

**WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND ITS INFLUENCE IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS  
AMONG NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE OFFICERS IN LAIKIPIA COUNTY, KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study assessed the influence of gender in career development decisions among National Police Service officers in the Kenya Police Service, determined the influence of disability in career development decisions among National Police Service officers in the Kenya Police Service, established the influence of age in career development decisions among National Police Service officers in the NPS, and established the influence of education in career development decisions among NPS officers in the Kenya Police Service. This was conducted within the context of Laikipia County. Social Career Cognitive Theory, Similarity/Attractive Theory, and Agency Theory informed the study. The research employed a descriptive survey study method. The target population for this study comprised all 616 police officers in all the 5 police sub-counties, encompassing a total of 7 police stations and 67 police posts. The sample size was 278 respondents, which was determined using Naissuma's (2000) formula after stratifying the total population into 5 sub-counties. The study employed semi-structured questionnaires containing both open and closed-ended questions to gather comprehensive insights into the research questions. The collected data underwent a thorough process to ensure accuracy and facilitate analysis. A pilot study was carried out in Kiambu County using 15 (10% of the sample) police officers before collecting the actual data. This served to test and guarantee the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The research applied both qualitative and quantitative data. Both inferential and comparative descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. To summarize the data, descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation, and frequencies were used. The study found that an increase in the proportion of female officers significantly affects career development decisions, indicating the importance of gender diversity in promoting career advancement opportunities within the NPS. Officers with disabilities also have a considerable influence on career development decisions, underscoring the importance of inclusivity and accommodation for officers with disabilities in fostering career progression opportunities within the NPS. Age diversity significantly affects career development decisions, with younger officers being particularly influential. Higher educational attainment among officers significantly impacts career development decisions, emphasizing the significance of educational background in job performance and career advancement within the NPS.*

**Key Words:** Gender, Disability, Age Group, Education, Diversity

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## INTRODUCTION

Globally, organizations are striving to adapt their structures to facilitate the development of essential skills among employees with diverse backgrounds, ensuring their ability to effectively execute corporate strategies (Ramirez, 2016). According to a 2001 survey conducted by the Human Resource Institute, which examined one thousand privately and publicly owned organizations in the United States, evidence of inclusion as a diversity strategy was observed. The findings indicated that 56 percent of the organizations offered diversity training focused on race, 68 percent on gender, 45 percent on ethnicity, 35 percent on age, 54 percent on disability, 57 percent on sexual orientation, and 24 percent on religion (Kelly, Ramirez & Brady, 2016). The study further indicated that the company's performance index increased by seven percent, with the private sector contributing the majority of this growth at five percent. The public sector's lower performance index was attributed to its reluctance to incorporate diversity into management systems.

In the United Kingdom, the UK Police Regulations of 2003 led to the establishment of the UK College of Policing, designed for learning and career advancement (Miller et al. (2021)). As a result, the Professional Development Review (PDR) was introduced as a tool to guide police officers in engaging with their professional development and planning their career progression. The (EQF) was introduced in February 2016 by the College of Policing, the national professional body for policing in England and Wales (Karas et al., 2020). This framework was designed to support the creation of academic programs tailored to the needs of the 43 police forces in England and Wales. The PEQF outlined multiple pathways for delivering education, including the PCDA, DHEP and PJD, all aimed at improving professional policing practices.

Adogoke (2018) asserts that career development strategies in Nigeria significantly influence employee motivation. Despite the increasing demand for Nigerian police forces, Adegoke (2018) identifies a lack of information and knowledge among them, hindering their performance and task execution. In Uganda, the Police Force has established training programs outlined in the UPF Training Policy Objective 2014, aiming to enhance both individual and institutional police performance. However, Ozelle (2019) suggests that despite the existence of training programs, the UPF's training management system lacks systematic and comprehensive handling.

In Kenya, Chelangat and Gachunga (2016) emphasize the strong correlation between organizational commitment and career advancement practices. They argue that training and development play a crucial role in improving the working conditions of organizational employees. However, RanslyReport (2009) reports dissatisfaction among Kenyan police personnel regarding the current practices of career growth within the service, despite provisions in the Service Standing Orders (SSOs). Allegations of corruption, political interference, favoritism, unnecessary bureaucracy, and the resultant impact on officer morale and performance cast doubt on the fairness of the career advancement selection criteria.

Career development decisions encompass the choices and actions individuals undertake to navigate and progress in their professional paths. These decisions span various facets of one's career, such as education, training, job transitions, skill enhancement, and long-term career aspirations (Stead, LaVeck & Rúa, 2021). The effectiveness of these decisions is pivotal for personal and professional advancement, necessitating self-awareness, strategic thinking, and a willingness to learn and adapt. Seeking guidance from mentors, career counselors, or utilizing self-assessment tools enables individuals to make informed choices aligning with their goals, fostering career satisfaction, and contributing to success (Xu, 2019).

In the traditional sense, Joseph and Selvaraj (2019) provided a definition of workforce diversity, which encompasses distinctions in race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, and education. However, the evolving business landscape has broadened this concept to view diversity as an integral aspect of engaging and including everyone in an organization, fostering a cohesive culture. This expanded perspective considers various factors, such as the presence of a multigenerational workforce, encompassing baby boomers, Generation X, millennial, and Generation Z, each with distinct needs and working styles. Another crucial

aspect is addressing unconscious bias in the workplace, acknowledging diverse worldviews shaped by factors beyond ethnicity or socioeconomic background (Bertolino, Truxillo & Fraccaroli, 2016).

The National Police Service Commission, established independently by the Constitution of 2010, assumes various functions, including human resource management for the Police Service. This establishment is not only constitutionally mandated but also the result of findings and recommendations from government-appointed task forces addressing the function of police in upholding law and order and providing security. The Commission is essential to the National Police Service's efficient and successful operation since it oversees the agency's human resource operations (NPS Report, 2020).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Mutuku (2019) highlights several challenges faced by the NPS in Kenya, including incompetence, political interference, lack of transparency and accountability and corruption. NPS in Kenya faces multifaceted challenges, including incompetence, political interference, corruption, favoritism, and nepotism, gender stereotypes, sexual harassment in both genders but mainly against women especially against female young police officers, incompetence in training institutions within the service hence lack of sufficient advancement in skills and knowledge, poor medical policies some not covering some degrees of injuries while in service, failure to acknowledge people living with disabilities with evidence of some being assigned duties despite their condition while others dismissed from the service. These factors affect workforce diversity right from recruitment to advanced stage of promotion and honors. For instance, political influence and favoritism may lead to recruitment, promotion and honor of officers based on gender, tribe, and even failing to consider education level, disability, performance among other necessary factors. This study, even though it covers all the four stated workforce diversity aspects (gender, age group, disability, education level), it raises more questions than answers hence the gaps that the current study aims to cover as well to point out the best suited recommendations that can be employed by the service leadership as well as policy makers.

