

Influence of Social Demographic Factors on Victimization of Police Officers in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract

Victimization of police officers is on the increase globally and locally. Reports of police officers being killed by civilians in the course of executing their duties have continued to raise a lot of concerns. This study analyzed the influence of social demographic factors on victimization of police officers in Embakasi sub-county, Nairobi city county, Kenya. The specific objectives were to examine the extent and nature of police victimization and the influence of police social demographics on victimization. The study was anchored on the lifestyle theory of victimization and the conflict theory. An exploratory research design was adopted, targeting a population of 449 police officers from general duty, traffic, administration police, and criminal investigation units within Embakasi Sub-County. A sample size of 135 police officers was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and focused interviews with key informants. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research question addressing the extent and nature of police victimization was analyzed using descriptive statistics, while binary logistic regression analysis was applied to examine the influence of social demographics on victimization. Thematic analysis was used to interpret data gathered from focused interviews with selected key informants. The study revealed that 81% of respondents experienced criminal victimization. A majority, 58%, faced threats, 38% physical victimization, and 4% robbery. Police victimization was significantly influenced by age, education, experience, location, marital status and department. This study concludes that criminal victimization among police officers is prevalent. The National Police Service should enhance safety training with a focus on threat assessment, de-escalation and situational awareness. Officers should be equipped with advanced protective gear and supported by effective surveillance and emergency response systems. The National Police Service should

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make accessible psychological support and wellness programs to help officers cope with trauma and stress. Additionally, the service should strengthen community policing initiatives to enhance trust, reduce hostility and improve officer safety.

Key words

police officers, social demographic factors, victimization

Introduction

Globally, police officers increasingly face victimization, with notable incidents across various countries. In the USA, 500 officers were killed in 2015 (Krienger et al., 2015). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) indicated that from 2006 to 2015, over 556,000 law enforcement officers were assaulted while on duty, with 27 percent suffering serious injuries. In Kentucky, 4,585 officers were assaulted between 2012 and 2016. In Mexico, a rampant victimization trend in 14 cities from 2005 to 2012 was noted, resulting in over 700 officer fatalities (Sabet, 2012). Since the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, police victimization surged, as insurgents targeted law enforcement amid administrative upheaval (Deflem & Sutphin, 2012). The nature of police victimization varies by country; in the USA, it's predominantly killings and assaults (Krienger et al., 2015). In Germany, patrol officers also face physical assaults (Ellrich, 2016). In Africa, countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo report high incidences of police victimization, with Boko Haram in Nigeria exacerbating the issue through targeted attacks and killings (World International Security and Police Index, 2016). In Kenya, police victimization has become increasingly prevalent, encompassing various forms of violence such as killings, physical assaults, theft, and exploitation. Notable incidents include the deaths of 42 officers in Baragoi in 2012 during a confrontation with cattle rustlers, and the ambush of 21 officers in Kapedo in 2014. The victimization of police officers by citizens can negatively influence community trust, raising doubts about their ability to protect others when they themselves are vulnerable (Redman, 2018). Police victimization affects officer safety, mental health and decision-making (Ellrich & Baier, 2016). Understanding contributing factors aids in developing strategies to enhance officer well-being, improve community-police relations and ensure effective law enforcement (Ellrich & Baier, 2016; Simmler et al., 2021). The lifestyle theory of victimization suggests that personal choices and lifestyles may enhance vulnerability to crime (Hindelang et al., 1978).

Previous research has primarily focused on the victimization of citizens by law enforcement, overlooking the increasing incidents of police victimization by the public (Redman, 2018). This has resulted in a lack of understanding of the factors that contribute to police victimization and its consequences. Instead, existing studies have examined the risks associated with police work (Lasky, 2019). As a result, there is gap in knowledge regarding the victimization of police officers by members of the public. Previous studies on gender and victimization yield mixed results. Connell and Bartle-Harring (2018) noted women face more violence, while Magadla & Obioha (2021) found male police officers experience higher victimization rates. Cara and Amie (2007) indicated female officers are at greater risk of assault due to societal gender views. Choudhary and Rufus (2021) revealed that female officers in India face sexual harassment from male colleagues.

