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# INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS PREDISPOSING POLICE OFFICERS TO THE RISK OF DEPRESSION IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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**MACPNRB614021**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY OF ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY, KENYA**

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**OCTOBER, 2024**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and is not as a result of anything done in collaboration, and has not been previously presented to any other institution.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation the brave men and women in law enforcement who face the daily challenges of their profession with courage and resilience. To those who have struggled with depression and other mental health issues, your strength and perseverance are an inspiration. I also dedicate this work to my family and friends, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my anchor throughout this journey.

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored institutional factors predisposing police officers to depression, focusing on the Kenya Police Service (KPS) in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The specific objectives were to assess the relationship between qualification-based promotion procedures and the risk of depression and to establish the effects of workload, transfers, and welfare conditions on depression symptoms. Grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) and Cognitive Activation Theory (CATS), the research employed a descriptive design to ensure representation across ranks and genders. From a population of 3,010 junior officers, 354 were selected using Yamane's (1967) formula and multi-stage sampling techniques, with 14 key respondents purposively sampled. Descriptive statistics, including means, percentages, and Chi-square tests, were used alongside qualitative thematic analysis. The findings revealed that unclear promotion procedures significantly contribute to depression, with only 4.0% of officers feeling their skills are recognized. A strong correlation between perceived workload and mental health challenges was identified, as 27.7% of officers reported that overwhelming demands lead to depression, and 25.7% indicated increased stress due to excessive workloads. Chi-square tests confirmed significant associations between workload and mental health outcomes. Inadequate transfer policies also impact mental health, with 55.3% dissatisfied with transfer fairness and 57.3% reporting insufficient support services. Additionally, poor welfare conditions, especially inadequate housing and safety concerns, contribute to depression, with 60.8% dissatisfied with housing and 60.3% citing safety issues affecting well-being. The study concludes that unclear promotion procedures, excessive workloads, inadequate transfer policies, and poor welfare conditions significantly contribute to depression among police officers. Recommendations include improving the promotion system, recruiting mental health practitioners, revising transfer and workload policies, and upgrading housing to enhance officers' well-being.


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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **CATS:** | Cognitive Activation theory of Stress |
| **CDC:** | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention |
| **DIA** | Daily interpretive analysis |
| **IPOA:** | Independent Policing Oversight Authority |
| **JDR:** | Job Demands-Resources |
| **KPS:** | Kenya Police Service |
| **MDD:** | Major Depressive Disorder |
| **NACOSTI:** | National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation |
| **NPS:** | National Police Service |
| **OCS** | Officer Commanding Station |
| **PSP** | Public Safety Personnel |
| **PTSD:** | Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| **UK** | United Kingdom |
| **UN:** | United Nations |
| **USA** | United States of America |

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# CHAPTER ONE
# INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study, including the background, statement of the problem, purpose, and objectives. It also outlines the research questions, significance, scope, limitations, and assumptions of the study, followed by definitions of key terms.

## 1.1 Background to the Study

Depression is a prevalent mental health issue that affects people from a wide range of backgrounds and occupations (Fonseca et al., 2019). However, particular pressures that are inherent in their work environment, several professions, most notably law enforcement, face disproportionately high rates of depression. The stresses and institutional issues together pose a serious global threat to police personnel's mental health (Parkes et al., 2019). The consequences of depression extend beyond individual well-being, impacting overall societal health and sustainable development goals (Thapar, et al., 2022). When it comes to law enforcement, depressed police may perform worse on the job, have strained relationships with coworkers, and be less productive (Muchiri, 2022). The consequent decline in the efficacy of law enforcement may jeopardize public safety and undermine institutional trust, impeding attempts at social cohesion and sustainable development.

Barley et al. (2023) argue that untreated depression in law enforcement personnel results in absenteeism as well as higher healthcare expenses for both people and institutions,: the attainment of sustainable development objectives on poverty alleviation, economic growth, and health equity is hampered by these economic consequences. Law enforcement officers continue to have higher rates of depression despite increased awareness of the problem and attempts to treat it (Almalki, et al.2016). Depression is among law enforcement professionals, which is concerning and should be taken very seriously.

According to Carleton et al. (2018), police personnel had a worldwide estimate of depression as high as 16.1%, which is much higher than rates seen in the general population. In a similar vein, Ryu et al. (2020) calculated that, depending on the

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region and nation, 10% to 30% of police personnel globally suffer from depression. This increased frequency emphasizes how urgently customized research is needed to meet the mental health requirements of law enforcement professionals throughout the globe. Santa Maria et al.'s (2021) study in the United Kingdom (UK) offers insight into the widespread problem of stress at work among police personnel. Remarkably, 90 percent of the 16,857 officers who participated in the poll showed signs of stress at work. Moreover, over half of the officers had symptoms suggestive of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), highlighting the gravity of the mental health difficulties encountered by law enforcement staff. Police officers' heavy workloads were one of the main institutional factors found in the study.

Law enforcement work is hard, frequently meaning long hours, stressful conditions, and a continual need for awareness (Al-Hassan et al., 2020). Between reacting to crises and conducting normal patrols, officers must manage several things simultaneously. Lewekabu and Verma, 2018 argue that officers have physical and mental health hardships as a result of their high duty. These results highlight the seriousness of the mental health issues that law enforcement personnel confront, especially in light of their demanding jobs and hefty workloads (Eseadi et al., 2019). These findings have significant implications for police personnel's mental health and well-being, emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive support systems and treatments.

Di Nota et al. (2020) make a notable contribution to the global conversation on depression among police officers, highlighting a worrisome rise in suicidal thoughts among Canadian officers. Their research reveals that about 44% of Canadian public safety personnel (PSP), including police officers, tested positive for one or more mental health disorders. A significant number of officers also reported having suicidal thoughts, plans, and attempts both in the past year and throughout their lives (Adibe et al., 2020). These findings emphasize the urgent need for robust mental health support and intervention strategies within the law enforcement community. According to Adebayo et al. (2017), lack of adequate support systems and hierarchical structures are identified as major elements intensifying psychological distress among law enforcement personnel.

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In Japan, Fukasawa et al. (2020) raise significant concerns about the impact of extended work hours and irregular shifts on police officers' mental health. They explain that law enforcement personnel often endure grueling schedules, including long hours, overtime, and unpredictable shifts. Eseadi et al. (2019) argue that demanding work patterns lead to chronic sleep deprivation and exhaustion, disrupting officers' regular sleep-wake cycles. This situation not only jeopardizes physical health but also increases stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. Adibe et al. (2020) corroborate with the study's findings on the negative effects of extended work hours and irregular shifts on police officers' mental health in Japan highlighting the urgent need for measures that address these harmful work patterns and prioritize officer well-being.

Saraswathi and Bhagyalakshmi (2018) further argue that stress is prevalent among female police officers in India due to their demanding job schedules, long shifts, and personal and family issues. The work of law enforcement officers has led to numerous problems, including discrimination, physical and mental harassment, and a lack of equal opportunities (Jibunoh & Ani, 2022). Additionally, female law enforcement personnel often work long, irregular hours without breaks, contributing to depression, chronic stress, and decreased job satisfaction. Arguably, it is crucial to manage workloads and provide adequate support networks to reduce stress and improve the overall well-being of female officers.

Depression among police personnel is an increasingly pressing concern in Sub-Saharan Africa, yet comprehensive data on its prevalence within law enforcement agencies remains notably scarce. Research by Purba and Demou (2019) highlights the challenging working conditions faced by police officers across the continent, which include heavy workloads, unfair transfer processes, promotional issues, and insufficient support systems. These organizational stressors can significantly impact mental health, underscoring the urgent need for greater awareness and targeted interventions. The Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress (CATS) posits that psychological outcomes related to stress are largely influenced by individuals' perceptions of stressors as threatening and their perceived ability to cope with these demands (Lee et al., 2020). This perspective may help explain why African police

officers often experience a combination of demanding workloads, irregular shifts, and inadequate organizational support, resulting in feelings of being overwhelmed. This persistent state of stress can lead to maladaptive coping strategies, further exacerbating symptoms of depression. Addressing these issues is crucial for developing effective interventions to support the mental well-being of law enforcement personnel.

Building on this theoretical framework, studies conducted in Ghana reveal that issues surrounding promotions and transfers significantly impact police personnel's mental health. For instance, Appiagyei (2019) highlights that the uncertainty and perceived unfairness surrounding promotion processes contribute to low morale and job dissatisfaction among officers. This dissatisfaction can lead to feelings of frustration and inadequacy, further exacerbating mental health challenges. In a related Nigerian study, Oluwaseyi (2020) emphasizes the importance of welfare conditions, particularly the intricate nature of housing. He argues that housing should not be viewed merely as shelter but as encompassing various social services and utilities essential for dignified living. This perspective aligns with the current study's focus on the broader organizational factors influencing mental health among police officers in Kenya. By addressing issues such as stigma, inadequate welfare, and the need for supportive environments, this research aims to provide insights that can inform effective interventions and policies to improve the mental well-being of police personnel in Nairobi and beyond. Moreover, the organizational culture surrounding mental health varies across different regions, significantly influencing how law enforcement agencies address these issues. Mohamed et al. (2021) highlight that supportive environments can mitigate the stigma associated with mental health challenges, suggesting that interventions must be culturally tailored to be effective.

The insights gathered from studies on police personnel in Ghana and Nigeria underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to address mental health challenges among police officers in Kenya. Given the unique organizational stressors related to promotions, transfers, and broader welfare conditions, it is essential to establish supportive frameworks within law enforcement agencies that prioritize fair promotion processes, adequate support during transfers, and enhanced overall welfare conditions, including housing and mental health resources. These findings are

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particularly pertinent as they may reflect similar issues faced by Kenyan police officers, emphasizing the importance of understanding these patterns to inform effective interventions. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to a more supportive and effective law enforcement environment, fostering resilience and well-being among officers, which is crucial for enhancing public safety and community trust.

In line with this commitment, the Kenyan government has demonstrated a strong dedication to law enforcement personnel's well-being through the National Police Service Act (2014), which establishes a framework for enhancing mental health among police officers. This framework includes developing policies that prioritize officers' welfare by providing access to counseling, medical care, and mental health support. By addressing challenges such as high stress, trauma exposure, and burnout, the government aims to foster a healthier workforce. This holistic approach not only improves job satisfaction and performance but also enhances community relations, as mentally resilient officers are better equipped to protect and serve the public.

Despite these proactive measures aimed at addressing mental health issues, depression remains a significant concern in the Kenyan law enforcement field, as evidenced by alarming suicide rates among officers. Mukii (2021) reports that approximately 60 police officers commit suicide annually due to various economic and professional constraints. This statistic underscores the urgent need for a continued focus on mental health within the law enforcement community.

Focusing specifically on Nairobi City County, a significant gap persists in understanding the institutional factors that predispose police officers to depression. While several studies have examined the challenges faced by officers in the security sector, there is a lack of detailed exploration regarding how unfair promotion criteria impact job satisfaction and mental health. Additionally, the effects of heavy workloads and frequent transfers on stress and feelings of inadequacy remain underexplored. Existing research has also not adequately addressed broader welfare conditions, including housing and support systems that significantly affect officers' mental well-being.

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This oversight highlights the critical need for comprehensive studies focusing on these institutional aspects within Nairobi's law enforcement community. Understanding their influence is crucial for developing targeted interventions to improve the mental health of police personnel in this urban setting. Therefore, this study aimed to bridge this research gap by investigating the institutional factors contributing to depression among police officers in Nairobi City County.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Law enforcement personnel entrusted with ensuring the safety of the community, often struggle with hidden levels of mental health challenges. According to Syed et al. (2020), one in every seven police officers worldwide suffers from PTSD or depression, compared to significantly lower rates in most other occupations. Like the rest of the world, Kenya law enforcement officials are dealing with suicide and depression. National Police Service (NPS) reports indicate that suicide among police personnel is experienced each year. The NPS observed 65 murder cases and 57 suicide cases between 2016 and 2020 (NPS report, 2021).

Institutional factors such as unfair promotion, workloads, unfair transfers, and heavy workloads predispose police officers to depression in Nairobi County, and this contributes to suicide among law enforcement officers. Several murders and suicide cases have been reported involving police officers due to mental health-related issues (Agutu, 2016). These sentiments agree with the findings of Amnesty International (2023) reports, which observed that Police murder-suicides, demonstrate the critical need for mental health treatment assistance for law enforcement personnel and highlight internal problems in police camps. Limited literature exists on institutional factors disposing police officers at risk of depression, and if the problem persists, the majority of police officers will end up with depression affecting work performance. Therefore, this study fills the gap by identifying the key institutional factors that predispose police officers to the risk of depression.

Despite programs to combat depression, no research has adequately addressed key institutional factors such as education and qualification-based promotion procedures, excessive workloads, frequent transfers, and inadequate welfare conditions.

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Therefore, this study sought to investigate institutional factors predisposing police officers to depression in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

## 1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate institutional factors predisposing police officers to depression in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

## 1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

i. Assess the relationship between qualification-based promotion procedures and the risk of depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County.
ii. Establish the effects of workload on the risk for depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County.
iii. Examine the influence of transfers on the risk for depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County.
iv. Evaluate the influence of welfare conditions on the risk for depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County.

## 1.5 Research Questions

i. What is the relationship between qualification-based promotion procedures and the risk of depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County?
ii. What are the effects of workload on the risk for depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County?
iii. How do transfers influence the risk for depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County?
iv. To what extent do welfare conditions influence the risk for depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County?

## 1.6 Justification of the Study

Depression among police officers is a critical issue, particularly in high-pressure environments like Nairobi County. While the mental health challenges within law enforcement are widely acknowledged, previous studies have primarily focused on general stress, anxiety, and burnout. There has been limited research that delves

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deeply into how institutional factors, such as qualification-based promotion procedures, workload, transfers, and welfare conditions, contribute specifically to depression. Research in Kenya has often centered on external factors like operational risks and public perception (Munyiri, 2019), with little focus on the internal organizational dynamics that may predispose police officers to mental health challenges.

Existing studies have overlooked the psychological toll of qualification-based promotion procedures, which can cause frustration and dissatisfaction when officers perceive the process as unfair or inconsistent (Omboto et al., 2013). Similarly, much of the research on workload has highlighted the physical demands of the job but failed to address how excessive workloads create chronic psychological stress (Kelwon, 2023). Furthermore, while some literature touches on welfare conditions in law enforcement, much of the focus has been on financial compensation rather than the broader support systems, such as access to mental health services, that significantly influence officers' overall well-being (Ogada, 2016).

The timeliness of this study is significant as it coincides with ongoing police reforms in Kenya. These reforms present a critical opportunity to address the growing concern of mental health issues within the police force. There is increasing awareness of the importance of mental health in the workplace, especially in high-stress occupations like policing. As police officers continue to face enormous pressure in their daily work, understanding how institutional factors are contributing to the mental health crisis among officers has never been more urgent. Addressing this issue now enables the study to inform timely interventions and policy adjustments aimed at improving the mental well-being of police officers. This, in turn, can have far-reaching effects on both the officers' quality of life and their capacity to perform their duties effectively.

By focusing on the specific institutional elements that may predispose police officers to depression, this research fills a critical gap in existing literature. The current study sought to provide evidence on how internal organizational structures, such as promotion practices, workloads, transfers, and welfare provisions, play a direct role in mental health outcomes. This insight is crucial not only for improving officers' mental health but also for ensuring the success of broader police reforms in Kenya.

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## 1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will guide policymakers in developing or revising policies in promotion criteria and workload management of the police to address the mental health challenges faced by law enforcement officers in the Ministry of Interior and National Administration. The findings will assist the NPS in allocating resources for mental health programs. Police departments in Nairobi country will use the insight from the study on specific institutional factors contributing to depression to improve working conditions, policies, and support systems for their officers.

The findings of this study will help mental health professionals in creating specialized interventions or support programs such as creating counseling centers and after-depression care for police officers tailored to the needs of this specific group of police officers. Finally, the research findings add knowledge to the existing body of literature in the area of depression management among police officers in the field of psychology.

