

The Perils and Fatalities: A Deep dive into the Killings of JMPD Officers

Rakgetse John Mokwena ¹, Mpho Maboja ², Maseeng Patricia Maphaka ³

^{1,2,3} University of South Africa, South Africa.

Corresponding author: mokwerj@unisa.ac.za

© Authour(s)

OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development, Ontario International Development Agency, Canada.

ISSN 1923-6654 (print) ISSN 1923-6662 (online) www.oidaijsd.com

Also available at <https://www.ssm.com/index.cfm/en/oida-intl-journal-sustainable-dev/>

Abstract: An assault on the police is a direct attack on the state, and action must be taken against individuals who perpetrate this crime, which is equal to treason (Mashatile, 2024). The Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) is one of the largest police departments in South Africa. This article aimed to explore police killings in the JMPD and to identify the causal factors and challenges correlated to these killings. A qualitative research approach was embraced in this article and the target population was the metro police officers. The article design was a case study design with a focus on the outcomes of the empirical research. The main findings were as follows: the factors that contributed to the killings were conversed; the reasons for the killing of police officers were identified; and the factors contributing to the police killings in this area. The results of the qualitative research showed that police officers are subjected to continuous risks, stress, and threats from violent offenders that jeopardize their safety. It was further indicated that the lack of service delivery in the provision of CCTVs, poorly lit streets, and consistent load shedding presented dangers and threats to the lives of police officials as criminality thrives mostly in darkness. It is imperative that the police department and police management should undertake the following measures for both organizational development and improved performance by their employees (i.e., police officers). This technology implementation may assist in increasing police officers' safety, public safety, improved crime prevention, and increased accountability.

Keywords: accident; crime; Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department; killings; police; road accident; robbery; violence.

Introduction

The persistently high rate of police fatalities in South Africa has become one of the most concerning issues for law enforcement agencies (South African Police Union/ SAPU, 2019, South Africa Police Service/SAPS, 2020:1). These deaths occur amid the constant dangers and pressures that officers face, including the ongoing threat of daily attacks from violent criminals (Bruce, 2016:7; Kwinika, 2019:1). In a particular case, Luvhengo (2024:n.p.) reported that two JMPD officers were injured following a shootout with suspects in an armed robbery at a spaza shop on Cornelius and Delvers streets in Marshalltown. The JMPD officer was assaulted after the suspects were apprehended in Bloubostrand, Randburg. The Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) issued a statement expressing concern over violent assaults and attacks on officers, condemning these acts of violence against law enforcement officers performing their duties. The department praised the courage of its members for their quick response. The JMPD also stated that the attacks on police highlight the daily risks officers face and, as a department, they remain committed to serving and protecting the citizens of Johannesburg, undeterred by such senseless aggression (Fihla, 2024:1).

The murder of police officers is perceived as a silent conflict against both law enforcement and the community, as officers are intended to serve and protect the public. As a result, public safety is compromised when officers are targeted (Madzivhandila, 2019:43). At a gathering held at the Union Buildings on 3 September 2023 to remember fallen officers, President Ramaphosa stressed the importance of ending police killings and urged the public to collaborate with the police to combat crimes against them (SAPS, 2023:1). In September 2024, a year later, at a ceremony dedicated to remembering fallen police officers, Deputy President Paul Mashatile highlighted that from April 2023 to March 2024, 39 police officers were killed while performing their duties, compared to 34 in the prior year. He further stated that since 2021, 140 officers have been honored for their deaths due to criminal acts while on duty. "An attack on the SAPS is a direct offense against the state and action must be taken against those

who commit this crime, which is tantamount to treason"(Mashatile, 2024). According to the JMPD New Deaths System (2023: n.p.), 40 police officers were killed from 2017 to 2023, of which 10 were on duty and 30 were off duty, with 35 males and 5 females among them. The victims included an inspector, though the majority were less experienced constables, particularly recruits and newly qualified officers, often described as 'foot soldiers' patrolling the streets (Pijoos, 2020:25). These junior officers are more susceptible to danger in contrast to those who are office-based or holding higher ranks. Despite repeated appeals to stop the killings of metropolitan police officials, many drivers and members of the public continue to disregard law and order, which could weaken public trust in law enforcement and the upholding of order (Longley, 2020:1; Bruce, 2016:8).

In this article, a qualitative approach was adopted to investigate police killings in the JMPD and to identify the causal factors and challenges linked to these killings.

Research Methodology

A qualitative research approach was pursued in this article and the target population was the JMPD police officers. A case study design was employed and the JMPD was utilized as a case and reference point for inductively understanding a specific situation or case. Purposive sampling was used to select the thirty-two participants from the JMPD, the thirty-two participants consisted of the Directors who worked directly and closely with the JMPD police officers who were killed in their respective units and the JMPD police officers who specifically witnessed the killings or worked with the victims. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all the participants in this article. The article used an empirical design, in which the JMPD members were the participants.

Theoretical and conceptual background

In this section, the focus is on the theoretical background of JMPD, the causes of the police killings in JMPD, and the factors behind the police killings in JMPD.

