RESEARCH ARTICLE

EVALUATION OF HOMICIDE IN POLICE FORCE: THE KENYAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The Kenya police employment is one of the top-rated professions for job stress next to air traffic controllers and dentists. This study seeks to assess the homicide in Security Forces. Since the problem cuts across the forces, concentration shall be on the Kenya police who have been affected the most. The reports provided by the Kenya police service has key aspects that subjects have exhibited as the cause and the trend of such a vice. Social factors, psychological, policy and constitution have been seen to have been the source as well as the dangers of the problem today. The literature and the police department reports have been the case study. A descriptive survey was adopted because it involved collecting information by administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Due to time factors and availability of senior officers, some of the questionnaires were distributed virtually using the survey monkey platform, which enabled the respondents to access and respond to the questions using their smartphones. The findings of the research show governmental and the non-governmental and especially the churches should be at the forefront in bringing solutions in the police force. The better living standards and working condition, increased personnel, offer training in stress and anger management as well as necessary counselling skills, and professional ethics can help solve such vices. The government's structure will positively embrace all the intervention measures in the force.

INTRODUCTION

A number of challenges are encountered by the Kenya Police service as they go along performing their duties. The constitution of Kenya, 2010 article 239, includes the national police service as a key national security organ of the republic of Kenya among other organs including; the National Defence Force and the National Intelligence Service. Additionally, the national police service act of 2011, discusses the roles and functions of the national police service in section 24 (Kenya Police), 27, (the Administration Police service), 35, (the Directorate of Criminal Investigations). The police service is also expected to adhere to others laws that govern the republic including other International Instruments that have been ratified by the state. Despite the legal framework that regulate their practice, Kenya police service additionally respond to humanitarian situations that may arise in the country like floods, terrorism and other natural disasters.

According to Ronald, (2015), the public looks to the police for answers and solutions to problems and to be problem solvers. Rarely does the public realize that the police are humans and that they have issues of their own. Most people like the police; a few individuals loathe the police. A majority of people do not enjoy their encounters with the police. The police are called for service when something bad or catastrophic has occurred, for example, a car accident, burglary, or theft report, and the list goes on. Often when the police are involved, there is some form of negative connotation attached to the situation. Over the past four year alone, the number of police officers who have been reported as having taken their own lives was huge. On the daily nation online paper dated 1st October, 2017, an officer killed her lover in Nairobi CBD. A week earlier, an Anti-stock theft unit had blown off his head. Also, an Administration Police officer had shoot himself dead after a post on face book. On 21st June, 2018, a police officer commits suicide citing work conditions. There are several other instances where officers shoot colleagues and their family before committing or attempting suicide.

According to a report by the Standard Newspaper on June 21st, 2018, there were 421 cases of suicide in 2017, 302 in 2016, 221 in 2015 and 301 in 2014. Majority of the victims were men. In 2017, 330 men committed suicide while 224 men committed suicide in 2016, 177 in 2015 and 239 in 2014. These figures are huge and would necessitate an inquiry into the causes of such suicide. Police officers are exposed to critical or traumatic events as part of their occupational roles. What makes police work unique, with regards to stress, is the hazardous and stressful environments of investigations and arrests of law breakers, the organizational and work stressors, the people served by police officers, the officers' family environment, and the beaurocracy of the criminal justice system (Alkus and Padesky 1983; Bartol 1995; Berkeley Planning Associates 1977:865; Maslach and Jackson 1979; Terry 1981; Stratton 1984:113-118; Graf 1986 cited in NyagaPhD Dissertation). The American Institute of Stress identified police work as one of the top ten most stress producing jobs (Newsweek, April 25, 1988:43). Research has shown that they are among the workers whose exposure to potentially traumatic events is part of their professional duty as they work to help the primary victims of crime, accident or disaster (Stephen, 1997 cited in NyagaPhD Dissertation).

