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ABSTRACT

The police play a central role in maintaining justice, yet depression among officers in Nairobi, Kenya, has become a critical issue affecting their job performance. This study aimed to evaluate the impact of depression on the job performance among police officers in Nairobi County. Grounded in Job-Demand Theory and Social Support Theory, a descriptive research design was employed. A sample of 341 respondents was drawn from a target population of 2,902 junior officers across 11 police divisions. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using simple linear regression. The results revealed that depression had a statistically significant positive effect on self-reported officer performance, with an Adjusted R Square of 0.230. This indicates that depression accounted for 23 percent of the variance in performance. The findings suggest that highly dedicated officers achieve exceptional metrics while simultaneously enduring profound psychological exhaustion and depressive symptoms due to high job demands and trauma exposure. The study recommends that the National Police Service focus on improving officer well-being by conducting regular mental wellness screenings and providing accessible, confidential counseling services. It is crucial for administrators to recognize that high performance does not equate to sound mental health. Integrating targeted depression interventions is essential to safeguard officer well-being, prevent severe burnout, and ensure effective, long-term service delivery in Nairobi County.

Keywords: *Depression, Job Performance, Police Officers.*

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INTRODUCTION

Depression is a serious mental health issue that significantly affects police officers in Kenya and influences their performance at work. It is characterized by enduring feelings of melancholy, despair, and a lack of interest or pleasure in everyday activities, as Johnston et al. (2019) note. This psychological condition directly impacts the well-being of law enforcement personnel and their ability to execute their duties effectively. When officers experience profound sadness, their motivation to engage with the public diminishes. The cognitive load of managing these internal struggles drains the mental energy required for vigilance and proactive policing, making it a critical organizational concern.

Several variables contribute to the prevalence of depression among Kenyan police officers. Rasool et al. (2019) state that exposure to traumatic events, ongoing stress, severe job demands, and organizational difficulties are primary catalysts. The rigorous nature of police employment, namely frequent exposure to violence and critical situations, directly triggers these depressive symptoms, according to Nyayieka et al. (2020). Officers operate in environments characterized by resource constraints and high public expectations, elements that compound their psychological burden. Furthermore, the stigma attached to mental health problems within the police community often deters officers from seeking treatment, a situation that results in untreated depression and exacerbates its negative effects on performance, as highlighted by Onchonga et al. (2021). The fear of being perceived as weak creates a pervasive culture of silence. Officers that suppress their emotional distress are left vulnerable to psychological deterioration, a reality that deeply compromises their operational readiness.

The manifestation of depression significantly impairs the performance of police officers in various ways. Johnston et al. (2019) explain that depressive symptoms, namely weariness, impatience, and trouble concentrating, negatively impact decision-making, communication, and general job execution. In high-stakes environments where rapid judgment is required, cognitive impairments linked to depression can result in critical errors. Impaired communication also damages the essential relationships between officers and the citizens they protect. Moreover, Rasool et al. (2019) observe that untreated depression leads to severe burnout and increased absenteeism, factors that drastically reduce overall productivity and job satisfaction among the force. When officers are absent or emotionally detached, the overall effectiveness of the police unit is compromised.

Addressing this crisis requires prioritizing early diagnosis and targeted intervention techniques for Kenyan police personnel, as Peele and Wolf (2020) emphasize. Nyayieka et al. (2020) suggest that implementing wellness programs, providing confidential counseling services, and fostering a supportive workplace that encourages mental health awareness can help officers cope with depression and lessen its effect on performance. These initiatives must be integrated into administrative protocols to ensure accessibility and normalize seeking psychological support. Additionally, Onchonga et al. (2021) recommend training courses focused on emotional health, stress reduction, and resilience building to equip officers with coping mechanisms. By recognizing the root causes and operational effects of depression, stakeholders in law enforcement agencies can adopt comprehensive strategies to promote mental health, increase work satisfaction, and ultimately improve the overall performance of police officers.

