10	15
Y	33	9	24	20	5	15
Z	27	11	16	17	7	10
Total	102	37	65	62	22	40
GRAND TOTAL	320	98	222	193	60	133

Quantitative data from the mortuary personnel was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. qualitative data was gathered using topic guides. The Key Informant Interviews on mortuary superintendents was carried out using a topic guide that was developed drawn on document review and literature.

RESULTS

The study showed that 52 (34.2%) of the respondents reported that they were dissatisfied by the opportunities offered for training by the management. However, 39(25.7%), agreed that they were satisfied with the training opportunities provided. To triangulate these findings with those from the qualitative interviews, one of the respondents who strongly agreed with the statement said;

“Our institution is very deliberate on the worker’s expending their knowledge with the changing times. For instance, new workers have to be thoroughly trained on their immediate working environment. Also, with the

change in the disease landscape, there is targeted training for the workers aimed at guiding them how to handle bodies differently based on the suspected cause of death.”

K I-4-PM

There was an almost similar view from respondents regarding their satisfaction with the creation of fair conditions for the personnel to learn and grow. While 45(29.6%) agreed with the statement, 39(25.7%) disagreed. Regarding the relevance of training to their work, a higher number of the respondents agreed that it was relevant 48(31.6%), closely followed by 37(24.3%) who disagreed. One of the key informants who disagreed with the statement said;

“At times it feels as though we are just put together with all the other departments whenever there is a funded training. I will not even fault the management much because most of the time you will find that the funders are quite rigid and wants to train on a specific topic regardless of the needs.”

KI-10-IM

Concerning the frequency of the training provided to encourage knowledge gain for workers, 52(34.2%), disagreed that they were frequent enough, whereas 43(28.3%) agreed that they were sufficient. When asked whether they felt that the training received matched up with the changing needs of the workplace, a higher number of the respondents 47(30.9%) agreed with the statement, followed by 34(22.4%), who disagreed. Further to this, there was a tie for those who strongly agreed and strongly disagreed with the adaptability of the training at 25(16.4%).

Respondents were asked whether the training was planned and purposeful, and out of the 152 responses, 51(33.6%) agreed while 43(28.2%) disagreed and those who strongly agreed were 31(20.4%). The study showed that 47(30.9%) respondents agreed that training and development were encouraged and rewarded, whereas 38(25.0%) disagreed. One of the respondents who agreed with the statement said;

“Besides number of years one has worked and their level of experience, a key factor that attributed to promotion is the level of education and even add-on courses. You find that workers are allowed to take a study leave and in most instances their salaries are still paid in full.”

KI- 12- PM

From the respondents who were satisfied, a higher number 28(41.2%) of them disagreed with satisfaction with the opportunities for continued learning provided by the management (Table 2). Similarly, majority 23(33.8%) of those who were satisfied, disagreed with the department’s creation of fair conditions for learning and growth, however, there was no statistical association with job satisfaction ($p=0.193$).

Table 2: Relationship between training factors and job satisfaction (n=152)

Independent variable	Respondent response	Dependent variable (Mortuary personnel job satisfaction)		Frequency (N)
		Satisfied (N=68)	Dissatisfied (N=84)	
I am satisfied with the opportunities for continuing learning provided by the management	Strongly disagree	13(19.1%)	10(11.9%)	$\chi^2=8.23, df=4, p=0.083$
	Disagree	28(41.2%)	24(28.6%)	
	Neutral	7(10.3%)	12(14.2%)	

	Agree	11(16.2%)	28(33.3%)	
	Strongly agree	9(13.2%)	10(11.9%)	
I am satisfied with the department's creation of fair conditions for personnel to learn and grow	Strongly disagree	14(20.6%)	12(14.2%)	$\chi^2 = 6.084, df=4, p=0.193$
	Disagree	23(33.8%)	16(19.0%)	
	Neutral	6(8.8%)	9(10.7%)	
	Agree	19(27.9%)	26(30.9%)	
	Strongly agree	6(8.8%)	15(17.9%)	
The training opportunities provided are relevant to my work	Strongly disagree	10 (14.7%)	12(14.3%)	$\chi^2 = 6.311, df=4, p=0.17$
	Disagree	18(26.5%)	19(22.6%)	
	Neutral	7(10.3%)	10(11.9%)	
	Agree	21(30.9%)	27(32.1%)	
	Strongly agree	12(17.6%)	16(19.0%)	
The training opportunities provided are frequent enough to enable gain of skills	Strongly disagree	17(25.0%)	5(5.9%)	$\chi^2 = 25.332, df=4, p=0.001$
	Disagree	19(27.9%)	33(39.3%)	
	Neutral	10(14.7%)	6(7.1%)	
	Agree	12(17.6%)	31(36.9%)	
	Strongly agree	10(14.7%)	9(10.7%)	
The department provides learning/training opportunities to meet the changing needs of my workplace	Strongly disagree	11(16.2%)	14(16.7%)	$\chi^2 = 6.384, df=4, p=0.173$
	Disagree	14(20.6%)	20(23.8%)	
	Neutral	10(14.7%)	11(13.1%)	
	Agree	20(29.4%)	27(32.1%)	
	Strongly agree	13(19.1%)	12(14.2%)	
Training and development are encouraged and rewarded in my department	Strongly disagree	6(8.8%)	11(13.1%)	$\chi^2 = 13.342, df=4, p=0.010$
	Disagree	14(20.6%)	24(28.6%)	