## 1.8 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted in Nairobi City County to examine the impact of institutional factors, specifically promotional policies, workload, transfers, and welfare conditions, on the mental health of police officers (NPSC, 2023). This research primarily focused on junior police officers stationed in the area who faced unique challenges related to career advancement, organizational expectations, and job-related stress. These challenges rendered them particularly vulnerable to mental health issues, such as depression, thereby highlighting broader systemic issues within law enforcement that affect officer well-being.

The target population for this research consisted of 3,010 junior police officers, with a sample size of 354 respondents. The geographical focus on Nairobi County was justified by the distinct challenges officers encountered in an urban environment characterized by high crime rates and significant public scrutiny. This context provided a relevant backdrop for exploring the organizational influences that contribute to depression among officers.

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Investigating the organizational factors within the police force was crucial, as these elements directly impacted officers' mental well-being. Understanding the relationship between institutional policies and mental health informed targeted interventions that aimed to create a healthier work environment. The study specifically targeted junior police officers to emphasize a group particularly susceptible to the effects of institutional factors in an urban area facing unique challenges, which could exacerbate the impacts of promotional policies and workload on mental health. Exclusions from the study included other ranks within the police force, as their experiences might differ significantly.

The research employed a descriptive survey design, which facilitated a detailed exploration of key variables, including promotional procedures, workload, transfers, and welfare conditions. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, enabling the researcher to gather quantitative data for systematic analysis. By clearly defining the target population, rationale for the location, and study variables, along with aligning the research design and data collection tools with the study objectives, this research presented a comprehensive framework for understanding the institutional factors influencing the mental health of police officers in Nairobi City County.

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## 1.9 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to police officers in Nairobi County, and the findings of the study can only be generalized to other counties with caution. The study was limited to the organizational influences within the police force that contribute to depression among officers Respondents were reluctant to volunteer information about organizational influence on depression among police officers, and to address this, the researcher informed the respondents that the information they submitted would be kept confidential.

## 1.10 Study Assumptions

The study respondents participated freely and provided accurate and honest information without the fear of being victimized. They alsoand had the knowledge and experience to inform the study's objectives.

## 1.11 Definition of Key Terms

**Depression:** This refers to a mental health condition characterized by persistent sadness, hopelessness, and low mood. Symptoms may include loss of interest in activities, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and thoughts of worthlessness.

**Institutional factors:** These include promotion methods, workload, transfers, and welfare conditions within the police force. These factors affect career advancement, job satisfaction, stress levels, social support, and overall well-being, collectively influencing officers' risk of experiencing depression symptoms.

**Police Officers:** In this study, these are people who are trained and hired by the government to maintain law and order.

**Qualification-based promotion procedures:** This refers to the criteria and processes for advancing police officers in their careers. While designed to promote fairness and merit, perceived unfairness or complexity in these procedures can lead to dissatisfaction and contribute to mental health issues among officers.

**Risk of Depression symptoms:** This refers to the likelihood of developing depressive symptoms due to work-related factors such as excessive workload, perceived unfairness in qualification-based promotion procedures, and inadequate welfare conditions. These factors can contribute to chronic stress and emotional distress, ultimately impacting an individual's mental health and well-being.

**Transfers:** This denotes the reassignment of police officers to different posts or locations within the police force. Such movements can disrupt social support networks, increase job-related stress, and create economic challenges, thereby potentially exacerbating the risk of depression.

**Welfare Conditions:** This, as used in this study, refer to the housing, amenities, and overall support services provided to police officers, which directly impact their quality of life and mental well-being. Adequate welfare conditions are essential for promoting job satisfaction and reducing stress among officers.

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# CHAPTER TWO
# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

The study explored the Institutional factors predisposing police officers to the risk of depression in Nairobi city county in Kenya. This chapter discusses the theories that ground the study. It also reviews related literature, presents a conceptual framework and the chapter summary.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted two theories namely Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory and Cognitive Activation Theory (CATS) to comprehensively understand the study.

### 2.2.1 The Job Demands-Resources Theory

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, introduced by Bakker and Demerouti (2006), provides a comprehensive model of occupational stress that addresses the limitations of earlier frameworks by incorporating a wider range of variables applicable across various industries (Kwon & Kim, 2020). The theory distinguishes between job demands, elements requiring continuous physical and mental effort, such as workload and cognitive demands, and job resources, factors that aid in achieving work goals and mitigating stress, including social support and opportunities for personal growth.

This framework emphasizes the dynamic interplay between job demands and available resources, positing that while high job demands can increase stress and the risk of depression, sufficient job resources can buffer against these negative effects (Bakker & Demerouti , 2018). The JD-R theory's flexibility and strong predictive power make it a valuable tool for understanding outcomes such as job satisfaction and performance across diverse work environments (Rattrie et al., 2020).

In the context of police officers in Nairobi County, the JD-R theory aids in comprehending how specific job characteristics relate to the risk of experiencing depressive symptoms. It underscores those demanding aspects of police work, like qualification requirements for promotion and high workload, can elevate stress levels, particularly when adequate resources for coping are lacking. Furthermore, the theory

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recognizes the role of environmental elements, such as welfare conditions, which can serve as either job demands or resources impacting officers' mental well-being.

Despite its strengths, the JD-R theory faces criticism for potentially oversimplifying workplace dynamics, particularly in unique contexts like law enforcement (Demerouti, 2018). Acknowledging these complexities, the study integrates the JD-R theory with other theoretical frameworks to enhance its applicability in exploring the factors influencing depression among police officers. Overall, the JD-R theory effectively guided the study by framing the investigation of how various job demands and resources influence the mental health of police officers in Nairobi County.

### 2.2.2 The Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress

The Cognitive Activation Theory of Stress (CATS), developed by Ursin and Eriksen(2004), emphasizes the role of cognitive processes in perceiving and responding to stress. According to CATS, stress is defined through the interplay of health, external and internal events, all subject to cognitive appraisal. The physiological and psychological responses to stress hinge on how individuals assess situations and the actions they choose to take in response (Lee et al., 2020).

CATS posits that cognitive evaluations influence stress responses, with individual assessments shaped by past experiences and expectations. The theory delineates two stages of learning: classical conditioning, which involves acquiring expectations based on stimuli, and operant conditioning, which pertains to learning response outcomes. This model categorizes stimuli as activating responses, leading to measurable stress reactions, such as those seen in the activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. Favorable outcomes are generally associated with positive expectations, while negative or uncertain expectations can exacerbate stress levels.

Despite its strengths in illuminating the cognitive dimensions of stress, CATS has limitations. Critics argue that it may underemphasize the role of organizational structures and contextual factors contributing to stress experiences in the workplace. For example, job demands, workplace culture, and organizational hierarchies significantly influence how stress is perceived and managed (Nielsen et al., 2017). Furthermore, the theory faces critique for neglecting the importance of social support in stress coping, which is vital for mitigating stress effects (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992).

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While CATS may lack empirical backing and predictive power in certain contexts, it remains a useful framework for understanding the cognitive aspects of stress experiences.

In this study, CATS provided valuable insights into how police officers in Nairobi perceived and responded to stressors inherent in their work environment. By emphasizing the subjective nature of stress, the theory enabled a nuanced understanding of how cognitive appraisals of various job demands and resources, such as promotion procedures, workload, transfers, and welfare conditions, shaped stress responses. The adoption of CATS allowed for a thorough analysis of how these cognitive processes interacted with external stressors, thereby enriching the investigation into the mental well-being of police officers. Through this theoretical lens, the study sought to unravel the intricate relationships between cognitive evaluations and stress responses, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the unique stress experiences faced by law enforcement personnel in Nairobi County.

### 2.2.3 Interaction of the Two Theories in the Study

The integration of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory and the Cognitive Appraisal Theory of Stress (CATS) establishes a comprehensive framework for understanding the mental health challenges faced by police officers. JD-R theory emphasizes the balance between job demands and available resources, illustrating how these factors can either contribute to or mitigate stress levels. In contrast, CATS focuses on individual cognitive appraisals, highlighting how personal interpretations of stressors influence stress responses. Together, these theories provide a multidimensional perspective that encompasses both external job characteristics and internal cognitive processes, shedding light on the complexities of stress among law enforcement personnel.

This theoretical framework enhances the investigation by revealing the intricate relationships between job characteristics, cognitive evaluations, and stress responses among police officers in Nairobi County. Each theory addresses the limitations of the other; JD-R highlights structural aspects that may overlook individual cognitive processes, while CATS emphasizes personal evaluations that can be informed by

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broader contextual factors. By merging these theories, the study offers a more holistic understanding of the unique stress experiences encountered by police officers, ultimately contributing to more effective strategies for managing stress in this challenging profession.

## 2.3 Empirical Literature Review

Depression represents a critical concern within law enforcement, manifesting as a pervasive and debilitating mental health condition that can profoundly affect officers' well-being and job performance. Mbanga et al. (2019) argue that depression leads to persistent feelings of melancholy, irregular sleep patterns, and unfavorable cognitive patterns, which is a major contributing factor to disability globally. The prevalence of depression is a serious problem that has to be addressed in the context of law enforcement, where personnel frequently deal with stressful circumstances and painful events. Although law enforcement professionals are perceived as resilient and strong, the truth is that they are not exempt from the psychological effects of their line of work. Over time, officers' mental health may be negatively impacted by their ongoing exposure to violence, trauma, and crises, which can have a variety of negative effects. Officers who suffer from depression not only have emotional and psychological problems but their capacity to carry out their jobs efficiently is also compromised.

This critical analysis delves into scholarly investigations, focusing on empirical data and evidence-based findings to consolidate, analyze, and synthesize the current knowledge and trends in the field. By examining a multitude of peer-reviewed studies, this review aims to elucidate the key themes, debates, methodologies, and gaps in understanding within the chosen domain.

### 2.3.1 Qualification-Based Promotional Procedures and the Risk of Depression Among Police Officers

A German study conducted by Otto et al. (2022) meticulously explored the long-term effects of promotions to managerial roles and salary increases on employees' job satisfaction over 27 years. The study's longitudinal design provided robust evidence that promotions and accompanying salary increases initially result in a marked increase in job satisfaction. This boost is particularly pronounced in the first year

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following a promotion, reflecting the immediate gratification and recognition associated with career advancement. However, the study found that this positive impact on job satisfaction tends to diminish over time, with the effects noticeably tapering off after one year. This diminishing return suggests that while promotions are effective in the short term, their ability to sustain long-term job satisfaction may be limited.

Otto et al. (2022) offer valuable insights into the dynamics of job satisfaction concerning promotions, it is essential to consider the contextual limitations of the study. The research was conducted in Germany and focused predominantly on managerial positions, which may not fully represent the experiences of employees in different roles or cultural contexts. Moreover, the study did not explore the potential stressors associated with the lack of promotion, leaving a gap in understanding how unmet career aspirations might affect employee well-being. This limitation is crucial when applying the findings to other settings, particularly in regions with different economic, social, and organizational structures.

Prenzler and Drew (2018) examined the promotion practices in countries such as the UK, United States of America (USA), and Australia, where employment procedures are designed to recognize and promote the most qualified candidates while minimizing discriminatory barriers. These countries often implement rigorous merit-based systems aimed at ensuring fairness and equality in career advancement. The study highlighted the pressures that accompany the pursuit of promotions, particularly in hierarchical professions like law enforcement. The authors argued that the intense competition for promotions could lead to significant stress for employees, especially when they perceive the promotion process as unfair or biased.

The relevance of Prenzler and Drew (2018) study lies in its examination of the psychological impact of promotion practices, particularly in high-stakes professions. The findings suggest that the pressure to secure a promotion can lead to negative outcomes for employees who are unable to advance, including feelings of frustration and decreased job satisfaction. However, the study's focus on developed countries with established employment systems may limit its applicability to other regions, such as Nairobi City County, where cultural and organizational norms may differ

significantly. This highlights the need for research that considers local contexts when examining the impact of promotion practices on employee well-being.

Okechukwu et al. (2022) conducted a study in Southeast Nigeria, focusing on the relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction among employees in five selected manufacturing firms. The study found a positive association between promotion and employee commitment, particularly within bakeries, suggesting that fair and transparent promotion practices can enhance employee satisfaction and loyalty. This empirical evidence supports the notion that promotion is a key driver of job satisfaction, reinforcing the importance of equitable career advancement opportunities in fostering a committed workforce. Despite the positive findings, the authors did not explore the potential negative consequences of perceived unfairness or the absence of promotion opportunities. The study's focus on positive outcomes leaves a gap in understanding the full spectrum of employee experiences related to promotion practices. Specifically, it does not address how employees might respond to perceived inequities in the promotion process, such as increased stress, dissatisfaction, or even depression. This gap underscores the need for a more comprehensive analysis of how promotion practices affect employee well-being, particularly in settings where organizational justice may be lacking.

The research by Kagwanja et al. (2020) offers a valuable perspective on the challenges associated with promotion practices in environments where resources are limited, roles are unclear, and political meddling is prevalent. The study argues that these factors can have a direct impact on job promotion procedures, leading to increased stress levels among employees. This stress is particularly pronounced in settings where promotions are perceived as being influenced by factors other than merit, such as political favoritism or resource constraints. The findings suggest that in such environments, the promotion process can become a source of significant anxiety and frustration for employees, potentially undermining their overall job satisfaction.

Furthermore, Kagwanja et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of managerial strategies in mitigating the negative effects of flawed promotion practices. The study suggests that managers can reduce employee stress by employing absorptive, adaptive, and transformational tactics. These strategies involve enhancing

organizational resilience, providing clear communication, and supporting employees' professional growth. By doing so, managers can create a more supportive work environment that alleviates the stress associated with the promotion process, thereby promoting employee well-being and long-term job satisfaction.

While these studies collectively highlight the critical role of promotions in influencing job satisfaction and employee well-being, they also underscore the complexity of the promotion process. The varying contexts and limitations of each study indicate that the impact of promotions is not uniform across different settings. Factors such as cultural norms, organizational justice, and the transparency of the promotion process play a significant role in determining whether promotions lead to positive or negative outcomes for employees. This suggests that organizations must carefully consider these factors when designing and implementing promotion practices to ensure they support rather than undermine employee well-being.

In conclusion, the body of research on promotions and job satisfaction provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of career advancement and its effects on employees. However, it also highlights the need for further research that takes into account the specific cultural, organizational, and economic contexts in which promotions occur. By doing so, future studies can provide a more nuanced understanding of how promotions impact employee satisfaction and well-being across different regions and industries. Such research is crucial for developing promotion practices that are not only fair and transparent but also supportive of employees' long-term career aspirations and mental health.

### 2.3.2 Workload and the Risk of Depression among Police Officers

Liang et al. (2020) and Ishikawa (2022) conducted a pivotal study exploring the correlation between extended work hours and mental health issues, particularly depression and anxiety. Their research revealed a significant finding: individuals working a minimum of 11 hours per day demonstrated a 2.43 times higher odds ratio for experiencing a major depressive episode compared to those adhering to the standard 7–8-hour workday. This striking statistic underscores the substantial mental health risks associated with prolonged working hours. However, while this study

provides critical insights into the general working population, its applicability to specific occupational groups, such as law enforcement, requires further exploration.

Virtanen et al. (2019) offered a nuanced perspective on this issue, arguing that the association between prolonged working hours and depressive symptoms remains unclear when specifically examining police officers. This observation raises important questions about the transferability of findings across different occupational contexts. Police officers, given the nature of their duties, may experience distinct stressors that are not adequately captured in studies focusing on the general population. These stressors include the physical dangers inherent in law enforcement, exposure to traumatic events, and the need for quick decision-making in high-pressure situations, all of which could uniquely influence the relationship between work hours and mental health.

Further supporting the link between work-related factors and mental health, Yin et al. (2023) conducted a study investigating depressive symptoms, measured by the PHQ-9, among individuals working over 8 hours daily. Their findings indicated that 49.8% of participants exhibited depressive symptoms, with a notable correlation between increased workload and elevated depressive symptom scores ($\beta = 0.26$, 95% CI: 0.13–0.40). This study emphasizes the significant impact of workload on mental health, reinforcing the need for targeted interventions in professions where extended working hours are commonplace. However, similar to previous studies, the generalizability of these findings to police officers remains a critical area for further investigation.

