

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK

**PERCEPTIONS AND CAUSES OF SUICIDE AMONG MEMBERS OF THE
NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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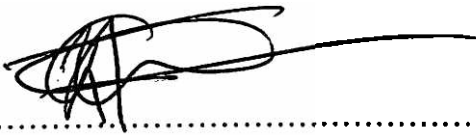
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DECLARATION

Declaration by the Student

This research project report is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree in any other university.

Signed.......... Date..... 20/11/2020.....

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Declaration by the Supervisor

This research project report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Signed.......... Date..... 30/Nov/2020.....

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to the National Police Service-Kenya (NPS) Personnel.

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Be blessed abundantly.

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ABSTRACT

This study was mooted in the context of the problem of suicide among law enforcement officials which is rampant across the world and, the lack of a comprehensive study of the phenomenon in Kenya. Subsequently, the study assessed the patterns of suicide among serving law enforcement agents using the case of Kenya's national law enforcement institutions. Specifically, it focused on the examination of the personal, cultural and socio-economic profiles of serving law enforcement agents in Kenya that predisposes them to suicide and suicidal thoughts. The study's unit of analysis was patterns of suicide by serving police officers while its units of observation were officers at the Nairobi Police Command. During the study, quantitative data was gathered via standard questionnaires while key informant interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Data analysis was done using Statistical package for the social sciences. The study's findings were that the exposure to suicide risk factors such as occupational factors surrounding law enforcement especially workplace stress, frustration and helplessness, poor working environment, traumatic incidences, poor pay and access to firearms predisposed law enforcement agents to suicide ideation and suicide. The study recommended an overhaul of the workplace environment in order to ensure that there is a friendly working environment. More so, counseling services should be devolved to the police station as the basic level in order to bring mental health closer to the police officers on the ground. These officers have a higher likelihood of being exposed to traumatic situations. Further, there is a need to implement the housing reforms in order to give police officers the freedom of living with public. This will not only help them cool off but also ensure they have support systems in the society. With regard to promotion and rewards, respondents complained of promotion and rewards not being based on merit, experience or education level. The national police service needs to put in place a meritorious policy on promotion and reward in order to avert stress and depression within police ranks.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

In the United States, statistics on suicide among law enforcers are startling. Between the year 2008 and the year 2012 the law enforcement officers who snuffed lives out of themselves was twofold the number of those murdered by felons. The year 2008 saw a hundred and forty-one suicides while the subsequent years saw a hundred and forty-three (2009), a hundred and twenty-six (2012) and a hundred and eight (2016) suicides. In 2015 alone, a hundred and two cases of suicide were reported nationally. Of these, ninety one percent were male, sixty three percent had no spouses, and those between the ages of forty and forty-four and had been in the service for about fifteen to nineteen years of service had the uppermost peril of taking their own lives (Nanavaty, 2015).

In the UK, the number of law enforcement agents who committed suicide nearly doubled from fifteen in 2009 to twenty-nine in 2013 (Roberts & Abbasah, 2015). Closer home, in South Africa, the South African Police Service (SAPS) registered a hundred and fifteen deaths of officers through suicide compared to twenty-nine officers murdered on duty between the year 2012 and the year 2013. This is an alarming ratio of four to one (Perkins, 2016).

Sociologically, suicide is a problem-solving behaviour that is largely aimed at improving a spiteful and flawed condition afflicting an individual and/or improving a susceptible self-image. It is an exercise of omnipotence in place of hopelessness and helplessness. Within the rank and file of law enforcement agencies, the suicidal law enforcement member believes, illogically, that even though his/her feelings towards the deed are

wrong, the deed itself is correct. The end ultimately justifies the means in a perfect Machiavellian sense. These conceptions of law enforcement officials taking away own lives especially regarding improving a susceptible self-image, in response to unexpected indignity is the fundamental apparatus in an acute inception of a suicidal crisis (Rangell, 1988).

Suicide by law enforcement agents reverberates within law enforcement institution across the orb with tremendous impetus. According to Nanavaty (2015), the sociological profile of police suicides represents a significant percentage of the rank and file of law enforcement agencies and particularly law enforcement officers living through burnout and malaise in the middle of their career. Already heavily invested in terms of years, it is difficult to switch to different careers. Furthermore, most have substantial years to cover prior to their eligibility for retirement (Nanavaty, 2015). To this end, this study undertakes a holistic assessment of the sociological patterns of suicide by serving law enforcement agents.

Within law enforcement agencies, high suicide rates pose a serious problem to the wellbeing and performance of police officers. This is due to the fact it points out to a problem of poor mental and emotional health and, poor social and ecological barriers to prevention at all stages. This happens within the context of a persistent operational culture of honor that disheartens socio-psychologically susceptible officers from looking for help as a result of the fear of adverse peer responses or career consequences (Deal, 2014).

Globally, there has been a spike in the misuse of firearms by law enforcement agencies as their agents resort to excessive and arbitrary force, or use firearms for unlawful killings and as an instrument of torture and ill-treatment against suspects (Amnesty International, 2016). In the United States for instance, the misuse of firearms by law enforcement agents has led to the deaths of over 1,000 people annually largely due to a lethal combination of systemic racism, white supremacy, America's gun culture, and the militarization of police (Grinshteyn & Hemenway, 2019).

The detrimental effect this has on societies extends beyond the loss of life and the pain to family members and survivors. According to Grinshteyn and Hemenway (2019), the misuse of firearms by law enforcement agents have a uniquely corrosive impact on the nation: patterns of police violence dramatically reduce public confidence in police and lead community members to see them as part of the problem. The fear sown by the misuse of firearms by law enforcement agents makes neighborhoods less safe since the police cannot do its part in preventing violent crime without the assistance of the community (Grinshteyn & Hemenway, 2019).

1.1 Problem Statement

Across the world, suicide among the disciplined forces has been identified as a rampant problem. The Badge of Life organization has observed that in the United States alone, the rate of suicide by officers serving in law enforcement institutions is about seventeen suicides per one hundred thousand officers serving in law enforcement institutions. This rate, the organization contends, is virtually three times the number of uniformed officers murdered by criminals each year, and virtually double those killed in traffic crashes. This

makes the number of serving officers who are taking their own lives higher than the number of those slain in the line of law enforcement duties.

The 21st century has experienced significant transformation in the domain of law enforcement. This is especially in regard to challenges bedeviling law enforcement causing drastic changes in the way officers deliver services. Spike in non-traditional crimes such as terrorism and cyber-crime and, populations have taken a toll on the personnel as they conduct their day to day law enforcement activities. Sociologically, these changes adversely impact on the law enforcement officers' protection, wellbeing, and health. Regardless, cognizant of the fact that a law enforcement institution's most important resource is its personnel, officers are expected to continue offering and delivering excellent and effective law enforcement services.

The spike of suicide among law enforcement agencies across the world and especially in Kenya's National Police Service is alarming. However, a comprehensive study of the phenomenon in Kenya is lacking. Thus, there is a lacuna in literature on explanation of the prevalence of suicide or proffering a patterned profile of suicide among law enforcement agents. This precludes drawing conclusions that could inform policies and efforts to prevent suicidal tendencies among law enforcement agents.

In this regard, this study is an assessment of the sociological patterns of suicide by serving law enforcement agents using the case of Kenya's national law enforcement agency. Of concern for the study, is the examination of the personal, cultural and socio-economic profiles of suicide by serving law enforcement agents of Kenya's national law enforcement agency.

1.2 Research Questions

1.2.1 Broad Question

The study sought to answer the broader question of why an increased number of law enforcement agents are misusing their mandate to protect by turning their guns on themselves and others.

1.2.2 Specific Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What are the personal profiles of suicide by serving law enforcement officers?
- ii. What are the cultural profiles of suicide by serving law enforcement officers?
- iii. What are the socio-economic profiles of suicide by serving law enforcement officers?

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 Broad Objective

To assess the sociological patterns of suicide by serving law enforcement officers

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To assess the personal profiles of suicide by serving law enforcement officers
- ii. To examine the cultural profiles of suicide by serving law enforcement officers
- iii. To assess the socio-economic profiles of suicide by serving law enforcement officers

1.4 Justification of the Study

The number of disciplined officers committing suicide across the world remains high, making it indefinite whether the disciplined forces are a threat unto their very self.

Furthermore, the profile of the highest risk segment; that is, law enforcement agents living through burnout and malaise in the middle of their career occasioned by many years of service under strenuous conditions but have heavily invested in their careers to change as they are years away from retirement eligibility makes it imperative to find the cure to these sociological profiles and patterns contributing to the high rates of law enforcement officers committing suicide. Worth noting is that at the structural level, whereas law enforcement agencies' recruits are usually forewarned that the job can take its toll, ways to mitigate the negative effects of policing barely exist. Furthermore, there are no strategies or prevention plans provided by the law enforcement agencies.

To this end therefore, there is a need for a review of the epidemiology of behavioral indices of the likelihood of suicide among law enforcement agents coupled by intensive review of the socio-economic and cultural profiles of suicidal cases among law enforcement agencies with a view to not only bridge the gap in literature on the same but also to inform policies and efforts to prevent suicide and suicidal tendencies among law enforcement agents.

At the academic level, this study will explore models of explaining suicidal ideation in total institutions. Additionally, the study will seek to address the lacuna in literature of aggregating the individual risk factors for suicide in order to identify the underpinning social factors defining law enforcement agencies and the interactive value of these variables and their causal links to suicide. At the policy level, the study will inform policymaking in the National Police Service particularly on sociological and organizational intervention mechanisms to addressing suicidal ideation among law enforcement agents.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

- Law Enforcement Agent:** A public-sector employee whose responsibilities principally comprise the enforcement of laws
- Sociological Pattern:** Predictable behavioural traits of an individual determined by culture, attitudes, beliefs, economic and idiosyncratic variables
- Suicide:** Intentional taking of one's life
- Kenya National Police Service (KNPS):** The National Police Service is the law enforcement agency of Kenya established under Chapter Fourteen of Kenya's constitution to enforce laws.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examined the literature on the sociological patterns of suicide by serving law enforcement agents. The chapter extrapolated on the lacunas that the literature proffers in furtherance on the quest to conceptualize and contextualize the sociological patterns of suicide by serving law enforcement agents in Kenya.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Sociological Patterns of Suicide in the World

Literature on suicide posits a remarkable percentage of law enforcement agents being afflicted by this problem as officers often commit suicide. The problem is even dire when the account of collateral damage during such suicidal forays is taken into account as colleagues and family members are taken out by officers with guns in suicidal murderous sprees. In the United States for instance, an estimation based on the Fraternal Order of Police statistics shows that the rate of suicide among law enforcement agents is twenty-two deaths per one hundred thousand officers. This is against a general societal suicidal rate of twelve deaths per one hundred thousand residents. According to D'Aurizio (1997), statistics from the mass media in the united states consistently shows that there are close to over three hundred annual cases of suicides by the disciplined forces officers which represents a law enforcement officers' suicidal rate that is close to 200% that of the overall residents (D'Aurizio, 1997).

In extrapolating on whether suicide among law enforcement agents leaves a footprint of a common profile, Aamodt and Stalnaker (2001) used two strategies: First, by a review of literature examining suicide by officers serving in law enforcement institutions, and secondly by utilizing analytical tools to pore through media narratives talking about suicide among serving police officers. In a profile of two hundred and ninety-nine law enforcement suicides across America, the findings were that the typical officer serving in a law enforcement institution who committed suicide was male, white, had a mean age of 36.9 years, were usually married and had a mean cumulative experience of 12.2 years in an American law enforcement agency (Aamodt & Stalnaker, 2001).

