

# The Various Initial Police Recruit Courses Offered To Enhance The Work Performance Of Police Officers, Nairobi City County.

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## Abstract:

**Background:** With the continuing cases of police officers' unprofessionalism and violations of the work ethos outlined in the various instruments of police work manuals such as the 2018 Kenya Police Service Internal Affairs Unit Operations Manual and the National Police Service Police Officer Manual. It has been observed that a significant number of this indiscipline and improper conduct is being committed by police officers who had recently graduated from police training colleges. While it is evident that this behavior is not entirely attributable to the training dispensed, and that other factors might be at play to contribute to such misconduct. Therefore, this study focused on the various initial police recruit courses offered to enhance the work performance of police officers, Nairobi City County.

**Materials and Methods:** The Training Review model was the theory used. This study was guided by a descriptive survey design that presented an opportunity for the researcher to obtain and present unique qualitative views derived from interviews and questionnaires that go a long way in inductive learning and knowledge building. The target population was police Officers serving within Nairobi County. The study used the multistage sampling. Primary data was gathered through questionnaires and focus group discussions.

**Results:** The findings of the study were that, firearm handling, drill, discipline, tactics and physical training and basic investigations were the top courses offered in initial police recruit training.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that the different types of training offered under these initial police recruit training require a holistic view of training to enable more components of training relevant for the work place performance to be incorporated. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the NPS prioritize periodical evaluations of the initial police recruit training to improve its content and boost its efficacy among learners.

**Key Word:** Initial Police Recruit Courses; Training; Work Performance; Police Officers.

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Date of Submission: 13-11-2023

Date of Acceptance: 23-11-2023

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## I. Introduction

Police work performance is an expectation society has in the institution of the police. The overall satisfaction with police performance has been based on the appropriate response to crime, reduction of threats to public security, professional conduct while executing police work, timely and conclusive response to public queries and complaints regarding police incompetence and a positive collaboration with the public.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the police operate under the watchful eye of the public requires an analytical focus on what affects such performance. It is also imperative for any evaluation of police performance to adopt a clear framework of determining the yardsticks of measuring such a performance.

The shift in day-to-day police duties and responsibilities requires officers to protect and serve rather than to enforce and coerce. Thus, in an effort to fulfil the demands of the society, policing authorities need an efficient training system capable of producing qualified officers who are able to respond swiftly and responsibly to the fast-moving pace of social change. And efforts to change institutions worldwide including police services have focused on training.<sup>2</sup> This is because training has over the years remained one of the means through which new procedures, policies and practices are learned. To this end, police training has been crucial in articulating and communicating values as well as professional and technical skills right from the point of entry of officers into the service. At the heart of the development of the police across the world, has been reform and refined training which has enabled it to proactively engage with the public.

The premium placed on training of police officers is informed by the sensitivity of the duties involved; safeguarding public safety and order, guaranteeing the rule of law and facilitating peaceful co-existence within society. To minimize indiscipline, unprofessionalism, abuse of office, and revolt, initial police recruit training

becomes a tool for shaping the skills, belief system, and overall professionalism of the police. It was this focus on various initial police recruit training that became the focus of the study.

August Vollmer and Oliver Wilson are cited with pioneering police professionalism in the USA in the 1960s to the 1980s through their noble policy recommendations that revolutionized policing in the USA.<sup>3</sup> For instance, through their efforts, crime labs, reorient police departments away from crime fighters to crime solvers and partners with communities to improve mutual cooperation with the public. The outcome of this has been an emphasis on partnerships with the public and in providing security rather than putting down demonstrations and propping up local and national governments.<sup>3</sup> It was therefore important to assess the various initial police recruit courses offered to enhance the work performance of police officers.

In the United Kingdom (UK), the police were considered to be as the King's guards existing to keep the edicts and pronounce his/her decree.<sup>4</sup> However, the establishment of limited government brought about a commensurate limitation on the excesses of the police and a need for reform. This led to a police force that essentially was limited in its functions and checked by different agencies and departments of the state.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the framework established to train these antecedent police officers was predicated on use of force and a desire to maintain public order in the interests of the status quo.<sup>4</sup> This ruling class in the UK played a significant role in shaping the training structure and the kind of functions apportioned to the police. This scenario reveals a rudimentary approach to training that at the time did not take into consideration the responsibility of the police to the public, a situation that changed with time as the police were no longer just answerable to the ruling elite but rather to the public. Whereas Bottoms, in his study provides an appropriate historical analysis in the development of training pedagogy in the UK, there exists a gap in knowledge in determining how the various types of training impact performance in the National Police Service (NPS) that this study sought to fill.

