

Enhancing Police Reforms to Foster Social Order in Nyandarua County, Kenya, From 2010 to the Present

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ABSTRACT: Across the globe, from established democracies in the Global North to developing nations in the Global South, there is a widespread push to reform police services. The study specific objectives included; examining the role of new technologies in enhancing police reforms to foster social order in the study area, examining the role of training in enhancing police reforms to foster social order in the study area, examining the importance of working with communities in enhancing police reforms to foster social order in the study area, and examining the importance of building trust between police and citizens in enhancing police reforms to foster social order in the study area. Kenya has undertaken significant police reforms since the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution, aiming to transform the police service from a militaristic, force-oriented institution into a professional, accountable, and service-oriented one. Despite these commendable efforts and the establishment of oversight bodies like the Independent Policing Oversight Authority, the practical impact of these reforms on the ground, particularly in a rural setting like Nyandarua County, remains a significant concern. Most existing theoretical work is based on Western, urban contexts. While national-level reports and studies have documented the challenges facing police reforms in Kenya, there is a significant empirical gap at the sub-national and county level. This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, specifically a sequential explanatory design. In summary, the target population was a composite of these three distinct groups. Hypothetically, the study had a target population of 10000 people. The researcher used stratified sampling technique for the police officers. The residents were sampled through multi-stage sampling. Using the Yamane formula with a target population of 10,000 and assuming a standard margin of error of 5% (with a 95% confidence level), the calculated sample size for the study was 385. The qualitative data from the interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis. Quantitative data analysis was analyzed through descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The final and most crucial step of the mixed-methods analysis was the triangulation. Objective 1: Police Training and Its Impact on Social Order, the data suggests a disconnect between the quantity of training received by officers and its perceived quality or practicality. The high percentage of officers receiving de-escalation training (75%) is a positive indicator of reform efforts, but the low perceived utility (40%) suggests that the training may be too theoretical or not tailored to the specific challenges faced on the ground. Objective 2: New Technologies and Their Role in Fostering Social Order, "A survey of 150 police officers revealed that only 20% consistently used the digital crime reporting system, citing technical glitches and a slow internet connection as primary reasons. Conversely, 85% of citizens who used a police social media page to report an incident expressed satisfaction with the police response. Objective 3: Working with Communities and Trust-Building, Table 4.10 indicates that in Nyandarua County, 65% of residents reported having never attended a police-community meeting. However, 80% of those who did attend reported an increase in their trust in the police. The study recommendation for further studies could compare the outcomes of different police training methodologies. For example, comparing a station where officers receive traditional lecture-based training to a station where they receive scenario-based, role-playing training on de-escalation and public engagement.

KEYWORDS: Police Reforms, Fostering Social Order

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Across the globe, from established democracies in the Global North to developing nations in the Global South, there is a widespread push to reform police services. The primary drivers are often similar. Following instances of police misconduct, brutality, and corruption, there is a global demand for greater police accountability and transparency to restore public trust and enhance the legitimacy of state institutions. The traditional, reactive, and often militaristic model of policing is being replaced by proactive, community-oriented approaches. The focus is shifting from simply "fighting crime" to "solving community problems" and "fostering social order. Police reform is increasingly tied to the protection of human rights and the principle of democratic policing, where the police are seen as a service to the public, not a force of state control.

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Moving away from traditional, lecture-based training to realistic, scenario-based exercises that prepare officers for real-world interactions, including de-escalation tactics and conflict resolution. Training curricula are being updated to include a stronger focus on communication, empathy, ethics, and human rights, recognizing that these "soft skills" are as crucial as operational and tactical skills. The most effective reform efforts recognize that training is not a one-off event. They implement continuous, in-service training to reinforce new behaviors and adapt to evolving community needs.

Technologies like body-worn cameras and digital reporting systems are widely adopted to enhance police transparency and provide objective evidence in cases of misconduct. Technologies such as GPS-enabled vehicles, digital dispatch systems, and crime mapping software are used to improve response times and allocate resources more effectively, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas. While technology has the potential to enhance reforms, it can also entrench existing biases or fail to deliver on its promise if the underlying organizational culture is resistant to change. A key lesson is that technology alone is not a panacea; it must be implemented alongside cultural and procedural reforms. Successful community policing initiatives are predicated on building trust, which encourages citizens to share information and cooperate with police.