In contrast to studies on law enforcement and general working populations, Masuku and Muchemwa (2017) examined occupational stress among professors at Solusi University in Zimbabwe. Their research highlighted the high levels of stress and fatigue experienced by lecturers due to increased workloads, pressure to meet objectives, and excessive working hours. While the findings underscore the pervasive impact of workload on occupational stress across different professions, caution is needed when extrapolating these results to law enforcement personnel. The academic environment presents a different set of challenges compared to the unique pressures faced by police officers, including the constant threat of danger and the need for rapid

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decision-making under stressful conditions. Thus, while instructive, the results from this study may not fully capture the stress dynamics in law enforcement.

Mwakasangula and Mwita (2020) provided additional insights into the relationship between job satisfaction and occupational stress, specifically within Tanzanian public secondary schools. The study identified a strong correlation between workload and workplace stressors, suggesting that excessive workloads are a significant source of dissatisfaction and stress among teachers. The authors proposed strategies to mitigate these stressors, such as recruiting additional teachers and providing leadership training for school administrators. However, similar to the findings of Masuku and Muchemwa (2017), this study's educational setting limits its direct applicability to law enforcement. The distinct nature of police work necessitates further research tailored to understanding the specific stressors in this profession.

Muchiri (2022) conducted a focused study on the impacts of workload on stress among employees within Kenya's disciplined services. The primary objective was to assess how work-related stress influences employee performance. The study found that a significant proportion of staff, 50.5%, experienced stress due to excessive work pressure, which subsequently affected their concentration and task performance. This finding aligns with the broader literature on the negative impacts of excessive workloads. However, the study's relatively small sample size of 111 employees out of a population of 557 raises concerns regarding the representativeness of the findings. To address these concerns and strengthen the research's validity, the current study proposes targeting a larger sample size of 142 law enforcement officers.

By expanding the sample size, the current study aims to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between stress and workload within law enforcement settings. Given the unique pressures faced by police officers, including the physical and psychological demands of their work, a larger and more representative sample will provide valuable insights into how workload influences stress and mental health in this context. This research will contribute to the ongoing discourse on occupational stress, offering evidence-based recommendations for improving well-being and performance among law enforcement personnel.

### 2.3.3 Transfers and the Risk of Depression among Police Officers

Transfers can severely affect an individual, largely because of their association with geographic isolation. For instance, a study by the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (cited in Malta, 2019, p.12) revealed that separation from a spouse or family because of transfers had negative impacts on individuals. This longitudinal study was carried out to identify demographic, military-specific, and service member mental health correlates of spousal depression and specifically revealed that geographic separation strongly predicted increased risk for Major Depressive Disorder (MDD). Although the study was based in America and focused on military spouses, it provides information with real-world application, especially for a better understanding of how transfer may play a role in stress and depression.

Hudson and Doogan (2019) investigated the impacts of geographic isolation on mental disorders, focusing on its connection to mental disabilities. They aimed to distinguish this relationship from other potential explanations, such as socioeconomic status, social isolation, economic inequality, and reverse causation. Their research analyzed mental disability rates across 2,960 U.S. counties, using data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Census Bureau. The study employed statistical methods to explore the data, including correlation analysis and regression techniques. The results showed that the direct effects of geographic isolation on mental disability rates were significant, even when considering variables like socioeconomic status and income levels. Approximately 54.4% of the variation in mental disability rates across counties could be attributed to the combined effects of geographic isolation, socioeconomic factors, income inequality, and other influences. This indicates that geographic isolation is a substantial factor affecting mental health outcomes in these communities.

The above two studies conducted by Hudsona and Dooganb (2019) and the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (referenced in Malta, 2019, p.12) provide compelling evidence affirming the suggested impact of geographic isolation on mental disability rates in U.S. Counties. Nevertheless, their observations do not diminish the influence of other factors contributing to the emergence of mental

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disabilities in the U.S. The findings did not dismiss the counter possibility that certain types of mental disabilities might prompt individuals to self-isolate, as both scenarios could conceivably coexist. Besides, the studies referenced are based in the American setting, which presents a different sociocultural and organizational context compared to Kenya. In the American context, factors such as law enforcement practices, organizational structures, and societal attitudes toward policing may differ significantly from those in Kenya.

Research by Husain and Faize (2018) in Pakistan examined the effects on police officers' mental health when they are transferred to police stations they don't like or are seen to be riskier. Officers stationed in sensitive locations showed higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression than those in less sensitive work conditions, according to their study, which was carried out in Pakistan. The authors concluded that job happiness, workload, and employee performance are all greatly impacted by transfers, which in turn has an impact on workers' mental health. Nonetheless, concerns are raised concerning the validity and dependability of the results due to the study's lack of precision regarding sample size. This omission highlights the need for accurate reporting of research methodology to maintain the credibility of study conclusions and may make it more difficult to extrapolate the results to a larger population of police personnel.

Agnew (2018) explored the link between undesirable events, particularly the loss of a loved one, and the emergence of depression. This emotional state is marked by feelings of helplessness and an apparent inability to address the adverse circumstances, leading to a state of inactivity and lethargy. Depression is associated with emotions such as despair, suffering, desperation, and disappointment, resembling anger in its potential to drive individuals toward delinquency and criminal behavior as a means of seeking corrective actions. While recognizing depression as an unpleasant emotional condition, the author suggested that it lacks the same level of pressure as anger.

Depression hinders individuals from employing formal coping mechanisms due to feelings of lethargy and helplessness, reducing their inclination to take appropriate action. Additionally, Agnew pointed out that depression tends to reduce the perceived

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costs associated with engaging in criminal activities, creating a sense of having nothing to lose. However, there remains a research gap since the author did not delve into the underlying causes of depression. The present study aims to address this gap by examining the institutional factors influencing depression among police officers. This research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the nuanced relationship between depression and criminal behavior, considering diverse individual experiences and responses to depressive states within the specific context of law enforcement.

In South Africa, police officers are more prone than the general population to consider suicide, according to research by Singo and Shilubane (2020). This is a worrying trend. Through the use of phenomenological methods and unstructured interviews, the researchers were able to determine that cops' suicidal thoughts were significantly predicted by adverse transfers and the lack of support from a spouse or partner. If results are extrapolated to the Kenyan context, a notable gap is highlighted by the study's concentration on South African police officers. We don't yet know if the negative impacts of moves are caused by a partner or spouse's lack of support or if these things happen on their own. To comprehend the unique difficulties encountered by Kenyan police officers and to create focused interventions to address them, comparable research must be carried out inside the Kenyan context, considering the country's unique social, legal, and criminal settings. More research on the effects of transfers on police officers' likelihood of developing depressive symptoms in Nairobi City County, in particular, may yield insightful information for the creation of supportive policies and organizational frameworks.

On a national scale, the Kenyan government's rules outline the processes via which the Kenya National Police Agency selects officers for various agencies (Republic of Kenya, 2016). Following the NPS 2015 requirements, the procedure must adhere to specific rules to guarantee impartiality and participation, while also accounting for the officer's understanding and proficiency with the assignment. Officers must also have served in a certain unit for a minimum of three years to advance to the next seniority level. Meeting the standards and demonstrating efficacy are prerequisites for moving on to the next level.

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These procedures set the benchmark for employee referrals, drills, and career advancement by emphasizing professional certifications, job knowledge, experience, excellence, and abilities as necessary components. From the viewpoint of the researcher, when one looks back on these regulations, one realizes how important merit-based promotion is to law enforcement since it ensures that staff members have the knowledge and skills needed to protect and serve the public. This matter deserves thorough consideration since the existing promotion procedures affect the effectiveness of Kenyan police personnel.

In another study, Tembur (2017) examined factors that influence employees' job performance within the NPS and discovered that, among other things, non-compliance with the employment growth process has a negative impact on employees' job performance. The study used a descriptive research approach and structured interviews with Officer Commanding Station (OCS), Sub-County Police Commanders, and County Police Commanders to examine data from 100 respondents. Although it offers helpful information, it's unclear how much the process of career development contributes to sadness. Furthermore, the study's interpretation and conclusion may have been impacted by the extremely small sample size of only 100 respondents, which is used in the analysis.

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### 2.3.4 Welfare Conditions and the Risk of Depression among Police Officers

The fundamental right to adequate housing, as part of the broader right to an adequate standard of living, is crucial for realizing all economic, social, and cultural rights (UN-Habitat , 2017). In recognition of this, the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights identified seven essential elements of adequate housing: legal security of tenure; availability of services, materials, and infrastructure; affordability; habitability; accessibility; suitable location; and cultural adequacy (Kim et al., 2021)

A UK-based study by Rolfe et al (2020) on housing as a social determinant of health and well-being, sought to confirm the impact of housing on an individual's mental health. The study utilized a mixed-methods, longitudinal approach analyzing quantitative data from tenants across the first year of their tenancy in three housing organizations. The authors developed causal hypotheses based on staff interviews and employed a Realist Research approach to test and refine these hypotheses into a

theoretical framework exploring the connections between tenants' overall housing experience and their health and well-being.

The findings of the study indicated significant correlations between housing service provision, tenants' perceptions of property quality, and aspects of the neighborhood with measures of health and well-being. This suggests that the quality of housing services, the condition of the property, and the neighborhood environment are all influential factors in shaping the health and well-being of tenants. The study provides some backup information, except that it is not carried out in the context of police officers. Pevalin et al. (2017) note that living in a home situation with ongoing challenges raises the likelihood of mental health disorders. Their UK-based study investigated if living in inadequate housing over an extended period affected mental health in addition to the immediate housing situation.

The findings showed that mental health was declining in tandem with housing issues' growing persistence. Regardless of one's present housing situation, the study showed that extended exposure to subpar living circumstances predicted decreased mental health. Although this study adds to the body of information regarding the negative consequences of long-term occupancy of poor housing, it should be noted that it was conducted only in the United Kingdom and did not include law enforcement officials. As such, there may be limited generalizability to other populations and geographic places, including Kenya.

In a Nigerian research study, Oluwaseyi (2020) highlighted the intricate nature of housing, stressing its significance beyond being a simple shelter to encompass various social services and utilities essential for dignified living. The study aimed to scrutinize how residential conditions influenced the psychological well-being of the Okelele-Adangba communities in the Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. The findings indicated that residents living in submerged buildings experienced heightened anxiety regarding their housing conditions. They felt a sense of depression when faced with news of robbery incidents, harbored feelings of shame about inviting friends to their deteriorating homes and unclean surroundings. Furthermore, they expressed a desire to relocate to better housing in more favorable areas whenever the opportunity arose.

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However, a research gap exists specifically in the context of understanding the impact of housing on the mental health of police officers in Nairobi City County. Exploring such a relationship could shed light on the unique challenges faced by police officers in Nairobi City County, providing valuable insights for developing targeted interventions to address their mental well-being within the context of housing conditions. Ngoro and Oloko's (2015) study clarified the important influence that inadequate housing has on the symptoms of depression experienced by police personnel in Migori. They specifically pointed to the absence of privacy as a major cause of this stress and linked it to the larger problem of inadequate housing. The results highlight the negative impacts of substandard living, such as increased levels of anxiety, sadness, and rage among law enforcement personnel. But a closer look reveals that although there is no denying the connection between stress and substandard housing and depression, the precise processes by which housing circumstances exacerbate depression are still unknown.

## 2.4 Research Gap

The reviewed studies collectively provide important information about the institutional determinants in Nairobi City County, Kenya, that predispose police officers to depression. They also highlight several knowledge gaps on the effects of workload, housing, transfers, and career advancement strategies on depressive symptoms in law enforcement personnel. Analysis of promotion practices in industrialized nations highlights the necessity for localized research to take into consideration the distinct social and cultural variables seen in Kenya's law enforcement sector (Prenzler & Drew, 2018; Otto et al., 2022). In a similar vein, Okechukwu et al. (2022) stress the need for studies that concentrate on the particular connection between depressive symptoms and promotion procedures among Kenyan police personnel.

Studies by Masuku and Muchemwa (2017), Yin et al. (2023), and Mwakasangula and Mwita (2020) provide information about the relationship between workload and depressed symptoms. There are, however, gaps in our knowledge of how police officers' workloads differ from those of other professions and in our analysis of potential confounding factors such as demands from personal lives or workplace

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dynamics. The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (quoted in Malta, 2019) and studies by Hudson and Dooganb (2019) highlight the importance of geographic isolation in leading to mental health disorders among police personnel. Nonetheless, further localized study is required to comprehend the precise contextual elements impacting depression symptoms among Kenyan police personnel.

Additionally, research by Agnew (2018), Husain and Faize (2018), and Singo and Shilubane (2020) highlights the significance of living circumstances and transfers in influencing depressive symptoms in police personnel. The generalizability of findings to the Kenyan setting is, however, limited by methodological limitations, such as small sample numbers or dependence on qualitative data, geographical gaps, and demographic gaps. Furthermore, there is a need for more studies to clarify the specific processes via which living circumstances and transfers increase depressive symptoms among Kenyan police personnel, as there is currently a knowledge deficit in this area.

Overall, geography is evident given that the majority of the reviewed studies are done in Asia, Europe, and North America, which highlights the need for localized research, particularly in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The subject matter would be contextualized through a local study carried out in Nairobi City County, bringing in methodological, contextual, and geographical gaps highlighted in previous studies.

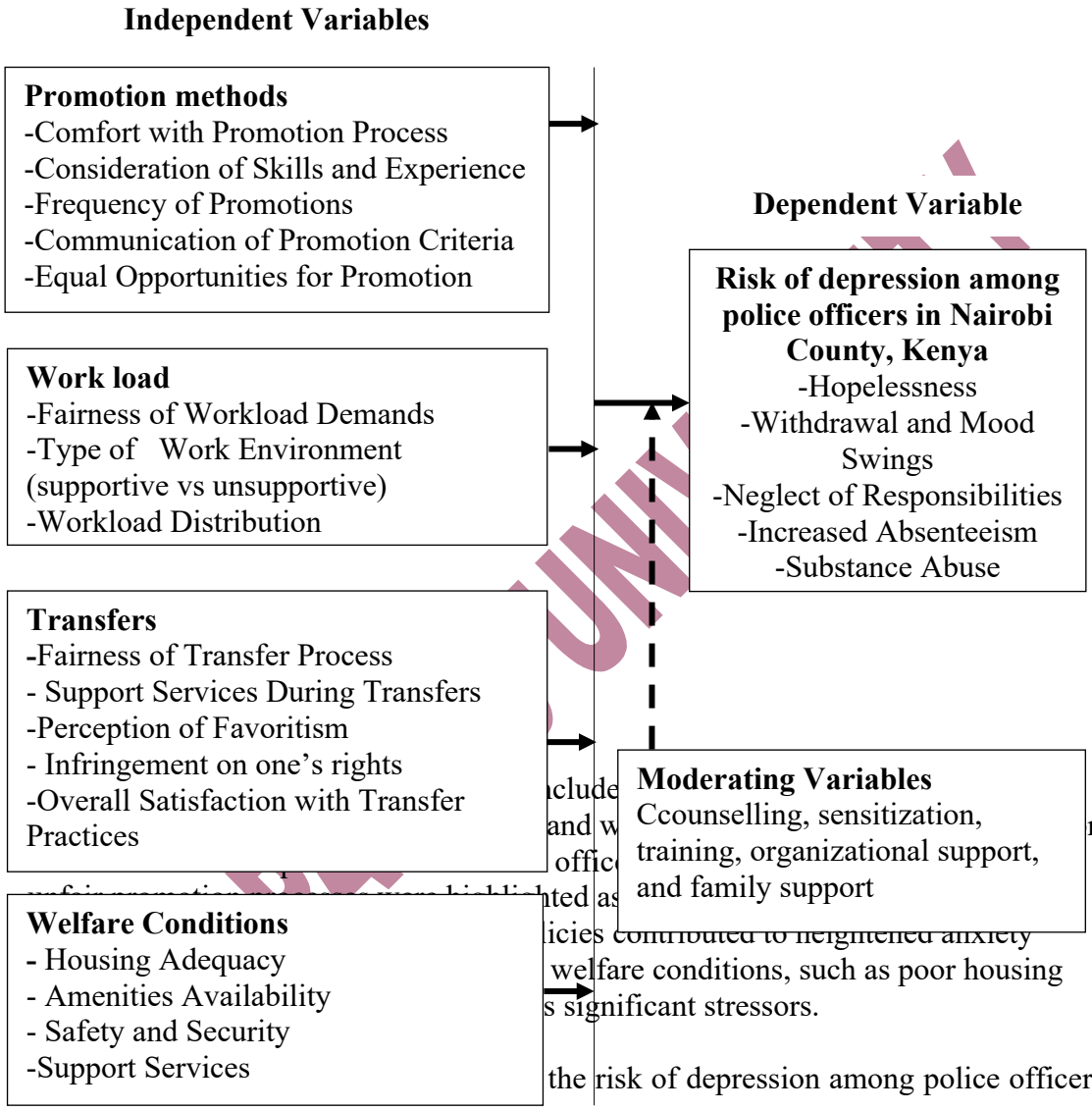
## 2.5 Conceptual Framework

The study examined how various institutional factors within the police force contributed to the risk of depression among officers in Nairobi County. The conceptual framework visually represented this relationship, outlining the independent variables that were identified and their direct impact on the dependent variable as shown in Figure 2.1.

