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EFFECT OF COUNSELLING ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AMONG HEALTH WORKERS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF NAROK COUNTY REFERRAL HOSPITAL

Nkamasiai Ntiini John¹, Wesonga Justus² and Kinanga Robert³

¹Corresponding author; Masters student, Maasai mara university

²Lecturer, Maasai mara university School of Business and Economics

³Lecturer, Maasai mara university; school of business and economics
Narok

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ABSTRACT

Stress in the workplace has been affecting the performance of employees in health institutions by leading to absenteeism, high employee turnover, poor employee-client relationships and poor productivity. There is no empirical evidence on whether counselling programs in Kenyan county hospitals have been effective in dealing with these challenges despite the introduction of counselling programs in these hospitals. The general objective was to investigate the influence of counselling on employee performance in the health workers in Narok County referral hospital. Basing on the Person-Centered Approach, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Social Efficacy Theories, the research took a descriptive research design whereby the researcher sampled 303 employees with a sample of 91 respondents sampled by stratified random sampling. The data collection was done by questionnaires and interviews and analyzed with the help of the descriptive statistics, correlation and regression. The results showed that personal counselling influenced employee performance significantly in a positive way ($r = 0.563$; $p = 0.014$) whereas disciplinary counselling described 46.3% of the performance change. There was also a positive relationship between career counselling and better staff motivation and commitment. Overall, counselling interventions improved time management, teamwork, and employee-client relations as well as service delivery. The research finds counselling to be very important in reducing stress related inefficiency and enhancing employee performance in healthcare. It suggests the need to institutionalize and enhance counselling programs, make them available to all health professionals and to incorporate them in the human resource policies of hospitals.

KEYWORDS: Disciplinary Counseling, Personal Counseling, Career Counseling, Employee Performance

1.1 Introduction to the Study

Stress is one of the most pervasive challenges in today's workplaces, significantly impacting employee well-being, performance, and organizational productivity. Stress arises when the demands of a job exceed an individual's ability to cope, resulting in physical, emotional, and psychological strain. Healthcare settings, such as Narok County Referral Hospital, exemplify environments where high stress levels are particularly common due to the demanding nature of the work, long hours, and exposure to critical patient care situations.

Interpersonal relationships are another area of social life that is not spared by workplace stress. High-stress levels lead to interpersonal conflicts, lack of cooperation, and poor relations between employees and supervisors (Pham et al., 2022). For instance, employees at Narok County Referral Hospital have complained of disputes, unproductive discussions, and lack of cooperation. These interpersonal conflicts complicate the organization's cohesiveness and capacity to attain group objectives.

Counseling is one approach that can be utilized to reduce workplace stress since it offers the employees all the requirements, they need to handle stress and other related factors that affect their lives. A workplace counseling program's primary basis is resolving issues that employees may face that may affect their performance. This paper has revealed that gestational counseling empowers employees to face work-related stress, build effective stress management strategies, and redirect their attention to their assignments (Mitchell, Oakley & Dunkle, 2019).

Counseling also helps us build healthy relationships between different employees during their work. Tensions can undermine interpersonal relationships – specifically, stress can weaken interactions and teamwork, producing problems and diminished cooperation (Keković, Peličić, & Radević, 2022). By endorsing counseling, the employee will probably exhibit better conflict-solving skills, enhance people relations in the organization, and promote a healthier working culture. This improved dynamic supports individual health and vitality and the co-created collective output.

Counseling is indispensable in areas like health care that require great precision and efficiency, especially in a field where patient care is of the utmost importance. Career guidance and developmental counseling assist individuals in understanding and pursuing goals and increasing productivity, given overall organizational goals and objectives, in the face of work challenges (Mitchell, Oakley & Dunkle, 2019).