Moler (2022) conducted research on Laikipia County Kenya seeking to unravel the ability of effective policing towards enhancing security in the county. He sighted challenges faced by the security agencies and particularly the police in a county that he described as a cosmopolitan faced with inter-ethnic conflicts and harmful cultural practices such as cattle rustling with unaccountable illegal firearms posing danger to not only the community but also the security personnel. Different tribes in the area including Maasai, Samburu, Reddile, Somali, and Kikuyu are marred with tribal conflicts. This can also be seen as a source of diverse workforce in the event of police recruitment in the area. The presence of illegal firearms also poses gender to the police officers with some suffering psychological as well as physical harm leading to disability among the officers. In terms of gender, female police officers are faced by challenges due living conditions in the said operational area considering some are young mothers with school going children. The study however does not address the education level and age factors in workforce diversity which are included in the current study.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- Evaluate the influence of gender in career development decisions among National Police Service officers in Laikipia County.
- Determine the influence of disability in career development decisions among National Police Service officers in Laikipia County.
- Establish the influence age group in career development decisions among National Police Service officers in Laikipia County.
- Examine the influence of education level in career development decisions among National Police Service officers in Laikipia County.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Gender and Career Development Decisions among Police Officers**

Diaz, Vanessa, Nuño and Lidia (2021), explored factors influencing the likelihood of pursuing a career as a police officer. Findings indicated that women, relative to men, demonstrated a lower interest in pursuing such a career; however, more than half of the women in the sample expressed an interest in policing. The study highlighted those personal characteristics and the prevailing socio-political climate influenced both men and women's likelihood of pursuing a career in policing. However, the study overlooked the broader context of workforce diversity within the police force, including factors such as ethnicity, age, religion, and cultural background. Additionally, while the study identified the influence of personal characteristics and the socio-political climate on career choice, it does not explore how these factors intersect with workforce diversity and their implications for career development decisions within the police service. The study sought to address this gap by examining the influence of workforce diversity on career development decisions among officers in the National Police Service (NPS) in Kenya

The goal of Awino (2019) was to assess how work-life issues affected Kenyan female police officers' performance. The liberal approach theory and radical feminist theory served as the study's guiding theories, the study unveiled that female officers encountered obstacles such as gender stereotypes, difficulties in balancing work and personal life, and instances of social injustice, all of which affected their effectiveness on the job. The study concluded that gender stereotypes at the workplace significantly influenced the performance of female officers. However, the study's focus on female police officers in Kenya does not provide a comprehensive understanding of the broader dynamics of gender perceptions and performance within the police force. The current study purposed to fill this gap by examining gender perceptions of job performance among both male and female police officers in Laikipia County, Kenya.

### **Disability and Career Development Decisions**

Gupta and Priyadarshi (2020) looked into the obstacles that people with disabilities (PWDs) encounter when advancing their careers, as well as how they view their careers. The research discovered that affirmative action had a negative impact by performing an exploratory study that involved interviews with professionally qualified Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in India who held permanent jobs. It led to what was thought to be positive discrimination, which had a detrimental effect on PWDs' self-esteem and general development. However, the study's focus on PWDs in a general employment context in India does not specifically address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by PWDs within the National Police Service (NPS) in Kenya, particularly in Laikipia County. The current study filled this gap by focusing specifically on the influence of disability in career development decisions among national police service officers in Laikipia County, Kenya.

Korir and Kipkebut (2016) emphasized the importance of compensating employees to ensure optimal performance, particularly within the context of police officers and personnel in the UK. They highlighted the encouragement for these professionals to take charge of their professional development through the implementation of Professional Development Review (PDR), which serves as a tool for planning future advancement. PDR processes involve principles and expectations established by the college, allowing officers and supervisors to address various aspects from welfare to performance and learning opportunities. However, the focus on the UK police service did not directly address the specific context of police service officers in Laikipia County, Kenya. Therefore, there was a gap in understanding how compensation strategies and professional development processes, such as PDR, impact the performance and career development decisions of police service officers in Laikipia County.

### **Age group and Career Development Decisions**

Heijden (2019) looked into the relationship between career commitment, age-related HR/D (Human Resource/Development) practices, and employees' subjective career experiences in academic staff. The study's initial hypotheses were partially verified by the findings, which indicated that certain HR/D practices

connected to age had a significant impact on academics' subjective career success. Contrary to predictions, the study's findings on the subjective success of careers did not reveal a significant main influence of career dedication or its relationship with HR/D practices connected to age. While the study provided valuable insights into these relationships within the academic context, it does not specifically address the influence of age-related HR/D practices on career development decisions among National Police Service officers, particularly in regions like Laikipia County, Kenya. Therefore, there is a gap in understanding how age-related HR/D practices impact career development decisions among police service officers in Laikipia County. The current study aimed to fill this gap by examining the relationship between age-related HR/D practices and career development decisions within the specific context of the National Police Service in Laikipia County

### **Education Level and Career Development Decisions**

Hitka *et al.* (2020) sought to examine the role of education in shaping employees' careers. Their study, involving a sample of 3,720 participants, aimed to validate the hypothesis that the level of education has a substantial impact on factors driving career motivation. The findings of the research supported the notion that education indeed plays a significant role in influencing employees' career trajectories. Moreover, the study revealed variations in the perceived importance of motivation factors, such as education and personal growth, application of skills, self-fulfillment, and autonomous decision-making, across different genders. Although the study offers insightful information about the correlation between educational attainment and career motivation factors in a broader employment setting, it does not particularly address how education level influences police service officers' decisions about their professional development or take into account the unique circumstances of Kenya's Laikipia County. In order to close this knowledge gap, the current study looked at how education level affects judgements about career advancement in this particular setting.

### **Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)**

Lent, Brown and Hackett (1980s) which was originally proposed in the late 1980s, with significant developments continuing into the 2000s, will guide the study. SCCT is a prominent theory in the field of career development, focusing on the interplay between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavior in shaping individuals' career choices and trajectories. It posits that career development is a dynamic process influenced by various factors, including one's self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, goals, and socio-cultural context (Wang, Liu & Deng, 2022).

According to SCCT, people make professional decisions based on their expectations of the results of various career routes. Workforce diversity aspects such as age, gender, and disability and education level can affect these outcome expectations. For instance, individuals of a certain age group especially those qualified but younger within the workforce may not get considered in promotions just because there are their older counterparts who may not be qualified for the promotion. Again, individuals living with disability maybe discriminated in due consideration of career development decision making despite being equal to the task. SCCT highlights the importance of promoting inclusive work environments and challenging stereotypes to broaden individuals' outcome expectations and encourage diverse career choices (Kelly and Foley, 2009).

SCCT acknowledges the significance of environmental factors, such as social support, cultural norms, and institutional policies, in shaping career development. Organizations committed to diversity and inclusion can create supportive environments that foster the career advancement of individuals from diverse backgrounds. SCCT encourages organizations to implement strategies such as diversity training, inclusive leadership practices, and equitable policies to address systemic barriers and promote a culture of belonging where all employees can thrive in their careers (Schaub, 2004).

### **Similarity/Attraction Theory**

According to Byrne Donn's 1979 Similarity or Attraction Theory, people are drawn to people who have similar aspirations, morals, attitudes, and personality qualities. This theory suggests that attraction involves a

desire to be around individuals who are similar in various aspects. The dimensions of similarity, examined in both romantic and friendship settings, generally show strong and steady effects on attitudes, values, physical attractiveness, and preferred activities. Even while personality similarity has less of an impact on attraction, it is still important. With regard to understanding why and how people are drawn to and influenced by others in their social circles, the theory provides a thorough framework.

