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Otieno, S. O., & Njoroge, J.

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INFLUENCE OF TRANSFER TIMING AND FREQUENCY ON PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG THE ADMINISTRATION POLICE SERVICE OFFICERS IN KENYA

[1] Otieno, S. O., & [2] Njoroge, J.

[1] Master Student, Department of Public Policy and Administration, School of Humanities and Social sciences, Kenyatta University [KU], Kenya

[2] Doctor, Lecturer, Department of Public Policy and Administration, School of Humanities and Social sciences, Kenyatta University [KU], Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The transfer of police officers has been associated with a decrease in police productivity, poor job satisfaction among officers mainly when officers are not comfortable with aspects of transfers such as timing and frequency. This issue has been contributing to incidences of police brutality and resignation of officers from the service. Despite that, scarce empirical literature concerning how these transfers influence police officers at individual level including their personal development has been published. This study sought to explore the effect of police transfers on the personal development of administration police officers. The objectives of this study were to explore influence of timing and frequency of transfers on personal development on police officers. This study was guided by the street-level bureaucratic theory the expectancy-value theory using a descriptive research design. The target population for this study was all the officers working in the border patrol unit of the Administration police service. The study involved a sample 100 officers from this unit through purposive sampling technique. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data, which was then sorted, coded, and analyzed through descriptive and inferential analysis. The study showed that Time-and-frequency of transfer has a varying negative effect on personal development. The study recommends policy makers to formulate a regular and predictable transfer schedule for police officers that consider the personal lives of officers and the transfer objectives.

Keywords: *Transfer, Timing, Frequency, Personal Development*

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INTRODUCTION

Transfer of employees is a common practise around the world both in public or private sector since mid-20th century, and in policing, the practice is as old as the history of policing. Transfer of police involves the lateral or diagonal relocation of police officers from one enforcement agency or one geographical location to another (Howes & Goodman, 2015). Lateral relocation is when officers move from one station to another within the same job status and job pay while diagonal transfer is when an officer experiences rise in job status and pay after a transfer (Tabiu *et al.,* 2016).

According to the NPS transfer policy, transfer of officers is affected to increase the effectiveness of the police service, through enhancement of versatility and competence and increase transparency in the service (NPS, 2015). The practice is also used as a disciplinary tool for correcting erroneous behaviours, increase transparency in the service, alleviate professional vices such as nepotism and favouritism, adjust workforce, relieve monotony and punish officers who commit mistakes (Diphoorn, 2019). The transfer is viewed as a tool for relocating malfeasant officers to places they cannot act as they wish or misuse their job position/authority.

The transfer can also reduce boredom and monotony and misunderstandings in between employees (Waihenya, 2019). The implications of police transfers are subjective as they depend on the perspective on which you look at the transfer. From the perspective of the police commission, the transfer can eliminate productivity constraints and prevent indiscipline issues among police officers. The practice can also weed out vices such as nepotism besides enhancing a balanced distribution of talent for different policing needs around the country (NPS, 2015). However, from a welfare perspective, the transfer can be detrimental to individual officers depending on the underlying factors. Where the officer disagrees with the circumstances surrounding the transfer, it can result in poor work morale and reduced job satisfaction (Reynolds *et al.,* 2018).

Personal development is concerned with the activities pursued by individuals to improve level of awareness, identity, proficiency, and quality of life, (Aubrey 2010). Employees tend to make this pursuit to improve their job status and wellbeing. The concept of personal development is derived from the Maslow's hierarchy of needs where individuals develop needs across five levels (Chen & Huang, *et al.,* 2017). The pursuit to fulfil these needs does not stop across the five levels of the hierarchy and new needs arise after each level (Chen & Huang, *et al.,* 2017). Personal development takes place throughout an individual's life as people seek to rise above their economic and social statuses (Debognies *et al*., 2019). This fact is the same to the police officers. This development may constitute of pursuits such as professional advancement in both academic and career terms, social development, and economic progress (Debognies *et al*., 2019).