Organizational performance is a key component of business success and encompasses productivity, customer service, cooperation, and compliance with organizational requirements in the organizational workplace. Good human resource performance facilitates productivity and improved customer experiences, while poor performance affects objectives. Thus, performance can be closely connected

with workplace stress, if stress is not managed, it becomes a productivity barrier (Keković, Peličić, & Radević, 2022). Stress influences employee performance in the following manners. High-stress levels can negatively affect memory, focus, judgment, and problem-solving abilities, resulting in mistakes and decreased productivity (Giovannini-Green, 2025). Where time is of the essence, like in clinical care stress, related inefficiencies could lead to dire consequences. The Narok County Referral Hospital has suffered from stress-related performance problems, including compromised patient care, truancy, and staff churn.

The problems experienced by the Narok County Referral Hospital employees' shows the need for counseling to address stress thus improving productivity. Inefficient behavior like being late for work, frequently taking long tea and lunch breaks, absenteeism greatly diminishes organizational productivity and continuity of healthcare services. Such inefficiencies indicate stress factors that, if not addressed, would progress to general performance issues.

It is in this light that counseling can help in transmuting the challenges. In an organized and private way, counseling enables the employees to understand what is causing stress and how to avoid it. Consultation can help people deal with personal problems like financial, health, or family problems that affect workplace productivity. Likewise, career counseling can assist the employees in defining their career aspirations and how to achieve them in a way that is consistent with the company's policies and objectives, thus promoting purpose and motivation. Furthermore, it has been found that counseling interventions can help develop a culture of accountability and time management concerning tardiness and absenteeism by providing solutions (Pham, et al., 2022). Promoting active and effective communication within the team through counseling reduces interpersonal conflicts and improves team dynamics.

However, the situation at Narok County Referral Hospital is far from this ideal state of affairs. KPIs show that some long-standing organizational problems include staff absenteeism, low productivity, employees' poor communication with clients, and a significant turnover rate of 23% within the last three years (Ruth & Alexander, 2022). They point towards work-related stressors as the leading causes of these problems, as supported by the human resources department. Workers lose effectiveness due to conflicts of interest between their work and family obligations, resulting in a vicious cycle of low productivity, low morale, and low productivity. These challenges affect the quality of health care South County Hospital delivers to patients and the overall efficiency of the institution.

Moreover, there have been cases of alcoholism and other maladaptive coping mechanisms in the workplace due to the absence of a support system to help employees address stress and related issues. These problems are not only limited to the workplace but also impact personal activities done by

employees and are likely to influence their general health.

Narok County health workers present a representative example in the context of Kenya because they work within the national healthcare framework, have the same systemic problems, and represent a wide range of people. Inferences made in this environment can thus be generalized to other counties.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Previous research points to counseling as an avenue that holds room for improving employee performance. For instance, Ugochukwu (2021) conducted a study that revealed that Nigerian HCWs who took part in counseling-related exercises perceived increased work productivity, efficiency, and interpersonal communication skills. Likewise, Ramlagan et al., (2024) reported an improvement in job performance by 100 percent among healthcare employees in South Africa who underwent counseling. Despite the introduction of counselling programs in Kenyan county hospitals, there is insufficient empirical evidence to confirm their effectiveness in addressing performance issues. At Narok County Referral Hospital, specific and severe performance deficiencies persist, underscoring a critical problem. Key performance indicators reveal a staff turnover rate of 23% over the past three years, alongside high levels of absenteeism, chronic tardiness, prolonged breaks, and observable interpersonal conflicts among staff. These issues have directly compromised patient care, leading to inefficiencies in service delivery, strained employee-client relationships, and a decline in the overall quality of healthcare services. Instances of alcoholism and other maladaptive coping mechanisms further point to unaddressed workplace stress and a lack of effective support systems.