The Similarity or Attraction Theory is highly applicable to the current study, which aims to explore the workforce diversity on career development decisions among National Police Service officers in Laikipia County, Kenya. According to the theory, individuals are attracted to others who share similar attitudes, values, and personality traits. Therefore, officers with similar educational backgrounds may be more likely to form cohesive teams and collaborate effectively in the workplace. Understanding the influence of education level on career development decisions within the National Police Service can help identify strategies for promoting unity, collaboration, and organizational effectiveness among officers with diverse educational backgrounds. Similarly, officers of same gender, age group or those leaving with disability may as well team up together forming a reliable workforce of different skills and knowledge which can be shared or emulated by the rest of the officers. The organizational heads and policy makers realizing this diversity can be guided towards career development decision making in NPS officers

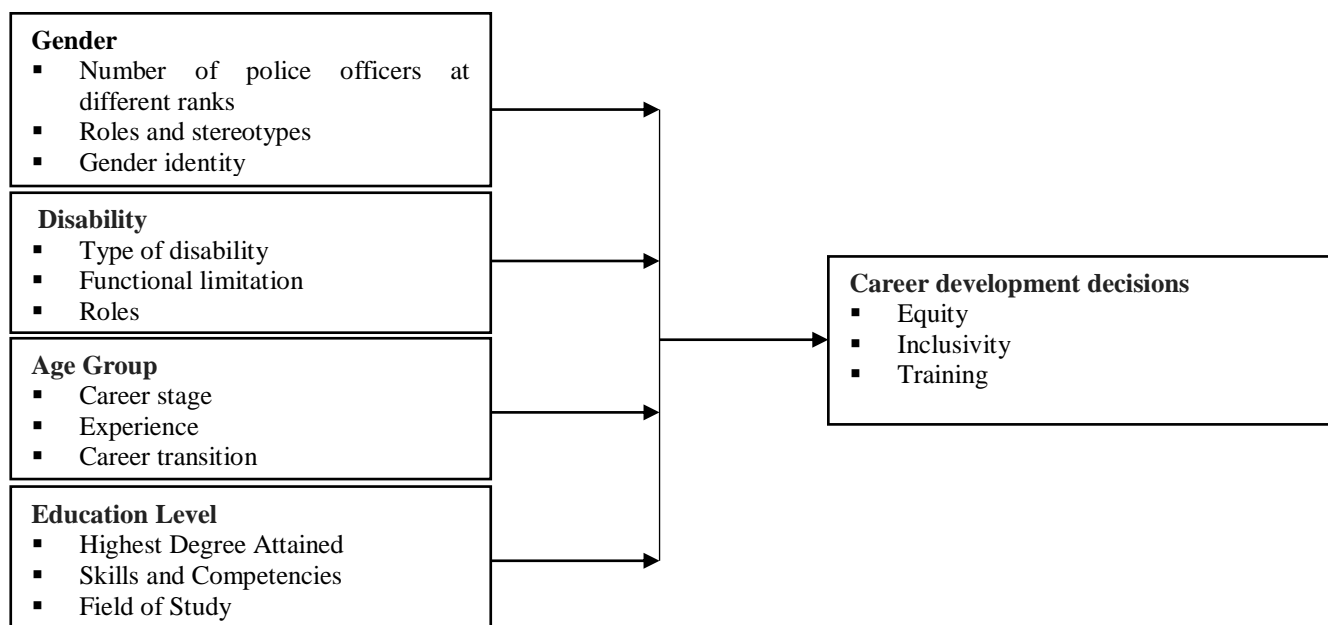
### **Agency Theory**

Agency theory, formulated by Jensen and Meckling in 1976, centers on the dynamics between a principal and an agent. Within an agency relationship, the agent is empowered to make decisions and take actions on behalf of the principal. This theory holds particular relevance in financial management, where agency relationships are prevalent owing to the industry's inherent structure. The comprehension and application of agency theory in financial management are paramount for investors, stockholders, and financial practitioners alike.

One of the central problems addressed by agency theory arises from the divergence of interests and asymmetric information between the principal and the agent. This happens when the employer is unable to verify that the worker is operating in the employer's best interest, particularly when the worker must pay for services that the employer finds advantageous. This information asymmetry can lead to challenges in ensuring that both parties act in a mutually beneficial manner, potentially resulting in suboptimal outcomes or even the avoidance of transactions altogether.

Agency theory provides a relevant framework for understanding the dynamics of the principal-agent relationship within organizations like the National Police Service. By acknowledging the inherent self-interest of individuals and the importance of aligning incentives with desired outcomes, organizations can effectively manage their workforce and ensure optimal performance. In the context of the study focusing on career development decisions among National Police Service officers in Laikipia County, Kenya, agency theory can shed light on the motivations and behaviors of both officers and organizational leaders, ultimately informing strategies for enhancing career development practices and organizational effectiveness.

## Conceptual Framework



### Independent Variables

### Dependent Variable

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a descriptive survey design, which encompassed both observation and assessment, as outlined by Cooper and Schindler (2003). The target population for this study consisted of all 616 police officers serving in Laikipia County. The county was divided into 5 police sub-counties, which included a total of 7 police stations and 67 police posts.

Respondents for the study were identified using both probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling methods. For probabilistic sampling, the study utilized stratified sampling based on the police division in which respondents were stationed. The sample size was determined using Nassiuma's formula (Nassiuma, 2000)

**Table 1: Sample Size**

Police Sub Counties	Population	Sample Size
Laikipia East	109	64
Laikipia West	116	67
Laikipia Central	130	71
Laikipia North	121	66
Nyahururu	140	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>278</b>

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

The study employed semi-structured questionnaires with both open-ended and closed-ended questions. This approach allowed for a mix of quantitative and qualitative data.

Prior to gathering official data, the researcher conducted a pilot study with 15 police officers in Kiambu County (10% of the sample). To evaluate the questionnaires' internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The study conducted one focus group discussion, involving 10 police officers.

SPSS was utilized to conduct data analysis. Statistical analyses, both inferential and descriptive, were used to investigate quantitative data. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data.

## RESULTS

### Response Rate

**Table 2: Response Rate**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Submitted Questionnaires	278	100
Returned Questionnaires	202	72.6
<b>Return Rate</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>72.6</b>

**Source: Research Data (2024)**

Out of the 278 questionnaires that were submitted, 202 were returned, resulting in a return rate of 72.6%. This indicates that nearly three-quarters of the distributed questionnaires were completed and returned. A high return rate like this is generally indicative of a robust response from the surveyed population, providing a substantial dataset for analysis.