Mburu, (2001) notes that some Kenyan police officers work away from families who are more often than not left back in the rural areas, they live in congested household which sometimes they share with their other colleagues and as a result, they are lonesome individuals who coupled with other stressors may be involved in heavy drinking as posited by Sewell, (1981 cited in NyagaPhDDissertation). Mburu (2001) further observes that in the process, they pick up prostitutes who may be infected with HIV/ADS, the women are shared by the officers and the result is devastating. In Kenya, suicide is a crime or at least; a victimless crime. Attempted suicide is a misdemeanor and if found guilty, one is imprisoned for a term not exceeding two years according to the penal code section 226. The reasons and rationale for the causes of police suicide has been hazy. According to AggreyAdoli, a number of factors come into play that may induce officers to commit suicide. Among the factors include, sour love triangles, domestic and other stresses, financial challenges as well as job related stresses. The most important question that remain unanswered is why they commit suicide for challenges that even ordinary Kenyans go through and do not choose the option of suicide. Is there a high affinity for suicide among police officers than ordinary Kenyans? It is on this background that the researcher seeks to find out the causes for suicide among Kenyan police officers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review explores the incidents of suicides and homicides in the police service in Kenya. The review includes an examination of factors that predict the recent surge of suicides and homicides carried out by police officers. The review foregrounds the recommendations that are outlined in light of the analysis of the results and findings. The conflict theory is also adopted to help understand the suicide-homicide cases in the police service.

Trends of Suicide and Homicide Cases in the Police Service in Kenya: The incidents of suicide and homicide cases in the police service in Kenya have been on the increase in the recent

past, warranting authorities to adopt frantic measures to curb the disastrous trend. In particular, based on statistics regarding suicide cases amongst police officers, more than 200 officers took their lives each year between 2014 and 2020, with more policemen reported as compared to their female counterparts (See Table 1.0). The trends have not abetted in the recent past either. According to a report by Amnesty International (2021), the cases of police suicides accompanied by attacks on colleagues are on the increase at an alarming rate. For example, in the first 5 days of January 2021, five police officers were reported to have lost their lives in suicide-murder situations. These attacks are not limited to colleagues; they are also extended to close family relations. On January 4, 2021, a police officer was reported to have shot himself dead in Garissa. This incident occurred a few hours after a prison warder committed suicide in Mwea after shooting dead another police officer in what was considered a vicious love triangle. The prison warder had found the police officer in the house of a woman with whom he was having an affair. These incidents came after the killing of a female police officer by a colleague during an argument on January 2, 2021, in Kamukunji Police Station in Nairobi. Another officer was injured during the incident, and the assailant fled the police station carrying an AK47 rifle. The rogue policeman was subsequently hunted down and shot dead by other officers, even though it was officially reported that he had shot himself as they tried to arrest him (Capital News, 2021). Besides, on June 6th, 2021 a junior officer at the Gigiri police station in Westlands sub-county committed suicide while on guard duties at his designated posting at the Amisom offices, nearby the United States of America Embassy. He committed suicide by shooting himself with an AK-with an AK-47 rifle (Owino, 2021; Kimuyu, 2021).

Predictors of Suicides and Homicides amongst Officers in Kenya Police Service: A research study conducted by the Addiction Centre in the US showed that more police officers are taking their own lives as compared to those who were killed in their line of duty. The study also found that law enforcement officers are at a greater risk of committing suicide as compared to any other professionals (Mutua, 2021). The increase in the suicide-murder incidents in the police force has raised questions as to the precedents of this development and some of the measures that could be undertaken to reduce the cases and protect lives (Amnesty International, 2021). This review explores some of the identified predictors that have been associated with the suicide-murder incidents in the police service.

Mental disorders and substance abuse: Mental disorders are among the key predictors of suicide attempts and death among police officers across the globe. According to a report by the US National Officer Safety Initiative (2020), psychiatric disorders, psychiatric disorders, and, and psychiatric disorders were present among 60- 90% of the deaths associated with suicide among law enforcement officers. These disorders included schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorders, and severe anxiety such as PTSD. Substance abuse emerged as the second critical risk factor for suicide amongst law enforcement officers. For instance, drinking among law enforcement officers is considered an acceptable coping strategy and bonding practice within the law enforcement culture, and alcohol is commonly used by the officers. The officers drink alcohol after their shifts to relax and relieve tension. The police officers are therefore susceptible to drinking problems as they