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Figure 2.1
*Conceptual Framework*




**Source:** Researcher (2024)

clude
and w
rs
offic
ted as
icies contributed to heightened anxiety
welfare conditions, such as poor housing
s significant stressors.

the risk of depression among police officers,
h as hopelessness, withdrawal, and mood swings, neglect of responsibilities, increased absenteeism, and substance abuse. These indicators reflected how the identified institutional challenges manifested as mental health issues among the officers. The study aimed to uncover the specific ways in which practices related to promotion methods and workload distribution affected the likelihood of developing depression, thereby providing a clearer understanding of how these institutional factors contributed to mental health problems.

The framework also incorporated moderating variables such as counseling, sensitization, training, organizational support, and family support. These factors were considered critical as they had the potential to either buffer or intensify the effects of institutional factors on the risk of depression. The study demonstrated that the presence of these moderating supports could mitigate the adverse effects of institutional stressors, while their absence increased the likelihood of depression among police officers.

To ensure the accuracy of the findings, the study controlled for confounding variables, such as socio-economic background and mental health history, through a pilot study, randomization, and statistical controls. The pilot study refined the questionnaire and identified potential confounders, while randomization ensured even participant distribution across demographic groups. Statistical controls were also applied during data analysis to account for variables like marital status and education level, effectively isolating the impact of institutional factors on the risk of depression among police officers in Nairobi County.

## 2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a comprehensive synthesis of the literature surrounding stress among law enforcement officers, particularly focusing on the Nairobi County police officers in Kenya. It elucidates the existing research gaps of the organizational factors influencing officers' mental health, emphasizing the need for a nuanced examination of Nairobi's institutional dynamics. The review delves into various stressors prevalent in law enforcement, such as promotional methods, workload, transfers, and housing issues, while also discussing theoretical frameworks like the Job JD-R theory and cognitive activation theory of stress to provide a conceptual foundation for understanding these dynamics.

Overall, Chapter Two serves as a critical foundation for the subsequent empirical investigation, identifying key areas for further research and conceptualizing a framework to guide the study. It highlights the importance of addressing the unique organizational aspects of the NPS to develop targeted interventions aimed at supporting officer well-being in this specific context.

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# CHAPTER THREE
# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.0 Introduction

The chapter focused on outlining the research design, identifying the target population, and determining the appropriate sample size. The chapter also outlines the sampling procedures, research instrument, piloting, validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. The chapter provides a comprehensive framework for the systematic execution of the research.

## 3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research survey design due to its effectiveness in assessing and reporting the institutional factors contributing to the risk of depression among police officers in Nairobi County. The design was justified by the need to capture a comprehensive picture of existing conditions without manipulating any of the variables involved. As highlighted by Kothari (2019), this approach facilitates the identification and documentation of relationships between variables in a specific context. By employing this design, the study aimed to uncover how institutional factors, such as promotion methods, workload, transfers, and welfare conditions, impact the mental well-being of police officers. This focus allowed for the collection of detailed data, providing valuable insights that can inform policy changes and interventions within the police force.

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection. The quantitative aspect involved distributing structured questionnaires to a sampled population, enabling the collection of numerical data for statistical analysis. Cooper and Schindler (2018) note that structured questionnaires effectively gather standardized data from respondents, allowing researchers to quantify the extent of various institutional factors and their correlation with depression risk. Simultaneously, qualitative methods were integrated to obtain in-depth insights into the officers' experiences and perceptions regarding their work environment and mental health. This dual-method approach enriched the data, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how institutional factors interact with mental health issues, ensuring that both statistical and narrative dimensions were adequately captured in the research

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findings. By combining these methodologies, the study strengthened the validity and reliability of its conclusions.

### 3.2 Study Area

This study was conducted in Nairobi County, one of the 47 counties in the Republic of Kenya, which serves as the capital city and the largest urban center in the country. Nairobi County is strategically positioned, bordered by Kiambu County to the north, Kajiado County to the south, and Machakos County to the east. The county covers a total area of 696.1 square kilometers and lies between longitudes 36°45' East and latitude 1°18' South. According to the 2019 population census, Nairobi County is home to approximately 4,397,073 residents (KNBS, 2019), making it a vibrant and diverse metropolis that plays a pivotal role in Kenya's social, political, and economic landscape.

The selection of Nairobi County as the study location is particularly relevant due to the high prevalence of depression among police officers operating within the region. Recent reports from the National Police Service (NPS, 2023) indicate a significant number of officers in this urban environment are affected by mental health issues, including depression. The NPS reported 65 murder cases and 57 suicide cases among police personnel between 2016 and 2020 (NPS report, 2021). This trend raises crucial concerns about the well-being of police personnel who serve in high-pressure situations and face numerous challenges in their line of duty, including work-related stressors, insufficient support systems, and societal pressures that merit thorough investigation.

Nairobi County's geographical elevation ranges from 1,425 to 1,795 meters above sea level, contributing to a moderate climate characterized by both warm and cool periods throughout the year. This climatic variability, combined with the distinct challenges faced by officers in an urban environment marked by high crime rates and significant public scrutiny, complicates the mental health landscape for police personnel. The interplay of these environmental factors and the institutional challenges underscores the need for targeted research to understand and address the specific risks of depression among police officers in Nairobi County effectively.

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Overall, the geographical focus on Nairobi County provides a relevant backdrop for exploring the organizational influences contributing to mental health challenges among officers. By understanding the unique stressors faced in this urban context, the study aims to uncover essential insights that can inform policies and interventions to improve the mental well-being of police officers in Nairobi County.

### 3.3 Target Population

This study focused on junior Kenya Police Service (KPS) officers stationed in Nairobi County, Kenya, specifically targeting those at the levels of constable, corporal, sergeant, and senior sergeant. Data from the NPS (2018) indicates a substantial population of 3010 junior police officers assigned to various police divisions in Nairobi County.

Table 3.1
*Distribution of Target Population*

| Police Division | Number of junior police officers (Kenya Police) |
|---|---|
| Central | 504 |
| Kilimani | 236 |
| Embakasi | 581 |
| Langata | 200 |
| Dagoreti | 100 |
| Buruburu | 350 |
| Makadara | 270 |
| Starehe | 315 |
| Kasarani | 175 |
| Gigiri | 169 |
| Kayole | 110 |
| **Total** | **3010** |

**Source:** National Police Service (2018).

For triangulations, key respondents were considered including mental health practitioners, Officer Commanding Station (OCS), and officials from the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA).

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### 3.4 Sample Procedure and Sample Size

The study was guided by Yamane's formula to get the desired number of respondents. Yamane (1967, p.886) provides the following formula for the calculation of sample size

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where,

n represents the desired sample size.

N is the size of the population.

e is the margin of error (expressed as a proportion, not a percentage

With a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 0.05, the researcher calculates a sample size of 351, as demonstrated below.

(i.) Desired sample size for junior police officers

Substituting N =2883, e = 0.05 into the formula:

$$n = \frac{3010}{1 + 3010(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3010}{1 + 3010x0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{3010}{1 + 7.525}$$

$$\frac{3010}{8.525}$$

n≈353.79

So, the calculated sample size using Yamane's formula for a population of 3010 with a desired level of precision of 5% is approximately 354.

A multistage sampling strategy was employed in this study to select junior police officers from various police divisions within Nairobi County. This approach was particularly relevant as it provided a systematic and organized selection process that ensured each junior police officer had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. The multistage sampling involved multiple stages: first,

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identifying the 11 police divisions in Nairobi County; second, randomly selecting junior officers from each division; and finally, ensuring that the selected officers represented the diversity within the junior police officer population across different divisions. This method effectively addressed the need for a representative sample that reflects the various demographics and experiences of officers throughout the county, consistent with the principles of fairness and randomness in sampling articulated by Cooper and Schindler (2018), thus enhancing the validity of the research findings.

The selection characteristics guiding the use of multistage sampling included geographical representation, rank within the police force, and the operational contexts of the officers. By sampling across different divisions, the study could account for variations in experiences, working conditions, and institutional factors that may contribute to mental health outcomes among junior police officers. This comprehensive approach allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how institutional factors influence the risk of depression, as it captured perspectives from a broad spectrum of officers operating in diverse environments within Nairobi County.

Purposive sampling was employed to select 14 key informants relevant to the research on the mental health of junior police officers. This group included 11 OCS from each of the police divisions in Nairobi County, providing insights from diverse operational contexts. Additionally, one official from the (IPOA was included for a centralized perspective on police governance, along with two mental health practitioners who offered specialized knowledge about the psychological challenges faced by police officers. This targeted approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration of institutional policies, support mechanisms, and mental health issues, enriching the study's findings and recommendations.

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### 3.5 Research Instruments

Data collection for this study employed survey questionnaires and interview guides that were aligned with the study's objectives.

#### 3.5.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaires were used in this study as they were particularly suitable for allowing participants sufficient time to complete and respond to the questions, ensuring

thoroughness. Furthermore, as recommended by Cooper and Schindler (2018), questionnaires were effective for assessing distant groups, making them an appropriate choice for reaching a wide range of participants.

To measure depression among police officers in Nairobi City, the questionnaires were adopted in a semi-structured format. They included closed-ended questions employing a 5-point Likert scale to quantify depression symptoms. Additionally, open-ended questions were incorporated to elicit qualitative insights, probing participants to provide explanations and narratives about their experiences. This comprehensive methodological approach aimed to enhance the depth of data collected and improve the study's outcomes by facilitating a nuanced understanding of depression symptoms among participants.

### 3.5.2 Interview Schedule

For triangulation, the interview schedule governed the interviews with mental health professionals, OCS, and officials from the IPOA. The researcher directly administered pre-planned questions throughout the interviews. The unstructured format of the key informant interview schedule encourages participants to offer a wide range of answers, which improves the quality and depth of the information gathered. Besides, this approach ensures a comprehensive exploration of participants' perspectives and experiences, complementing the quantitative insights obtained through the structured questionnaires.

## 3.6 Piloting

The pilot study was conducted in Kiambu County, which shares similar characteristics with Nairobi County. Notably, Kiambu County was ranked 2nd by the National Police Service as a county with a high number of officers affected by depression (NPS, 2023). This context provides a relevant backdrop for understanding the challenges faced by police officers in the region.

Piloting is crucial as it helps identify potential ambiguities or issues with the research tools before their full deployment (Kothari, 2019). During the pilot testing, aspects such as the clarity of questions, the feasibility of data collection, and the time required for completion were thoroughly evaluated. It was established that some questions

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were ambiguous and were subsequently removed from the questionnaire, thereby enhancing the clarity and reliability of the research instruments.

To align with the recommended proportion by Cooper and Schindler (2018), a practical approach was adopted by selecting a sample size of 10% of the actual sample size. For the pilot test, 35 police officers from Kiambu Police Station in Kiambu County were utilized, which constitutes the recommended 10%. The findings from the pilot study significantly enriched the main study by providing insights into the areas requiring refinement. Specifically, the removal of ambiguous questions ensured that the final questionnaire was more straightforward and easier for respondents to understand, thus improving the overall quality of the data collected. Additionally, feedback gathered during the pilot phase informed adjustments to the data collection process, making it more efficient and effective.

Importantly, while the results of the pilot study were not included in the final analysis, they played a critical role in enhancing the research design. By refining the tools and processes based on pilot feedback, the study aimed to ensure more robust and valid results in the subsequent full-scale research.

### 3.6.1 Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the data collection instruments, the study utilized Cronbach's Alpha analysis to assess internal consistency among the questionnaire items. This statistical method evaluates the degree to which items correlate with one another, thereby determining their collective ability to measure the same underlying construct. Aiming for robust reliability, the study established a threshold of 0.7 for acceptable internal consistency and 0.8 for excellent reliability (Cooper & Schindler, 2018). By performing this analysis, the study not only identified items that did not contribute to a cohesive measurement but also refined the questionnaire to enhance its overall reliability. This process ensured that the instruments provided consistent and accurate data, which is essential for drawing valid conclusions from the research findings.

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### 3.6.2 Validity

Validity in this study involved ensuring that the research instruments accurately assessed the intended variables related to police officers' depression. To achieve this, two types of validity were considered: content validity and construct validity. Content validity was ensured through consultation with experts in counseling psychology at St. Paul University, who reviewed the instruments for relevance and appropriateness. They evaluated each item based on criteria such as clarity, relevance to the constructs, and alignment with the research objectives. The feedback provided was crucial in refining the instruments, and their documented consensus confirmed the validity of the items used in the study.

Construct validity was established by aligning the interventions with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory and Cognitive Activation Theory (CATS), both of which are crucial for understanding the factors that contribute to depression among police officers. The JD-R theory emphasizes that when job demands, such as high workload, emotional strain, and insufficient support, are not adequately balanced by job resources like social support, autonomy, and opportunities for professional development, it can lead to burnout and negative mental health outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti 2006). Conversely, CATS highlights the role of cognitive processes in influencing how individuals cope with stress and their motivation to engage in adaptive behaviors (Ursin & Eriksen, 2004).In this study, mapping the constructs measured by the instruments to these theoretical frameworks ensured that the survey items accurately captured the specific job demands, resources, and cognitive factors affecting the mental health of police officers. By grounding the instruments in these established theories, the research affirmed that they effectively measured the intricate interplay of stressors and supports impacting depression within this population, thereby enhancing the construct validity and ensuring that the instruments targeted the intended psychological constructs rather than unrelated variables.

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### 3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Before commencing data collection, clearance was obtained from the institutional scientific and ethics review committee of St. Paul University to ensure adherence to ethical guidelines and the safeguarding of participants' welfare. Following this, an application was submitted to the National Commission for Science, Technology, and

Innovation (NACOSTI) using the approved ethics clearance letter to secure a research permit essential for conducting research in Kenya and ensuring legal compliance.

Data collection involved administering validated questionnaires and interview guides to police officers in Nairobi County. A total of 354 questionnaires were distributed, while 14 key informants participated in the interviews. The questionnaires were designed to gather quantitative data on various aspects related to police officers' mental health, while the interview guides provided in-depth qualitative insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding depression. The use of both instruments allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives by combining quantitative breadth with qualitative depth.

Informed consent was obtained from all participating police officers before data collection commenced. Participants were briefed on the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits, with an emphasis on their right to confidentiality and voluntary participation. The questionnaires and interview guides, approved by university supervisors for reliability and validity, ensured that the instruments effectively captured all relevant objectives of the study. The interview schedule was semi-structured, allowing for predefined questions while providing the flexibility to explore topics in greater depth.