In South Africa, the police infamously propped up the colonial and then the Apartheid regime. Through police training, biased codes of conduct and liberal as well as sweeping powers empowered the police to infamously become the symbol of oppression and human rights abuses.<sup>6</sup> Discussions and studies on the South African Police (SAPS) would naturally focus on the ethos and nature of training that was inculcated in the SAPS. Equally important was the desire to reform this disciplined force upon the end of apartheid to focus on effective skills and attitudes that could reorient this force from a tool of oppression to a force fit for modern policing, maintenance of law and order and establishing safe neighborhoods.<sup>6</sup> There however exists a gap in literature on the importance of various regular and progressive curriculum reviews as well as conducive work environments in fostering a proactive and well-functioning police service.

In Kenyan context, the Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 243 establishes the National Police Service, it demands that police should be trained to the highest possible standards of professionalism and competence. According to the police modernization plan 2014, the estimated numbers of the National Police Service officers recruited annually stands at 10,000. The National Police Service Commission has been mandated by the law to oversee the work of the police, which includes training, recruitment, promotion and deployment. Training is a key concept of the police after selection process, which ideally addresses the issues of passing of knowledge, skills and competencies to the trainees.

The training of an organization like the National Police Service (NPS) to deliver effective public service positively denotes providing effective capacity building. Scholars emphasize that the role of training is to build skilled, qualified and capable personnel which can help organizations to improve their level of performance and adapt to change. This it is a critical component of the success of any law enforcement agency.<sup>9</sup> Training is regarded as a strategic mechanism by which an organization can pursue its performance and is a core business tool for delivery of efficient and effective public security. It is through training that police organizations equip their personnel with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to perform their law enforcement responsibilities. The researcher therefore sought to establish the various initial police recruit training and the work performance of police officers.

Chtalu offers an insight into the challenges into police reforms especially in Nairobi County. The scholar reviews the nature of police reforms conducted and evaluates police performance before identifying the challenges experienced in reforming the police. He observes that the performance of police officers in Nairobi has exhibited an inconsistency between the public expectations on one hand and the overall performance on the other.<sup>10</sup> He also notes that there have been progressive efforts to reform the police but these efforts have not been embraced wholeheartedly by the police. The study by Chtalu is however limited in its insights on the context of training as a major challenge affecting police performance. He ably discussed various challenges but it is important for a study that picks certain various initial training and discusses them individually to bring out their impact on police performance.

## **II. Literature Review**

Fischer, Halibozek, and Walters in their study, centralized the role of training and development as one of the most important of human resource in any organization. Using comparative case study approach, the scholars

present a compelling discussion on basic actors in security and their function in the delivery of security. It was argued that, training must be a continuing concern of the entire management and that a lack adequate training of security organizations has been the major criticism leveled against policing globally.<sup>3</sup> From the discussion points and the western examples singled out, this study notes the core role of adequate training can and must be an important aspect of security planning in the proprietary organization. The technological needs and demands in policing, demands a comprehensive approach in skill up scaling of police officers. Whereas this study provided a useful insight that informed the study on the significance of policing, it has a literature gap in terms of geographical scope and study on technical aspects of training and their impacts on work performance of police officers. This study therefore proposes to fill this gap in this envisaged study.

Ramavhunga in his study on the transport systems, notes the important role of policing as necessitated by the emerging crime trends which include terrorism, money laundering, human trafficking, and cybercrimes, commercial cattle rustling amongst others. He observes that in addition to traditional law enforcement roles, the 21st Century police officer has much more complex duties in the society since policing today is not just about enforcing the law but detection and prevention of lawlessness within the society.<sup>11</sup> The shift in day-to-day police duties and responsibilities requires officers to protect and serve rather than to enforce and coerce. Whereas Ramavhunga adopted a global and continental perspective in its analysis of security matters, its major arguments fit together with the objectives of this study and the preliminary arguments thus; in an effort to fulfil the demands of the society, policing authorities need an efficient training system capable of producing qualified officers who are able to respond swiftly and responsibly to the fast-moving pace of social change. A study on this was therefore proposed with a view of providing a practical and contemporary perspective to the observations by Ramavhunga.