are constrained to drink as a way of fitting in with their colleagues. The same case is applicable in the Kenyan context where psychological challenges have been identified as the key contributors to the increased cases of suicides and homicides amongst police officers (Capital News, 2021). Mwenja (2018) notes that one of the key reasons that are driving law enforcement officers to commit suicide, which is attributed to the increase in the suicide rate amongst the police, is their desire to end the intense psychological pain and suffering that they are facing. More than 90% of law enforcement officers who commit suicide have diagnosable psychiatric illnesses, which are caused or rather intensified by their work, relationships, or drug abuse. Police officers who use drugs and other substances are prone to making irrational judgments when it comes to using their firearms. The use of drugs and substance abuse in the police force is rampant because of their stressful and tricky assignments, which demand that they adapt to changes in their shifts and work in traumatic conditions. The police face a myriad of administrative challenges that constantly expose them to terror and risky situations. As a result, many officers have turned to drug abuse to ease their stress, which rather exacerbates the psychological and emotional strain that is manifested in suicides and homicides (Ngeera, 2019). Thami (2020) observes that alcoholism is another factor that has been attributed to suicides and homicides among Kenyan police officers. Alcoholism has been associated with workplace misbehavior among police officers characterized by absenteeism, intemperance, and traffic mishaps, which have in some cases predisposed the officers to take their own lives or commit homicides.

Exposure to Traumatic Scenes/Cases at work: Exposure to traumatic events during the cause of work is associated with the increase in suicide incidents in the police workforce. The acute stress that is caused by exposure to these events may lead to physiological and psychological reactions that may be too much for an officer to overcome or their ability to cope. Exposure to these traumatic conditions is also associated with other negative consequences such as substance misuse, depression and anxiety, poor sleep quality, and suicidal thoughts (National Officer Safety Initiative, 2020). Studies have established that exposure to suicides is highly likely to trigger suicidal thoughts and behavior. Law enforcement officers have close interaction with suicide cases when they collect bodies or notify members of the family of a person who has committed suicide. This work-related exposure to suicide invariably affects the psychological and emotional well-being of the officers, and it is also associated with PTSD symptoms and recurrent suicidal thoughts (National Officer Safety Initiative, 2020). The same is applicable in the Kenyan context as well regarding the increase in the cases of police suicide and homicides. Mwenja (2018) concurs that Kenyan police officers arguably experience very upsetting events during the course of their work more than any other professionals. An experienced police person considers death and the handling of human remains routine to the investigation work. However, these investigative works come with emotional significance and involve very unpleasant smells, tastes, sounds, and touch sensations. Mwenja (2018) further notes that police training does not completely obliterate the humanity in the police officers, and they are therefore vulnerable to sensory and emotional aspects of death scenes and corps handling. The magnitude of gruesomeness and horror of such scenes leave the police officers with indelible impressions. Though they do not show any outward emotional responses, they invariably

experience or develop long-term psychological problems that in some cases push them to depression and alcohol abuse. In concurrence, Thami (2020) also points out that the recurrent exposure to traumatic deaths of the members of the public is a sure trigger of adverse emotional responses by the Kenyan police officers. The exposure to unattended deaths, gory accident scenes, suicides, murders, rotting corpses desensitizes the police about death, which in turn leads them to have a higher insensitivity to death. Mutua (2021) observes that the constant exposure to life-threatening situations, devastation, and the accompanying physical strain occasioned by long working hours leave police officers feeling anxious, helpless, and hopeless as well. These exposures have resulted in multiple mental health issues, which eventually escalate into depression or post-traumatic stress disorder. For instance, police officers have to grapple with trauma by themselves when they are dispatched to collect dead bodies from homes or accident scenes. They undergo social and psycho-trauma as they internalize the crime scene for the purpose of collecting evidence and compiling reports. They grapple with raw data from the investigation as they interrogate suspects, witnesses, and victims of atrocious crimes. This work is characterized by psychological and emotional trauma that contributes to their work-related stress, thereby shattering their sense of security and making them feel vulnerable, even helpless in a world that is increasingly dangerous. The police officers are thus left feeling numb, disconnected, and anxious, yet at the same time, they have the responsibility of protecting the public (Amnesty International, 2021). The disturbing mental pictures remain with the police officers for a very long time and occasionally come back in terms of nightmares, flashbacks, and thoughts (National Police Service, 2021). It is also important to acknowledge that witnessing or participating in normalized violence and indignity that is meted against members of the public by the police officers is another source of stress and trauma that police officers experience. This triggers psychological and mental issues that have no specified channels of being appropriately addressed, leading to erratic, self-destructive, and violent behavior among those who end up committing suicide or homicide (Amnesty International, 2021).

