

# Impact of Postsecondary Education on Police Officers' Selective Law Enforcement Attitudes: Does the Choice of Academic Major Matter?

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## ABSTRACT

With the increasing challenges in policing, selective law enforcement, a flexible policing strategy, is widely considered an effective way of maintaining law and order. Officers with favorable attitudes towards selective enforcement commonly use discretion to prioritize responses based on the seriousness of offenders and offenses and to balance their roles of law enforcement, service calls, and maintenance of order. However, as the calls for police officers to pursue higher education continue to gain momentum, it is not known whether college experience, particularly the choice of academic major, influences police officer attitudes toward selective enforcement. Using qualitative data from regular police officers in Murang'a County, a peri-urban county in Kenya, we sought to determine the influence of college academic majors on police officers' selective law enforcement attitudes. We relied on socialization theory and used a descriptive cross-sectional design. The sample size was 95 police officers with postsecondary experience, selected randomly. We collected data using self-administered structured questionnaires and conducted inferential analysis using SPSS version 22. We established that officers' academic major has no statistically significant relationship with their selective law enforcement attitudes. We concluded that there is little evidence that what a police officer studies in college affects their role orientation. The study recommends that encouraging police officers to pursue higher education in general will increase their attitudes towards selective law enforcement. Limitations and suggestions for future studies have been discussed.

**Keywords:** academic major, postsecondary education, police education, selective enforcement, non-criminal justice interventions

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a rise in the complexity and multidimensionality of police roles (Novak et al., 2022). Unlike in the past, when police officers were only required to 'enforce' the law, today's police work also involves monitoring criminal activities, building relations with communities under the community policing model, providing social services (such as was the case during the COVID-19 crisis), preventing crime, and testifying in court (Novak et al., 2022; Paprota, 2012). The increase in competing priorities in police work has meant that alternative ways of enforcing the law and serving the best interests of the public

have to be designed and implemented (Dewey et al., 2021; Tasdoven & Kapucu, 2013). A common police work model that continues to gain popularity with the expansion of police work is selective law enforcement, a policing approach that allows police officers to make decisions based on the priority or significance of crime incidents that they confront while in the line of duty (Sun, 2003; Huff, 2021). Under this model, police officers deliberately decide not to enforce the law fully and opt to use other non-criminal justice alternatives to dealing with crime (Sun, 2003; Zhang, 2021). It is argued that selective law enforcement promotes flexibility, enhances police accountability and autonomy, and ultimately promotes the use of effective and fair policing practices (Tasdoven & Kapucu, 2013). As a result, selective law enforcement has become popular among police officers in recent times as many of these professionals increasingly exercise their discretion in different situations (Zhang, 2021).

In Kenya, there have been deliberate efforts by the government to improve the police's effectiveness and ability to enforce the law in ways that best meet the objectives of the criminal justice system. For instance, among the 2009 National Task Force on Police Reforms' recommendations was that standards of education for police officers should be upstretched, with a solid emphasis on the recruitment of more police officers with postsecondary qualifications (Usalama Forum, 2015; Republic of Kenya, 2009). Underpinning this suggestion was the expectation that, with postsecondary experiences, police officers in Kenya will be more receptive and sensitive to the unique needs of communities and the challenges they face (Republic of Kenya, 2009). In other words, it was projected that more educated police officers would be more oriented towards selective enforcement of the law, thereby enabling them to prioritize the communities' needs during the maintenance of law and order (Huff, 2021). It is also theoretically expected that with exposure to different college majors, police officers would have more positive attitudes towards selective law enforcement, and such officers would be more empowered to exercise their discretion when confronted with different criminal incidents (Hilal & Densley, 2013; Telep, 2011; Huff, 2021). However, there is little evidence of the credibility of this assumption in the Kenyan context.