Furthermore, their reviewed data showed that the 86.3% of all the suicides by American law enforcement agents was committed while these officers were off-duty, 90.7% of them used guns, and there were 54.8% chance of these suicidal officers being at home at the time they committed suicide. Furthermore, relationship problems either at home or at the workplace accounted for the highest percentage of law enforcement agents taking their lives at 26.6%, tailed by legal hitches which accounted for 14.8% of all the suicide cases by law enforcement agents with over 33% having no known reason (Aamodt & Stalnaker, 2001). The challenge with adopting the findings of Aamodt & Stalnaker's (2001) national media study however is that while legal challenges bedeviling the work profile of law enforcement agents were a major reason for law enforcement agents taking of their own lives (Aamodt & Stalnaker, 2001), no other research on suicides among law enforcement agents has separately coded legal problems.

According to Violanti J. M. (1995), a number of issues explain the prevalence of suicides amongst law enforcement agents. To begin with, the occupational factors surrounding

law enforcement as a job profile account to the prevalence of suicide. The sense of frustration and helplessness for instance is one of them. This is because officers serving in law enforcement institutions enter law enforcement agencies with unrivalled ethos and a gallant desire to help others (Violanti, 2005). However, as opined by Violanti (1995), this sense of impracticality transforms into uncompromising disparagement over the years owing to the incongruence between the ideal and the reality. For individual law enforcement agents, the ensuing frustration is aggravated by a mass media insensitive to the cause of law enforcement agents, a systemic absence of societal support, and difficult systems of criminal justice. To this end, a sense of social isolation and exclusion emerges in effect compelling law enforcement agents to an individual or group defensive stance. In the extreme cases of mental distress, a law enforcement agent trapped in overwhelming frustration and lacking viable coping mechanisms will highly likely resort to suicide (Violanti J. M., 1995).

Another issue of concern with regard to the alarming rates of law enforcement agents taking their own lives is their ease of access to weapons. Unlike to the general population, officers have access to weapons. This is buttressed by earlier studies which showed that over 90% of suicides among officers in the United State were effected using officer's service weapon. Furthermore, a comparative appraisal of suicides among serving officers in New York City and London showed that the rate of suicides among officers serving in law enforcement institutions in New York City where they carry weapons was twice that of the overall population. In contrast, in London where officers do not carry firearms, the rate was similar to that of the overall populace (Violanti J. M., 1995).

Alcoholism has also been drawn in as a causative dynamic in suicides amongst law enforcement agents. Alcohol misuse has been cited as a significant contributor of law enforcement agents taking their own lives. For instance, 3/5 officers who committed suicide in the Chicago Police Department alone had issues to do with alcoholism. The challenge with alcoholism is that there is a likelihood that it will lead to other law enforcement workplace snags including high nonattendance, traffic mishaps, or intemperance while carrying out law enforcement duty which cumulatively will predispose a law enforcement agent to take their own lives (Violanti J. M., 1995). While there is no conclusive study on the relationship between the two factors, given the reputable connection between alcoholism and suicide, these indicators should not be overlooked. To researchers examining the problem of suicide among law enforcement agents, they are construed as indicators of deeper problems.

The anxiety over the departure from the law enforcement subculture is also another net contributor of the increase in incidences law enforcement agents taking their own lives. This is due to the fact that as officers approach retirement, the threat of departure from their workplace, their colleagues and the sub-culture of law enforcement agencies creeps in and sets in motion feelings of frustration and stress. To individual law enforcement agents, retirement implies separation from the companionship and protection of other law enforcement agents.

During their years of law enforcement service, law enforcement agents may have huddled with other law enforcement agents due to the general segregation from mainstream society and its preconceptions toward the law enforcement agencies. In retirement, these law enforcement agents must reenter a society they which they think of as strange and

unwelcoming. While the paybacks of superannuation may be regarded positively by the majority of officers serving in law enforcement institutions, departure from the law enforcement subculture can impact on others. In addition, distress, relatively advanced age when retiring which is in itself a suicide risk, separation from comrades in the law enforcement service, self-definition and status loss, increase suicide vulnerability of some retiring officers (Violanti, 1995).

While other scholars have employed the suicide ideational assessment test (LAT) to test suicide ideational and correlation to actual suicide such as law enforcement officers in quest of treatment in a psychiatric emergency department, their results are largely case specific. According to Violanti J. (2007), the findings of their study showed that the work undertaken by law enforcement agents leans towards sharing mutual glitches and exposures which may intensify the peril of suicide, and potentially lead to suicide contagion. Indeed, the work undertaken by officers serving in law enforcement institutions is a fertile ground for police officers to take their own lives owing to the chronic stress, distressing incident exposure, and the handiness of firearms in the law enforcement workplace (Violanti J. M., 2007).

Furthermore, it is also probable that recurrent exposure to traumatic deaths by law enforcement officers in the law enforcement workplace may influence their adverse responses. Often, they are exposed to death during the course of law enforcement investigations, especially in cases of suicide, unattended deaths, rotting cadavers, accidents, and murders. The exposure to these kinds of deaths may lead to desensitization about death as evidenced by study done in 2013. The study showed that some officers have higher affinity to death arising from this desensitization. Six percent of the officers

involved had a sturdier affinity with death relative to life as reflected by their suicide ideational assessment test scores. However, such studies are not prevalent, though they yield insights about suicidal thinking (Violanti, Mnatsakanova, & Andrew, 2013).

The challenge however as Aamodt and Stalnaker (2001) found in their study is that some of these factors are not exclusive to officers working in law enforcement. In the United States for instance, though suicide rates among the officers may seem to be significantly more than those of suicides in the general population, a more specific focus points otherwise. Considering that the vast majority of officers serving in law enforcement institutions are white (81%), males (89%) and aged between 21 and 55, the suicide rate within the service is similar to the same demographic profile within the general population (Aamodt & Stalnaker, 2001).

To this end, alteration between suicide rate among officers and that in the overall population can with caution be elucidated by the demographic factors of recruits who enter field of law enforcement. This is a vital fact because it shows that job stress and the accessibility of law enforcement issue firearms are not the only aspects that are solely linked with suicide by officers serving in law enforcement institutions. Reasons that explain why officers serving in law enforcement institutions take own lives are comparable to those of the overall population with the conceivable exception of legal problems and accessibility to weapons especially guns (Aamodt & Stalnaker, 2001). This raises a key issue even in the Kenyan context. Do gender, age and ethnicity and other factors outside the service matter within the suicide profile of officers in Kenya? If they do, then what are their implications on the KNPS?

Another key conceptual concern is that there exist considerable difficulties and bureaucratic bottlenecks in researching on the issue of disciplined force agents committing suicide. This is largely due to the fact that information on suicides by law enforcement officers is either not collected or law enforcement agencies are unwilling to permit access to such data. Furthermore, suicides by law enforcement agents may be wrongly categorized as either accidents or undetermined deaths. This is largely due to the fact that law enforcement agents and their institutions of work conventionally ascribe to the notion of indestructibility, thus viewing suicide as an ignominy not only to the law enforcement agent who has committed suicide, but also to the profession (Violanti, 1995).

On the issue of self-report as a suicidal analysis assessment, it is worth noting that there is absence of a correlation between two variables i.e., forecast and behavioral tendencies that predispose one to suicide. This has been consistent with self-report data. Furthermore, due to the macho psychological portrayal of officers, expectedly few if any do report suicidal ideation (Dawes, Faust, & Meehl, 1989; Nock, et al., 2010).

To Neumayer (2003), an array of monetary and social illuminating variables that are largely grounded on pecuniary and, fixed-effects and random-effects explained in Durkheimian theory can serve to aptly explain suicide among serving law enforcement officers. Neumayer (2003) drawing from a sixty eight countries review between 1980 and 1999 to test the socio-economic variables explaining suicide across the age spectrum concluded that socio-economic aspects influence meso and macro level differences in suicide rates (Neumayer, 2003).

Cutright and Fernquist (2000) in their analysis of suicide focusing on the effects of societal integration or lack of it, social and cultural factors, regions, and other dynamics in causing suicides among male officers of specific age in 20 developed countries between the year 1955 and the year 1989 made the following observations: that the determinants of the rates of suicides do differ by age and; the ethos of suicide play an expressly vital role in the thirty five and sixty four years age group. Cutright and Fernquist (2000) attributed this outcome to lack of integration of this male cohort. This makes it important to examine if lack of societal integration among police officers has a bearing on suicide among law enforcement agents in Kenya.

The developing world has also been plagued by the challenge of officers serving in law enforcement institutions taking their own lives. There are about a hundred and seventy thousand deaths by suicide reported annually in India. To Patel, et al. (2012) who sought to quantify mortality as a result of suicide in India in 2010 by using India's nationally representative mortality survey as aptly recorded by India's Registrar General, the researchers found out that close to three percent of the surveyed deaths i.e., two thousand, six hundred and eighty four of ninety five thousand, three hundred and thirty five deaths of individuals aged fifteen years or older were occasioned by cases of suicide (Patel, et al., 2012).

This corresponded to close to one hundred and eighty seven thousand deaths occasioned by suicide in India in 2010 at these ages with the bulk of the figure, 115,000 being men while 72,000 were women. In this regard, the age-standardized rates per one hundred thousand residents who were fifteen years of age or older was 26.3 for males compared to 17.5 for females. To this end therefore, Patel, et al. (2012) thus opine that males face

significant risks of committing suicide than do females, including those in police services (Patel, et al., 2012). The assertions of Patel, et al. (2012) provide a significant insight on gendered differentials on suicide, as much as the study did not specifically focus on officers working in law enforcement. Thus, it is necessary to disaggregate suicide data so as to examine whether suicide rate among KNPS officers is correlated to gender.

Patel, et al. (2012) and Merriott (2016) further postulated that in India, socioeconomic issues, as opposed to mental health problems, predispose one towards a suicidal pathway particularly in agrarian communities. For instance, increased indebtedness among farmers and rural peasants has remained a predominant determinant of suicide. Lacking macroeconomic support, they are inflicted by feelings of economic frustration (Merriott, 2016).

Chu, et al. (2010), in a meta-review of literature on the connection between cultural issues, ethnicity, sexual orientation and suicide extracted major factors explaining suicide dynamics among non-heterosexuals belonging to African, Asian and Latino Americans. The factors they brought out are culture which give meaning to stressors that make individuals commit suicide, intents, plans and suicide attempts.. Additionally, they identified threshold to tolerance to psychological pain as having influence on suicidal acts (Chu, Goldblum, Floyd, & Bongar, 2010). On the other hand, Eshun (2003) found out that cultural differences are significant contributors to suicide ideation. These differences include family closeness, religiosity, and negative suicide attitudes and, are significant predictors to prevalence of suicide among cultural groups. Essentially, though not focused on law enforcement officers, the study evidences the importance of culture in influencing individual inclination to suicide.

Phillips, Liu and Zhang (1999) in an exploratory suicide study in China, one of the fast growing economic powerhouse arrived at quite different findings relative to other parts of the world. This is due to the fact that there is a higher prevalence of female suicides than that of males. Furthermore, the rural rates are three-fold that of the urban rates of suicide. The three scholars noted that the rural rates are a consequence of rapid social change that have been contemporaneous to huge economic reforms, high numbers of persons with depression and remain untreated as well as lack of systemic prevention measures to suicide (Phillips, Liu, & Zhang, 1999).

According to Vijayakumar, et al. (2008), comparatively prosperous countries have higher suicide rates especially those undergoing accelerated development. In these countries, rates remain high especially for those among the socially-disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, the economic development bias in favor of urban areas and the attendant rural-urban migration heightens the risk of suicide for those who are devoid of economic coping mechanisms. They are faced with the prospect of economic hardship, nonexistent social support, and socioeconomic isolation (Vijayakumar, et al., 2008).

As Vijayakumar, et al. (2008) further contends, the presence or absence of religion order and/or religious beliefs and dogmas may also serve as a catalyst or an inhibitor of suicides. This is because, where religion and/or religious beliefs are present, they provide protection to individual and the collective. This is because religion has explicit values either prohibiting or permitting suicide. However, religion as factor may inject unnecessary complexities on suicide research for it may make individuals less inclined to report suicides, leading to miscategorization and underreporting of deaths caused by suicides (Vijayakumar, et al., 2008).