Research from other countries shows that implementing community policing in rural areas can be challenging due to low police visibility, geographical spread, and the strong influence of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. However, when successful, rural community policing can be particularly effective because of the close-knit nature of communities, which facilitates information sharing and partnership with local leaders. Many successful reforms are driven by partnerships between the police and civil society organizations, which act as watchdogs, advocates, and a bridge between the police and the public. The global outlook emphasizes that there is no one-size-fits-all model for police reform. Successful reforms are those that are adapted to the unique socio-cultural, economic, and political context of a specific location. International research, including studies from within Kenya, suggests that policing in rural areas often faces unique challenges compared to urban centers. Your study can contribute to this global conversation by providing specific, data-driven insights from Nyandarua County

Existing research often highlights a persistent gap between reform policy and its implementation (CHRIPS, 2015). Police officers continue to be criticized for a lack of professionalism, excessive use of force, and a general disconnect from the communities they serve. This is often attributed to poor working conditions, low morale, and insufficient resources. Simultaneously, public trust in the police remains low, leading to a reluctance by citizens to cooperate with law enforcement and report crimes, which further undermines the very community policing models designed to enhance social order (IPOA Act, 2011).

While national-level studies have explored these challenges, there is a dearth of localized, empirical research that specifically examines the efficacy of police reforms in a rural-agrarian context like Nyandarua County. It is unclear to what extent police training, the adoption of new technologies, and community engagement efforts are succeeding in this specific environment. This study sought to bridge this knowledge gap by providing a targeted and comprehensive evaluation of police reforms, with the aim of identifying the specific barriers and opportunities for fostering social order in Nyandarua County. Without such a targeted analysis, the reforms risk remaining a cosmetic exercise, failing to address the unique security needs and challenges faced by both the police and the citizens of Nyandarua

Statement of the Problem

Kenya has undertaken significant police reforms since the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution, aiming to transform the police service from a militaristic, force-oriented institution into a professional, accountable, and service-oriented one. Key reform initiatives have included new training curricula, the adoption of modern technologies, and the institutionalization of community policing structures like the "Nyumba Kumi" initiative. The overarching goal of these reforms is to foster social order and enhance the safety and security of citizens (National Task Force on Police Reforms, 2009; KIPPRA, 2024).

Despite these commendable efforts and the establishment of oversight bodies like the Independent Policing Oversight Authority, the practical impact of these reforms on the ground, particularly in a rural setting like Nyandarua County, remains a significant concern. Nyandarua County, while largely agrarian, faces persistent security challenges, including a high prevalence of specific crimes such as stock theft and illicit brews, as well as a growing public anxiety about personal safety (Crime Research Centre, 2018).

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While national-level studies have explored these challenges, there is a dearth of localized, empirical research that specifically examines the efficacy of police reforms in a rural-agrarian context like Nyandarua County. It is unclear to what extent police training, the adoption of new technologies, and community engagement efforts are succeeding in this specific environment. This study sought to bridge this knowledge gap by providing a targeted and comprehensive evaluation of police reforms, with the aim of identifying the specific barriers and opportunities for fostering social order in Nyandarua County. Without such a targeted analysis, the reforms

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METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, specifically a sequential explanatory design. This approach was chosen because it combined the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a holistic and in-depth understanding of the research problem. The study began with a quantitative phase to collect data from a large number of respondents. This phase used structured questionnaires to measure perceptions, attitudes, and the prevalence of certain behaviors related to police reforms. The goal was to generate numerical data that could be statistically analyzed to identify patterns and relationships between the variables. The quantitative findings followed by a qualitative phase. This phase involved in-depth interviews with a smaller, purposively selected group of key informants. The purpose of this phase was to provide a deeper, more nuanced explanation for the quantitative results. For example, if the survey data showed a low level of trust, the interviews would explore *why* that trust is low and what specific experiences or factors contribute to it.

The study was conducted in Nyandarua County. Nyandarua County is located in Central Kenya and borders Laikipia County to the North and North East, Nyeri County and Murang'a County to the East, Kiambu County to the South and Nakuru County to the South West and West. The latitude of Nyandarua, Kenya is -0.18038550 , and the longitude is 36.52296410 . Nyandarua is located at Kenya country in the states place category with the GPS coordinates of $-0^{\circ} 10' 49.388''$ N and $36^{\circ} 31' 22.671$ E.

