



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN SCIENCES

**Police perceptions on Suicide
Amongst
Durban Metro Police Service in KwaZulu-Natal.**

by

ERIC MANDLA KHUZWAYO

SUPERVISOR: DR G. JAGGANATH

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that “**Police perceptions on Suicide amongst Durban Metro Police Service in KwaZulu-Natal**” is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents and my family for being my inspiration.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the following people in making this study achievable:

I thank the almighty God for granting me strength, courage, patience, and foresight, to pursue my studies.

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Acronyms

CDC	Centre for Disease Control
DMPS	Durban Metropolitan Police Service
EAP	Employees Assistance Programme
EAS	Employees Assistance Services
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NEAPC	National Employee Assistance Programme Committee
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
SAPS	South African Police Services
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal

Abstract

This study analyses the perceptions of police suicide in the Durban Metro Police Service (DMPS). The research was necessitated by the increasing police suicide and suicide attempt rates within this municipality.

Emile Durkheim's theory of suicide was used in the study to assist in the identification of the causes and factors of police suicide. Conceptualization was based on the existing legislative, theoretical and conceptual perspectives that apply to suicide. These were drawn from various sources to provide insight into police suicide in South Africa. The nature of the study necessitated the use of interviews, literature review and focus group discussions in a qualitative research design to elicit information from the participants in the DMPS.

The study established that within the DMPS, police suicide was caused by both personal and work-related issues such as working night shifts, availability of fire arms as well as the police culture which encourages officials to be masters of their own destinies. Such cultures constrain officials from communicating their problems, hence they commit suicide. The important role of the Suicide Prevention Workshop, the social workers and management was also revealed as important for reducing suicide rates within the DMPS.

In view of the results, it is recommended that the nature of the working relationship amongst police management and employees be strengthened in order to create an environment of trust and openness within the department. Management should be on the lead in the development of this relationship. It is also important that the State intervene in the provision of training with regard to suicide. Management (both managers and supervisors) need to be given the first priority in the undertaking of such programmes so that they can be able to motivate their subordinates to undergo the same training. Training is also good for management in that managers and supervisors will be able to identify their troubled subordinates and then encourage their subordinates to attend the workshops. Some Suicide Prevention Workshops need to be conducted on a monthly basis to try and curb the suicide rate within the police department. Both the department and the State must invest resources in the development of the workshops.

Future research need to focus on determining the reasons why officers despise attending workshops. It is also essential to explore the manner and the approach use by DMPS management in referring troubled officers for assistance. More importantly, research is needed in exploring the perceptions of subordinates concerning their managers and the services rendered by the Employee Assistance Services (EAS).

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Chapter One

Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

Studies on police suicide have been increasing in recent decades as researchers continue to seek an advanced knowledge of the phenomenon, its causal factors and how it can be reduced or prevented. Death is heartbreaking, it is worsened when it is suicide, especially when the victim is a police member. Remember, police members are the ones that sacrifice their lives and freedom to protect the community, thus police suicide is a calamity. Various issues such as the use of drugs, marital relations and work stress have been identified as the main causes of police suicide. However, the extent to which these factors influence police officer suicides has not been addressed. Furthermore, it is paramount to investigate how police officials themselves perceive suicide. The study endeavored to examine these issues against the background of related issues that emerged from an in-depth review of the literature.

1.2 Background of the Study

1.3 Problem Statement

Reportedly, the rate of suicide among police officers is increasing in South Africa (Mashela, 2012; Pienaar, 2005; Masuku, 2000) and studies focusing on police suicide have generated a sustained interest in this phenomenon over the past decades (Mangwani, 2012; Schlebusch, 2011; Rossouw, 1997). However, the causes of suicide by police officials have not been satisfactorily illuminated. Simplistically, police suicide has been placed on record as part of the 'nature of the job'. Popular arguments about police suicide have been that the work is stressful because police officers always deal with criminals in their daily work. However, the problem that informed this study was the continued lack of empirical studies that employed scientific methods to investigate the root causes of suicidal cases among law keepers. Therefore, while acknowledging the sterling work that has already been done by various

scholars, this study elucidated new, valuable information and recommendations that may be embraced by the Department in order to deal with this challenge.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the study was to establish the perceptions of police officials concerning suicide. Functioning officials within the Durban Metro Police Service (DMPS) in KwaZulu-Natal were utilised as representatives of a microcosm of the larger South African police population.

