



# Personnel Reforms and Performance in Law Enforcement among Directorate of Criminal Investigations Officers in Kenya: The Moderating Effect of Technology

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## Abstract

Policing is vital to a society's criminal justice system, ensuring law and order, crime prevention, and public safety while protecting citizens' rights. In Kenya, the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) faces challenges in balancing these duties. This study examines how personnel reforms affect DCI officers' performance, grounded in Peelian Principles. Using a mixed-method approach, it collected quantitative data via Likert-scale questionnaires from 5,383 DCI officers across eight regions, analysing performance impacts with SPSS for objective, generalisable results. Qualitative data from open-ended interviews provided deeper insights into experiences and challenges. The sample included 384 respondents (230 DCI officers, 154 civil society representatives and Nyumba Kumi), selected through multistage sampling. Data collecting involved questionnaires, interviews with Regional Criminal Investigations Officers, and focus groups with civil society. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative findings were thematically analysed, offering a comprehensive view of reform effects on DCI performance. The study found that police reforms in Kenya focused on facilities, remuneration, and deployment. DCI performance improved due to ongoing fair recruitment reforms. Crucially, the analysis revealed that while personnel reforms independently influence performance ( $\beta = 0.429$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), their effect is significantly enhanced when complemented by technological reforms ( $\beta = 0.245$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). To improve DCI effectiveness, the government should equitably upgrade facilities nationwide, invest in digital tools for emerging crimes, and institutionalise regular infrastructure audits. Simultaneously, competitive, inclusive remuneration and transparent, skill-based deployment, guided by officer feedback and supported by trained supervisors, are essential for morale, trust, and performance.

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## Introduction

Policing plays pivotal role in upholding law and order, preventing and investigating crime, and safeguarding citizens' rights and freedoms (Prendergast, 2021; Abu & Ben-Porat, 2021). Effective policing depends not only on adequate training and resources but also on public trust and institutional accountability (Meško & Lobnikar, 2021). As societies evolve, governments are increasingly called upon to reform policing institutions to ensure efficiency, adaptability, and respect for human rights



(Adejoh & Lawal, 2022; Kinoti, 2022). However, concerns around police conduct, including excessive use of force, corruption, and rights violations, persist globally and in Kenya. Such incidents erode public trust and legitimacy, leading to civil unrest and weakening societal stability (Aytogo, 2020; Rueda, 2021). Striking a balance between law enforcement and human rights remains a significant challenge, particularly where officers are seen to act outside legal or ethical boundaries (Cowell-Meyers & Gallaher, 2020; Freedman et al., 2022). The Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) in Kenya, while mandated to investigate crimes and protect the public (Monga & Singh, 2020), has faced criticism for actions that contravene these responsibilities (Hoag, 2020).

In response, personnel reforms have emerged as a critical component of broader police transformation efforts. These refer to structured interventions aimed at improving the effectiveness, conduct, and morale of police officers through mechanisms such as merit-based recruitment, targeted training, transparent deployment, improved welfare, fair compensation, and performance management systems. Historically, such reforms have evolved in line with changing social demands and are designed to align police behaviour and outcomes with constitutional and democratic values (Independent Policing Oversight Authority [IPOA], 2024).

Globally, diverse jurisdictions have implemented personnel reform strategies to varying effect. In Finland, measures included regular transfers to reduce monotony, revised pay structures, and improved access to resources; however, the results on performance were mixed (Vuorensyrjä, 2018). Indonesia emphasised performance appraisals and supervisory restructuring, with bureaucracy playing a moderating role (Yunita et al., 2020). In Singapore, higher police salaries were introduced to curb corruption, yet they did not translate into better performance outcomes (Sulardi & Erliyana, 2021). South Africa adopted mass recruitment to improve racial and gender representation while also reforming station-level management (Lamb, 2018). Ghana focused on improving entry-level hiring practices and misconduct resolution, resulting in increased public confidence (Wu & Boateng, 2019). In contrast, Liberia's externally driven reforms struggled due to weak public trust and a lack of local ownership (Islam, 2021). Sierra Leone introduced reforms aimed at officer welfare, including housing and uniforms, alongside organisational restructuring and a shift toward community policing (Albrecht, 2017). In Kenya, personnel reforms have been driven by the 2010 Constitution and operational demands. These reforms have included conduct-based recruitment, intelligence-led training, psychosocial support, and better command structures through the Kenya Police Service Act (Ayers et al., 2020). These efforts seek to enhance professionalism, reduce abuse of power, and align policing with human rights norms (Sagwa, 2021; Ayieko & Gitonga, 2020).