Research assistants were engaged in the data collection process to facilitate interactions with participants and ensure efficient data gathering. They received training from the principal researcher to understand the study's objectives, ethical considerations, and proper administration of the instruments. Throughout the data collection phase, confidentiality was strictly maintained, with participants' responses anonymized and data securely stored, accessible only to authorized research personnel. This comprehensive approach ensured that the data collection process was ethical, compliant with regulatory requirements, and respectful of the rights and privacy of all participants involved in the study.

### 3.8 Data Analysis

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative analyses to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research

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objectives. The collected questionnaires were meticulously checked for completeness and cleaned to identify any anomalies. Once prepared, the data was coded and entered into SPSS 25.0 for analysis. To address the specific research objectives, descriptive statistics were employed, including percentages and frequencies, which helped summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the prevalence of mental health issues among police officers. Additionally, inferential statistics, specifically Chi-square tests, were used to explore relationships between categorical variables, allowing for an assessment of how different factors may contribute to the mental well-being of police officers. The results of this quantitative analysis were presented visually through bar graphs and frequency tables, making it easier to interpret and communicate the findings.

Table 3.2
*Data Analysis Summary*

| Research Questions | Independent Variables | Dependent Variables | Statistical Analysis Methods |
|---|---|---|---|
| What is the relationship between education/qualification-based promotion procedures and the risk of depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County? | Institutional factors | Depression | Frequencies<br>Percentages<br>Chi-square |
| What are the effects of workload on the risk for depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County? | Institutional factors | Depression | Frequencies<br>Percentages<br>Chi-square |
| How do transfers influence the risk for depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County? | Institutional Factors | Depression | Frequencies<br>Percentages<br>Chi-square |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| To what extent do welfare conditions influence the risk for depression symptoms among police officers in Nairobi City County? | Institutional factors | Depression | Frequencies<br>Percentages<br>Chi-square |

Qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews were systematically organized and coded into themes aligned with the study's objectives. This thematic analysis allowed for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions related to mental health challenges within the police force. Daily Interpretive Analysis (DIA) was employed to facilitate a thorough understanding of the qualitative data. DIA involves continuously interpreting and analyzing data as it is collected, which is particularly useful for information that may change over time. By utilizing DIA, the researchers ensured that the context and richness of participants' narratives were preserved, thereby enhancing the validity of the insights gathered.

The qualitative findings were presented in a narrative format, supported by direct quotes from participants to illustrate key themes. This approach not only highlighted individual experiences but also provided a broader understanding of the collective challenges faced by police officers, ensuring that both quantitative and qualitative data contributed meaningfully to the overall findings of the study.

The study's integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches provided a comprehensive perspective on police officers' mental health challenges. The quantitative data revealed trends and patterns, establishing a clear understanding of the prevalence of specific issues and the relationships among various factors. Meanwhile, the qualitative data offered deeper insights into individual experiences and perceptions, highlighting the reasons behind the quantitative trends. This combination enriched the findings, illustrating the interaction between job demands, resources, and psychological factors. Ultimately, the complementary nature of these approaches validated the results and facilitated more informed recommendations for interventions and support strategies.

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### 3.9 Ethical Consideration

Before commencing this research, permission was obtained from the relevant authorities, including the St. ethics review committee. The necessary clearance was obtained from the NACOSTI. Throughout the research process, there was an emphasis on maintaining a positive and respectful relationship with the respondents. The confidentiality of the information obtained was upheld and the participants' privacy was upheld.

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# CHAPTER FOUR
# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion based on data collected from junior police officers and key respondents. The study focused on investigating institutional factors that predispose police officers to depression, specifically examining the effects of qualification-based promotion procedures, workload, transfers, and welfare conditions. Both quantitative and qualitative data are analysed to identify key patterns, and the findings are discussed in relation to existing literature, providing insights into how these institutional factors contribute to the risk of depression among police officers.

## 4.1 Response Rate

A response rate is a measure used in survey research to establish the proportion of individuals who complete and return the questionnaires out of the number of individuals who were initially selected to participate in the survey study (Sataloff & Vontela, 2021). A return rate of (340) 96.04% was achieved and (14) 3.96% of the questionnaires were not returned. All the questionnaires returned were found suitable for analysis. This was an acceptable response rate because, according to Johnson and Wislar (2012), a response rate of 60% and above is an acceptable threshold in social sciences. The returned questionnaires were all properly responded to and none had uncompleted data, therefore, 340 questionnaires were processed for further data analysis.

Table 4.1
*Response Rate*

| Response | Frequency (F) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Returned | 340 | 96.04% |
| Not returned | 14 | 3.96% |
| **Total issued** | **354** | **100%** |

## 4.2 Demographic Information of the Respondents

This section contains the demographic information of the respondents, which includes the respondents' gender, age, marital status, education level, and the station police officer. The information was gathered and analyzed. This demographic information

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was vital in providing an understanding of the respondent's background information which was believed to influence the behaviour of the respondents. Data on demographic characteristics is presented in bar graphs and frequency tables.

### 4.2.1 Gender of the Respondents

Figure 4.1

*Gender Distribution of the Respondents*

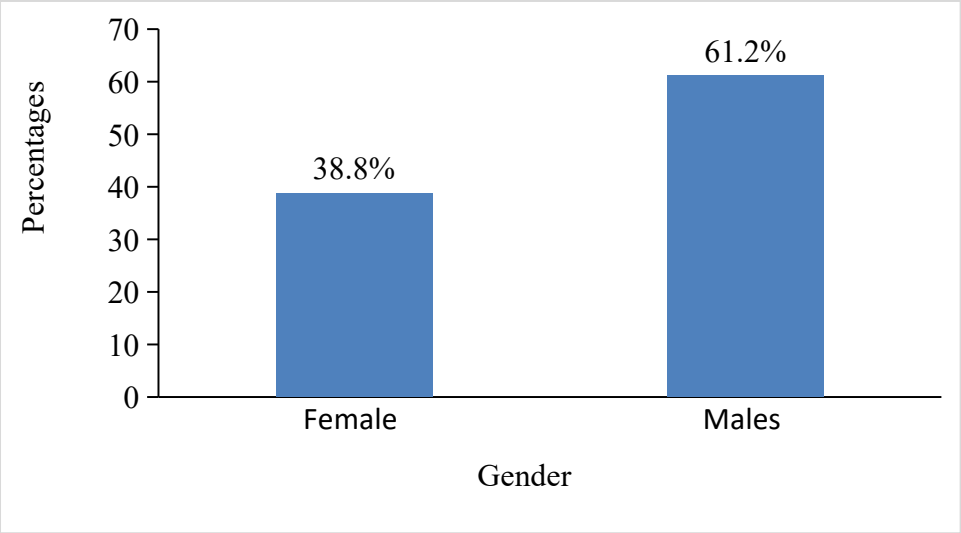



Figure 4.1 illustrates the gender distribution among police officers, revealing that 38.8% of the respondents were female, while 61.2% were male. This data reflects a predominantly male representation within the police force, which may have significant implications for workplace dynamics and mental health. The underrepresentation of female officers creates a work environment that can be less supportive and more challenging for women. This imbalance may lead to increased stress levels and a heightened risk of depression among female officers, who may struggle to navigate a predominantly male culture. Cultural norms and institutional barriers, such as biases in recruitment and promotion processes, often discourage the entry and retention of women in law enforcement roles, perpetuating the gender disparity.

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The predominantly male composition of the police force can contribute to a workplace culture that stigmatizes mental health issues, particularly for female officers who may feel marginalized. This stigma can manifest as reluctance to seek help or speak openly about mental health challenges, ultimately exacerbating feelings of isolation among officers. A lack of representation can diminish opportunities for support networks, further hindering female officers' ability to cope with the demands of their roles. Moreover, the absence of diverse perspectives in the police force can perpetuate gender-specific stressors that negatively influence job satisfaction and overall mental well-being, as the unique challenges faced by female officers may not be adequately addressed within a male-dominated environment.

The findings align with existing literature, which emphasizes the importance of addressing gender disparities in law enforcement. For instance, Muchiri (2022) observed similar trends regarding the underrepresentation of women in the Kenya Disciplined Services, indicating a broader issue that transcends individual organizations.

The overall implication of these findings is that addressing the gender disparity within the police force is essential for fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment. Implementing targeted recruitment and retention strategies for female officers, alongside policies that promote mental health awareness, can help mitigate the adverse effects of gender imbalance. By prioritizing the welfare of all officers, regardless of gender, the National Police Service can enhance overall mental health outcomes and improve job satisfaction. This approach not only benefits individual officers but also leads to more effective policing services for the community. A more diverse police force can contribute to better community relations, as officers with varied backgrounds and perspectives may be more adept at understanding and addressing the unique needs of the populations they serve.

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### 4.2.2 Age of the Respondents

Figure 4.2
*Distribution of Respondents according to their Age-Brackets*

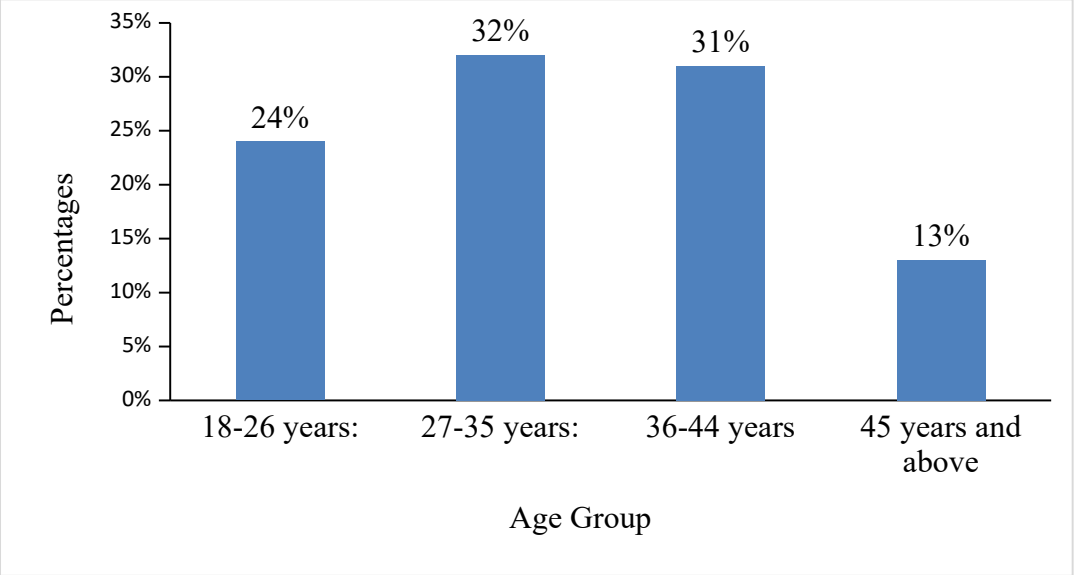



Figure 4.2 presents the distribution of respondents by age group, revealing that 24% of the respondents were aged 18-26 years, 32% were in the 27-35 age group, 31% were aged 36-44 years, and 13% were 45 years and above. This distribution indicates a relatively young workforce within the police service, with a majority of officers falling within the 27-35 and 36-44 age brackets. The predominance of younger officers may reflect a trend in law enforcement agencies, where recruits are increasingly younger, likely due to higher retirement rates and recruitment strategies targeting a younger demographic. This finding aligns with Tembur (2017), who examined factors influencing employees' job performance within the National Police Service (NPS) and found that a significant portion of respondents were young officers.

The overall implication of these findings is that the age distribution of police officers should inform the design and implementation of mental health interventions within the National Police Service. A focus on younger officers is critical for developing targeted mental health programs that address the specific challenges they face in the line of duty. By creating supportive structures, such as mentorship programs and

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mental health awareness campaigns, law enforcement agencies can foster a healthier work environment that encourages open dialogue about mental well-being. This approach not only enhances the individual well-being of police officers but also improves overall organizational effectiveness, ultimately leading to better community relations and more effective policing in Nairobi County. Prioritizing the mental health of younger officers is essential in building a resilient workforce capable of effectively serving and protecting the community.

### 4.2.3 Marital Status of Respondents

Table 4.2

*Table for the Marital Status of the Respondents*

| Marital Status | Frequency (F) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Single | 143 | 42.1 |
| Married | 84 | 24.7 |
| Divorced | 57 | 16.7 |
| Widowed | 56 | 16.4 |
| **Total** | **340** | **100** |

The data on marital status presented in the table indicates that among the respondents, 42.1% were single, 24.7% were married, 16.7% were divorced, and 16.4% were widowed. This distribution reveals a significant proportion of single officers, suggesting a potential demographic trend within the police force where younger individuals may be more likely to pursue law enforcement careers before establishing long-term relationships or families. The findings indicate that a notable number of officers may be navigating the complexities of their careers without the additional support that a marital partnership can provide.

Interpreting these findings, it can be inferred that the high percentage of single officers may impact mental health differently compared to their married counterparts. Single officers might face unique stressors, such as social isolation and limited emotional support, which could predispose them to mental health challenges, including depression. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two supports this notion, as studies have shown that marital status can significantly influence mental health outcomes. For instance, research by Tembur (2017) noted that officers with strong

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familial support systems reported lower levels of work-related stress and better mental health outcomes.

Comparatively, this data aligns with findings from other studies that highlight the relationship between marital status and mental health in law enforcement contexts. For example, Muchiri (2022) found that officers who were married reported higher job satisfaction and lower levels of stress than their single or divorced counterparts. These studies suggest that marital stability may serve as a protective factor against depression and other mental health issues, underscoring the importance of social support networks in mitigating the effects of occupational stressors.

The overall implication of these findings is that addressing the varying needs of police officers based on their marital status is crucial for developing effective mental health interventions. Tailoring support programs to meet the specific challenges faced by single officers, such as creating peer support networks or counseling services, could help alleviate potential mental health risks. Additionally, promoting awareness of the mental health challenges that may disproportionately affect single and divorced officers can foster a more supportive and understanding work environment. By prioritizing the mental well-being of all officers, regardless of marital status, the National Police Service can enhance overall job satisfaction, reduce the risk of depression, and ultimately improve policing effectiveness in Nairobi County.

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### 4.3 Institutional Factors Predisposing Police Officers to Depression

This section contains the analysis and interpretation of data to the study objectives, which are educational-based promotion procedures, workload, transfers, and welfare conditions as institutional factors predisposing police officers to depression.

#### 4.3.1 Education-based promotion procedure predisposing police officers to the risk of depression

The study focused on the following aspects in this section: the lack comfortability of the way promotions are conducted in the national police service, the promotion process if it considers police officers' skills, experience, and contributions, the satisfaction of the police officers with the frequency of promotions within the police service, the criteria for promotion is communicated to all police officers, if the police officers have equal opportunities for promotion regardless of factors like gender and

ethnicity and if the police officers were satisfied with the promotion practices in national police service.

The study conducted descriptive statistics to determine the influence of educational-based promotion criteria as a predisposing factor to depression among police officers in Nairobi County. The supposed facilitation was measured on a five-level Likert scale from strongly agreed to strongly disagreed. The table below represents the findings of the study variable.

Table 4.3

*Education-based Promotion Criteria Predisposing Police Officers to Stress.*

| **Statement Rating** | **SA** | **A** | **U** | **D** | **SD** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of promotion procedures. | 22.0 % | 27.7% | 21.2% | 17.5% | 11.6% |
| Lack of consideration of police skills, experience, and contribution | 4.0% | 46.6% | 11.9% | 15.8% | 21.8% |
| Minimal promotion frequencies of officers | 24.0 % | 37.0% | 11.9% | 17.5% | 9.6% |
| Lack of Communication of promotion criteria | 18.1 % | 34.7% | 15.5% | 19.8% | 11.9% |
| Unequal promotion opportunities among police officers. | 11.9 % | 33.1% | 21.2% | 15.8% | 18.1% |
| Dissatisfaction with promotion practices in the National police service | 23.7 % | 37.3% | 17.5% | 15.5% | 5.9% |

The results presented in Table 4.4 detail the respondents' views on promotion procedures as a factor contributing to depression among police officers in Nairobi County. Notably, 22% of respondents strongly agreed, while 27.7% agreed that the lack of promotion procedures is a significant factor leading to their depression. Conversely, 21.2% remained neutral, and a combined 29.1% disagreed (17.5% disagreed and 11.6% strongly disagreed). These findings indicate a prevalent belief among officers that inadequate promotion protocols may indeed be a source of mental distress.