### Descriptive Analysis

#### Gender and Career Development

**Table 3: Gender and Career Development**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Gender plays a significant role in shaping career advancement opportunities within the NPS.	32%	29%	10%	21%	8%	0.20	0.097
Female officers face more obstacles in career progression compared to their male counterparts within the NPS	35%	26%	10%	16%	13%	0.20	0.092
The NPS offers equal career development support regardless of gender.	27%	26%	8%	14%	17%	0.184	0.072
Gender stereotypes impact the types of assignments and promotions female officers receive within the NPS	31%	38%	11%	12%	8%	0.20	0.123
Gender diversity within leadership positions positively influences career development opportunities for all officers in the NPS	33%	35%	7%	13%	12%	0.20	0.116
Female officers are encouraged to pursue career advancement opportunities within the NPS	28%	34%	9%	16%	13%	0.20	0.942
Gender bias affects the allocation of resources for training and development programs within the NPS.	40%	27%	6%	14%	13%	0.20	0.121
The national police service actively addresses gender disparities in career advancement through policy initiatives.	38%	36%	9%	12%	5%	0.20	0.141
Male officers receive preferential treatment in terms of career progression opportunities within the NPS	34%	33%	8%	11%	14%	0.18	0.133
The NPS provides adequate support systems to address gender-related challenges in career development.	32%	36%	9%	11%	12%	0.20	0.115
Gender-sensitive training programs are necessary to mitigate bias in career development decisions within the NPS	34%	39%	10%	8%	9%	0.20	0.135



The responses suggest a widespread perception among respondents that gender plays a significant role in shaping career advancement opportunities within the National Police Service (NPS), with a combined 61% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement. This indicates a prevalent belief that gender-based factors influence career progression within the service. Conversely, 29% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a minority that may not perceive gender as a significant determinant of career advancement opportunities. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (10%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding this issue. The findings are similar to those by Rensburg who (2021) uncovered that women face a slower advancement in their careers compared to men due to higher rates of rejection and unequal distribution of workload.

Regarding whether female officers face more obstacles in career progression compared to their male counterparts within the NPS, the responses indicate a similar trend, with a combined 61% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement. This suggests a widespread belief that female officers encounter greater challenges in advancing their careers within the service. Conversely, 29% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority that may not perceive gender-based obstacles in career progression. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (10%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding this issue. The findings correlate with those from Menéndez-Espina, Llosa, *et al.* (2020) who indicated that women tend to experience increased insecurity in precarious employment conditions (such as temporary work, informal employment, salary reductions, and job tenure), whereas men's perceptions were more influenced by factors related to their professional status (job category and education) and household income.

Regarding whether the NPS offers equal career development support regardless of gender, the responses suggest a mixed perspective. While a significant portion of respondents (53%) either agree or strongly agree with this statement, indicating recognition of equal support, there is also a notable presence of dissenting views, with 31% of respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. The presence of a relatively high proportion of neutral responses (8%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding this issue. However, the study by Ashlock (2019) study revealed that men who pursued careers in policing tended to adopt more traditional gender attitudes compared to their male counterparts, whereas the general cohort trended towards less traditional attitudes.

The responses regarding the impact of gender stereotypes on assignments and promotions for female officers within the National Police Service (NPS) indicate a prevalent belief among respondents that gender stereotypes do influence career advancement opportunities. With 33% strongly agreeing and 35% agreeing, a combined 68% perceive a correlation between gender stereotypes and the types of assignments and promotions female officers receive. This suggests a recognition of the challenges and biases female officers may face in their career progression within the NPS, potentially hindering their professional development and advancement opportunities. On the other hand Diaz, Vanessa, Nuño and Lidia (2021) indicated that women, relative to men, demonstrated a lower interest in pursuing such a career; however, more than half of the women in the sample expressed an interest in policing

Regarding the influence of gender diversity within leadership positions on career development opportunities for all officers, the responses reveal a slightly less pronounced consensus. While 28% strongly agree and 34% agree, indicating a combined 62% acknowledging the positive influence of gender diversity, there is also a notable proportion, 29%, who disagree or strongly disagree. This suggests a degree of uncertainty or disagreement among respondents regarding the impact of gender diversity on career development opportunities. However, the overall trend leans towards recognizing the potential benefits of gender diversity in leadership for all officers within the NPS. On the other hand the study by Jayne and Dipboye (2018) on the other hand indicated that gender diversity may not always result in better commitment, lower conflict rates, higher motivation, or better skill

In terms of whether female officers are encouraged to pursue career advancement opportunities within the NPS, the responses indicate a strong consensus, with 40% strongly agreeing and 27% agreeing, totaling 67% in agreement. This suggests a prevailing belief among respondents that female officers are indeed encouraged to advance their careers within the NPS. However, the presence of 27% who disagree or strongly disagree indicates a significant minority who may perceive a lack of encouragement for career advancement among female officers. The findings contradict Weerarathna and Hapurugala (2019) who found that there is an impact of gender on career progression.

The responses regarding the influence of gender bias on the allocation of resources for training and development programs within the National Police Service (NPS) highlight a prevalent belief among respondents that gender bias does indeed affect resource allocation. With 38% strongly agreeing and 36% agreeing, a combined 74% perceive a correlation between gender bias and resource allocation for training and development programs. This suggests a recognition of the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities within the NPS, potentially disadvantaging certain groups, particularly female officers, in their professional development. On the other hand, Angwaomaodoko (2023) discovered that gender differences do not have a significant impact on students' academic success in Nigerian colleges.

Regarding the NPS's efforts to address gender disparities in career advancement through policy initiatives, the responses indicate strong support for proactive measures, with 40% strongly agreeing and 27% agreeing, totaling 67% in agreement. This suggests a prevailing belief among respondents that the NPS is actively working to address gender disparities and promote equal opportunities for career advancement. However, the presence of 27% who disagree or strongly disagree indicates a significant minority who may perceive a lack of effective policy initiatives in addressing gender disparities within the NPS. However, Maina (2023) concluded from the study on individual factors and women's career advancement in public health institutions in Nairobi County, Kenya, that there was a generally positive perception of the factors influencing career advancement.

In terms of whether male officers receive preferential treatment in terms of career progression opportunities within the NPS, the responses reveal a concerning perception among respondents. With 34% strongly agreeing and 33% agreeing, totaling 67% in agreement, there is a widespread belief that male officers indeed receive preferential treatment. This suggests a recognition of systemic biases and inequities within the NPS, potentially undermining efforts to promote gender equality and fairness in career advancement opportunities. Bol and Fogel-Yaari (2022) highlighted that stereotyping affects women's professional lives by influencing decisions made by both supervisors and employees. This bias begins with hiring decisions, determining who gets hired, at what level, and what salary they receive.

The responses regarding the provision of adequate support systems by the National Police Service (NPS) to address gender-related challenges in career development indicate a general consensus among respondents. With 32% strongly agreeing and 36% agreeing, totaling 68% in agreement, there is a prevailing belief that the NPS does indeed provide adequate support systems. However, the presence of 23% who disagree or strongly disagree suggests a significant minority who may perceive inadequacies in the support systems provided by the NPS. Addressing these concerns and ensuring the effectiveness of support mechanisms is crucial for fostering gender equality and promoting the professional development of all officers within the NPS. The findings by Vanessa and Nuno (2021) suggested that both genders viewed themselves as equally competent for various law enforcement responsibilities, including administrative duties and supervision.

Regarding the necessity of gender-sensitive training programs to mitigate bias in career development decisions within the NPS, the responses indicate strong support for such initiatives. With 34% strongly agreeing and 39% agreeing, totaling 73% in agreement, there is a widespread belief among respondents in the importance of gender-sensitive training programs. This suggests a recognition of the role that education and awareness can play in addressing bias and promoting inclusivity within the NPS. However, the presence of

17% who disagree or strongly disagree indicates a minority who may question the effectiveness or necessity of gender-sensitive training programs. The findings by Awino (2019) unveiled that female officers encountered obstacles such as gender stereotypes, difficulties in balancing work and personal life, and instances of social injustice, all of which affected their effectiveness on the job.