Despite the implementation of numerous personnel reforms in Kenya's law enforcement sector, questions remain regarding their actual impact on institutional performance, particularly within the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI). While broader policing reforms have garnered attention in academic and policy discourse, a notable gap exists in empirical research that focuses specifically on how personnel reforms impact the operational effectiveness, accountability, and service delivery of DCI officers. Moreover, the increasing integration of digital technologies, such as mobile paybill systems, has added a new dimension to law enforcement operations. Yet, the extent to which technology moderates the relationship between personnel reforms and performance outcomes remains underexplored. This study aimed to address that gap by examining the influence of personnel reforms on the performance of DCI officers in Kenya, while analyzing how technology – particularly digital platforms like the e-Citizen Paybill – moderates this relationship. The objectives of this study are to assess the effectiveness of current personnel reforms within the DCI, examine the relationship



between personnel reforms and law enforcement performance, and evaluate the moderating role of technology in enhancing institutional transparency, efficiency, and public trust. The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform evidence-based policy decisions within the security sector. By providing data-driven insights into how reform strategies and digital tools interact, the study contributes to ongoing efforts to modernise law enforcement, strengthen institutional accountability, and improve public confidence in the DCI and related agencies.

### **Study design**

The study employed a mixed-method approach to examine the impact of police personnel reforms on law enforcement performance at Kenya's Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI). Combining qualitative and quantitative methods, it aimed to gain an understanding, using concurrent triangulation to deepen the analysis. Quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires with Likert-scale questions measured the influence of the reforms on DCI performance, enabling statistical analysis for objective and generalizable findings. Qualitative data, gathered through open-ended interview guides, provided in-depth insights into subjective experiences and challenges, enhancing nuance on reform effects. The research design integrated a descriptive survey and an ethnographic approach.

### **Study sites**

The study sites consisted of the DCI offices spread out across the eight regions in Kenya, where the officers are based. These were accessed through their respective Regional and County DCI Officers.

### **Study population**

Data collection targeted 5,383 DCI officers across eight Kenyan regions and over 100,000 civil society (Law Society of Kenya [LSK], Independent Policing Oversight Authority [IPOA], Haki Africa, HRW-Kenya, KNCHR, and *Nyumba Kumi* (community policing initiative) representatives.

### **Sample size and sampling**

A sample of 384 respondents (230 DCI officers for the questionnaire and 154 for the Key Informants and Focus Group Discussion participants) was selected via multistage sampling. The sample was determined using the Krejci and Morgan (1970) sampling table. According to Memon et al. (2020), the table is ideal for calculating the sample size when probability sampling is employed.

### **Research instruments**

Quantitative data collection was conducted through closed-ended questions regarding personnel reforms, technology, and law reforms. Open-ended questions, on the other hand, provided qualitative data with in-depth insights from DCI officers who held positions as Senior Superintendents of Police and below. The study employed an interview guide that combined structured and semi-structured elements to gather data from eight Criminal Investigations Officers who operated at the regional level as police commissioners. The eight Regional Criminal Investigations Officers (RCIOs) command different regions and possess comprehensive knowledge of their respective areas as part of their role as administrators of criminal intelligence information. After interviews, Kothari (2004) indicates that respondents give their responses to questions and share their feedback.