Housing Conditions of Police Officers: The living arrangements provided for the police officers and their families in which case they share amenities such as housing also contribute to their traumatic experiences (Amnesty International, 2021). The poor living conditions of the police predispose them to conflict amongst themselves, which have been characterized by sharing of living spaces that have turned to breeding grounds for adultery which have in many cases been resolved by homicides and suicides (Gamonde, 2019).

Access to Lethal Weapons: Another established risk of suicide among police officers is the access to lethal means of self-harm. This is evident considering that the officers use firearms in their daily work and take their firearms with them when they retire to their homes. Due to this, more than 80% of suicides committed by law enforcement officers involve the use of firearms and, in most instances, their own weapons (National Officer Safety Initiative, 2020). In almost all incidents that have involved police suicides and homicides against themselves, colleagues, or close relatives, the firearms provided for use in their job to maintain public safety and security have been used (Gamonde, 2019). Firearms seem to be their easiest option of committing homicides, which are often accompanied by suicide.

Workplace Bureaucracy: The workplace bureaucracy is characterized by the frustrations from their superiors in the rank and file of the police service. The police do not have a trade union that looks into their affairs as public service employees; they, therefore, do not have channels for airing their grievances or for advocating for a better working environment. They, therefore, suffer silently under unfair and cruel superiors, for the sake of keeping their jobs. Those officers who try to protest against their superiors are punished by contending with career stagnation or being transferred to hardship areas (Amnesty International, 2021). Other bureaucratic factors include judicial decisions that undermine the efforts by the police to curb crime; criticism from the public and government agencies regarding police actions (Nyingi, 2016). Besides, undeserved promotions and stagnation within the ranks; inadequate equipment such as operational vehicles; and long stays in particular operational areas are characterized by hardships (National Police Service, 2021).

Nyingi (2016) also established that education levels within the rank-and-file of the police force are another predictor of suicide amongst the officers. Police officers with certificates or lower academic qualifications indicated a higher than expected frequency of suicidal thoughts as compared to those who have diplomas or degrees. The rank of police officers is also associated with suicidal ideation amongst the officers: constables and sergeants indicated a higher than expected frequency of suicidal thoughts as compared to other high-ranking police officers. Besides, gender also influences suicidal ideation among the police officers: female police officers are statistically higher within the sergeant and Constable ranks in terms of suicide ideation as compared to their male counterparts. Police officers who claimed to have medical conditions that affect their performance were also highly predisposed to suicidal thoughts (Nyingi 2016).

Work Load and Working Hours: The working shift of law enforcement officers is also associated with suicide ideation and, more particularly, among those officers who already have other risk factors for suicide, such as drug abuse and depression. The rotation of shifts among the officers is highly likely to result in inadequate sleep, increased social stress, and work contentment, which makes it increasingly harder for the officers to cope with other stress factors that they are already grappling with. Fatigue and sleep deprivation that results from shift work negatively affect the officers' thinking and decision-making and therefore increasing their risk of committing suicide. Other related stress factors include mandatory overtime and irregular working hours (National Officer Safety Initiative, 2020). Work-related stress is associated with officers being assigned to hectic schedules that forced them to work in various shifts that cover various operations. Little pay and a volatile work environment are also other factors driving police officers to commit suicide and homicide. In January 2019, a police officer shot himself dead after he was transferred from Garissa to Ijara, a more volatile area. Police officers are forced to work far away from their homes and at times in very remote areas, still earning meager salaries. The senior officers in the force have been grossly unable to identify the disturbed junior in need of immediate attention and support. This is because the senior officers are not equipped with requisite competencies such as counseling, management, public relations, emotional intelligence, and financial and station management (Otieno, 2019).

Social Isolation: The work of law enforcement officers is characterized by unpredictable shading that means the time I have to maintain relationships with family and friends, family and friends, which significantly contributes to the social isolation significant to isolation. Police officers work during holidays and even during special family occasions and are therefore denied the opportunity of developing social relationships outside their work environment. Though social isolation contributes to the enhancement of internal solidarity among police officers, invariably leads to mistrust for members of the public, resulting in a "us versus them" mindset. The low social integration in society makes it increasingly difficult for law enforcement officers to establish social networks outside their workplace, from which they can get social support to help them cope with psychological crises (National Officer Safety Initiative, 2020).

