Nexus between Hidden Curriculum in Basic Police Training and Police Performance: Case of National Police College Embakasi A Campus

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ABSTRACT: Hidden curriculum includes the elements of socialization that occur in training but are not part of the formal content. It is not clear whether hidden curriculum in basic police training subsequently influences police performance. No official reports have been made or studies have been done to show the impact of hidden curriculum in basic police training on police performance. This study was undertaken to assess the nexus between hidden curriculum in basic police training and police performance at the National Police College Embakasi A Campus. This paper provides a theoretical and analytical framework on how hidden curriculum in basic police training is related to police performance. The study emphasizes that the hidden curriculum from police subcultures influences police service performance to a moderate extent. The attitudes that were passed to trainees with the contribution of instructors included occupational socialization or police norms and use of police discretion. The study found that the punishment administered to trainees that had the greatest effect on performance of police officers. The study recommends that efforts be made to deploy instructors based on competence and to areas they are likely to be most effective and efficient. A regular review of the training methodology used in basic training would also address basic police training hidden curriculum.
Key words: Police Training, Hidden Curriculum, Police Performance

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I. INTRODUCTION

Policing is a profession that is achieved through various models of Basic Police training across the world. The most common is the British model of policing which has so far been applied in many countries such as United States and Canada (Deverge, 2016). In Africa, most countries use the same model, Kenya included. Internal strains like corruption, police brutality, accountability among others which acts as a hidden curriculum in training institutions can influence the police institutions (Wimshurst & Ransley, 2007). The idea of a hidden curriculum is derived from educational studies and refers to opinions, attitudes and values that students learn, not from formal curriculum but are unarticulated and unacknowledged and learnt from experience in the institution (Meares, 2016). Hidden curriculum is revealed in police interaction with the public and the way they carry out their mandate in policing. Recruits instruction during the initial police training may have a positive or a negative impact on their performance as future law enforcement officers (Deverge, 2016).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

When recruits enter the police colleges, the training is intended to develop their personal capacities which translate to police practice and performance of tasks in law enforcement. However, during training, the recruits are also exposed to and learn from the hidden curriculum comprising of opinions, attitudes and values that are not from the formal curriculum. The hidden curriculum may introduce the recruits to acts that are different to what is expected in enforcement of law and maintaining order in the society. It is not clear whether hidden curriculum in basic police training has subsequently influenced police performance. No official reports have been made or studies have been done to show the impact of hidden curriculum in basic police training on police performance. Despite recognition that hidden curriculum may have a role on the way police perform, it had not been empirically studied. The aim of this research was to assess the effect of relations between students and instructors, investigate the effect of the punitive administration, assess the effect of police subcultures and investigate the effect of training methodology on police performance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bruce (2014) noted that significant investments have been made in Kenya but performance and expected transformation of police have not improved markedly. Police performance has been marked by unprofessional conduct that includes colluding with criminals, malicious allocation of duties, suicide, senseless and wanton use of firearms and shooting of colleagues (Hope, 2015). The dismal police performance may therefore be influenced by relations between students and instructors, punitive administration and police subcultures (Bruce, 2014). Appropriate training methods have to be selected based on the trainees' level of skills and their performance gap (Lynton & Pyreek, 2007). The basic police training curriculum should be comprehensive with practical exercises to develop different skills necessary for police efficiency and integrity (Mboroki, 2012).

Certain training can lead to decreases in individuals' level of moral reasoning and to malpractices. This grooming can result in trainees altering their values to conform to their training officers (Bennett, 1984). Garner (2005) suggested that academy experience can have a negative impact on some trainees' level of personal integrity. This is attributed to the impact of some of the content of the training such as relations with instructors (Oliva & Compton, 2010). Recruits are affected by explicit stories and implicit messages about unethical behavior and attitudes by instructors (Garner, 2005). Danger may be the justification for the unethical and illegal behavior (Ford, 2003). Specifically, by products of the training foster us versus them attitudes which may instill strong bonds among trainees in order to rely on each other (Chappell & Lanza-Kaduce, 2010).

Police administration in general often exhibit punitive or authoritarian forms of management where trainees have to follow orders and commands from seniors. Recruits may learn mistreatments as the norm hence mistreat the public through brutality and unlawful arrests (White, 2016). Dollard *et al* (2001) found that work stress in the police administration during training may occur as a result of high workloads, financial worries and conflict. Such instructors may not be able to offer quality police training but impact negatively on the police trainees (Prenzler, 2009). Police culture in most cases allows only official thinking on roles, disregard experience, and communicate in the official disciplinary manner instilled by the police trainers (Means, 2010).

Recruits are influenced by the police stories on their perceived roles during training which could perpetuate the occupational culture of the police in part bringing with it negative elements. Hidden curriculum in police training may reinforce traditional cultural prejudices and erode the sound ethical reasoning of new recruits that they had prior to recruitment (White, 2006). The study utilized the Social Learning theory by Albert Bandura (1983) which held that apart from what they are taught, individuals acquire behavior through observing the way others behave or from the consequences of the behavior. A behavior will be learned or abandoned after it has been externally or internally reinforced or punished or from consequences of other's behavior.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted within NPC Embakasi A Campus and used survey design in order to obtain quantitative and qualitative data. The target population for this study was 385 instructors in NPC Embakasi A Campus serving in the ranks of Gazetted officers, inspectorate and other ranks. The target population for this study also included 300 serving officers and ordinary members of the public in Nairobi County. Stratified random sampling was applied to select respondents comprising of instructors from NPC Embakasi A Campus and serving officers in RDU. Ordinary members of the public in Nairobi County were selected by snow ball sampling to make the study sample size to be 147.