Eterno (2008) found that officers with postsecondary experience had more adaptable value systems and used non-coercive tactics to resolve situations (Eterno, 2008). In addition, Telep (2008) concluded that officers with higher education were less prone to abusing their authority. Another research study discovered that police officers possessing postsecondary education exhibited higher ethical standards compared to counterparts without such educational backgrounds (Davis, 2014). Additional research indicated that police officers with postsecondary education tended to use less force, faced fewer citizen complaints, demonstrated superior decision-making skills, and exhibited flexibility in problem-solving. This suggests a preference for the selective enforcement of the law (Aamedt, 2004). However, it is currently not known whether attaining postsecondary qualifications influences how police officers perceive selective law enforcement. Early findings in this area are mixed (Guller, 1972; Weiner, 1976; Regoli, 1976; Eterno, 2008), and the limitations of the data have barred police academics from examining the importance of exposure to diverse postsecondary courses among officers with higher education qualifications (Paoline et al., 2015; Telep, 2008; Davis, 2014). Although the Kenya National Police Service (KNPS) has been employing graduate police constables and inspectors in recent days, there is still less support for government-sponsored postsecondary education for police officers. Most police officers in Kenya enroll in postsecondary education for their own career prospects but not as a requisite requirement in the KNPS. One of the potentially contributing factors to the low hiring of police graduates or the introduction of a government policy that supports postsecondary police education is the absence of consistent, concise, and empirical evidence concerning the worth of postsecondary studies for law enforcers. Existing studies in Kenya focus on the association between police education and work performance (Chelangat, 2016), not on how postsecondary qualifications influence officers' selective law enforcement attitudes. Other studies focus on how police training program content and instructional approaches affect Kenya's counter-terrorism capability (Nyabira *et al.*, 2019).

In addition to the dearth of studies, previous focus has been on police officer-suspect interactions during arrests and usage of force, citing methodological deficiencies, including failure to incorporate feedback from non-police officers when evaluating police attitudes to triangulate the findings (Huff, 2021). Given that postsecondary education is a socialization process and officers' predispositions influence their work-related attitudes, the socialization theory has not been used to explain how exposure to higher education correlates with police attitudes toward selective law enforcement. This state of affairs underscores the need for additional studies to shed light on the nexus between postsecondary experience, particularly the choice of academic major, and job-related attitudes (Paoline et al., 2015). In this regard, this study used the socialization theory, along with responses from police officers, to assess the correlation between postsecondary education and selective law enforcement attitudes among police officers in Kenya. In addition to broadening or improving the application of the socialization theory, the study will demonstrate how the choice of college major influences police officers to develop varied attitudes toward flexibility in their application of the law.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, we review prior research efforts on the correlation between selective enforcement attitudes and the choice of college major. We have also discussed the theory underpinning the study and the conceptual framework that outlines the measurement of the study variables.

### • Officers' Academic Major and Law Enforcement Attitudes

Although recent studies have tried to address the limitations of the early empirical studies on the impact of postsecondary education on police officers' perceptions of their roles, such as selective enforcement, they have still generated mixed findings and have not addressed all the factors involved. One of the factors that has received insufficient attention in contemporary studies is the academic major among officers with postsecondary experience. Police researchers have stressed the need to explain the role of the program of study since police practice may be more appropriate for some academic majors and specializations than others (Hudzik, 1978; Worden, 1990). However, studies have used varied measures for academic major inquiry, leading to less definitive guidance for this variable. For example, Carlan (2007) used a dichotomized metric involving criminal justice and non-criminal justice specializations to investigate the role of academic major. Other studies that have measured academic majors using multiple dummy variables have applied various classifications. For instance, an early study by Wycoff and Susmilch (1979) utilized a trichotomized measure consisting of criminal justice or police science, liberal arts, and technical-related college majors. Roberg (1978) used a more stretched measure that classified academic majors by humanities, business, criminal justice, education, social sciences, psychology, and agriculture. In a fairly comparable approach, although with varied groupings, Cascio (1977) measured academic majors using social sciences, criminal justice, law, police sciences, physical sciences, medical sciences, education, business, engineering, and economics. Both Cascio (1977) and Roberg (1978) admit that there are limitations with such categorizations, especially in regard to a few cases in most of the classifications.

The most recent comprehensive multivariate model used to measure academic major is based on Paoline et al.'s (2015) study, which used a five-category measure of academic major consisting of criminal justice, social science, business, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and another category, including history, religion, and general studies. Based on survey responses from more than 2,100 patrol officers, Paoline et al. (2015) noted that officers with criminal justice specializations and non-criminal justice specializations have the same attitudes towards the enforcement of the law. The researchers concluded that college specialization generally had almost no effect on how police officers view their law enforcement roles. The relationships that the researchers established were independent of the police officer's

work experience, sex, department of service, race, and prior military experience. Given the changing nature of modern policing environments, such as management expectations, increasing oversight, expanded roles, and the use of technology, more finely examining such effects across various college specializations seems to be more relevant than ever. This is particularly true as police practitioners and researchers continue to examine the significance of postsecondary education as a prescribed requirement in law enforcement contexts (Paoline et al., 2015).