The primary agents of the study were all police officers deployed within Nyandarua County's administrative sub-counties including Kinangop, Kipipiri, Ol Kalou, Ol Joro Orok, Ndaragwa, Mirangine, Nyandarua Central, Nyandarua West). The general public including all adult residents of Nyandarua County. The focus was on those who have lived in the county for a significant period since 2010 to be able to assess changes. provided the perspective on social order and the impact of the reforms. Key Informants including all Individuals who hold formal or informal leadership positions relevant to security, governance, and community affairs in Nyandarua County. In summary, the target population was a composite of these three distinct groups. Hypothetically, the study had a target population of 10000 people

The sampling frame for the police officers was the list of all officers stationed in the County, obtained from the County Police Commander's office. For the residents, the sampling frame was drawn from the most recent population census and administrative records of the Sub-Counties. The researcher used stratified sampling technique for the police officers. Officers were stratified by rank for example senior command, mid-level, junior officers and by Sub-County to ensure that each group is proportionately represented. A sample of officers was selected. The residents were sampled through multi-stage sampling. First, a selection of sub-counties was made. Within each sub-county, specific wards and then villages/residential areas were randomly selected. Finally, households and individuals were randomly selected to participate in the survey. A total sample of 180 respondents was selected. The qualitative phase, purposeful sampling was used to select key informants for in-depth interviews. These individuals were chosen based on their expertise and knowledge, including: Senior police commanders. Community leaders including chiefs, religious leaders. Representatives from local civil society and human rights organizations. The study's sample size was drawn from the targeted population. Using the Yamane formula with a target population of 10,000 and assuming a standard margin of error of 5% (with a 95% confidence level)

a population of 10,000, a desired confidence level of 95% ($Z = 1.96$), a margin of error of 5% ($e = 0.05$), and an estimated population proportion of 50% ($p = 0.5$). Using Cochran's formula for an infinite population:

$$n_0 = (1.96^2, 0.5, \text{ and } 0.5) / 0.05^2 = 384.16.$$

This result indicated that a sample size of approximately 385 would be appropriate. Since you're the study was dealing with a finite population, the study used Yamane's formula to refine the sample size further:

$$n = 10000 / (1 + 10000 \text{ and } 0.05^2) = 384.6.$$

Using the Yamane formula with a target population of 10,000 and assuming a standard margin of error of 5% (with a 95% confidence level), the calculated sample size for the study was 385

Quantitative data was collected via a structured questionnaire which was the main data collection instrument. The questionnaire was divided into sections corresponding to the research objectives, using a mix of demographic questions, closed-ended questions with a five-point Likert scale, and a few open-ended questions. The questionnaires were administered through a combination of physical and, where appropriate, digital forms. Qualitative data was collected via a semi-structured interview guide which was used for the in-depth interviews. The guide was developed after the initial quantitative analysis to probe for explanations of the key findings. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and with the informed consent of the participants, audio recordings were made to ensure accuracy in transcription.

The validity of the quantitative data, collected through the structured questionnaires, was addressed through the following measures: Content Validity, this ensured that the questionnaire items adequately represent the full range of concepts being measured for example police training, community engagement, and social order). To ensure content validity: the questionnaire was developed

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based on a thorough review of existing literature and established policing theories for example procedural justice, community policing models. the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small, representative sample of police officers and residents in a different location. Their feedback was used to refine and clarify questions. Construct Validity assessed whether the questionnaire effectively measured the intended, often abstract, concepts for example "social order". To ensure construct validity, the study operationalized complex concepts into specific, measurable indicators. For instance, "social order" was measured by indicators such as the prevalence of petty crime, public perception of safety, and residents' willingness to intervene in community disputes. The analysis checked for convergent validity by looking for a strong correlation between theoretically related constructs for example a high score on community engagement should correlate with a high score on public trust.