Nazarzadeh, et al. (2013) in their assessment of suicides in Iran concluded that family wrangles and financial challenges have a noticeable role in suicide. On the other hand, Meel (2003) who studied drivers of suicide in Transkei sub-region, South Africa, delineated economic hardship, alcohol abuse, health related issues, marital problems, and social disputes and the attendant lack of coping mechanisms as major drivers of suicide. More so, these drivers affected males more (Meel, 2003).

2.1.2 Sociological Patterns and Profiles of Suicide in Kenya

In Kenya, Philista M. Onyango (1982) conducted a study on suicide and attempted suicide in Nairobi with a view to investigate the extent and nature of suicide in Kenya in general and Nairobi. The study sought to examine the relationship between suicide and the sociological pattern of African livelihoods i.e., extended family systems, polygamous marriages and place of residence.

According to Philista's study, majority of those who succeeded in killing themselves were older, unemployed and most of them were married men. In addition, those who attempted suicide came from places far from Nairobi (long distance migration) and were generally dissatisfied with their marriage, occupation, income, education, place of residence and life achievement. Furthermore, majority of those who attempted suicide did so because of poor relationships with spouses, disagreements with parents, losses and mental and physical problems (Onyango, 1982).

A World Bank's 2006 Country Social Analysis of Kenya, the sociological patterns and profiles of suicide may well be a reflection of the challenges bedeviling individuals. These challenges include serious recessions especially in the economic and social realm. This occasioned the erosion of rural livelihood systems. To this end, livelihood stress at

the meso and macro levels was increasingly reflected in social existence at the individual and societal levels. In addition, social disintegration and anomie have been signaled in Kenya (World Bank, 2006).

According to Wanyoike (2015) whose study examined the risk factors that predispose an individual to the suicidal path, there is an inconclusive thesis on the sociological patterns and profiles of suicide owing to what she terms as the unavailability of analytically useful information on rates of suicide in Kenya (Wanyoike, 2015). According to a study by Khasakhala, Ndetei, and Mathai (2013) on the interaction between youth suicides and psychotropic/alcohol use, depressive drug abuse raise the risk of suicide and/or suicidal behavior. Hence, among the youth abusing substances including drugs and alcohol there is higher predisposition towards suicide (Khasakhala, Ndetei, & Mathai, 2013).

Urbanization has also been blamed as a potential source of suicide risk and/or suicidal ideation. According to Qin (2005), people living in more urbanized areas are at a higher risk of suicide than their counterparts in less urbanized areas. However, the impact of urbanicity on suicide risk differs significantly by sex and across age. While urban life reduces suicide risk significantly among men, particularly young men, Qin (2005) avers, it increases the risk among women, particularly women aged between 24 and 35 and those below 65 years. In addition, the suicide risk associated with urbanicity remains rather constant among women, while it drops among men. To Qin (2005), the increased risk in urban areas can largely be explained by the effects of marital status, ethnics, income, and psychiatric status (Qin, 2005).

2.2 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study employs two theories; the social integration/social regulation theory of suicide and the strain theory of suicide. This study employs the social integration/social regulation theory of suicide. Postulated by Emile Durkheim's 1897 analysis of suicide, the theory argues that societal conditions can increase or decrease the propensity for individuals to react to problems and pain by committing suicide. According to Durkheim, there are two forces that normally maintain social order and prevent social chaos. These factors include; social integration, which binds individuals to society through the social norms and values of the group; and social regulation, which restricts people's potentially limitless natural desires and aspirations by defining specific goals and the means of attaining them (Bille-Brahe, 2000).

To Durkheim, individual behaviour is profoundly influenced by the way the social and collective life of a society is organized. As such, the theory argues that suicide is as a result of social integration i.e., the more socially integrated a person is, the lesser the likelihood of committing suicide (Bille-Brahe, 2000). The potency of this theory in explaining suicidal ideation lies in its unifying approach to individual and societal social indicators such as divorce rates, rapid social change, wars etc and how the interplay between these indicators and social integration and social regulation influence the rates of suicide.

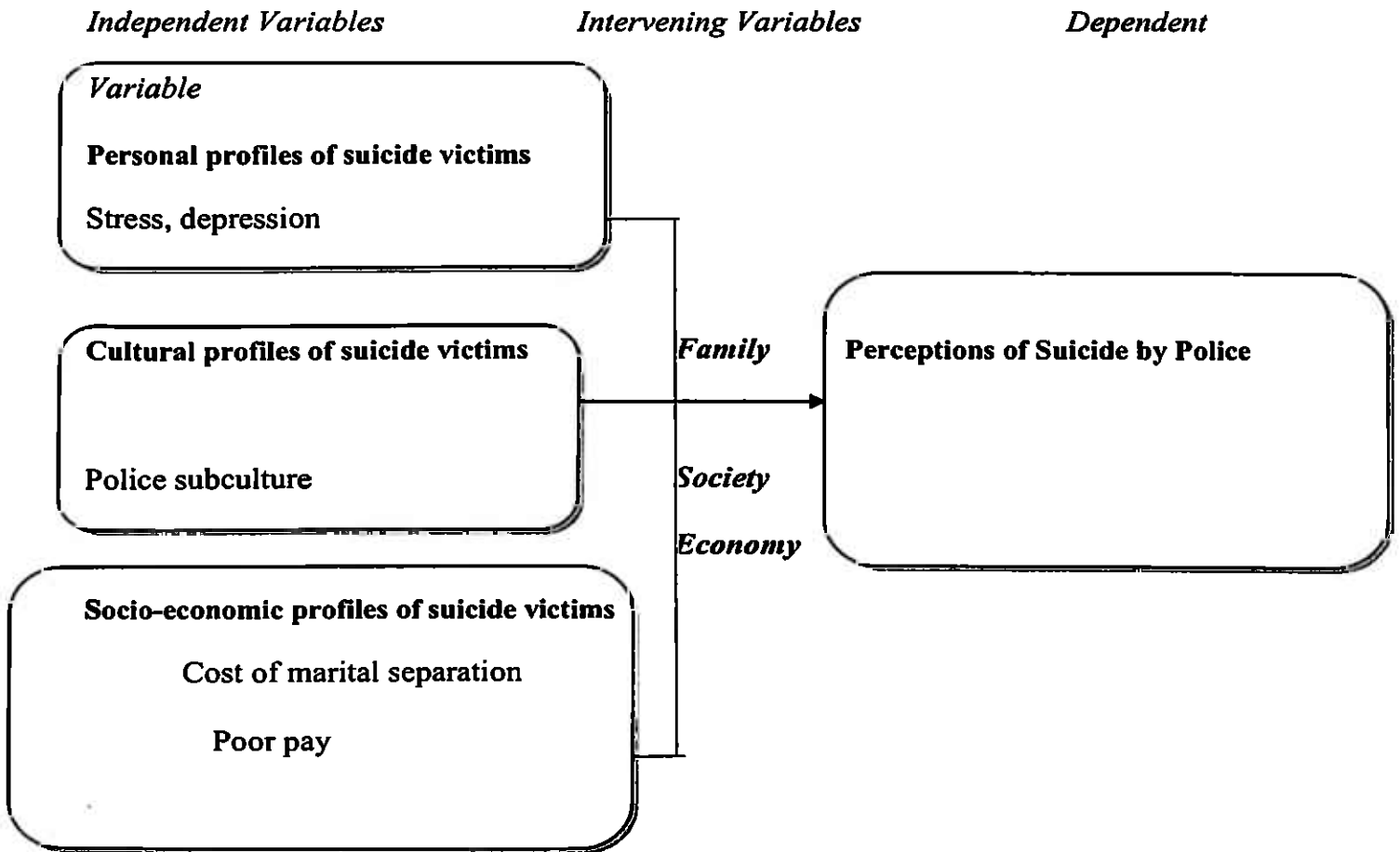
The strain theory of suicide was pioneered by Zhang is based on premise that prior to a decision by an individual to take own life, such an individual is afflicted by serious psychological strains (Zhang, 2019). Strain subjects an individual to unbearable pressures subsequently making suicide a preferred alternative to continued living. Such pressures

manifest themselves variously including in form of physical and psychological pain, anger, frustrations and bitterness. The strains are not akin to day to day stress that most of individuals encounter in their lives for example, stress related to meeting work deadlines. Rather they are more persistent leading to frustrations and anger, and force an individual to find a way of reducing or eliminating them (Zhang and Zhao, 2013; Ling and Zhang, 2012). When there is an inability to reduce or resolve the strains, then suicide provides a final resolution.

The sources of strain are varied but generally arises from value system whereby an individual possesses conflict values; gaps between the aspirations an individual has and the realities of his/her life; being in an environment characterized by relative deprivation; and inability to cope with a certain conditions in one's life. Conditions may include loss of social status, money, victimization or bullying at work, breaking up of one's family among others (Zhang, 2019).

This theory has been useful to this study because rather than approaching suicide as simply having the ideation and capabilities to actualize this ideation, it goes further to understanding why suicide ideation forms in the first place, and importantly, under what circumstances is the ideation actualized. Simply, suicidal ideation arises out of strains in a person's life. More so, the actualization of suicide ideation is a duo-process whereby an individual is simultaneously undergoing through serious strains psychologically and is unable to reduce or eliminate the strains. Ultimately, he/she opts to taking own life as an unequivocal way of resolving the strains.

2.3 Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Researcher (2018)

The conceptual framework has been derived from the literature. Basing on the literature reviewed, among serving police officers, stress, depression, lack of family cohesion, absence of social support, societal isolation, marital problems and easy access to means of committing suicides especially firearms play a predominant role in the likelihood of a serving police officer to commit suicide.

On the other hand, law enforcement as an organization operates under its own sub-culture. The culture as captured in the literature is closed leading to poor social

integration to the mainstream society. More so, it valorizes strength and abhors weakness, treats suicide as dishonorable and this can discourage individuals facing serious challenges from opening up and looking for assistance. Left unattended, such individuals may opt to take their own lives. Importantly, due to exposure to death, it may lead to high affinity to suicidal ideation and, desensitization to death and high. In addition, the police have unique labor commitment procedures and remuneration as opposed to mainstream industry. These sub-cultural aspects may increase the likelihood of a serving police officer committing suicide.

Finally, the literature covered shows that economic factors can subject individuals to immense strain. Thus, issues including increased indebtedness, poor remuneration, costs of raising families and divorce costs can have a role in the likelihood of a serving police officer decision to commit suicide.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The preceding chapters have laid out the terrains of this research by providing background and reviewing literature relevant to the study. This chapter addresses methodological aspects of the research. It does so through outlining the instruments and procedures used by the researcher during data gathering on the sociological patterns of suicide among officers serving with KNPS and analysis. Accordingly, the chapter outlines the research design used in the study, in addition to the site of the study. More so, it explains methods that the researcher used to collect and analyze the data. Finally, it outlines the research ethics which provided the parameters of acceptable conduct during the entire cycle of this research.

3.1 Research Design

In any study, a research design, which simply put is a roadmap on how a research will be conducted is of utmost significance. This is because the design offers a roadmap in terms of methods and procedures to be employed, how they will be employed and the kind of data that the researcher should gather and analyze. In this research, the researcher utilized a descriptive research derived from the nature of the study which sought to answer 'why' questions as they regard to KNPS officers committing suicide. To answer these questions, the research utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies, and data were derived from primary and secondary sources.

3.2 Units of Analysis and Observation

The sociological patterns of suicide among serving law enforcement agents in Kenya National Police Service constitutes the unit of analysis for this study. On the other hand, the units of observation were the officers in the Nairobi Police Command of Kenya's National Police Service and key informants. The choice of the unit of analysis of the study is informed by Halbwachs (1971) thesis on urbanization and suicide where he argues that when the individual becomes discouraged and neglects himself or if he becomes desperate and turns his anger against himself, it is due to the breakdown in social integration and regulation.

