

Original Research Article

Beyond Structural Change: Examining the Outcomes of Police Restructuring in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract: Globally, police organizations are facing multiple challenges linked to their complex operating environment. Anchoring on this, police organizations are reviewing their organizational structures and re-engineering them to meet the needs of their customers. This study sought to evaluate the efficacy of police restructuring on the delivery of policing services in Nairobi City County. More specifically, the study sought to establish the outcomes of police restructuring in Nairobi County. The New Public Management theory underpins the study. It carried out an empirical literature review using books, journal articles, periodicals, conference papers, government publications, and publications of renowned intergovernmental bodies. With a target population drawn from the National Crime Research Centre, Independent Policing Oversight Authority, Civil Rights Bodies, particularly Katiba Institute and Independent Medico- Legal Unit, National Government Administrative Officers and police officers drawn from the constitutive services and a directorate of the National Police Service, the study drew a sample of 109 participants. Additionally, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. Primary data was collected using questionnaires, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Secondary data was acquired from books, journal publications, and government publications. The primary data collected was cleaned, edited, coded, and analyzed using SPSS version 9 and NVIVO software for qualitative data analysis. The results of data analysis were presented in the form of frequency tables, graphs, and charts. The study established that police restructuring in Nairobi County had mixed and uncertain outcomes. While some improvements were noted in command flow (51.9%), service delivery (52%), and police community relations (48.1%), many officers (73.1%) reported no direct impact, with APS officers in particular citing victimization, discrimination, and unclear roles. Gains in grassroots and community policing were modest, with less than 40% rating community policing as effective. Perceptions of officers revealed skepticism, with 52.9% rating reforms as only moderately effective and 62.5% indicating restructuring had not enhanced professionalism. Persistent corruption, unequal access to training and promotions, and confusion in command structures undermined the intended outcomes. APS officers reported

marginalization in housing, resourcing, and recognition, further fueling discontent. The study recommends that the government establish ongoing sensitization programs for the purpose of creating awareness on restructuring objectives and expected outcomes.

Keywords: Police Restructuring, Service Delivery, Policing Services

INTRODUCTION

Globally, police organizations are facing challenges in their increasingly complex environment. Consequently, these organizations are obligated to review and adapt their organizational structure to address these challenges and meet the needs of the communities they serve (van Graan & Ukpere, 2015). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2013) notes that policing continues to evolve in response to new knowledge, technology, demographic change, diversifying societal demands, and urbanization. Structure is the lifeline of every organization that is interested in survival. An organization's structure is the way the pieces of the organization fit together internally, which also covers the links with the external environment, such as partners and stakeholders. For an organization to deliver on its mandate, its strategy and structure must be woven seamlessly (Ogbo, Obi-Anike, Agbaeze, and Ukpere, 2014; Fleming, 2017; Katarzyna, 2017). Heugens and Scheneck (2004) view restructuring strategy as the eradication of business processes that are not performing and replacing them with new and more efficient processes. The explanations for the restructuring of policing involve shortcomings of the public service delivery, an increase in crime, the nature of economic systems, the character of government, and the social structure, ideas, and culture.

In the 2013 review of policing in England and Wales, police restructuring adopted three options: legally negotiated mergers, coordinated amalgamation to create 10 regional forces, and a national police service for England and Wales (Independent Police Commission, 2013). An evaluation of police restructuring in England and Wales reveals that the "progressive reorganization of Britain's police into larger units has merely fueled public dissatisfaction" (Loveday & Reid, 2016).

The efforts to undertake police reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina were an internationally led process. The process was initiated by the United Nations with the assistance of the European Union. The reform process was geared towards the transformation of the police system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The police system here was considered fragmented, and therefore the restructuring process was to transform the system into a depoliticized system (Thomas, 2008). According to the EU (2005), the process was sealed through the signing of an agreement called the Association and Stabilization Agreement. The overall goal of the restructuring process was to achieve a more efficient police service which is financially sustainable. It was generally agreed that the reform process would proceed through a consensus. Thomas (2008) observes that this process became difficult because of two key issues: it had to achieve a delicate ethno-political power-sharing deal in a post-conflict environment. Additionally, the deficiencies of the

international community, which included divergent opinions, also derailed the process. A further voice added by Marijan and Guzina reasons that Bosnia and Herzegovina were not ripe for reforms as envisaged in the policing sphere (Marjan & Guzina, 2014).

In Africa, police restructuring has interesting cases presenting different scenarios. The South African Police restructuring process was undertaken in 2006. The overall objective of the process was to streamline the management of SAPS as well as to ensure efficient and effective service delivery (van Graan & Ukpere, 2015). In a broader view, Omar (2007) asserts the restructuring of SAPS was aimed at addressing duplication of functions, weak command and control and poor service delivery at the station level. During the process of restructuring of the SAPS, specialized police units such as the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences (FCS), the Serious and Violent Crimes Unit (SVC) and Area Crime Combating Units (ACCUS) were absorbed into a decentralized structure. According to a study by van Graan (2008), the decentralization of FCS was shrouded in ambiguity and a lack of proper communication. Consequently, the officers at the FCS lost morale, and their productivity plummeted. There was low opinion as to the feasibility and sustainability of the process and the expertise and specialized skills of the FCS as a unit were not taken into consideration. In addition, the partnerships that were already established by the FCS literally collapsed, and this led to a negative impact on the delivery of policing services. Furthermore, the clientele that was being served by the FCS was also affected. As a consequence, there was a ministerial order by the Minister of Police that FCS resume its former centralized structure.

