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**EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGAGING EXPERTS IN HELPING JOURNALIST IN KENYA
TO DEAL WITH TRAUMA**

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Effectiveness of Engaging Experts in Helping Journalist in Kenya to Deal With Trauma

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Abstract

Purpose: The objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness of engaging experts in helping journalists in Kenya to deal with trauma.

Methodology: The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods of collecting data. This included the uses of questionnaires and interviews. The collected data was edited, coded and analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The data was presented using both qualitative and quantitative statistics.

Findings: The results of the study revealed that engaging experts had a significant relationship with effective trauma management.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study recommends that journalists should engage spiritual leaders to help them to deal with traumatic experiences. In addition, journalists should also engage counselors to help them to deal with traumatic experiences.

Keywords: *Experts, Journalists, Trauma*

INTRODUCTION

According to Dworznik (2011), journalists are inevitably exposed to unpleasant scenes and disturbing noises since traumatic incidents occur spontaneously during their duties. Fires, natural disasters, gruesome traffic accidents, terrorist attacks, among other traumatic occurrences in the media schedule, are not always anticipated but are highly common and unavoidable for journalists in their everyday work.

Brayne (2007) and Simpson and Coté (2006) state that working in distressing situations can have an impact not only on victims, but also on journalists gathering and reporting the incidents. However it is important to note that there is an unwritten code among journalists holding that no assignment, no matter how brutal, can defy one's capacity to take a photograph, gather facts, and produce a story (DartCenter, 2014). However, this contradicts the newsroom code assumptions about emotional compartmentalization. In recent years, the role of traumatic stress and journalism has come under closer inspection. According to research by Dart Centre (2007), 86% to 100% of journalists have witnessed work related traumatic events while covering the news.

Al-Tampkins of the Poyner (2001) states that reporters among others in the media profession like photo journalist, soundmen, field producers work together with emergency workers, the police officers, and firefighters, hence the symptoms of trauma among the journalists are similar to these of the police officers, yet the journalists receive little support after their duties yet the public emergency workers are offered debriefing and counseling after trauma.

Studies reveal that journalists, who have been exposed to traumatic events such as war, can suffer psychological problems. Some of these psychological problems include; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD), anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, depression and substance abuse. This is backed up by a growing body of research that suggests that coverage of traumatic stories affects the livelihoods of journalists (Dworznik, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

Journalists are often exposed to traumatic events just like emergency workers such as police officers and firefighters. However, journalists receive little support after their duties as compared to public emergency workers who are offered debriefing and counseling programmes after traumatic events. In addition, a number of large-scale crises involving Kenya media coverage have occurred including the Westgate terrorist attack 2013, post-election violence of 2007 that spilled to early 2008, the helicopter crash in Ngong forest on 9th June 2012 and the Garissa students massacre of 2015, where journalists were exposed to clear pictures of bloodshed, dead people, critically injured people, burning people etc. These crises among other traumatic crises that have been reported in Kenya have raised questions in turn on the news work situation and well-being of journalists reporting on crises. Violanti and Paton (2006) also noted that the ill preparedness and lack to recognize the need to offer PTSD support by most media houses sometimes has led to journalists feelings abandoned or resented.

On the other hand, researchers such as Maxson(1999), Castle (1999) and Bennetts (2008) have highly recommended on some of the training and support programs that can help journalists manage the effects of traumatic events. However, these studies fail to measure the effectiveness of these programs and strategies put in place to help journalists cope with trauma. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of engaging experts in helping journalists in Kenya to deal with trauma.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the effectiveness of engaging experts in helping journalists in Kenya to deal with trauma.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Studies

Ullman and Filipas (2001) conducted a study on predictors of PTSD symptom severity and social reactions in sexual assault victims. The study found out that social support following trauma may either be positive, negative or neutral. Both negative and neutral responses to the victim can negatively impact the recovery of the trauma survivor. In dealing with PTSD Crowley, (2007), suggested that the people in the field needed confidence and the training on how to look after the journalist. He further asserts that at the end of the day it will be the responsibility of the middle manager who has a direct responsibility for the welfare of that staff members to know what should and shouldn't be done, and to monitor the welfare of the journalists when they return from a particular assignment and if they have PSTD issues to know what need to be done. Further, a study by Castle (1999) on also found out that some media houses have adopted medical schemes to provide their employees with full medical cover, counseling, psychiatric support also to staff welfare as a mechanism for supporting them on the effects of PSTD.

