

## **POOR EMPLOYEE WORK PERFORMANCE- A CASE STUDY - CAMBRIDGE POLICE STATION**

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### **Abstract**

Understanding the impact of employee poor performance and dealing with it immediately is very important to curb the negative element in the organization especially if left unattended. The study aimed at identifying the root causes and consequences of employee poor work performance and to explore the possible solutions. The results of the study exhibited how much the role of the management in the performance of the members. The morale of the members is important for the organisation's success to improve the level of performance and productivity.

Cambridge Police Station was identified as one of the contributors and was producing the expected desired result on performance especially on the operational programmes. Main drivers of poor performance were explored focusing on Visible Policing and Detective Components; the reasons for the employee low morale and the relationship between employer and employee. The study also takes into consideration the work environment with regard to resources and skills required for the members to perform their duties with the aim to maximize their performance. In any company or organisation it becomes imperative to consider return on investment, to ensure that resources utilized are yielding the desired outcome.

Quantitative research approach was followed utilising an interpretive descriptive design to obtain the information. Structured questionnaires deemed to be relevant for data collection for this study. The response to the study was marginal with 70% [n=30] responses received. Data analysis included identifying and comparing existence of factors that affect the members personally and work related factors that threatens turnover intentions. The study participants composed members working at the Community Service Centre, Complaint attendance and Investigating Officers in the Cambridge Police Station precinct regardless of levels.

The results revealed various factors that affect the performance of the station. The study findings showed a problem with regard to management aspects in terms of effective communication, lack of resources, implementation of performance appraisal system, recognition of good performance done by members and members' views are not given recognition. These aspects played a negative effect on member's morale that adversely affected the overall performance; hence the members lacked motivation and recognition by managers.

It was also evident that the poor performance regulatory policy was either unknown or very little knowledge by members who heard about the policy. The results indicated that the policy was not

correctly implemented instead managers showed less interest for members welfare. Management dealt with members in accordance to disciplinary procedures without giving the employees a chance to explain their perspective.

Based on the results of the findings, the researcher conclusively formulated the conclusion and recommendations to bridge the gaps identified.

**Keywords:** Performance, Human Resource Management, Physical Resources, Quality of Work Life, Performance Appraisal System, Motivation, Good Leadership, Organizational Factors and Communication.

## **Introduction**

The study originated from understanding that Cambridge Police Station was viewed as not performing at an acceptable standard when evaluated as per performance chart. Performance Chart being the monitoring tool of the organization, this tool concentrates on all aspects of the SAPS such as Operational and Administration components. The study then focused on one dimension being Operational field which deals with Crime Prevention, Complaints attendance and Investigation thereof. Without highly motivated, skilled personnel and enough physical resources the organization cannot function properly and effectively.

It is widely recognized that the police are not providing the desired output in relation to the set standards. Other provinces are having the similar situation with the current status regarding performance as per performance chart and crime statistics recently released nationwide by the Minister of Police. It transpired during the course of this study that a number of factors are affecting the performance and members are concerned hence they raised their opinions. The literature review revealed some actions and solutions to remedy the situation so that the organization can achieve the desired outcomes, improving work conditions, motivating members, improving management styles of the supervisors, development and strengthening of skills through sufficient training of investigators, remuneration and enhancement of teamwork.

The operational components are very much important in the SAPS due to their field of work. Detectives and Community Service Centre are Front Office fields, which mean members working there must portray professionalism and must be well equipped to perform their duties. These two offices are the core business of the SAPS, hence they are crime fighters and always on the frontline to ensure that South Africa is safe and secure at all times. They are also to be self motivated and be client oriented to be able to perform at a high standard. This solely means the community of South Africa depends on the hands of SAPS for their safety. Their performance is therefore of critical nature for successful provisioning of effective and efficient performance at all costs.

