

Original Research Article

Evaluating the Efficacy of Police Restructuring in Kenya Through Officers' Perceptions: Evidence from Nairobi County

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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.

1.0 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 university 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.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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.

2.5 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

2.6 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 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.

2.7 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.

2.8 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.

2.9 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.

2.10 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.

2.11 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 to seek 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.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 How Police Officers Perceive the Restructuring Process

The study defined set parameters within which respondents would perceive the restructuring process. These parameters included procedural fairness by station commanders, the equitable distribution of training and promotional slots, uniform support of police officers by commanders, and the reduction of confusion in policing and the clarification of roles following the restructuring process. The perceptions of police officers presented in Table 11 revealed that officers were generally skeptical and cautious, with the

majority describing reforms as moderately effective. Only a small minority viewed them as very effective. Officers acknowledged some gains in accountability and role clarity, but most maintained that professionalism has not improved, with 62.5% indicating restructuring failed to enhance integrity or discipline.

Table 2: How Police Officers Perceive the Restructuring Process

	SA N (%)	A N (%)	N N (%)	D N (%)	SD N (%)
There is procedural unfairness by station commanders	22(21.2)	38(36.5)	17(16.3)	16(15.4)	11(1.6)
There is distribution of training and promotion slots is equitable	5(4.8)	17(16.3)	14(13.3)	36(34.6)	32(3.8)
There is uniform support for police officers by their commanders	9(8.7)	32(30.8)	20(19.2)	21(20.2)	22(21.2)
Restructuring brought confusion to policing in Kenya	29(27.9)	25 (24 0)	18 (17.3)	21(20.2)	11(10.6)
Roles are clearer after restructuring	16(15.4)	31(29.8)	18(17.3)	21(20.2)	18(17.3)

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

Table 11 presents findings of various in regards to perception of officers restructuring. On the issue of procedural fairness by station commanders, 22 (21.2%) strongly agreed and 38 (36.5%) agreed that unfair practices were prevalent. Meanwhile, 17 (16.3%) were neutral, 16 (15.4%) disagreed, and the rest (10.6%) strongly disagreed. These results show that although a majority believed there were issues of unfairness, a notable minority held contrary opinions.

Regarding the equitable distribution of training and promotion slots, only 5 (4.8%) strongly agreed, and 17 (16.3%) agreed that opportunities were distributed fairly. A further 14 (13.3%) were neutral, while 36 (34.6%) disagreed and 32 (30.8%) strongly disagreed. This indicates that most respondents viewed restructuring as failing to ensure fairness in career advancement.

When asked whether police commanders uniformly supported their officers, 9 (8.7%) strongly agreed, and 32 (30.8%) agreed with the statement. However, 20 (19.2%) were neutral, while 21 (20.2%) disagreed and 22 (21.2%) strongly disagreed. This reflects

divided perceptions, though more than two-fifths felt consistent leadership support was lacking.

On whether restructuring had brought confusion into policing in Kenya, 29 officers (27.9%) strongly agreed, and 25 (24.0%) agreed, representing more than half of the respondents. In contrast, 18 (17.3%) were neutral, 21 (20.2%) disagreed, and 10.6% strongly disagreed. This shows that while a substantial proportion believed restructuring created confusion, others disagreed or were undecided.

Finally, on whether restructuring clarified roles, 16 (15.4%) strongly agreed and 31 (29.8%) agreed, whereas 18 (17.3%) were not sure. On the other hand, 21 (20.2%) disagreed, and 18 officers (17.3%) strongly disagreed. This suggests that although some officers acknowledged clearer role definitions, a considerable share felt otherwise.

The quantitative findings on the effectiveness of police restructuring on the delivery of policing services in Kenya present a mixed picture of outcomes. Among the valid responses, it was reported that restructuring had greatly improved service delivery, particularly by addressing overlapping roles. This indicates that for slightly over a third of respondents, the reforms brought positive operational changes and reduced role confusion, which can contribute to efficiency in policing. However, the majority viewpoint points to the persisting challenges. A total of 46 respondents (48.9%) stated that restructuring has had no effectiveness, with continued complaints from citizens, duplication of ranks, and overlapping job roles still evident. This shows that almost half of the respondents felt that the intended objectives of restructuring, such as improved service delivery and role clarity, have not been fully realized in practice. In addition, a few respondents emphasized the need for strong political goodwill, adequate resource allocation, and improved officer welfare as prerequisites for restructuring to succeed. This highlights the view that structural changes alone are insufficient without supportive governance, sufficient funding, and attention to staff motivation.