### **Validity and reliability**

A measurement instrument gains construct validity when it accurately reflects the theoretical concepts it is intended to evaluate. The researchers worked toward construct validity by developing proper operational procedures for their tested key elements. A content-valid approach was achieved by having sufficient measurement items in each tested domain to obtain comprehensive feedback that addressed the concerns. The consistency and accuracy of measuring particular concepts and phenomena in research determine reliability (Balwan et al., 2022). This research analysed the internal



reliability of instruments because they employed multi-item scales across multiple constructs (Rasoolimanesh, 2022). Reliability was ensured with Cronbach’s Alpha above 0.7, and validity was assessed through pilot studies.

*Table 1: Reliability Statistics for Quantitative Data*

Item	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Personnel reforms	0.841	10
Technology Reforms	0.779	9
Performance of DCI	0.805	5
Overall reliability	0.821	24

The reliability measures for personnel reforms yielded a Cronbach’s Alpha of  $r=0.841$ , while that of Technology Reforms was 0.779. Cronbach’s Alpha for the effective performance variable reached a value of  $r = 0.805$ , and the overall reliability was 0.821 (**Table 1**). All these were above the Cronbach’s Alpha threshold of 0.7, which meant that the instrumentation was reliable in terms of internal consistency (Barbera et al. 2020).

### Data analysis

Quantitative analysis utilised SPSS for descriptive statistics, including percentages, means, and standard deviations, while qualitative data underwent content analysis to identify themes. Inferential statistics involved correlation and regression analysis, whereby the hypotheses were tested using the p-values. The results were presented in the form of tables and charts.

### Ethical consideration

Ethical approval was obtained from Mount Kenya University, the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, reference number 890773, and the Directorate of Criminal Investigations. The researcher ensured voluntary participation, anonymity, and data integrity. Informed consent was obtained, and all ethical protocols governing research involving human subjects in Kenya were strictly followed throughout the study.

### Results

#### Response rate

The response rate is shown in Table 2.

*Table 2: Response Rate*

Respondents	Research Instruments	Sampled	Responded	Response Rate
DCI Officers	Questionnaires	230	184	80.0
Regional criminal investigations officers	KIIs	8	7	87.5
Civil Society groups (LSK, IPOA, Haki Africa, HRW-Kenya, KNCHR) and Nyumba Kumi members	FGDs	13	8	61.5
Average				76.3

As shown in Table 2, from a sample of 230 DCI officers who completed the questionnaires, a total of 184 questionnaires were returned and confirmed as complete. This translates to an 80% percentage response rate for questionnaires used in collecting quantitative data. The semi-structured interview achieved a response rate of 87.5% from Regional Criminal Investigations Officers (RCIOs). Furthermore, the study conducted eight Focus Group Discussions with Civil Society groups and Nyumba Kumi members from the targeted 13 areas, translating to 61.54%. This finding concurs with the study by Nyumba et al. (2018), who analysed 170 papers published over 20 years (1996-2016) and



found that the median number of FGDs per study was 7. According to Monique and Kaiser (2022), research employing empirical data, especially those with relatively homogeneous study populations, attains saturation within a limited range of interviews (9–17) or focus groups (4–8). The overall average response rate of 76.34% was considered adequate to address the concerns of this study. Generally, a response rate of 70% or higher is considered excellent in surveys (Sataloff & Vontela, 2021).

**Descriptive results**

***Personnel Reforms and Performance in Law Enforcement***

The study focused on exploring the perspectives of respondents regarding the ongoing personnel reforms within the police service. Respondents were presented with a series of statements, each prompting them to express their level of agreement on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