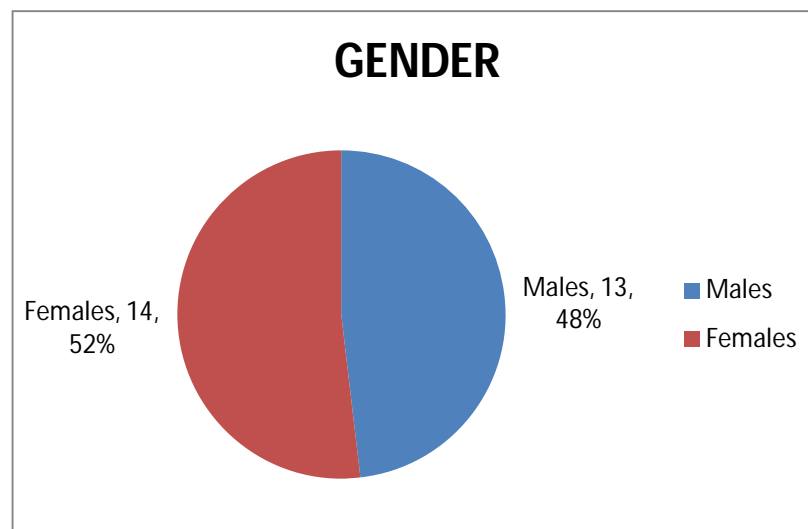
This study therefore aimed at establishing the causes of poor work performance and the possible solutions to remedy the situation with specific focus on operational component at Cambridge police station in the Eastern Cape. The study involved the members from the station to get their views and opinion on this topic hence they are based at this station. This chapter therefore presents the conclusions obtained from the results of the study and the recommendations to

improve performance of Cambridge Police Station and later the recommendations will be piloted to other stations within the province.

## FINDINGS

The findings are organised in relation to the questions that assisted the study to obtain the responses for the participants. Questions were directed mainly to the members functioning operationally in the Visible Policing and Detective environment at the Cambridge Police Station on both commanding and grassroots positions. The participants were complaint attendants, investigators or data capturers.

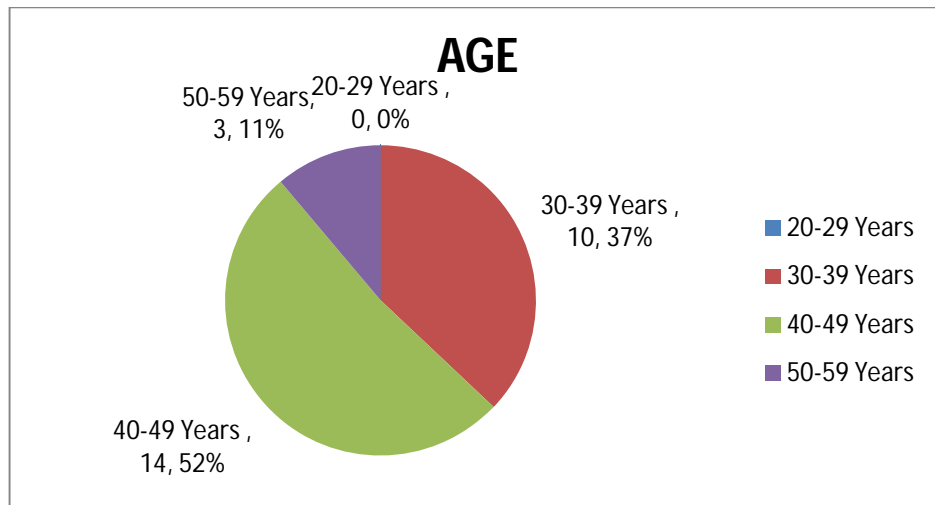
The sample focused on one station as a study field out of twelve Brigadier level within the Eastern Cape Province. The choice for Cambridge police station was due to its location and vastness of the area as well as the combination of the station precinct being urban, rural and semi-urban environments including farm area. At least fifty questionnaires were distributed though only 51% was reverted back to the researcher and some of the questionnaires were either partially answered or not answered due to lack of knowledge regarding how to deal with poor performance. This became clear that members are not familiar about some policies with the organisation except the knowledge of disciplinary procedures for misconduct.