A study was carried out complementary studies on the important role of training focusing on Pakistan,<sup>11</sup> and on the USA.<sup>12</sup> Using theories of change, they explain the importance of training on job performance. From the two studies, this study understands that efforts to change institutions worldwide including police services have focused on training. This is because training has over the years remained one of the means through which new procedures, policies and practices are learned. To this end, police training has been crucial in articulating and communicating values as well as professional and technical skills right from the point of entry of officers into the service. While commenting on police training reforms in Pakistan an emphasize was that the police curriculum must be able to develop a service-oriented and professionally proficient police service with the knowledge, skill, and competency to address the concerns of the vulnerable in society.<sup>11</sup> Gaps in training are therefore hindrances to job performance and progressive growth in professionalism. It is this thematic gap and geographical gap that begged for further research; research into the unique case of Kenya and Nairobi County.

Sahail argued that globally, police training is increasingly moving away from the closed police-training model, which is fully under the authority and direction of police agencies and instructors to a more open system where civilian academic institutions take an active role in training.<sup>13</sup> This is due to increased orientation of police services towards community or problem-oriented policing, which has created demand for better skills in use of discretionary powers. Therefore, developed nations particularly the USA and countries in Europe enlist police officers with high academic qualifications, or encourage their staff to pursue further education as part of their career progression. Public universities have also been involved in development of policing related courses or creation of advanced police education programmes for the policing services, alongside research. The trend is equally being adopted in Kenya, where efforts to reform the police have seen public universities cooperate with police agencies to improve the manpower of police officers. This study by Sahail was however limited in its scope and ability to fully link training and performance of police officers as it focuses more on qualifications inasmuch as that is a dimension that this study can also consider when conducting field work. This study however sought to fill this gap that is unfilled in Sahail's study.

Pelser identified the heavy burden of police training reforms on the meagre resources of developing countries has been underscored as one challenge police services have to contend with.<sup>14</sup> Whereas Pelser examined the challenges in training and community policing in South Africa,<sup>14</sup> Neild focused his study on Latin America.<sup>2</sup> He similarly presents a situation of meagre resources which in turn compromise on quality of training.<sup>2</sup> For instance, they point out that police training reforms have led to creation of new police academies in Panama and Haiti and the demilitarization of the curriculum and trainers in Guatemala and El Salvador.<sup>2</sup> Even though the El Salvador National Public Security Academy (ANSP) managed to produce 9,000 police officers in three years through the reform initiative, the huge numbers overstretched the training system and facilities to their limits. On the other hand, Haiti managed to train about 5,000 police officers in 18 months but largely through donor funding. The role of the donor community in police training reforms has therefore been significant. During the training reform period in Panama, Haiti and El Salvador, the training was largely conducted by international instructors under United Nations or bilateral programs such as the United States' ICITAP (International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program).

Ordu and Nnam in their study singled out instructor competence as a key in training reforms. While focusing on the Nigerian case, these scholars observe that the instructors recruited for the police academy were

found to have archaic knowledge of police work and were not well versed with international policing standards and the ongoing security sector reform agenda in the country.<sup>15</sup> Such a situation therefore means that the police academies were training grounds for incompetency and improper inculcation of faulty curriculum. The study by Ordu and Nnam also studied community policing and highlights the challenges such as bribery and corruption, human rights abuse, public loss of trust/confidence, meddlesome attitudes of political godfathers in police-community affairs, lack of visionary schemes, and unnecessary use of coercion and threats to enforce public compliance with rules threaten police accountability and success.<sup>15</sup> This study however misses to focus on the role of training and nature of curriculum in shaping the values and culture of police officers. This study therefore proposed to fill this gap by domiciling its study in Nairobi County.