Background of the JMPD

In 1854, the Municipal Police Services (MPS) were formed in South Africa to oversee townships, originally referred to as traffic departments. Teams of men fulfilled roles as guards and policemen, focusing mainly on protecting government buildings and addressing violent crimes. These units frequently functioned as paramilitary groups, with armed members funded by municipal governments. (Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Policing (PPCP), 2019:1); Mpulu, Motloutse & Namudi-Mashego, 2022:7).

In the year 2000, the service was transitioned to Metropolitan Police Departments (MPDs), according to the directive of the South African Police Service (SAPS) Act, ACT 68 of 1995. MPDs are responsible for managing traffic, enforcing by-laws, and preventing crime. Although Metropolitan Police Officers (MPOs) carry weapons and share similar authority with SAPS officers, their role in criminal investigations is limited to patrolling, conducting searches, and making arrests (Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Policing/ PPCP, 2019:1).

In most urban areas, MPOs tend to be more noticeable than SAPS officers. The Durban Metropolitan Police Department (DMPD) was the first municipal police service formed in December 2000, with the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) following in March 2001. Other major cities such as Cape Town, Ekurhuleni, Nelson Mandela Bay, and Tshwane have also established MPDs. The JMPD, EMPD, and TMPD are all located in Gauteng Province. The establishment of these MPDs was driven by the need for increased crime prevention and control responsibilities in major cities (Mpulu et al., 2022:7). Launched in March 2001, the JMPD was the second MPD in Gauteng Province, once known as a municipal police service. It functions under the SAPS Amendment Act (No. 68 of 1995), with a focus on traffic monitoring, by-law compliance, and crime deterrence. However, it lacks the power to conduct criminal investigations (PPCP, 2019:n.p.). The JMPD is organized into seven units: the academy, auxiliary services, by-law management, fines and administration, internal affairs, regional operations, and specialized services.

Factors that contribute to the police killings in the JMPD

In South Africa, the police encounter continuous risks, stress, and threats from violent offenders that jeopardize their safety. They are exposed to danger, leading to loss of life. This section explores the factors that lead to the deaths of police officers.

Road accidents: Bruce (2016: 3) and Solomons (2022:1) illuminate that vehicle accidents are a significant cause of fatalities among police personnel, and most police officers lost their lives due to motor vehicle accidents in the line of duty. In one incident, a drunk driver crashed into three (3) JMPD police officers whilst on duty busy recording an

accident and directing traffic at the intersection of Eden Cuyler Drive and Soweto Highway in Noordgesig, the driver further crashed into two (2) bystanders who were assisting the officers at the site (Ramush, 2023:2). These scenarios can be fatal, particularly when directing traffic in high-speed areas or on congested roads, where some motorists might be impatient or under the influence of alcohol/drugs, trying to rush through (Dlamini: 2023:1). The former JMPD Chief David Tembe noted in his presentation that since the establishment of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) in 2001, approximately 40 officers have died while on duty (Chantelle, 2018:16). The Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) (2023:1) indicated in its report on corruption within the Police Organization that 19 police deaths were the result of road accidents during the financial years 2017 to 2023. Former Mayor of Johannesburg, Mr. Mashaba, highlighted that the murder of police officers continues to be a significant concern in the city, largely due to drivers who disregard traffic regulations and law enforcement (City of Johannesburg (CoJ), 2018b). Although fatalities in vehicular accidents have declined recently, the management of JMPD should focus on resolving the problem of police killings happening in the city (CoJ, 2018a). In contrast, Siso (2022:9) mentioned that sometimes police officers get distracted and lose concentration as they spend a lot of time on their phones instead of staying alert to possible risks (Siso, 2022:9).

Police corruption: The primary role of the police is to enforce the law and maintain peace. However, corruption within the police force, often involving collaboration with criminals, has become a significant issue. Former President Thabo Mbeki highlighted this concern in September 2019, noting that organized crime has contributed to the increase in police killings (Kwinika, 2019:3). Aggressive behaviour from criminal gangs and excessive force from corrupt officers exacerbate tensions and casualties. Minnar (2003:6) and Pijoos (2020:6) indicate that police corruption often leads to police killings. Corrupt officers may conspire to eliminate colleagues who discover their illicit activities. Poor training further contributes to harassment, extortion, and brutality among officers seeking bribes (Pijoos, 2020:6). Public trust in law enforcement diminishes due to perceived corruption, straining community relations (Salame, 2020:37-43). Factors that contribute to police corruption include societal pressure, low wages, abuse of power, lack of ethics, and political influence. Political appointees unfamiliar with the police force exacerbate these issues (Salame, 2020:37-43; Yesufu, 2014:12). Yesufu (2014:12) emphasizes that low salaries lead to diminished morale and increased corruption. Adequate compensation could reduce the inclination to solicit bribes, but public complicity in offering bribes also needs to be addressed.

The South African Police Union (SAPU, 2019:13) notes that poor management, favoritism, and bribery in the recruitment process contribute to police killings. Combating corruption requires promoting human rights, independent oversight, and accountability. Effective mechanisms for investigating corruption and police violence are crucial to ensuring justice.