**FIGURE 1.: SEX of the RESPONDENTS**

## Age of Respondents

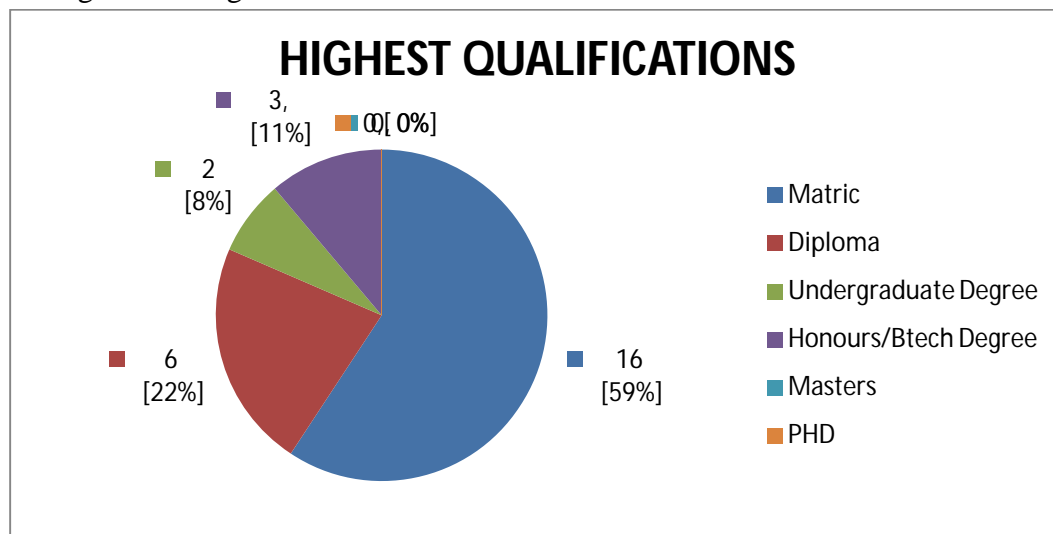
The age of respondents is an important aspect during the interpretation of the results also for this study. Figure 4.2., below show that most of the respondents are in the well mature group between the age of 40 and 49 years old.



**Figure 2.: Age of the Respondents**

#### Highest Qualification

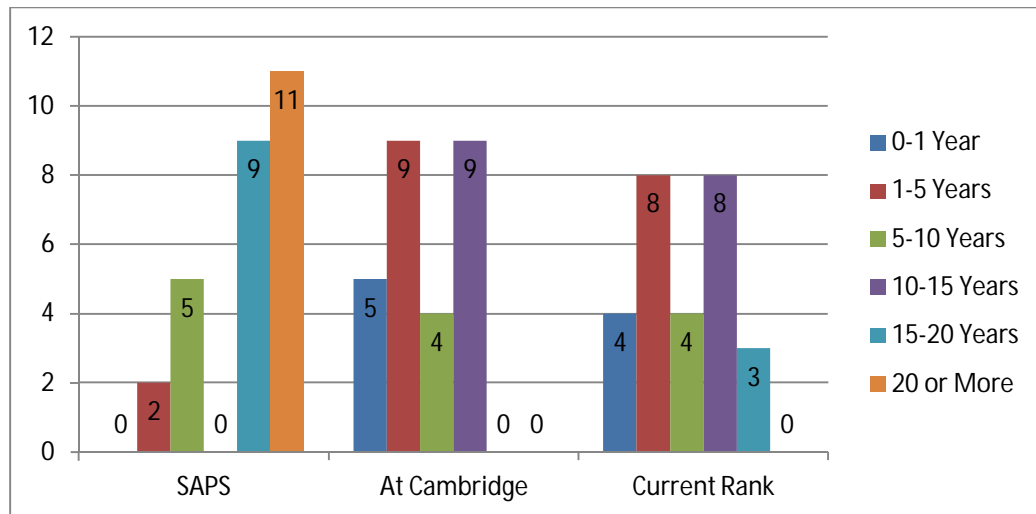
Qualification of the members was important to check the level of professionalism and growth outside the organization as well as to see how they value self equipment. In view of the chart below it was clear that a big number [56%] of the members only ended at matric in their studies, followed by 22% with diplomas, 11% with either honours/Btech Degree and 8% with undergraduate degree. None on masters and Phd level.