Statement of the Problem

The prevalence of depression among police officers in Nairobi, Kenya, is a critical issue impacting their well-being and job performance. The demanding nature of law enforcement exposes officers to severe job demands, frequent exposure to traumatic experiences, and persistent work-family conflicts. Coupled with the constant threat of

violent crimes, these intense job demands create continuous psychological strain. According to Cheptoo (2022), this constant stress precipitates severe depression and an inability to manage everyday responsibilities. When these professional stressors spill over into personal lives, they generate severe work-family conflicts, leaving officers emotionally depleted.

The consequences of this unmanaged depression are evident in rising suicide cases. According to National Police Service statistics (2021), between 2016 and 2020, 65 cases of murder and 57 cases of suicide were recorded within the service. Amnesty International Kenya (2023) notes that police murder-suicides have become rampant, with Nairobi registering an average of four cases annually, namely 17% of the national total. Furthermore, depression often manifests as emotional dysregulation and impaired judgment. Amnesty Kenya (2023) highlights incidents where Nairobi officers were accused of excessively forceful interactions with the public. Many officers also turn to maladaptive coping mechanisms. Statistics from the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (2018) show that four out of ten Kenyan police personnel suffer from drug use, corresponding to 40% of Nairobi-based officers. This misuse links to poor judgment and absenteeism. This research sought to provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing targeted support and intervention programs to combat depression and improve police performance in Nairobi.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The study was grounded on Job-Demand Theory, and Social Support Theory. Job-Demand Theory, rooted in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model by Demerouti et al. (2001), explores the relationship between workplace demands and available resources in influencing employee well-being and performance. The theory argues that job demands, such as physical, psychological, social, or organizational stressors, require sustained effort and can lead to significant physiological and psychological costs. In contrast, job resources, including support, training, or adequate compensation, help mitigate these demands, foster personal growth, and enhance performance, as noted by Bakker and Demerouti (2017). Police officers often experience significant job demands, including exposure to traumatic events, extended working hours, and high-stakes decision-making. When these demands exceed the available resources, namely peer support systems or mental health services, officers are at a greater risk of experiencing burnout, stress, and reduced performance, according to Hosseini et al. (2022).

The imbalance between job demands and resources is particularly pronounced in high-stress environments like law enforcement, making the application of Job-Demand Theory essential for understanding the impact of mental health challenges on police performance. In the context of the impact of mental health on the performance of police officers in Kenya, Job-Demand Theory provides a valuable framework for analysis. Police officers in Kenya face heightened job demands due to the nature of their work, which includes exposure to violent crimes, civil unrest, and terrorism. These stressors contribute to chronic mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. If these challenges remain unaddressed, they significantly hinder job performance and overall organizational effectiveness, a point supported by Mwiti et al. (2023).

To further explain the buffering mechanisms against these demands, Social Support Theory, developed by Cobb (1976), emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships and social networks in promoting well-being and buffering individuals from stress. It identifies emotional, informational, and instrumental support as essential elements that enable people to cope effectively with challenges. Work-related stress is one of the most significant factors affecting the mental health and performance of police officers. It

arises from the pressures and demands of their roles, including exposure to violence, managing public expectations, and balancing administrative and operational tasks. Prolonged exposure to such stressors can lead to burnout, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues, significantly impairing the ability of officers to perform effectively, as Kinman and Teoh (2020) point out.

Social Support Theory provides a valuable lens for understanding how depression can be mitigated. Support from colleagues and supervisors can reduce the psychological impact of stressors by fostering a collaborative and empathetic work environment. For instance, peer support programs within the police service can create safe spaces for officers to share experiences and seek advice, reducing feelings of isolation. Similarly, family and community support can enhance overall well-being by providing a stable and encouraging foundation outside the workplace, as noted by Brough et al. (2022). When officers feel supported both professionally and personally, they are more likely to demonstrate resilience, focus, and effectiveness in their roles, according to Mwangi and Wanjiru (2023).