Inadequate Police Training: Inadequate and insufficient specialized training have been identified as key factors contributing to police killings (Minnar, 2003:7). Training and development are crucial elements of the police organization. Proper training is essential for law enforcement officers to make informed decisions and de-escalate situations, particularly under high-pressure conditions. Retraining and refresher courses further enhance the skills and knowledge of police officials (Zinn & Dintwe, 2015:24). Continuous training allows less experienced police officers to improve their performance, develop skills, and take charge of their development. According to Kwinika (2019:1), inadequate firearm training and safeguarding during arrests contribute to police killings. Continuous firearm handling training should be part of on-the-job training, as officers are often killed due to improper handling of firearms during arrests or at crime scenes. Firearm training should be mandatory and executed with skill and experience.

Zill (2022:25-37) posits that insufficient training leads to a significant number of police killings. Police departments should equip their officers with the knowledge and skills necessary to handle firearms safely and effectively. Without proper training, officers can approach situations with undue authority and force, which can cause severe injury even death. DeAngelis (2021:2) and Zill (2022:25-37) assert that police procedures and training techniques can skew officers' perceptions of potential risks on duty. Bruce (2002:16) posits that tactical training could help address the challenge of police being reckless and reacting violently when responding to complaints. Solving this problem requires a comprehensive strategy involving all parts of society to ensure openness, accountability, adequate training, and improved working conditions for police officers. Inappropriate training and supervision, inadequate equipment and resources, and poor coordination between departments can contribute to police killings. Without training opportunities, officers might experience poor performance due to stagnation and lack of fulfilment (Zill, 2022:25-37). Additionally, law enforcement must possess strong communication abilities to foster positive connections with the public, calm tense situations, and resolve disputes. DeAngelis (2021:2) asserts

that police agencies should allocate resources to training initiatives focused on communication and conflict resolution to minimize the chances of fatal encounters.

Lack of Equipment and Resources: Conradie (2001:3) argues that insufficient equipment significantly contributes to police fatalities. Officers often report not wearing bulletproof vests because they are not provided with one, highlighting a critical gap in protective gear. A major issue within the police force is the lack of vehicles, which hampers timely responses to crime scenes. Officers sometimes have to wait for colleagues to return with vehicles due to this shortage, affecting their ability to respond effectively to complaints. Police department management has the responsibility to ensure that officers have the necessary equipment. Kwinika (2019:3) suggests that wearing bulletproof vests could have prevented some police killings. However, officers notice the absence of protective vests, and some complain that the vests are too heavy, cumbersome, and uncomfortable. Officers must wear bulletproof vests while on duty to reduce the risk of gunfire harm, ensuring that their families receive support in the event of injury or death (Perkins, 2018:163). Adequate resources and equipment must always be available so that officers can perform their duties effectively. Having the right equipment, such as bulletproof vests, communication tools, and firearms, could improve officers' capacity to protect both the public and themselves. Ensuring that officers are well-equipped is crucial for their safety and operational duties.

Peer Pressure between Law Enforcement Officials and Negligence:

Peer pressure is a common occurrence in various areas of life, including law enforcement. Violanti, Slaven, Charles, Burchfiel, Andrew and Homish (2011:346) note that many police officers succumb to peer pressure from their coworkers, risking misconduct to "fit in" with their peers. This often involves colleagues urging each other to attend social gatherings or have drinks after long work hours, which can become a regular practice. Officers often bond and reinforce their values over drinks, typically gathering at a local bar after work. The primary reason that places officers at risk of alcohol misuse is the desire to 'fit in' within the group. Kargin (2011:1) highlights the serious implications of peer pressure among police officers, as reported by several law enforcement agencies. Officers are expected to enforce the law and maintain high ethical and moral standards (Krieger, Chen, Waterman, Kiang, & Feldman, 2015:135). However, there is an unspoken expectation that officers should remain silent about illegal or unethical acts by colleagues, including significant criminal offenses (Kargin, 2011:3). The urge to remain loyal to the group, even in the face of wrongdoing, can be strong and difficult to resist, leading officers to engage in behaviors that contradict these high standards.

Although peer pressure among officers presents a significant challenge, it can be managed through strong policies and practices that emphasize ethical behavior, transparency, and accountability (Joubert, 2018:20). Establishing a robust code of ethics and behavior that emphasizes transparency, accountability, and responsibility is essential to combat peer pressure within the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD). Kargin (2011:1) proposes creating a strong peer support program that provides counselling and resources to officers facing peer pressure and other work-related challenges. Additionally, promoting and rewarding officers who uphold ethical standards and report misconduct could help minimize corruption among officers.

Poor Service Delivery: Inadequate service delivery and extended response times significantly contribute to police fatalities (Minnar, 2003:8). Staff and equipment shortages, particularly the persistent lack of vehicles, hinder the effectiveness of the police. Although some officers patrol on foot, vehicles are essential to respond quickly to emergencies. Prolonged power outages due to load reduction further exacerbate poor service delivery. Nwakanma (2015:55-59) notes that society holds the police responsible when complaints are not addressed promptly, leading to severe situations and potentially fatal confrontations between police and community members. Furthermore, insufficient services such as healthcare, education and job opportunities can lead to frustration and increased crime rates (Ahsan, 2016:43). Bruce (2016:7) highlights that many police officers killed on duty were responding to armed robberies and domestic violence incidents.