*Table 3: Influence of Personnel Reforms on Performance in Law Enforcement*

Statements (N = 184)	SA f(%)	A f(%)	N f(%)	D f(%)	SD f(%)	Mean	Std Dev
The police recruitment process is fair, with clear guidelines and this has enhanced police work	21(11.4)	63(34.2)	27(14.7)	44(23.9)	29(15.8)	3.02	1.295
There is openness and competitive recruitment in the police service that promotes performance	27(14.7)	67(36.4)	25(13.6)	22(12.0)	43(23.4)	3.07	1.418
The wellbeing of police officers is well taken care of by the state which enhances performance	7(3.8)	31(16.8)	32(17.4)	43(23.4)	71(38.6)	2.24	1.236
There is presence of Counselling and Psychosocial Support in the police service which enhances performance	7(3.8)	54(29.3)	48(26.1)	40(21.7)	35(19.0)	2.77	1.174
There is provision of conducive working conditions improve performance	35(19.0)	94(51.1)	7(3.8)	27(14.7)	21(11.4)	3.52	1.272
Better salaries promote higher performance and dedication	104(56.5)	40(21.7)	33(17.9)	7(3.8)	0(0.0)	4.31	0.897
There is clear procedure for police deployment, and this has enhanced performance	7(3.8)	59(32.1)	27(14.7)	49(26.6)	42(22.8)	2.67	1.247
The deployment of police officers is fairly done, and this has enhanced performance	7(3.8)	47(25.5)	47(25.5)	48(26.1)	35(19.0)	2.69	1.158
There is availability of reliable medical services for the officers which motivates them to perform better	34(18.5)	53(28.8)	27(14.7)	29(15.8)	41(22.3)	3.05	1.295
Post-retirement support for the officers who retire from the Service has been initiated and this has motivated the officers to perform better	8(4.3)	40(21.7)	55(29.9)	33(17.9)	48(26.1)	2.59	1.200
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>2.99</b>	<b>1.219</b>

SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; f = Frequency

The analysis in Table 3 focused on recruitment, welfare, and deployment. Regarding recruitment, respondents moderately agreed that the police recruitment process is fair and guided by clear



procedures (Mean = 3.02, SD = 1.295), and that openness and competitive recruitment practices promote performance (Mean = 3.07, SD = 1.418). While these mean scores are slightly above the midpoint, the relatively high standard deviations reflect variation in opinion. The findings suggest a cautious optimism about reforms in recruitment, but they also reveal inconsistencies in how fairly and competitively these processes are perceived to be implemented across the force.

Welfare-related items showed mixed results. The strongest agreement was with the statement that better salaries promote higher performance and dedication (Mean = 4.31, SD = 0.897), indicating near-universal consensus on the motivational value of improved compensation. Similarly, provision of conducive working conditions was positively rated (Mean = 3.52, SD = 1.272), supporting the view that an enabling work environment enhances performance. However, several welfare indicators recorded lower mean scores. The wellbeing of police officers (Mean = 2.24, SD = 1.236), post-retirement support (Mean = 2.59, SD = 1.200), and counselling and psychosocial support services (Mean = 2.77, SD = 1.174) all reflected dissatisfaction or indifference. Likewise, the availability of reliable medical services was rated moderately (Mean = 3.05, SD = 1.295). These results highlight significant concerns among officers regarding the comprehensiveness of welfare initiatives beyond salaries and basic infrastructure.

Regarding deployment, perceptions were predominantly neutral, with some being negative. The item on clear procedures for police deployment received a mean score of 2.67 (SD = 1.247), while fair deployment of officers scored 2.69 (SD = 1.158), both of which are below the neutral midpoint of 3.0. These results suggest that personnel perceive the deployment process as lacking transparency and consistency, which may contribute to reduced morale and negatively impact service delivery. Concerns about deployment fairness and clarity highlight the need for institutional reforms in how assignments are managed and communicated.

The overall mean score of 2.99 (SD = 1.219) indicates a generally neutral stance on the effectiveness of personnel reforms in enhancing performance. While salary and working conditions stand out as successful reform areas, critical gaps remain in officer welfare—particularly around psychosocial support and post-retirement provisions—as well as in deployment practices. Addressing these gaps could significantly strengthen personnel satisfaction and organisational performance in law enforcement. Qualitative data corroborated these trends as shown in Table 4.