In this study, we examined the relationship between police officers' social demographics, personality traits, punitive attitudes, and victimization. We aimed to fill contextual, methodological and theoretical gaps in the literature, as there is paucity of literature on social demographic factors and victimization of police officers. Through this study, we contributed to the limited body of knowledge on police victimization by examining the extent of police victimization, assessing the influence of sociodemographic factors on police victimization and providing practical recommendations to enhance officer safety, mental health support and community engagement. This study, therefore, assessed the extent of victimization of police officers and investigated the influence of social demographic factors on victimization of police officers in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi City County.

Literature review

Research into gender-related victimization reveals significant disparities in findings. Connell and Bartle-Harring (2018) found that women are generally more likely to experience violent victimization compared to men, a conclusion supported by broader studies on violence across various professions. Similarly, Cara and Amie (2007) established that female police officers are at a heightened risk of assault, attributing this to prevailing societal stereotypes and perceptions regarding the capabilities and roles of women in law enforcement. However, contradictory evidence exists. Indeed, Magadla and Obioha (2021) reported that male police officers experienced higher levels of victimization than their female counterparts. Such discrepancies may stem from contextual differences such as cultural norms, operational environments, or reporting practices. Choudhary and Rufus (2021) further nuanced this discussion through a thematic review focusing on women in the Indian police force. Their findings indicated that women officers frequently face gender-specific victimization, notably in the form of sexual harassment, often perpetrated by male colleagues.

The role of experience or length of service affects police victimization. This is supported by Magadla and Obioha (2021), who observed that officers with one to five years of service were more susceptible to victimization than those with longer service records. This finding suggests that less experienced officers may lack the situational awareness or tactical experience necessary to avoid or de-escalate potentially dangerous encounters. Additionally, early-career officers may be more frequently assigned to high-risk duties, further increasing their exposure to victimization.

Marital status is a major factor in police victimization. Magadla and Obioha (2021) reported that married police officers were more likely to experience victimization compared to their unmarried counterparts. While this relationship is less frequently explored in literature, possible explanations include the added emotional and psychological stressors that accompany balancing work and family life. Marital responsibilities may also influence decision-making or increase vulnerability during off-duty periods, particularly in cases involving domestic abuse, which has been highlighted by Brennan et al. (2023) as a form of victimization increasingly affecting police officers. Brennan et al.'s (2023) study emphasizes that even though the police institution is tasked with safeguarding the public, its members are not immune to forms of domestic abuse, which often go unreported due to stigma, institutional culture, or fear of reprisal.

Indeed, the lifestyle theory of victimization (Hindelang et al., 1978) supposes that a person's characteristics and lifestyle may contribute to his victimization. The theory is based on a person's status characteristics, personal and lifestyle activities that can prompt a person to become a victim of crime (Paluka & Calphin, 2022). According to the theory, a person's status characteristics are determined by a person's level of income, age, level of education, employment, sexual orientation among others. These characteristics tend to produce a certain life pattern which can prompt an offender to execute their crimes. From an offender's perspective, personal characteristics and lifestyles contribute to determine target suitability and desirability (Hindelang et al., 1978). The study examines age, gender, and length of service of police officers, suggesting these traits influence behavior and victimization exposure differently.

Methodology

Study Philosophy and Design

We employed a pragmatism research philosophy. In their publication, Creswell and Creswell (2017) emphasized the significance of adopting a pragmatic research philosophy, advocating for the use of various research methods to ensure the credibility and dependability of research outcomes when addressing real-world issues.

This study used an exploratory research design. According to George and Merkus (2023), an exploratory research design is a research design that is employed in researching an event where scant information exists. An exploratory research design helps in a better understanding of an existing problem and provides answers to the questions: why, how and what, hence aiding the researcher in acquiring more information about the research problem.

Study Area

The study area was Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi City County. The area is approximately 11 kilometers southeast of the central business district. The area is a residence for low- and middle-income earners. The area is one of the most populous in Nairobi, with a population density of 11,460 per square kilometer according to the 2019 Census. The area is under the coverage of Embakasi, Kware, Villa, Mombasa Road and Mukuru kwa Rueben police stations.