Police may delay responding to complaints due to safety concerns, taking extra time to verify the legitimacy of calls. Equipment shortages, particularly vehicles, result in late arrivals at crime scenes, often leading to hostility from communities during mob attacks and riot responses. Noxhaka (2019:49) mentions that immigration from other African nations to South Africa in search of employment is also perceived as a factor in police killings. Johannesburg faces numerous challenges, including poor service delivery and dwindling resources due to overpopulation, increasing the likelihood of crime and violence (CoJ, 2019a:1). To manage situations in areas affected by inadequate services, police officers need adequate training and support. Poor service delivery can lead to confrontations between police and community members (JMPD, 2023:n.p.). Police officers often bear the brunt of public frustration, especially if viewed as symbols of an unfair system. Government and community collaboration is

critical to addressing the root causes of crime and violence. Reducing socioeconomic disparities and crime rates may require investment in basic services such as water, food, education, housing, energy, healthcare and security.

High Crime Rate: Noxhaka (2019:94) asserts that poverty drives police officers to the brink of committing crimes, such as demanding bribes from motorists, and high unemployment, inequality, and substance abuse enable criminals to rob police officers of their firearms for further criminal acts. Poverty and high unemployment are significant contributing factors to police killings. Many perpetrators of police killings move to big cities like Johannesburg seeking better opportunities or entering the private sector. During their job search, some police officers may engage in criminal activities, as seen in Randfontein, where police officers and soldiers were killed during a cash-in-transit heist (African News Agency, 2018:1). Firearms are valuable targets for criminals, either for use in further crimes or for sale on the black market.

Most police personnel are killed off duty rather than on duty. Officers often frequent unsafe places with firearms, such as shebeens, pubs, and taverns, which contributes to their deaths (Minnar, 2003:7). Conradie (2001:2) argues that, while criminals target police officers for their firearms, this is not always the primary reason for police killings. Officers are often killed on the street, in police stations and at home, as they are well known in their communities as law enforcement officers. For example, two JMPD officers were robbed of their firearms and killed during a robbery (JMPD Death System, 2023), highlighting the risks officers faced, especially in townships.

Bruce (2002:16) states that many police killings result from disputes or arguments with killers, family members, and others. Criminals aim to disarm police officers with their service weapons to commit further crimes. Bruce (2016:8) notes that when police officers are killed off duty, they are often crime victims due to their vulnerability at the time of death. Off-duty conduct, such as visiting unsafe places and being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, also contributes to their deaths. Although robbery may contribute to police deaths, other factors, such as responding to dangerous situations, pursuing suspects, or being targeted for their law enforcement role, also play a role. It is crucial to treat each case individually and to avoid generalizing the reasons for police killings.

Use of Excessive Force and Police Brutality: Perkins (2018:216) highlights that violence is often used as an immediate reaction to threats, potentially leading to police killings. Groups such as the Tactical Response Team (TRT) use persistent violence to instil fear and gain respect from criminals during arrests. Perkins (2018:216) and Bruce (2002:15) note that police often escalate violence by rapidly shooting upon arriving at crime scenes, suggesting that officers should approach active crime scenes with more caution. Zunno and Lester (1982:6) also verified that police apply maximum force sooner than necessary. Offenders may strike back or resort to violence against the police in self-defense. Former Minister Bheki Cele identified South Africa as the most violent country, with 5,876 cases of murder (Gifford, 2021:n.p.). Instances where officers use force unlawfully can endanger their colleagues' lives, as suspects can fear mistreatment or fatal consequences if they surrender. Noxhaka (2019:97) states that police shootings often involve violent confrontations between criminals and their victims. Bruce (2002:15) found that many individuals who killed police officers did so to obtain their service firearms.

In certain scenarios, corrupt officers may use violence and excessive force to protect their illegal dealings and silence potential informants. Kent (2010:3-23) suggests that high crime rates and disorder can lead to violence targeting the police. In contrast, Bruce (2020:3) contends that a lack of accountability contributes to police brutality. Police killings can be attributed to urban issues such as violent crime and structural elements that promote crime. For example, a JMPD officer was killed in a road rage incident in Braamfischerville, Soweto, demonstrating the perilous environment in which police operate (Bhengu, 2022:1). Salame (2020:38) notes that police brutality also plays a role in police killings, as excessive force during arrests can lead to retaliation or self-defense by those targeted. Police work is a high-stress occupation that involves potentially dangerous situations, such as intervening in ongoing crimes and apprehending lawbreakers. Minnar (2003:5) found that police confrontations with civilians occur in 5% of incidents, with 1.5% occurring in licensed venues like shebeens and taverns. It is crucial to implement measures that hold police officers accountable for their conduct in violent incidents, ensuring investigations and justice for victims and their families.

South Africa is recognized for having one of the highest rates in the world of deaths related to police. The nation's violent crime crisis predominantly drives these fatalities, but police misconduct and corruption are also significant contributors (Yesufu, 2022:23). Bruce (2020:4) suggests that improving police accountability could help address the issue of police brutality. In South Africa, law enforcement officers frequently use excessive force without facing consequences and are expected to provide detailed reports on any situation involving the use of force. Police misconduct is a key factor contributing to the number of police deaths (Bruce, 2020:14; Yesufu, 2022:23). Officers often overstep their authority during arrests, leading to instances of brutality. Strengthening the Independent

Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) could help control police misconduct by holding officers accountable for their actions. Police misconduct is perceived as one of the leading causes of police-related fatalities.