Among those studies examining academic majors and selective law enforcement, the findings are mixed. Some studies found that criminology and criminal justice majors were less punitive (Payne et al., 2006; Tsoudis, 2000), while others found they were more punitive, authoritarian, or dogmatic (Mackey & Courtright, 2000; Lambert, 2004; Shelley et al., 2011). A comparative study by Owen and Wagner (2008) found that criminal justice students had higher levels of authoritarianism than those from other disciplines, suggesting their negativity towards selective law enforcement. In addition, some studies reported that differences between majors were small or nonexistent (Benekos et al., 2002; Hensley et al., 2003; Lambert et al., 2005; Mackey et al., 2006). The divergent findings in the existing research underscore the need for further research on the relationship between the choice of college major and officers' selective enforcement attitudes.

#### • **Theoretical Framework.**

This study relies on the socialization theory. As the understanding of police attitudes expanded at the start of the 1960s, social scientists suggested that work experiences and peers determined police attitudes and behavior more than pre-employment attitudes and values. The development of this perspective led to the formulation of the socialization theory, which posits that an individual's socialization is shaped by their occupational encounters (Doolittle, 2009). In police settings, the socialization theory was largely supported by the research conducted by John Van Maanen, who carried out participant-observation research in one of the police departments in California in 1973 (Van Maanen, 1973). This sociological perspective posits that the police personality is shaped by the process of group socialization, or the ingraining of individuals into the distinct culture of the police (Kenney & McNamara, 1999). For instance, if a police officer becomes lenient in enforcing the law or corrupt, it is because the police department promotes leniency in law enforcement; in other words, leniency towards law enforcement is learned over the years of police practice. The socialization theory applies to all types of police attitudes and behaviors, whether good or bad (Kenney & McNamara, 1999).

In the context of this study, postsecondary education is one of the sociological factors that play a key role in shaping police attitudes (Lin, 2020). The theory of socialization perceives the postsecondary experience as a process of socialization driven by exposure to a variety of novel ideas, friendships, and belief systems. This socialization process influences people to become more conscious and concerned about the surrounding world. Attaining postsecondary education is associated with the development of more humanistic ideals (Lin, 2020; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Hence, for law enforcement officers, college education functions as a way to acquire the skills of adeptly engaging with individuals and applying the law with adaptability. While participating in postsecondary education programs, law enforcers can commit sufficient time to reflect, think about, or view themselves in various moral predicaments in the classroom, efforts that can prepare them to deal with issues at the street level (Zhang, 2021; Lynch, 1976). Therefore, socialization was used to explain the nexus between academic majors and selective law enforcement attitudes.

#### • **Conceptual Framework.**

We used a five-category measure of the officer's academic major, the independent variable in the study. As shown in Fig. 1, it consisted of criminal justice (e.g., penology, criminology, and criminal justice specializations); social sciences (e.g., social work, sociology, anthropology, and political science

disciplines); business (e.g., human resource management, business management, accounting, marketing, and economics specializations); security studies (e.g., intelligence management, security management, and surveillance and CCTV management); and other categories (e.g., religious studies, history, education, and STEM specializations). These measures of academic major were also used by previous researchers (see, e.g., Paoline et al. 2015).

**Officer’s Academic Major (X)**

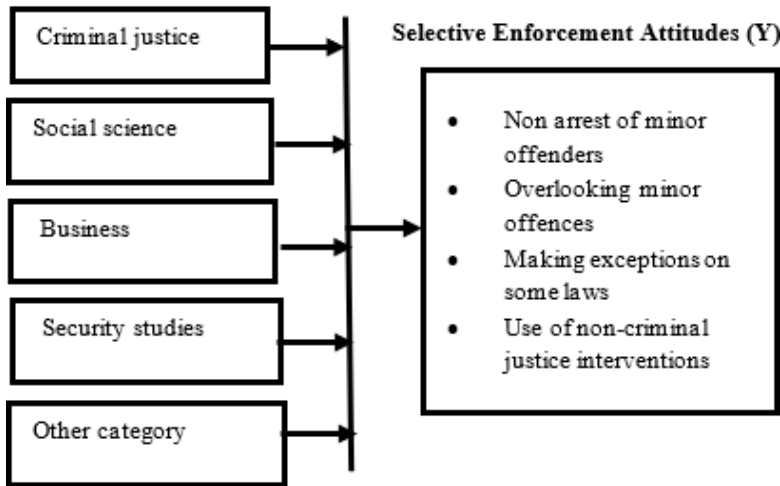


Figure 1 Conceptual framework for college major and selective enforcement attitude.