	Neutral	8(11.8%)	7(8.3%)	
	Agree	21(30.9%)	26(30.9%)	
	Strongly agree	19(27.9%)	16(19.1%)	

Regarding the training opportunities provided being relevant to their work, majority 21(30.9%) of those who agreed were satisfied, and there was a significant statistical association with job satisfaction ($p=0.017$).

From the respondents who were dissatisfied, many 33(39.3%) of them disagreed that the training opportunities that were provided were frequent enough to enable gain of skills. Additionally, there was a statistical association between this fact and job satisfaction from the analysis ($p=0.001$). From the respondents who were satisfied, 20(29.4%) of them agreed that their department provided learning and training opportunities to meet the changing needs of their workplace. However, there was no significant statistical association with job satisfaction ($p=0.173$).

DISCUSSION

The study showed that most employees were not satisfied with the opportunities that were provided for continued growth. This is because the employees felt that the opportunities were not consistent and in other instances not targeted. This observation was consistent with Momanyi *et al.*, (2016) and Oladotun & Öztüren, (2013) who ascertained a significant association between opportunities for career growth and job satisfaction. ^{[19],[20]}

Ganesh, (2019) observed that one of the most undervalued cadres among the healthcare personnel are the mortuary staff. Due to the stigmatization associated with this career, there is a shortage of talent entering the profession, and in most instances, individuals currently holding these positions often lack the opportunity to fully maximize their performance. This in return results into low job satisfaction levels, which impedes negatively on the health systems over time. ^[21]

Analysis on opportunities for growth showed that they should also be relevant to the area of work and up to date with the changing needs of the society. This observation was consistent with Munyewende *et al.*, (2014) and with Price and Reichert(2017) who showed that training provides an opportunity for keeping up with the changes in the specific industry. ^{[22],[23]} Consistent with Alnıaçık(2012), the study showed that the healthcare industry has always evolved with new technologies and techniques being discovered at a rapid pace, this factor therefore presents a need for constant training in all its sectors to help employees keep pace with these changes. ^[24]

CONCLUSION

The study showed that most employees were dissatisfied with the opportunities provided for continued growth, citing inconsistency and irrelevance. Further analysis highlighted the importance of offering growth opportunities that are relevant to the specific area of work and aligned with societal needs. Consistent training helps employees keep up with industry changes, particularly in rapidly evolving fields like healthcare. The study highlighted the need for constant and targeted training to ensure employees remain current with new technologies and techniques, enhancing their job satisfaction and effectiveness. The world has recently witnessed profound changes in the healthcare space including changes in disease patterns and demography among populations.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends continuous training among healthcare workers to improve their skills and operations in handling such changes. This will in turn increase the healthcare workers' confidence in carrying out their duties, hence improving their job satisfaction levels. Although the study was undertaken in both public and private mortuary facilities, its major limitation was that it was only undertaken in Nairobi City County. Further comparative studies should be undertaken in other Counties for better comparison due to variations in County characteristics.

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Conflict of interest: The author declares there was no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval: The study protocol was taken through the scientific and ethical clearing processes at the Kenyatta University Ethics Review Committee (KU-ERC) and National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). All participants were approached for interview only after authorization from the institution authorities. Informed consent was sought from the mortuary personnel recruited for the study. The purpose and nature of the study was explained to them, and privacy and confidentiality assured before consenting. It was made clear that: participation was fully voluntary and no identifiable details would be disclosed to any other person during the study period and/or dissemination of findings unless with prior explicit consent of the participant and that there were no direct material benefits to the study participants.

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