That policing and other security facets of the governments in Kenya are viewed distinctly from the usual civil service does not negate the fact that police officer have individual goals and pursuits like other civil servants. Maslow's hierarchy of needs underscore the innate desire for all human beings to pursue actualization goals beyond basic needs and police officers are no exception (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016). This fact is best demonstrated by the transfer practices in the United States. Most of the transfer requests by police officers in the United States are motivated by personal pursuits including better pay, community conduciveness, and perceived professional and political support in a state (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016). Police officers in Kenya might also be concerned by personal goals during a transfer even though transfers are largely institutional and beyond personal control, which makes a consideration for personal factors significant when effecting police transfers. Personal development allows police officers to improve their proficiencies, professional status, quality of life,

personal contentment, and job satisfaction depending on the perspective of the development.

Personal development goals for police officers do not exist in a vacuum. Rather, they are influenced by other external factors such as the social, economic, and physical environment of an individual officer (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016; Waqas *et al*., 2014). For instance, career advancement goals are overtly susceptible to the work environment of an individual and economic capacity (Waqas *et al*., 2014). The time of the year during when a transfer is done, and the transfer frequency can influence the ability of an officer to continue pursuit of personal goals. This effect can also be experienced by police officer if there is a significant change in distance.

The APS is a department under the NPS, established under article 243(1) of the Kenya constitution 2010, consists of the Kenya police service and the Administration police service (NPS, 2014). This arm of the national police plays a critical role in interior security, mainly in maintaining law and order at the community level (Carter, 2013). The APS consists of 5 operation units namely, Border Police Unit (BPU), Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU), Security of Government Buildings (SGB), Critical Infrastructure Protection Unit (CIPU), and Anti-Stock Theft Unit (ASTU) (NPS, 2014). However, the police unit is not exempt from periodic transfer bearing that it is subject to the transfer policy of the NPS. The Administration Police Service (APS) experience job transfers as frequently as the Kenya Police, albeit more rampantly than other units such as coast guard and border patrol (Carter, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

The transfer of police officers has been associated with a decrease in police productivity, poor job satisfaction among officers, which has been contributing to incidences of police brutality but also resignation of officers from the service according to Kimotho *et al*. (2018). A 2018 report by the Transparency International found out that transfers officers was a leading factor behind work-related stress, which also culminated to police brutality. Despite these challenges associated with police transfers in Kenya, scarce empirical literature concerning how these transfers influence police officers at individual level including their personal development has been published. Police officers are normal employees with personal goals and ambitions in career development, academic progression, social and economic development, the actualization of which necessitates the right combination of factors (Carter 2013, Donavant, 2009). Change in the social and physical environment is bound to alter the ability of individual officers to achieve their goals especially when the goals were influenced by other external factors.

Related studies such as Batt *et al.*, (2012), Bauer (2019), and Muthondeki *et al.*, (2014) have fallen short in examining the implications of transfer of police officers on any of aspects of policing such as productivity. Muthondeki *et al.* (2014) only examined the psychosocial challenges faced by retired police officers in Kenya. Transparency International conducted a survey in 2016 examining the role of job satisfaction among police officers in Kenya and the role of that satisfaction in incidences of police brutality. While the survey highlighted police transfers as part of their problem, it fell short in explicating how these transfers influence personal development efforts of police officers either positively or negatively. Personal development struggles in police studies such as Tengpongsthorn (2017), and practice papers like Cappitelli (2019) have been blamed on poor leadership in police departments and personality traits such as ambition. Such characterization neglects occupational factors such as transfers, which are outside the control of a police officer in most cases. This study explored this gap by conducting a research into the effect of police transfers on their personal development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Time and frequency of transfer and personal development

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Job relocation has become an important issue in the lives of many people including managers, employees, and their families. Job relocations are bundled with a cost of relocation to the employer and employee, and psychological stress to the employees. Such occurrences have not been systematically chartered. In a theoretical model of the relationship between work and family, Chen and Shein (2011) identified job transfer as a work factor that may influence the family life of an individual, yielding other repercussions such as work performance issues and satisfaction amongst workers.