Yesufu (2022:23) identifies several factors contributing to the rise in police brutality in South Africa, including inadequate training, poor leadership, criminal elements within the force, non-compliance with legal frameworks, and failure to follow internal disciplinary procedures. Police officers are dying both on duty and off duty due to inadequate policing, in part because of a lack of essential resources like backup vehicles. Incidents of peer-to-peer brutality can undermine trust between the public and law enforcement, hindering the ability of officers to perform their duties effectively (Van Zyl-Gous, 2019:20). The trust between law enforcement and the community has eroded, and citizens often perceive the police as adversaries. It is imperative that the government addresses the issues of police misconduct and related deaths by empowering IPID, establishing a national task force for police reform, and launching comprehensive investigations into officer misconduct. Furthermore, Van Zyl-Gous (2019:20) suggests addressing public concerns such as poverty, inequality, and limited access to quality education and healthcare, which contribute to increased crime and violence in the country.

Promoting community policing forum initiatives that advocate for equity and openness from the police department is vital. Most police officers in South Africa have been killed due to violent crimes compared to the United States (US). Kwinika (2019:4) states that most of the respondents admitted to attacking police to evade arrest, free detainees or seize the officer's firearm, placing South Africa among the countries with the highest incidence of violent crimes globally.

Occupational stress, Anger and Revenge: Police officers often face more traumatic, stressful, and unsettling work environments than individuals in other professions (Violanti et al., 2011:346). They risk being attacked, injured, or killed by the very society they aim to protect, contributing to their overall job stress. Officers must interact with hostile members of the public, manage conflict situations, apprehend violent criminals, and navigate daily political pressures. Bruce (2016:7) agrees with Violanti et al. (2011:346) that police personnel regularly encounter dangerous criminals and operate in a violent society. Trust issues between police and the community further exacerbate these challenges. Compared to other professions, the occupational exposures of law enforcement officers are consistently considered more stressful (Violanti et al., 2011:346). Trauma is a constant aspect of police work, and officers respond to fatal incidents, criminal activities, child abuse, homicides, suicides, and sexual assault, exposing them to numerous potential traumatic triggers. Ongoing job stress and trauma can increase the risk of developing alcoholism among police officers, as highlighted in the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted Report/LEOKA (2010:n.p.).

Husain and Faize (2018:29) recognize workplace interactions as a major stressor for police officers. Berg, Hem, Lau and Ekeberg (2006:2) note that while policing may not be extremely stressful, it can contribute to psychological distress. Work-related mental disorders are especially prevalent among police officers compared to other professions. Research also identifies work-life balance as an additional stress source, particularly for married officers struggling to juggle professional and family commitments (Zhao, He, Lovrich, & Cancino, 2003:3-46). Violanti et al. (2011:346) agree that the impacts of work and personal life significantly affect the performance of an officer. While on duty, police officers face life-threatening scenarios, witness acts of violence, and are subject to constant time pressure to make rapid decisions. Extended hours, shift work, and increased vigilance further add to their cumulative stress levels. It is crucial to prioritize and improve the mental health support available to police officers to help them manage these stresses effectively.

Revenge is often cited as a reason for police deaths, particularly in situations where officers have been previously attacked or harmed by individuals or groups. Police fatalities are also linked to love triangles, especially when one partner betrays the other, leading to misunderstandings and revenge (Noxhaka, 2019:98). Police fatalities may also be the result of mistreatment, humiliation, or social rejection. Additionally, officers may hold grudges against the justice system, which can affect their relationships with colleagues, family, friends, and society at large (Noxhaka, 2019:98). Officers are often disheartened when they arrest dangerous offenders, only to see them released shortly after due to unforeseen circumstances. This can motivate officers who feel wronged by the justice system or society to seek revenge. Bruce (2002:15) notes that hostility towards the police, often fueled by community hatred and anger, can lead to police fatalities. This hostility is sometimes linked to the role of police in perpetuating discrimination, prompting retaliation from the community (Clarke, 2021:13).

Political motives for police killings cannot be ignored, as the public retains negative perceptions of the police due to historical events, such as the actions of apartheid police before 1994. Resisting or retaliating against

arrest can lead officers to use excessive force or behave aggressively. To mitigate violence against police, it is essential to build positive relationships with communities, fostering trust and confidence.

Findings and Discussion

Road accidents: As outlined by Bruce (2016:3) and Solomons (2022:1) vehicle accidents are a dominant factor contributing to the deaths of JMPD police officers. Human error factors were to blame for 73.6% of fatal road accidents, while vehicle factors were responsible for 14.1%, and environmental and road elements contributed to only 12.3% of these accidents (Nkosi, 2023:77). These road accidents were fuelled by a lack of respect from the motorist and the drivers who are driving recklessly and driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Police corruption: Corruption is a significant factor contributing to police brutality and killings in South Africa. Minnar (2003:6) and Pijoos (2020:6) mentioned that the involvement of police in corruption with criminals contributes to police killings. Public trust erodes due to police corruption, viewed as a cause of police killings, leading to strained relations between law enforcement and the community (Salame, 2020:37-43). The empirical data revealed that corruption is also the cause of police killings. Highlighting corruption and corruptibility as other contributing factors to JMPD police killings.