Further examination of the promotion criteria revealed that only 4.0% of respondents strongly agreed that the criteria sufficiently considered police skills, experience, and

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contributions, while 46.6% agreed. In contrast, 15.8% and 21.8% disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively, suggesting a lack of consensus on the fairness of promotion considerations. Regarding minimal promotion frequencies, 24.0% strongly agreed and 37.0% agreed that infrequent promotions expose officers to depression, highlighting the importance of timely career advancements to enhance job satisfaction and reduce stress. The study also assessed whether a lack of communication surrounding promotion criteria contributed to officers' depression, finding that 18.1% strongly agreed and 34.7% agreed on this point, further emphasizing communication's role in workplace morale.

These quantitative findings align with insights gathered from interviews with key informants, such as the Officer Commanding Station, who stated,

> "The method of promotion can create pressure on police officers, particularly when perceived as unsatisfactory or unfair, which eventually leads the officers to depression due to unclarity of the procedure" (OCS, 2024).

This sentiment underscores the consensus that unclear promotion criteria foster feelings of unfairness and pressure among officers, leading to increased levels of depression. Mental health practitioners echoed these findings, noting,

> "The police officers get into depression as a result of the failure of the national police service to consider skills, outstanding contributions, and experience during the promotion of the officers, which in turn leads to depression due to the feeling of unappreciation in this County" (Mental Health Practitioner, 2024).

The qualitative insights gathered from these interviews are supported by existing literature. For instance, Di et al. (2020) argue that in hierarchical professions like law enforcement, the quest for promotions introduces significant pressures, with failures in securing promotions negatively impacting mental health. Similarly, Masuku and Muchemwa (2017) emphasized the necessity of considering skills and experience during promotions to enhance officers' morale and mitigate feelings of unappreciation. Moreover, the officer commanding station highlighted that the irregularity of promotions affects officer morale, reinforcing the notion that predictable and fair promotion cycles are essential for maintaining mental well-being among officers. This perspective is echoed by Okechukwu et al.(2022), who found

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that infrequent promotions often lead to feelings of unfairness and contribute to depression.

The discussion surrounding unequal promotion opportunities and dissatisfaction with promotion practices revealed further distress among officers. An official from the Independent Police Oversight Authority remarked,

> "Depression among police officers in Nairobi County has been attributed to unfairness in promotion opportunities and practices that are full of favouritism and corruption" (IPOA Official, 2024).

This above statement resonates with Kagwanja et al. (2020), who argued that a lack of clear promotion practices raises stress levels among officers, ultimately leading to detrimental mental health outcomes.

As a researcher reflecting on these findings, it is clear that addressing the institutional factors predisposing police officers to depression is paramount. The lack of transparency in promotion procedures, coupled with inadequate consideration of skills and contributions, fosters an environment ripe for dissatisfaction and mental health issues. By reforming promotion practices to prioritize equity and clarity, the National Police Service can enhance the well-being of its officers and create a more resilient workforce capable of effectively serving the community in Nairobi County.

Descriptive and chi-square were done to establish education-based promotion procedures predisposing police officers to depression in Nairobi County. The chi-square revealed that there was a significant influence of education-based promotion procedures predisposing police officers to depression. The study sought to establish whether there was a significant difference in education-based promotion procedure based on gender, age, marital status, and level of education of the participants. The findings are summarized in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4
*Education-Based Promotion Procedure/Grouping Variable*

| **Education-based procedure /Grouping variable** | **Gender** | **Age** | **Marital Status** | **Education level** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| lack of promotion procedures. | 0.897 | 0.730 | 0.920 | 0.366 |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of consideration of police skills, experience, and contribution | 0.380 | 0.511 | 0.398 | 0.004 |
| Minimal promotion frequencies | 0.711 | 0.570 | 0.999 | 0.210 |
| Lack of communication of promotion criteria | 0.130 | 0.787 | 0.349 | 0.737 |
| Unequal promotion opportunities among police officers | 0.281 | 0.504 | 0.046 | 0.217 |
| Dissatisfaction with promotion practices in the National police service | 0.170 | 0.730 | 0.912 | 0.467 |

The data in above indicates no significant differences in education-based promotion criteria predisposing police officers to depression based on demographic variables, including gender, age, marital status, and level of education in Nairobi County. This means that the majority of the participants were in agreement that education-based promotion criteria predisposed police officers to depression. However, considerations of police skills, experience, and contributions indicated a significant influence as education-based promotion criteria on police officers' stress based on the respondents' demographic variable of the level of education, with a p-value of 0.004. This illustrated that respondents with different levels of education had different views on the aspect of police skills, experience, and police officers' stress a contributing to police officers' depression. Likewise, the equal promotion opportunities among officers showed a significant influence on stress among police officers based on the respondents' demographic variable of marital status with a p-value of 0.046.

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## 4.4 Perceived workload as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression

The study conducted descriptive statistics to determine the level of perceived workload as a factor that predisposes police officers to depression in Nairobi County. The supposed facilitation was measured on a five-level Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The table below represents the findings of the study variable.

Table 4.5

*Perceived workload as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression*

| Statement /Rating | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overwhelmed by work assigned. | 27.7% | 39% | 15.8% | 9.9% | 7.6% |
| Resources unavailable make the workload difficult. | 22.0% | 35.3% | 21.2% | 17.8% | 3.7% |
| Unequal sharing of work responsibilities leads to more work. | 24.0% | 35.0% | 23.2% | 11.9% | 5.9% |
| Excessive workload contributes to heightened stress levels. | 25.7% | 41% | 13.6% | 13.8% | 5.9% |
| The current workload of police officers is not manageable. | 3.7% | 44.6% | 13.8% | 17.8% | 20.1% |
| Police officers are dissatisfied with the workload that is distributed. | 26.0% | 37.3% | 11.3% | 17.8% | 7.6% |

The quantitative data presented in Table 4.6 revealed a substantial concern regarding excessive workloads; specifically, 27.7% of respondents strongly agreed, and 39% agreed that being overwhelmed by work significantly contributes to their depression. Additionally, 22.0% strongly agreed, and 35.3% agreed that inadequate resources exacerbate the difficulties of their workload. The findings further indicated that 24.0% strongly agreed and 35.0% agreed that unequal sharing of work responsibilities among officers leads to increased stress and depression. Furthermore, 25.7% strongly agreed, and 41% agreed that excessive workloads heighten stress levels, clearly demonstrating a strong correlation between perceived workload and depression among police officers.

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These findings indicate a pressing need to address the overwhelming nature of police work, coupled with inadequate resources and unequal task distribution, which significantly contribute to mental health issues within the force.

The insights gathered from key informant interviews further elucidated the lived experiences of police officers. An officer commanding a station remarked,

> "Many police officers complain that the duties assigned to them are overwhelming, especially in Nairobi County due to the high population that requires their services" (OCS, 2024).

This statement is corroborated by the research of Santre (2024), who linked prolonged working hours to depressive symptoms among police officers. Additionally, studies by Tembur (2017) and Njiro et al. (2021) indicated that individuals working extended hours exhibited a significantly higher likelihood of experiencing major depressive episodes compared to those with standard working hours. The confluence of these perspectives underscores the profound impact that workload pressures have on police officers' mental health.

The study's findings on resource availability resonate with those of mental health practitioners, who stated,

> "The unavailability of the resources required to carry out the police mandates makes the work difficult, consequently leading to depression among police officers" (Mental health practitioner, 2024).

This observation aligns with Masuku and Muchemwa (2017), who highlighted that a lack of resources, unclear roles, and political interference significantly affect police officers' workloads and contribute to elevated stress levels. This convergence of qualitative and quantitative data emphasizes the critical role that institutional support plays in officer well-being.

The issue of unequal work distribution was also significant, with IPOA officials noting,

> "Unequal sharing of duties among police officers in Nairobi County contributes to depression among police officers. This is a result of the unfairness of Officer Commanding Stations distributing work

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> unfairly among officers, leading to feelings of depression" (IPOA Official, 2024).

The above sentiments align with Munyiri's (2019) conclusion, which found a strong correlation between workload and stress arising from the unequal distribution of tasks among police officers.

The relationship between excessive workload and mental health challenges was further emphasized by IPOA officials who stated,

> "Officers commanding stations had no alternative other than to assign officers to extra duties. This excessive workload contributed to depression among police officers since the officers had no time to rest" (IPOA Official, 2024).

This observation parallels findings from Muchiri (2022) which indicated that a significant proportion of personnel in Kenya's disciplined services experienced stress due to excessive work pressure, adversely affecting their concentration and overall mental health. The consistency of findings across different studies reinforces the notion that excessive workloads are detrimental to the mental well-being of police officers.

Finally, regarding current workloads and dissatisfaction with distribution, mental health practitioners noted,

> "Most cases of depression among police officers were attributed to dissatisfaction with the workload distribution" (Mental health practitioner, 2024).

This assertion aligns with Thapar et al. (2022) who observed that police officers face unique pressures that, combined with high workloads, exacerbate their risk of mental health issues.

The findings of this study underline the urgent need for systemic reforms to address the factors contributing to depression among police officers. The interplay between perceived workload, resource availability, and unequal task distribution highlights the complexities of police work and the mental health challenges that arise in this context. Policymakers must prioritize creating supportive work environments that ensure adequate resources, equitable workload distribution, and access to mental health services. Furthermore, these findings provide a compelling case for enhancing

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institutional support for police officers in Nairobi County. The evidence demonstrates a significant connection between perceived workload and depression, emphasizing the importance of addressing these factors to improve mental health outcomes and overall job satisfaction among officers. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of institutional changes on police mental health and seek to identify effective interventions that can alleviate the pressures faced by officers in their daily responsibilities.

The implications of these findings extend beyond individual well-being; they have the potential to influence the effectiveness and efficiency of police services in Nairobi County. A healthier workforce is likely to be more engaged, perform better in their duties, and maintain positive community relationships, ultimately fostering trust between the police and the communities they serve. Therefore, addressing these critical issues not only benefits the officers themselves but also enhances the overall functioning of the police force and the safety of the communities they protect.

Descriptive and chi-square were done to establish the Perceived workload as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression in Nairobi County. Results from the chi-square revealed that there was a significant influence of a perceived workload on depression among police officers in Nairobi County. The study sought to establish whether there was an influence in specific perceived workload on depression among police officers based on gender, age, marital status and level of education among the respondents. The results are presented in Table 4.6.

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Table 4.6
*Perceived Workload/Grouping Variable*

| Perceived Workload/Grouping Variable | Gender | Age | Marital Status | Educational level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overwhelmed by the work assigned | 0.872 | 0.888 | 0.997 | 0.313 |
| Resources available make the workload fair. | 0.570 | 0.585 | 0.593 | 0.502 |
| Unequal sharing of work responsibilities leads to more work | 0.655 | 0.847 | 0.442 | 0.169 |
| Excessive workload contributes to heightened stress levels | 0.771 | 0.908 | 0.879 | 0.831 |
| The current workload of police officers is manageable | 0.783 | 0.041 | 0.818 | 0.947 |
| Police officers are satisfied with the workload is distributed. | 0.092 | 0.887 | 0.278 | 0.398 |

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The findings from Table 4.5 reveal that perceived workload as a factor contributing to depression among police officers does not significantly vary by gender, marital status, or education level. However, a notable difference was observed based on age, with a p-value of 0.041 indicating that younger and older officers may experience and perceive their workloads differently. This suggests that while systemic issues related to workload affect all officers uniformly, age-specific challenges may make younger officers more vulnerable to feeling overwhelmed. Consequently, tailored interventions that address these age-related differences are essential for supporting the mental health and well-being of police officers, highlighting the need for policies that consider the unique experiences of various demographic groups within the force.

## 4.5 Transfer issues as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression

The study sought to comprehend the transfer issues as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression in Nairobi County. The study focused on the following elements, the current transfer policies if it consider the mental well-being of police officers, whether the police are satisfied with the fairness of the

transfer process, transfer practices and their impact on the stress levels of police officers, if the police officers get adequate services experiencing distress due to transfers, if the Sense of the unequal application of rules for various individuals, such as favoritism induces depression among police officers and Transfers sometimes infringe on an individual's rights.

The study conducted descriptive statistics to determine the level at which transfer issues as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression. The supposed facilitation was measured on a five-level Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The table below represents the findings of the study variable.

Table 4.7

*Transfer issues predisposing police officers to depression*

| **Statement /Rating** | **SA** | **A** | **U** | **D** | **SD** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The current transfer policies adequately consider the mental well-being of police officers. | 5.9% | 39% | 17.5% | 31.9% | 5.6% |
| Police are dissatisfied with the fairness of the transfer process. | 22.0% | 33.3 % | 23.2% | 13.6% | 7.9% |
| Transfer practices have a significant negative impact on the stress levels of police officers. | 28% | 31.4 % | 23.2% | 5.9% | 11.6% |
| Adequate support services are provided to police officers experiencing distress due to transfers. | 22% | 35.3 % | 25.4% | 5.6% | 11.6% |
| Sense of the unequal application of rules for various individuals, such as favoritism induces stress. | 32.0% | 28% | 11.9% | 15.4% | 5.9% |
| Transfers sometimes infringe on an individual's rights. | 24.0% | 34.7 % | 23.7% | 13.8% | 3.7% |

Table 4.7 shows that only a minority of respondents (5.9% strongly agreed and 39% agreed) believed that transfer policies adequately consider the mental well-being of police officers. In contrast, a significant proportion, 31.9%, expressed disagreement

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regarding the consideration of mental health in these policies. Additionally, 55.3% of respondents felt dissatisfied with the fairness of the transfer process, highlighting a potential source of stress and dissatisfaction among officers. The findings further indicated that transfer practices negatively impacted the stress levels of officers, with 28% strongly agreeing and 31.4% agreeing that these practices contribute to their stress. Notably, 22% and 35.3% of respondents acknowledged that adequate support services are not provided for officers experiencing distress due to transfers, underscoring the inadequacy of existing support mechanisms.

The overall interpretation of these findings suggests a significant disconnect between the intentions of transfer policies and their actual impact on police officers' mental health. The data indicate that a majority of police officers do not feel that current transfer policies adequately consider their mental well-being, with a large percentage expressing dissatisfaction with the fairness of the transfer process. This dissatisfaction likely contributes to heightened stress levels among officers, as indicated by the responses regarding the negative impact of transfer practices on their well-being.

These quantitative findings align closely with insights gathered from interviews with mental health practitioners and officers commanding stations. For instance, a mental health practitioner noted,

> "The majority of the police officers who seek mental health treatment complain of an unfair transfer process, and that pushes the officers to depression" (Mental Health Practitioner, 2024).

This sentiment underscores the dissatisfaction expressed in the survey regarding the fairness of the transfer process. An officer commanding a station further added,

> "When transfers are done from the region or county from one station to another, there is a feeling among the officers that it was not fairly done" (OCS, 2024).

The above sentiments from the Mental Health Practitioner and OCS corroborate the quantitative data, illustrating a consistent narrative of frustration regarding transfer policies.

Furthermore, the interviews highlighted the inadequacy of support services for officers facing distress due to transfers. One mental health practitioner emphasized,

> "Inadequate support services are provided to police officers experiencing distress due to transfers. Most of the transfers are urgent, and inadequate support is provided for the officers to settle in the new stations" (Mental Health Practitioner, 2024).

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This aligns with the survey results, where a significant number of respondents (57.3%) felt that adequate support services were lacking. The findings reflect a troubling reality where the urgency of transfers often overlooks the need for mental health support.

Additionally, a mental health practitioner echoed earlier concerns, stating,

> "The majority of the police officers who seek mental health treatment complain of an unfair transfer process, and that pushes the officers to depression" (Mental Health Practitioner, 2024).