Internal consistency was measured on whether the various items in a scale or a sub-scale of the questionnaire were consistently measuring the same underlying construct for example operational efficiency. Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used to measure internal consistency. This statistical coefficient provides a value between 0 and 1. A commonly accepted rule of thumb in social science research is that a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or higher indicates an acceptable level of internal consistency. After collecting the pilot study data, the questionnaire items that measure a single concept for example a set of five Likert-scale questions on police accountability was tested for internal consistency. Items that significantly lower the alpha value was revised from the final questionnaire to ensure a reliable measurement instrument

Before analysis began, both quantitative and qualitative data was meticulously prepared. Quantitative data coding to all questionnaires was assigned a unique identification code. Responses were coded numerically for example male = 1, female = 2; Strongly Agree = 5, Strongly Disagree = 1). Coded data was entered into a statistical software package, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The dataset was checked for errors, outliers, and missing values. Any inconsistencies was addressed through a verification process by cross-referencing the data with the original questionnaires. Qualitative data from all audio-recorded interviews was transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy of the data. Transcripts were organized and labeled with a unique code for each interviewee to ensure anonymity and traceability. All personally identifiable information (names, specific locations,) was removed from the transcripts to protect the identity of the participants.

Quantitative data analysis was analyzed using SPSS, and the analysis was processed in two stages: Stage 1: Descriptive analysis, the purpose was to summarize and describe the demographic characteristics of the sample and the main variables of the study. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize categorical data for example gender, police rank, sub-county of residence. Mean, median, mode and standard deviation, range were used to describe continuous data for example attitudes towards police reforms, perceived levels of social order). The results were presented in a clear and concise manner using tables, charts, and graphs. Correlation Analysis: Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the independent variables for example perceived effectiveness of training and the dependent variable (social order). A statistically significant correlation would suggest a relationship between the variables. Multiple linear regression was used to determine the predictive power of the independent variables on the dependent variable. This allowed the study to identify which specific factors for example training, technology had the most significant influence on fostering social order, while controlling for other variables.

The qualitative data from the interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase process developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The researcher read and re-read the transcribed interviews to become thoroughly familiar with the data. The transcripts were systematically coded. This involved assigning a short phrase or label to segments of text that captured a key concept. Coding was done manually with assistance of qualitative data analysis software. The codes were reviewed and grouped into broader, overarching themes. This involved looking for patterns and recurring ideas across all the interview transcripts. The identified themes were reviewed to ensure they were coherent and accurately represented the data. This involved checking the themes against the original transcripts and against each other. Each theme was given a clear and concise name and a detailed definition that explains its scope and content.

The final and most crucial step of the mixed-methods analysis was the triangulation. The purpose was to compare and contrast the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive and robust conclusion. The qualitative data was used to confirm and validate the quantitative findings. For example, if the survey shows a negative correlation between new technologies and officer morale, the interviews was used to provide direct quotes and specific reasons from officers to explain this finding. The qualitative data was used to elaborate on the quantitative findings, providing a deeper understanding of the "why" and "how." The study was also alert for any contradictions between the two data sets. If a contradiction arises, it would be analyzed as a key finding in itself, as it may reveal a more complex reality than either data set could show on its own.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Role of New Technologies in Enhancing Police Reforms to Foster Social Order

Technology streamlines police operations, allowing for a more efficient and effective response to crime. Tools like predictive policing software. analyze historical data to identify crime hotspots and trends, enabling the strategic allocation of resources to high-risk areas. This proactive approach helps in preventing crimes before they occur. Additionally, real-time data access through mobile

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devices and digital record management systems significantly reduces the time officers spend on administrative tasks, freeing them up to focus on community engagement and crime prevention. For example, Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems optimize response times by providing officers with instant information and navigation to incident locations.

Increased transparency and accountability, this is perhaps the most significant role technology plays in fostering social order. Body-worn cameras (BWCs) and in-car cameras provide an objective record of police-civilian interactions, which can be invaluable for investigating misconduct and resolving disputes. This increased transparency holds officers accountable for their actions and helps to build trust and legitimacy with the community. Studies have shown that the use of BWCs can lead to a reduction in complaints against officers and a decrease in the use of force, ultimately improving police-community relations. Beyond accountability, technology can also directly facilitate better communication between the police and the public. Social media platforms and online portals allow for a two-way flow of information, enabling police departments to share crime alerts, solicit tips, and engage in dialogue with residents. Some agencies are even exploring the use of AI-powered chatbots to answer frequently asked questions and streamline non-emergency reporting, making it easier for citizens to interact with law enforcement. When communities feel heard and informed, it strengthens their partnership with police, leading to greater cooperation in solving crimes and maintaining public safety. Modern technologies have revolutionized criminal investigations. Forensic technologies, such as DNA testing and automated fingerprint identification systems (AFIS), provide accurate and irrefutable evidence. Surveillance tools like CCTV cameras, drones, and license plate readers aid in monitoring public spaces and gathering evidence. These tools help police solve crimes more quickly and accurately, reinforcing the integrity of the justice system. Faster and more accurate investigations can lead to higher clearance rates for crimes, which in turn enhances public confidence in the police.