**Figure 3.: Highest Qualifications of Respondents**

#### Question 4, 7 & 8 Period in the SAPS, Station and Rank [Position]

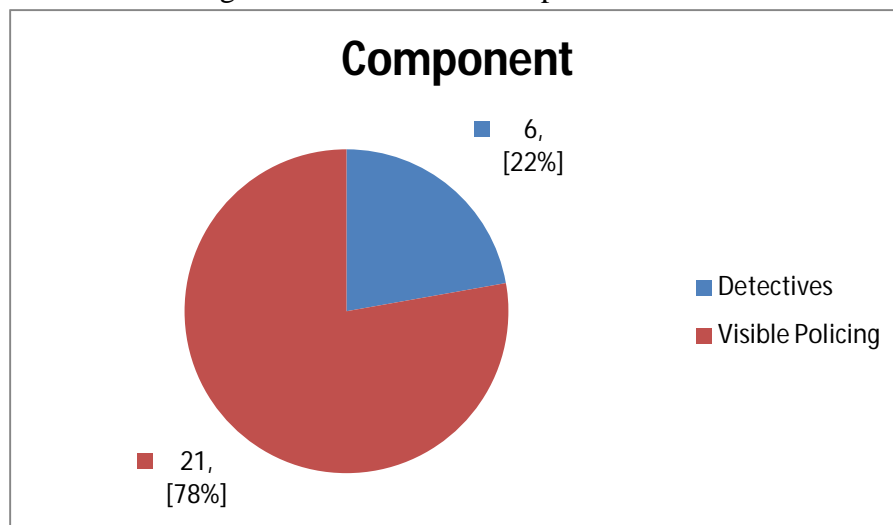
These questions aimed at establishing the duration of the members being employed in the organization, the time spent being on the same station as well as period on the same level. This information was important to request because sometimes it has to do with members being bored of working in the same environment without growth and also the fact that some members get too acquainted with the environment in so much that there is no challenge anymore.



**Figure 4.: Number of Years in the Organization, Station & Current Rank**

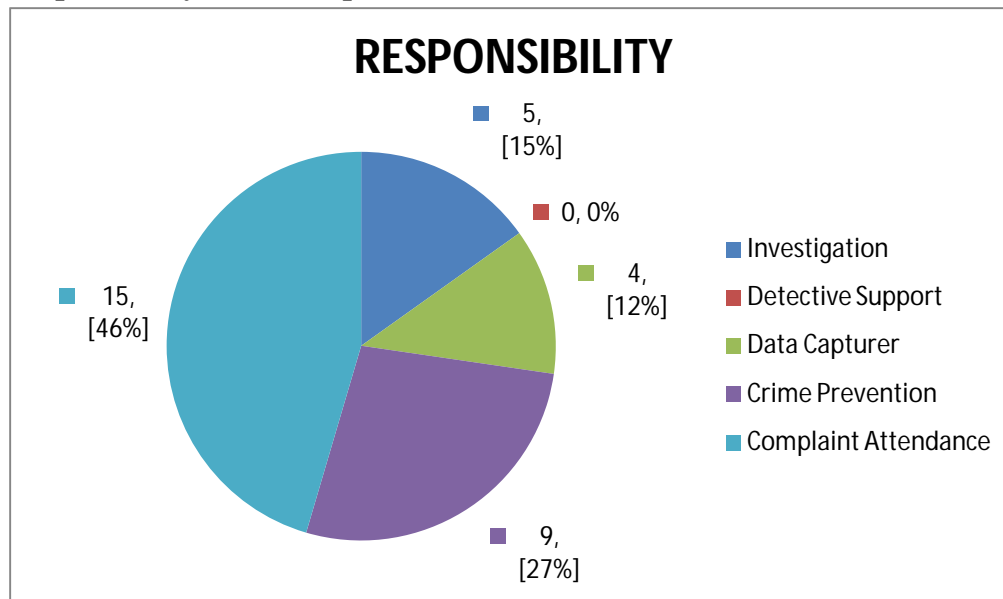
### Component

This question looks at the number of respondents from the two components of operational environment at the station. This indicates a bigger percentage to be Visible Policing with 78% and the remaining 22% for Detective component.



**Figure 5.: Component**

### Responsibility of the Respondents



**Figure 6.: Responsibility**

### General Factors that Contributes to Poor Work Performance

The first object of the study was to determine factors causing employee poor work performance in the Cambridge Police Station, Eastern Cape. The aspects that emerged from the study include a broad spectrum of negative [demoralizing] and positive [Motivating] factors which are embedded within the individual or the organizational processes and those factors are discussed below.