These above sentiments resonate with the research of Husain and Faize (2018), which highlighted that dissatisfaction with transfers, especially to less favorable or riskier postings, exacerbates mental health issues among police officers. The study further explored the implications of unequal application of transfer rules, revealing that 32% of respondents strongly agreed and 28% agreed that favoritism exists during the transfer process. Insights from the Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA) echoed this sentiment, stating, "

> Transfer practices have a significant negative impact on the stress levels of police officers" (IPOA, 2024).

This finding is consistent with research by Singo and Shilubane (2020), which established a link between adverse transfer experiences and increased suicidal thoughts among officers.

Regarding the issue of individual rights, 24% of respondents strongly agreed that transfers often infringe upon these rights. This perception aligns with statements from Officer Commanders who noted,

> "There is a feeling among the officers that it was not fairly done" (OCS, 2024).

Such perceptions resonate with Husain and Faize's (2018) conclusion that perceived inequities in transfers can significantly impact job satisfaction and overall mental health.

Overall, the findings from this study illustrate a pressing need for reform in transfer policies to enhance their fairness and support mechanisms. Addressing the concerns regarding the perceived inadequacies of current transfer practices is crucial for

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promoting the mental well-being of police officers. The evidence underscores that enhancing transparency and fairness in transfer processes can potentially mitigate feelings of depression and dissatisfaction among officers, ultimately fostering a healthier work environment.

As a researcher, the results of this study are particularly important. They reveal not only the systemic issues within police transfer practices but also the human element that often gets lost in policy discussions. The direct quotes from officers and mental health practitioners highlight a concerning reality that impacts the lives of many. The disconnect between policy intent and the lived experiences of police officers calls for immediate action. It is crucial that those in positions of authority recognize the importance of mental health support and fairness in transfer policies. The research underscores a vital message: effective policy should not only be about procedural fairness but should also prioritize the mental health and overall well-being of police officers. This reflection emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to reform, one that integrates the voices and experiences of those most affected by these policies.

Descriptive and chi-square were done to establish the transfer issues as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression in Nairobi County. Results from the chi-square revealed that there was a significant influence of transfer issues to depression among police officers. The study sought to establish whether there were significant differences in transfer issues as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression based on gender, age, marital status, and education level. The results are presented in Table 4.8.

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Table 4.8

*Transfer issues predisposing police officers to depression /Grouping Variable*

| **Transfer issues /Grouping Variable** | **Gender** | **Age** | **Marital Status** | **Education level** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The current transfer policies adequately consider the mental well-being of police officers. | 0.771 | 0.123 | 0.034 | 0.938 |
| Police are satisfied with the fairness of the transfer process. | 0.157 | 0.552 | 0.872 | 0.410 |
| Transfer practices have a significant impact on the stress levels of police officers. | 0.208 | 0.836 | 0.976 | 0.802 |
| Adequate support services are provided to police officers experiencing distress due to transfers. | 0.433 | 0.936 | 0.353 | 0.696 |
| Sense of the unequal application of rules for various individuals, such as favoritism induces stress | 0.067 | 0.879 | 0.356 | 0.256 |
| Transfers sometimes infringe on an individual's rights. | 0.570 | 0.595 | 0.980 | 0.579 |

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Table 4.8 above shows that there were no significant differences in transfer issues as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression based on gender, age, marital status, and level of education. However, differences were noted in the current transfer policies that adequately consider the mental well-being of police officers based on marital status with a P-value of 0.034.

## 4.6 Perception of Welfare Conditions as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression.

The study sought to grasp the various elements of perceived Welfare Conditions as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression. The elements were; The housing conditions are not adequate for the police officers; the structures of the

houses are well done to cater to the needs of the police officers, the housing situation does not allow for adequate separation between work and personal life, Safety concerns at home contribute to your stress levels or impact your well-being, there is an association between welfare conditions and the development of depression among police officers and Police are dissatisfied with the current housing conditions.

Table 4.9

*Perception of Welfare Conditions Predisposing Police Officers to Depression.*

| **Statement /Rating** | **SA** | **A** | **U** | **D** | **SD** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The housing conditions are inadequate for the police officers. | 60.8% | 31.1% | 3.7% | 1.8% | 2.6% |
| The structures of the houses are not well done to cater to the needs of the police officers. | 56.3% | 34.5% | 3.4% | 1.6% | 4.2% |
| The housing situation does not allow for adequate separation between work and personal life | 59.2% | 32.1% | 3.7% | 3.7% | 1.3% |
| Safety concerns at home contribute to your stress levels or impact your well-being. | 60.3% | 32.6% | 3.4% | 2.4% | 1.3% |
| There is an association between welfare conditions and the development of depression among police officers. | 59.7% | 32.9% | 2.6% | 2.6% | 2.1% |
| Police are dissatisfied with the current housing conditions. | 58.6% | 33.7% | 3.2% | 1.3% | 3.2% |

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Table 4.19 presents key findings regarding the housing conditions of police officers and their mental health. A significant majority of respondents (60.8% strongly agreed and 31.1% agreed) indicated that inadequate housing conditions contribute to depression among police officers, with only a small percentage undecided (3.7%) and a minority disagreeing (1.8% and 2.6% strongly disagreeing). Furthermore, the study

explored whether the structures of housing adequately meet the needs of police officers, revealing that 56.3% strongly agreed and 34.5% agreed that they do not. Only 3.4% were undecided, while a small fraction (1.6% disagreed and 4.2% strongly disagreed) expressed differing views. The findings also highlighted concerns regarding the separation between work and personal life, with 59.2% of respondents strongly agreeing and 32.1% agreeing that current housing situations do not allow for adequate separation.

When asked about safety concerns at home, 60.3% of participants strongly agreed and 32.6% agreed that such concerns contribute to their mental health struggles, while only 2.4% and 1.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Additionally, the connection between welfare conditions and depression was evident, with 59.7% strongly agreeing and 32.9% agreeing that there is a link between these factors, and a small number undecided (2.6%) or in disagreement (2.6% disagreed and 2.1% strongly disagreed). This data illustrates the significant impact of housing and welfare conditions on police officers' mental well-being in Nairobi County.

To triangulate these findings, interviews with officers commanding stations confirmed that housing conditions are indeed inadequate. One officer noted,

> "Police officers with families are adversely affected by the conditions of the houses provided by the government, and this results in high levels of stress leading to depression" (OCS, 2024).

The above sentiment reflects the quantitative data that indicates dissatisfaction with housing conditions among officers.

The results align with Kimathi (2021) who asserts that housing is a crucial social determinant of health and well-being. Their research confirmed the impact of housing quality on mental health. Additionally, Kim et al. (2021) emphasized that factors such as the quality of housing services, property conditions, and neighbourhood environment significantly influence tenants' health and well-being, further substantiating the concerns raised by police officers in this study.

The qualitative insights also highlighted the inadequacy of housing structures. A mental health practitioner remarked,

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> "The house structures were small in size and could not cater to the needs of the police officers and their families" (Mental Health Practitioner, 2024).

This observation resonates with the findings of Pevalin et al. (2017), who noted that persistent housing challenges can increase the likelihood of mental health disorders. Their study illustrated how inadequate housing over an extended period affects mental health, reinforcing the notion that housing conditions are pivotal for the well-being of police officers.

Moreover, officers from the Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA) stated,

> "The housing situation does not allow for adequate separation between work and personal life. This was contributed by the fact that police officers live in a congested environment within police stations that does not give allowance for separation" (IPOA Official, 2024).

This perspective complements the quantitative data, indicating that the congested living conditions directly impact officers' ability to separate their professional and personal lives, thus exacerbating mental health issues.

In discussing the association between welfare conditions and depression, an officer commanding station emphasized,

> "The national police service was not keen on the welfare of the police stations, ranging from remunerations to living conditions, which in turn contributed to depression among police officers in Nairobi County" (OCS, 2024).

This insight aligns with Ongoro and Oloko (2015), who found that inadequate housing significantly correlates with depression symptoms experienced by police personnel. They identified the lack of privacy as a critical factor contributing to stress and linked it to broader issues of inadequate housing.

Regarding safety concerns at home, mental health practitioners confirmed,

> "Police officers suffering from depression were associated with safety concerns and housing conditions of the houses where the family were residing." (Mental Health Practitioner, 2024)

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This further emphasizes the importance of housing in relation to mental health outcomes. Pevalin et al. (2017) reiterated that officers living in substandard housing often experience heightened anxiety and depression due to ongoing safety concerns.

From the researcher's perspective, these findings emphasize the urgent need for reform in the housing conditions of police officers. The intersection of qualitative insights and quantitative data presents a compelling narrative that illustrates the systemic issues affecting officers' mental well-being. The testimonies from officers and mental health practitioners underscore the human element often overlooked in policy discussions, highlighting a troubling reality that affects many police officers. The disconnect between the lived experiences of officers and the existing policies surrounding their housing conditions calls for immediate attention. Policymakers must prioritize the mental health and overall well-being of police officers by addressing these concerns, ensuring that housing conditions do not only provide shelter but also foster a supportive environment conducive to mental health. It is crucial to recognize that effective policy should not merely focus on procedural aspects but should also prioritize the voices and experiences of those most affected. A holistic approach to reform, incorporating feedback from officers and mental health professionals, will be essential in fostering a healthier work environment for police officers and promoting their mental well-being.

Descriptive and chi-square were done to establish the perceived Welfare Conditions as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression in Nairobi County. Results from the chi-square revealed that there were significant differences in perceived Welfare Conditions as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression. The study sought to establish whether there was a difference in specific perceived Welfare Conditions as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression. based on gender, age, marital status, and level of education among the respondents. The results are presented in Table 4.10.

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Table 4.10

*Perception of Welfare Conditions predisposing police officers to depression/Grouping Variable*

| Perception of Welfare Conditions /Grouping Variable | Gender | Age | Marital Status | Education Levels |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The housing conditions are inadequate for the police officers. | 0.357 | 0.865 | 0.111 | 0.467 |
| The structures of the houses are not well done to cater to the needs of the police officers. | 0.766 | 0.820 | 0.283 | 0.500 |
| The housing situation does not allow for adequate separation between work and personal life. | 0.055 | 0.408 | 0.067 | 0.314 |
| Safety concerns at home contribute to your stress levels or impact your well-being. | 0.039 | 0.785 | 0.304 | 0.434 |
| There is an association between welfare conditions and the development of depression among police officers. | 0.782 | 0.509 | 0.936 | 0.397 |
| Police are dissatisfied with the current housing conditions. | 0.132 | 0.787 | 0.162 | 0.500 |

The results in Table 4.9 reveal that perceived welfare conditions did not significantly vary among police officers based on gender, age, marital status, or education level, indicating a systemic issue affecting all officers uniformly. This underscores the need for comprehensive reform to improve welfare conditions, which is crucial for enhancing officers' mental health and well-being. In contrast, significant differences were noted regarding safety concerns at home impacting stress levels and overall well-being ($p = 0.039$), suggesting that these factors are influenced by individual circumstances and may significantly contribute to mental health challenges. Consequently, these findings highlight the importance of creating a supportive environment that addresses both welfare conditions and safety issues to alleviate stress and promote better mental health outcomes for police officers in Nairobi County.

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# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the key findings from the research, focusing on investigating institutional factors that predispose police officers to depression. Specifically, the study examined the effects of qualification-based promotion procedures, workload, transfers, and welfare conditions. The insights gained from the analysis highlight the intricate relationship between these factors and the mental health of police officers in Nairobi County. Additionally, this chapter offers conclusions drawn from the data analysis, emphasizing the implications of these findings for policy and practice within the police service. Finally, recommendations are provided to enhance the welfare and mental well-being of police officers, addressing the systemic issues identified throughout the study.

## 5.1 Summary of the Study

The study aimed to explore the institutional factors that predispose police officers in Nairobi County, Kenya, to depression, addressing a critical global concern within law enforcement. It identified specific factors such as promotion methods, workload, transfer issues, and welfare conditions that contribute to officers' mental health challenges. Using descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis, the study investigated the relationship between promotion methods and demographic factors, including gender, age, marital status, and education level among police officers. Results indicated no significant differences in how promotion methods predispose officers to depression.

The demographic data revealed a predominantly male workforce, with 61.2% male and 38.8% female officers. The age distribution showed that 24% of officers are aged 18-26 years, 32% are in the 27-35 age group, 31% are aged 36-44 years, and only 13% are 45 years and above. Additionally, marital status data presented in Table 4.2 indicated that 42.1% of officers are single, 24.7% are married, 16.7% are divorced, and 16.4% are widowed, highlighting a significant proportion of single officers within the force.

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### 5.1.1 Qualification-Based Promotional Procedures and the Risk of Depression Among Police Officers

The study highlighted significant concerns regarding promotion procedures within the National Police Service and their impact on the mental health of police officers in Nairobi County. Results indicated that 22.0% of respondents strongly agreed and 27.7% agreed that the lack of clear promotion procedures contributes to feelings of depression. Furthermore, only 4.0% felt that promotion criteria adequately considered officers' skills, experience, and contributions, with 24.0% strongly agreeing that infrequent promotions lead to increased stress. These quantitative findings were supported by qualitative data, with an Officer Commanding Station stating, "The method of promotion can create pressure on police officers… which eventually leads the officers to depression due to unclarity of the procedure".

The chi-square analysis showed no significant differences in perceptions of education-based promotion criteria leading to depression based on demographic factors. However, it did reveal significant associations regarding the consideration of police skills, experience, and contributions ($p = 0.004$) and equal promotion opportunities based on marital status ($p = 0.046$) (Table 4.4). A mental health practitioner echoed these concerns, noting, "The police officers get into depression as a result of the failure of the national police service to consider skills… which in turn leads to depression due to the feeling of unappreciation" (Mental Health Practitioner, 2024). The findings emphasize the need for reforms in promotion practices to address institutional factors contributing to depression among police officers, thereby improving their mental well-being and job satisfaction.

### 5.1.2 Workload and the Risk of Depression among Police Officers

The study examined perceived workload as a factor contributing to depression among police officers in Nairobi County, revealing alarming levels of stress linked to work demands. According to the findings, 27.7% of respondents strongly agreed, and 39% agreed that being overwhelmed by work significantly contributes to their depression. Additionally, 22.0% strongly agreed, and 35.3% agreed that inadequate resources make their workload more difficult. The analysis further indicated that 24.0% strongly agreed and 35.0% agreed that unequal sharing of work responsibilities leads to increased stress and depression. Overall, 25.7% strongly agreed, and 41% agreed that

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excessive workloads contribute to heightened stress levels, underscoring a strong correlation between perceived workload and mental health challenges.

The chi-square analysis revealed no significant differences in perceived workload contributing to depression based on gender, marital status, or education level. However, age demonstrated a significant relationship, with a p-value of 0.041, suggesting younger and older officers may experience their workloads differently. This indicates that while systemic issues affect all officers, age-specific challenges may make younger officers more susceptible to feelings of being overwhelmed. Overall, the findings emphasize the urgent need for systemic reforms to address the overwhelming nature of police work and improve the mental health of officers in Nairobi County.

### 5.1.3 Transfers and the Risk of Depression among Police Officers

The study examined transfer issues as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression in Nairobi County, focusing on current transfer policies, perceived fairness of the transfer process, the impact of transfers on stress levels, support services, favoritism, and individual rights. The findings indicated that only a minority of respondents (5.9% strongly agree and 39% agree) believed that current transfer policies adequately consider their mental well-being. In contrast, 31.9% disagreed with this statement. Additionally, 55.3% expressed dissatisfaction with the fairness of the transfer process. Regarding the impact of transfers on stress levels, 28% strongly agreed, and 31.4% agreed that transfer practices negatively affect their stress. Furthermore, 57.3% felt that adequate support services were lacking for officers experiencing distress due to transfers. Chi-square analysis revealed no significant differences in transfer issues based on gender, age, marital status, or education level. However, a significant difference was noted in perceptions of transfer policies considering mental well-being based on marital status, with a p-value of 0.034. These quantitative findings were corroborated by qualitative insights, highlighting the challenges faced by police officers regarding transfer policies and their mental health.