In the same vein, the social exclusion also negatively affects police officers in Kenya. Thami (2020) notes that police officers experience social exclusion and isolation based on the nature of their work, which puts them at cross-purposes with the society or community that they are charged to protect. Thami (2020) further notes that social exclusion has resulted in the fear of retirement or being fired from the force by seniors, which has led some officers to commit suicide. Arguably, the anxiety associated with departure from the police subculture brings about stress and frustrations, as they imply separation from protection by the other law enforcement agents and companionship. They therefore must re-enter mainstream society, which in itself reflects our culture shock that many are not ready to psychologically handle. A report by the National Police Service (2021) acknowledges that some of the factors that contribute to stress suicides and homicides among the police officers in Kenya include the fact that the officers are normally at the receiving end of the societal problems. Apart from shunning the normal societal relationships such as family and friends and the general loss of interest in societal activities that contribute to positive leisure; there is also a lack of collegial concern among the officers makes it increasingly hard for them to recognize signs of depression in their colleagues and therefore recommend or seek for intervention on their behalf. In most cases, very few people have a clue that an officer was undergoing emotional and psychological challenges when the officer eventually becomes violent to themselves or their colleagues. The work of law enforcement presents several demands and is continually stressful to the officers; it is therefore occasioned by socially destructive behavior such as sexual recklessness, drug, and alcohol abuse, and irritability.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Conflict Theory and Police Homicide: At the heart of conflict theorist is the aphorism that force or its threat is the very buttress upon which unequal societies are held together. Because of this, proponents of conflict theory also posit that the state's monopoly of violence is mostly controlled by those who benefit from the inequalities that have been nurtured by such regimes, (Jacobs, & Britt, 1979). It follows therefore that the agents of state power are more likely to use extreme force even against self when economic inequalities are pronounced. Police officers are not immune to the demands of the economy and are hard hit whenever economic equations begin to select. Those who are weak resort to even suicide to escape such economic wrath.

Conflict theorists argue that the social structure is so complex. It consists of many different groups not just two classes of the haves and the have-nots. These groups interests are not just economic rather social and political. This can explain why the causes for police suicide is more than because of the economic challenges that they may face. It may include among other things, family, community, political, job related and or psychological factors. According to Dahrendorf, the existence of dominant and subordinate positions produces a situation in which individuals have differing interests. Those occupying dominant positions have an interest in maintaining a social structure that gives them more authority than others. Those in the subordinate positions on the other hand have an interest in changing a social structure that deprives them of authority. What happens if at their disposal are minimal or non-options available to make economic, social or even political success? This may be the reason behind police officers suicide.

A number of Studies have revealed several factors related to police suicide. Suicides have been found to be more common among older officers than their junior counterparts. In most cases, the causes move from ill health, alcoholism, or sometimes even impending retirement. Other researchers have indicated that the lack of psychological help may explain the high rate of self-inflicted death among police officers: The availability of firearms; continuous duty exposure to death and injury; social strain resulting from shift work; inconsistencies within the criminal justice system; and the perception among police officers that they labor under a negative public image may also contribute to make worse their already delicate circumstances. Additionally, there is often a higher propensity for suicide among males, who dominate the police profession, (Violanti, 1995).

Bureaucracy and Control: Bureaucracy is a system of control. It involves a hierarchical organization in which superiors strictly control and discipline the activities of subordinates, (Weber, 1958). Weber argued that in any large scale task, some people must coordinate and control the activities of others. He stated that the imperative coordination of the action of a considerable number of men requires control of staff of persons. In order for this control to be effective, it has to be regarded as legitimate and there has to be at least a minimum of voluntary submission to higher authority (Haralambos, &Holborn, (2000). Accordingly, the Kenya Police as an institution is ordered likewise. According to Weber, the police structure would fall under the rational legal authority and organizational structure. Their operations are such that junior officers take orders from their senior counter-parts and if they are prejudiced in any way; they may later institute proceedings. Orders of transfers, demotion, promotion, discipline and others are matched in this particular manner. This way, avenues for redress are limited for them.