3.3 Study Site

The study used the Nairobi Police Command as the study site for the study. As a law enforcement geographical jurisdictional region, the Nairobi Police Command is composed of ten police divisions; namely, Central Police Division, Kilimani Police Division, Embakasi Police Division, Langata Police Division, Dagoretti Police Division, Buruburu Police Division, Kasarani Police Division, Parklands Police Division, Pangani Police Division, and Muthaiga Police Division. The choice of the site was informed by their ease of accessibility to the researcher and their geographical expansiveness which offered a research significant sample of suicide profiles.

3.4 Target Population

The study targeted officers who were colleagues of suicide victims within the law enforcement agencies within the Nairobi Police Command. Furthermore, force commanders and officers drawn from KNPS Internal Affairs Unit comprised the respondents for the study.

3.5 Sampling Design

The study used both probability and non-probability techniques of sampling. Probability sampling included proportionate stratified sampling and simple random sampling. Probability sampling was used to sample officers in the Nairobi Police Command. The non-probability sampling method used was purposive sampling. It was used to select the key informant.

3.6 Sample size

The study used a sample size of ninety officers. The officers were drawn from the ten police divisions that comprise the Nairobi Police Command whereby two were top ranking police officers, while twelve and seventy-six officers were drawn from the middle and subordinate ranks of the National Police Service. In addition, the study had six key informants will include top ranking police officers with a background in psychology, human resource management and homicide investigations.

Table 3.1 Target population (officers) and the distribution of sample by ranking.

RANK	Sample	Percentage (%)
Inspector General		
Deputy Inspector General		
Senior Assistant Inspector General	1	1.1
Assistant Inspector General		
Commissioner		
Senior Superintendent	1	1.1
Superintendent of Police		
Assistant Superintendent	1	1.1
Chief Inspector	3	3.3
Inspector	8	8.9
Senior Sergeant	6	6.7
Sergeant	13	14.4
Corporal	20	22.2
Constable	37	41.1
Total	90	100

Source: Researcher (2019)

3.7 Data Collection Methods

This study employed a mixed methods approach to data collection. The mixed methods approach is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research techniques in order to enable a researcher to gain a broad perspective on a problem. This entails taking advantage of the strengths of each approach in context of the social problem under consideration. Quantitative data collection methods entail the collection of numerical data in order to find patterns, averages and use the same to generalize findings on a wider population. On the other hand, qualitative data collection methods entail the collection of non-numerical data in order to get opinions and experiences that can be used to generate in-depth insights into a social phenomenon.

The choice of the mixed method approach is informed by the nature of the study in that it seeks to examine an issue area in a national security agency where information is highly scanty and therefore the choice of one methodology might be misleading while the choice of both will result in an ability to arrive at reliable and valid data. The mixed method approach provides a more comprehensive evidence for studying research problem than the choice of a single approach. Additionally, the choice of a mixed method approach is informed by the need to triangulate data garnered from a quantitative approach with data from a qualitative one.

For primary data, the researcher will employ both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods using standard questionnaires in the case of the former and key informant interviews in the case of the latter. On the other hand, secondary data was sourced from multiple sources including books and scholarly articles, news sources, government data, policies and reports among others.

3.8 Data Analysis

During the analysis, the researcher used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze quantitative data. Further, content analysis was used when analyzing qualitative data. In order to align the data with the research answers sought, the employed inductive analysis, extracting and categorizing themes from the data for the purposes of analysis. To enhance data validity, the researcher corroborated the finding with other sources especially the predominant findings generated by similar studies.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the entire cycle of the study, the researcher adhered to standard ethics governing this kind of research. The researcher adhered to the principle of informed consent from all respondents. In addition, the study maintained confidentiality of identities and records of respondents requiring such confidentiality. Furthermore, the researcher sought and was granted authority to use relevant official documents from KNPS.

3.10 Scope and Limitations

Data collected for this study was limited to information given by officers and key informant on suicide among law enforcement agents.

The researcher faced constraints in obtaining information on the sociological patterns of suicide cases amongst law enforcement agents especially particularly entrenched practices of secrecy within the police service. This however was addressed by the use of key informants, recommendations from police leadership and trust building with respondents whom we are colleagues.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

In this Chapter data collected from respondents drawn from the KNPS, Nairobi County has been analyzed and thematically presented.

4.1 Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings

4.1.1 Demographic Data of the Respondents

4.1.1.1 Sex of the Respondent

Sex of the Respondents	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Male	52	59.1
Female	36	40.9
Total	88	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

The total number of respondents was 88. Of these, 52 were male representing 58.4% of the total respondents while 36 were female representing 40.4% of the total number of respondents. The gender imbalance is a representation of the patriarchal nature of the National Police Service in the past but which is now being corrected with the older male dominated force personnel exiting the service through retirement and affirmative action in recruitment.

Table 4.2 Number of years working in the National Police Service

Years worked	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
0-5 Years	15	17.0
6-10 Years	17	19.3
11-15 Years	15	17.0
16-20 Years	16	18.2
20 Years and Above	25	28.4
Total	88	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

The bulk of the respondents were evenly distributed based on the years of service in order to get a better understanding of sociological factors leading to suicide in the National Police Service across the spectrum.

Table 4.3 Rank of the Respondent in the National Police Service

Rank of respondent	Frequency(n)	Percent (%)
Junior Rank	74	84
Middle Rank	12	13.6
Top Rank	2	2.27
Total	88	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

The study's respondents ranks was pyramidal with non-commissioned police officers forming the bulk of the study at 74 (84%) while the top ranks (senior superintendent of police and upwards) were only 2 representing 2.7% of the respondents.

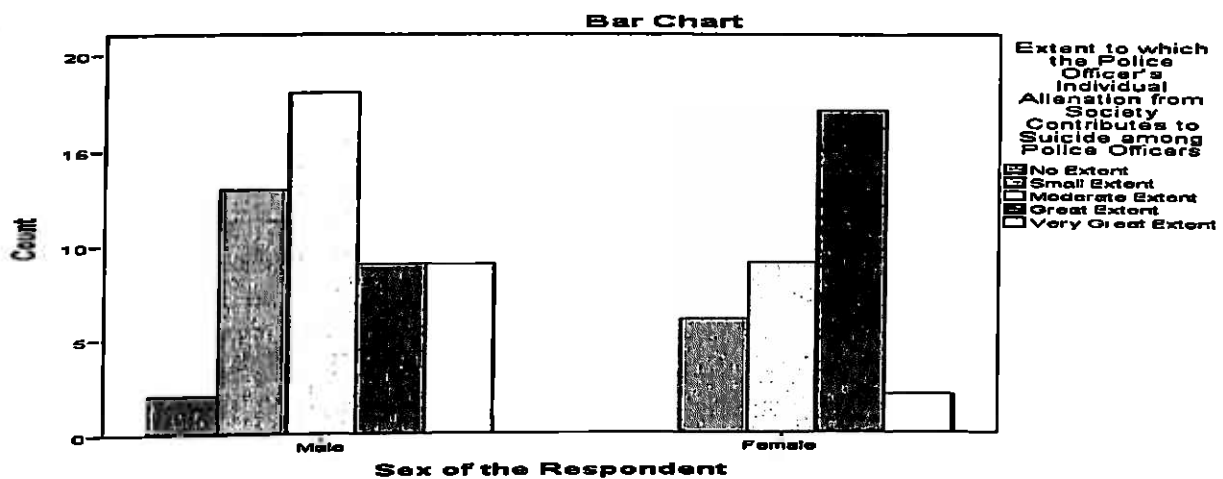
4.1.2 Personal Profiles of Suicide by Serving Police Officers

Table 4.4 Respondent’s Perception on Stress in the National Police Service as a Workplace

Stress at work place	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	3	3.4
Small Extent	6	6.8
Moderate Extent	17	19.3
Great Extent	32	36.4
Very Great Extent	30	34.1
Total	88	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.4 Respondent’s Perception on Stress in the KNPS as a Workplace



Source: Study Data (2019)

With regard to the extent to which respondents perceived stress at the KNPS as a workplace, 89% of the respondents were of the view as a workplace, KNPS contributed to stress among its workforce to a significant extent. A view corroborated from the interviews. A key informant interviewed opined,

“Poor management at the basic unit of policing i.e., the police station coupled by inadequate working equipment and poorly thought out transfers and redeployments make the National Police Service a very stressful workplace”

Another key informant who was a senior police officer was of the view that;

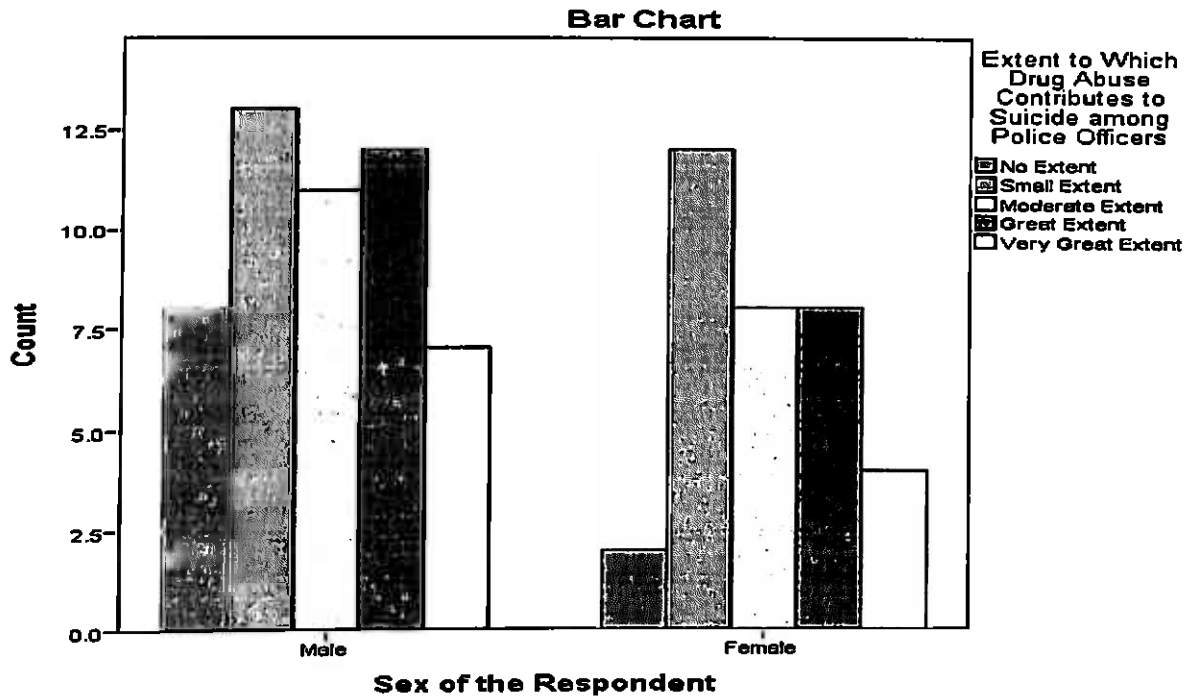
“Stress contributors in the National Police Service a very stressful workplace was occasioned by leadership styles whereby the basic unit of policing i.e., the police station is led in an autocratic fashion which is unfortunately replicated at the top echelons of the force. As such, it breeds leaders who are not approachable and hence disgruntled officers in lower cadres would rather bottle up frustrations rather than speak out. The second factor is working conditions which are pathetic”

Table 4.5 Extent to which the Police Officer’s Individual Alienation from Society Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers

Alienation from society	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	2	2.3
Small Extent	20	23.3
Moderate Extent	27	31.4
Great Extent	26	30.2
Very Great Extent	11	12.8
Total	86	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.5 Extent to which the Police Officer’s Individual Alienation from Society Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers



Source: Study Data (2019)

With regard to the extent to which respondents perceived police officer’s individual alienation from society as contributor to suicide, 72% held the view that police officers serving with the

National Police Service were alienated from society and as such, the attendant lack of a support base contributed to suicide among officers to a significant extent.