### Disability and Career Development

The respondents were required to rate the statements provided based on their level of agreement.

**Table 4: Disability and Career Development**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Disability often hinders career advancement opportunities within the National Police Service	33%	24%	8%	16%	19%	0.20	0.083
Officers with disabilities face more challenges in career progression compared to their able-bodied counterparts within the National Police Service.	26%	37%	3%	14%	20%	0.20	0.114
The National Police Service provides adequate support and accommodations for officers with disabilities to pursue career development opportunities.	40%	27%	9%	13%	11%	0.20	0.118
Disability-related stigma influences the types of assignments and promotions officers with disabilities receive within the National Police Service.	38%	33%	8%	10%	13%	0.204	0.125
Diversity and inclusion initiatives positively impact career development opportunities for officers with disabilities within the National Police Service.	34%	32%	7%	10%	15%	0.19	0.112
Officers with disabilities are encouraged to pursue career advancement opportunities within the National Police Service.	30%	35%	11%	12%	12%	0.20	0.103
The National Police Service allocates resources effectively to provide training and development programs tailored to officers with disabilities.	39%	36%	10%	9%	6%	0.20	0.144
Policies and procedures within the National Police Service adequately address the needs and rights of officers with disabilities in career development.	33%	39%	7%	10%	11%	0.20	0.133
Officers with disabilities are treated equally in terms of career progression opportunities within the National Police Service.	35%	38%	2%	12%	13%	0.20	0.140
The National Police Service provides appropriate accommodations to ensure officers with disabilities can fully participate in career development activities.	36%	34%	5%	15%	10%	0.20	0.126
Disability awareness and sensitivity training programs are necessary to promote inclusivity in career development decisions within the national police service.	33%	29%	9%	17%	12%	0.20	0.094

**Source. Research Data (2024).**

The responses suggest a notable acknowledgment among respondents regarding the impact of disability on career advancement opportunities within the National Police Service, with a combined 57% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement. This indicates a prevalent perception that individuals with disabilities face challenges in advancing their careers within the service. Conversely, 35% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a portion that does not perceive disability as significantly hindering career advancement opportunities. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (8%) indicates a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding this issue.

The responses indicate a widespread belief among respondents that officers with disabilities face more challenges in career progression compared to their able-bodied counterparts within the national police service, with a combined 63% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement. This suggests a prevalent perception that disability presents significant obstacles to career advancement within the service. Conversely, 34% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority that may not perceive disability as significantly hindering career progression. The presence of a relatively low proportion of neutral responses (3%) suggests a high level of certainty or consensus among respondents regarding this issue. The study correlates with those by Gupta and Priyadarshi (2020) who discovered that affirmative action had a negative impact by performing an exploratory study that involved interviews with professionally qualified Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in India who held permanent jobs

The responses suggest a prevailing belief among respondents that the national police service provides adequate support and accommodations for officers with disabilities to pursue career development opportunities, with a combined 67% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This indicates a widespread perception that the service offers sufficient resources and assistance to enable officers with disabilities to progress in their careers. Conversely, 24% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a minority that may not perceive the support and accommodations as adequate. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (9%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding this issue. The study revealed prejudice against invisible disabilities, leading employees to hesitate in disclosing their disabilities.

The responses indicate a significant acknowledgment among respondents regarding the influence of disability-related stigma on the types of assignments and promotions officers with disabilities receive within the national police service, with a combined 71% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests a prevalent perception that disability-related stigma impacts career opportunities within the service. Conversely, 23% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority that may not perceive stigma as significantly affecting assignments and promotions. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (8%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding this issue. However, Gupta and Priyadarshi (2020) who discovered that affirmative action had a negative impact by performing an exploratory study that involved interviews with professionally qualified Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in India who held permanent jobs

The responses suggest a widespread belief among respondents that diversity and inclusion initiatives positively impact career development opportunities for officers with disabilities within the national police service, with a combined 66% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This indicates a prevalent perception that fostering diversity and inclusion can enhance career prospects for officers with disabilities. Conversely, 25% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a minority that may not perceive the impact of diversity and inclusion initiatives on career development opportunities for this group. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (7%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding this issue. However, Brehmer, Strauser, Shen, Phillips, Kosciulek and Austin (2023) highlighted the important differences across dimensions of functioning that

impact career development. Results suggest that a multidimensional approach to career development would be most efficacious in supporting the functioning of individuals with disabilities.

Regarding whether officers with disabilities are encouraged to pursue career advancement opportunities within the National Police Service, the responses indicate a similar trend, with a combined 65% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests a widespread belief that officers with disabilities receive encouragement to advance their careers within the service. Conversely, 24% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority that may not perceive sufficient encouragement for career advancement among officers with disabilities. The presence of a relatively high proportion of neutral responses (11%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding this issue. However, Gupta and Priyadarshi (2020) argue that persons with disabilities (PWDs) perceive affirmative action to have a detrimental impact due to resulting positive discrimination, which undermines their confidence and overall development.

The responses suggest a widespread belief among respondents that the National Police Service effectively allocates resources to provide training and development programs tailored to officers with disabilities, with a combined 75% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This indicates a prevalent perception that the service prioritizes the needs of officers with disabilities in terms of training and development opportunities. Conversely, only 15% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a minority that may not perceive resource allocation as effective for this group. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (10%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding this issue.

Regarding whether policies and procedures adequately address the needs and rights of officers with disabilities in career development within the National Police Service, the responses indicate a similar trend, with a combined 72% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests a widespread belief that the policies and procedures within the service sufficiently address the needs and rights of officers with disabilities. Conversely, 21% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority that may not perceive policies and procedures as adequate in this regard. The presence of a relatively low proportion of neutral responses (7%) suggests a high level of certainty or consensus among respondents regarding this issue. On the other hand, Brehmer, Strauser, Shen, Phillips, Kosciulek and Austin (2023) highlighted the important differences across dimensions of functioning that impact career development. Results suggest that a multidimensional approach to career development would be most efficacious in supporting the functioning of individuals with disabilities.

Regarding whether officers with disabilities are treated equally in terms of career progression opportunities within the National Police Service, the responses suggest a prevalent belief among respondents that officers with disabilities are indeed treated equally, with a combined 73% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This indicates a widespread perception that the service provides equal opportunities for career progression regardless of disability status. Conversely, 25% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a minority that may not perceive equal treatment for officers with disabilities. The presence of a relatively low proportion of neutral responses (2%) suggests a high level of certainty or consensus among respondents regarding this issue.

