



**PERSONAL COUNSELLING ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN THE HOTEL  
INDUSTRY IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY IN KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The goal of counselling is to help employees develop in order to achieve organizational goals. However, very few would be willing to participate as they may fear being viewed as weak and thus would prefer to ignore its benefits. The general objective of the study was to establish the effect of personal counselling on employee productivity in the hotel industry in Nairobi City County. A descriptive survey research method was adopted in this study. The target population was 2093 management level employees. The study used stratified random sampling technique in choosing the sample size from the target population. The sample size was 336 respondents. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires. Quantitative data collected was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Data was presented in form of tables, 3-D graphs and pie charts. Narrative analysis was used in the analysis of qualitative data. Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the study variables. A multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine the level of significance between the study variables. The study revealed that personal counseling had a positive effect on employee productivity in the hotel industry. The study recommends that the organization should purpose to provide personal counseling. This would assist employees in coping with stressful life situations, work/school problems, grief, and emotional distress or relationship difficulties.

**Key Words:** workplace counselling, personal counselling, employee productivity

## **Background of the Study**

Employees play a great role in ensuring organization success. It is therefore important for organizations to ensure the well-being of their employees to achieve organization objectives (Gupta & Shaw, 2014). In today's fast-paced corporate world, there is virtually no organization free of stress or stress-free employees. Personal difficulties, such as work-related stress, marital or family issues, or alcohol and drug addiction, can affect almost anyone. Most often, such problems can impair an employee's productivity, resulting in lower productivity, strained relations with co-workers and frequent absences or accidents (Jena & Pradhan, 2010). Organizations can help their employees maintain their health and well-being by offering employee assistance program that includes workplace counselling.

Workplace counselling is an employee support intervention that is usually short term in nature and provides an independent, specialist resource for people working across all sectors and in all working environments (Tripathy, 2014). Workplace counseling offers the employer a service that is valued by the employees, has the potential for savings by reducing sickness absence and takes pressure off managers through the availability of a constructive means of dealing with difficult staff or situations. It also contributes to its reputation as a caring employer. Workplace counseling is often viewed by employers as an insurance policy against compensation claims made by employees exposed to work related stress (Collins, 2012).

Most employers understand the hidden costs of employee stress, overload, decreased productivity, interpersonal conflict, sick leave and even long-term disability. Addressing stress issues before they become debilitating is a sound investment. Work place counseling will help employees develop and implement work-life strategies that will meet their needs as well as the corporate goals. The employees will be able to recognize and prioritize all aspects of modern life, work, family, self-care and the community and thus creating and implementing strategies for enhancing work-life balance (Mayor, 2011).

Certain factors can impact the success of a workplace counseling program. Confidentiality is essential for employees who participate in workplace counseling who need to know that all communication with a counselor will be privileged (Wright, 2015). The qualification of the counselors available through the program is another factor that contributes to the success of a program. Counselors should be licensed psychologists or social workers with a good understanding of the employees' work environment (Mortensen, 2014). Workplace counseling has clear benefits for both employees and employers. There's a strong link between an employee's psychological well-being and their productivity at work. When companies offer an EAP that includes confidential workplace counseling services, everybody wins. Employees can work through challenges in their life that may be impacting their performance, and employers can enjoy productivity gains while knowing that they are helping to improve the lives of their employees (Knights & Clarke, 2013).

Provision of workplace counseling is not common in Hong Kong, especially for in-house counselors. The in-house counseling service named Oasis – Centre for Personal Growth and Crisis Intervention and operated by the Hospital Authority of Hong Kong is one of the impressive exceptions (Ho, Tsui, Chu, & Chan, 2013). Over the past twenty years, 75% of medium and large organizations in Britain and North America provide workplace counselling programs to their employees (Walton, 2014). The level of stress caused by the problems and the anxieties of employees has experienced a decrease in employees who get counselling services.

## **Statement of the Problem**

A healthy and productive work environment depends on the emotional, psychological, and physical health of its employees (King & Gardner, 2016). Stress, chronic stress, and burnout

can lead to employee incapacity, sickness, and resulting absenteeism (Wainwright & Calnan, 2012). Further, workplace pressures contribute to the erosion of professional identities, which can be fragile and can change very quickly in the face of insecurity (Knights & Clarke, 2013). Counselling is a common strategy which can be used in addressing stress issues amongst organization employees.