Inadequate police training: Minnar (2003:7) echoed that police officers were killed as a result of a variety of reasons, including inadequate training, incorrect training, or even the lack of specialized training. Lack of training has played a pivotal role in the increasingly violent crimes against the JMPD officers, which depicts the City of Johannesburg as an unregulated and lawless city (Clarke, 2021:2). Many participants alluded to the lack of training and resources as contributory factors to challenges that ultimately link to JMPD police's work-related death.

High crime rate: The police officers fear for their lives when conducting their duties, which even magnifies the general community's state of safety and risk (Perkins, 2018:216). The empirical data from the participants revealed that most of the police officials are killed as a result of the high crime rate to the extent that some participants mentioned that they feared for their lives when responding to complaints and carrying out their duties mainly due to the high levels of crime.

Use of excessive force by the police: Perkins (2018:216) highlights that violence is often used as an immediate reaction to threats, potentially leading to police killings. Perkins (2018:216) and Bruce (2002:15) note that police often escalate violence by rapidly shooting upon arriving at crime scenes, suggesting that officers should approach active crime scenes with more caution. Corrupt officers may use violence and excessive force to protect their illegal dealings and silence potential informants. Kent (2010:3-23) suggests that high crime rates and disorder can lead to violence targeting the police. The use of excessive force could result in retaliatory measures by offenders/ suspects that could ultimately result in the spate of JMPD police officials' deaths.

Peer Pressure between Law Enforcement Officials and Negligence: Bruce (2016:16) affirms that police officers' conduct both on and off duty has a direct link to their safety and exposure to the threat of violence and brutal killings. Similarly, the findings in this article indicated that the police officers' own negligence was a cause for concern. It was further indicated that the reckless and irresponsible behaviour of off-duty police officers was found to be an influential factor behind police killings in JMPD.

Occupational stress, anger, and revenge: Police officers are exposed to occupational stress that can lead to factors such as frustration, poor concentration, anger, and depression (Violanti et al., 2011:346). Empirical data revealed that the JMPD officials are exposed to stress in their workplace due to an unpleasant working environment, which has a negative impact on their personal lives as well.

Recommendations

The reduction and prevention of police killings is an indispensable requirement for both the maintenance of law and order, as well as the restoration of the public's trust in the capacity of the police to protect them, their lives, and their property (Carter & Fox, 2018:16; Cheema, 2016:489). It is strongly recommended that the JMPD and police management should undertake the following measures for both organizational development and improved performance by their employees (i.e., police officers):

- Provide the JMPD police officers with proper equipment and technology such as geographical information systems, vehicles installed with cameras, in-car electronic ticketing, body-worn cameras, wireless ear pods communication devices, hand-held scanners, virtual training, intelligent policing, morpho fingerprint biometric sensors, and digital intelligence. This technology implementation may assist the police

department in increasing police officers' safety, public safety, improved crime prevention, and increased accountability.

- Provide the police and JMPD officers with regular opportunities for in-service training more often to acquire knowledge and skills. Such training should entail:
 - control and handling of firearms, alternatives to deadly force, and safe responses to crises.
 - de-escalation strategies involving the use of minimum force and taking precautionary measures when responding to active crime scenes;
 - inculcation of self-control and self-discipline for dignified behaviour that does not bring discredit to themselves and their organization on, and off duty, and also being discreet in their social behaviour and public appearances.
- Initiate processes for amending the Constitution to include implementation of harsher sentences, such as life imprisonment for police killers to deter reoccurrence.
- Review internal policies and procedures to ensure the implementation of proper safety measures and procedures that will increase the safety of the police officers.

Establishing more effective policies and regulations could minimize the irregularities that might have been identified in the present police training strategies. Policy modifications, training improvements, and other measures could alleviate the prevalence of police violence by evaluating the data concerning the magnitude of officers who have been victims of police killings (South African Policing Union/ SAPU, 2019:12).

Conclusion

There is a critical need for action to address the alarming rate of police killings within the JMPD. The on-duty fatalities are caused by road accidents, high crime rates, inadequate training, and lack of resources. Off-duty fatalities are caused by robbery, domestic violence, socializing in unsafe places and other contributing factors as discussed above. South Africa should address the escalation of the high number of police killings to maintain law and order. The killing of police officials is a violation of law and order.

Reference

- African News Agency. (2018). Cash heist shoot-out. *Pretoria News*, 7 June.
- Ahsan, T. (2016). Robert K Merton's theory of anomie and crime in Bangladeshi Society. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/27683873/Robert_K_Mertons_Theory_of_Anomie_and_Crime_in_Bangladeshi_Society. [Accessed on 11 September 2022].
- Berg, A.M., Hem, E., Lau, B. & Ekeberg, Ø. (2006). An exploration of job stress and health in the Norwegian police service: a cross-sectional study. *Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology*, 1(1): 1-9. Available from: <https://occup-med.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1745-6673-1-26>. [Accessed on 12 September 2022].
- Bhengu, C. (2022). Taxi patroller hands himself to police after allegedly shooting JMPD cop 7 times. *News24*, 2 September. Available from: <https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/taxi-patroller-hands-himself-to-police-after-allegedly-shooting-jmpd-cop-7-times> [Accessed on 15 September 2022].
- Blair, J.M., Fowler, K.A., Fetz, C.J. & Baumgartner, J.I. (2016). Occupational homicides of law enforcement officers 2003–2013: Data from the national violent death reporting system. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 51.
- Bruce, D. (2002). Stop cop killing: Lessons and limitations of South African research. Centre for the study of violence and reconciliation. *South Africa Crime Quarterly*, 2.
- Bruce, D. (2016). Improving data on killings of police: risk factors for policing. Available from: <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/leoka/>. [Accessed on 15 June 2022].
- Bruce, D. (2020). How to reduce police brutality in South Africa. ISS Southern Africa Report, 2020(40), 1-20. *African Journals*. Available from: <https://journals.co.za/doi/abs/10.10520/ejc-issar-v2020-n40-a1>. [Accessed on 18 June 2022].
- Chantelle, F. (2018). City pays homage to slain JMPD officer Ratshikhopa. *Randburg Sun*, 16 February. Available from: <https://randburgsun.co.za/339664/city-pays-homage-slain-jmpd-officer-ratshikhopa/> [Accessed on 05 April 2023].