Officers’ selective enforcement attitudes were used as the main dependent variable for the study. As shown in Fig. 1, officers’ attitudes toward selective enforcement were measured using five Likert-type items. The selective enforcement items were adapted from the questions used by Sun (2003) and from both scales used by Wortley (2003), irrespective of whether they fall in the watchman scale or service-legalistic. Participants assessed these statements using a Likert scale, with options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A cumulative value from the eight statements was then developed and grouped into three levels: negative attitudes towards selective law enforcement (1–2.60), neutral attitudes towards selective law enforcement (2.61–3.40), and positive attitudes towards selective law enforcement (3.41–5.0). Greater scores reflected a more favorable outlook, while lesser scores signified a less favorable stance.

**METHODOLOGY**

This section presents the methodology that we adopted to conduct the study. It covers the design, participants, sampling procedure, data collection, analysis, validity, and reliability.

**• Design**

This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design to gather quantitative data. Using a quantitative approach, it was possible to reach a wider range of participants across police stations based on the location of the area, use standardized questions, and provide a high degree of anonymity (Kothari, 2009). In addition, the approach also allowed for ease in coding information. The closed-ended questions containing pre-categorized proposed answers significantly minimized the potential for respondents’ misinterpretations of responses (Wilson, 2014).

**• Participants**

This study was carried out in Murang’a County, Kenya. With a population of 1,056,640, the county had

eight police stations with over 500 regular police officers in different ranks as of November 2022. According to the Murang'a County Integrated Development Plan for 2018–2022, the county faces insecurity, especially from outlawed groups (Murang'a County, 2018). The target population consisted of 125 Kenyan police officers (regular) with postsecondary education qualifications in the county. These officers had different ranks, which included Senior Officers (Superintendent [SP] and Senior Superintendent of Police [SSP]), Members of Inspectorate (Chief Inspector [CIP], Inspector [IP]), and low-ranking officers (Senior Sergeant [S/SGT], Sergeant [SGT], Police Corporals [CPLs], and Police Constables [PCs]). These officers were targeted because they are the ones who often apply selective or full enforcement as they maintain law and order.

### ● Sampling Procedure

We employed Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size calculation, setting a margin of error of 0.05, resulting in a determined sample size of 95 regular police officers. We applied stratified random sampling to develop a sample. This included seven senior officers, 34 members of the inspectorate, and 54 low-ranking officers.

### ● Data Collection

A structured, self-reported questionnaire was the data collection tool. The tool was a pencil and paper questionnaire, which took about 20 to 30 minutes to complete. Before the data gathering process, we ascertained the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. We attained content validity by ensuring that the tool was developed after grilling through the existing literature. We also conducted a pilot study in two of the eight police stations within Murang'a County one week before the actual study to evaluate the reliability of the Likert-scale items that measured selective law enforcement attitudes. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of the scale used was 0.948 according to the pilot study data, demonstrating a very strong degree of internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Once the data collection instruments had been validated and checked for reliability, the data gathering exercise started after the study had been approved by the Institute of Criminology, Forensics, and Security Studies, Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, and the National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI). Authority to administer the questionnaires was further obtained from the County KPS Commander, Murang'a County. The questionnaires were issued to the identified respondents and collected after a week to give them sufficient time.

### ● Analysis

The returned questionnaires were edited, coded, and cleaned for consistency of analysis, and standard schemes were utilized in computing the scores for selective law enforcement. Coding was conducted by assigning the collected questionnaire data to categories. We conducted inferential analysis using one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test, and Pearson correlation analysis in SPSS version 22. Levene's test was performed to establish whether the selective law enforcement attitude scale had homogeneity of variance before carrying out the one-way ANOVA. A cut-off probability value of .05 or 95% confidence level, was used to judge the significance level. The significance value of the Levene statistic was 0.254, indicating that the requirement of homogeneity of variance was not violated, and the ANOVA test can be considered robust.

## RESULT

The main objective of this study was to investigate the influence of officers' academic majors on their selective enforcement attitudes. Out of 95 questionnaires distributed to regular police officers, a total of 63 were fully completed and returned for analysis. In this section, we present the results of the descriptive and

inferential analyses conducted.