However, there are some gaps in the knowledge about the detailed outcomes of counseling intercessions at the Narok County Referral Hospital. Previous research has looked at broad attributes of counseling without considering the specific impact of disciplinary, personal, and career counseling on employee performance. Additionally, one of the research limitations is the shortage of studies that might have reported findings from similar cultures and organizational contexts of Kenyan healthcare facilities. Thus, to fill these gaps the study aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of counseling in enhancing the performance of employees in Narok County Referral Hospital.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overall research aim is to examine the effect of counselling on employee performance among health workers at Narok County Referral Hospital.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Carl Rogers' Person-Centered Approach

The Person-Centered Approach is another essential figure of humanistic counseling created by Carl Rogers, which focuses on the optimistic view of the possibilities for self-actualization in every individual. This theory asserts that humans are self-actualizing beings who can make sense of it or work through their issues if given the opportunity. It is essential in healthcare, given that workers in this field experience intense stress, emotional exhaustion, and interpersonal conflict. By establishing a welcoming and compassionate environment, the Person-Centered Approach enables clients to overcome these difficulties and tap into their potential to improve productivity at the workplace (Rogers, 1961).

Embedded in this approach are several principles that shape the counseling process. One such principle is unconditional positive regard, where the individual is accepted without criticism, regardless of behavior or mood. This makes it easier for healthcare workers to come out and reveal their concerns without feeling that people are judging or criticizing them. For example, a nurse suffering from low self-esteem or guilt after an *einzelrahmen* may be comforted and valued during a counseling session that involves unconditional positive regard (Corey, 2021). The second is empathy, the counselor's capacity to identify and share the client's sentiments. In the medical field, which requires people to work in isolation due to the intensity of responsibility, counseling creates an understanding and reinforcing atmosphere that alleviates stress.

Counseling focuses on the individual and is based on the Person-Centered Approach; it has practical implications in healthcare. One of the advantages of this concept is that it fosters the development of coping mechanisms based on the 'emotional sponge' model. Employees in the healthcare sector often experience stressful events, including dealing with severe patients or loss of life. Counseling allows them to work through these experiences and, thus, prevents burnout and promotes sustainable psychological well-being (Barnett et al., 2020). For example, a counselor hired to work with a group of nurses may employ empathy and active listening to assist clients in managing stress arising from heavy workloads or patients' demands.

Another crucial application is the enhancement of relationships within the workforce. Internal conflicts within the practice setting and the healthcare workers involved, sometimes fuelled by stress and communication issues, and might disrupt team cohesiveness and the quality of service. There is the possibility of counseling sessions in organizations, which can be aimed at improving the emotional literacy aspect so that the workers can learn how to handle their emotions and those of their fellows in the organization (Dugué, Sirost, & Dosseville, 2021). This, in turn, fosters cooperation and results in an enhanced working relationship between employees. For instance, if two co-workers, such as a doctor and a nurse, are engaging in workplace conflict, they might undergo counseling to determine the root causes and how they may resolve it.

The Person-Centered Approach especially applies to the Kenyan setting and the difficulties that practicing caregivers encounter at health facilities such as Narok County Referral Hospital. These workers are also often faced with scarce resources to work with, which increases stress and limits the work's effectiveness. Cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, and humanistic counseling interventions based on this approach might assist them in understanding their experiences and finding ways to cope with future adversity. For instance, a counselor could support a nurse in managing frustration due to understaffing and find new ways and approaches together.

2.3. Empirical review

2.3.1 Disciplinary Counselling

This type of counseling will seek to find out if there is counseling on timelines in the workplace in the hospital if there is counseling on quality of products matters in this hospital if there is counseling on consistency in the workplace in the hospital if there is counseling on being effective in the workplace in the hospital if there is counseling on abiding by the code of conduct, matters in the hospital and if there is counseling on being reliable in this hospital and if there is counseling on being result oriented in the hospital. This is expected to affect hospital employee performance.

2.3.2 Personal Counselling

The personal counseling aspect will seek to find out if there is Personal counseling on family matters in the hospital, explore the Personal counseling on financial matters in the hospital, find out if there is personal counseling on health matters in this hospital, determine if there is Personal counseling on communication skills, matters in the hospital, find out if there is Personal counseling on motivation and encouragement matters in this hospital and determine if there is Personal counseling on emotional intelligence matters in this hospital. All this is deemed to affect performance.