Table 4.6 Extent to Which Drug Abuse Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers

Drug abuse	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	11	12.8
Small Extent	25	29.1
Moderate Extent	19	22.1
Great Extent	20	23.3
Very Great Extent	11	12.8
Total	86	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

With regard to the extent to which respondents' perception of drug abuse among serving police officers and its contribution to suicide among police officers, over a half of the respondents were of the view that significantly contributed to suicide among officers to a significant extent.

Corroborating the information, a key informants who had a background in human resource management was of opinion that ;

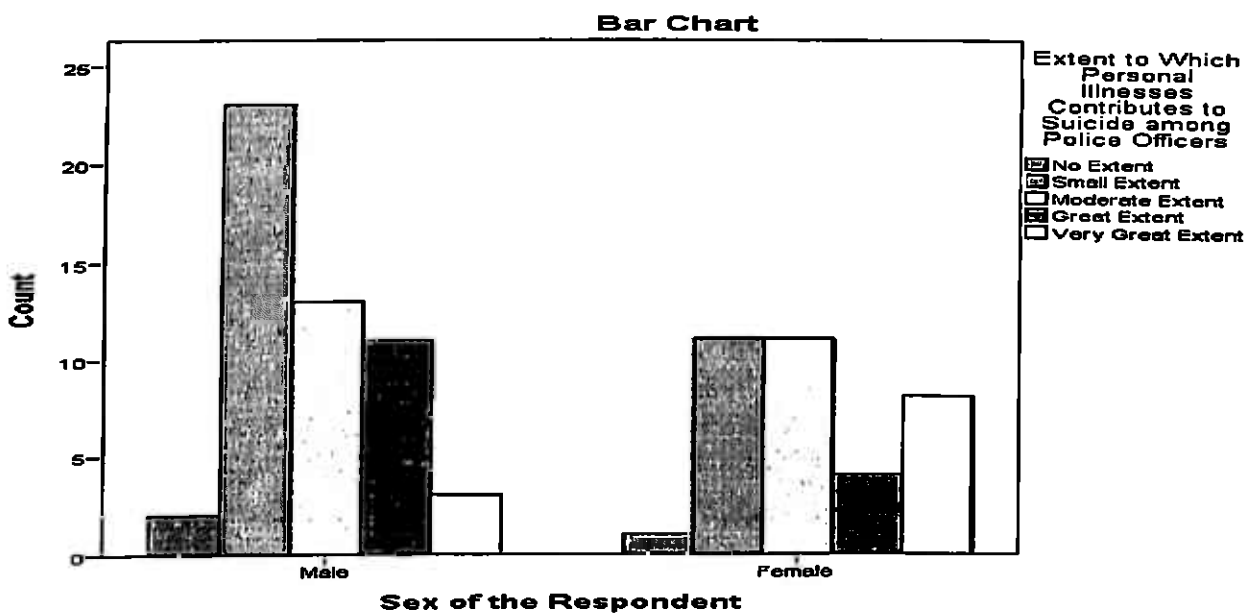
“Drug abuse contributed significantly to suicide. This is due to the fact that as a result of failure of other safety nets such as the society and religion, police officers tend to take the course of drug abuse to deal with problems. When this doesn't work, they take the course of suicide and use the drug abuse as the trigger.”

Table 4.7 Extent to Which Personal Illnesses Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers

Illnesses	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	4	4.5
Small Extent	34	38.6
Moderate Extent	24	27.3
Great Extent	15	17.0
Very Great Extent	11	12.5
Total	88	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.7 Extent to Which Drug Abuse Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers



Source: Study Data (2019)

Personal illnesses were also pinpointed as a potential source of suicide among police officers serving with the National Police Service though to a moderate extent.

A key informant who had a background in counseling noted that;

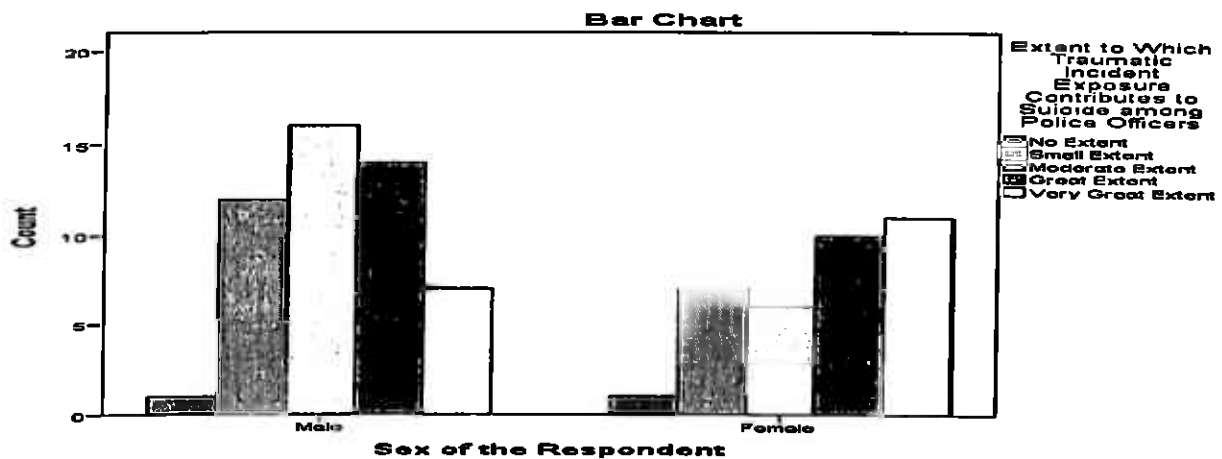
“Communicable diseases are a source of stress and depression which can lead to suicide, this was more prevalent with patients living with HIV/AIDS as they lose hope and seek the easier way out.”

Table 4.8 Extent to Which Traumatic Incident Exposure Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers

Traumatic Incident Exposure	Frequency	
	(n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	2	2.3
Small Extent	19	22.1
Moderate Extent	22	25.6
Great Extent	25	29.1
Very Great Extent	18	20.9
Total	86	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.8 Extent to Which Traumatic Incident Exposure Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers



Source: Study Data (2019)

Police work involves exposure to traumatizing incidences such as retrieval of dead and rotten cadavers, killing criminals, terror attacks and death of close friends within the police force in ambushes or confrontations with gangs. Respondents perceived police officers' exposure to traumatizing incidences as significantly contributing to suicide among police officers. Respondents identified the lack of trauma debriefing, centralized counselling services and the popularization of a macho culture as contributing to stress and depression within the service.

A key informant who had a background in medicine noted;

“Exposure to stressful and traumatic incidences led to the development of stress, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder as well as other mental health ailments such as schizophrenia. Furthermore, their physical health may deteriorate aggravating the stress and depression.”

Furthermore, they lamented the lack of adequate coping strategies.

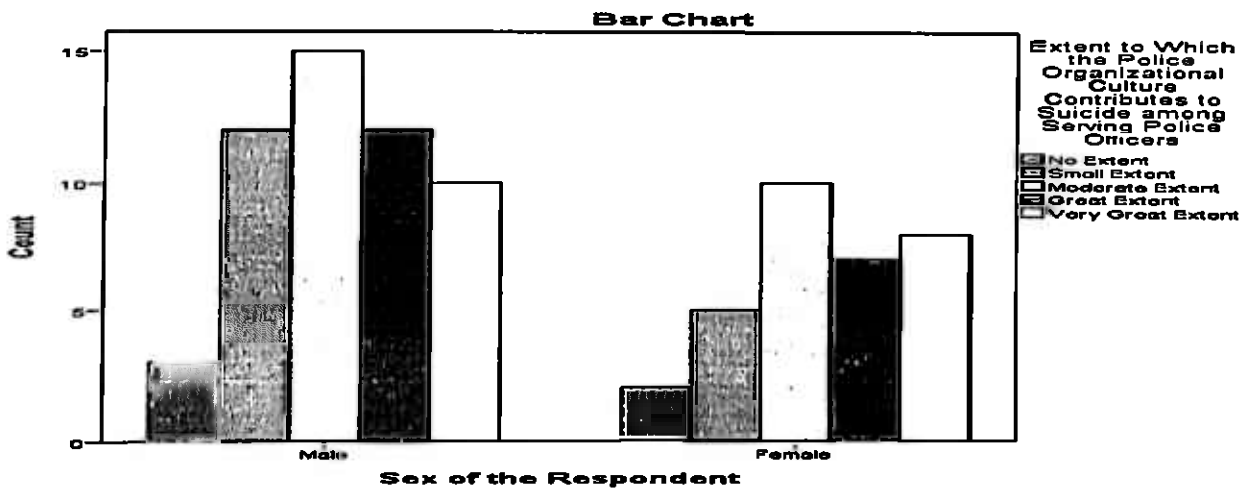
“The coping strategies are not sufficient. While the government has taken a number of measures for the well-being of officers including through providing insurance cover and instituting measures for the rehabilitation of alcoholism and mental health issues, the uptake of the services is still low.”

Table 4.9 Cultural Profiles of Suicide by Serving Police Officers
Extent to Which the Police Organizational Culture Contributes to Suicide among Serving Police Officers

Organizational culture	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	5	5.9
Small Extent	18	21.2
Moderate Extent	25	29.4
Great Extent	19	22.4
Very Great Extent	18	21.2
Total	85	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.9 Police Organizational Culture Contribution to Suicide among Serving Police Officers



Source: Study Data (2019)

With regard to the extent to which respondents perceived the organizational culture of the KNPS as contributing to suicide, 62% of the respondents were of the view that the organizational culture of the KNPS contributed to suicide among officers to a significant extent especially due to the laxity in gun handling rules.

The key informant opined that;

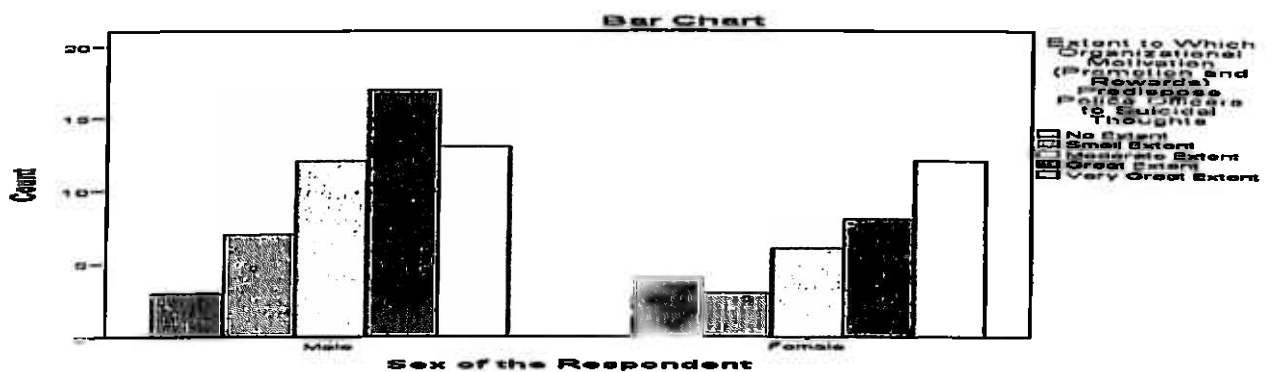
“The nature of interactions within the service which was devoid of a human face. In the police, they opined, interactions are work related. As such, only those who joined the police training college together would maintain social ties. The already minimal social ties are usually killed through transfers and redeployments.”