• **One Way ANOVA for Officers’ Academic Major and Selective Law Enforcement Attitudes**

A one-way ANOVA was carried out to determine whether there were any significant differences between the means of selective law enforcement attitudes and officers’ academic majors. Findings in Table I show that regular police officers with security studies (e.g., intelligence management, security management, and surveillance and CCTV management) and other categories (religious studies, history, education, and STEM specializations) scored the highest mean at 2.2727. This was followed by those with business (accounting, economics, human resource management, business management, and marketing specializations) academic majors with a mean of 2.2500, criminal justice (penology, criminology, and criminal justice specializations) majors with a mean of 2.1200, and social sciences (sociology, social work, psychology, anthropology, and political science disciplines) majors that scored a mean of 2.0000. The findings show that the attitudes of regular police officers toward selective law enforcement were almost similar and negative regardless of their academic major, as indicated by the overall mean of 2.1746.

Table I. The Relationship between Officers’ Academic Major and their Selective Law Enforcement Attitudes

Officers’ Academic Major	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Criminal justice	25	2.1200	.72572	1.00	3.00
Social sciences	8	2.0000	.53452	1.00	3.00
Business	8	2.2500	.46291	2.00	3.00
Security studies	11	2.2727	.46710	2.00	3.00
Other category	11	2.2727	.64667	1.00	3.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>2.1746</b>	<b>.61012</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>3.00</b>

We also carried out a one-way ANOVA to explore the variation in selective law enforcement attitudes with respect to police officers’ academic majors, as shown in Table II. The findings indicate insignificant differences between the means of selective law enforcement attitudes and officers’ academic major,  $F(4, 58) = .371, p \geq .05$ .

Table II. One-way ANOVA for Officers’ Academic Major and Selective Law Enforcement Attitudes

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.576	4	.144	.371	.828
Within Groups	22.504	58	.388		
Total	23.079	62			
The mean difference is significant at $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed).					

• **Chi-square Test for Officers’ Academic Major and Selective Law Enforcement Attitudes**

A chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ) was conducted to find out whether there was an association between police officers’ academic specialization and their selective law enforcement attitudes. The results presented in Table III show that there was no significant relationship between officers’ academic major and their attitudes towards selective law enforcement,  $\chi^2 (8, N = 63) = 6.588, p \geq .05$ .

Table III. Chi-square Test for Officers’ Academic major and Selective Law Enforcement Attitudes

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.588 <sup>a</sup>	8	.582
Likelihood Ratio	8.521	8	.384
Linear-by-Linear Association	.952	1	.329
N of Valid Cases	63		
Chi-square is significant at $p \leq .05$ (2-tailed)			

• **Pearson Correlation for Officers’ Academic Major and Selective Law Enforcement Attitudes**

We used Pearson product moment correlation to investigate the influence of officers’ academic majors on their attitudes towards selective law enforcement. The result of the Pearson correlation analysis between officers’ academic major and their selective law enforcement attitudes is presented in Table IV. According to these results, there is no statistically significant correlation between officers’ educational level and their selective law enforcement attitudes,  $r(63) = .124$ ;  $p = .333$ .

Table IV. Pearson Correlation between Officers’ Academic major and their Selective Law Enforcement Attitudes

		Selective Law Enforcement Attitudes	Officers’ Academic Major
Selective Law Enforcement Attitudes	Pearson Correlation	1	.124
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.333
	N	63	63
Officers’ Academic major	Pearson Correlation	.124	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.333	
	N	63	63
Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)			

**DISCUSSION**

This section presents a comprehensive discussion of the findings drawn from the analysis. The results show that the attitudes of regular police officers toward selective law enforcement were almost identical and negative, regardless of their academic major. This aligns with earlier research findings that indicated either minimal or non-existent distinctions among majors (Benekos *et al.*, 2002; Hensley *et al.*, 2003; Lambert *et al.*, 2005; Mackey *et al.*, 2006). In the current study, those with security studies academic majors and other specializations like religious studies, history, education, and STEM had slightly higher attitude scores, followed by those with business and criminal justice majors. However, those majoring in social sciences had the lowest attitude scores, according to the results. This result conforms to those of Paoline *et al.* (2015), who found that officers with criminal justice specializations and non-criminal justice specializations have similar attitudes towards the enforcement of the law. The researchers concluded that officers’ college specialization generally had almost no statistical effect on how police officers view their law enforcement roles. It is worth noting that police officers with criminal justice majors reported having negative attitudes towards selective enforcement of the law, reaffirming the findings in other studies that found criminology and criminal justice students to be more punitive, inflexible, and authoritarian (Lambert, 2004; Mackey & Courtright, 2000; Owen & Wagner, 2008; Shelley *et al.*, 2011).