In Nigeria, the Nigeria National Police Force (NNPF) was restructured to reduce overcentralization of police in the country. Zaidu et al. (2019) argue that centralization of the police made it more susceptible to political control. In putting up a case for the restructuring of the NNPF, Olalekan and Adekunle (2019) posited that “just like every other federal institution, the federal police are not only inefficient but also poorly funded. By devolving security duties of the police to the state and communities, the federal government will be killing two birds with one stone. Through devolution of the present Nigerian Police Force into state and community control, the federal recurrent budget will be drastically reduced, and the blame of the federal government for certain crimes will be pushed to states and community governments”.

The restructuring of the National Police Service (NPS) in Kenya was initiated in 2018. The initiative was driven by the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of the National Government and the Inspector General of Police. The overall goal of the NPS restructuring was to enhance the delivery of policing services, facilitate prudent use of resources, and increase police presence at the grassroots (NPS, 2018). The process presented mixed outcomes. A study by Linturi and Muna (2019) concluded that the restructuring process led to confusion in the command structure, instructions issued were slow to reach junior officers who are responsible for their execution, and the delivery of policing services became slow. A contrary view is presented by Wanjiru and Maina (2021). The authors aver that portfolio restructuring enhanced cooperation between different police formations, and the service is more focused and organized after the restructuring. This

glaring disagreement between scholars as to the outcomes of the restructuring process calls for the need to conduct a more holistic interrogation of the subject in the Kenyan context. This study, therefore, seeks to evaluate the efficacy of police restructuring on the delivery of policing services in Nairobi County.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed-methods research approach. This approach integrates qualitative and quantitative data to enable a holistic comprehension of the study topic. The researcher selected this method because it confers a variety of advantages. Due to the mixture of both qualitative and quantitative data in one study, the results were more credible. Additionally, the convergence of both qualitative and quantitative data lends more validity to the findings and conclusions of the study. Further, the study benefited from a deeper and more contextualized insight borne out of qualitative data, as well as the generalizability of the results from quantitative data. This approach also accorded the researcher flexibility in the design of this study.

Research Design

Kombo and Tromp (2016) argue that a research design gives a glimpse of how all components of the study will be brought together to address research objectives and answer research questions. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey design. The rationale for the employment of this research design is that it enabled the researcher to collect data and report the situation as it is without manipulating the study's variables. Further, the research design allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative research data, and lastly, it minimized biases.

Target Population

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) describe the target population as a group of persons in whom the researcher has an interest, and they respond to the research questions. The study's population included the National Crime Research Centre (NCRC), Independent Policing Oversight Authority, Civil Rights Bodies, particularly the Katiba Institute and Independent Medico-Legal Unit, National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs), and police officers drawn from the constabulary services. These participants were drawn from all the Sub-Counties in Nairobi County.

Sampling Design

A sampling design is a holistic outline to be adopted by a researcher in identifying a sample from a target population. This study adopted purposive sampling to reach the respondents who were trusted to have the requisite information for the study. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to make an in-depth exploration of the research questions with a smaller margin of error. In addition, purposive sampling enabled the researcher to select individuals who have expertise and authority in the subject of police restructuring and, therefore, will be good sources of information. To carry out proper purposive

sampling, the researcher used a mix of extreme case sampling and maximum variation sampling to achieve the best results in terms of samples for the study.

Sample Size

A Sample size covers entities to be studied and therefore draws from the target population. The sample size of this study was 109 participants drawn from the National Crime Research Centre, Independent Policing Oversight Authority, National Government Administrators, Civil Rights bodies, and police officers from all the constituent services of the NPS to offer a police perspective to the study. Table 1 represents the distribution of samples for the study.

Table 1: Distribution of Samples for the Study

Institution/Entity	Target Respondents	Total
National Police College – Embakasi A Campus	Training Managers	5
National Police College – Embakasi B Campus	Training Managers	5
NPS – Directorate of Training and Reforms	Director Training and Reforms	1
APS – Director of Training and Reforms	Director Training and Reforms	1
Sub-County Police Commanders	Sub-County Police Commanders	17
Ward Police Commanders	Ward Police Commanders and 3 Police Officers	60
National Crime Research Centre	Director and Researchers	5
Independent Policing Oversight Authority	Director and Investigators	5
NGAOs	DCCs	5
Kenya National Commission	Directors/Field Officers	5
TOTAL		109

Data Collection Methods

The researcher acquired an approval letter from NACOSTI to conduct the study within Nairobi County. After the acquisition of the approval letter from NACOSTI, the researcher sought a letter of approval from the Inspector General of the NPS to interview police officers within Nairobi County. The researcher issued questionnaires and guided

respondents on how to fill them. A drop-and-pick method of administering questionnaires was used. This ensured the researcher saved time on administration of the questionnaires and, at the same time, provided an opportunity for those not readily available to fill out the questionnaires to participate in the study. The researcher also conducted interviews with officers of the rank of ASP and above in order to get their views on the restructuring process.