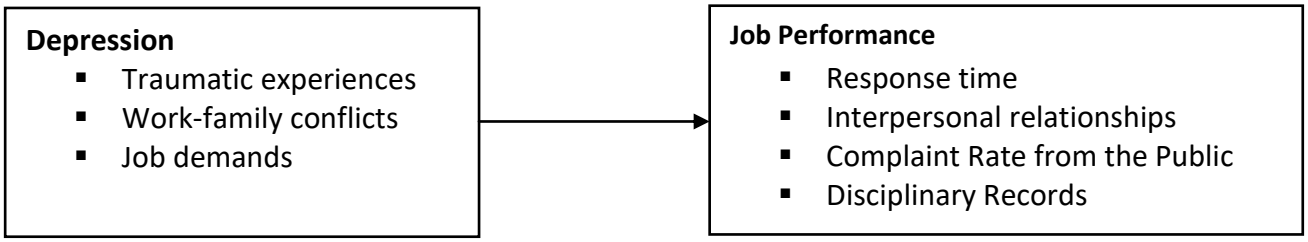


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012), researchers employ the concept (variable) operationalization strategy to accomplish certain goals. Mental health is represented as an independent variable in this conceptual framework by depression, and employee performance as the dependent variable.

Empirical Review

Depression is a serious mental health issue that affects police officers in Kenya and has an influence on their performance at work. It is characterized by enduring feelings of melancholy, despair, and lack of interest or pleasure in everyday activities (Johnston et al., 2019). Depression has an impact on law enforcement personnel' well-being and ability to do their jobs effectively. It can be impacted by a number of variables.

According to Rasool et al. (2019), there are a variety of factors that might contribute to depression in Kenyan police officers, such as exposure to traumatic events, ongoing stress, demands from their jobs, and organizational difficulties. Depressive symptoms may arise as a result of the nature of police employment, which includes being exposed to violence, important situations, and rigorous schedules (Nyayieka et al., 2020). Furthermore, the stigma attached to mental health problems in the police community may deter officers from getting treatment, which might result in untreated depression and its related effects (Onchonga et al., 2021).

Police officers' performance is significantly impacted by depression, which can take many different forms. Officers' decision-making, communication, and general job performance might be negatively impacted by depressive symptoms such weariness, impatience, and trouble concentrating (Johnston et al., 2019). Furthermore, police officers' productivity and job satisfaction may be negatively impacted by untreated depression

due to burnout, and absenteeism (Rasool et al., 2019).

The literature review emphasizes the significance of early diagnosis and intervention techniques in addressing depression among Kenyan police personnel (Peele & Wolf, 2020). Coping with depression and lessening its effect on performance may be achieved by officers through the implementation of wellness programs, confidential counseling services, and a friendly workplace that encourages mental health awareness (Nyayieka et al., 2020). Training courses on emotional health, stress reduction, and resilience-building can also give cops coping mechanisms to deal with depression's obstacles (Onchonga et al., 2021). Stakeholders in Kenyan law enforcement agencies may adopt comprehensive strategies to promote officers' mental health, increase work satisfaction, and improve overall performance by recognizing the causes and effects of depression among police officers.

Police work performance encompasses essential variables heavily influenced by mental health. Primarily, timely incident response is critical in law enforcement. Depressive conditions can cause severe problems with focus and motivation, a factor that results in significantly slower response times, according to Smith et al. (2021). Furthermore, officers depend on strong communication to establish trust. However, mental health challenges strain these interpersonal abilities, a situation that frequently leads to communication breakdowns or severe social disengagement (Johnson & Lee, 2023).

The public complaint rate is a critical indicator reflecting how effectively officers interact with communities. Mental health issues severely interfere with emotional regulation, potentially increasing public grievances and inappropriate behavior (Patel et al., 2020). Additionally, disciplinary records serve as a vital performance measure. Persistent stress and burnout can weaken self-control, raising the risk of misbehavior and disciplinary actions, as noted by Brown et al. (2022). Tracking these specific dimensions provides comprehensive insights to direct supportive policing interventions.