Proposed Remedies to the Incidents of Police Suicides and Homicides: According to Nyingi, (2016) guidance and counseling programs alone cannot be effective in alleviating the stress and suicidal tendencies of officers in the police service in Kenya. Therefore, additional measures should be taken to ensure that the police are empowered emotionally to undertake their roles and responsibility in providing safety and security to the public. In particular, NPS should screen the recruits to assess their psychological capability for special duties, and identify any symptoms of depression. They should also be trained in management skills and interpersonal communication. The identified High suicidal recruits should be tracked and all police officers should be provided with periodic training throughout the service in regard to bolstering their emotional intelligence. Mwenja (2018) argues that the psychological challenges facing police officers in the line of duty are fundamentally treatable problems if they are adequately addressed. One of the ways this can be achieved is by changing the way police officers with mental illnesses are handled. There is a need for the NPS to address the root causes of drug abuse and depression. For instance, long working hours, high-handedness by the seniors, handling of traumatic events or cases, and poor working conditions are some of the issues that must be addressed to reign in on the increase in the cases of police suicides and homicides. The NPS needs to establish a functional psychiatry department or rather outsource psychiatric services that will liberate the officers to seek such services outside their work environment which is normally intimidating especially to the juniors. Mwenja (2018) also points out that the training of the police should also be best on a curriculum that features units on conflict resolution, and stress management. The NPS could also train a selected team of officers to provide peer counseling to other members of the force. Besides, the members of the society also have a responsibility of supporting police officers irrespective of the various weaknesses attributed to the police force. There is a need for reaching out to police officers who present symptoms of depression or express suicidal thoughts on their social media platforms. Police officers with emotional distress or suicidal thoughts should also reach out for help.

Policy Responses to Police Suicides and Homicides: There have been attempts by the government to upgrade their housing conditions for the police officers and improve on their remuneration through the improved salary and integration program. The establishment of the National Police Service Commission (NPS) was considered a positive direction towards improving the welfare of the police, enhancing their career progression, and bolstering other aspects of their human resource management. The establishment of the commission heralded the hopes of fair recruitments, appointments, promotions, transfers, and disciplinary actions, and also ending the nepotism and corruption that had infiltrated these processes in the Police service (Amnesty International, 2021). The National Police Service has come up with a program referred to as MuamkoMpya - Healing the Uniform, which was kick-started in June 2019. The program is aimed at sensitizing all police officers regarding psychological well-being and trauma healing in the course of fulfilling their mandate of providing security and safety in the country. The program also aims at converting police stations, police camps, police colleges, and communities into safe spaces where peer-to-peer support is enhanced so that police officers can share their experiences and stories of anguish, trauma, and stress in a non-judgmental and confidential environment (National Police Service, 2021). NPS hopes that one of the major outcomes of the program will include the creation of an environment in which police officers will be free to vent, share and counsel each other; thereby having a forum through which they can prevent the pent-up stress that manifests through bouts of violence. There is a need for enhancing the reporting avenues so that junior police officers are legally and professionally protected from any abuse by superior officers, who made subject them to anxiety and trauma that drive them to commit suicide or homicide (Amnesty International, 2021).

The pilot MuamkoMpya program trained more than 500 police officers across the country on peer-to-peer psychological support and leadership in trauma-informed policing. The key aspects of the training curriculum included stress and trauma awareness, healing and transformation, identity, resilience, relationships, and security. The program seeks to establish peer-to-peer psychological support across the ranks and file and also within the command structure at the regional and county level. The program also aims at providing psychological and well-being programs at all levels in the Police service and also integrates the MuamkoMpya training curriculum in all courses provided at the National Police Service Training institutions (National Police Service, 2021).

Komu (2021) notes that in response to the increasing violence among police officers in the police service, and also as a way of addressing cases of gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the service, which trigger violence the Interior Security Ministry proposed a draft of changes in April 2021. Some of the recommendations include barring police officers from having romantic relationships with each other. Besides, as a part of the ongoing police reforms, the officers serving orders will also be reviewed.

METHODOLOGY

Site selection: Nairobi County was selected purposively as the research site because of the researcher's familiarity with the area. Also, Nairobi hosts the administrative headquarters of Kenya police and also the training ground for administrative police unit at Embakasi. This study adopted survey research design to determine the causes of police homicide in Nairobi. Kothari, (2012) describes a research design as the conceptual within which research is conducted; it constitutes the framework for data collection, measurement and analysis. Research design is used to structure the research, Kombo and Tromp (2010). A descriptive survey was adopted because it involved collecting information by administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. According to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2012), survey seeks to obtain information that describes existing phenomenon by asking individuals about their perception, attitudes, behavior or values. Due to time factorsand availability of senior officers, some of the questionnaires were distributed virtually using the survey monkey platform, which enabled the respondents to access and respond to the questions using their smartphones.