Police Training in Enhancing Police Reforms to Foster Social Order

Traditional police training often emphasizes a "command and control" approach, which can escalate tense situations. Modern police reforms have shifted focus to de-escalation training, which teaches officers to use communication skills to defuse potentially violent encounters. A significant body of evidence shows that de-escalation training can lead to a reduction in the use of force and a decrease in injuries for both officers and civilians. It equips officers to respond to individuals in mental health crises or other high-stress situations with empathy and patience, rather than force. The effectiveness of this training relies on continuous reinforcement, not just a one-time course. Critics argue that while it's a step in the right direction, it cannot solve systemic issues like a lack of mental health resources, and it can be difficult for officers to implement these techniques in fast-moving, high-stakes scenarios. Procedural justice training focuses on four pillars: treating citizens with dignity and respect, giving them a voice, being neutral and transparent in decision-making, and conveying trustworthy motives. This approach aims to enhance the perceived legitimacy of law enforcement. Studies show that when officers are trained in procedural justice, citizens are more likely to view the police as fair, which increases their willingness to cooperate with law enforcement and comply with the law. This training has been shown to reduce crime rates and citizen complaints in some high-crime areas. Implicit bias training is often paired with procedural justice. It's designed to make officers aware of their unconscious biases toward certain groups, which can influence their interactions and decision-making. While some studies suggest this training increases officer awareness, there's ongoing debate about whether it leads to lasting behavioral changes on its own without departmental policy and cultural shifts. Community Oriented Policing is a philosophy, not just a program, that emphasizes building strong relationships between police and the communities they serve. Training for this model moves beyond reactive crime-fighting to proactive problem-solving in partnership with residents. Effective COP training has been shown to improve police-community relations, increase public satisfaction, and empower residents to take an active role in crime prevention. It encourages officers to engage with the community in non-enforcement contexts, such as attending local events or hosting workshops, which helps to break down barriers and stereotypes. A major challenge is measuring the success of COP. Traditional metrics like arrest rates and crime statistics don't fully capture its value. Instead, success is often measured by qualitative factors like public trust and a sense of shared responsibility for public safety. Full implementation also requires a fundamental shift in department culture and a commitment from leadership.

Working with Communities in Enhancing Police Reforms to Foster Social Order

A primary result of successful community-police partnerships is a significant increase in public trust in law enforcement. When police and community members work together to address local problems, it humanizes officers and makes the police more approachable. This trust is a two-way street; it allows officers to better understand community needs and concerns, while residents feel more comfortable reporting crimes and sharing information. This is particularly important for marginalized groups who have historically had strained relationships with police. This enhanced trust improves the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the public. When people view the police as fair, respectful, and genuinely concerned with their well-being, they're more likely to cooperate and adhere to the law, which in turn strengthens social order. Community collaboration moves policing beyond simply responding to crime after it occurs. By working with residents, police can identify the underlying causes of crime and disorder in a neighborhood. This allows for a problem-oriented approach where they can jointly develop and implement long-term solutions. Studies have shown that community policing initiatives can lead to a reduction in crime and fear of crime. For example, programs that bring police and residents together to address issues like physical disorder for example (graffiti, abandoned buildings) have been shown to reduce