A study by Maabela (2011) on experiences and perceptions of South African police service members regarding trauma, stated that living with a member diagnosed with PTSD brought trauma, financial problems and constant worry among families. The study found out that families coped by supporting each other. The provision of counseling services and active participation in PTSD support groups and sport activities were identified by most participants as fundamental in coping with the effects of PTSD. The provision of sufficient integrated family counseling and life skills programmes was identified as crucial by most families in coping with the effects of living with a member diagnosed with PTSD. This study although it focused on a different group which is different from this study, it recommended the use of interpersonal communication strategies which this study wishes to establish how effective the strategies are amongst the journalism fraternity.

Bennetts(2008) study on issues of safety and traumatic stress in the media noted that compulsory safety training is fundamental to preparing journalist for potentially dangerous assignments. The training must account for the fact that journalism is a unique profession and media staff cannot behave the same way an average citizen would in extreme situations. The journalist should be

educated on both how to survive, and work successfully in hostile environments. It is also important that training extends beyond the classroom to put the journalist in realistic scenarios.

According to a study by Stephenson (2007), journalism schools have the responsibility to teach students about the realities of foreign correspondence and PTSD, and that this must then be supported by mentoring in the news organizations which they work. He also noted that its quite to send young journalists out to cover something and not have someone in the newsroom overseeing their work and keeping an eye on them. Shapiro (2007) study also adds that media organizations have the same responsibilities for journalists whether physically or emotionally injured on the job and if organizations continue to ignore the support needed for journalists to safely carry out their jobs, a neglect lawsuit is only a matter of time .

Gambhir and Agrawal (2010) conducted a study on training in trauma management. According to this study considerable improvements have occurred in the care of injured patients since the times of World War I and II. This has been brought about not only by technological advances but also due to improved training of doctors and nurses in providing trauma care. Important elements of combat trauma training are realism, human-specific injuries and treatments, volume of trauma exposure, and team building. In all modern armies training is imparted using human simulators and mannequins, human cadavers, occasionally live animals but more often using animal tissues. Worldwide trauma training courses are mandatory for both paramedics and medical officers. There is a need to set up an organized system of trauma training in India and we, in the Armed Forces have to capitalize on the wealth of combat and non-combat trauma experience, in setting up such courses

Arvay (2001) study focused on secondary PTSD among the PTSD counselors which other studies tried to ignore. The study found out that counselors working in the field of trauma are vulnerable and at risk for developing trauma symptoms similar to those experienced by traumatized clients. The author reviewed research and literature on secondary traumatic stress. Although the research is slightly different from this current study it bring out the ideal of secondary PTSD experienced by people who deal with PTSD victims such a media house counseling experts and managers.

Theoretical Literature

Information Processing Theory

Information processing theorists propose that PTSD occurs as the result of an inability to adequately process traumatic events (Ehlers and D. Clark,2000) Foa, Steketee and Rothbaum (1989) hypothesized that PTSD develops due to the formation of a fear network in the sufferer's memory which is stable, broad and easily activated. When trauma reminders activate the fear network, the information in this network enters consciousness (intrusive symptoms) and subsequent attempts to avoid this activation result in avoidance symptoms, which serve to maintain PTSD. Ehlers and Clark (2000) further proposed a cognitive model. They suggested that PTSD develops and becomes persistent when individuals process the trauma in a way that leads to a sense of serious and present threat. This sense of threat arises as a consequence of: 1) excessively negative appraisals of the trauma and/or its consequences the individual may make appraisals such