Study population: Kombo and Tromp, (2010) describe a population as a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement. The target population for this study consisted of police officers from central police station, Kenya police headquarters vigilance and administration police headquarters at Jogoo house. Singleton, Straits and Straits, (1999) describe a unit of analysis as an object of study or item under study that is described and analyzed. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003), define a unit of analysis as subject, object, item or entity from which a researcher measures the characters of, or obtain the data required in the research study. For this study, the unit of analysis was Kenya police from Jogoo house, Vigilance house and central police station.

Sampling Procedure: According to Kombo and Tromp, (2010), sampling refers to the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. Its aim is to select a number of individuals (samples) for a study in such a way that the individual selected is representative of the lager group from which they are selected, (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

This study employed various non probability sampling procedures to sample the respondents. This was because the respondents were from disproportionate groups. Stratified sampling was used to group the officers into groups of either, administration police or Kenya police. Random sampling was used to identify the one hundred and forty sixth respondents. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2012) suggest that one may use a sample size of at least 10%, but for better, more representative results, a higher percentage is better.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Questionnaire Response rate: The researcher administered 385 questionnaires to the study respondents. All the questionnaires were fully completed and returned- a response rate of 100%. This response rate was thus adequate for analysis.Using Cochran's formula for sample calculation; with a 95% confidence level, a maximum variability of 0.5 and a 5% precision; 385 officers were sampled and participated in the research.

Table 1.1. The Respondents

	Female	Male	Total
Central Police	63	65	128
Jogoo House (AP)	56	72	128
Vigilance House	66	63	129
TOTAL	185	200	385

Source: Survey, 2019

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The age of respondents: Majority of the officers who participated in the study were between the ages of 34 to 37 years representing 43%. Officers between the ages of 18 and 23years represented 12%. Those between the ages of 24 and 30 years were 27%. Those between the ages of 37 and 44 were 11% while those above the age of 45 years were 7%.

Table 1.2. Age of the Respondents

Age of Respondents	Percentages
18 – 23 yrs.	12 %
24 – 30 yrs.	27%
34 – 37 yrs.	43%
38 – 44 yrs.	11%
38 – 44 yrs.	7%
45 yrs.& Above	-
TOTAL	100

Source: Survey, 2019

Education Level: All the officers had basic education (primary) and (secondary). Most of the officers had at a college education (66%) and there were officers with degree qualifications, (13.5%). The number of those with postgraduate qualification was at 2%.

Table 1.3. Education Level of the Respondents

Education Level	Percentages
Post Graduate	6%
University	18%
Tertiary/College	76%

Source: Survey, 2019

Marital Status: Majority of officers were married or at least in a stable consensual relationship. However, younger officers (18-23 years) were single.

Experience in the Service: Since majority of the officers who participated in the study were between the ages of 34 and 37 years they had fairly over three years of experience. In fact all the officers had had over three years of experience but three. This means that majority of officers had witnessed or heard of instances of police homicide among their colleagues.

Instances of Police Suicide: All the officers reported that they had heard colleagues who had committed suicide in the past and that police suicide was a common occurrence and to them it was nothing new. The frequency however varied. Majority of the officers (67%) indicated that most suicide cases are often reported among the administrative arm of the Kenya Police, while 33% noted that it came from the Kenya Police Service wing.

Table 1.4. Respondents Awareness Regarding Suicide Rates

Police Department	Total Number	Percentage
Kenya Police	257	66.7%
Administration Police	128	33.3%
Total	385	100%

Source: Survey, 2019

Frequency of Suicide occurrence: Majority of the officers from both the Kenya Police and Administration police agreed that officers from the Administration line were more likely to commit suicide than their Kenya Police counterparts.

Table 1.5. Frequency of police Suicide

	Very Frequent	Highly Frequent	Moderate	Less Frequent	Less Frequent
Administration Police	19. 2%	14.2%	15.3%	6.2%	5.9%
Kenya Police	6.7%	11.6%	10.6%	19.7%	20%
Total	25.9%	25.8%	25.9%	25.9%	25.9%

Source: Survey, 2019

Cause of Police Suicide: The findings showed that relationships played an integral role in contributing to the suicide cases amongst the police officers accounting for 44.4% of the causes. The other predominant reasons included crime related reasons (12.73%); financial reasons (10.5%); job related reasons (7.79%); political reasons (7.79%) and other unspecified reasons (16.62%).