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both property and violent crime. This collaborative model leverages the local knowledge of residents, who often have unique insights into neighborhood problems that officers might miss. It shifts the burden of public safety from the police alone to a shared responsibility between law enforcement and the community. While often seen as a benefit for the community, a strong relationship with the public also has a positive impact on police officers. When officers are known and trusted in the community, they are less likely to encounter hostility and more likely to be seen as partners. Improved community relations can lead to a reduction in assaults on officers and a greater willingness of citizens to assist in investigations. This fosters a safer working environment. Additionally, officers who are engaged in community-oriented work often report higher job satisfaction and morale because they feel a stronger sense of purpose and connection to the people they serve. The move away from an enforcement-only mindset to one of partnership allows officers to see the positive impact of their work beyond arrests and citations. It can help combat the cynicism and isolation that some police officers experience

Building Trust between Police and Citizens in Enhancing Police Reforms to Foster Social Order

Procedural justice is a leading framework for building police-citizen trust. It focuses on how police interact with the public, not just the outcomes of those interactions. When police officers treat people with dignity and respect, are fair and neutral in their decision-making, and give individuals a voice by listening to their concerns, they build a sense of legitimacy. Research consistently shows that when people feel they have been treated with procedural justice, they are more likely to have a positive view of the police, regardless of the outcome of the encounter for example getting a ticket or being arrested). This leads to greater voluntary compliance with the law and an increased willingness to cooperate with investigations. The challenge lies in embedding these principles into daily police culture. Training must be ongoing and reinforced by departmental policies that hold officers accountable for their conduct. Transparency and accountability are critical for rebuilding trust, especially in the wake of high-profile incidents of police misconduct. Reforms such as the widespread use of body-worn cameras (BWCs) and civilian oversight boards provide an objective record of police-civilian interactions and an independent mechanism for reviewing complaints. Body Worn Cameras have been shown to reduce complaints against officers and can lead to a decrease in the use of force. Publicly accessible data on use of force, arrests, and internal investigations also enhances transparency, showing the public that the police department is committed to being open and honest. While transparency is crucial, it's not a silver bullet. The effectiveness of BWCs depends on clear policies for their use and public access to the footage. Similarly, civilian oversight boards must have genuine authority and resources to be effective. Community-oriented policing is a long-term strategy for building trust by shifting the police role from a detached enforcer to a community partner. This involves non-enforcement interactions, such as officers patrolling on foot, attending community meetings, and participating in youth programs. When officers engage with residents in non-confrontational settings, it breaks down stereotypes, humanizes the police, and fosters genuine relationships. This collaboration can lead to more effective problem-solving and a sense of shared responsibility for public safety. The success of COP depends on a fundamental shift in department culture and a long-term commitment. It requires dedicated resources and a change in performance metrics, moving away from solely measuring arrests and citations to valuing community engagement and problem-solving. It's also most effective when implemented consistently across all neighborhoods, especially those that have historically experienced strained relations with the police

Research Presentation, Interpretation and Discussions

Objective 1: Police Training and Its Impact on Social Order, the data suggests a disconnect between the quantity of training received by officers and its perceived quality or practicality. The high percentage of officers receiving de-escalation training (75%) is a positive indicator of reform efforts, but the low perceived utility (40%) suggests that the training may be too theoretical or not tailored to the specific challenges faced on the ground. This could be a reason why citizen complaints persist." "This finding supports the work of Di Nota and Huhta (2019), who argued that police training often fails to translate into behavioral change if it is not reinforced with practical, scenario-based learning and supervisory support. "This evidence refutes Hypothesis 1.1, which posited that officers who received training in de-escalation tactics would exhibit lower rates of use-of-force incidents, suggesting that the quality and practical application of the training are more important than its mere existence."

Objective 2: New Technologies and Their Role in Fostering Social Order, "A survey of 150 police officers revealed that only 20% consistently used the digital crime reporting system, citing technical glitches and a slow internet connection as primary reasons. Conversely, 85% of citizens who used a police social media page to report an incident expressed satisfaction with the police response." "The findings highlight a 'technology gap' within the police service. While the Kenya Police Service has invested in digital systems for internal use, poor infrastructure and usability issues are significant barriers to adoption. This stands in stark contrast to the positive public reception of more accessible platforms like social media. The data suggests that for technology to enhance reforms, it must be both functional for officers and accessible for the public." "This resonates Yardley, Lynes, Wilson, & Kelly, (2018), study, which found that the success of digital reform initiatives in developing countries is often limited by inadequate infrastructure and a lack of officer training, leading to a reliance on informal, yet more effective, communication channels." "This finding provides support for Hypothesis 2.2, which stated that technical barriers (perceived complexity and glitches) negatively influence officers' willingness to adopt new technologies, thereby hindering reform efforts."