The relationship between depression severity and work-related outcomes like presenteeism and absenteeism is examined by Johnston et al. (2019) in their study titled "Impact of Depression Severity on Absenteeism and Presenteeism in the Working Population". The study used the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) to measure depression levels and the World Health Organization Health and Work Performance Questionnaire to gather information about work-related data from 4953 employees who were recruited through industry partners and social media for a mental health smartphone app evaluation. It was shown that there was a strong correlation between absenteeism linked to mental health issues and a negative linear relationship between the severity of depression and presenteeism. The study also demonstrated the differing contributions of individual depression symptoms to these results, with behavioral symptoms having a greater effect on presenteeism and cognitive symptoms having a greater influence on absenteeism. The results suggest the importance of considering individual symptoms in managing depression and making return-to-work decisions.

Using work depression as a mediating variable, Rasool et al. (2019) examine how a toxic office environment—which includes aspects like harassment, bullying, ostracism, and incivility—influences worker productivity both directly and indirectly. Data were gathered from 23 branches of five Chinese banks close to Shanghai using a questionnaire survey consisting of 53 items on a five-point Likert scale. PLS-SEM 3.2 was used to evaluate 180 completed responses from the intended sample, which consisted of administrative personnel, middle managers, and senior managers. The results imply that a toxic work environment has a detrimental effect on employees' productivity, both directly and indirectly through job-related depression. In order to improve productivity, the

study highlights the necessity of addressing toxic workplace environments and encouraging mental health assistance.

Sen et al. (2022) investigated depression at work by looking at internet reviews of depression at significant US firms. The Occupational Depression Inventory (ODI), modified for use in work-related settings, was utilized by the researchers to collect and examine more than 350,000 employee evaluations from 104 significant US organizations between 2008 and 2020. To evaluate these evaluations and determine composite ODI ratings, they created a deep learning system known as Auto ODI. The results showed that states that hosted enterprises with high ODI ratings had greater rates of despair, talent shortages, and economic difficulties and that these companies' stock values decreased. This creative use of Auto ODI has useful implications for businesses and policymakers to address work-related depression and its wider effects, as well as theoretical insights into computational social science, occupational health, and economic geography.

Peele and Wolf (2020), concentrating on 444 kindergarten teachers in Ghana, investigated the determinants of anxiety and depressive symptoms among teachers in Ghana: Evidence from a randomized controlled experiment. The study examines determinants of anxiety and depression symptoms in these instructors who took part in a school-randomized control experiment called the Quality Preschool for Ghana (QP4G) Study using multilevel models. The results show that personal stresses including food insufficiency in the home and unfavorable work settings all lead to heightened feelings of anxiety and depression in teachers. On the other hand, taking part in a professional development intervention was linked to a lower rise in symptoms over the academic year, suggesting that parent involvement, in-class coaching, and training programs may be beneficial for teachers' mental health.

Nyayieka et al. (2020) looked at the relationship between teenagers' academic achievement in a few Kenyan secondary schools and their clinical depression and anxiety. Data was gathered from 126 teenagers, ages 14 to 19, using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), and a questionnaire created by the researcher. A nonequivalent pretest-posttest design was utilized in the study, with two schools serving as the experimental group and the control group, respectively. Academic performance was examined in connection to depression, anxiety, and Spearman Correlation Coefficient using bivariate analysis. The results demonstrate that academic performance and depression have a strong link (p=0.010), while there is no significant correlation (p=0.651) between anxiety and academic performance. The study highlights how crucial it is for secondary school administrators and mental health care providers to treat depression and anxiety as clinical problems.

Onchonga et al. (2021) studied the effects of the 2019 SARS-CoV-2 pandemic on anxiety and depression in Kenyan frontier healthcare professionals. The 7-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7) and the Patient-Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) were used to evaluate 476 participants in total, in addition to a sociodemographic questionnaire. The study adopted stratified sampling and applied the Statistical Package Programme for Social Science Version 23.0.0 for data analysis. The study included the use of Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney U tests to examine variations in anxiety and depression levels across socio-demographic factors. The study employed ordinal logistic regression analysis to identify determinants of both anxiety and depression levels.