The objectives of the study were: to investigate the possible reasons why police members commit suicide; to ascertain which gender, male or female, is most likely to commit suicide; to establish what support police members receive from the Department to address the pressures of their work; to establish which occupational level within the DMPS is most likely to be plagued by police suicides; and to explore whether the nature of police work may have an impact on police officers' decision to commit suicide.

1.5 Research questions

To achieve these objectives, the research questions for the study were the following: Why do police members commit suicide? Which gender is more likely to commit suicide? What support does the unit provide for troubled employees? Which is the occupational level where police suicide is most prevalent, and why? How does the nature of police work impacts on police members committing suicide?

1.6 Brief Historical Overview of Durban Metro Police Service (DMPS) and the South African Police Service (SAPS)

According to Jewell (1989), during the 1850s the city of Durban was experiencing a rapid population growth and the city fathers saw a need to adopt a policing strategy to cope with the growing population. Therefore, the Durban City Police Force was established in 1854 to maintain peace and order. The name formerly known as the Durban City Police was changed in 2000 to the Durban Metro Police Service.

The study site was the city of Durban in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. It spans a total area of 225.9 square kilometers with a population density of 884.34 households per square kilometers (Census, 2011).

The eThekweni municipality is divided into five regions. In all five these regions there are Metro police stations, for instance the Headquarters of DMPS as well as stations at Boscombe place and Albert Park in the central region. In the southern region, there is a Metro Police Station in Isipingo, Chatsworth and Umlazi. In the outer west region there are two stations which are Hammersdale and Gillits, and in the inner west region there are four stations: in Queensburgh, Pinetown, Westville, and New Germany. The northern region has two police stations namely KwaMashu and Verulam.

1.7 Rationale for the Study

Life is a basic right for every individual in the Republic of South Africa, and therefore the premature death of any member of the police department is an issue which requires urgent research and analysis. For this reason the decision was taken to conduct empirical analysis of the causal factors of police suicide in the study site. The new knowledge highlighted by this study is likely to contribute additional insights into the social and economic impacts of police suicide. In this context, the study is significant on both the practical and methodological levels. The practical significance of the study derives from the results based on the case study that was conducted among police officers in the Durban area. The study established the major causal factors of suicide among police officials as well as the perceptions and attitudes of police officials concerning suicide. Because of the relatively broad scope of the study across various areas in the Durban Metro region, it may be possible to generalize the findings to the underlying populations in the same department in South Africa.

In addition, the study makes a marked contribution to research methodology. The case study showed how to apply the theoretical framework of the study to the type of data required in studying the perceptions of police officers on suicide. This was consistent with Bryman's (2006) advice, who states that the choice of a research design should be informed by a conceptual orientation of the study.

It was the researcher's conviction that the research would be able to be repeated using the qualitative method and data collection techniques that were employed. Given the

complexities of how an issue like perception can be measured, it was appropriate that a qualitative approach be adopted in order to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. This study demonstrated that the use of the qualitative approach generated rich and in-depth data of the phenomenon under study. However, the researcher was cognizant of the fact that the qualitative design could be fraught with challenges (Schulze, 2003), particularly in terms of cross-checking shortcomings with other methods. For instance, because suicide is an extremely sensitive issue that elicits strong emotional response, quantitative support for the study data would not have contributed to the findings.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

Participants in the study were above 18 years, which is in compliance with South African legislation. They also had a minimum of five years' experience of police service. This was an inclusion criterion as it was deemed important to involve participants with experience as they would contribute to and enhance the data that would be collected. It was also assumed that police members with at least five years' experience would be more familiar with incidences of suicide within the department than those members with fewer years' experience.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

Suicide: This is “an act with a fatal outcome that is deliberately initiated and performed by the deceased him-/herself in the knowledge or expectation of its fatal outcome, and with the outcome being considered by the actor as instrumental in bringing about desired changes in consciousness and social conditions” (Pieterse, 1992:4). It is therefore the act of killing yourself, most often as a result of depression or other mental illness.

Police suicide: This act results in the death of a police member who killed him/herself using any tool or instrument and who adopted any form of violence and aggressive behaviour (Oxford Dictionary, 2006). Police suicide from the definition could be argued as the action committed by the police officer to end his/her life.

Police member: This is any person so appointed in terms of section 64 of the SAPS Amendment Act 83 of 1998. For the purpose of this study, only Constables, Sergeants, Inspectors and Captains are referred to as police members.

Officer: According to Durban Metro Police Service Standing Order No. 22, 'officer' is the rank carried by any member holding the rank of Superintendent or above (Durban Metro Police, 2001).