The responses indicate a prevalent belief among respondents that the National Police Service provides appropriate accommodations to ensure officers with disabilities can fully participate in career development activities, with a combined 70% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests a widespread perception that the service prioritizes the provision of accommodations to enable officers with disabilities to engage fully in career development opportunities. Conversely, 25% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority that may not perceive the accommodations as adequate. The presence of a relatively low proportion of neutral responses (5%) suggests a high level of certainty or

consensus among respondents regarding this issue. On the other hand Alkaabi (2022) findings suggested that a higher frequency of sickness absence spells and more days taken off due to illness could serve as predictors for disability retirements among police personnel in the UAE

Regarding whether disability awareness and sensitivity training programs are necessary to promote inclusivity in career development decisions within the National Police Service, the responses indicate a mixed perspective. While a significant portion of respondents (62%) either agree or strongly agree with this statement, indicating recognition of the importance of such training programs, there is also a notable presence of dissenting views, with 29% of respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (9%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding this issue. The findings correlates with Gupta and Priyadarshi (2020) who underscored the negative fallout of affirmative action, leading to positive discrimination and affecting confidence and development among PWDs.

### Age and Career Development

**Table 5: Age and Career Development**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Age is a significant factor in determining career advancement opportunities within the National Police Service.	34%	33%	11%	12%	10%	0.20	0.111
Younger officers have more favorable career progression prospects compared to older officers within the NPS.	32%	34%	9%	12%	13%	0.20	0.103
The NPS provides equal career development support regardless of age.	30%	37%	8%	10%	15%	0.20	0.115
Age-related stereotypes impact the types of assignments and promotions officers receive within the National Police Service.	31%	28%	10%	16%	15%	0.20	0.081
Diversity in age within leadership positions positively influences career development opportunities for all officers in the National Police Service.	32%	29%	9%	14%	16%	0.20	0.089
Officers of all ages are equally encouraged to pursue career advancement opportunities within the National Police Service.	36%	34%	10%	9%	11%	0.20	0.122
Age bias affects the allocation of resources for training and development programs within the National Police Service.	30%	33%	8%	12%	17%	0.20	0.098
The National Police Service actively addresses age-related disparities in career advancement through policy initiatives.	31%	35%	9%	12%	13%	0.20	0.107
Younger officers receive preferential treatment in terms of career progression opportunities within the National Police Service.	29%	36%	7%	15%	12%	0.19	0.098
The National Police Service provides adequate support systems to address age-related challenges in career development.	27%	33%	11%	13%	16%	0.20	0.085
Age-sensitive training programs are necessary to mitigate bias in career development decisions within the National Police Service.	34%	37%	11%	8%	10%	0.20	0.127

**Source: Research Data (2024)**

The percentages of responses reveal a nuanced landscape regarding the perception of age's significance in career advancement within the National Police Service, with 67% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with its relevance, 11% remaining neutral, and 22% expressing disagreement. This distribution underscores a notable awareness of potential age bias within the organization. Such awareness necessitates proactive measures to ensure fairness and equity in recruitment, promotion, and career development processes.

The results from the table of responses indicate a split perspective on whether younger officers have more favorable career progression prospects compared to older officers within the NPS. Specifically, 66% of respondents either agree (32%) or strongly agree (34%) with this statement, suggesting a prevailing belief in the advantage younger officers hold in career advancement. Conversely, 25% of respondents either disagree (12%) or strongly disagree (13%), indicating a significant portion of individuals who do not perceive age as a determining factor in career progression within the NPS. This disparity underscores the need for the NPS to address potential age-related biases in its career development processes to ensure fairness and equal opportunities for all officers, irrespective of age. On the other hand, Mori, Odagami, Inagaki, *et al.* (2023) discovered that work engagement tends to increase with age, largely mediated by improved emotional regulation. Furthermore, they found that age moderates the relationships between different job-related psychological factors and work environment factors with work engagement. Additionally, their study indicated that work engagement is linked to working beyond retirement age.

With 67% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the NPS provides equal career development support regardless of age, and only 18% expressing disagreement, the overwhelming sentiment suggests a belief in the NPS's commitment to equitable career development opportunities. Additionally, the low percentage of neutral responses (8%) indicates a clear stance among the majority of respondents. However, the presence of dissenting views (10% disagree, 10% strongly disagree) highlights a need for the NPS to address concerns and perceptions of unequal treatment based on age. While the majority view indicates confidence in the NPS's fairness, addressing the concerns raised by the dissenting minority is crucial to ensuring that career development support is genuinely equitable for all officers, regardless of age. However, De Lange *et al.* (2019) identified several forms of evidence regarding the links between age and employability metrics.

The data suggests a significant acknowledgment among respondents regarding the impact of age-related stereotypes on the types of assignments and promotions officers receive within the national police service, with a combined 59% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This indicates a prevailing perception that age-related biases influence career opportunities within the service. Conversely, 31% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a subset that does not perceive age-related stereotypes as influential in career decisions. However, the presence of a notable proportion of neutral responses (10%) implies a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents. However, Heijden (2019) indicated that certain HR/D practices connected to age had a significant impact on academics' subjective career success

The data underscores a recognition among respondents regarding the positive influence of diversity in age within leadership positions on career development opportunities for all officers in the national police service. With a combined 61% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, there's a prevalent belief that diverse age representation in leadership roles fosters favorable career prospects for all officers. Conversely, 30% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a segment that does not perceive age diversity as significantly impacting career development opportunities. The presence of a notable proportion of neutral responses (9%) indicates a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents. Steindórsdóttir *et al.* (2019) discovered positive correlations between increases in upward and horizontal

career transitions and both objective and subjective career success through the use of latent growth curve analysis

The responses reflect a predominant belief among respondents that officers of all ages are equally encouraged to pursue career advancement opportunities within the National Police Service, with a combined 70% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This indicates a prevailing perception that the service promotes equal opportunities for career development regardless of age. Conversely, 20% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a portion that perceives disparities in encouragement based on age. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (10%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents. To ensure equitable career advancement opportunities for all officers, regardless of age, it's crucial for the National Police Service to actively promote inclusivity, provide mentorship and training programs, and maintain transparent and merit-based promotion processes. In addition Schrimpf, Froehlich and Venegas (2021) showed that the availability of developmental initiatives significantly connected with an organization's age climate, which in turn improved employees' employability

The responses suggest a notable acknowledgment among respondents regarding the impact of age bias on the allocation of resources for training and development programs within the national police service, with a combined 63% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This indicates a prevalent perception that age-related biases influence resource allocation in training and development initiatives. Conversely, 29% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a segment that does not perceive age bias as significantly affecting resource allocation. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (8%) indicates a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents. To ensure fair and equitable access to training and development opportunities for all officers, it's imperative for the national police service to address any perceived biases, allocate resources based on merit and need rather than age, and foster an inclusive organizational culture that values continuous learning and professional growth for all members regardless of age. Fasbender, Vignoli, and Topa (2022) demonstrated that psychological capital served as a mediator for the beneficial impacts of personal growth and self-knowledge acquisition, as well as the detrimental effects of social loss, on career-related outcomes.

The responses suggest a prevailing belief among respondents that the national police service actively addresses age-related disparities in career advancement through policy initiatives, with a combined 66% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This indicates a widespread perception that the service takes proactive measures to mitigate age-related biases in career advancement. Conversely, 25% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a segment that does not perceive sufficient efforts in addressing such disparities. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (9%) indicates a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents. Vickerstaff and Horst (2021) identified a decline narrative associated with older age, where poorer health conditions motivate some individuals to leave employment to enjoy their remaining years in good health. Conversely, this narrative also motivates others to remain employed to avoid health issues that may arise from a sedentary retirement.