According to the National Academies of Sciences (2016) and Brett (1982), both parents and children in "mobile" homes have difficulty developing social bonds. These issues were exacerbated in homes with adolescent children. This is consistent with Mokomane's (2013) results that employees whose families have well-established social networks in their town are less ready to accept migration. shows that family difficulties of this nature are likely to have a negative impact on the process of adapting to change in the workplace. Pinder (2014) recommended that management give assistance for both employees and their families at the conclusion of a study on time to competency following transfer.

In the study conducted by Kadam, *et al.* (2016) on the healthworkers working in government health systems in India, the authors noted that adequate and appropriate deployment of government workers, particularly health workers, is a challenge for the government. This is because the government has to align the individual aspirations of its workers with organizational needs. The findings of this rsearch can be applied in other sectors of government, including the NPS. It is important that employee recruitment, deployment and promotion policies and procedures are aligned with organizational needs, while remaining effective in attracting, retaining and motivating all employees. In addition, it is also important to develop proper guidelines for the implementation any policies made, and mechanisms for employee incentives and accounatbility. It is equally important to consider employee perspectives beafore making decisions related to recruitment, deployment, transfer and promotion (Kadam, *et al.* 2016). The study focused on the effects of time of transfer and the frequency of transfer in relation to personal development of the employee.

Theoretical review

The street-level bureaucracy theory

Street-level bureaucracy (SLB) is a sociological theory that was developed by Michael Lipsky, an American sociologist. The theory seeks to provide an explanation on the working practices and beliefs of front-line employees who work in the public sector, and the ways in which public policies are enacted to guide their routine work (Cooper *et al.*, 2015). The theory examines the workplace by looking on the practical and systematic dilemmas that workers in the civil service must overcome, with a greater focus in areas of policing, education, and welfare. According to (Cooper et al., 2015), the SLB theory is based on the belief that public service is a representation of 'the coal mines of welfare where the "hard, dirty, and dangerous work" of the state' is done. Lipsky supports this notion because of reasons such as clients always creates high demand for services; the demand often surpasses the supply due to limited resources.

Most state organizations do not have private alternatives. Hence, most clients cannot obtain government services elsewhere. Consequently, civil servants opt for 'mass processing' of excessive client caseloads (Gilson, 2015). Secondly, for many front-line public servants, extensive personal discretion is an important work component, especially for those involved in private, face-to-face interactions with clients to evaluate the credibility of cases. Workers in the public service are often forced to exercise some degree of personal discretion to become creative in resolving complex cases, excessive workload, and ambiguous job performance targets, and enforcing the rules, regulations, and policies which they are obligated to

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uphold. For instance, when a police officer catches a speeding motorist, he/she can decide whether to apply a penalty such as a criminal charge or a warning, or just give a warning. A border patrol officer who finds undeclared goods can give a warning to individuals involved in the illegal activity, confiscate, and destroy the contraband items, or levy a fine/penalty.

Although front-line public employees can exercise extensive personal discretion, they are bound to operate within the rule of law, government regulations and follow administrative procedures. This helps to ensure that the SLB operates fairly and ethically; each citizen deserves a fair treatment (Maynard-Moody & Portillo, 2011). Thirdly, Public workers compromise their work quality by 'creaming off' cases that they perceive to have a known positive outcome or are likely to be straightforward. Sometimes, workers play the role of advocating for clients who are perceived to be experiencing social vulnerability. Workers become unable to provide all services required by all members of the public, and this may force them to deny other clients basic humanity. In the long run, these pragmatic choices eventually become the de facto policy of the organisation (Cooper *et al.,* 2015). This may create a contrast with the written aims and objectives of an organization.

The SLB theory has implications not only for individuals in the public service, but also the overall government system. According to Lipsky, the unmet demands from clients imply that substantial expansion of budgets and staff may not reduce workload pressures. Instead, increasing the capacity is likely to lead to "ongoing expansion of the same level of service quality at a higher volume" (Cooper *et al.,* 2015). Where there is growth in population, the demand for services keeps increasing because the number of citizens who need public services also increases. The demand for police services varies by region, but generally, the demand for their services increases with increase in population. Because metropolitan regions and urbanized areas are fast growing in many developing countries like Kenya, the demand for police officers is

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a descriptive design approach that sought to apply both quantitative and qualitative research strategy for a comprehensive coverage of the research aim (Coste *et al*, 2013). This research design was chosen for the purpose of this research because the research sought to establish the relationship between independent and dependent variables (Bell, 2019).