The goal of counselling is to help employees develop in order to achieve organizational goals. Counselling is usually directed by policy, and at other times, leaders choose to counsel to develop employees. However, very few would be willing to participate as they may fear being viewed as weak and thus would prefer to ignore its benefits. Mayor (2011) noted that less than 50% of employees per organization would be willing to participate in such an initiative which discourages its popularization within the organization. Further, most organizations administrators especially those who are tasked with overseeing the financial resources would prioritize expenditures to initiatives that result in high returns. Moreover, very little budget could be committed to funding the counselling program until the management is convinced on its effectiveness.

Empirical studies include; Tham (2014) did a study on employee counselling programs in the Malaysian workplace. Joo and Grable (2011) did a study on improving employee productivity: the role of financial counselling and education. Ekpang (2015) did a study on counselling for effective work performance: a way for service improvement. From the empirical research it is evident that there is contextual gap. Therefore, this study sought to establish the effect of workplace counselling on employee productivity in the Hotel Industry in Nairobi City County in Kenya: a survey of five-star hotels

### **Specific Objectives**

- i. To examine the effect of personal counselling on employee productivity in the Hotel Industry in Nairobi City County in Kenya

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

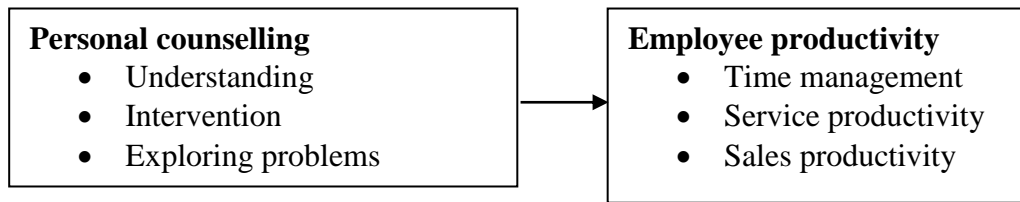
#### **Counselling Theory**

Reality therapy is a relatively new form of therapy in counselling. Therapy was founded by William Glasser a psychologist in California in 1965. Reality therapy refers to the client's phenomenal world and emphasizes the subjective way the client will see and interact with their surrounding world through internal control assessment. Glasser (1985) have emphasized that people see the world through the five basic needs of genetics and not the real world as it is the locus of evaluation. Like any other therapy, reality therapy has been pointed out that people have freedom, can make responsible choices and options. People can effectively control this life if they are willing to try setting a goal. So by putting the principles of control theory, people can prevent many problems that can lead to therapy.

Reality-oriented behavior therapy as a whole that involves components of doing, thinking, feeling and physiology this means that the client is responsible for choosing not only what they do, but whatever they think, feel, and experience it physically. In other words therapy focuses on the behavior and thinking. In general, the goal of reality therapy is to provide an environment that can help clients to build psychological strength to assess the current behavior or values. It can be used in therapy (counselling), family counseling, rehabilitation counselling, institutional management, and development and progress of society. Like in this study employee counselling programs will help improve on area of absenteeism, turnover and productivity among youth development officers. Kottler and Brown state that reality therapy is an approach to teaching that emphasizes problem solving, personal responsibility and he

also said the reality therapy is based on the assumption or assumptions that individuals need to build the identity of either succeed or fail.

### Conceptual Framework



#### Personal counselling

Personal counselling is a one-on-one discussion between the counselor and the client. The two form an alliance, relationship or bond that enables trust and personal growth (Jha & Hui, 2012). Individual Counselling is aimed at helping you to cope with addiction, mental health, trauma and with stresses that can cause anxiety and depression, it's about helping you to heal from the negative things that have happen in everyday life, such as losses, separation and divorce, family conflict, violence or abuse. Individual Counselling can assist in coping with stressful life situations, work/school problems, grief, and emotional distress or relationship difficulties. The main issues for which people ask for personal counselling, or are offered it at work is: stress, bullying and harassment, depression, alcohol abuse and drug abuse (Marshall, 2016). Personal counselling is important as it helps one to have a better understanding of own self and emotions, helps to discover personal strengths and weakness, encourage an attempt at new ways of thinking and behavior, sharing worries with an expert helps feel less alone with the problem and helps to identify personal goals and how to progress towards those goals (Chan, 2012).