The instruments were validated through content validity while reliability of the instruments was tested by correlating the two sets of results to determine the coefficient calculated using Pearson's correlation coefficient and found to be 0.79. Research data was collected using a questionnaire and a key informant interview and personally administered by the researcher. The collected qualitative data were analyzed by content analysis and discussed narratively under themes. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS computer package and organized in percentages and frequency distributions. These results were then presented in tables. The researcher also adhered to ethical considerations in the process of research.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
3.1 Effect of Training Methodology on Performance

Skill at arms and physical fitness were found to be the training units with the most effect to police performance as represented with means of 3.74 and 3.63 respectively. The rest of the units were rated to have lower effect to police performance as represented by lower means. These include legal studies (mean of 3.45), field craft and tactics (mean of 3.42) and police procedures (mean of 3.30) as shown in Table 4.1 below. The respondents also indicated that the training unit with the least effect to police performance was drill with a mean of 2.90. From these results, it is revealed that more emphasis is placed on skill at arms and physical fitness at NPS A Campus during training.

Table 3.1: Relevance of training methods

Training units	V. High (%)	High (%)	Low (%)	V. Low (%)	Not at all	Mean
Legal studies	45.5(60)	15.2(20)	9.1 (12)	-	30.3 (40)	3.45
Drills	9.8 (13)	30.3(40)	14.4(19)	31.1(41)	14.4 (19)	2.90
Skill at Arms	47.0(62)	12.1(16)	14.4(19)	21.2(28)	5.3 (7)	3.74
Field Craft and Tactics	39.4(52)	10.6(14)	23.5(31)	6.1 (8)	20.5 (27)	3.42
Physical Fitness	16.7(22)	45.5(60)	26.5(35)	6.8 (9)	4.5 (6)	3.63
Police Procedures	28.0(37)	22.7(30)	19.7(26)	10.6(14)	18.9 (25)	3.30

3.2 Effect of Relations between Students and Instructors on Performance

A large number of respondents revealed that the relationship between trainees and instructors influenced to a greater extent poor public image and abusive language and bad morals as represented by means of 3.65 and 3.48. Also, to a lower extent the relationship between trainees and instructors influenced concealing and falsification of evidence and abuse of human rights as shown by means of 3.36 and 3.33. These results reveal that the relationship between trainees and instructors has a moderate influence on the practices in performance. The results also reveal that police training through the relationship between trainees and instructors imparts trainees with negative attitudes toward the public.

3.3 Effect of Punitive Administration on Police Performance

The study found that punishment administered to trainees that had the greatest effect on performance of police officers included extreme or unfair punishment for mistakes and performing difficult duties unnecessarily as shown by means of 3.18 and 3.17. These results reveal that extreme or unfair punishment for mistakes and being made to perform difficult duties unnecessarily has a negative effect on the performance of police officers to a greater extent. Performing extra fatigue, dipping in water and denial of opinions negatively affected performance of police officers to a lesser extent as indicated by means of 3.08 each.

3.4 Effect of Police Subcultures on Police Performance

The results show that teamwork followed by aggressiveness were the police subcultures acquired by police officers to a greater extent as shown by means of 3.77 and 2.95. The results also show that the rest of the police subcultures were acquired by police officers at lower levels. It can be deduced that from the socialization and interactions in college, trainees acquired the police subcultures to a lower extent as indicated by lower means of below 3.00. These results may also imply that police officers acquired more subcultures from the field while they worked than while they were undergoing training.

3.5 Cumulative Influence of Hidden Curriculum on Police Performance

When the respondents were asked to comment cumulatively on the extent to which the hidden curriculum from police subcultures influences police service performance, majority of them indicated that hidden curriculum influences police service performance to a moderate extent as evidenced by a mean of 3.58. This finding indicates that trainees acquire police subcultures to a lower extent which leads to a moderate influence on police service performance.

Table 3.2: Cumulative Influence

Extent	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Very High (%)	19	14.4
High (%)	19	14.4
Low (%)	20	15.2
Very Low (%)	14	10.6
Not at all (%)	60	45.5
Total	132	100.0
Mean	3.58	

V. CONCLUSIONS

Police training is considered important for imparting relevant knowledge to cope with modern policing trends. More emphasis is placed on the best training methods which give skills that address current demands. Police training is also a basis for changing police officers' attitudes. The relationship between trainees and instructors that is characterized by negative attitudes during police training imparts trainees with negative attitudes toward the public. Unfair and extreme punishment leads police officers to replicate the same when dealing with public. However, police officers acquire more subcultures from the field while they worked than while they undergo training. Despite trainees acquiring police subcultures to a lower extent during training, the effects on police performance continue to last for decades.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that Government provide adequate funds to motivate and improve the welfare of staff, introduce a new curriculum and build the capacity of instructors. Efforts should be made to deploy instructors based on competence and to areas they are likely to be most effective and efficient. A robust trainee selection process should be put in place with an aim of recruiting a manageable number of trainees per session. A regular review of the training methodology used in basic training would also address basic police training hidden curriculum. Further studies are recommended in the other NPS campuses and police training institutions in the country. Further studies are also recommended on the source of negative police subcultures specifically police brutality.

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