This study targeted the Border Police Unit, which is one of the five units that make up the administration police service. The unit is mandated to patrol Kenyan borders to contribute to national development and security through the interception and prevention of terrorism activities and border-related crime (APS, 2020). The researcher had been part of the BPU for several years and had witnessed a stream of frequent transfers on police officers serving in the unit. The researcher found the unit an ideal target population based on that experience in addition to the overarching need to understand the transfer dynamics in the unit. The BPU was first incepted in 2008 as the Rural Border Patrol Unit, although it was barely operational owing to the lack of equipment and facilities until 2014. This study focused on the 2920 individuals in the police unit as the target population for the study. The sample size of 100 was determined from the total number of officers in the BPU using Yamane's formula. The formula was the most appropriate strategy for determining the sample size because not much was known about the behaviour of the population (Ryan, 2013). The research utilized semi-structured questionnaires for collecting data for this study. Descriptive statistical methods such as means, percentages, frequencies and standard deviation were also be used. The results obtained from the questionnaires were presented in the form of tables and charts. Inferential analysis to examine the effect of transfers on personal development was examined using Ordinal regression model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study targeted 100 respondents as informed by the sampling procedure. While this number might appear high considering the demanding nature of work of the target population, the use of both in-person and remote data collection tools made it possible to generate this sample size. To that end, 100 questionnaires were issued to the target participants out of which 97 were returned successfully. A further three of these questionnaires were incomplete and were eliminated for the final analysis. According to Coste (2013), a researcher is at liberty to discard incomplete questionnaires if their inclusion might affect the validity and reliability of a study. The summary of the response rate is showed in Table 1.

Table 1: Response rate for the participants

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Questionnaires returned	97	97.0%
Unreturned questionnaires	3	3.0%
Total	100	100.0%
Incomplete Questionnaires	3	3.1%
Analysed Questionnaires	94	96.9%
Total	97	100.0%

As showed in Table 1, only 94 questionnaires were analysed and included in the findings presented herein. This represents 96.9 percent response rate based on the returned questionnaires and 94 percent based on the target population. Any response rate above 60 percent is considered sufficient for a primary research for the validity and generalizability of the studies.

Employee transfer

Transfer Experience

The researcher examined whether the participating officers had experienced a transfer in the course of their duties. The responses in this section were viewed as critical in that the overarching theme and problem statement were more geared towards officers who had experienced a transfer in the line of their work. There is not rule of thumb that officers in a department such as BPU have experienced a transfer.

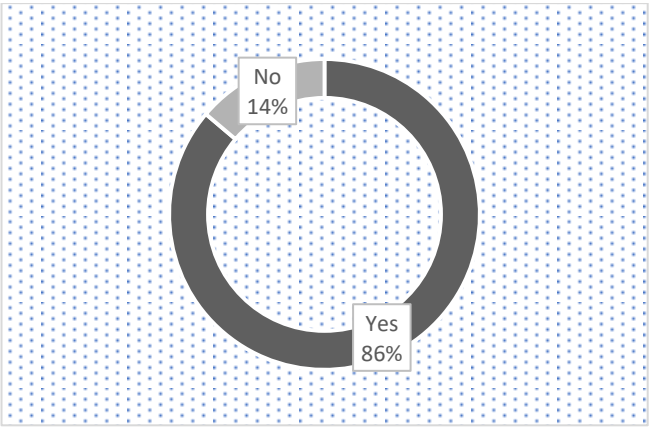

Figure 1: Transfer experience of the respondents

The obtained responses showed that 86% of the participating officers had experienced at least one transfer in the line of Duty under NPS. This response coincided with the observation in the demographic profiles that the officers had served in NPS for 6-to-10 years, on average. Transfer guidelines by the NPS indicate that no officer ought to service in a station for more than three years (NPS, 2017).