In Kenya, the Ransley Task Force Report underscored that the Kenyan public rated the police poorly in the areas of use of violence, mistrust, poor communication, corruption and general violation of human rights and that the general police training skills were inadequate.<sup>16</sup> The report identified the reasons for this training gap as overemphasis on physical training at the expense of cognitive and analytical skills. It recommended, among other things, a comprehensive review of the existing recruits' curriculum and increasing the training period to a minimum of one year. It also recommended for minimum entry as holders of KCSE certificates with at least a C- (minus). Following the recommendations of the Ransley Commission Report, the Kenyan government appointed the Police Reform Implementation Committee (PRIC) to oversee the implementation of the Ransley report. This study proposed to fill the following gap identified; the Ransley report diagnoses training gaps in the Kenyan Police, it did not entirely focus on the fault lines that may be present in the training curriculum and flaws in the training of police officers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study used the training review model based on the ideas of Donald Kirkpatrick, a leading academic in the field of training evaluation. Kirkpatrick's Training Evaluation Model identifies four levels upon which the impact of a training intervention may be evaluated. These are Reaction (Level 1), Learning (Level 2), Behavior Change (Level 3) and Results (Level 4). The first level (reaction) involves determining how well participants liked or was satisfied with a training program. The aim is to provide a message to the participants that they are valuable and their opinion counts, though they may not be wholly relied on to improve the training programme.<sup>17, 18</sup>

The second level (Learning) involves establishing changes that have occurred in the participants' attitudes, knowledge and skills as a result of the training. This is measured through tests administered before and after the training. Changes in skills are measured through performance tests. The third level of evaluation, (behavior change), involves measuring the transfer of learning to the individual's work performance platform. It is the determination of the contribution the individual has been able to make at the workplace as a result of the training received.

Evaluation at level four (Results) involves measuring the impact of the training on the trainees' organization. It is a determination of the overall worth of the training programme to the organization in meeting its goals and priorities. Nevertheless, the linearity of the model has given it administrative convenience and this has made it one of the most widely applicable models of evaluation of different types of training. As Kirkpatrick explains, the implementation of the model is subject to the programmes being evaluated since the model does not provide details as to the implementation of all the four levels. He notes as follows: 'Its chief purpose is to clarify the meaning of evaluation and offer guidelines on how to get started and proceed'.<sup>17</sup>

Whereas Kirkpatrick's model suited this study's inquiry into initial police recruit training and work place performance, it did not provide for a comprehensive study of the three objectives. Its strength laid in its ability to assist the researcher to study particular aspects of training and work place activities with a view of mapping out missing links and establishing key indicators of performance. This model had the shortfall of not providing the best yardsticks for gauging not just training but also performance. It is with this in mind that the researcher employed Bradley's and Connors' evaluation model. This alternative model enabled the researcher to incorporate evaluations at the training and performance level. This enabled the researcher to establish any disconnect that may exist between training and work place performance. While the theory was useful in analyzing police training challenges that might contribute in explaining challenges in policing and the institutional and educational challenges, as a theoretical model it failed to illustrate how on-the job challenges might affect police performance. Bradley and Connors Comprehensive Training and Evaluation Model for Criminal Justice Training provided some tangible answers to this inadequacy.

### **III. Material And Methods Literature Review**

The researcher employed a mixed method research approach. This entailed gathering qualitative and quantitative data with a view of not only establishing the distinct opinions and views of the respondents on the subject area but also to quantitatively analyze the data to establish patterns of behavior. To actualize this mixed method approach, the study adopted a descriptive survey design in collecting and analyzing the data. This

approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to collect unique views, opinions and perspectives from the different respondents. A qualitative study presents an opportunity for the researcher to present unique qualitative views that go a long way in inductive learning and knowledge building.<sup>19</sup> Besides the collection of primary data, the study proposed to augment this with secondary data. This was crucial as it bolstered the validity of the data and ensure corroboration of both sets of data.

The researcher used multistage sampling to get the sample size and to identify the respondents. Multistage sampling makes division of large populations into parts and stages to make the process of sampling more practical, and can use simple random sampling and a combination of either cluster sampling or stratified sampling.<sup>20</sup>

First, four constituencies were purposively sampled (that is 23.5% of the total constituencies) because they have the particular characteristics of heightened work performance concerns of police officers that are of interest in this study, which will best enable the researcher to answer the research questions. It is recommended 20% of an n compared to the general N.<sup>21</sup> However, the researcher increased to 23.5%, as it is argued that the statistical power is enhanced by increasing the sample size.<sup>22</sup>

Four constituencies where the study was undertaken were Dagoretti North (having 6 police stations), Kasarani (having 6 police stations), Makadara (having 5 police stations) and Starehe (having 9 police stations) areas in Nairobi County. They are also in high population density areas which are surrounded by the informal housing settlements.