Data Collection Tools

Primary data for this study were acquired through the use of questionnaires and an interview guide. These questionnaires were structured to include both open and closed-ended questions. On the one hand, questionnaires afforded the research flexibility in the acquisition of data as well as saved valuable time. On the other hand, interview guides enabled the researcher to verify information and probe responses that are not clear further in order to gain an elaborate perspective of the subject under study. Additionally, focus group discussions (FGDs) were employed to gather data of a qualitative nature around the subject of police restructuring. The researcher conducted FGD with participants between 8 and 10 to discuss key issues of the study. The researcher conducted at least two FGDs within Embakasi East Sub-County. The criteria for choosing participants for FGDs were based on the competence and understanding of the police restructuring process. The researcher observed demographic factors such as age, gender, rank and years of service. The FGD sessions were moderated by the researcher, while the researcher's assistants took notes of the discussions. Secondary data was gathered from books, journal articles, reliable websites, government publications, conference papers and periodicals which were found to be relevant to this study.

Pre-testing

Hurst et al. (2015) define pretesting as the process of undertaking data collection on a small scale so as to test the reliability and practicability of the data collection tools. The researcher exposed the questionnaire and interview guide to a review and correction by the supervisors, and then a representative sample of respondents with similar characteristics to the target population. The essence of conducting a pre-test is to enable the researcher to ensure that the right questions are included in the research tools. The researcher drew a pilot questionnaire totaling 10. These pilot questionnaires were administered in Ngong Sub-County in the neighbouring Kajiado County. The Sub-County was used for a pre-test because it is not within Nairobi City County, which is the research site, but it bears similarities to the research site in terms of having similar characteristics to the target population. The ultimate objective of a pilot study was to check whether the questionnaire would achieve its intended objective.

Validity and reliability

The researcher ensured the validity of the research instrument through the formulation and operationalization of questions in tandem with the study variables. This guaranteed that each study variable is exhaustively covered. Furthermore, insights from the

supervisors and law enforcement experts were included in the tool. On the other hand, reliability is the achievement of consistent results using the same tool applied in similar sets of circumstances. Data collection was aligned with the questionnaire and the methods identified for data analysis.

Data Analysis and Presentation Plan

Kothari (2004) views data analysis as the entire process from data collection to processing, interpretation and drawing of conclusions. Data collected passed through the process of cleaning, editing, coding and entering into requisite formats for a deeper analysis. The researcher used the questionnaires, which were properly filled out. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 27, and the results were presented in frequency tables, charts and graphs. The study applied regression analysis to analyze quantitative data and bring out the relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze qualitative data. Data will be analyzed thematically using NVIVO software and results presented as descriptive narratives giving details of research findings.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher acquired a letter granting permission to carry out the research from NACOSTI. Additionally, other relevant letters, such as an introductory letter from the National Intelligence and Research University and a letter authorizing the researcher to interview police officers from the Inspector General of Police, were also acquired by the researcher. The researcher explained to the respondents about the purpose of the study and informed them of their right to voluntary participation as well as seeking their informed consent. The researcher ensured that participants were given assurance on the anonymity of their responses and the confidentiality of the information they gave in the process of this study. Further, consent and authorization from identified organizations to participate in the study were sought before commencing data collection.

The researcher ensured the participants in the study of their privacy as well as the confidentiality of any information divulged by them through participation in this study. The participant was also informed that after successful completion of the study, the questionnaires would be destroyed. Finally, the participants were assured that this study was done principally for academic reasons only.

RESULTS

Response Rate and Participants' Response

The researcher issued 109 questionnaires to different respondents from different institutions. Out of the 109 questionnaires issued, 104 participants responded, while five questionnaires were not responded to. This makes a 95.4% (see Table 4). This response rate is deemed satisfactory as it surpasses the 70% threshold recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2019).

Table 4: Distribution of Response Rate

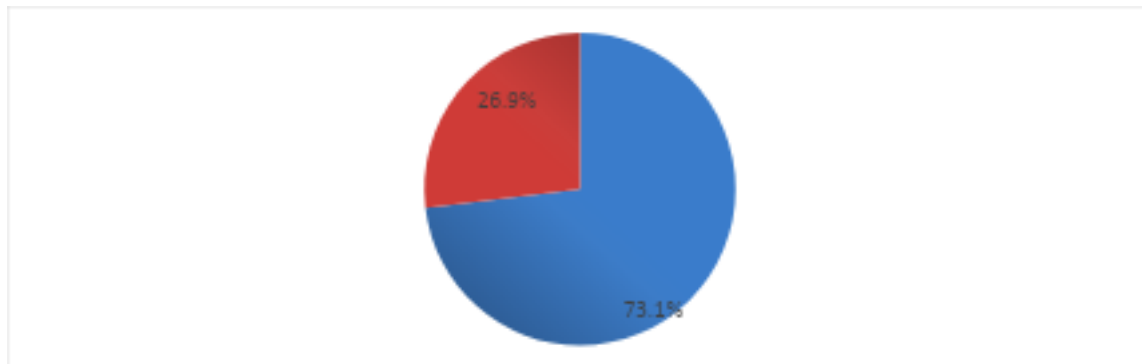
Response Category	Number of Participants (N)	Percentage (%)
Responses	104	95.4
Non-responses	5	4.6
Total	109	100