Table 4.10 Extent to Which Organizational Motivation (Promotion and Rewards) Predispose Police Officers to Suicidal Thoughts

Organizational Motivation	Frequency	
	(n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	7	8.1
Small Extent	10	11.6
Moderate Extent	19	22.1
Great Extent	25	29.1
Very Great Extent	25	29.1
Total	86	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.10 Extent to Which Organizational Motivation (Promotion and Rewards) Predispose Police Officers to Suicidal Thoughts



Source: Study Data (2019)

Motivation in form of promotion and/or rewards is part and parcel of a sound human resource culture. With regard to the extent to which respondents perceived the National Police Service’s motivation system as contributing to suicide among police officers, 80%

of the respondents were of the view that lack of merit based promotion systems and poor reward systems for exemplars of excellence led to stress and contributed to suicide among officers to a significant extent.

According a the key informant with a background in human resource management noted that;

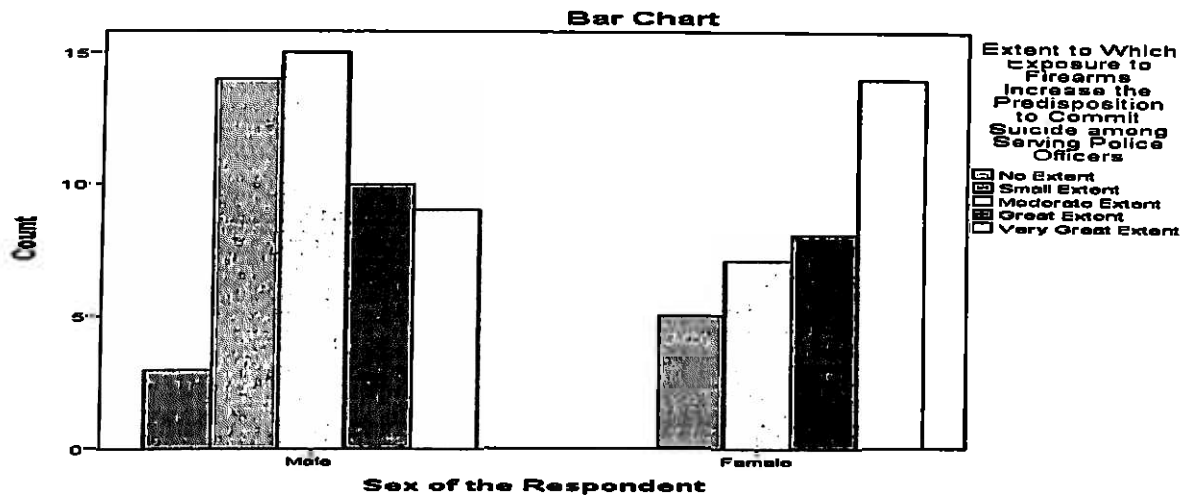
“Motivated workers are stress free and stand a very low chance of committing suicide. However, police officers are poorly promoted and promotion not based on merit leading to stress.”

Table 4.11 Extent to Which Exposure to Firearms Increase the Predisposition to Commit Suicide among Serving Police Officers

Firearms Exposure	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	3	3.5
Small Extent	20	23.3
Moderate Extent	22	25.6
Great Extent	18	20.9
Very Great Extent	23	26.7
Total	86	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.11 Extent to Which Exposure to Firearms Increase the Predisposition to Commit Suicide among Serving Police Officers



Source: Study Data (2019)

Exposure to firearms was also cited as a significant contributor to suicide among serving police officers. Over two thirds of the respondents cited the ease of access of firearms as a key contributor to suicide since it served as an enabler to suicide.

A key informant noted that;

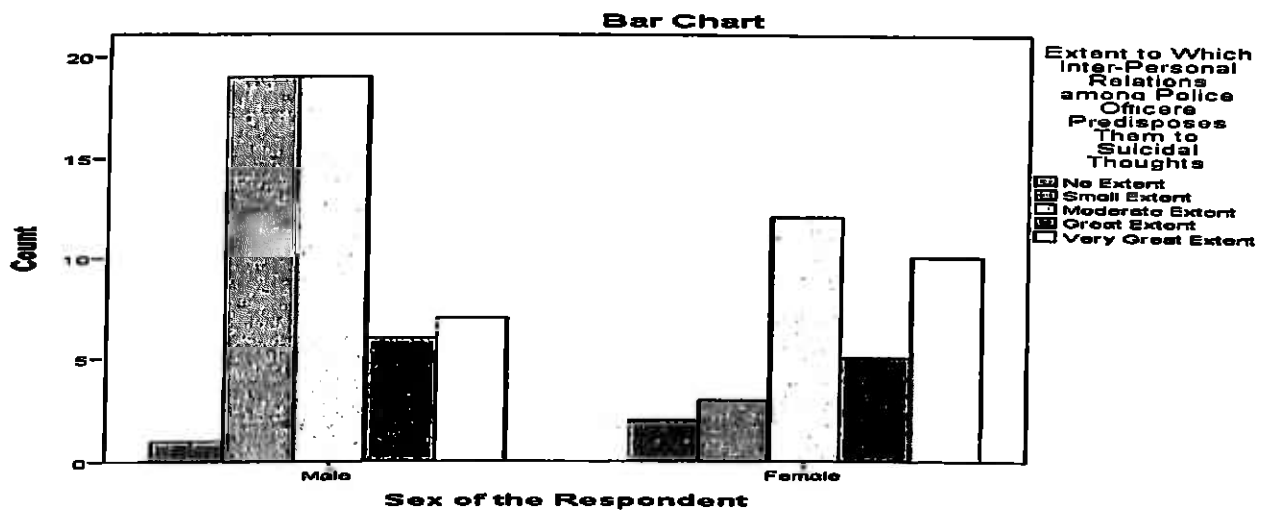
“Due to the lethality of firearms makes them a tool of choice. Furthermore, owing to the fact that police officers use guns in their day to day lives means that they can easily turn them against themselves.”

Table 4.12 Extent to Which Inter-Personal Relations among Police Officers Predisposes Them to Suicidal Thoughts

Interpersonal relations	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	3	3.5
Small Extent	23	27.1
Moderate Extent	31	36.5
Great Extent	11	12.9
Very Great Extent	17	20.0
Total	85	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.12 Extent to Which Inter-Personal Relations among Police Officers Predisposes Them to Suicidal Thoughts



Source: Study Data (2019)

Poor interpersonal relations among police officers have also been cited as predisposing police officers to suicide and suicidal thoughts. This is more pronounced among vertical

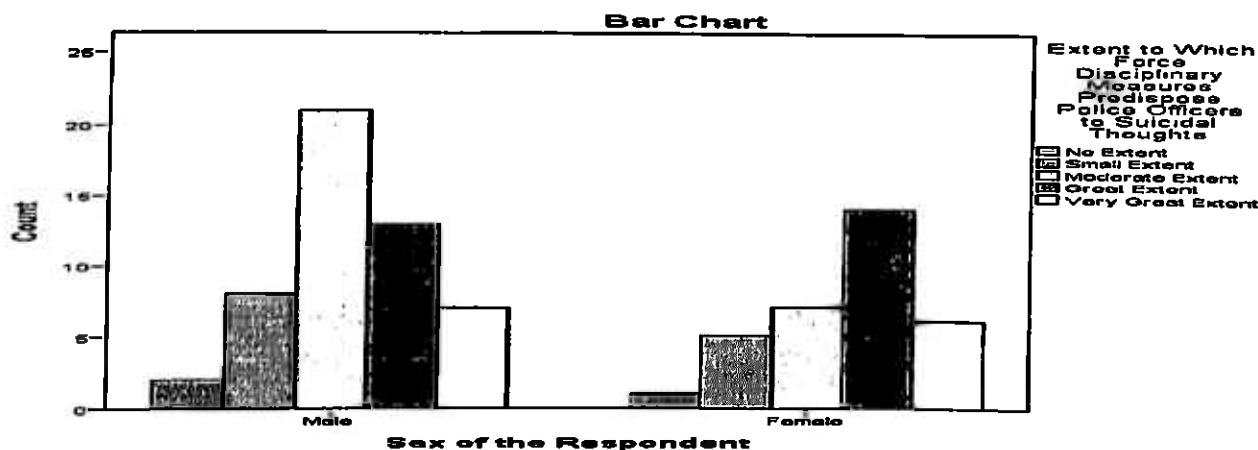
inter-personal relations as well as poor relations with the society thus removing the safety net that society offers as a cushion to suicide.

Table 4.13 Extent to Which Force Disciplinary Measures Predispose Police Officers to Suicidal Thoughts

Disciplinary Measures	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	3	3.5
Small Extent	13	15.3
Moderate Extent	29	34.1
Great Extent	27	31.8
Very Great Extent	13	15.3
Total	85	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.13 Extent to Which Force Disciplinary Measures Predispose Police Officers to Suicidal Thoughts



Source: Study Data (2019)

Punitive disciplinary measures have also been cited as contributors to suicide among serving police officers. This predisposes police officers to resort to suicide to solve disciplinary issues and/or to resort to suicide when disciplinary proceedings recommend punitive measures against an officer

A key informant who was a senior commander noted that;

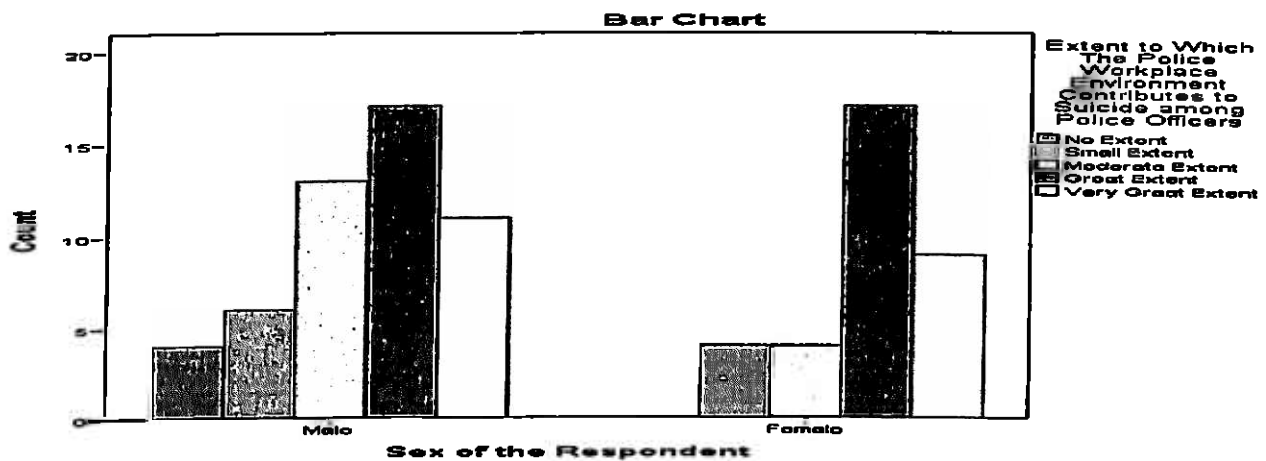
“Officers especially those undergoing disciplinary proceeding against an indiscipline inquiry might opt to suicide because the punishment or the consequences of such disciplinary proceeding are sometimes viewed as extremely harsh, they can recommend dismissal reductions in rank, for forfeiture of salary. This might push an officer to suicide.”

Table 4.14 Extent to Which The Police Workplace Environment Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers

Workplace Environment	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	4	4.7
Small Extent	10	11.6
Moderate Extent	18	20.9
Great Extent	34	39.5
Very Great Extent	20	23.3
Total	86	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.14 Extent to Which the Police Workplace Environment Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers



Source: Study Data (2019)

The majority of the respondents were of opinion that police workplace environment was harsh and not conducive as a working environment .

A key informant was of opinion;

“The National Police Service workplace environment was also cited as significantly contributing to suicide among police officers in that of its terror police migration, they will pop up. So they would invest in poor management at the basic unit of policing i.e., the police station coupled by inadequate working equipment and poorly thought out transfers and redeployments make the National Police Service a very stressful workplace”

Another key informant was of the view that;

“Stress contributors in the National Police Service a very stressful workplace was occasioned by leadership styles whereby the basic unit of policing i.e., the police station is led in an autocratic fashion which is unfortunately replicated at the top echelons of the force. As such, it breeds leaders who are not approachable and hence disgruntled officers in lower cadres would rather bottle up frustrations rather than speak out.”