Results indicated 53.6% had mild depression, 9.2% had severe depression, 13.4% had severe anxiety, and 35.1% had mild anxiety. Significant variables influencing anxiety levels were gender, years of work experience, and the cadre of healthcare workers; gender also had an influence on depression levels. The study highlights the importance of providing healthcare professionals

with specialized mental health assistance, with a focus on addressing gender inequities and unique professional positions.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the impact of depression on the performance of police officers in Kenya. This design is effective because it acquires comprehensive and accurate information to assess current relationships between variables. Therefore, the descriptive approach was the most appropriate method since the research intends to uncover causal associations and elucidate the characteristics of a sizable population.

The target population consisted of 2,902 junior police officers, namely constables, corporals, sergeants, and senior sergeants stationed across 35 police stations within 11 police divisions in Nairobi County. A sample size of 341 respondents was determined through stratified sampling that was guided by the Krejcie and Morgan table of 1970. Questionnaires served as the primary data collection instrument because they offer efficiency in obtaining accurate and reliable information. Data processing involved cleaning, sorting, and coding to maintain consistency and reliability. Analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26.0 for both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics summarized general trends using frequencies, means, and standard deviations, while simple linear regression assessed the nature of impact of depression on job performance by police officers.

The regression model was specified as:

$$Y = \beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y is Performance and X1 is Depression. β0 is the constant, β1 is the beta coefficient, while ε is the error term.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are based on an analysis conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods based on 222 responses. The descriptive statistics for the depression variable indicators are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Depression

Depression Indicators	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	Std. Dev
	Percent (%)						
I have experienced stressful events (such as violent crimes, accidents, or disasters) while performing my duties as a police officer that impacted my mental health.	0.0	1.1	0.6	31.5	66.5	4.64	.558
I experience conflicts between my work responsibilities and my family/personal life.	0.6	0.0	3.4	32.1	63.9	4.59	.616
I occasionally feel emotionally depleted or worn out from the duties of my job.	0.6	0.0	1.7	34.1	63.6	4.60	.585
I find my family and other personal relationships resourceful in helping me cope with job-related stress and depression?	0.6	1.1	1.7	37.2	59.4	4.54	.648
For depression symptoms connected to my job as a police officer, I have sought professional assistance or counseling	0.6	0.6	2.8	36.1	59.9	4.54	.639
I have difficulty sleeping due to thoughts related to traumatic incidents experienced at work.	0.6	1.1	2.3	37.2	58.8	4.53	.658
I sometimes feel hopeless or lack motivation as a result of my job-related experiences.	1.7	1.7	2.8	31.3	62.5	4.51	.784
Depression symptoms have at times interfered with my performance as a police officer.	0.6	0.6	3.7	34.4	60.8	4.54	.652

SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, M= Mean, STD=Standard Deviation

The study explored how police officers experience and manage symptoms of depression as related to the demands of their work. A large majority (98.0%, mean = 4.64, std. dev = 0.558) reported having encountered stressful events—such as violent crimes, accidents, or disasters—that impacted their mental health. The very low standard deviation suggests near-universal agreement, highlighting the emotional toll that operational duties impose. This finding reinforces prior research by Muriuki and Ochieng (2022), which found that police officers frequently experience post-traumatic symptoms due to repeated exposure to high-risk events.

Work-life conflict was also prevalent, with 96.0% of respondents (mean = 4.59, std. dev = 0.616) agreeing that their job responsibilities interfere with personal or family life. The tight clustering of responses signals a consistent perception of strain across participants. Emotional fatigue was equally common, as 97.7% (mean = 4.60, std. dev = 0.585) occasionally felt emotionally depleted or worn out from job duties. These findings align with those of Wambua and Kariuki (2021), who observed that emotional exhaustion is a core component of job-related burnout in uniformed services.