Participants and Sampling

A research population is a group of individuals or objects through which a sample is selected (Kothari, 2014). It describes a group of objects or individuals that are of interest to a researcher. The target population were 449 police officers in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi City County as per the National Police Service Annual Returns (2022). The officers were drawn from the General Duty, Traffic, Directorate of Criminal Investigation and the Administration Police departments. The breakdown of the target population was as follows: 158 General duty officers, 139 Traffic

police officers, 48 Directorate of Criminal Investigation officers and 104 Administration Police officers.

As described by Kothari (2014), a sample size is a proportion of objects or individuals selected from a target population. The sample size was 135 police officers. The researcher chose a proportional sample of 30% which as stated by Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) is the ideal threshold if the population is small that is; below 1000. Consequently, forty-seven (47) general duty officers, forty-two (42) traffic police officers fifteen (15) officers from the DCI and thirty-one (31) administration police officers were sampled. Therefore, the total sample size was one hundred and thirty-five (135).

Stratified random sampling was adopted to select the sample size by dividing the population into strata, ensuring representation for accurate inferences (Kothari & Garg, 2014). The study included officers from various police divisions: General Duty, Traffic, Directorate of Criminal Investigation, and Administration Police. A proportional sample of 30% was drawn from each stratum, as suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) for smaller populations. To select individual participants, simple random sampling was utilized where each officer was assigned a number, mixed in a basket, and 30% of those numbers were randomly picked for study participation.

Procedure

A hundred and thirty-five police officers in Embakasi Sub-County were issued with questionnaires, out of which 108 questionnaires were filled and returned. The response rate was 80%. Shyab et al. (2023) suggest that response rates of 50% or higher are suitable for analysis. Data collection was done through the use of research questionnaires and focused interviews from key informants. This section, therefore, discussed the data collection instrument and the data collection procedures. Data was collected through questionnaires and key informant interviews. Questionnaires both open and closed-ended and segmented into four (4) sections. The researcher conducted interviews with senior officers, to gain their insights on the study. The questions were guided by the research objectives. Senior police officers were chosen as key informants due to their expertise and experience, position of authority, access to information, decision-making roles, professional network and role modeling. These factors made them valuable in providing insights and recommendations on curbing the victimization of police officers.

Prior to the collection of data, the researcher applied for the review of the proposal by the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Scientific Ethics Review Committee (DEKUTSERC), which subsequently issued approval for data collection in the field. The second step involved obtaining a research permit from the National Council of Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Pilot data was then collected for the purpose of conducting the pilot study. This was followed by the actual data collection. Questionnaires were administered to 135 respondents, who were required to fill them within one week. The duly filled questionnaires were then collected and coded in readiness for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The data analysis involved carrying out descriptive statistics, which helped in revealing the various forms of police victimization in terms of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The influence of police demographics, personality, and punitive attitudes on the victimization of police officers was analyzed using binary logistic regression analysis. Data from focused interviews with selected key informants were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involved reading and re-reading transcripts for understanding. Codes were generated by highlighting significant features of the data relevant to the research question. These codes were reviewed and organized into themes, which were then refined and defined to capture the main themes and subthemes of the qualitative data.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were standards that had to be adhered to in the research process, as failure to do so would compromise the integrity of the study. Several steps were undertaken in the current study to observe ethical standards. The first step involved seeking approval of the research proposal from the university through DEKUTSERC, which, upon approval, issued a letter of introduction that allowed the researcher to approach relevant bodies like the National Commission of Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), which then issued a research permit. Another ethical standard adhered to was the acknowledgment of various sources of information by citing and referencing the authors. Furthermore, the issue of voluntary and informed consent was respected by formally and in writing requesting respondents to participate in the study. Anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents were also upheld by assuring them that no identifying information would be included in the research report. They were not required to write their names on the questionnaire unless they consented. A plagiarism test was done to ensure that no part of the research was copied from other sources and to guarantee the originality of the research.

Findings

Demographic Characteristics

Respondents were required to indicate their gender, age, education level, department attached to, length of service, marital status and location of work. Findings showed that 93 (86%) were male and 15 (14%) were female. There were more males than females in the study. The average age (mean) was 40 years, while the middle value (median) was 39 years, suggesting that most respondents were in their late 30s or early 40s. The range of ages spans from 25 to 55 years, with a standard deviation of 5.6 years, indicating a moderate spread around the average age. Findings indicated that 1 (1%) respondent had primary school education, 62 (57%) had secondary school education, 27 (25%) had diplomas, 17 (16%) had bachelor's and 1 (1%) had master's degrees. Hence, most of the respondents had a secondary school level of education. Thirty-six (33%) respondents were attached to general duty, 38(35%) were attached to traffic, 10(9%) were attached

to the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, and 24(22%) were attached to the Administration Police.