#### Employee productivity

Employee productivity (sometimes referred to as workforce productivity) is an assessment of the efficiency of a worker or group of workers. Productivity may be evaluated in terms of the output of an employee in a specific period of time. According to Mathis and John (2014) productivity is a measure of the quantity and quality of work done, considering the cost of the resources used. The more productive an organization, the better its competitive advantage, because the costs to produce its goods and services are lower. Better productivity does not necessarily mean more is produced; perhaps fewer people (or less money or time) was used to produce the same amount. McNamara (2015) further states that, results are usually the final and specific outputs desired from the employee. Results are often expressed as products or services for an internal or external customer, but not always. They may be in terms of financial accomplishments, impact on a community; and so whose results are expressed in terms of cost, quality, quantity or time.

Measuring productivity involves determining the length of time that an average worker needs to generate a given level of production. One can also observe the amount of time that a group of employees spends on certain activities such as production, travel, or idle time spent waiting for materials or replacing broken equipment (Lake, 2014). The method can determine whether the employees are spending too much time away from production on other aspects of the job that can be controlled by the business. Employee productivity may be hard to measure, but it has a direct bearing on a company's profits. An employer fills his staff with productivity in mind and can get a handle on a worker's capabilities during the initial job interview. However, there are several factors on the job that help maximize what an employee does on the job (Lake, 2014).

Voon (2011) continues to state that controlling labour costs and increasing productivity through the establishment of clearer linkages between pay and performance are considered to be key human resource management component of competitive advantage. In addition, increased concerns over productivity and meeting customer requirements have prompted renewed interest in methods designed to motivate employees to be more focused on meeting (or exceeding) customer requirements and increasing productivity.

### **Empirical Review**

Dumigan (2017) studied the effect of individual counselling on students with disciplinary issues. The intent of this study was to ascertain if individual counselling can be used as an intervention to help those students who have continual, problematic, disciplinary issues. Similarly, this study examined if counselling can be an effective intervention for the students who receive multiple disciplinary referrals within a school year, but have not yet received individual counselling. Students were selected based upon a criterion of a minimum of 5 disciplinary interventions within the last school year (in school suspension, out of school suspension, multiple class failure across semester, insubordination, physical violence and continual reported peer conflict). Results revealed that counselling can be used as an effective intervention with this population. Both the participants' self-report and disciplinary records proved that counselling was an effective way to minimize disciplinary referrals and aid in student self-awareness and coping skills.

Lancaster and Stead (2017) did a study on individual behavioral counselling for smoking cessation. The study searched the Cochrane Tobacco Addiction Group Specialized Register for studies with counsel in any field in May 2016. Randomized or quasi-randomized trials with at least one treatment arm consisting of face-to-face individual counselling from a healthcare worker not involved in routine clinical care. The outcome was smoking cessation at follow-up at least six months after the start of counselling. The study identified 49 trials with around 19,000 participants. Thirty-three trials compared individual counselling to a minimal behavioral intervention. There was high-quality evidence that individual counselling was more effective than a minimal contact control (brief advice, usual care, or provision of self-help materials) when pharmacotherapy was not offered to any participants (RR 1.57, 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.40 to 1.77; 27 studies, 11,100 participants; I<sup>2</sup>=50%). There was moderate-quality evidence (downgraded due to imprecision) of a benefit of counselling when all participants received pharmacotherapy (nicotine replacement therapy) (RR 1.24, 95% CI 1.01 to 1.51; 6 studies, 2662 participants; I<sup>2</sup>= 0%). There was moderate-quality evidence (downgraded due to imprecision) for a small benefit of more intensive counselling compared to brief counselling (RR 1.29, 95% CI 1.09 to 1.53; 11 studies, 2920 participants; I<sup>2</sup>= 48%). None of the five other trials that compared different counselling models of similar intensity detected significant differences.