Support systems played a significant role in coping with depressive symptoms. Most respondents (96.6%, mean = 4.54, std. dev = 0.648) viewed their family and close relationships as helpful in managing job-related stress and depression. While the slightly higher standard deviation indicates some variation, the overall agreement suggests that personal support networks remain critical. Regarding help-seeking behaviors, 96% (mean = 4.54, std. dev = 0.639) stated they had sought professional assistance or counseling for depression symptoms related to their role. This is a promising sign of increasing mental health awareness and openness to intervention, echoing the shift in attitudes noted by Nyambura and Gikonyo (2020).

More specific symptoms of depression were also reported. For instance, 96% of officers (mean = 4.53, std. dev = 0.658) acknowledged having difficulty sleeping due to traumatic job-related experiences. Similarly, 93.8% (mean = 4.51, std. dev = 0.784) sometimes felt hopeless or lacked motivation due to their work. Notably, this item had the highest standard deviation in the dataset, indicating greater variation in individual coping thresholds or experiences with depressive symptoms. Additionally, 95.2% (mean = 4.54, std. dev = 0.652) reported that depression symptoms have, at times, interfered with their performance. These findings highlight how emotional strain and psychological fatigue can impact both personal well-being and job effectiveness, emphasizing the need for sustained psychological support systems within law enforcement structures.

The study sought to examine police officers' perceptions of their performance, focusing on responsiveness, communication, professionalism, and public interaction. The responses are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Job Performance

Job Performance Indicators	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	Std. Dev
			Percent (%)				
I respond to emergency calls promptly.	0.0	0.0	1.7	28.7	69.6	4.68	.503
My response time to public distress is consistent and efficient.	0.0	0.0	1.1	29.5	69.3	4.68	.490
I feel I have the necessary resources to respond to incidents quickly.	1.1	0.6	4.8	28.7	64.8	4.55	.718
My unit's response time meets the expectations of the public.	0.0	1.1	2.3	33.8	62.8	4.58	.598
I maintain professional relationships with my colleagues.	0.0	0.0	1.1	36.9	61.9	4.61	.512
My communication with colleagues and supervisors is effective.	0.0	1.7	2.3	37.5	58.5	4.53	.631
I have a positive working relationship with the community I serve.	0.0	1.1	3.4	29.8	65.6	4.60	.614

The results show that a significant majority of respondents (98.3%, mean = 4.68, std. dev = 0.503) reported that they respond to emergency calls promptly. The minimal standard deviation highlights a strong consensus among participants, suggesting a uniform commitment to rapid response. Similarly, 98.8% of officers (mean = 4.68, std. dev = 0.490) agreed that their response time to public distress is both consistent and efficient. This exceptionally low variation further affirms a widely shared belief in the operational reliability of emergency interventions, reinforcing findings by Wekesa and Otieno (2022), who emphasized the importance of timely service delivery in frontline roles.

Regarding the availability of resources for quick incident response, 93.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (mean = 4.55, std. dev = 0.718) that they are adequately equipped. Although the standard deviation is slightly higher, it still suggests general agreement, with some variability likely reflecting differences in local resource allocation. In line with this, 96.6% (mean = 4.58, std. dev = 0.598) stated that their unit's response time meets public expectations. The narrow distribution of responses signals a high degree of alignment with public service standards and suggests responsiveness is a strength across the department.

Interpersonal performance was also positively rated. 98.8% of respondents indicated that they maintain professional relationships with their colleagues (Mean = 4.61, std. dev = 0.512). Effective communication within the department was similarly endorsed by 96% of participants (mean = 4.53, std. dev = 0.631), though the slightly wider spread may indicate variations in individual experiences with supervisors or units. Positive relationships also extended to the community, with 95.4% of officers (mean = 4.60, std. dev = 0.614) expressing that they maintain a good rapport with the public. These findings align with the principles of community policing as discussed by Ndungu and Kibicho (2022), which emphasize trust-building as a pillar of effective service.