**Table 4: Personnel Reforms on Performance in Law Enforcement**

Theme	Qualitative Evidence	Key Insights/Quotes
Recruitment Fairness & Guidelines	Confirmed by KII 02	<i>"The need for personnel reforms... was to improve fairness in recruitment... turn around the effectiveness of DCI officers"</i>
	Confirmed by KII 02 (10 Sept 2023)	<i>"Fair and open competition in recruitment is a crucial principle... Agencies should continually evaluate their recruitment strategies"</i>
Welfare Reforms	FGD 02 (14 Sept 2023)	<i>"The livelihood of police officers is not rightly checked... receiving bribes... makes them suffer psychologically"</i>
	KII 04 (14 Sept 2023)	<i>"We had realised so many gaps around the welfare and psychosocial support for officers..."</i>
Counselling & Psychosocial Support Working Conditions	KI 01 (20 Sept 2023)	<i>"Counselling services... significantly impact employee satisfaction... officers learn healthy coping mechanisms..."</i>
	KII 04 (14 Sept 2023)	<i>"We have improved working conditions... at least one has a working table..."</i>
	FGD 01 (14 Sept 2023)	<i>"Officers work shifts which has enhanced their attendance and organisation..."</i>
Digital Forensic Lab (DFL)	KI 05 (12 Sept 2023)	<i>"Seizing, acquiring, and analysing electronic devices... ensures justice and upholds the rule of law"</i>
Resistance to Reforms	KII 04 (14 Sept 2023)	<i>"Reforms hardly felt by officers due to unclear guidelines on how they will benefit..."</i>
	KI 02 (10 Sept 2023)	<i>"Officers may not appreciate reforms especially if it is not felt in their pockets"</i>

Respondents praised fairer recruitment processes and better work environments, but criticised inconsistent welfare support. Counselling services were seen as beneficial but underutilised, while salary adjustments significantly boosted morale and performance. The newly introduced Digital Forensic Lab (DFL) was also cited as critical infrastructure supporting effective investigation and job satisfaction.

**Regression analysis**

Regression analysis was performed to determine whether personnel reforms significantly influenced performance in law enforcement among DCI officers in Kenya (Table 5).

**Table 5: Regression Model of Personnel Reforms on Performance of DCI Officers**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
Summary	.465a	0.216	0.212	0.81691		
ANOVA		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	33.507	1	33.507	50.21	.000b
	Residual	121.455	182	0.667		
	Total	154.962	183			
Coefficients		Unstandardised Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	(Constant)	2.259	0.215	Beta	10.513	0.000
	Personnel Reforms	0.488	0.069	0.465	7.086	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Performance of DCI Officers

b Predictors: (Constant), Personnel Reforms

The regression results reveal a statistically significant and moderately positive relationship between personnel reforms and the performance of DCI officers. With an R value of 0.465, the findings suggest a moderate correlation. In contrast, the R-squared value of 0.216 indicates that personnel reforms



explain approximately 21.6% of the variation in performance among DCI officers. The model is statistically significant, as evidenced by the F-statistic ( $F = 50.21, p < .001$ ), confirming the model's explanatory power. The standardised coefficient (Beta = 0.465) further underscores the strength of the positive association between personnel reforms and officer performance. The coefficient for personnel reforms ( $B = 0.488, p < .001$ ) indicates that for each unit increase in personnel reform efforts, such as improvements in recruitment, training, and welfare, there is a corresponding increase of 0.488 units in performance scores. These results provide empirical support for the hypothesis that strategic and well-structured personnel reforms enhance operational effectiveness, responsiveness, and professionalism among DCI officers in Kenya.