- Charman, S. & Bennett, S. (2021). Voluntary resignations from the police service: The impact of organizational and occupational stressors on organizational commitment. *Policing and Society*. 32 (2): 159-178, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2021.1891234>
- Child, J. (2010). *Organization: Contemporary principles and practice*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- City of Johannesburg (CoJ). (2018a). Media statements. Available from: https://joburg.org.za/media_/MediaStatements/Pages/2018-Media-Statements.aspx. [Accessed on 15 August 2022].
- City of Johannesburg (CoJ). (2018b). Metro One Plan: City of Johannesburg. Available from: <https://cmbinary.gauteng.gov.za>. [Accessed on 15 September 2022].
- City of Johannesburg (CoJ) (2019b). Final Section 14 Manual. Available from: <https://www.joburg.org.za>. [Accessed on 10 July 2022].
- Clarke, P.T. (2021). Police killings: How does South Africa compare? *Mail & Guardian*, 2 March. Available from: <https://mg.co.za/news/2021-03-02-police-killings-how-does-south-africa-compare/>. [Accessed on 10 June 2022].
- Conradie, H. (2001). The modus operandi of police killers in four provinces of South Africa. *Crime Research in South Africa*, 2 (1): 1-13. 2.
- De Angelis, R.T. (2021). Systemic racism in police killings: New evidence from the mapping police violence database 2013-2021. *Journal of Race and Justice*, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21533687211047943>.
- Dlamini, P. (2023). JMPD officer killed in Braamfontein had served for 16 years: The city has released the name of the man who was shot and killed allegedly by a SAPS member. *Sowetan Live*, 28 June. Available from: <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2023-06-28-jmpd-officer-killed-in-braamfontein-had-served-for-16-years/>. [Accessed on 29 June 2023].
- Fihla, X. (2024). Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department -JMPD media statement. 16 June 2024. Available at: Media... - Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department - J MPD | Facebook accessed on 2024-10-04.
- Gifford, G. (2021). New crime stats show SA remains ‘a very violent country’. Most kidnappings happened in Gauteng. *Times Live*, 19 November. Available from: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2021-11-19-new-crime-stats-show-sa-remains-a-very-violent-country/>. [Accessed on 22 January 2023].
- Husain, W. & Faize, F.A. (2018). Depression, anxiety and stress of police officers in sensitive and insensitive police stations. *Archives of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences*, 1 (2): 26-31. Available from: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Waqar-Husain/publication/329800822>. [Accessed on 26 November 2022].
- Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department. (2023). Johannesburg: City of Johannesburg
- Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department. (2023). JMPD New Death System. Johannesburg
- Joubert, C. (2018). *Applied law for police officials*. 5th edition. Cape Town: Juta.
- Kargin, V. (2011). Peer reporting of unethical police behaviour. United State of America: LFB Scholarly Publishing LCC.
- Kent, S. (2010). Killings of police in U.S. Cities since 1980: An examination of environmental and political explanations. *Homicide Studies* 14 (1): 3-23 Available from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249715365>. [Accessed on 15 January 2023].
- Krieger, N., Chen, J.T., Waterman, P.D., Kiang, M.V. & Feldman, J. (2015). Police Killings and Police Deaths Are Public Health Data and Can Be Counted. *PLoS Medicine* 12(12): e1001915. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001915>.
- Kwinika, M. (2019). An analytical assessment of police killings in South Africa. South African Police Union (SAPU) Presentation. Pretoria: SAPU.
- Law Insider. (2022). JMPD Definition. Available from: <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/jmpd>.
- Lester, D. (1984). The murder of police officers in American cities. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*. 11(1): 101-113. Available from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240281411> [Accessed: 15 January 2023].
- Lippert-Rasmussen, K. (2019). Killing. *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*. 2918–2928. Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781444367072.wbiee393>. [Accessed on 16 October 2022]
- Longley, R. (2020). The history of modern policing. Available from: <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-history-of-modern-policing-974587> [Accessed on 27 August 2022].
- Luvhengo, P. 2024. Timeslive. Available at JMPD officers wounded in a shootout with armed robbers in Marshalltown. <https://www.timeslive.co.za>. [Accessed on 2024-10- 24].
- Madzivhandila, A.C. (2019). An analysis of the role of the South African Police Service railway policing in crime prevention in South Africa. Pretoria. University of South Africa.