Note, N=109

Outcomes of Police Restructuring in Nairobi County

The study started by seeking to know the number of officers affected by the restructuring process. Figure 4 reveals that a majority of respondents reported not being directly affected by the police restructuring process. Out of the 104 participants, 76 (73.1 %) indicated that they were not affected, while only 28 (26.9 %) acknowledged being directly impacted. This indicates that nearly three-quarters of the respondents perceived the restructuring exercise as having little or no direct effect on their roles, responsibilities, or work environment.

Figure 4: Distribution of the number of officers affected by the restructuring process



Qualitative feedback from the participants shed light on the challenges faced by those who were affected. Officers redeployed from the Administration Police (APS) to the Kenya Police Service (KPS) reported experiencing victimization and discrimination from KPS colleagues, which created not only an unconducive and hostile environment but also weakened the intended objective of fostering unity and cohesion within the police service. These findings align with the findings of a report by the National Taskforce on Improvement of the Terms and Conditions of Service and other Reforms for Members of the National Police Service, Kenya Prisons Service, and National Youth Service 2023, which reported that:

“However, the 2018 re-organization loosely referred to as ‘merger’ of Kenya Police Service and Administration Police Service, meant to remedy this

situation by eradicating the overlap and duplication of functions, was not properly executed and did not sit well with members of the Administration Police Service across the country. Administration Police Service officers expressed frustration at being treated as juniors to their Kenya Police Service counterparts, and felt that their issues were not given necessary consideration and regard by the NPS leadership” (RoK, 2023).

This narrative from one of the respondents underscores this scenario:

After deployment from the Administration Police Service to the Kenya Police Service General Duty Police, there was a lot of victimization from the officers originally in the Kenya Police Service, thus not creating a conducive environment for work (Participant 1)

To further paint a picture of the challenges faced by those who were redeployed, another participant narrated that:

Of course, I was affected because of no proper sensitization, and even after the merger, I was discriminated against at the next service I was deployed to. I was viewed as though I knew nothing and had to prove myself that I was as much of a police officer as others. (Participant 2)

Additionally, some respondents highlighted disparities in training backgrounds, noting that officers who had undergone specialized training in law or paramilitary fields, such as the General Service Unit (GSU) and APS, often faced difficulties integrating with their new colleagues. This mismatch in professional orientations and skill sets contributed to tension and reduced effectiveness in collaboration. These findings align with Okonya (2021), who found that the professional orientation of the Administration Police Service and the Kenya Police Service has affected the effective blending between these services, even after the restructuring process.

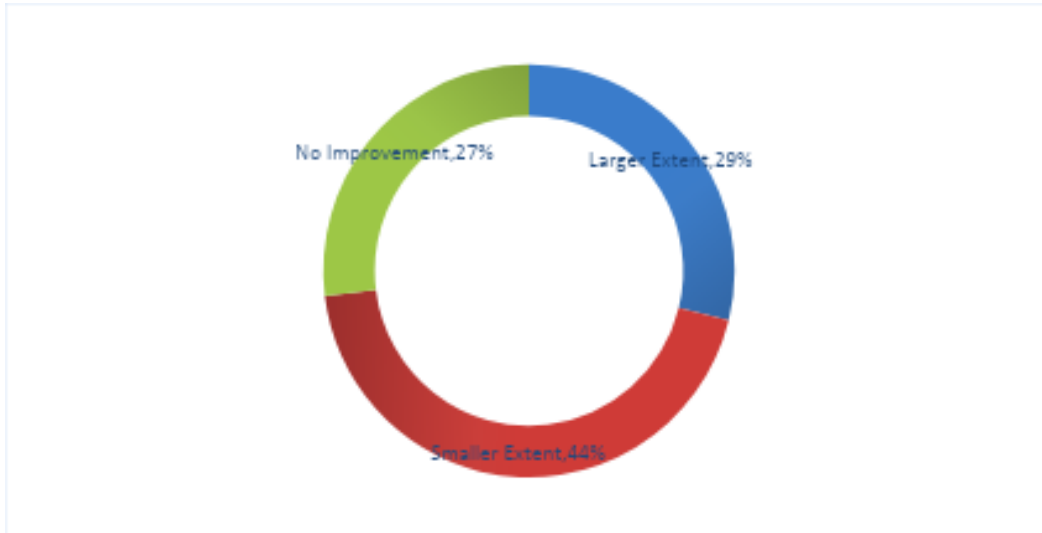
Furthermore, officers attached to the National Government Administration indicated that police restructuring left them without a clear unit of enforcement. This lack of organizational clarity may have led to reduced efficiency in service delivery and lowered institutional confidence in the restructuring process. A National Government administrator responded that *“the NGAOs were left without a unit of enforcement because the Administration Police officers who were attached to chiefs’, ACC’s and DCCs’ offices were withdrawn”* (Participant 3). These findings align with those of Waweru and Maina (2019), who found that corporate organizational restructuring has resulted in improved organizational harmony and, consequently, clarity of service delivery. However, these results contradict the results of a study by Thurairaja and Muna (2021), who found that command restructuring in the NPS led to confusion in roles within the Service.