The author was further interested in examining the responses of the officers to the pertinent issues of the research ranging from the timing and frequency of transfer, the responses concerning these

assessments were measured using a Likert Scale with a measurement scale of 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree). Frequency distribution (in percentage) was used to tabulate the responses in addition to the mean and standard deviation. The interpretation of the mean is subject to the Likert scale.

Time and frequency of transfer

This inquiry was developed under the assumption that frequency and ill-timed transfer of officers leads to inconveniences in an individual's personal development. Several inquiries concerning this theme were created as showed in Table 2.

Table 2: Time and frequency of transfer

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	S.D
APS gives transfers at the recommended times of the year	25.7	40.4	13.5	13.9	6.0	1.3	0.4
Transfers depend on the duration of service in a particular area as recommended in the regulations	28.4	38.0	16.6	10.0	6.5	1.3	0.3
The frequency of transfers within the APS is within the recommended periods	29.2	26.2	15.8	17.5	11.5	1.1	0.2
Those who have stayed longest are considered first when effecting transfers	22.0	30.4	19.8	17.3	10.0	1.4	0.4
There are too many transfers in the service	5.1	8.0	22.4	28.9	36.0	3.3	0.4

The respondents *disagreed* (40.4%) and *strongly disagreed* (25.7%) with the sentiment that APS gives transfers at the recommended times of the year (M=1.3, SD=0.4). The respondents also *disagreed* (38.0%) and *strongly disagreed* (28.4%) with the sentiment that transfers were implemented subject to the duration of service that an officer had served in a particular area (M=1.3, SD=0.3). The participating officers *disagreed* (26.2%) and *strongly disagreed* (29.2%) that the frequency of police transfers in the APS was within the recommended times of the year (M=1.1, SD=0.2). In addition, the officers disagreed (22.0%) and *strongly disagreed* (30.4%) that officers who had stayed the longest were considered first when effecting transfers (M=1.4, SD=0.4). However, the respondents *agreed* (28.9%) that there were too many transfers in the service (M=3.3, SD=0.4).

The observations concerning the frequency of police transfers were consistent with published studies. Gill *et al*. (2011) observed that police transfers were common among Indian officers. The study noted that these transfers were not only unstructured, they were also conducted maliciously and in ways aimed at punishing some officers while rewarding undeserving officers. The authors noted that frequent transfers of police officers created opportunities for inefficiency and corruption across ranks as officers attempted to fight the frequent transfers.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis between the weighted average responses was assessed using spearman rank test because of the non-parametric nature of the collected data. This inferential analysis examines the direction of the relationship between two variables (Senthilnathan, 2019). The analysis was performed assuming a 95% confidence level. The decision criterion for correlation analysis is based on the arithmetic value of the coefficient (r). The relationship is perfect if $r = 1$, strong if $r = 0.5\ to\ 0.99$, moderate if $r = 0.3\ to\ 0.49$, and weak of $r = 0.1\ to\ 0.29$ (Senthilnathan, 2019). There is no correlation between two variables

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where $r = 0$. The arithmetic sign on the coefficient determines the direction of the relationship, whether it is positive or negative (Senthilnathan, 2019). The outcomes of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation analysis

	Personal development
Time and Frequency	-0.841*

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on the highlighted criteria, the relationship between police transfers and personal development varied from strong to moderate, and from positive to negative. The anchoring assumption behind this study was that employee transfer affects personal development in the APS negatively. This assumption was based on the observation that published research suggests high levels of discontentment among police officers out of the transfer activities (Gill *et al*., 2011). This correlation was strong in the associations between time and frequency of transfer ($r = .841$).

Regression analysis

The outcomes of the cause-effect analysis are subdivided into three groups namely model summary, analysis of variance, and regression coefficients as showed from Table 4.