More qualitative data from FGDs and key informant interviews revealed that some officers perceived restructuring positively, citing improvements in accountability and professionalism. For instance, one participant noted that when AP officers were absorbed into the KPS, *“there has been some accountability since officers underwent training that streamlined their conduct.”* Another respondent in one of the FGDs agreed that *“the restructuring has brought some sanity because there is no overlap of duty. Each service has its duties and functions well defined”* (Participant 15). Officers in FGDs also acknowledged that restructuring introduced new structures such as the Sub-County AP Commander, which brought some degree of reorganization and authority clarification.

Nonetheless, skepticism and dissatisfaction dominated perceptions. Officers frequently pointed to a lack of clarity in command realignment, with many struggling to differentiate between APS and KPS jurisdictions. Another participant shared experiences of confusion during county forums where *“the KPS and APS commanders would have different responses”* (Participant 16), undermining the perception of a single, unified command. To further emphasize the mixed responses, one respondent narrated that:

Police restructuring efforts in Kenya, particularly the unification of the Kenya Police Service (KPS) and the Administration Police (AP) into the National Police Service (NPS), aim to improve service delivery through streamlining, efficiency, and better coordination. While some aspects of these reforms are seen as effective, challenges remain in areas like public trust, accountability, and addressing specific issues like corruption and police misconduct. (Participant 17)

Another participant, while noting the historical differences between APS and KPS, noted that:

Though the restructuring was a commendable initiative aimed at benefiting consumers of policing services across the country and beyond, the historical specialization of services within the Kenya Police Service (KPS) and the Administration Police Service (APS) continues to hinder the full realization of its intended goals. 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. (Participant 18)

Furthermore, restructuring was perceived as unequal and unfair, particularly disadvantaging the APS. As the SACC noted, *“APS officers often lacked housing and resources compared to their KPS counterparts, leaving them feeling marginalized within the new system.”* (Participant 19). The sense of APS being “subsumed” rather than merged was reinforced by a key informant, who pointed out the continuing distinctness between DIG-AP and DIG-KP commands.

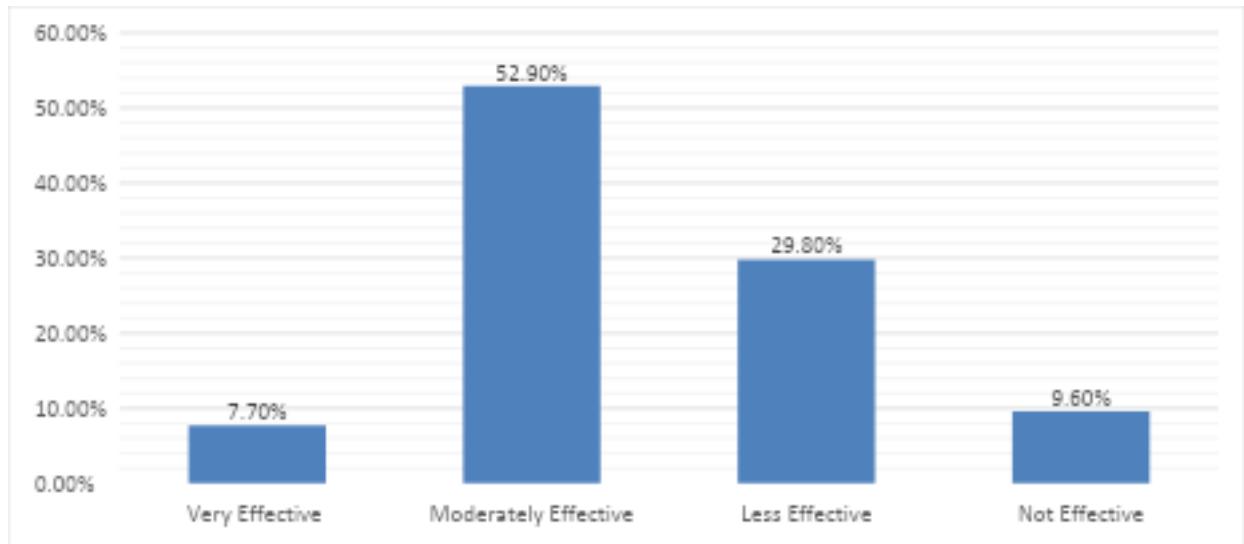
Perceptions of professionalism were also mixed. While restructuring introduced clearer roles and some ethical improvements, especially in urban areas, officers believed that unprofessional conduct persisted. In fact, there was a perception that restructuring may have widened the space for corruption by creating opportunities for APS officers to access “lucrative” corrupt practices previously dominated by KPS officers. It is therefore evident that officers’ perceptions reveal disillusionment with the restructuring process, stemming from confusion, inequality, and continued systemic issues that diluted the intended benefits.