Table 4.15 Socio-Economic Profiles of Suicide by Serving Police Officers

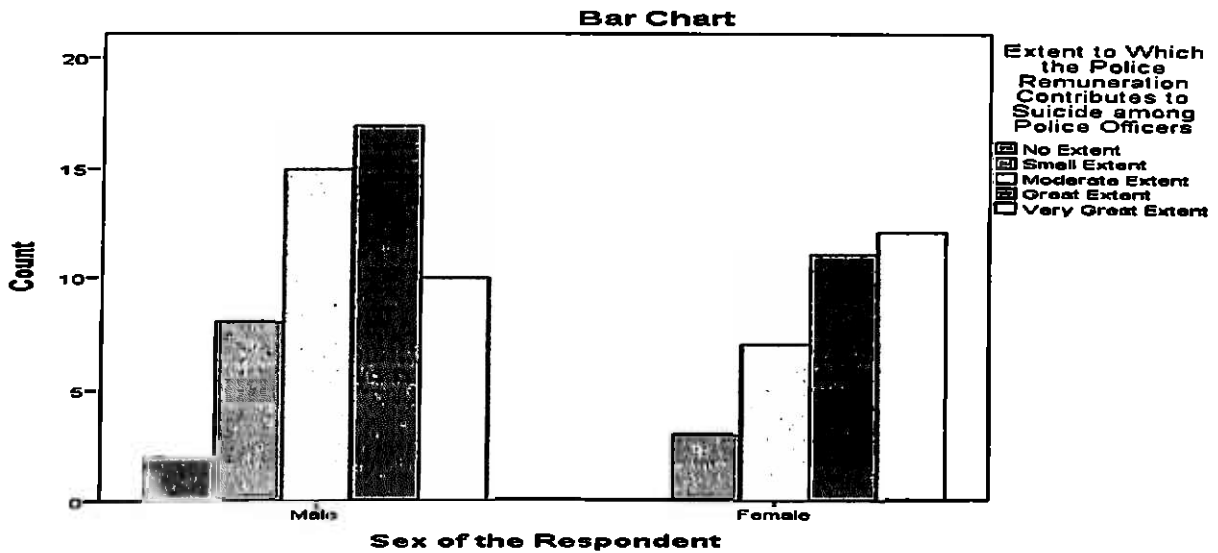
Extent to Which the Police Remuneration Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers

Police Remuneration	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	2	2.3
Small Extent	12	14.0
Moderate Extent	22	25.6
Great Extent	28	32.6
Very Great Extent	22	25.6
Total	86	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.15 Socio-Economic Profiles of Suicide by Serving Police Officers

Extent to Which the Police Remuneration Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers



Source: Study Data (2019)

Respondents were of the view that police officers are poorly remunerated. This results in their inability to meet their daily needs contributing to stress and depression within the service.

A key informant;

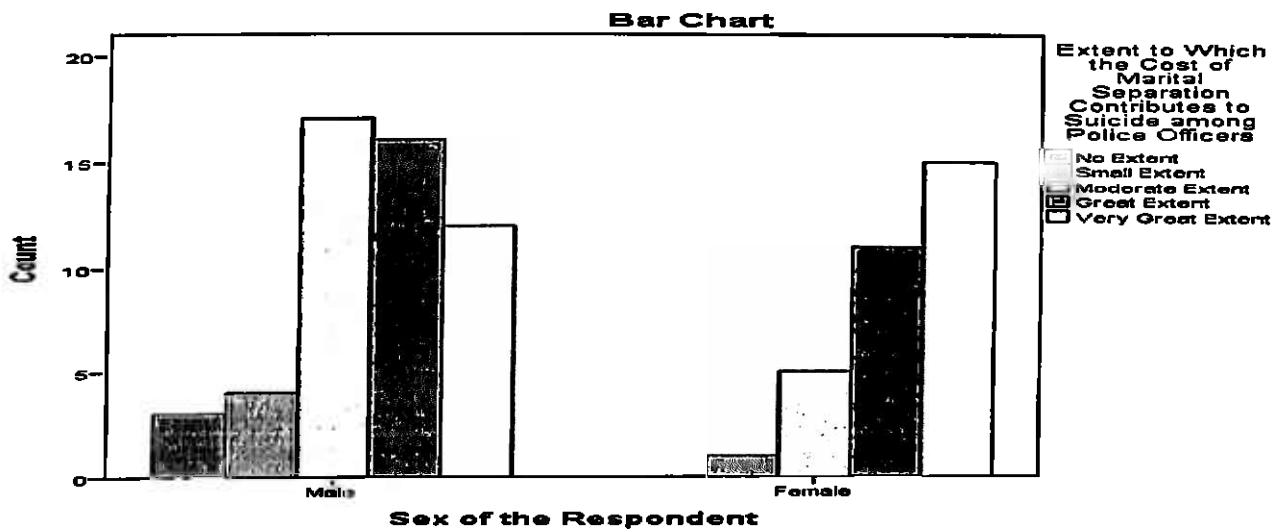
"Police officers are amongst some of the poorly remunerated civil servants, majority feel that the amount of salary they earn is not in tandem with neither the challenges they encounter as far as their personal safety is concerned nor is it in line with the demand of their current economic demands . This lead to suicide because living with unbearable and unaffordable

Table 4.16 The Cost of Marital Separation Contribution to Suicide among Police Officers

Marital Separation	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	3	3.5
Small Extent	5	5.9
Moderate Extent	23	27.1
Great Extent	27	31.8
Very Great Extent	27	31.8
Total	85	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.16 The Cost of Marital Separation Contribution to Suicide among Police Officers



Source: Study Data (2019)

Respondents were of the view that alimony costs as well as other costs attendant to marital separation among serving police officers was a significant contributor to the suicide risk among serving officers.

A key informant gave his opinion and stated that;

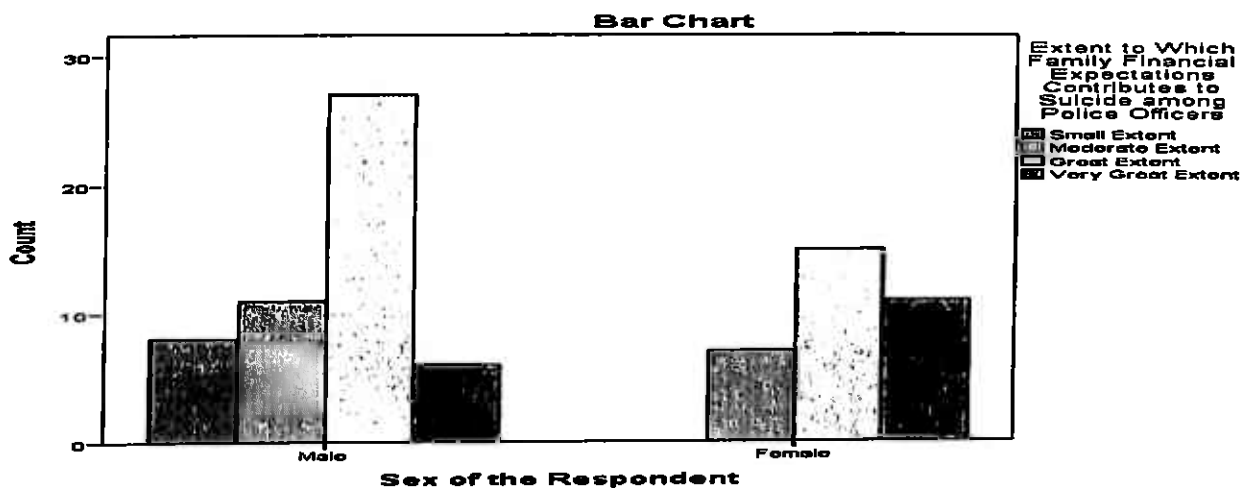
“ Most of the officer feel that they are already under paid and that meeting the day to day demands of life is a challenge when such an individual is further directed to share his /her meagre income with an estranged spouse and the order enforced by a court of law, majority would view suicide as a best way to address the issue.”

Table 4.17 Extent to Which Family Monetary Expectations Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers

Final Expectations	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Small Extent	8	9.3
Moderate Extent	18	20.9
Great Extent	43	50.0
Very Great Extent	17	19.8
Total	86	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.17 Extent to Which Family Monetary Expectations Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers



Source: Study Data (2019)

A key informant stated that;

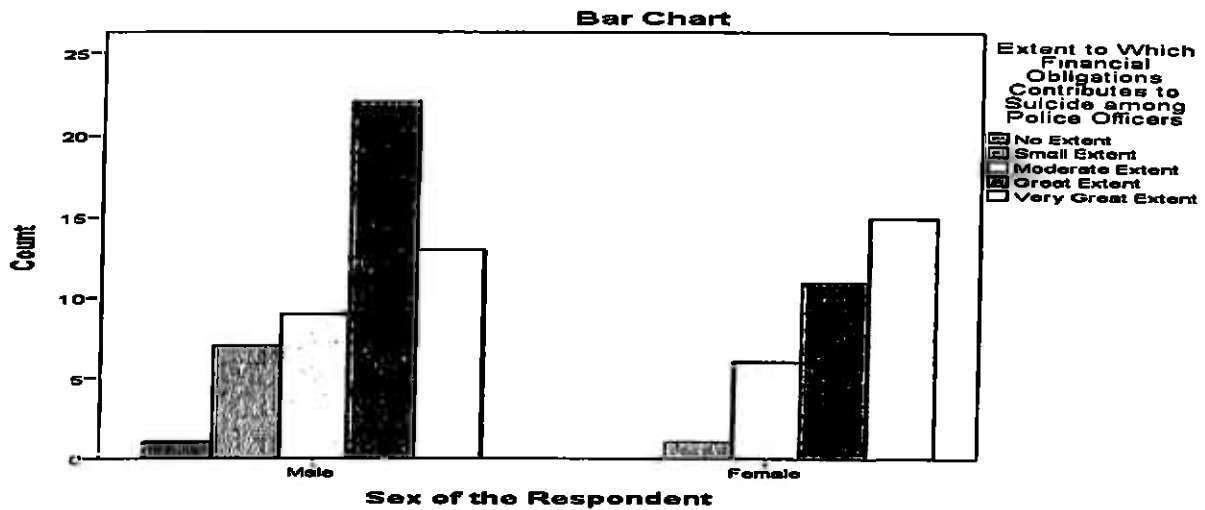
“An officer individual family, extended family and “side families” expected an officer to carter for too much bills yet the officer cannot afford , these leads to stress a noted risk factor as far as suicide is concerned”

Table 4.18 Extent to Which Financial Obligations Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers

Financial Obligations	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No Extent	1	1.2
Small Extent	8	9.3
Moderate Extent	15	17.4
Great Extent	33	38.4
Very Great Extent	29	33.7
Total	86	100.0

Source: Study Data (2019)

Figure 4.18 Extent to Which Financial Obligations Contributes to Suicide among Police Officers



Source: Study Data (2019)

Majority of the respondents were of opinion that financial obligation are sometimes too much to settle yet the salary cannot cater for all that, they added that some officers result to vices such as demanding for bribes and others result to suicide.

The respondents opinion was also supported by key informant stated that;

“Some officer develop some vices to cater for their huge financial obligation. There are also those who adopt corruption for instance demanding bribes as their adopting strategy. Others results to other unorthodox methods such as committing armed robbery, unfortunately other results to suicide.”

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The respondents were of the view that the KNPS as a workplace contributed to stress among its workforce to a significant extent. Work stress at the KNPS is closely related to adverse outcomes. The main outcomes are depression and abuse of one's intimate partner. In case of some officers, the work stress is exacerbated by their reliance on unhelpful mechanism such as avoidance, alcohol use and gambling. These and similar negative mechanism made such officers report higher levels of perceived work stress and adverse health outcomes.