2.3.4 Career Counselling

The career counseling aspect will seek to find out if the employees are pleased with the available career coaching at the referral hospital, if Career coaching has helped the employees define personal goals and prepare career plans at the referral hospital, if the hospital avails adequate information to employees on career guidance if the career guidance in Narok County referral hospital has enhanced the employee competencies, if counseling services provided at Narok County referral hospital meet the needs of both male and female workers, if Narok County referral hospital has organized career counseling services favorable to all workers and if Career counseling practices at Narok County referral hospital have increased the employee commitment.

2.3.5 Performance of Hospitals

The performance of health workers will be determined if, due to counseling, there is improved time management, due to counseling in the hospital to the staff the workplace is efficient, if there is

counseling in the hospital to the staff has made clients have confidence in the hospital, due to counseling in the hospital to the staff has made hospital staff have a good relationship with patients and other stakeholders, due to counseling in the hospital to the staff has made staffs to provide better products and services, due to counseling in the hospital to the staff has led to the utilization of the available resources and due to counseling in the hospital to the staff has minimized staff turnover.

2.4 Gaps Identified

Despite the extensive literature on the advantages of counseling in the workplace, there are still numerous gaps. One limitation is the inability to distinguish the kind of counseling being provided. Preventing: Most studies assume counseling as a uniform treatment without distinguishing between disciplinary, personal, and career counseling. For instance, while a recent systematic review by Garcia & Lee (2023) covers a wide range of approaches to workplace counseling in general, it does not delve into the impact of various counseling techniques on the productivity of workers. This lack of specificity makes it difficult to pinpoint interventions that may address specific difficulties that workers in various positions or sectors encounter.

There are also no studies that investigate the effect of group counseling on performance indicators in the long term. Many researches concentrate on short-term effects, including stress decrease and job satisfaction, with less concern for how these outcomes contribute to enhanced performance, employee turnover, and patient outcomes. For example, in the study conducted by Westgate et al. (2023), the long-term positive effects of counseling in the reduction of burnout were well established, but the consistency of these benefits was not considered. Realizing the outcome is a critical aspect of counseling to ensure that strong and resilient programs, which have a positive effect on workers and firms, are established.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Kim and Gilham (2013) define a study design as the methods to be used in gathering sufficient and pertinent data to address an investigator's questions. In this study, a descriptive research design was used. Because it made an effort to select respondents from a larger population to be measured for the variables under investigation, the research design was appropriate.

3.2 Target Population

A population is described by Welman and Kruger (1999) as an investigation subject that can comprise persons, groups, organizations, events, or situations. The probe was limited to hospital workers in Narok County and referral Hospital Narok. The target population, 303, is summarized

3.3 Sampling and Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting an acceptable sample or an ambassador segment of a population in order to determine the parameters or characteristics of the full population. A sample size of 10% to 30% of the population is appropriate for social studies, according to Mugenda & Mugenda (2012). 91 study participants were given questionnaires after the researcher chose a sample of 30% of the population. In order to reduce bias, the study used both basic random sampling and stratified sampling to get the sample. The distribution of the sample is displayed.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

To provide a thorough and precise study, the researcher collected data using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The crucial link between empirical observation and the mathematical expression of quantitative relationships will be provided by quantitative research. Any information presented in numerical formats, such statistics or percentages, is considered quantitative data. In contrast, the qualitative approach provides an investigator with deeper and more thorough information. Researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter by using qualitative data, which is more closely linked to the unique consequences of people and particular stories. The researcher employed key informant interviews to gather qualitative data and a questionnaire to gather quantitative data. Using quantitative approach such as questionnaires and qualitative approach such as interviews and observation increases reliability and validity of the research findings through data triangulation.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher entered the data into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical analysis, which included means, percentages, and frequencies, was carried out by the researcher. The data collected was able to show patterns in how employees see workplace counseling. Tables, graphs, and charts were used to display the data, along with the investigator's interpretation. Because the qualitative data from secondary sources and key informant interviews provided more detailed information on workplace counseling, it was presented in prose. To avoid distorting the respondents' descriptions of the meanings, this was done verbatim. In order to decide whether the hypothesis should be accepted or rejected, correlation and regression analysis were used. The model for regression analysis is displayed below:

The following regression model was fitted.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3+ \varepsilon$$

4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The researcher undertook inferential analysis where the focus was on correlation analysis , analysis of variance and regression analysis to establish the nature and strength of the relationships between

counselling and employee performance in Narok County and the referral hospital.