### Aspects Relating to Training and Skills

Without training performance of high quality and standard is totally impossible, that is why every organization have human resource development component to ensure that their personnel acquire the necessary skills to perform their jobs. Most of the respondents indicated the lack of necessary skills especially on the investigation skills. As an investigator one needs to have the necessary training besides the tertiary and basic training as a police officer. On personal information obtained it was clear that almost half of the members managed to accomplish grade 12 and no further education thereafter. Only one third of the members acquired a diploma education level and only a mere 10% at honors/Btech level [Figure 3]. A huge percentage [70%] of respondents reported that they required necessary skills to perform their current job to be able to improve their performance. Also another enormous gap of [90%] was reported by the respondents with regard to clarity on what was expected of them at work.

Members also came strongly about the senior management leadership skills in the station to the point of suggesting changes of the station senior managers. Some members went to the point of preferring the previous leadership due to how things are currently. Some respondents also suggested in-service training and on the job training to overcome the training challenges. Members performing detective duties indicated they are lacking investigation course and yet they are overloaded with dockets and that puts a lot of pressure on their shoulders.

Therefore, performance of high standard and quality solely depends on well skilled labour. Lack of knowledge can be dangerous to the employee's career; this was clearly indicated by lack of understanding of the availability of the necessary policies and procedures to deal with poor performance in the SAPS [Table 3.]. Also, the respondents were asked about the meaning of poor performance and to distinguish whether it was misconduct or lack of discipline, the responses indicated they were not having a clear understanding about the subject.

### **Aspects Relating to Resources**

Every organization needs to be resourced to achieve its objectives and goals successfully. Though almost half of the respondents reported lack of resources at the station as part of a challenge, lack of resources hampers the production at all costs. Both human and physical resources were mentioned by the respondents as one of the causes, as a result some of the members reported they utilize their private vehicles to attend to investigations. Lack of resources also led to overloading of the members with dockets. In a number of times members cited the transportation between place of residence and work and another challenge that cause members to perform poorly hence some members resort to booking off-sick.

### **Aspects relating to motivation**

Highly motivated members equals to performance of high standard whilst on the other hand members with low morale equals to poor work performance. This becomes clear that members' well being is always important for the organization's performance. In this aspect respondents reported approximately 43.33% of their responses that members lacked motivation due to several aspects. These included personal needs not being met, treatment by the commanders that was not appropriate, lack of appreciation by commanders, performance appraisals, lack of recognition, and scarcity of promotions, favoritism, low salaries and poor communication.

Johnson [1997:106] says "our basic social nature demands that we seek out communication with other people"; furthermore, "What prompts communication is our desire for someone else to know what we know, to value what we value, to feel what we feel, and to decide what we decide".

Almost 90% of the respondent [86.67%] reported that they are not satisfied with their current commanders. Members does not feel the sense of satisfaction in their job, respondents indicated

intentions to search for other greener pastures given the opportunities [Table 1& 2.]. Respondents reported that poor performance had a big effect on their morale and makes them not to be associated with the station at times or to be seen wearing uniforms within the premises of the Cambridge Police Station. Employees need self fulfillment, self actualisation, job security and self motivation to have a driving force to perform effectively.

### **Factors Relating to Consequences and Impact of employee poor work performance**

Labour Relations Act and Public Service Commission toolkit documents deals with what is expected of each and every employee. SAPS as an organization, agreement 3/2005 is in place to regulate poor performance and to give clear guide what to do when a member does not perform as required.

Poor performance has negative consequences in the organization and also to the image of members. It also transpired from the respondents that poor performance should be addressed with immediate effect hence if it is not dealt with it has bad consequences. 100% of the respondents strongly indicated that poor performance should not be left unattended because it can lead to unfixable situation leading our clients to lose confidence causing them to take the law to their hands. Poor work performance tarnishes the image of the organization and runs the work place unruly and demotivate members that are hard workers. It will also lead to increase in crime levels. Over and above members get embarrassed to be associated with the poor performing station or any organization. Hence the stations performance is rated on the performance chart and then compared to other stations, that brings the shame to that specific station management and members for the station will be seen and the worst performing station. Poor performance also demoralizes member's morale and paints a bad picture because crime statistics goes up.