As cited previously, Paoline *et al.* (2015) found that police officers with criminal justice college majors and non-criminal justice college majors have related attitudes towards law enforcement and that officers’ college



specialization does not have a statistical effect on how they view their law enforcement roles. However, these findings also contradict those of other studies that found criminology and criminal justice students to have favorable attitudes towards selective law enforcement (Payne *et al.*, 2006; Tsoudis, 2000). These results can be explained using the socialization process proposed by socialization theory. The theory posits that the police personality is formed through the process of group socialization, or the ingraining of individuals into the culture of the police force. In other words, police officers learn different attitudes regarding their roles over the years of police practice, and an academic major may have little impact.

## LIMITATIONS

In this section, we point out some of the shortcomings that may have had an influence on our findings in this study. Firstly, our focus was exclusively on KNPS officers involved in the maintenance of law and order. Therefore, our findings tend to be biased toward regular police officers. We attempted to address this limitation by drawing our sample from officers with mixed ranks and roles, including managerial and operational duties. Secondly, although this study covered the postsecondary education of police officers by accounting for academic majors, it did not capture potential institutional effects on police attitudes. That is, does the type of university or college officers attend affect their enforcement attitudes? In our sample, we tried to address this limitation by targeting officers who have attended varied universities, both private and public. Finally, this research relied on subjective viewpoints, and assessing the impartiality of the participants posed a significant challenge. The fact that the study was gauging police attitudes toward selective law enforcement made it susceptible to bias on the part of police respondents. We could only attempt to counter this potential limitation by encouraging the respondents to answer the questions as honestly as possible.

## CONCLUSION

This section discusses the conclusion drawn from the study and delineates practical recommendations, policy suggestions, and directions for future studies. Based on the slight mean differences noted in the results, we conclude that there is little evidence that what a police officer studies in college affects their role orientation or selective enforcement attitudes. As postulated by the socialization theory, the influences of police socialization are more dominant than any potential impact that a college degree might have on police officers. However, it emerged that those with security studies majors and other specializations like religious studies, history, education, and STEM have slightly higher selective law enforcement attitude scores, followed by those with business and criminal justice majors. Because the mean differences were insignificant, post secondary education in general has a similar effect on officers. If the National Police Service Commission (NPSC) seeks to promote more application of selective law enforcement in Kenya, it needs to encourage officers to pursue academic majors like security studies.

As previously mentioned, the outcomes presented in this research specifically pertain to standard police officers engaged in law enforcement duties. It is likely that the impacts of post secondary education, as well as the subjects studied in such contexts, are more discernible and significant in realms beyond initial entry-level police responsibilities. In other words, individuals in higher-ranking positions or undertaking different assignments within the police force may experience advantages from their post secondary education that do not necessarily apply to lower-ranking officers engaged in routine street-level policing. It is likely that the connection between academic majors and work-related attitudes might be more noticeable within various assignments and ranks. For instance, one could reasonably assume that individuals with administrative roles in the inspectorate would find business degrees advantageous. Consequently, further research should investigate these aspects through empirical inquiry. It will be more practical for future researchers to include more officers with senior ranks and different police assignments in their studies.

Additionally, although this research contributed to the existing body of knowledge on police education by considering the influence of academic majors, it did not encompass potential institutional impacts. Specifically, it did not examine whether the attitudes of selectively chosen law enforcement officers are influenced by the nature of the college or university they attend. Moreover, with the evolving program offerings in Kenyan post secondary institutions, investigating the potential consequences of online versus in-person university programs would be valuable for researchers. Robust qualitative methodologies would enhance research endeavors in these areas (this study relied more on structured questionnaires). Regrettably, there is a shortage of qualitative research in this field. Employing in-depth interview methods could prove advantageous in eliciting essential details concerning these educational contexts. The insights gained from such research endeavors could subsequently inform the creation of well-structured questionnaires for the efficient gathering of data from sizable populations of police officers, enabling comprehensive multivariate analyses. Additionally, these studies may uncover traits of postsecondary education that contribute most positively to the attitudes and performance of police officers, including factors like the caliber of the educational institution and the characteristics of the instructors.

Finally, while this study evaluated the nexus between post secondary education and police occupational attitudes, it neglected to control for multiple variables known to influence selective law enforcement attitudes. Yet, in previous research, variables like officer experience, fear or concern about crime, in-service police training, geographic region, religious beliefs, and gender had effects on police work-related attitudes (see, e.g., Rydberg and Terrill, 2010). This neglect of control variables may have led to a series of misspecified statistical models. Thus, it will be instructive for future work to include a multitude of control measures to determine whether these variables matter in some way.

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