as ‘I attract disaster’ or ‘I can’t cope with this’ 2) a disturbance of autobiographical memory which may cause the person’s trauma to be easily triggered and yet experience problems during intentional recall in therapeutic or workplace settings. In response to these negative appraisals and memory disturbances, individuals adopt various maladaptive coping strategies including rumination (excessive dwelling on the trauma), cognitive avoidance or substance use. These maladaptive strategies then perform the maintenance role in PTSD by increasing symptoms, preventing changes in negative appraisals and change in the trauma memory. This theory is therefore deemed relevant to this study since it tries to discuss on some of the maladaptive coping strategies adopted by individual in trauma management, which is the dependent variable in the current study.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed method design; both qualitative and quantitative but skewed more of qualitative methods. Creswell (2009), states that the mixed method of research is authoritative since it utilizes the strengths of both the qualitative and quantitative research methods. According to Teddlie and Yu (2007) in mixed methods sampling involves combining well established qualitative and quantitative techniques in creative ways to answer research questions posed by mixed method research designs. In addition, Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) states that the data produced by the mixed method of research enhances the validity and reliability of research findings, thus the employment of the mixed study in this study assisted in verifying and enhancing findings that was conducted. Therefore, the research design was found relevant for the current study.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in tables and diagrams. The analyzed data was also arranged under themes that reflect the research objectives.

Response Rate

The number of questionnaires that were administered was 90. A total of 75 questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This represented an overall successful response rate of 83.33% as shown on Table 4.1 below. This agrees with Babbie (2004) who asserted that return rates of 50% are acceptable to analyze and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good. Based on these assertion 83.33% response rate is adequate for the study.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Returned	75	83.33%
Unreturned	15	16.67%
Total	90	100%

Effectiveness of Engaging Experts in Helping Journalist to Deal with Trauma

The objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of engaging experts in helping journalist in Kenya to deal with trauma.

Professional Talk

Table 4.2: Professional Talk

Professional talk	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	37	50.7%
No	38	49.3%
Total	75	100%

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they have had anyone professional to talk to about their experience and feeling. The results in table 4.2 indicated that majority of the respondents who were 50.7% indicated yes while only 49.3% indicated no. These findings agree with that of Coté and Simpson (2006) concluded that journalist talk to counsellors about trauma experiences. This implies that most of the journalists in Kenya have have had someone professional to talk to about their experience and feeling.

Professional Assistance

Table 4.3: Professional Assistance

Professional talk assistance	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	32	86%
No	5	14%
Total	37	100

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether the professional assistance assisted them in dealing with the effects of trauma. The results in table in table 4.3 indicated that of the respondents who were 86% indicated yes while only 14% indicated no. These findings agree with that of Coté and Simpson (2006) who found that counsellors help in dealing with trauma.

Fellow Journalist

Table 4.4: Professional Assistance

Employing Professional Talk	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	54	72%
No	21	28%
Total	75	100

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether they believe that fellow journalists should employ a similar approach to talk to professional. The results in table in table 4.4 indicated that majority of the respondents who were 72% indicated yes while only 28% indicated no. These

findings agree with that of Coté and Simpson (2006) who recommended that if you live in an area where you can find professional counselling that can help you overcome the difficulties that your work may be imposing on you, it will be of much help than trying to fix it yourself.

Professional Support

Table 4.5: Seeking Professional Support Again

Seeking professional support again	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	33	88.18%
No	4	11.82%
Total	37	100%

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether they go back for professional support again in case of future trauma experience. The results in table in table 4.5 indicated that majority of the respondents who were 88.18% indicated yes while only 11.82% indicated no. These findings agree with that of Maabela (2011) who found that journalists go back to counselors for assistance when they experience traumatic experience.

Use of Experts

The media managers were asked to indicate whether their organization use experts like counselor to provide professional support to help the journalists after exposure to traumatic events. Majority of the media managers indicated that yes. These findings agree with that of Mitchell and Everly (2001) who found that most media houses consults counselors when their journalists are struggling with trauma. The following were the responses:

NTV	<i>'Yes'</i>
CITIZEN	<i>'No'</i>
KISS	<i>'Sometimes'</i>
KTN	<i>'Yes'</i>
K24	<i>'Yes'</i>

The media managers were also asked to indicate what type of experts (counselors, psychotherapists) they mostly engage. The results indicated that most media houses engage counselors. These findings agree with that of Mitchell and Everly (2001) who found that most media houses use counselors. The following were the responses.

NTV	<i>'Psychological counselors'</i>
CITIZEN	<i>'None'</i>
KISS	<i>'Counselors'</i>
KTN	<i>'Counselors'</i>
K24	<i>'Motivational Speakers and Counselors'</i>

The media managers were also asked to indicate whether the use of the experts help the journalists in their professionalism and livelihoods. Most of the media houses indicated that it helps. These findings agree with that of Nic Place (1992) who found that journalists who report on traumatic incidents may require counselling after covering traumatic situations.

