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## The possibility of upward job mobility for security guards from Samburu community working in Nairobi

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### Abstract

This study investigated the possibility of upward job mobility for security guards from the Samburu community working in Nairobi. The issue that this study focused on, was the possibility of upward job mobility. In examining this issue, the study looked at the promotion at work and salary increment as indicators, which provided evidence for granting or non-granting employee rights. The study involved all security guards from the Samburu community working in Nairobi as the population of study and individual security guards as the unit of analysis. Five areas of the city, that is, Westlands/Kabete, Lavington/Kangemi/Waithaka/Muthaiga/Thika Road, Karen/Lang'ata, South C/South B and Embakasi, were marked out as the places from which the study sample was taken. The study adopted a survey design, and data was collected through questionnaires, which were applied to 200 security guards who had been randomly selected from 5 administrative clusters in Nairobi. In this study, frequency distribution tables were used to analyse the data. The results were presented in tables of numbers and percentages of the sample interviewed, as well as column charts. The findings indicated that security guards had minimal chances for job mobility due to a lack of on-job training. This study recommends that the trade union movement in Kenya should reach out to security guards to enrol them and register an organisation for them that can effectively pursue issues regarding their welfare at work.

**Key words:** Employee, employer, labour, terms of employment.



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## INTRODUCTION

The proximity of the Maasai and Samburu communities' indigenous lands to the city of Nairobi causes men from these two communities to be the ones mostly engaged as security guards in the city. In Kenya, nomadic pastoralist communities are found in Eastern and North-Eastern counties, Northern counties of the Coastal region, and the Northern and Southern counties of the Rift Valley. The major communities found in these areas are the Samburu, Maasai, Turkana, Borana and Somali (Nyariki & Amwata, 2019). Men from these communities are highly preferred for engagement as security guards in Kenya's urban areas, of which Nairobi is the major urban centre, being the nation's capital city. This study seeks to investigate the possibility of upward job mobility for security guards from the Samburu community working in Nairobi.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Job mobility is a key indicator of the avenues for personal as well as financial growth of an employee. In an investigation on the type of employees who are likely to move on the job, both upwards and downwards, and the factors which influence such mobility, Meng et al. (2014) found that training and retraining of employees influenced their mobility on the job ladder, with those with both formal and informal training having greater chances of moving up. The study also found that women were moving upward more than men, and such movement was more evident in jobs. The study was mainly a documented survey of Australian labour statistics, taking all registered workers in Australia as the population of the study. While the study brought to light the issue of gender diversity as far as job mobility was concerned, it did not focus on specific occupations and the mobility factors inherent to them. The current study will cover this gap by looking at the issue of job mobility with regard to the security industry, specifically security guard workers.

Pinigina (2011) researched the aspects of mobility in the career path of hotel managers with the aim of bringing out an understanding of the role of mobility in their career path. An informant interview design was employed with a sample of 11 managers of a

hotel chain, as well as through document review. The study found that career mobility was both enhanced and represented by the development of job skills, willingness on the part of the managers to improve themselves in job skills, and the organisational intent to offer opportunities for the same. This study concentrated on highly skilled employees at the managerial level, and the findings may not be true for lower cadre employees, whose job replacement may be easier than for those at the managerial level. This study will bridge this gap by analysing job mobility issues relating to security guards, a low-cadre job group.

## METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a survey design to investigate the welfare of security guards from nomadic pastoralist communities working in Nairobi. The study was carried out within Nairobi City. Nairobi City is the capital city of the nation of Kenya, the economic powerhouse of the Eastern and Central African region. Nairobi Comity is the most populous city in East Africa, with a population of over three million people. It is located in the South-Central part of the country, at an altitude of 1680 m above sea level. It is 1.28330 South of the Equator and 36.81670 East of the Greenwich Meridian. The study involved all security guards from the Samburu community working in Nairobi as the population of study and individual security guards as the unit of analysis. Five areas of the city, that is, Westlands/Kabete,

Lavington/Kangemi/Waithaka/Muthaiga/Thika Road, Karen/Lang'ata, South C/South B and Embakasi, were marked out as the places from which the study sample was taken from each of these areas. Thus, clustering was used as a prelude step in selecting the study sample. According to Babbie (2007), cluster sampling is the most common. The researcher initially carried out a reconnaissance visit to the study areas, listing all the security guards from nomadic pastoralist communities according to the five clusters of administrative areas described above. From these clusters, a sample of 200 security guards was selected through random sampling. Random sampling gives each individual in the study population an equal opportunity to be selected: this creates a situation where the sample is a true

representation of the study population (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The data used in the study was both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data was gathered through questionnaires, which were constructed in such a way that they captured different kinds of information that would be required to address the objectives of the study. For that reason, both open-ended and closed questionnaires were used. A pilot study was carried out to assess the content-related validity of the questionnaires before the actual research was carried out. In this study, frequency distribution tables were used to analyse the data. The results were presented in tables of numbers and percentages of the sample interviewed, as well as on pie charts and column charts.

**RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

**Possibility for Upward Job Mobility for Security Guards**

The fourth objective of this study was to investigate the possibility of upward job mobility for security guards from Samburu Community working in Nairobi. To achieve this objective, the security guards were interviewed on issues regarding their employment, such as job satisfaction, length of time of employment, type of employer, stations worked at, number of employers they had worked for, and any on-job training they had undergone. Tables 1 and 2 show the findings in this regard:

**Table 1: Average of Employee Work Life and Employers Worked For**

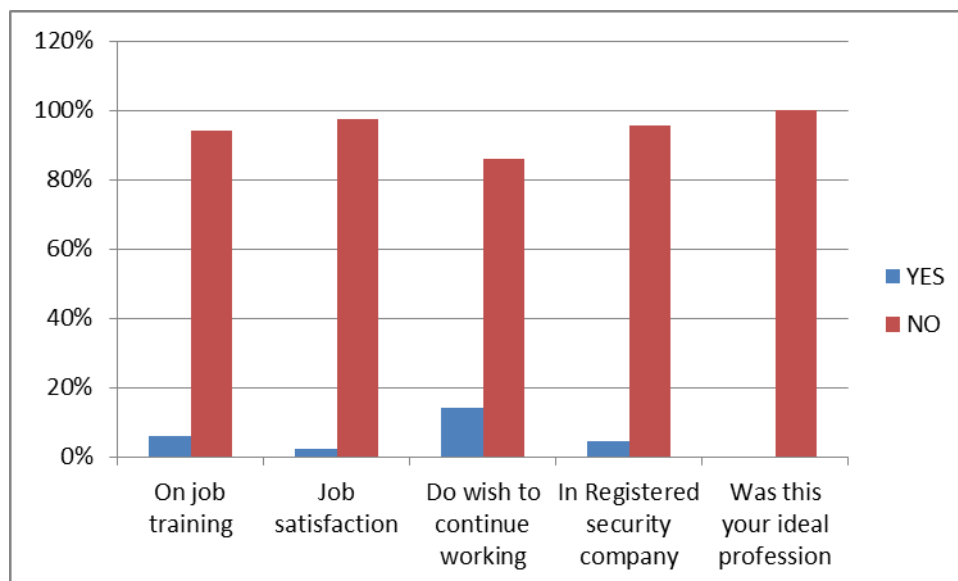
Average years of work as a Security Guard	4
Average no. of employers	3
Average years worked in the current station	1

**Table 2: Employee and the job**

	YES	Percentage	NO	Percentage
On job training	12	6%	188	94%
Job satisfaction	5	2.5%	195	97.5%
Do you wish to continue working	28	14%	172	86%
In a Registered security company	9	4.5%	191	95.5%
Was this your ideal profession	0	0%	200	100%

From Table 1, it is evident that the security guards' mobility from employer to employer and thus from workstation to workstation is high, with the average length of time they have worked being 4 years and working for an average of three employers over that period, and staying for an average of 1 year only at the station current at the time of this study. At the same time, as Table 2 indicates job satisfaction was very low at 2.5 per cent and 100 per cent indicated that being a security guard was not their ideal

profession. Only 14 per cent of the guards indicated they wished to continue with the job. On-job training for the security guards was found to be minimal, with only 6 per cent getting any form of training. This was perhaps due to the informal nature of their engagement for the job because only 4.5 per cent of the guards were employed by registered security companies. These findings are expressed in the column chart below:



**Chart 1: Employee and the Job**

**Discussion**

The findings of the study indicated a very low level of on-job training for security guards, at 6 per cent. In effect, this means that chances for upward job mobility for security guards were minimal because on-job training contributes to the upward movement of employees on the job ladder (Meng et al., 2014). Given that 100 per cent of the security guards indicated that this was not their ideal profession, lack of on-job training meant further demotivation for a group of employees whose motivation at the job entry point was already low. Apparently, the main reason for the lack of on-job training for security guards was the informal way in which they were engaged, for only 4.5 per cent were employed by registered security companies, where structures for on-job training could be put in place, and employees could rise to supervisory roles through training and

experience. Lack of chances for upward mobility for security guards at their employment meant low motivation, and thus, only 2.5 per cent indicated satisfaction with their job. In light of this low level of job satisfaction, the higher level of desire to continue with the job (at 14%) could be due to other constraining factors, such as the need for an income and the unavailability of options.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**Conclusion:** Security guards had minimal chances for job mobility due to lack of on-job training and had low motivation for their work.

**Recommendation:** The trade union movement in Kenya should reach out to security guards to enrol them and register an organisation for them that can effectively pursue issues regarding their welfare at work.

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