Secondly, six police stations out of twenty-six police stations from the four constituencies were also purposively sampled: Kabete police station in Dagoretti North, Lang'ata police station in Lang'ata, Kamukunji police station in Starehe and Industrial police station in Makadara, were involved. It is recommended at 20% for a small number of n (sample size) compared to the general N (total population).<sup>21</sup> However, the researcher increased the n to 21%, which the statistical power is improved by increasing the sample size.<sup>22</sup>

**Sample size:** The sampling size comprised all the National Police Officers working in all levels in Nairobi. The sampling frame was obtained from the relevant authorities for the purposes of obtaining an appropriate sample size. Stratified random sampling applied in carrying out the study as per the departments. A total of 71 respondents were involved in the study. This sample was 30% of the target population and was a representative of all the police trainees and other ranks of police officers in Nairobi. This figure was based on the recommendations that advise on the use of such sampling method and for the choice of 30 percentage of the target population.<sup>23, 24</sup> Stratified random sampling subject was selected in a way that the existing subgroups in the population are more less reproduced thus samples consisted two or more groups. This method was the most suitable for this study because the population accurately represented in its entire characteristics.

**Table no 1: Sample Size**

Officers in Rank	No of officers	% of officers	Sample size
Asp and above	6	30%	2
Members of inspectorate	35	30%	11
NCOs	61	30%	18
Constables	140	30%	42
Total	242	30%	73

**Source: The Researcher 2023**

### Statistical analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics like percentages, average, mean and pie charts. Tabulations meant recording and classification data in quantitative terms that facilitated their manipulation and also increased the precision with which the data was analyzed. Averages and means were calculated for respective items from the generated frequencies counts and frequency distributions and percentages and use to describe and summarize data. Quantitative data was analyzed thematically (pinpointing examining and recording patterns), inferential statistics were applied to describe and make inferences about the population.

### IV. Result

By enhancing the police officers' knowledge, skills, and behaviors, training is a sort of learning intervention that may boost workplace performance and ease the introduction of new job duties. As an integral part of human resource management, training necessitates close coordination across several departments. This research sought to establish, as its first objective, the nature of initial police recruit training that the police in Nairobi were exposed to. Training, is a temporary issue for organizations since it focuses on preparing new hires to do their duties.<sup>25</sup> The emphasis is on the trainee acquiring the foundational information, abilities, and mindset necessary to begin doing the job or improving upon existing performance.

The respondents were unanimous in their confirmation that they have undergone foundational training via the various initial police recruit training. As table 2 below shows, the police officers were instructed on various courses that equipped them with the knowledge on policing.

**Table no 2: Types of Initial Police Recruit Training**

Types of training	Frequency	Percentage
Basic investigations	32	45.07
Child protection	7	9.86
Community policing	6	8.45
Crime detection	16	22.54
Criminal law	8	11.27
Customer care	10	14.08
Discipline	45	63.38
Drill	56	78.87
Firearm handling	61	85.92
First aid	11	15.49
General public relations	14	19.72
Handling of police exhibits	28	39.44
Handling of prisoners	11	15.49
Human rights	16	22.54
Integrity	11	15.49
Tactics and physical training	35	49.30
Respondents/Percentage	71	100

**Source: The Researcher (2023)**

From the Focus Group Discussion sessions held with the respondents, it was evident that the police officers were knowledgeable about the various initial police recruit training that they were underwent. There was consensus as to the dominance of drill, physical fitness and discipline as the core areas of the training programmes. One police corporal observed that;

*“In my experience of the training process, I came to appreciate the transformative nature of the training to my personality and how my perspective of policing was imparted in me. I however learnt that we were being prepared for the work experience and without the training, we could not handle the pressure of work.”* (RESP1/17/7/2023)

This opinion above reveals the foundational role of the initial police recruit training to equipping he recruits with skills and aptitude to perform police duties. The assumption here is that the curriculum is well-suited to the work environment and that the transition from the training camp to the work station will be a smooth one with the officer ready and acquiescent for work place duties. Another officer was however quick to observe that;