Results indicate that respondents had an average of 18 years of work experience, with the median at 17 years, meaning that half of the respondents have 17 years of experience or less, while the other half have more. The range of experience spans from 5 years (minimum) to 34 years (maximum), with a standard deviation of about 5.9 years, indicating a moderate variation in experience levels among respondents. Findings showed that 3 (3%) of the respondents were single, 104(96%) of the respondents were married and 1(1%) of the respondents were divorced. Hence, most of the respondents were married. Twenty-one (19%) respondents worked in Donholm, 19 (18%) worked in Pipeline, 13 (12%) worked in Tena, 27 (25%) worked in Embakasi village, 14 (13%) worked in Mukuru Kwa Rueben and 14 (13%) worked in Fedha. Hence, most of the respondent's place of work was Embakasi village. Demographic characteristics summary is illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1
Demographic characteristics

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	93	86%
	Female	15	14%
Education Level	Primary School	1	1%
	Secondary School	62	57%
	Diploma	27	25%
	Bachelor's Degree	17	16%
	Master's Degree	1	1%
Department Attached To	General Duty	36	33%
	Traffic	38	35%
	Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI)	10	9%
	Administration Police	24	23%
Marital Status	Single	3	3%
	Married	104	96%
	Divorced	1	1%
Location of Work	Donholm	21	19%
	Pipeline	19	18%
	Tena	13	12%
	Embakasi Village	27	25%

Mukuru Kwa Rueben	14	13%
Fedha	14	13%

Extent of Victimization of Police Officers

The study's determined the extent of victimization of police officers in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi City County. Respondents were required to indicate if, in the previous three years, they had been criminally victimized by members of the public while on duty at their current stations. Data analysis involved carrying out descriptive statistics, which helped in revealing the various forms of police victimization in terms of frequencies and percentages. Results are summarized in Figure 1

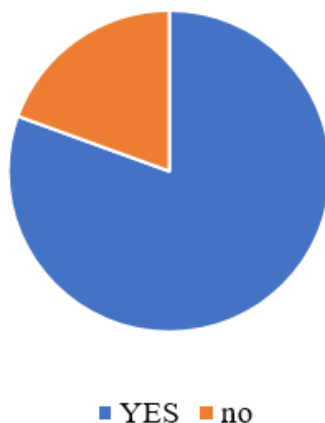


Figure 1: Criminal Victimization

Figure 1 demonstrates that a majority of the respondents (81%) had been criminally victimized. This provided a reliable proportion to determine predictors of victimization of police officers. Additionally, respondents were required to indicate the forms of victimization encountered. This is summarized in Figure 2

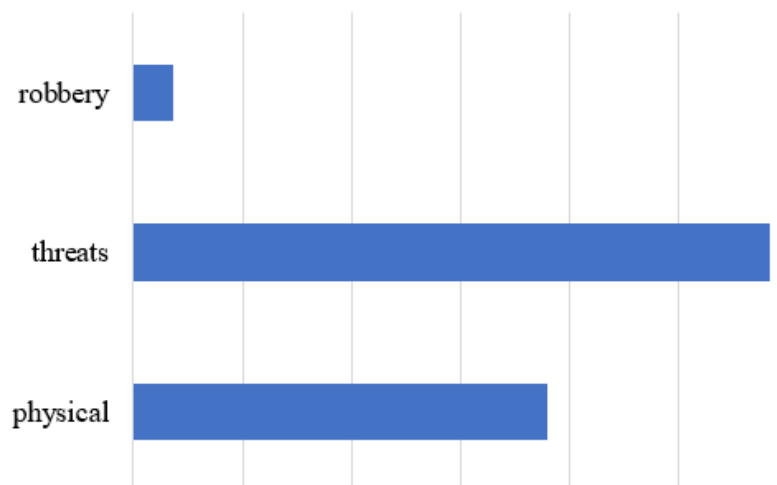


Figure 2: Forms of Victimization

Figure 2 illustrates that 58% of the respondents had received threats and intimidations, 38% had encountered physical victimization and 4% had encountered robbery/theft. Hence, majority of the respondents had encountered threats and intimidation in their course of duty.