NTV	<i>'It helps'</i>
CITIZEN	<i>'It helps'</i>
KISS	<i>'It helps'</i>
KTN	<i>'It helps slightly'</i>
K24	<i>'It helps'</i>

Correlation between Use of Experts and Effective Trauma Management

Table 4.6: Correlation Matrix

		Use of experts	intermediate	short term	Long term	Overall trauma
Use of experts	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Short term	Pearson Correlation	-.242*	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.036				
Intermediate	Pearson Correlation	-0.204	.277*	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.009	0.015			
Long term	Pearson Correlation	-0.121	.467**	.609**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	0	0		
Overall trauma	Pearson Correlation	-.288*	.750**	0.14	0.185	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.021	0	0.232	0.111	

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

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in table 4.6 revealed that use of experts and short term experiences are significantly related ($p=0.036$). These findings agree with that of Coté and Simpson (2000) who found that professional counseling is significantly related to trauma management. This implies that use of experts is associated with lower short term trauma experiences and hence effective trauma management. The table further indicated that use of experts and intermediate experiences are

significantly related ($p=0.009$). These findings agree with that of Coté and Simpson (2000) who found that professional counseling is significantly related to trauma management. This implies that use of experts is associated with lower intermediate term trauma experiences and hence effective trauma management. It was further established that use of experts and long term experiences were significantly related ($p=0.002$). These findings agree with that of Coté and Simpson (2000) who found that professional counseling is significantly related to trauma management. This implies that use of experts is associated with lower short term trauma experiences and hence effective trauma management. Overall correlation results indicated that use of experts is significantly associated with overall trauma ($p=0.021$). These findings agree with that of Coté and Simpson (2000) who found that professional counseling is significantly related to trauma management. These findings also agree with that of Nic Place (1992) who found that journalists who report on traumatic incidents may require counselling after covering traumatic situations. This implies that use of experts is associated with reduced trauma and hence effective trauma management.

Regression between Use of Experts and Effective Trauma Management

Table 4.7: Model Fitness

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.588a	0.3457	0.3455	0.29202

The results presented in table 4.7 present the fitness of model used of the regression model in explaining the study phenomena. The results revealed that the goodness of fit of the model was satisfactory. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 34.57%. This means that Use of experts explain 34.57% of the effective trauma management.

Table 4.8: Analysis of Variance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.562	1	0.562	6.594	.020
Residual	6.225	73	0.085		
Total	6.787	74			

Table 4.8 provides the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant as supported by a p value of 0.020 which is lesser than the critical p value of 0.05. These findings agree with that of Coté and Simpson (2000) who found that professional counseling is significantly related to trauma management. The $F_{cal}=6.594 > F_{critical}=2.4599$ at $\alpha 0.05$ which imply that use of experts are good predictor of the effective trauma management.

Table 4.9: Regression of Coefficients

	B	Std. Error	T	Sig.
(Constant)	0.674	0.107	6.298	0
Professional talk	-0.588	0.067	8.776	0.002

Regression of coefficients results in table 4.9 shows that is a significantly relationship between use of experts and effective trauma management as supported by beta coefficient of 0.588. This was also supported by the t values whereby $t_{cal}=8.776 > t_{critical}=1.96$ at a 95 percent confidence level which depicts that we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative. This implies that improvement in use of experts would lead to effective trauma management by 0.588 units.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

The objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of engaging experts in helping journalist to deal with trauma. The results revealed that engaging experts had a significant relationship with effective trauma management. This implies that improvement in use of experts would lead to effective trauma management by 0.588 units.

Conclusion

Based on the study findings the study concluded that engaging experts is a good strategy of dealing with trauma among journalists. The studies also concluded that engaging spiritual leaders had the greatest help in dealing with traumatic experiences. In addition the study concluded that counselors help journalists after their exposure to traumatic experiences. Lastly use of experts help journalist in their professionalism and livelihoods.

Recommendation

The study recommends that journalists should engage spiritual leaders to help them to deal with traumatic experiences. In addition, journalists should also engage counselors to help them to deal with traumatic experiences.

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