#### **It was concluded therefore that,**

- Incidents of poor performance are dealt with in accordance to the necessary legislations within the organization.
- Commanders are taking into consideration all the members' performance to uplift the standard of the station performance.
- Procedures should be followed correctly without prejudicing the employee rights.
- Disciplinary measures should not be mistaken for poor work performance procedures and the necessary processes be followed.
- Performance Enhancement Processes be not taken for punitive measures but to guide the members' performance.
- Management should acquaint themselves with Agreement 3/2005 and be communicated to the members on the field.



- The employer employee relations are improved for harmony and to improved performance thereby uplifting the standard of the organization.

### **Factors Relating to Recommended Issues to improve employee work performance.**

In literature review we discussed possible manners to address poor work performance as discussed by scholars. Cordner & Scarborough [2010:346-247]....touches the importance of evaluating police performance and the reasons why it should also give a list of uses for information pertaining to police performance; that it is important that good is acknowledged and therefore there are processes of performance appraisal systems.

Communication plays a big role in the organization to ensure that members understand their roles and responsibilities the organization they are working for. The manner in which the instructions are given to members is also important to curb misunderstanding. It also transpired in the study that sometimes communication is not clear causing members to execute wrong instructions.

Highly motivated members produces good end product and performs at a high level. Motivation is one of the interventions to encourage high level performance, as adapted from Swanepoel et al [2000:353]. Managing for maximum performance as the need to manage performance effectively at the level of either individual or the work team subsequent lessons stay focused on the overall objective while recalling information about performance that builds on the foundation of the earlier lessons [Cascio 1998:299-300]. Taking into consideration the respondents views, it transpired that building a strong team, building trust and commitment, managers are to ensure the employees are highly motivated by acknowledging the effort they put to uplift the performance standard.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings revealed that the factors affecting the performance of the members of the Cambridge Police station. These factors therefore need to be addressed with immediate effect and be monitored over a period of time to ensure gradual sustainable progress in improving the performance of the members appointed on operational environment. Interventions are to be implemented to educate, motivate and encourage the members thereby boosting their morale. Immediate intervention from Cluster and Provincial level will also be recommended with the involvement of the Employee Health and Wellness Services for morale boost activities, Labour Relations for information sharing with regard to labour related matters such as disciplinary procedures, and Legal Services for legal principles to educate the personnel inclusive of the station management about.

The involvement of the following components from Provincial level can play a big role in ensuring the organizational procedures are being kept by the station management.

The components are-

- Human Resource Management Physical Resource management - to check if the station is properly resourced,
- Human Resource Utilization – to establish if the personnel placed at Cambridge are they properly utilized and has the correct performance management measurements.
- Human Resource Development – to establish whether the necessary training for the members placed in the environments of Visible Policing and Detectives is provided and to develop a strategy to overcome the short comings discovered.
- Organizational Development – to conduct and efficiency study to establish whether the station resources are equivalent or sufficient enough for the precinct being policed or serviced is appropriate.
- Provincial Senior Management to revisit the appointment of station senior managers.

**It was therefore recommended that-**

- Poor performance is attended to immediately applying the correct procedures.
- Interventions that will assist members to perform better be implemented, such as, improved work relations with the management,
- Better working conditions, skills and resources allocated at the stations be revisited, meaning the allocation is suitable to perform successfully.
- Station lectures to update members with the new developments within the organization.
- Uniqueness of each environment be addressed in terms of vastness, crime tendencies, and infrastructure.
- Recruitment selection and appointments of incumbents should address the field of work. Correct candidates for specific jobs.
- Management to ensure that communication or interaction with members is maintained to build trust and to earn their commitment.
- Office etiquette is maintained at all times, for example management does not call members names and approach to juniors is very much imperative.
- Management to acknowledge good work by members.
- Members are involved and management listens to their contributions.
- Management builds the sense of ownership by opening discussion tables where the members interact with the management on the problematic areas.
- Management to utilize the leadership skills effectively and efficiently.
- Organization implements retainment strategy especial for the members that the organization has invested some special skills.
- Organization acknowledges further acquired tertiary education by members.

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