4.1 Disciplinary Counseling on Employee Performance.

The study sought to establish the correlation between disciplinary counselling and employee performance in Narok County and the referral hospital. The results of the study are shown in Table 1

Table 1: Correlation of Disciplinary Counselling and Employee Performance

		Employee Performance
Disciplinary Counselling	Pearson Correlation	.518*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011
	N	81

The study found a somewhat positive and statistically significant association between employee performance in Narok County and the referral hospital and disciplinary counseling, as shown in Table 4.8. ($p = 0.011$; $r = 0.518$). This suggests that improved disciplinary counseling programs will inevitably boost worker productivity in the referral hospital and Narok County. The study's results are consistent with those of Eglay and Byaruhanga (2017), who contended that workplace counseling significantly enhanced workers' performance while they were coping with difficulties at work and at home.

4.2 Personal Counselling and Employee Performance in Narok County and Referral Hospital

Secondly, the researcher sought to establish a correlation between personal Counselling and employee performance in Narok County and referral hospitals. The study's findings are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation between Personal Counselling and Employee Performance

		Employee Performance
Personal Counselling	Pearson Correlation	.563*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014
	N	81

Employee performance and personal counseling were found to have a favorable and statistically significant link ($r = 0.563$; $p = 0.014$). This suggests that staff performance will improve when the county and referral hospital improve their personal counseling programs. The results are consistent with those of Weldon, Hannah, and David (2020), who discovered that employee counseling

programs had a positive effect on worker performance. To improve performance, employee counseling programs should be reinforced.

4.3 Career Counselling and Employee Performance in Narok County and Referral Hospital

The study examined the correlation between career counselling and employee performance in Narok County and referral hospitals. The results of the correlation analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation between Career Counselling and Employee Performance

		Employee Performance
Career Counselling	Pearson Correlation	.449*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021
	N	81

Career counseling and employee performance were shown to have a fairly positive and statistically significant connection ($r = 0.449$; $p = 0.021$), as Table 3 illustrates. This suggests that expanding career counseling services within the hospital will enhance healthcare personnel's performance. The results corroborate those of Martaningsih (2018), who found that career-related peer coaching enhanced self-image accuracy, boosted trust, enhanced change management success, and provided passion for professional goals.

4.4 Regression Analysis

The study ascertained the effect of counselling on employee performance in Narok County and referral hospitals. The results in relation to the foregoing are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.681 ^a	.463	.458	.62786

The association between independent and dependent variables was found to be positive and quite strong, as shown in Table 4.10. The dependent variable's variation in relation to changes in the independent variables is known as the R-squared. The study's R-squared was 0.463, indicating that the three independent variables—disciplinary counseling, personal counseling, and career counseling—can account for 46.3% of the dependent variable, with the remaining 53.7% coming from

factors not included in this analysis.