About 27.5% affected were aged between 38 – 44 years; 16% were aged between 24 – 30 years; 14% were aged from 45 years and above while 7.2% were aged between 18 – 23 years. There appears to be to a large extent a close relation to suicide among police officers in Kenya. Two primary qualities that almost all working cops adhere to are self-reliance and infallibility. Many officers believe that they should be able to handle most situations with a minimum of help and that you're only as good if you win all the situations around you. As Violanti, (1995) notes, most officers at the same time, have a strong craving for approval. Part of the gratification the police role bestows lies in the respect it garners among civilians, as well as the camaraderie felt among brother officers. This is not unique to Kenyan Police officers alone rather a desire for most officers world over. From the study, the researcher indeed established that there was police suicide among the Kenyan police officers. It also emerged that the Administration Police Service were highly likely to commit suicide (67%) than their other counterparts. However, there was no distinct reason as why this was happening. Partly, the lack of secondary victim support could explain this.

Additionally, there was high suicide rates from the male officers than from their female counterparts. Because of the police culture of the need to portray strength and firmness, the male officers were less likely to show a need for help; and were even slower to seek alternative assistance as this may be perceived by their colleagues and the public as a sign of weakness. The study further revealed that the cause(s) for police suicide cannot be explained by one specific condition. There is no one factor fits all as each case is uniquely affected by one or several of the factors. However, a large number of the respondents did indicate that relationship issues were at the top of most suicides reported (44%). Other factors that equally led to suicide included, alcoholism and depression arising from traumatic scenes and events of crime. As Miller, (2005) notes, suicidal crises does not occur in isolation, but a common characteristic depicted by those officers with prior histories of depression, or in those who have recently faced a combination of debilitating stressors, leading to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Often, there is a slow, smoldering build-up of tension and demoralization, which then abruptly accelerates, culminating in a suicidal crisis. It is this feeling of helplessness and isolation that is nurtured by them leading to self-destruction. Psychologists call this state as 'learned helplessness'. At this state, the person has learnt to be helpless and believes that no devices can help them out of their situation.

Table 1.6. Causes of Suicide

	Political reasons	Crime related reasons	Relationship reasons	Job related reasons	Financial reason	Other	Total
Respondents	30	49	171	30	41	64	385
Percentages	7.79%	12.73%	44.42%	7.79%	10.65%	16.62%	100%

Source: Survey, 2019.

Table 1.7. Frequency of Suicide by Age Group

	18 – 23 yrs.	24 – 30 yrs.	31 – 37 yrs.	38 – 44 yrs.	45 & Above
Frequency	7.2%	16.1%	34.8%	27.5%	14.2%

Source: Survey, 2019.

Age Group Prone to Suicide: The findings showed that majority of the respondents who were affected by suicide were aged between 31 – 37 years (34.8%).

They thus plug into alcoholism, drugs and depression sets in. they may even resort to suicide if they are not attended to early.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher suggests a number of recommendation to help reduce the instances of police suicide:

Firstly, as first responders to scenes of crime, police officer become secondary victims and may even suffer trauma from the view they get. There is need to be established a panel of trained officers to offer psychological support to officers who suffer not only from such view but also counsel on financial and relationship issues. Secondly, that most officer leave behind their families whenever they go on duty should not be the case. This situation is happening precisely because of the inadequate housing that officers have and some even share small rooms. Sufficient housing for officers will ensure they carry along their loved ones and family who may be a source of support for them and may even help solve some relationship matters. Moreover, there is a need to address police job related issues adequately and with profound respect to their rights. Indeed the National Police Service Commission has done a commendable job but the body takes so long to give response to police issues, constant red tape in the service and a lack of trust in the commission. Like Independent Policing Oversight Authority, the National Police Service Commission should take seriously cases of violation of the rights of police officers by their bosses. This will help reduce disharmony among officers and thus reduce suicide cases. There is need to pay police officers well and commensurate to their education and the job they do. This will reduce anxiety in the service, ensure calm and settlement of the officers and eventually reduce instances of police suicide.

CONCLUSION

More police officers die by their own hand and means than are killed in the line of duty. If the statistics are anything to go by, the government and other related organizations should consider this very seriously. We all need to protect our officers as they continue to serve us. The welfare of the officers thus need to be considered; they need to be well remunerated and motivated to do their job. This research thus has helped to show what happens and what needs to be done to remedy the situation.

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