The Extent to Which Police Restructuring Improved Grassroots Policing

Within the broader objective of evaluating the outcomes of police restructuring in Nairobi County, the study further sought to establish the extent to which police restructuring improved grassroots policing in Nairobi County. From the findings in Figure

5, 44.2 % reported that restructuring had improved grassroots policing only to a smaller extent, while 28.8 % felt that it had improved policing to a larger extent. On the other hand, 26.9 % indicated that restructuring had led to no improvement at all.

Figure 5: The extent to which police restructuring has affected grassroots policing



This distribution in Figure 4 suggests that while some gains have been realized, particularly in certain localities or units, the reforms have not consistently translated into significant improvements at the grassroots level. The dominant response implies that progress has been modest and possibly uneven, with gaps in coverage and effectiveness.

The results are a testament that grassroots policing did not improve after the restructuring process. This can be attributed to the closure of Administration Police Camps, which were very instrumental in peripheral policing. The centralization of policing services at the police station affected the proximity of the police to communities. These findings reflect the results of the Report of the National Taskforce on Welfare of the National Police Service (2024). The Report found that police restructuring led to negative outcomes. More particularly, the report cites the transfer of 24000 APS officers to KPS as undermining grassroots policing.

The Extent to Which Community Policing Has Been Effective Since Restructuring

Community Policing has been a central pillar in police reform processes in Kenya. The study, therefore, sought to determine the extent to which community policing has been effective since police restructuring took place, and results were presented in Table 9. The results indicate that only 17 respondents perceived community policing to be very effective since the restructuring, while 24 considered it effective. The majority of respondents, however, expressed moderate or low satisfaction: 32 rated it as moderately effective, and 31 viewed it as less effective.

Table 9: The extent to which community policing has been effective since restructuring

	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Very effective	17	16.3	16.3	16.3
Effective	24	23.1	23.1	39.4
Moderately effective	32	30.8	30.8	70.2
Less effective	31	29.8	29.8	100.0
Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Note, n=frequency

These findings suggest that while restructuring may have laid a foundation for improving community engagement, its overall impact has been limited. This explains why less than 40 percent of respondents rated community policing as effective or very effective. These results are in agreement with the findings of Shai (2021), who describes a bleak outlook for police reforms. The author argues that achieving community-oriented policing (COP), as outlined in reform strategies, is nearly impossible because police, policing, and COP efforts are tied to partisan politics, and past measures meant to control the state to protect elite interests continue to be used.

When these findings are viewed within the context of NPM theory, the findings suggest that while restructuring may have laid a foundation for improving community engagement, its overall impact has been limited. This points to partial realization of organizational efficiency, accountability, and restructured service delivery. From the perspective of DCT, the NPS has not effectively channeled resources towards the achievement of the goals of community-oriented policing.

Perceived Results of the Restructuring Process

The study explored the perceived results of the restructuring process as presented in Table 10. These results were examined within the parameters of improved command flow within NPS, improved resources, improved police-community relations, delivery of policing services, and police response to crime.

Table 10: Perceived results of the restructuring process

	SA	A	N	D	SD
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Police restructuring has improved command flow within NPS	17(16.3)	37(35.6)	15(14.4)	21(20.2)	14(13.5)
Police restructuring has resulted in improved resources	16(15.4)	33(31.7)	16(15.4)	26(25.)	13(12.5)
Police - Community relations have improved	18(17.3)	32(30.8)	20(19.2)	22(21.2)	12(11.5)
Delivery of policing services has improved after restructuring	14(13.5)	40 (38.5)	10 (9.6)	28(26.9)	12(11.5)
Police response to crime has greatly improved	15(14.4)	37(35.6)	12(11.5)	26(25. 0)	14(13.5)

Note, SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, N=Total Respondents

While the data presented in Table 8 highlights the quantitative aspects of the perceived results of the restructuring process, the qualitative responses provide deeper insights into the real-life experiences behind these statistical data. From the qualitative responses, a significant minority of respondents felt that police restructuring has improved access to justice for victims of crime. Their explanation emphasized better responsiveness, enhanced service delivery, improved accountability, and more effective community policing. One participant stated that: *“Police restructuring has enhanced access to justice by decentralizing services, creating specialized units, improving response time, and promoting accountability. It also boosts public trust and encourages victims to report crime.”* (Participant 5). Another participant said that:

Restructuring of APS to KPS has been effective in policing, especially community policing. This has led to access to justice for victims of crime. APS, who were closer to the people working with the local administration, including chiefs. They have been impactful, busting criminals within their areas of jurisdiction. (Participant 6)

In one of the key informant interviews, one of the respondents indicated that: *“Some progress has been made through streamlining reporting and investigation procedures, but*

systemic delays, corruption, and lack of support services still hinder access to justice.”
(Participant 7)

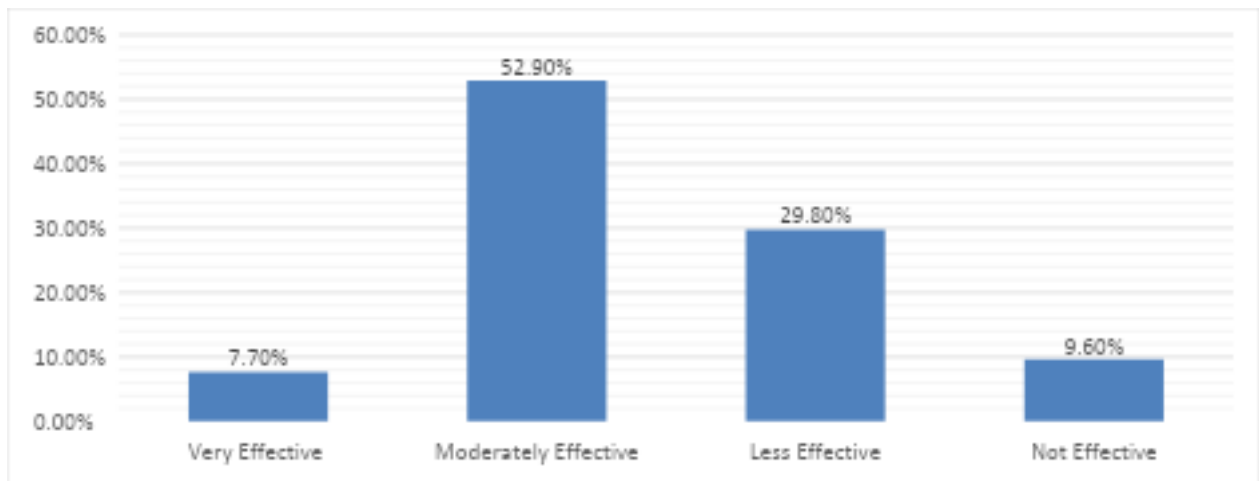
The study found that the outcomes of the restructuring process were mixed and modestly positive. Although 52% of the respondents agreed that service delivery improved and 51.9% confirmed better command flow, a large proportion remained dissatisfied, with over a third disagreeing across most indicators. Resourcing, community relations, and responsiveness to crime showed only incremental gains. Notably, 73.1% of officers reported they were not directly affected by restructuring, but those deployed from APS to KPS experienced discrimination, marginalization, and role confusion.

This ambivalence reflects Okonya (2021), who found that despite restructuring, KPS and APS continued operating as separate entities, with rivalry undermining integration. These findings also echo Getembe (2022), who highlighted officers’ skepticism and doubts about reform outcomes. However, in line with Waweru and Maina (2019), this study shows restructuring did enhance accountability and visibility at the grassroots, albeit unevenly, with 28.8% acknowledging substantial improvements in grassroots policing.

Overall Effectiveness of Police Restructuring in Kenya

The second objective of the study focused on the perceptions of police officers regarding restructuring. Firstly, the researcher sought to know how the respondents would rate the overall effectiveness of police restructuring in Kenya, as presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Overall effectiveness of police restructuring



The findings of Figure 6 revealed mixed opinions among respondents. A small proportion, 8 (7.7%), perceived restructuring as very effective, while the majority, 55 (52.9%), rated it as moderately effective. However, a significant share of officers expressed reservations about its impact, with 31 (29.8%) indicating that restructuring was less effective and 10 (9.6%) stating it was not effective at all.

To further complement the quantitative data, the researcher examined qualitative responses to capture the perspectives of the respondents. From the qualitative responses, those participants who reported a “Yes” highlighted that restructuring had introduced a

clear command structure, improved accountability mechanisms, and provided opportunities for additional training, which they believed enhanced professionalism in policing. To reinforce these findings, one of the respondents narrated that *“The part on duplication of duties was clearly sorted, and also service members with interest in departments they find suitable to serve in get the chance to do so”* (Participant 8). To demonstrate that accountability has improved in the NPS after the restructuring process, one respondent asserted that *“there's great improvement in the level of responsibility and accountability.”* (Participant 9). In a key informant interview, one participant stated that:

Most of the officers absorbed into the Kenya police service have undergone specialized training in criminal investigation, traffic management, and also those in the administration police were better trained into specialized units like border police and the special operations group (SOG), who have brought about calm in our borders and also have contained the threat of Al-Shabaab. (Participant 10).

On the other hand, those who reported a “No” explained that restructuring was more structural than practical, and therefore had little impact on the behaviour and attitudes of officers. They pointed to persistent issues such as corruption, poor work ethics, limited resources, and weak enforcement of professional codes of conduct, which continued to undermine professionalism despite the restructuring. One respondent particularly indicated that *“restructuring has made policing more reactionary rather than being proactive; therefore, community and police are not working together to reduce crime.”* (Participant 11).