Respondents were required to indicate the number of times they had been victimized in the various forms, while on duty. Figure 3 illustrates the results.

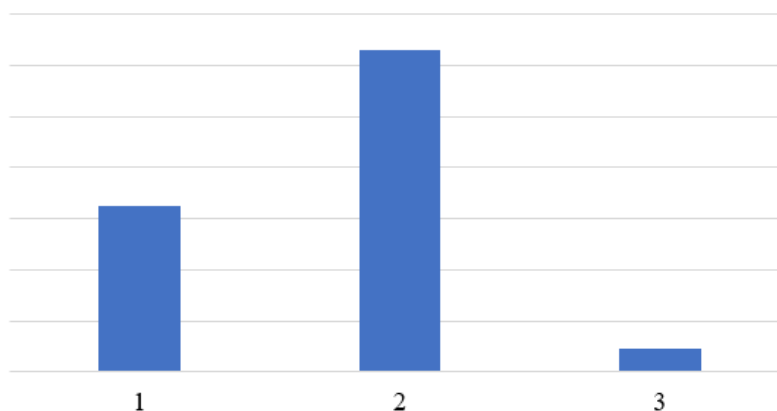


Figure 3: Frequency of forms of Victimization

Figure 3 illustrates that the majority of respondents (63%) experienced threats and intimidation. Furthermore, 32% of the respondents reported experiencing victimization as the second most frequent occurrence, whereas only 5% reported the lowest incidence of being robbed.

Social Demographic Factors and Victimization of Police Officers

The study assessed the influence of social demographic factors on victimization of police officers in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi City County. Data analysis involved carrying out descriptive statistics, which helped in revealing the various forms of police victimization in terms of frequencies and percentages. Binary logistic regression was used to assess the influence of social demographic factors on victimization of police officers.

Binary Logistic Regression

The study carried out binary logistic regression of social demographic factors on victimization of police officers. Results are presented and analyzed in the subsequent tables.

The Step Chi-square of 14.143 with a p-value of 0.000 shows that the most recent step in building the model significantly improves its fit. Similarly, the Block Chi-square with the same value and a p-value of 0.000 suggests that including all predictors together as a block significantly enhances the model's fit. The Model Chi-square (14.143, p = 0.000) indicates that the model is statistically significant, hence it provides a better fit than a model with no predictors. Hence, the predictors contribute significantly in explaining the variation in the dependent variable.

The -2 Log Likelihood value of 2.259 indicates a good fit, as lower values typically indicate a better model fit to the data. The Cox & Snell R Square of 0.523 and the Nagelkerke R Square of 0.596 indicate that the model explains between 52.3% and 59.6% of the variance in the dependent variable. This indicates a significant level of explanatory power, hence the model accounts for a significant portion of the variability in the dependent variable.

Table 2 presents the analysis of Social Demographic Factors and Victimization of Police Officers and shows that gender had a significant effect on police victimization (Wald = 1.309, p = 0.003). Age, education, department, experience, marital status and location also showed significant associations with victimization, with p-values below the threshold of 0.05, indicating that these factors influence the likelihood of victimization. For instance, experience (Wald = 1.448, p = 0.002) and department (Wald = 3.946, p = 0.027) are particularly strong predictors, highlighting the influence of professional background and length of service. The study reveals that younger police officers are more susceptible to victimization due to their inexperience and insufficient skills in managing tense scenarios.

Table 2
Equation Variables for Social Demographic Factors and Victimization of Police Officers

Variables in the Equation	Wald	Sig.
Gender	1.309	0.003
Age	1.179	0.028
Education	0.925	0.009
Department	3.946	0.027

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Experience	1.448	0.002
Marital	1.653	0.048
Location	2.329	0.008
Constant	0.000	0.000

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: gender, age, education, department, experience, marital, location.