Table 4: Model summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	df2	Sig. F Change
.231	.153	.130	.4083043	95	.263

The coefficient of determination (R) was computed to examine the extent to which the independent variables (employee transfer) could explain the changes in the dependent variables (personal development). Adjusted R-square was used in this assessment because it is considered more stable concerning unit changes in the independent variables. Table 5 showed the analysis of variance and the assessment of the entire regression model.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA[a]					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.889	4	.222	4.333	.043[b]
Residual	15.838	95	.167		
Total	16.727	99			
a. Dependent Variable: Personal Development					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Time and Frequency					

The analysis of variance was computed to demonstrate the suitability and reliability of the guiding linear model. This assessment was based on the F-statistics and its significant levels as recommended by Leeper (2017). The analysis showed that the model was statistically significant at 5% level (*F = 4.333*). The coefficients of the relationship between personal development and the proxies for employee transfer among administration police officers. The interpretation of this table is such an outcome was statistically significant if the significance statistically was lesser than the critical value of 5% (95% confidence level). The arithmetic sign against the unstandardized coefficient showed the direction of the underlying relationship.

Table 6: Regression analysis

Coefficients[a]					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.148	.268		8.020	.000
Time and Frequency	-.112	.051	.224	2.197	.030

a. Dependent Variable: Personal Development

Source: Research Data (2021)

As earlier noted, this study was guided by the regression model in equation 1.

$Y = X_0 + X_1 T + \varepsilon$..... 1

In the model, Y denotes the personal development measured through variables like socio-economic development, T denotes the time and frequency of police transfers, G area is proxy for change in Geographical environment, D denotes the proxy for distance from previous environment, and A denotes the proxy for benefits associated with post-transfers including the allowances. X_0 represents the intercept for the model, X_1, X_2, X_3, and X_4 represent the coefficients for the independent variables, and ε represents the econometrical error term. Considering that the error term summates to zero, the outcomes in can be inserted into the model as showed in equation 2.

$Y = 2.148 - 0.112T$..... 2

The outcomes of the regression analysis showed that the effect of the predictor variables on the outcome variables was rather small based on the magnitude of the coefficients for all the predictor variables. Based on the coefficients, there was a negative cause-effect relationship between personal development and employee transfer variables except for post-transfer benefits. Time-and-frequency of transfer had a negative (or undesired) effect on personal development 11.2 percent of the time. These observations were statistically significant at 5 percent level. Post-transfer benefits had a positive effect on personal development about one percent of the time, although the observation was not statistically significant.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The issue of personal development is a challenge to public servants, police being part of the fraternity they are not exceptional. The summary of the observations made from this study has it that;

There is a strong, negative correlation between personal development and the time and frequency of police transfers. The cause-effect of this relationship showed that time and frequency of transfer negatively affected the personal development of officers up to 11.2 percent of the times transfers happened, an outcome that was statistically significant at 5%.

The aim of this study was to establish the effect of employee transfer on personal development. Employee transfer was represented by transfer timing and frequency. Several observations were made concerning this aim. Subject to the overriding research questions, the study has showed a slightly weak effect of employee transfer on personal development, to a notable extent, this effect is negative as was the case with most of the independent variable; time-and-frequency of transfer. The study suggests that the time and frequency of transfer is a significant determinant of the satisfaction and contentment among police officers after they are transferred because of the relatively higher percentage of influence.

This study recommended that the regular and predictable schedule of police transfers be strictly adhered to among police officers. Notably, the study showed a negative relationship between time and frequency of police transfers. In the literature review, it was noted that a key discontentment

among officers concerning this variable is the unpredictable nature of these transfers, where an officer can be transferred multiple times within a year, contrary to the minimum three-year NPS policy.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Several recommendations were notable for future research based on the technical weaknesses of this research. First, the outcomes obtained in this study were primarily driven by the overarching research methods. The improvement of that methodology is a gap that scholars in this domain can fill in the future for more comprehensive and insightful observations. There might be a need to conduct future research with an orientation towards grouped independent t-test. In addition, there is a need to consider the fact that the participants in this study were primarily from the Border Police Unit as described in the research population. Regions such as these are considered hardship areas, meaning that the sentiments of some officers is likely to be biased based on the nature of the hardship. The biases are especially likely to be higher among officers whose pre-transfer workplaces were in urban areas. In such a case, being posted in a hardship area means that their physical environment is almost inverted, hence negative sentiments especially in the event of disappointment. As such, it might be prudent to replicate this study using a more inclusive population for generalizable observations.

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