This is largely due to the fact that the most important risk factors associated with officers' perceived work stress were maladaptive coping behaviors such as excessive drinking or problem gambling.

The study also found out that occupational factors surrounding law enforcement as a job profile such as workplace stress, frustration and helplessness and poor working environment significantly contribute to the prevalence of suicide. Drug abuse and specifically alcohol related issues have also been identified as a significant contributor to the same largely due to disciplinary issues occasioned by absenteeism and intoxication on duty. Poor interpersonal relations among police officers have also been cited as predisposing police officers to suicide and suicidal thoughts. This is more pronounced among vertical inter-personal relations as well as poor relations with the society thus removing the safety net that society offers as a cushion to suicide

Exposure to firearms was cited as a significant contributor to suicide among serving police officers. Over two thirds of the respondents cited the ease of access of firearms as a key contributor to suicide since it served as an enabler to suicide. The study thus identified a propensity of officers using guns to terminate their lives thus supporting Aamodt & Stalnaker's (2001) thesis that police officers who commit suicide are likely to use guns issued by the police. The study also found out that relationship problems either at home or at the workplace significantly contributes to suicides.

The National Police Service operates under its own sub-culture. In Kenya, this is characterized by norms and mores guided by the force standing orders. In addition, they have unique labour commitment procedures and remuneration as opposed to mainstream industry. Police sub-cultural sanctions, distress caused by traumatic incident exposure, and social discord with society plays a predominant role in the likelihood of a serving police officer to commit suicide. Furthermore, police officers serving with the National Police Service are alienated from society and as such, the attendant lack of a support base contributed to suicide among officers to a significant extent.

Socioeconomic factors occasioned by poor pay and high financial obligations and expectations also had significant role in increasing suicide risk among serving police officers. As such, increased indebtedness is a significant risk factor. Increased indebtedness, poor remuneration, costs of raising families and divorce costs among police officers plays a predominant role in the likelihood of a serving police officer to commit suicide.

Personal illnesses are also a potential source of suicide among police officers serving with the National Police Service though to a moderate extent. Respondents cited communicable diseases as sources of stress and depression leading to suicide.

Police work involves exposure to traumatizing incidences such as retrieval of dead and rotten cadavers, killing criminals, terror attacks and death of close friends within the police force in ambushes or confrontations with gangs. Respondents perceived police officers' exposure to traumatizing incidences as significantly contributing to suicide among police officers. They identified the lack of trauma debriefing, centralized counselling services and the popularization of a macho culture as contributing to stress and depression within the service.

Further, respondents perceived the KNPS's motivation system as contributing to suicide among police officers. The system lacks merit and poorly rewards exemplars of excellence. This leads to stress and an increase in suicide among officers. Punitive disciplinary measures have also been cited as contributors to suicide among serving police officers. This predisposes police officers to resort to suicide to solve disciplinary issues and/or to resort to suicide when disciplinary proceedings recommend punitive measures against an officer.

5.2 Conclusions

Deriving from the analysis, the study concludes that poor mental and emotional health of police officers; barriers-environmental and cultural-to prevention; a widespread culture that stigmatizes and disapproves seeking assistance when one has suicidal motives are key drivers of suicide among law enforcement agents serving with the National Police Service (NPS).

5.3 Recommendations of the Study

This study recommends

- 1) An overhaul of the workplace environment in order to ensure that there is a friendly working environment. In addition, counseling services should be devolved to the police station as the basic level in order to bring mental health closer to the police officers on the ground who have a higher likelihood of being exposed to traumatic situations. There is also a need to implement the housing reforms in order to give police officers the freedom of living with public. This will help them cool off but also ensure they have support systems in the society.**
- 2) With regard to promotion and rewards, it is worth noting that respondents complained of promotion and rewards not being based on merit, experience or education level. The national police service needs to put in place a policy on promotions and rewards to avoid disgruntled, stressed and depressed police officers.**
- 3) Enhancing the uptake of health insurance meant for serving law enforcement agents.**
- 4) Decentralize counselling to the police station level.**

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear Participant

My name is Amos Gakuo Thami and I am a graduate student at the University of Nairobi. As part of my academic requirements, I am researching on the sociological patterns of suicide by serving law enforcement agents using the National Police Service, Kenya, as the case study. Because you are a serving police officer in the National Police Service, Kenya, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the attached questionnaire. In order to ensure that all information will remain confidential, please do not include your name. If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and return the completed questionnaires promptly. Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. The data collected will provide useful information regarding stemming the suicide of serving police officers in Kenya.

Sincerely,

Amos Gakuo Thami

Phone: +254726373228

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

1. Sex

Male Female

2. Number of years working in the National Police Service

1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21+

3. Rank

<i>RANK</i>	<i>Please Tick Here</i>
Inspector General	
Deputy Inspector General	
Senior Assistant Inspector General	
Assistant Inspector General	
Commissioner	
Senior Superintendent	
Superintendent of Police	
<i>Assistant Superintendent</i>	
<i>Chief Inspector</i>	
<i>Inspector</i>	
Senior Sergeant	
Sergeant	
Corporal	
Constable	

SECTION B: PERSONAL PROFILES OF SUICIDE BY SERVING POLICE OFFICERS

		Very Great Extent (5)	Great Extent (4)	Moderate Extent (3)	Small Extent (2)	No Extent (1)
4	To what extent would you characterize police work stressful?					
5	To what extent does individual alienation from society contribute to suicide among police officers?					
6	To what extent does drug abuse contribute to suicide among police officers?					
7	To what extent does personal illnesses contribute to suicide among police officers					
8	To what extent does stress contribute to suicide among police officers?					
9	To what extent does traumatic incident exposure contribute to suicide among police officers					

10. Are there any other personal issues that might lead to suicide among serving police officers

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11. Any other comment to section B above

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SECTION C: CULTURAL PROFILES OF SUICIDE BY SERVING POLICE OFFICERS

		Very Great Extent (5)	Great Extent (4)	Moderate Extent (3)	Small Extent (2)	No Extent (1)
11	To what extent does the police organizational culture contribute to suicide among serving police officers?					
12	To what extent does lack of organizational motivation (promotion and rewards) lead to suicidal thoughts among police officers?					
13	To what extent does exposure to firearms increase the predisposition to commit suicide among serving police officers?					
14	To what extent does inter-personal relations among police officers lead to suicide among police officers?					
15	To what extent does force disciplinary measures lead to suicidal thoughts among police officers?					
16	To what extent does the police workplace environment contribute to suicide among police officers?					

17. Are there any other cultural issues that might lead to suicide among serving police officers

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18. Any other comment to section C above

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SECTION D: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILES OF SUICIDE BY SERVING POLICE OFFICERS

		Very Great Extent (5)	Great Extent (4)	Moderate Extent (3)	Small Extent (2)	No Extent (1)
19	To what extent does the police remuneration contribute to suicide among police officers?					
20	To what extent does the cost of marital separation contribute to suicide among police officers?					
21	To what extent does family financial expectations contribute to suicide among police officers?					
22	To what extent does financial obligations contribute to suicide among police officers?					

23. Are there any other economic issues that might lead to suicide among serving police officers

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24. Any other comment to section D above

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION
AMOS GAKUO THAMI

APPENDIX II: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

SECTION A: PERSONAL PROFILES OF SUICIDE BY SERVING POLICE OFFICERS

1. What contributes to stress at the police work place?
2. Does experiences at the police work place contribute to stress and depression?
3. What are the coping strategies to stress and depression at the police work place?
Are they sufficient?
4. How are social interactions in and outside the police work place?
5. Does drug abuse contribute to suicide among police officers?
6. Does personal illness contribute to suicide among police officers?
7. Does traumatic incident exposure contribute to suicide among police officers

SECTION B: CULTURAL PROFILES OF SUICIDE BY SERVING POLICE OFFICERS

8. What is the influence of organizational motivation (promotion and rewards) on suicide among police officers?
9. What are your views on exposure to firearms and suicide among serving police officers?
10. What are your views on the police force's disciplinary measures?
11. Does inter-personal relations among police officers lead to suicide among police officers?
12. Does the police workplace environment contribute to suicide among police officers?

**SECTION C: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILES OF SUICIDE BY SERVING
POLICE OFFICERS**

13. What are your views on the police remuneration? Does it in any way contribute to suicide among police officers?
14. What are your views on financial obligations among police officers? Does it in any way contribute to suicide among police officers?
15. What are your views on family financial expectations among police officers? Does it in any way contribute to suicide among police officers?

**APPENDIX III: INTRODUCTION LETTER FROM UNIVERSITY OF
NAIROBI**



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL WORK

Fax 254-2-245566
Telex 22095
Varsity Nairobi Kenya
Tel. 318262/5 Ext. 28167

P.O. Box 30197, Nairobi
Kenya
Email: dept-sociology@uonbi.ac.ke

8/4/2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

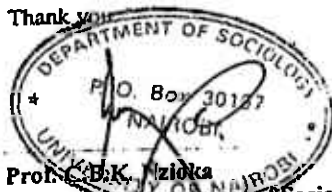
RE: AMOS GAKUO THAMI- C50/83862/2016

Through this letter, I wish to confirm that the above named is a bonafide postgraduate student at the Department of Sociology & Social Work, University of Nairobi. He has presented his project proposal entitled; "Assessment of the Sociological Patterns of Suicide Among Serving Law Enforcement Agents: A Case Study of the National Police Service, Kenya."

Amos is required to collect data pertaining to the research problem from the selected organization to enable him complete his thesis which is a requirement of the Masters degree.

Kindly give him any assistance he may need.

Thank you



Prof. B.K. Mzioka
Chairman, Department of Sociology & Social Work

APPENDIX IV: AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM NACOSTI



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Wayaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/19/98735/30683**

Date: **7th June, 2019.**

Amos Gakuo Thami
University of Nairobi
P.O Box 30197-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Assessment of the sociological patterns of suicide among serving law enforcement agents: A case study of the National Police Service, Kenya.*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Nairobi County for the period ending 7th June, 2020.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner, and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a copy of the final research report to the Commission within one year of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.


BONFACE WANYAMA
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County

APPENDIX V: INTRODUCTION LETTER FROM KENYA POLICE SERVICE



KENYA POLICE SERVICE

Telegraphic Address: "VIGILANCE", Nairobi
Telephone: Nairobi 341411-6
Fax: 330495

POLICE HEADQUARTERS
P.O. Box 30083-00100
NAIROBI

When replying please quote
Ref. No. A/EST/6/1/2/VOL.VI/80
and date

31st July 2019

The County Police Commander
Nairobi County
P O Box 30051-00100
NAIROBI

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
NO. 92172 PC AMOS GAKUO THAME

The above named is a Post graduate student at the University of Nairobi pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in Criminology and Social Order.

He is currently writing a Project titled "Assessment of the Sociological Patterns of Suicide among Serving Law Enforcement Agents". A case study of the National Police Service, Nairobi County, Kenya".

The request to interview officers within the County has been approved by the Deputy Inspector General, Kenya Police Service. This is therefore to request that the officer be felicitated to collect the data.

He has been advised to share with the service the results of the findings of the study.

Kindly facilitate.


(DAVID BIRECH) psc (R)
FOR: DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL
KENYA POLICE SERVICE

APPENDIX VI: TURNITIN ORIGINALITY REPORT

Turnitin

07/11/2019, 05:18

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Turnitin Originality Report

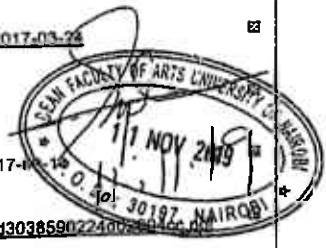
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ASSESSMENT OF THE PATTERNS OF SUICIDE AMONG S... By Amos Gakuo

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Dr. James K...