Persistent challenges included procedural unfairness, inequitable distribution of training and promotional slots, and operational confusion. These perceptions were reinforced qualitatively, particularly among AP officers, who cited marginalization in terms of housing, resources, and recognition. These findings align with the results of a study by Ochieng and Abila (2022), who concluded that NPS change management was not inclusive and was perceived as a top-down initiative driven by the Inspector General and the National Police Service Commission. The skepticism also resonates with Getembe (2022), who found officers remained unconvinced that reforms would curb corruption.

3.2 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 1: 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:

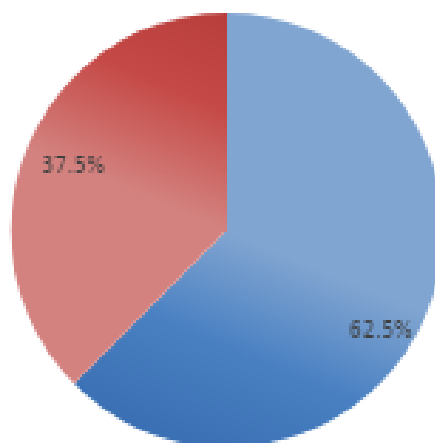
Police restructuring has not significantly improved professionalism within the service. While the process aimed to streamline roles and enhance accountability, many officers still experience favoritism, a lack of merit-based promotions, poor leadership, and limited access to professional development 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 How Police Officers Perceive the Restructuring Process

The study defined set parameters within which respondents would perceive the restructuring process. These parameters included procedural fairness by station commanders, the equitable distribution of training and promotional slots, uniform support of police officers by commanders, and the reduction of confusion in policing and the

clarification of roles following the restructuring process. The perceptions of police officers presented in Table 11 revealed that officers were generally skeptical and cautious, with the majority describing reforms as moderately effective. Only a small minority viewed them as very effective. Officers acknowledged some gains in accountability and role clarity, but most maintained that professionalism has not improved, with 62.5% indicating restructuring failed to enhance integrity or discipline.

Table 3: How Police Officers Perceive the Restructuring Process

	SA	A	N	D	SD
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
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When asked whether police commanders uniformly supported their officers, 9 (8.7%) strongly agreed and 32 (30.8%) agreed with the statement. However, 20 (19.2%) were neutral, while 21 (20.2%) disagreed and 22 (21.2%) strongly disagreed. This reflects divided perceptions, though more than two-fifths felt consistent leadership support was lacking.

On whether restructuring had brought confusion into policing in Kenya, 29 officers (27.9%) strongly agreed and 25 (24.0%) agreed, representing more than half of the respondents. In contrast, 18 (17.3%) were neutral, 21 (20.2%) disagreed, and 10.6% strongly disagreed. This shows that while a substantial proportion believed restructuring created confusion, others disagreed or were undecided.

Finally, on whether restructuring clarified roles, 16 (15.4%) strongly agreed and 31 (29.8%) agreed, whereas 18 (17.3%) were not sure. On the other hand, 21 (20.2%) disagreed, and 18 officers (17.3%) strongly disagreed. This suggests that although some officers acknowledged clearer role definitions, a considerable share felt otherwise.