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### 5.1.4 Welfare Conditions and the Risk of Depression among Police Officers

The study explored various elements of perceived welfare conditions as factors predisposing police officers to depression, focusing on housing conditions, safety concerns, and overall dissatisfaction. The findings indicated that a significant majority of respondents felt that inadequate housing conditions contribute to their mental health struggles, with 60.8% strongly agreeing and 31.1% agreeing with the statement that housing conditions are inadequate. Additionally, 56.3% strongly agreed, and 34.5% agreed that the housing structures do not adequately meet their needs. Concerns regarding the separation between work and personal life were echoed by 59.2% of officers who strongly agreed, while 60.3% stated that safety concerns at home significantly impact their stress levels and overall well-being. Furthermore, 59.7% acknowledged a connection between welfare conditions and the development of depression, with 58.6% expressing dissatisfaction with current housing conditions. Chi-square analysis results showed no significant variation in perceived welfare conditions based on gender, age, marital status, or education level, suggesting a systemic issue uniformly affecting all officers. However, significant differences were observed in safety concerns contributing to stress levels ($p = 0.039$), indicating that individual circumstances may influence these perceptions.

These quantitative findings were corroborated by qualitative data, including testimonies from officers and mental health practitioners, reinforcing the critical connection between inadequate welfare conditions and the mental health of police officers in Nairobi County.

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## 5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study makes the following conclusions:

Unclear promotion procedures within the National Police Service significantly contribute to feelings of depression among officers in Nairobi County. A substantial portion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with how promotions are administered, particularly regarding the recognition of skills and contributions. These findings emphasize the urgent need for reforms in promotional practices to enhance officers' mental well-being and job satisfaction.

The study concludes that there is a strong correlation between perceived workload and depression among police officers, with many officers feeling overwhelmed by work demands and inadequate resources. While no significant differences were found across demographic factors, age emerged as a critical variable influencing perceptions of workload. This highlights the necessity for systemic reforms to mitigate excessive workloads and improve the mental health of officers.

It is clear from the study that current transfer policies adversely impact the mental well-being of police officers, with a majority expressing dissatisfaction regarding perceived fairness and support services associated with transfers. Although demographic factors showed no significant differences, marital status was linked to perceptions of mental health considerations in transfer policies. These findings suggest that enhancing the transfer process and providing adequate support can help alleviate stress and improve officers' mental health.

Lastly, the study concludes that inadequate welfare conditions, particularly concerning housing and safety, significantly contribute to depression among police officers. A considerable proportion of respondents reported dissatisfaction with their living conditions and the resulting impact on their mental health. These findings indicate a systemic issue affecting all officers, underscoring the need for improved welfare provisions to foster better mental health outcomes within the police force.

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## 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, this study makes the following recommendations:

Firstly, the KPS is encouraged to implement a technology-driven system for qualification-based promotions. By automating the promotion criteria, KPS can ensure that the process is fair and free from corruption, allowing officers to be evaluated solely based on their qualifications. This will enhance transparency and improve morale among officers.

Secondly, it is crucial for the police to prioritize the recruitment of mental health practitioners to be stationed at various police facilities. Providing accessible counseling services will help officers who are dealing with depression and other mental health challenges, fostering a more supportive work environment.

Furthermore, the KPS should revise its policies regarding transfers and workload management. By addressing biases in these areas, KPS can create a more equitable distribution of responsibilities, which is essential for reducing stress levels among officers.

Lastly, there is need for the force to consider upgrading of housing conditions for its officers. Improved housing is vital for enhancing the welfare of police personnel and can significantly impact their mental health and overall job performance. By investing in better living conditions, KPS can demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of its officers.

### 5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

The current study focused on specific institutional factors, qualification-based promotion procedures, workload, transfers, and welfare conditions, potentially limiting its scope by excluding other significant influences on mental health, such as economic stressors and personal life challenges. To enhance understanding of the mental health challenges faced by police officers, future research should broaden its focus to include these omitted variables. Studies could investigate the impact of financial insecurity on depression, examine personal life challenges such as family dynamics and social support networks, and adopt longitudinal methodologies to assess changes over time. Furthermore, incorporating qualitative methods, like in-depth interviews, could provide deeper insights into the lived experiences of police officers, ultimately informing more comprehensive mental health support strategies within the KPS.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix I Letter of Introduction

**CONSENT**

**INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS PREDISPOSING POLICE OFFICERS TO DEPRESSION IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA.**

**Dear Respondent**

My Name is Evelyne M. Ndonye, a student at St. Paul University, undertaking a Master's program in Counseling Psychology. I am carrying out a study on institutional factors predisposing police officers to depression in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the institutional factors predisposing police officers to depression with reference to Kenya Police Service (KPS) in Nairobi City County, Kenya**.**

**Procedure:** kindly answer all the questions without consulting others. There are no right or wrong answers and your honesty is of great value to the researcher. If there are any questions about the study, such as how to fill out the questionnaires or complaints on the research project, please do not hesitate to reach the researcher through *macpnrb614021@spu.ac.ke*.

**Risk/discomforts:** There are no risks associated with participating in this research; your responses will only be available to the researcher. Your participation is completely voluntary and you have a right to withdraw from participation at any level of filling the questionnaire.

**Confidentiality:** Do not write any personal identification on the questionnaire. The responses you give to the questions will remain confidential and anonymous. All respondents' forms are coded, and your responses will not be used to identify you. The information provided even if published will not be used to identify you in any way and hence anonymity is assured.

**RESEARCHER……**

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**CONSENT**

I do understand that there are no risks associated with participating in this research. I voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

Respondent Signature……. date…….

Researcher signature……date……..

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study

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## Appendix II Questionnaire For Police Officers

**Instructions:**

This study is designed to clarify institutional factors predisposing police officers to depression in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Please answer all questions honestly. The information provided will be kept confidential and will only be used for this purpose. Read each question carefully and then tick (√) or fill in your correct answer in the spaces provided.

### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

**A Social-Demographic Characteristics**

| Questions | Response | Tick | Question | Response | Tick |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q.1Please indicate your Police Station | In Nairobi City County | | Q.2What is your Marital Status? | Married | |
| | Outside Nairobi City County. | | | Single | |
| | Others | | | Divorced | |
| Q.3Respondent's Gender | Female | | | Widowed | |
| | Male | | | | |
| Q.4How old are you? | 18-26 | | Q.5 What is your highest level of education? | Primary School | |
| | 27-35 | | | Secondary School | |
| | 36-44 | | | | |
| | 45 and above | | | College level | |
| | | | | University | |

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**SECTION B: Promotion Methods/Procedures**

Indicate your level of agreement using a tick concerning promotion methods and procedures an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression. Where **5. Strongly agree, 4. Agree, 3. Undecided, 2. Disagree, 1. Strongly Disagree**

| | | SA (5) | A (4) | U (3) | D (2) | SD (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. | I am comfortable with the way promotions are conducted in the police | | | | | |
| 7. | The promotion process adequately considers employees' skills, experience, and contributions | | | | | |
| 8. | I am satisfied with the frequency of promotions within our organization. | | | | | |
| 9. | The criteria for promotion are communicated to all employees. | | | | | |
| 10. | Employees have equal opportunities for promotion regardless of factors like gender and ethnicity | | | | | |
| 11. | Overall, I am satisfied with the promotion practices in our organization | | | | | |

**B SECTION C: Perceived workload**

Indicate your level of agreement concerning perceived workload as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression. Where **5. Strongly agree, 4. Agree, 3. Undecided, 2. Disagree, 1. Strongly Disagree**

| | | SA (5) | A (4) | U (3) | D (2) | SD (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. | I feel overwhelmed by the amount of work assigned to me as a police officer in Nairobi City County | | | | | |

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| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. | Given the resources available, the workload demands imposed on police personnel are fair. | | | | | |
| 14. | Unequal sharing of work responsibilities leads to more work | | | | | |
| 15. | Excessive workload contributes to heightened stress levels among police officers in Nairobi City County | | | | | |
| 16. | The current workload of police officers in Nairobi County is manageable | | | | | |
| 17. | I believe effective communication helps create a supportive and collaborative work environment. | | | | | |
| 18 | Overall, I am satisfied with how the workload is distributed among police officers in my work station | | | | | |

**SECTION D: Issues of the Transfer**

Indicate your level of agreement concerning the transfer of police officers as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression. Where **5. Strongly agree, 4. Agree, 3. Undecided, 2. Disagree, 1. Strongly Disagree**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19. | The current transfer policies adequately consider the mental well-being of police officers. | **SA (5)** | **A (4)** | **U (3)** | **D (2)** | **SD (1)** |
| 20. | I feel satisfied with the fairness of the transfer process in Nairobi. | | | | | |
| 21. | Transfer practices have a significant impact on the stress levels of police officers. | | | | | |
| 22. | Adequate support services are provided to police officers experiencing distress due to transfers | | | | | |
| 23. | Experiencing a sense of the unequal | | | | | |

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| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | application of rules for various individuals, such as favoritism induces stress. | | | | | |
| 24. | Transfers sometimes infringe on an individual's rights. | | | | | |
| 25. | Overall, I am satisfied with how transfer practices are managed in my workstation. | | | | | |

**SECTION E: Perception of Welfare Conditions**

Indicate your level of agreement concerning the Perception of Welfare Conditions as an institutional factor predisposing police officers to depression. Where **5. Strongly agree, 4. Agree, 3. Undecided, 2. Disagree, 1. Strongly Disagree**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26. | The housing conditions are adequate for the police officers. | **SA (5)** | **A (4)** | **U (3)** | **D (2)** | **SD (1)** |
| 27. | The structures of the houses are well done to cater for the needs of the police officers. | | | | | |
| 28. | The housing situation allows for adequate separation between work and personal life | | | | | |
| 29. | Safety concerns at home contribute to your stress levels or impact your well-being | | | | | |
| 30. | There is an association between welfare conditions and the development of depression among police officers. | | | | | |
| 31. | Police are satisfied with the current housing conditions. | | | | | |

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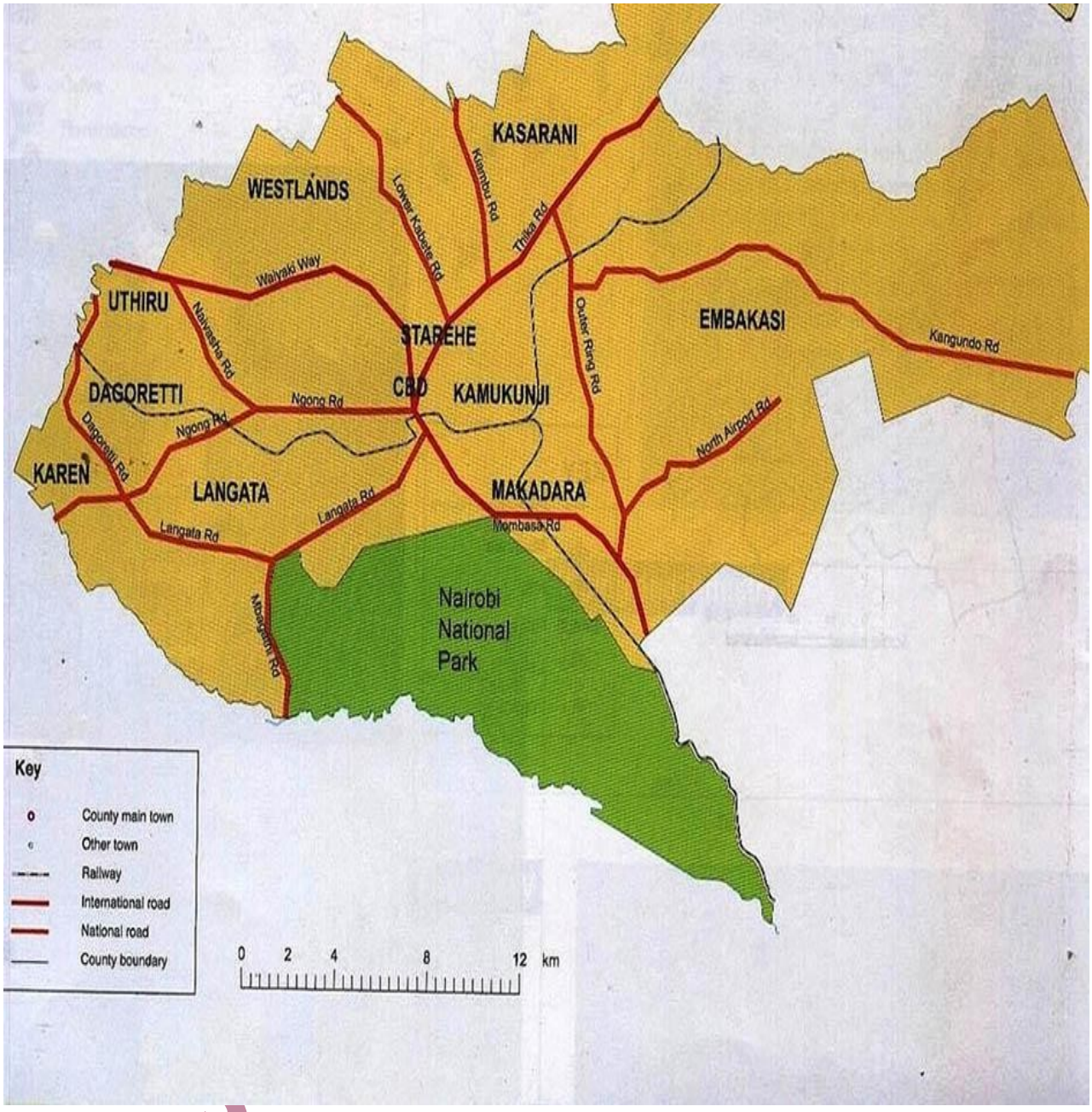
Interview Schedule

1 From your experience, how do you perceive the role of education and qualification-based promotion procedures in shaping the mental well-being of police officers in Nairobi County?
2 Can you provide insights into how officers' perceptions of fairness in promotion procedures might impact their overall job satisfaction and risk of experiencing depression symptoms?
3 In your opinion, what challenges might arise for officers as they navigate the educational requirements for promotion within the police force, and how might these contribute to their risk of developing depression symptoms?
4 From your perspective, what is the possible link between the volume of workload experienced by police officers and their susceptibility to depression symptoms?
5 In your opinion, what measures could be implemented to manage and reduce the negative effects of workload on officers' mental health and well-being?
6 As a mental health practitioner or representative of IPOA, what are your insights into how transfers within the police force may affect officers' mental well-being and risk of experiencing depression symptoms?
7 Have you encountered cases where officers have exhibited increased stress or psychological distress following transfers, and what factors do you believe contribute to these outcomes?
8 From your perspective, what measures could be put in place to mitigate the potential negative impacts of transfers on officers' mental health?
9 Do you think housing stability and adequacy play/influence the mental well-being of police officers in Nairobi County? Explain
10 In your opinion, what improvements could be implemented to enhance welfare conditions for police officers in Nairobi County and alleviate any associated mental health burdens?

**Appendix III Map of the Study Area**

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## Appendix IV NACOSTI Permit



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 881414

Date of Issue: 17/July/2024

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Miss.. EVELYN MWIKALI NDONYE of Saint Paul University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS PREDISPOSING POLICE OFFICERS TO DEPRESSION: A CASE OF KENYA POLICE SERVICE (KPS) IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA. for the period ending : 17/July/2025.

License No: NACOSTI/P/24/37730

881414

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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See overleaf for conditions

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## Appendix V Research Authorization

# ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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(0) 736-424440

**REF: SPU/197/2024** **Date: 1st July 2024**

**TO: Evelyne Ndonye**
**St. Paul's University**

**Dear Evelyne,**

==========

**REF: Institutional Factors Predisposing Police Officers to Depression: A Case of Kenya Police Service (KPS) In Nairobi City County, Kenya.**

==========

Greetings,

This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 206, for the period between 1st July 2024 – 1st July 2025 (1 year).**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours

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v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
viii. **Please note that it is within the ISERC's mandate to monitor your research and to do random visits to the site. All research is subject to post approval monitoring.**

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) *https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke* **and also obtain other clearances needed.**

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Daniel Nzengya, PhD**
**Chairperson**
**SPU- Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee**