The responses suggest a prevalent perception among respondents that younger officers receive preferential treatment in terms of career progression opportunities within the national police service, with a combined 65% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This indicates a widespread belief that age-related biases favor younger officers in career advancement. Conversely, 27% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a segment that does not perceive preferential treatment based on age. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (7%) indicates a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents. To ensure fairness and equal opportunities for career advancement, it's imperative for the National Police Service to address perceptions of age-related biases and implement transparent promotion processes based on merit and performance rather than age. In addition Schrimpf,



Froehlich and Venegas (2021) showed that the availability of developmental initiatives significantly connected with an organization's age climate, which in turn improved employees' employability

The responses indicate a mixed perception regarding whether the national police service provides adequate support systems to address age-related challenges in career development. While a combined 60% either agree or strongly agree with this statement, suggesting a significant portion that perceives sufficient support, 29% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a substantial segment that feels the support systems are inadequate. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (11%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents. To effectively address age-related challenges in career development, the national police service may need to reassess its support systems, ensuring they are tailored to address the specific needs and concerns of officers across different age groups. In addition, Zhang and Farnsdale (2021) discovered that age profiles significantly predict work engagement. They found that development opportunities had a stronger relationship with work engagement among younger employees compared to older employees. However, age profiles did not show a positive correlation with Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) nor did they moderate the relationship between job resources and OCB.

The responses indicate a strong consensus among respondents regarding the necessity of age-sensitive training programs to mitigate bias in career development decisions within the National Police Service, with a combined 71% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests a widespread recognition of the importance of addressing age-related biases through targeted training initiatives. Conversely, only 18% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority that may not perceive the need for such programs. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (8%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents. Also Vickerstaff and Horst (2021) identified a decline narrative associated with older age, where poorer health conditions motivate some individuals to leave employment to enjoy their remaining years in good health. Conversely, this narrative also motivates others to remain employed to avoid health issues that may arise from a sedentary retirement.

### **Educational Level and Career Development**

In objective sought to assess the influence of education level in career development decisions among National Police Service officers in Laikipia County. The respondents were required to rate the statements provided based on their level of agreement. Using the Likert scale of 1 to 5, the results are tabulated in table 6.

**Table 6: Educational Level**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Education level significantly affects career advancement opportunities within the National Police Service.	34%	33%	14%	15%	18%	0.22	0.084
Officers with higher levels of education have better career progression prospects compared to those with lower levels of education within the National Police Service.	30%	37%	6%	12%	15%	0.20	0.116
The national police service provides equal career development support regardless of an officer's level of education.	30%	40%	5%	9%	16%	0.20	0.131
Education-related biases influence the types of assignments and promotions officers receive within the National Police Service.	35%	38%	7%	12%	8%	0.20	0.136
Diversity in educational backgrounds within leadership positions positively influences career development opportunities for all officers in the national police service.	32%	39%	9%	14%	6%	0.20	0.131
Officers of all educational levels are equally encouraged to pursue career advancement opportunities within the National Police Service.	29%	40%	9%	11%	11%	0.20	0.124
The National Police service's training and development programmes are affected by the distribution of resources based on educational bias.	31%	37%	4%	16%	12%	0.20	0.122
The National Police Service actively addresses education-related disparities in career advancement through policy initiatives.	30%	38%	6%	15%	11%	0.20	0.121
The National Police Service's training and development programmes are affected by the distribution of resources based on educational bias.	39%	33%	2%	13%	13%	0.20	0.138
The National Police Service provides adequate support systems to address education-related challenges in career development.	38%	35%	5%	15%	7%	0.20	0.139
Education-sensitive training programs are necessary to mitigate bias in career development decisions within the National Police Service.	41%	26%	3%	11%	19%	0.20	0.130

**Source: Research Data (2024)**

The responses indicate a divided perspective regarding the influence of education level on career advancement opportunities within the National Police Service. While a substantial portion of respondents, totaling 67%, either agree or strongly agree that education level significantly affects career advancement, there's also a notable presence of dissenting views, with 33% of respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this notion. The relatively high percentages of neutral responses (14%) suggest a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding the impact of education level on career progression. This divergence in opinion underscores the complexity of factors influencing career advancement within the national police service and highlights the need for further examination and discussion to ensure equitable opportunities for all officers, regardless of their educational background. The findings correlates with Matulcikova, Hamranova, and Hrivikova (2021) who discovered that many individuals equate career progression with attaining a managerial position, although there is relatively low interest in managerial training.

The responses suggest a widespread belief among respondents that officers with higher levels of education have better career progression prospects within the national police service, with a combined 70% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This indicates a prevailing perception that educational attainment significantly influences career advancement opportunities. Additionally, there is a considerable agreement (73%) that education-related biases influence the types of assignments and promotions officers receive, highlighting a perceived correlation between education level and career opportunities. The presence of relatively low percentages of neutral responses (5% and 7%, respectively) suggests a high level of certainty or consensus among respondents regarding these issues. The findings are similar to Hitka, Starchon, Lorincova and Caha (2021) who substantiated that the level of education holds a significant sway over employees' career trajectories. Furthermore, perceptions of the significance and gender of motivating variables such education and personal development, skill application, self-fulfillment, and independent decision-making varied.

The responses indicate a strong consensus among respondents that diversity in educational backgrounds within leadership positions positively influences career development opportunities for all officers in the national police service, with a combined 71% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests a widespread belief that a diverse range of educational backgrounds among leaders fosters favorable career prospects for all officers. Additionally, there is substantial agreement (69%) that officers of all educational levels are equally encouraged to pursue career advancement opportunities, highlighting a perceived commitment to fairness and equal opportunities within the service. The relatively low percentages of neutral responses (9% and 9%, respectively) suggest a high level of certainty or consensus among respondents regarding these issues. The findings are similar to Yulinasril, Wardi, and Masdupi (2019) found that education level had a favourable and significant impact on transformational leadership and subsequent career advancement, using path analysis on respondents from West Sumatera

The responses suggest a prevailing belief among respondents that the distribution of resources for training and development programs within the National Police Service is affected by educational bias, with a combined 68% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This indicates a widespread perception that educational background influences resource allocation in training initiatives. Conversely, only 28% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a minority that may not perceive educational bias as significantly impacting resource distribution. The presence of a relatively low proportion of neutral responses (4%) suggests a high level of certainty or consensus among respondents regarding this issue. The findings correlates with Hitka *et al.* (2020) who supported the notion that education indeed plays a significant role in influencing employees' career trajectories. Moreover, the study revealed variations in the perceived importance of motivation factors, such as education and personal growth, application of skills, self-fulfillment, and autonomous decision-making, across different genders.