*“Throughout my career in law enforcement, I’ve seen firsthand the impact that inadequate training has on officers’ effectiveness. As a consequence, the public becomes dissatisfied with the outcomes and voices its disapproval via complaints.”* (RESP2/17/7/2023)

The comment above from another focused group discussions participant establishes a link between inadequate or inappropriate training with a service that might not be in line with public demands. Such a comment raises the question as to which of these aspects of training might be outliving their purpose and not adequately preparing the police officers for the service required of them. Table 2 above provides an insight into the nature of the training provided in the initial police recruit training.

It has been, outlined that the prevalent kinds of police training programme aimed to prepare officers with a broad variety of policing related abilities includes the following: Initial training is provided to new police recruits, in-service training is provided to existing officers, and special training is often provided on a needs-basis.<sup>26</sup> These three types of training are among the primary courses. The breadth of subjects covered in the classes available extends from workout routines to information and communication technology. The specific courses identified were criminal process, criminal law, and mustering trials traffic capability, community policing, and public relations.<sup>26</sup>

Here below is an extract from the table revealing the five most taught courses.

**Table no 3: The Top Courses offered in Initial Police Recruit Training**

Type of Training	Frequency	Percentage
Basic investigations	32	45.07
Tactics and physical training	35	49.30
Discipline	45	63.38
Drill	56	78.87
Firearm handling	61	85.92

**Source: The Researcher (2023)**

This table 2 reveals a traditional emphasis on what was referred to as “the physical approach to training”.<sup>26</sup> The emphasis on this type of training brings to the fore an interpretation that this training has been designed for command-and-control purposes with a gradual realignment of the training to incorporate other aspects of training as the law-and-order environment metamorphosed.

As table 6 shows, the training became wider to provide for competence in human rights, criminal law and justice as well as customer relations. While the latter programmes have been incorporated into the programme, the preeminence of these courses listed in table 7 still indicates the philosophy and motivation of such training. However, basic officer skills, otherwise referred to as “physical training”<sup>26</sup> still takes the bulk of the credit hours (17).

The research revealed that the initial police recruit training is largely appropriate in preparing the police for the work place duties. There was also an affirmation that the core curriculum is adequate in its content and its delivery to ensure that police officers undergoing it are competent for the work place duties. However, it was revealed by this research that the course programme had a heavy emphasis on Weapon training, basic investigations, tactics and physical training, discipline, drill and firearm handling. This was echoed that training must be a continuing concern of the entire management and that a lack adequate training of security organizations has been the major criticism leveled against policing globally.<sup>3</sup> This adequate training comes in terms of establishing meaningful teaching curriculum.

The results of the informant interviews about the adequacy of the police training programme in equipping police officers with skills and abilities indicated that police for successful resolution of cases and customer satisfaction. The literature review provided a corresponding critique of this initial police recruit training. It had been argued that the police training programme has to be relevant to the changing work environments and that previously dominant components such as drill and physical training might have to be restructured to conform to new modern policing requirements.<sup>26</sup>

It had been further argued that globally, police training is increasingly moving away from the closed police-training model, which is fully under the authority and direction of police agencies and instructors to a more open system where civilian academic institutions take an active role in training.<sup>13</sup> This is due to increased orientation of police services towards community or problem-oriented policing, which has created demand for better skills in use of discretionary powers. This view by Sahail resounded in the research as respondents and participants opined the necessity of realigning and incorporating new aspects of policing in the police training programme.

## **V. Discussion**

The study established that the various initial police recruit training offered to enhance the work performance of police officers in Nairobi were to a large extent elaborate and commensurate with the on-the-job-demands and expectations. However, as Tables 6 and 7 as well as presentations from focused group discussions participants cited the need to incorporate aspects of community policing, human rights, customer service, and communication skills.

This study concludes that the initial police recruit training adequately trains police recruits in preparation for the job market and that such training is anchored on a curriculum that positively develops the police work force

## **VI. Conclusion**

The study's results indicate that field training has a favorable and substantial impact on the performance of the organization. Based on these results, the research suggests that the NPS prioritize periodical evaluations of the initial police recruit training to improve its content and boost its efficacy among learners.

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