Table 5: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3.546	3	.887	9.337	.000 ^b
1 Residual	4.387	77	.095		
Total	7.934	80			

In this study, the model's suitability for the data was assessed using the analysis of variance. According to the results, the model is good at predicting how respondents will respond to the three independent variables because the p-value was 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Additionally, the model was fit to predict the impact of the independent factors on the dependent variable because the F value was smaller than the F-calculated, which was 9.337.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised	Standardised Coefficients	Coefficients	
	B	t	Sig	Std.
(Constant)	1.082	.127	8.529	0.00
Disciplinary Counselling	.314	.033	0.433	9.515 0.00
Personal Counselling	.159	.042	0.220	3.786 0.00
Career Counselling	.313	.033	0.432	9.485 0.00

In order to determine the regression coefficients linking the independent and dependent variables, the study also performed a regression analysis, as shown by the equation below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \epsilon$$

where Y stands for the performance of employees in the referral hospital and Narok County. Disciplinary counseling is represented by X1, personal counseling by X2, and career counseling by X3. Constant, denoted by β_0 , is a measure of employee performance that does not include predictor variables. The values of Unstandardized Coefficients (β) provided an answer to the given problem based on the results in Table 4.13. The findings show that employee performance at Narok County and referral hospitals is positively correlated with career, personal, and disciplinary counseling. Thus,

$$Y = 1.082 + 0.314X_1 + 0.159X_2 + 0.313X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Employee performance in Narok County and referral hospitals has a predictive variable value of 1.082. This explains why, when all other parameters are held constant at zero, employee performance in Narok County and referral hospital will always equal 1.082. The findings also show that employee performance in Narok County and referral hospital would change by 0.314 times for every unit change in disciplinary counseling, 0.159 times for every unit increase in personal counseling, and 0.313 times for every unit increase in career counseling.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

In order to ascertain the significance of the relationship between the independent factors and employee performance, the study aimed to evaluate the provided hypotheses. The computed t-statistics from the regression coefficients (Table 4.11) were compared to the crucial t-value in order to determine whether or not to reject the null hypotheses. The two-tailed t-critical value for this investigation is roughly 1.991 at a 5% significance level ($\alpha=0.05$) and degrees of freedom (df) of 77.

The first hypothesis (H_{01}) states that disciplinary counseling has no discernible impact on healthcare professionals' performance at Narok County Referral Hospital.

The computed t-statistic for disciplinary counseling is 9.515 based on the regression findings in Table 5. The rule of decision states that if $|t\text{-statistic}| > t\text{-critical}$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This is in contrast to the t-critical value of 1.991. The analysis contradicts the null hypothesis (H_{01}) since $|9.515| > 1.991$. This leads to the conclusion that staff performance at Narok County Referral Hospital is significantly impacted by disciplinary counseling. The results corroborate those of Gathatwa (2017), who discovered that disciplinary counseling has a significant impact on workers' productivity in Kenya's flower industry.

The second hypothesis (H_{02}) states that personal counseling has no discernible impact on healthcare personnel' performance at Narok County Referral Hospital.

The computed t-statistic for individual counseling is 3.786 based on Table 4.11. The t-statistic's absolute value ($|3.786|$) exceeds the t-critical value of 1.991. Accordingly, the study concludes that personal counseling significantly affects employee performance and rejects the null hypothesis (H_{02}). The study concurs with Matolo and Mukulu (2016) that personal counseling improves college employees' performance.

The third hypothesis (H_{03}) states that career counseling has no discernible impact on healthcare

workers' performance at Narok County Referral Hospital.

A t-statistic of 9.485 was obtained from the career counseling regression results. The computed t-statistic is more than the critical value, as demonstrated by the comparison $|9.485| > 1.991$. As a result, the study indicates that career counseling significantly affects employee performance at Narok County Referral Hospital and rejects the null hypothesis (H_{03}). The study supports the findings of Kathukya, Mwangi, and Machogu (2022), who discovered that career counseling will improve worker performance at Murang'a Water and Sanitation Company Limited (MUWASCO) in Murang'a County, Kenya.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study set out to investigate the effect of counselling on employee performance at Narok County Referral Hospital, with a specific focus on disciplinary, personal, and career counselling. The analysis of collected data, encompassing descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses, leads to the unequivocal conclusion that counselling, in its various forms, is a significant determinant of employee performance. The findings robustly demonstrate that structured counselling interventions directly address key performance challenges—such as absenteeism, interpersonal conflicts, and low morale—identified at the hospital, thereby enhancing overall organizational efficacy. The following conclusions are drawn for each specific objective.