Gathatwa (2016) studied the relationship between workplace stressors and organizational performance in Kenya's Flower Industry. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between workplace stressors and organizational performance in Kenya's flower industry. The research adopted cross section survey research design and the target population were organizations in the flower industry in Kenya. The instrument of data collection was semi-structured questionnaires. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis was the main tool to test relationships among variables. The study established that there existed an average level of financial stress within the organization that was associated with the overall organizational performance. The study also found out that, there was average level of workplace relationship, and working conditions within the flower sector were fair which

contributed to organizational performance. The employees perceived themselves as always timely in performing their duties with high proportion always achieving their targets.

Matolo and Mukulu (2016) researched on the role of counselling in employee performance in public universities. The study aimed at investigating the role counselling plays in employee performance in public universities and it focused on Kenyatta University as a case in Kenya. The study population comprised of management staff, counselors, teaching and non-teaching members of staff. In order for the objectives of the study to be achieved, a questionnaire was used and data was collected and analyzed using SPSS. The research employed descriptive statistics which gave a result that there was a positive link between counselling and employee performance in public universities in Kenya.

Ngeno (2020) researched on employee counselling and performance of employees in commercial banks in Kenya. The study sought to determine the extent to which employee counselling programs affected employee performance within the commercial banks in Kenya. It was guided by positivist philosophy and used descriptive research design targeting 30,903 employees of the 43 banks. Proportionate stratified combined with purposive sampling was used to identify 395 respondents. Reliability and validity of the instrument was tested using Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and expert opinion respectively. Structured questionnaires were used for primary data while other studies, libraries, worldwide web and organizational reports provided secondary data. Descriptive statistics and regression model was used to analyze quantitative data while content analysis was utilized to analyze qualitative data. Employee performance was found to be affected positively by the employee counseling programs. Employee counselling programs should be enhanced to improve performance.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive survey research method was adopted in this study. The study was conducted in all the five-star hotels in Nairobi County in Kenya. The hotels were the unit of analysis. The target respondents were management level employees (unit of observation) in the hotels. These employees were targeted because they are in charge of employee counselling in the organization. From the human resources reports of the hotels, the target population was 2093 employees. The study used stratified random sampling technique in choosing the sample size from the target population. The sample size for the study was calculated using Slovin's formula. The sample size was 336 respondents this was 16% of the target population

Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires. Data was coded using SPSS version 23. Quantitative data collected was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Data was presented in form of tables, 3-D graphs and pie charts. Narrative analysis was used in the analysis of qualitative data. Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the study variables. A multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine the level of significance between the study variables.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

The study sample size was 336 respondents. These respondents were all issued with questionnaires, from where 304 were returned. This formed a response of 83%. According to Mugenda (2009) a response rate of above 70% is excellent.

### **Descriptive Statistics**

#### **Personal Counselling**

The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement on the following statements about the effect of personal counselling on employee productivity in the hotel

industry in Nairobi City County in Kenya. Scale 1- strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-moderate, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree. The findings were as shown in Table 1.

From the findings, the respondents agreed that personal counselling help employees to understand themselves better hence improving workplace relationships as shown by a mean of 4.109, personal counselling equips employees with valuable coping skills as shown by a mean of 4.076, personal counselling is essential when solving individual employee problems as shown by a mean of 4.036, personal counselling has been adopted in our organization as shown by a mean of 3.921, personal counselling is highly private and confidential as shown by a mean of 3.934, personal counselling tends to improve communication skills, such as those pertaining to assertiveness, emotional intelligence, empathy and active listening as shown by a mean of 3.865, and personal counselling is a good method of encouraging employees to go for counselling as shown by a mean of 3.984. The findings concur with those of Matolo and Mukulu (2016) who found a positive link between counseling and employee performance in public universities in Kenya.

**Table 1: Personal Counselling**

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev
Personal counselling has been adopted in our organization	9	16	31	182	66	3.921	0.993
Personal counselling is highly private and confidential	13	14	33	164	80	3.934	0.923
Personal counselling is essential when solving individual employee problems	11	18	30	135	110	4.036	0.905
Personal counselling tends to improve communication skills, such as those pertaining to assertiveness, emotional intelligence, empathy and active listening	8	16	37	191	52	3.865	1.025
Personal counselling equips employees with valuable coping skills	10	17	30	130	117	4.076	0.923
Personal counselling help employees to understand themselves better hence improving workplace relationships	7	15	29	140	113	4.109	0.944
Personal counselling is a good method of encouraging employees to go for counselling	12	18	29	149	96	3.984	0.903

### Employee Productivity

The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement on the following statements about employee productivity. Scale 1- strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-moderate, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree. The results were as shown in Table 2.