Interviewees were asked to explain particular demographics or personal characteristics that made police officers more susceptible to victimization. Senior Officer D indicated,

"Yes, certain demographics and personal characteristics can make officers more susceptible to victimization. Age plays a significant role, as younger officers may not have the experience to navigate tense situations effectively, which can make them vulnerable. Gender is another factor; female officers, especially in male-dominated environments, sometimes face more hostility or aggression. Also, officers who work in densely populated areas or high crime-prone areas are at a higher risk simply because the likelihood of encountering violent individuals is greater."

Senior Officer E said,

"Yes, officers in high-risk environments are more susceptible to victimization. Younger officers with less experience might not know how to de-escalate situations, making them more vulnerable. Gender also matters – female officers sometimes face additional challenges or discrimination, which can escalate conflicts. Officers working in slums or areas with high political tension are at greater risk, as these areas can often be more volatile and hostile toward law enforcement."

Senior Officer B noted,

"Yes, there are clear demographics and characteristics that can increase an officer's susceptibility to victimization. Age can be a factor, as older officers might be more cautious, whereas younger ones may take unnecessary risks. Gender, too, plays a role; female officers can sometimes be targeted more, especially in certain cultural contexts. Officers in areas with high crime rates or political unrest, such as slums or high-density urban areas, are definitely more exposed to victimization."

The senior police officers were asked the role location or setting of police work played in officer victimization. Senior Officer A indicated,

"The location of police work is absolutely critical. Officers in high crime-prone areas, such as slums or densely populated urban areas, face more immediate threats from violent individuals. The location of incidents also matters – areas with high political tension, such as during protests or elections, can be very dangerous for officers. Traffic incidents, especially those in busy urban areas, also increase the likelihood of violent encounters."

Senior Officer C said,

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"Location is a major factor in officer victimization. Officers working in high crime-prone areas, such as slums, or regions where political tensions are high, are more likely to be at risk. These areas tend to have less stability and greater hostility towards police. Additionally, the sheer density of people in these areas increases the chances of violent confrontations, especially during demonstrations or in heavily congested traffic."

Senior Officer D asserted,

"Yes, location plays a critical role in officer safety. Areas with high crime rates or political tension, such as slums or regions known for frequent protests, put officers at greater risk. Traffic-related incidents, particularly in high-density areas, can also escalate quickly into violent confrontations. Officers working in such environments must always be prepared for potential dangers."

Interviewees were asked to explain why specific departments or units within the police service were more prone to victimization than others. Senior Officer A said,

"Yes, certain units are more prone to victimization. For example, officers in the General Service Unit (GSU) or the Administration Police face more direct confrontations with violent offenders, especially in high-risk areas. Their presence in crowd control or conflict zones, such as during political unrest or in crime-prone areas, makes them prime targets for violence. These officers are often in the line of fire during volatile situations."

Senior Officer B indicated,

"Yes, departments such as the GSU and the Administration Police are at a higher risk. These units often deal with high-intensity situations like riots, public disturbances, or high-crime zones. Their role in enforcing law and order during politically charged environments or in slums places them in harm's way. Their visibility in such areas makes them more likely to encounter aggression from both the public and criminals."

Senior Officer C said,

"Yes, the GSU and the Administration Police units are more prone to victimization due to the nature of their duties. These officers are often deployed in areas with high political tension, such as during election periods or public demonstrations, which can lead to confrontations. Additionally, working in slums and high-crime areas, they face more physical risks from hostile individuals, making them more vulnerable to violent acts."

Discussion

The study assessed the extent of police victimization in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi, revealing that 81% of officers had experienced some form of criminal victimization in the past three years. This aligns with previous studies, such as Violanti et al. (2018) and Gershon et al. (2009), which reported high victimization rates among officers in urban settings. The most common form of victimization was threats and intimidation, reported by 58% of respondents, followed by physical attacks (38%) and robbery/theft (4%). These findings are consistent with global patterns,

highlighting the high vulnerability of urban police officers due to frequent confrontations and occupational stress. Further analysis showed that 63% of officers had experienced threats and intimidation multiple times, confirming this as the most recurrent form of victimization. These results emphasize the need for tailored interventions such as enhanced officer safety measures, psychological support systems, and community engagement strategies to mitigate the risks faced by law enforcement personnel in high-risk areas.