The quantitative findings on the effectiveness of police restructuring on the delivery of policing services in Kenya present a mixed picture of outcomes. Among the valid responses, it was reported that restructuring had greatly improved service delivery, particularly by addressing overlapping roles. This indicates that for slightly over a third of respondents, the reforms brought positive operational changes and reduced role confusion, which can contribute to efficiency in policing. However, the majority viewpoint points to the persisting challenges. A total of 46 respondents (48.9%) stated that restructuring has had no effectiveness, with continued complaints from citizens, duplication of ranks, and overlapping job roles still evident. This shows that almost half of the respondents felt that the intended objectives of restructuring, such as improved service delivery and role clarity, have not been fully realized in practice. In addition, a few respondents emphasized the need for strong political goodwill, adequate resource allocation, and improved officer welfare as prerequisites for restructuring to succeed. This highlights the view that structural changes alone are insufficient without supportive governance, sufficient funding, and attention to staff motivation.

More qualitative data from FGDs and key informant interviews revealed that some officers perceived restructuring positively, citing improvements in accountability and professionalism. For instance, one participant noted that when AP officers were absorbed into the KPS, *“there has been some accountability since officers underwent training that streamlined their conduct.”* Another respondent in one of the FGDs agreed that *“the restructuring has brought some sanity because there is no overlap of duty. Each service has its duties and functions well defined”* (Participant 15). Officers in FGDs also acknowledged that restructuring introduced new structures such as the Sub-County AP Commander, which brought some degree of reorganization and authority clarification.

Nonetheless, skepticism and dissatisfaction dominated perceptions. Officers frequently pointed to a lack of clarity in command realignment, with many struggling to differentiate between APS and KPS jurisdictions. Another participant shared experiences of

confusion during county forums where *“the KPS and APS commanders would have different responses”* (Participant 16), undermining the perception of a single, unified command. To further emphasize the mixed responses, one respondent narrated that:

Police restructuring efforts in Kenya, particularly the unification of the Kenya Police Service (KPS) and the Administration Police (AP) into the National Police Service (NPS), aim to improve service delivery through streamlining, efficiency, and better coordination. While some aspects of these reforms are seen as effective, challenges remain in areas like public trust, accountability, and addressing specific issues like corruption and police misconduct. (Participant 17)

Another participant, while noting the historical differences between APS and KPS, noted that:

Though the restructuring was a commendable initiative aimed at benefiting consumers of policing services across the country and beyond, the historical specialization of services within the Kenya Police Service (KPS) and the Administration Police Service (APS) continues to hinder the full realization of its intended goals. 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. (Participant 18)

Furthermore, restructuring was perceived as unequal and unfair, particularly disadvantaging the APS. As the SACC noted, *“APS officers often lacked housing and resources compared to their KPS counterparts, leaving them feeling marginalized within the new system.”* (Participant 19). The sense of APS being “subsumed” rather than merged was reinforced by a key informant respondent, who pointed out the continuing distinctness between DIG-AP and DIG-KP commands.

Perceptions of professionalism were also mixed. While restructuring introduced clearer roles and some ethical improvements, especially in urban areas, officers believed that unprofessional conduct persisted. In fact, there was a perception that restructuring may have widened the space for corruption by creating opportunities for APS officers to access “lucrative” corrupt practices previously dominated by KPS officers. It is therefore evident that officers’ perceptions reveal disillusionment with the restructuring process, stemming from confusion, inequality, and continued systemic issues that diluted the intended benefits.

Persistent challenges included procedural unfairness, inequitable distribution of training and promotional slots, and operational confusion. These perceptions were reinforced qualitatively, particularly among AP officers, who cited marginalization in terms of housing, resources, and recognition. These findings align with the results of a study by Ochieng and Abila (2022), who concluded that NPS change management was not inclusive and was perceived as a top-down initiative driven by the Inspector General and the National

Police Service Commission. The skepticism also resonates with Getembe (2022), who found officers remained unconvinced that reforms would curb corruption.

4.0 Conclusions

On the perception of police officers on the restructuring process, the study concluded that officers had a negative perception of the process. The majority of the respondents viewed the process as one that was rushed, lacked a defined sensitization framework, and adopted a top-down approach to the exclusion of contributions of junior officers. The apparent lack of consultation with key stakeholders, such as the NGAOs, junior police officers, and the public, removed legitimacy from the whole process. The process, therefore, missed the opportunity to get practitioner contributions from those who operated on the ground. The lack of inclusivity in the process resulted in disillusioned, disgruntled, and demotivated officers. These perceptions among police officers therefore, negatively impact the effective delivery of policing services to the public.

5.0 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.

6.0 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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