According to the findings, the respondents agreed that career counselling helps in improving employee efficiency as shown by a mean of 4.063, motivational counselling ensures that employee work to achieve quality results as shown by a mean of 4.030, personal counselling ensures that employees accomplish their tasks at the required time as shown by a mean of 4.023 and disciplinary counselling helps in improving employee productivity as shown by a mean of 3.967.

**Table 2: Employee Productivity**

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dv
Disciplinary counselling helps in improving employee productivity	7	14	27	190	66	3.967	1.044
Personal counselling ensures that employees accomplish their tasks at the required time	6	17	30	162	89	4.023	0.942
Career counselling helps in improving employee efficiency	5	19	33	142	105	4.063	0.908
Motivational counselling ensures that employee work to achieve quality results	9	16	29	153	97	4.030	0.928

### Correlational Analysis

Correlational analysis was used to determine the strength of the relationship between the study variables. Pearson R correlation was used to measure strength and the direction of linear relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. The findings were as shown in Table 3. From the findings, personal counselling has a positive significant correlation with employee productivity in the hotel industry in Nairobi City County in Kenya ( $\beta=0.787$ ,  $p=0.002$ ).

**Table 3: Correlational Analysis**

		Employee productivity		Personal counselling	
Employee productivity	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	304			
Personal counselling	Pearson Correlation	.787	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002			
	N	304	304		

### Multiple Regression Analysis

The study computed multiple regression analysis to establish the relationship between workplace counselling and employee productivity in the hotel industry in Nairobi City County in Kenya.

### Model Summary

The model summary was used to determine the variations of employee productivity due to the changes in disciplinary counselling, personal counselling, career counselling and motivational counselling. From the findings, the R squared was 0.776, this implies that there were 77.6% variations in employee productivity due to the changes in disciplinary counselling, personal counselling, career counselling and motivational counselling. The remaining 22.4% implies that there are other factors influencing employee productivity in the hotel industry that were not discussed in this study.

**Table 4: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.881 <sup>a</sup>	.776	.770	.27512

### Analysis of Variance

From the findings, the F-calculated, as shown in Table 5, was 38.752. Since the F-calculated was more than the F-critical (2.401), the model was good fit for the data and hence they could



be used in predicting the effect of workplace counselling on employee productivity in the hotel industry in Nairobi City County in Kenya.

**Table 5: ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	25.871	4	6.468	38.752	.002 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	49.904	299	0.167		
Total	75.775	303			

### Coefficients

The model emanating from the regression modeling was as follows:

$$Y = 1.131 + 0.361X_2$$

From the regression equation, it can be observed that when the disciplinary counselling, personal counselling, career counselling and motivational counselling are held to a constant zero, on employee productivity in the hotel industry in Nairobi City County in Kenya would be 1.131 as shown in Table 6.

Personal counseling had positive effect on employee productivity in the hotel industry ( $\beta=0.361$ ). The effect was further found to be significant since the p-value (0.003) was less than the selected level of significance (0.05). Therefore, a unit increase in personal counseling would result to a unit increase employee productivity in the hotel industry in Nairobi City County in Kenya.

**Table 6: Coefficients**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.131	.194		5.830	.002
1 Personal Counselling	.361	.101	.241	3.574	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Productivity

### Conclusions

The study established that personal counselling had a positive effect on employee productivity in the hotel industry. The effect was further found to be significant. Also, a unit increase in personal counseling would result to a unit increase employee productivity in the hotel industry in Nairobi City County in Kenya. The study concludes that personal counselling has a positive effect on the employee productivity in the hotel industry Nairobi City County in Kenya.

### Recommendations

The study established that personal counselling had a positive effect on employee productivity in the hotel industry. The study recommends that the organization should purpose to provide personal counseling. This would assist employees in coping with stressful life situations, work/school problems, grief, and emotional distress or relationship difficulties

### Suggestion for Further Research

The objective of the study was to establish the effect of workplace counselling on employee productivity in the Hotel Industry in Nairobi City County in Kenya. The study recommends that a study should be conducted to determine the effect of workplace counselling on employee productivity in public state corporations.

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