### **Discussion**

The regression results indicate that personnel reforms have a significant impact on the performance of DCI officers in Kenya. This finding supports Kapur's (2020) argument that effective recruitment and human capital development are foundational to institutional performance. The positive influence of fair recruitment, better working conditions, and improved remuneration aligns with ILO (2019) and Article 232 of the Kenyan Constitution, both of which underscore transparency and merit in public service. This is further affirmed by Herzberg's two-factor theory (Ldama & Nasiru, 2020; Nagaraju & Pooja, 2017), which identifies equitable pay and conducive work environments as critical to motivation. Moreover, while counselling services were seen as impactful, their underutilisation echoes Dos Santos et al. (2021) and Nderu et al. (2024), who found that police culture—steeped in masculinity and "warrior ethos" (Skopp et al., 2012; O'Neil, 2008)—often impedes the uptake of psychosocial support. Addressing such cultural barriers is thus essential for personnel reforms to reach full effectiveness.

The study further reveals that technological reforms independently and significantly enhance DCI performance, aligning with the global literature on technology's transformative role in law enforcement. Mastrobuoni (2020), Abbas and Policek (2021), and Abdulhabib and Al-Dhaafri (2018) argue that well-equipped police units—bolstered by forensic, surveillance, and communication technologies—are more efficient and credible. The introduction of the Digital Forensic Lab (DCI, 2020) exemplifies how modern infrastructure can elevate case resolution and investigative success.

### **Triangulated synthesis of the results**

Fairness and transparency in hiring had a Mean ranging around 3.0 ("open competition" = 3.07; "fair recruitment" = 3.02); slightly above neutral, but with significant standard deviations indicating a mixed experience. The response from KII-02 was: "Open and fair competition is essential, but practice varies." This showed a partial convergence. While there is considerable variation among units, many officers have noticed improvements. Thus, to lessen the perception of favouritism, it is crucial to standardise hiring practices and conduct yearly compliance audits. On pay and fundamental working conditions, "Better salaries promote performance" is the highest item among the 18 statements (Mean = 4.31; SD = 0.90). "Working conditions that are conducive" Mean: 3.52. As per KII-04 & FGD-01: "The shift system has raised morale and better desks", showing that both agree with the finding.

On capacity building, "Building technical capacity", the Mean is 3.45, but 22.8 per cent disagree. As per KI 03: "We need to keep upskilling officers", indicating convergence on the issue. Training is beneficial, but coverage varies. Develop e-learning portals and establish a continuous digital skills CPD programme institutionally. On performance, the overall mean score of 3.72 indicates a positive overall perception of performance (DCI). Teamwork and service quality rank highest at 3.83 and 3.82, respectively. Responsiveness is modest at 3.49. Qualitative narratives highlight teamwork and professionalism, while also pointing out persistent delays in certain areas. This indicates convergence



of the views. While professionalism has improved due to reforms, timeliness remains uneven. This calls for the redesign of dispatch procedures and the implementation of response time KPIs.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings from this study underscore the transformative potential of personnel reforms in enhancing the performance of officers within the Directorate of Criminal Investigations. Improvements in recruitment fairness, salary structures, working conditions, and welfare initiatives were observed to contribute to morale and professionalism positively. However, certain aspects, such as deployment transparency and psychosocial support, remain weak points, limiting the overall impact of these reforms. Crucially, the analysis revealed that while personnel reforms have an independent influence on performance, their effect is significantly enhanced when complemented by technological reforms.

To maximise impact, personnel reforms should be systematically aligned with technological upgrades. Adequate digital tools and platforms must support improvements in recruitment, welfare, and deployment. This synergy will enhance responsiveness, professionalism, and service delivery. The DCI should adopt a coordinated reform framework that ensures investments in human capital are reinforced by modern technologies, creating a well-equipped, motivated, and high-performing law enforcement agency.

The government should prioritise the equitable distribution of technological resources across all DCI units. This includes modern forensic tools, communication systems, and data management platforms. By reducing disparities in technological access, particularly in underserved regions, the effectiveness of personnel reforms can be fully realised. Ensuring that all officers have access to up-to-date tools will standardise performance levels and improve the overall efficiency and accountability of the DCI nationwide.

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