- Mashatile, P. (2024, November 6). An assault on the police is a direct attack on the state. *SANews*. <https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/assault-saps-assault-state-acting-president>.
- Minnar, A. (2003). The murder of members of the South African Police Service: Some findings on common causes and practical preventative steps. Pretoria: Acta Criminological Institute for Human Rights & Criminal Justice Studies Technikon: Southern Africa.
- Mpulu, M.P., Motloutse, T.J. & NamudiMashego, T. (2022). An examination of the role of municipal police service in crime prevention: The case of Gauteng South Africa. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*. (11) 07-16. Available from: [https://www.ijhssi.org/papers/vol11\(9\)/B11090716.pdf](https://www.ijhssi.org/papers/vol11(9)/B11090716.pdf). [Accessed on 18 September 2023].
- Nkosi, N.C. (2023). An assessment of contributing factors to road fatalities on R546 route in Mpumalanga Province: A case of Govan Mbeki local municipality. Published Dissertation. Pretoria. Tshwane University of Technology.
- Noxhaka, N. (2019). An exploration of police killings in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal. Published Dissertation, Kwazulu-Natal. University of Kwazulu-Natal.
- Nwakanma, E. (2015). Social psychology, general strain theory and prostitution laws: A case study of the Nigeria society. *Developing Country Studies*, 5(10): 55-59.
- Parliament Portfolio Committee on Policing. (2019). Report on the status of the Metropolitan police departments in South Africa. Available from: https://static.pmg.org.za/190213_MPD.pdf. [Accessed on 25 September 2022].
- Perkins, G. (2018). Danger and death. Organizational and occupational responses to the murder of police in South Africa a-case study. Submitted Thesis. Cape Town. University of Cape Town.
- Pijoo, I. (2020). JMPD officer killed in car crash, driver arrested. *Sowetan*, 06 July. Available at: <https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-07-06-jmpd-officer-killed-in-car-crash-driver-arrested/>. [Accessed on 21 June 2023].
- Ramush, S. (2023). 'Drunk' driver knocks down three JMPD officers and two bystanders. *Surge Zirc South Africa*, 28 May. Available from: <https://surgezirc.co.za/news/drunk-driver-knocks-down-three-jmpd-officers-and-two-bystanders/>. [Accessed on 10 June 2023].
- Salame, C. (2020). Corruption within the police force. *Silicon Valley Sociological Review* 18 (7): 37-43 Available from: <https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/svsr/vol18/iss1/7> [Accessed on 26 January 2023].
- Siso, N. (2022). RIP| JMPD officer shot dead after confronting suspects. *The South African*, 30 July. Available from: <https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/rip-jmpd-officer-shot-dead-after-confronting-suspects-saturday-30-july-2022-breaking-news> [Accessed on 24 April 2023].
- Solomons, L. (2022). JMPD security officer killed and robbed while out on patrol in Soweto. *News24*, 16 January. Available from: <https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/jmpd-security-officer-killed-robbed-while-out-on-patrol-in-soweto-20220116>. [Accessed on 21 July 2023].
- South African Police Service. (1995). South African Police Service (SAPS) Act (No. 68 of 1995. Legislation and Acts. Available from: <https://www.saps.gov.za/legislation/acts/act68of1995.pdf>. [Accessed on 21 December 2022].
- South African Police Service. (2020). Briefing to the portfolio committee on police on the state of metropolitan police services and levels of cooperation with the South African Police Service. Available from: <https://static.pmg.org.za/160907MPS.pdf> [Accessed on 10 September 2022].
- South African Police Service. (2023). Address by President Cyril Ramaphosa at the SAPS National Commemoration Day. Pretoria. Available from: www.saps.gov.za
- South African Police Union. (2019). An analytical assessment of police killings in South Africa. South African Police Union (SAPU) Presentation. Pretoria: SAPU.
- Van Zyl-Gous, N. (2019). Annual report analysis of the independent police investigative directorate (IPID) 2019/20. Available from: https://static.pmg.org.za/201118IPID_Annual_Report_2019-20_Analysis.pdf [Accessed on 13 September 2022].
- Violanti, J.M., Slaven, J.E., Charles, L.E., Burchfiel, M.C., Andrew, M.E. & Homish, G.G. (2011). Police and alcohol use: A descriptive analysis and associations with stress outcomes. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*. 36(4): 344-356. Available from: https://www.academia.edu/17357778/Police_and_Alcohol_Use_A_Descriptive_Analysis_and_Associations_with_Stress_Outcomes. [Accessed on 13 May 2022].
- Yesufu, S. (2014). Police corruption: A threat to South Africa's democracy. Pretoria. National traffic police academy. Available from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345034863> [Accessed on 27 January 2023].

- Yesufu, S. (2022). The continuity of police brutality in post-apartheid South Africa. *Science Rise*, 2(79): 21-29. <http://doi.org/10.21303/2313-8416.2022.002408>.
- Zhao, J.S., He, N.P., Lovrich, N. & Cancino, J. (2003). Marital status and police occupational stress, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 26(2): 3-46. Available from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?> [Accessed on 31 January 2023].
- Zinn, R. & Dintwe, S. (2015). *Forensic Investigation: Legislative Principles and Investigative Practice*. Cape Town. Juta and Co.