Gender had a significant effect on police victimization (Wald = 1.309, $p = 0.003$). Consistent with Kaminski et al. (2003), female officers face heightened hostility and aggression, particularly in patriarchal environments that challenge their authority. Fleming and Luecking (2014) reported that women in law enforcement experience higher rates of physical and psychological victimization than men. These findings support the lifestyle theory of victimization, which posits that occupational role influence exposure. Female officers are at increased risk due to their presence in a male-dominated field, leading to greater interactions and potential hostility from male colleagues.

The study assessed the influence of social demographic factors on victimization of police officers in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi City County. Age, education, department, experience, marital status and location also showed significant associations with victimization, with p -values below the threshold of 0.05, indicating that these factors influence the likelihood of victimization. For instance, experience (Wald = 1.448, $p = 0.002$) and department (Wald = 3.946, $p = 0.027$) are particularly strong predictors, highlighting the influence of professional background and length of service. The study reveals that younger police officers are more susceptible to victimization due to their inexperience and insufficient skills in managing tense scenarios. This aligns with Ogan, E. P. (2021), who indicated that younger officers often struggle under pressure, elevating their victimization risk. Choudhary and Rufus (2021) support these observations, noting that younger officers are more prone to conflicts due to inadequate de-escalation experience, suggesting that age and experience are vital in assessing victimization likelihood. Research by Abdelmottlel (2016) confirmed that higher educational attainment among officers enhances conflict resolution skills, reducing risky exposure and fostering procedural justice to mitigate violent encounters. Klein et al. (2016) noted that units engaged in crowd control face greater risks due to their operational contexts, increasing their likelihood of violent confrontations and victimization, especially in politically unstable or high-crime areas. Smith, E. (2019) demonstrated that inexperienced officers struggle with situational awareness and coping strategies. Violanti et al. (2018) found that officers in high-crime neighborhoods face increased confrontations with criminals and exposure to violent incidents. Additionally, Ogan (2021) corroborates this by illustrating that officers in urban or conflict-heavy areas encounter significantly higher rates of violence due to dense populations and elevated criminal activity, increasing their chances of victimization.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that gender significantly affects police victimization, with age, education, department, experience, marital status, and location also playing important roles. Certain

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demographics, locations, and departments increase officers' vulnerability to victimization. Younger, less experienced, and female officers face greater risk, especially in high-crime areas. Officers in densely populated urban areas, politically sensitive regions, or high-crime zones are exposed to higher victimization risks due to frequent violent encounters. Location factors, such as working in politically unstable or traffic-congested areas, further amplify victimization risks. Units like the General Service Unit and Administration Police, often deployed to conflict-prone or volatile locations, have increased exposure due to their frontline responsibilities.

This study recommends that the National Police Service should enhance officer safety training, focusing on threat assessment and de-escalation techniques to reduce confrontations. Policies should be developed to improve officer protection, including better surveillance, emergency response strategies, and increased access to protective gear. Psychological support and counseling services should be provided to help officers cope with the trauma of threats, intimidation, and physical victimization. Strengthening community relations through proactive engagement programs can help reduce hostility and foster trust between police and the public. Additionally, reviewing and adjusting operational deployment strategies to minimize officers' exposure to high-risk situations can further enhance their safety.

The National Police Service should implement targeted training programs that equip younger, less experienced, and female officers with enhanced situational awareness, self-defense, and conflict resolution skills. Deployments should consider officers' experience levels, ensuring that high-risk areas have a mix of seasoned and junior officers to provide mentorship and support. Specialized mental health and wellness programs should be introduced to help officers cope with stress and trauma, particularly for those in high-crime or politically unstable areas. Community policing initiatives should be strengthened to foster trust and collaboration between officers and residents, reducing hostility and potential threats. Additionally, police units deployed to volatile locations should receive enhanced protective equipment and advanced tactical training to minimize risks.

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Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Data Availability Statement

The corresponding author will, upon reasonable request provide the data supporting the findings of this study.

Author Contributions

Samuel Ngaithe: Writing, Editing, Data Collection and Analysis

Mwai Kariuki & Cyprian Omari: Guidance, Reviewing and Validation

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Scientific Ethics Review Committee (DeKUTSERC), Ref/No: DeKUTSERC/CA/03/01

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