In one of the FGDs, one participant narrated that:

Police restructuring has not significantly improved professionalism within the service. While the process aimed to streamline roles and enhance accountability, many officers still experience favoritism, a lack of merit-based promotions, poor leadership, and limited access to professional development opportunities. Also, inconsistencies in command, inadequate supervision, and the absence of a strong ethical enforcement framework continue to undermine efforts to raise professional standards. (Participant 12)

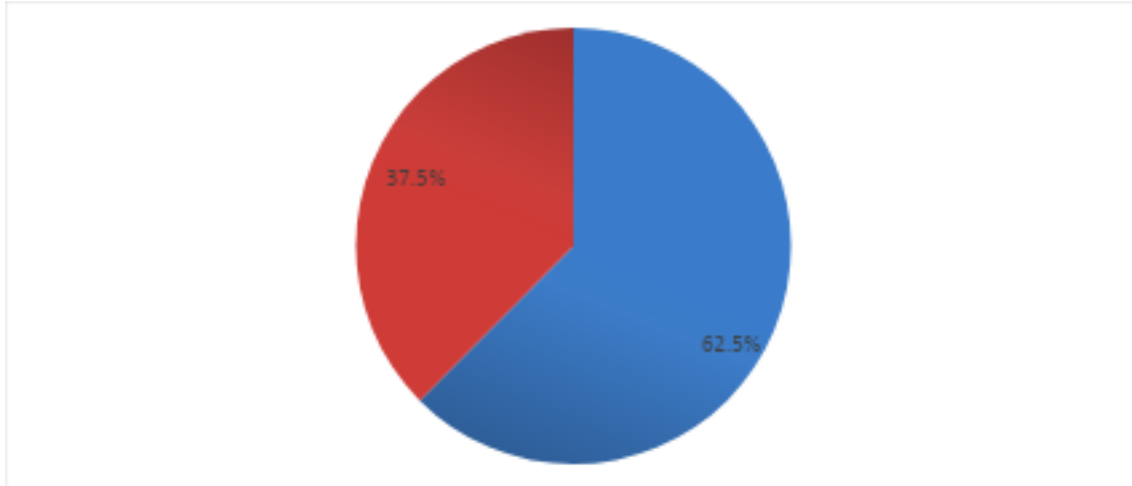
These findings broadly align with the findings of Waweru and Maina (2019) and Mogere and Muna (2022), who found that the restructuring process improved police operational preparedness. However, in contrast, Okonya (2021) and Thurania and Muna (2019) argue that police restructuring has not brought the much-anticipated efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of policing services.

Police Restructuring Has Improved Police Professionalism

Police professionalism was one of the key areas that the restructuring process sought to deal with. One of the key objectives of the police restructuring process was to enhance police professionalism as well as their interaction with the public. The study,

therefore, sought to determine whether police restructuring had improved professionalism within the Service. The results presented in Figure 7 indicated that the majority of the respondents felt professionalism had not improved.

Figure 7: Distribution of whether police restructuring has improved professionalism.



It was revealed that a majority of respondents, 65 (62.5%), indicated that restructuring had not improved professionalism among police officers. In contrast, only 35 respondents 35 (37.5%) felt that the reforms had led to improvements in professionalism. This suggests that despite the intentions of restructuring to enhance professional conduct and service delivery, a larger proportion of officers did not perceive a significant change.

Despite the fact that quantitative findings of the study established the statistics as presented in Figure 7, the qualitative responses provided a contextual background to the issues defining these responses. Therefore, from a qualitative insight, those who responded “Yes” highlighted that restructuring had introduced clearer command structures, improved accountability mechanisms, and provided opportunities for additional training, which they believed enhanced professionalism in policing. On the other hand, those who responded “No” explained that restructuring was more structural than practical, and therefore had little impact on the behavior and attitudes of officers. They pointed to persistent issues such as corruption, poor work ethics, limited resources, and weak enforcement of codes of conduct, which continued to undermine professionalism despite the reforms.

One participant narrated that:

It has not improved police professionalism because an officer may be redeployed from APS to KPS or from KPS to APS without being taken for a course to be taught on the roles and responsibilities one is supposed to take up and not used to. There will be no improvement in professionalism.
(Participant 13)

To further underscore that police restructuring has not significantly improved professionalism, one participant stated that:

Police restructuring has not significantly improved professionalism within the service. While the process aimed at streamlining roles and enhancing accountability, many officers still experience favouritism, lack of merit-based promotions, poor leadership, and limited access to professional development opportunities. Inconsistencies in command, inadequate supervision, and the absence of a strong ethical enforcement framework also continue to undermine efforts to raise professional standards. (Participant 14)

These findings align with the findings of Kivoi and Mbae (2013), who found that police reforms in Kenya have not improved professionalism. The authors argue that the police organization in Kenya still faces challenges related to corruption, abuse of police powers, and accusations of police brutality.