Further, inter-unit collaboration emerged as a notable strength, with 98.8% of respondents (mean = 4.68, std. dev = 0.515) agreeing that they work effectively with other units to meet shared goals. This reflects a coordinated organizational culture, supporting previous studies highlighting the importance of teamwork in policing operations (Mwangi & Barasa, 2021). Finally, 99.5% of officers (mean = 4.64, std. dev = 0.491) reported receiving minimal complaints from the public, underscoring a prevailing perception of professional conduct and public accountability across the force. The narrow spread in responses suggests uniformity in ethical standards and conduct, reinforcing the importance

of continued professionalism in community engagement.

To provide additional insights into the nature of impact depression as the independent variable had on job performance as the dependent variable, a regression analysis was conducted. Table 3 shows the model summary.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	
1	.482[a]	.232	.230	.31823	.232	105.814	2.042

a. Predictors: Depression,

b. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

The adjusted R^2 value of 0.230 indicates that 23% of the variation in police officers job performance can be explained depression. This implies that the rest of 78% can be explained by variables which were not captured in the current specific model. Table 4 show the ANOVA results.

Table 4: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.716	1	10.716	105.814	.000[b]
	Residual	35.444	350	.101		
	Total	46.160	351			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: Depression

An F-value of was obtained, which was statistically. The overall significance of the model is confirmed by the F-statistic of 105.814 and a corresponding p-value (Sig.) of 0.000. Because the p-value is less than the standard 0.05 threshold ($p < 0.05$), it indicates that the model is statistically significant. Therefore, depression was a reliable predictor of job performance.

Table 4 provided the specific values needed to understand the individual relationship between the variables and to build the predictive equation.

Table 5: Coefficients for Impact of Depression on Job Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.372	.219		10.836	.000
	Depression	.489	.048	.482	10.287	.000

Table 5 shows the unstandardized B coefficient for depression was 0.489. This indicates a positive relationship where a one-unit increase in reported depression levels correlates with a 0.489-unit increase in officer performance. The t-value of 10.287 and a significance level of $p = 0.000$ further affirm that this relationship is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis H03 failed to be accepted.

The study concludes that depression has a significant and positive statistical impact on self-reported officer performance. While this finding appears counterintuitive, it reveals a complex dynamic within high-stress law enforcement

environments. Highly dedicated officers that take on excessive workloads and actively respond to numerous critical incidents often achieve very high performance metrics. However, this exact hyper-vigilance and continuous exposure to traumatic events simultaneously drives severe psychological exhaustion. Therefore, the data reflects a reality where high-performing officers are functioning with elevated levels of depression and burnout as a direct consequence of their rigorous professional commitment.

These findings are consistent with prior research by Liberman et al. (2002). Traditional models suggest that depressive symptoms generally impair concentration and motivation. However, this study demonstrates that in the specific context of Nairobi police units, officers continue to execute their duties at high levels despite enduring profound psychological distress. This phenomenon of the functioning depressed officer highlights a critical risk. Even though immediate performance remains high, untreated psychological strain can eventually escalate into more severe outcomes, namely substance abuse or total burnout, making early detection vital. In the context of police work in Nairobi, these findings suggest that high performance should not be misinterpreted as an indicator of good mental health.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that depression significantly impacts the overall job performance of police officers in Nairobi. While highly dedicated officers achieve exceptional metrics, they simultaneously endure profound psychological exhaustion. Consequently, regular mental health screenings and accessible counseling are critical to ensure that high performance does not mask severe, untreated burnout.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended giving focused attention to depression within the police force, as untreated symptoms severely diminish concentration, motivation, and morale. Police institutions should implement regular mental health screenings, accessible confidential counseling, and robust wellness programs that promote psychological well-being. Furthermore, policy interventions must integrate specialized mental health services directly into police medical facilities and secure funding to train law enforcement psychologists. Administrators must proactively support even their most productive personnel. Cultivating an open culture that prioritizes psychological well-being is critical for ensuring long-term institutional resilience and preventing sudden operational failures.

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