The responses indicate a predominant belief among respondents that the National Police Service actively addresses education-related disparities in career advancement through policy initiatives, with a combined 68% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests a widespread perception that the service is proactive in mitigating disparities based on educational background. Conversely, 26% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority that may not perceive sufficient efforts in addressing such disparities. The presence of a moderate proportion of neutral responses (6%) suggests a degree of uncertainty or lack of consensus among respondents regarding this issue. Qianchen (2021) noted that career education procedures in Western nations were more developed than in Chinese high schools, where a comprehensive curriculum for this subject was still lacking

The responses highlight a significant belief among respondents that the distribution of resources for training and development programs within the national police service is influenced by educational bias, with a combined 72% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests a widespread perception

that educational background plays a role in resource allocation for training initiatives. Conversely, 26% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority that may not perceive educational bias as significantly impacting resource distribution. The presence of a relatively low proportion of neutral responses (2%) suggests a high level of certainty or consensus among respondents regarding this issue. The findings correlates with Hitka *et al.* (2020) supported the notion that education indeed plays a significant role in influencing employees' career trajectories. Moreover, the study revealed variations in the perceived importance of motivation factors, such as education and personal growth, application of skills, self-fulfillment, and autonomous decision-making, across different genders.

The responses indicate a prevailing belief among respondents that the national police service provides adequate support systems to address education-related challenges in career development, with a combined 73% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests a widespread perception that the service offers sufficient resources and assistance to overcome obstacles related to educational background in career advancement. Conversely, 22% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority that may not perceive the support systems as adequate. The presence of a relatively low proportion of neutral responses (5%) suggests a high level of certainty or consensus among respondents regarding this issue.

The responses indicate a substantial belief among respondents that education-sensitive training programs are necessary to mitigate bias in career development decisions within the national police service, with a combined 67% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. This suggests a widespread recognition of the importance of addressing educational biases through targeted training initiatives. Conversely, 30% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating a minority that may not perceive the need for such programs. The presence of a relatively low proportion of neutral responses (3%) suggests a high level of certainty or consensus among respondents regarding this issue. The findings correlates with Hitka *et al.* (2020) who supported the notion that education indeed plays a significant role in influencing employees' career trajectories. Moreover, the study revealed variations in the perceived importance of motivation factors, such as education and personal growth, application of skills, self-fulfillment, and autonomous decision-making, across different genders.

### Regression Analysis

The researcher carried out multiple regression analysis to establish relationship between the variables of the study. The findings are indicated in subsequent sections.

**Table 7: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	.8445	.713 <sup>a</sup>	701	10.51960

Predictors: (Constant), Gender, disability, age, education level

### Source: Research Data (2024)

The model summary above indicates a coefficient of correlation R of 0.8445 signifying presence of strong positive correlation between the variables of the study. The coefficient of determination R square is .713 showing that 71.3% change in employee performance at the Police Service is explained by independent variable Workforce diversity (Gender, disability, gender, education level).

**Table 8: ANOVA Analysis**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	50.12	4	12.53	54.24	.000
Residual	20.13	87	0.231		
Total	70.25	91			

### Source: Research Data (2024)

The ANOVA findings of the processed data at 5% level of significance indicate an F calculated value of 54.24 while F critical Read from F Table is 2.48. This shows that the overall regression model was significant in predicting relationship between the study variables as F calculated is greater than F critical. The p value 0.000 is also less than 0.05 and therefore statistically significant association of the study variables

**Table 9: Regression Coefficients**

Career Development	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	0.482	2.262		0.213	0.161
Gender	0.256	0.178	0.292	1.441	0.002
Disability	0.462	0.191	0.465	2.417	0.016
Age	0.128	0.046	0.281	2.782	0.015
Education Level	0.599	0.077	0.819	7.796	0.034

**Source: Research Data (2024)**

From the findings, the established equation becomes:

$$Y = 0.482 + 0.256X_1 + 0.462X_2 + 0.128X_3 + 0.599X_4$$

Where: Y= Career development decisions; X<sub>1</sub> = gender; X<sub>2</sub> = Disability; X<sub>3</sub> = Age; X<sub>4</sub> = Education level

Therefore; when all factors are held constant performance would be at 48.2%. A unit increase in Gender of the NPS work force would increase Career development decisions by 25.6%, a unit increase in Disability of the NPS work force would increase Career development decisions by 46.2%, a unit change in Age of the NPS work force would affect Career development decisions by 12.8% and a unit increase in education level of the NPS work force would affect Career development decisions by 59.9%

In view of significance of each individual independent variable at 5% level, gender of the NPS Work force diversity significantly added up to Career development decisions p=0.002. According to Van Esbroek and van Engen (2008), diversity has a negative impact on an organization performance. Disability of the NPS work force diversity was significant predictor of Career development decisions p=0.016<0.05. McMillan-Capehart (2003) noted that gender diversity at the organizational and management levels will enhance a firm with a competitive edge.

Age of the NPS work force diversity was significant in affecting Career development decisions p=0.015. David (2011) states that educational background is important to employees and that employees cannot find a job and performs well without adequate educational background. Education Level of the NPS work force diversity had significant effect on Career development decisions p=0.034.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that gender diversity within the National Police Service (NPS) significantly affects career development decisions. Specifically, an increase in the proportion of female officers is associated with a notable increase in career development decisions. This finding highlights the importance of gender diversity in promoting career advancement opportunities within the NPS, aligning with existing literature that suggests diversity at organizational levels enhances competitiveness.

The research reveals that disability diversity within the NPS also significantly impacts career development decisions. Officers with disabilities are found to have a considerable influence on career development, suggesting the importance of inclusivity and accommodation for officers with disabilities in fostering career progression opportunities within the NPS.

The study identifies age diversity as another significant factor affecting career development decisions within the NPS. Younger officers are particularly influential in shaping career advancement opportunities, indicating the importance of considering age diversity in career development strategies within the organization.

Education level diversity among NPS officers emerges as a significant predictor of career development decisions. Higher educational attainment among officers is associated with a notable impact on career development, emphasizing the significance of educational background in job performance and career advancement.

There is need to develop and implement comprehensive diversity and inclusion programs within the National Police Service (NPS) to promote gender, disability, age, and education level diversity. These programs should include training initiatives, awareness campaigns, and policy reforms aimed at creating a more inclusive and equitable work environment.

There is need to develop clear and robust accommodation policies to support officers with disabilities in accessing career development opportunities within the NPS. These policies should outline the provision of reasonable accommodations, such as accessible training materials, modified work arrangements, and assistive technologies, to ensure equal participation and advancement for all officers.

The study recommends a review and revised career development criteria within the NPS to account for diversity factors such as gender, disability, age, and education level. Ensure that promotion and advancement decisions are based on merit, performance, and potential, rather than solely on traditional criteria that may inadvertently disadvantage certain groups.

There is need to enhance recruitment practices to attract and retain a diverse workforce reflective of the broader community served by the NPS. Implement targeted recruitment strategies to actively recruit individuals from underrepresented groups, including women, individuals with disabilities, older adults, and those with diverse educational backgrounds

### **Recommendations for further Studies**

There is need for studies to track the career trajectories of NPS officers over time, focusing on how diversity factors such as gender, disability, age, and education level impact career progression and leadership opportunities within the organization.

There is need for a study to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of NPS officers regarding diversity and career development. Qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation can provide valuable insights into the complexities of diversity dynamics within the organization.

The study recommends a study comparative studies to examine diversity and career development practices across different police departments or law enforcement agencies, both nationally and internationally. Comparisons can help identify best practices and lessons learned that can inform policy and practice within the NPS.

There is to design and implement intervention studies to evaluate the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives within the NPS. Evaluate the impact of specific interventions, such as diversity training programs, mentorship initiatives, or policy reforms, on career development outcomes for officers from diverse backgrounds.

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