Conclusions

From the findings of the study on the outcomes of the restructuring process, the study concluded that police restructuring in Kenya has not achieved police professionalism. Whereas the process was intended to improve professionalism and how police interact with the communities, professionalism within NPS remains below the expected standards. There are still cases of police brutality, corruption, and dereliction of service delivery within NPS. This is a clear testimony that a change in police structures alone cannot yield the desired professional outcomes. The NPS must focus on intentional training, officer mentorship programmes, and proper accountability frameworks.

The study further found that despite the restructuring process taking place, there is still limited command harmonization within the NPS. The study, therefore, concluded that police restructuring has not resulted in full command harmonization within the NPS. Instead of the intended harmonization of command between the APS and KPS in the Regions, Counties, Sub-Counties, and Wards, there still exist jurisdictional overlaps and a lack of operational coordination between the constituent services of NPS. This has translated into operational inefficiency, which consequently has impacted negatively on the delivery of policing services in Kenya. It has also led to a disjointed response to citizens' distress calls. In essence, the study concluded that police restructuring concentrated on administrative restructuring as opposed to institutional transformation that leads to effective service delivery to citizens.

Recommendations

From a practice perspective, the study recommends that future reforms within the NPS should be holistic, inclusive, and designed to address both structural and cultural dimensions of change. This is supported by Participant 7's response that *"some progress has been made through streamlining reporting and investigation procedures, but systemic delays, corruption, and lack of support services still hinder access to justice."* Reforms must go beyond altering organizational charts and command hierarchies to embrace comprehensive capacity-building initiatives, targeted training on professionalism and

ethics, and stronger mechanisms for accountability and citizen engagement. Equally, reforms must be adequately resourced, with sufficient logistical, financial, and human capital support to ensure sustainability.

For policy, the study recommends the urgent need for reforms to be insulated from political interference, which continues to erode public trust and compromise institutional autonomy. This is buttressed by Table 10 and KII 3, which asserts that, “there is a need for unified command and oversight reforms that have since enhanced accountability with the existing legislative framework. However, there are persistent gaps reported, such as slow response, fuel misuse, politicized police leadership, and the perception that oversight leads to a lack of teeth to bite for police officers.” Political goodwill is therefore essential for ensuring that the reform agenda is not only implemented but also sustained. Furthermore, there is a pressing need for legislative frameworks that reinforce operational independence, entrench professionalism, and ensure citizen-centered policing approaches. Policies should also promote inclusivity in reform design and implementation, ensuring that the voices of junior officers and the general public are integrated into the process.

The Ministry of Interior and Coordination of the National Government and the National Police Service of Kenya should establish ongoing sensitization programs for the purpose of creating awareness on restructuring objectives and expected outcomes. This is supported by Participant 10, who reported that “there was not enough sensitization.” Officers can be equipped with updated knowledge and skills for reform implementation through regular workshops, seminars, and in-service training sessions would equip officers with updated knowledge and skills for reform implementation. Such initiatives will play a key role in bridging the gap between policy intentions and actual practice by clarifying roles and responsibilities.

The Ministry of Interior and Coordination of the National Government should ensure that adequate funding is directed toward modern equipment, operational tools, training, and improved welfare of officers. This is justified by Participant 25, who said that “officers’ welfare ranging from housing, low wages compared to the current time, lack of structure for in-service training, and political interference.” In order to monitor resource allocation and ensure that funds intended for reform are effectively utilized to drive meaningful change, transparent and accountable structures must be developed.

The Ministry of Interior and Coordination of the National Government and the Office of the Inspector General should ensure that strong legislative frameworks are in place to entrench new policies. This is supported by Participant 19, who asserted that the process was affected by “poor implementation framework-lack of a clear phased and well communicated roadmap has created confusion, especially at lower levels.” The legislative framework will effectively anchor future restructuring processes and ensure that they are enforceable and binding across successive governments. This creates continuity, enhances officers’ confidence in reforms, and ensures that political transitions do not compromise progress made in professionalizing the police.

The National Police Service should work beyond structural adjustments and ensure reforms emphasize changing mindsets and organizational culture within the NPS. A number of initiatives, such as mentorship programs, professional ethics training, and reward systems for integrity, should be established. This is evidenced in the response provided by Participant 18, who argued that “dedicated efforts are needed to deculturate the specialized knowledge and practices held by KPS and APS officers, and to enculturate all officers with the shared service ethos envisioned by the restructuring.” As a result, accountability and professionalism will be instilled. Over time, such programs would build a culture of trust, discipline, and service to the public.

Areas for Further Research

Future studies ought to go beyond the study of structural police reforms and instead look more closely at the influence of police leadership on enhancing professionalism in a post-reform setting. There has been little focus on how leadership methods, decision-making styles, and accountability frameworks directly affect the entrenchment of professionalism within restructured police agencies. This is despite the fact that previous studies frequently identified structural or legal alterations.

In addition, future studies should investigate the degree to which police restructuring has significantly changed police-community interactions. More particularly, these studies should look into how restructuring has fostered legitimacy, trust, and cooperative problem-solving.

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