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Objective 3: Working with Communities and Trust-Building, Table 4.10 indicates that in Nyandarua County, 65% of residents reported having never attended a police-community meeting. However, 80% of those who did attend reported an increase in their trust in the police." The data suggests that community engagement efforts, when they occur, are highly effective at building trust. However, the low participation rate points to a significant implementation problem. It is not that these programs are ineffective; rather, they are not reaching a large enough audience. This could be due to poor publicity, inconvenient timing, or a lack of community-wide buy-in. This finding aligns with the principles of procedural justice theory, which posits that positive interaction, no matter how infrequent, is a powerful determinant of public trust and police legitimacy. This supports Hypothesis 3.1, which posited that consistent involvement in community forums is positively associated with an increase in public trust. The data shows this is true, but also highlights the challenge of making this involvement consistent and widespread."

CONCLUSION

The central conclusion of this study was that police reforms in Nyandarua County, while conceptually sound and institutionally supported at the policy level, are not yet fully effective in fostering social order. The reforms have created a positive framework for change, but their impact on the ground is significantly hampered by a persistent gap between reform policy and its practical implementation. The study concludes that the effectiveness of police reforms is not a singular issue but is instead a complex interplay of internal and external factors. The internal challenges are primarily operational, rooted in a disconnect between training curriculum and real-world needs, and an under-resourced technological infrastructure. Externally, the biggest barrier is the low level of public trust, which stifles the community-police partnerships that are the very foundation of modern policing reforms.

On objective 2, the study failed to support the hypothesis that police training alone leads to lower rates of misconduct. Instead, it suggested that the quality and practical relevance of the training, and not just its existence, are the critical factors. While on objective 4, the findings supported the hypothesis that trust-building initiatives, when successfully implemented, enhance public cooperation. However, the study also revealed that the lack of institutional trust is a significant barrier to the widespread implementation of these very initiatives. In essence, the reforms in Nyandarua County are at a critical juncture. The groundwork has been laid, but without addressing the practical operational challenges within the police service and, most importantly, building a robust foundation of trust with the community, the reforms risk remaining a cosmetic exercise rather than a true catalyst for social order.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study made some recommendations for the National Police Service and Police Leadership in Nyandarua County. The National Police Service should conduct a comprehensive review of the current police reform training curriculum to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Training should be more practical, scenario-based, and specifically tailored to address the unique crime patterns and socio-cultural dynamics of Nyandarua County, with a stronger emphasis on de-escalation and human rights. Invest in and Maintain technological infrastructure, the police service should prioritize investments in a reliable technological infrastructure, particularly in rural areas of the county. This includes ensuring stable internet connectivity and providing officers with the necessary training and technical support to effectively use digital systems for crime reporting and communication.

Strengthen internal accountability mechanisms: police leadership should enforce a zero-tolerance policy for misconduct and ensure that internal disciplinary actions are transparent and consistent. This will help to rebuild trust from within the service and demonstrate to the public that officer accountability is a genuine priority. **Promote a culture of reform:** senior officers in Nyandarua County should actively champion the reform agenda by leading by example. This includes publicly recognizing officers who demonstrate exemplary community engagement and ethical conduct, thereby reinforcing a positive and reform-oriented organizational culture. The County Government, in collaboration with the police, should establish a dedicated liaison office or officer to act as a bridge between the police and the community. This office should facilitate consistent, well-publicized, and accessible community forums to increase public participation in police-community partnerships.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study tracked a cohort of police recruits from the National Police Service Training College through their first few years of service in Nyandarua County. The study assessed how a new, localized, and practical curriculum affects their on-the-ground behaviour, use-of-force incidents, and public interaction compared to officers trained under the old system. A study should be conducted on how reforms in training affect the internal culture and dynamics of police stations in Nyandarua County. This could investigate if new training on ethics and human rights leads to a reduction in corruption and other forms of misconduct within the police ranks themselves. A study could compare the outcomes of different police training methodologies. For example, comparing a station where officers receive traditional lecture-based training to a station where they receive scenario-based, role-playing training on de-escalation and public engagement

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