5.1 Disciplinary Counseling and Employee Performance

The study concludes that disciplinary counselling is a fundamental tool for fostering a culture of accountability and professionalism, which in turn significantly enhances employee performance. This aligns with Social Cognitive Theory, as the counselling sessions provide a guided mastery experience where employees learn and internalize the behaviours expected of them, thereby boosting their self-efficacy in fulfilling their roles correctly. By proactively addressing issues like tardiness and inconsistency, disciplinary counselling reduces workflow disruptions and creates a more predictable and efficient work environment. This directly contributes to improved service delivery at Narok County Referral Hospital, as a disciplined workforce is better equipped to handle the rigours of patient care reliably and effectively.

The study concludes that personal counselling is an indispensable intervention for safeguarding the psychological well-being of healthcare workers, which is a critical precursor to sustained high performance. This finding strongly resonates with Carl Rogers' Person-Centered Approach; the provision of a confidential, empathetic, and non-judgmental space allows employees to unburden themselves and develop healthier coping mechanisms. By addressing the root causes of stress and

anxiety, personal counselling directly counteracts the burnout and emotional exhaustion prevalent in high-stakes healthcare environments like Narok County Referral Hospital.

The study concludes that career counselling is a strategic imperative for fostering employee commitment, enhancing competencies, and securing long-term organizational stability. This aligns perfectly with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, as career counselling addresses higher-level esteem and self-actualization needs. When employees perceive a pathway for growth, recognition, and the realization of their potential, their job satisfaction and loyalty to the organization are significantly bolstered, reducing the allure of seeking opportunities elsewhere. It signals to employees that the organization is invested in their long-term development, which in turn encourages them to invest their skills and energy back into the hospital. By helping employees align their personal aspirations with the hospital's goals, career counselling creates a symbiotic relationship where individual growth fuels organizational performance, leading to a more skilled, motivated, and stable workforce capable of delivering superior healthcare services.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made to enhance the effectiveness of counseling programs in Narok County Referral Hospital and similar settings:

The hospital administration should reinforce counseling services by ensuring these services address disciplinary, individual, and career issues among employees. Thus, the crucial demand for special support points to the fact that counseling interventions should be personalized to the needs of the healthcare employee to enhance performance and satisfaction with their job.

To make sure that the counseling initiatives are sustainable and effective, it is recommended that occasional assessments should be made. These evaluations should measure the effects of counseling on organizational performance indicators including production, truancy, and staff turnover. Feedback from the employees should also be given frequently to help enhance the programs.

Career development interaction planning is recognized as a critical factor leading to increases in commitment and professional growth of the employees. Career counseling resources should be supplemented with mentorship, skill-building, and professional training and advancement opportunities. This will encourage a culture of professionalism and lifelong learning since such opportunity would be available throughout one's career.

It should be noted that counseling has to become an integrated part of the hospital's organizational policies as one of the crucial elements of the support systems for the personnel. However, institutionalizing the counseling programs can help the hospital to consistently apply them with the employees, and also make it possible for pass all the workers.

5.3 Areas for Further Research

The research suggested several areas for further investigations to provide more insight into the nature of counseling programs and their influence on performance of employees. First, there is a need to conduct a broader sectoral analysis to identify how counseling programs work in other sectors of the Kenyan society other than schools, working with government institutions, parastatals, and private organizations. Such a perspective would give a broader insight into how counseling is effective in various workplace environments. Second, future studies should use longitudinal research designs to establish the lagged relationships between counseling and employee attitudes, turnover intentions, and organizational outcomes. Descriptive research, for instance, would provide information on how counseling programs are able to maintain their positive impacts in the long-run. Also, more related studies should be conducted to examine the multifaceted nature of employees' perceptions to understand more about the way counseling impacts job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee resilience. These suggestions are meant to provide a solid foundation of knowledge to guide further research into the short-term and long-term effects of counseling in various organizations.

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