1.9 Chapter Summary

Chapter one has explained the following; Introduction of the study, Background of the study, Problem Statement, Aim and Objectives of the Study, Research questions. Brief Historical Overview of DMPS and the SAPS, Rationale for the study, Assumption of the Study, Ethical Considerations, and Definition of Key Terms.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an introduction to the study. This chapter reviews the literature that is related to the study. The chapter is divided into nine broad sections of which this introduction is the first. Section 2.2 presents the definitions of key terms, section 2.3 is an overview discussion on suicide, section 2.4 analyzes possible suicide causes, section 2.5 provides the theoretical framework that was used to understand the study, and section 2.6 presents a discussion on the methods of suicide. Section 2.7 presents suicide prevention strategies in South Africa, section 2.8 provides a history of the Durban Metropolitan Police Service (DMPS), and section 2.9 is a summary of the chapter.

2.2 Suicide: An Overview

2.2.1 Suicide

The word ‘suicide’ comes from two Latin roots, *sui* (‘of oneself’) and *cidium* (‘killing’ or ‘slaying’). Alonso-Betancourt (2012:1) defines suicide as an intentional self-inflicted death. It is the “conscious act of self-induced destruction, best understood as multidimensional melancholy in a needful individual who defines an issue for which the act is perceived as the best solution” (Kaplan & Sadock, 2009:2).

In history, there has been slight uniformity in the adoption of the terminology related with suicide tendencies (Berg, Hem, Lau & Ekeberg, 2003). In referring to suicide, researchers have utilized numerous terms interchangeably; for instance suicidal ideation, suicidal intent, and suicidal behaviour (Chae & Boyle, 2013). This practice, notwithstanding, can prompt to disarray as the implications of these clinical terms fluctuate extensively (Prabhu and Turner, 2007). With the end goal of this review, self-destructive ideation alludes to considerations

and discernments about completion one's life. This may incorporate clear arrangements and means by which to finish the suicide (Reynolds, 1991). In the present amalgamation of the investigation, the suicide measures incorporated into the audit solely surveyed perceptions and musings about closure one's life. In like manner, the terms self-destructive ideation and musings of suicide will be utilized reciprocally from this point forward.

Suicide is one of the oldest and most deplorable phenomena that lead to the death of a person. Data have revealed that “suicide is the 11th principal cause of death in the USA (Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2006) and the 16th leading cause of death in developing countries” (Chae & Boyle, 2013:91). There are many definitions and descriptions of what suicide entails. According to Giddens (2001:10-11), suicide is “a phenomenon that manifests itself in different patterns and affects all categories of human societies.” Suicide, according to Giddens (2001:12-13), involves the ending of one’s life, not by mistake, but intentionally and with a motive behind the killing. Buttrick et al. (1989:14) define suicide as “the human act of self-inflicted, self-intentioned cessation” while Honderich (1997:1453) defines it as “the end result of a process, not the process itself”. Mishara (1995:7) defines suicide as “a mode of death that is mostly experienced as a brutal dissolution of life, and a violent disunion of existing relationships.” According to Battin and Mayo (1980:117-118), suicide is “doing something which results in one’s death, either from the intention of ending one’s life or the intention to bring about some other state of affairs (such as relief from pain) which one thinks it certain or highly probable can be achieved only by means of death or [an act that] will produce death.”

According to Hendricks and Byers (1996:280-281), suicide is “an individual’s way of trying to avoid the psychological pain that he/she is undergoing by taking his/her own life”. Firestone (1997:59) defines suicide as “the execution of oneself with the purpose to relieve oneself from psychological conflicts”.

According to Pienaar (2004:18), “suicidal behaviour can be classified as including suicide completion, overt intention, suicide attempt, and suicidal ideation”. Ideation is defined as “thoughts and ideas about death, suicide, serious self-injurious behaviour, and thoughts related to the planning, conduct and outcome of suicidal behaviour” (Chae & Boyle, 2013:5), while Baechler (1979:9) defines suicide as “death that emanates from the act undertaken by the victim himself and which is not a sacrifice.” Cooper (1999:4), citing Durkheim (1966:

44), defines suicide as “cases of death emanating directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce a result.”

Chae and Boyle (2013) also argue that a personal termination of life reflects suicide as retroflected murder and a possible concealed injury and as a process that, in an effective sense, has already taken place. The homicidal inclinations that turn inward in the form of suicide in Friedman’s (1968) conceptual scheme are fundamentally the same underlying mechanisms as retroflected suicide in Heiman’s (1997:97) scheme. Within the police force fraternity, Hendlin (1963:94) understands suicide as the officer’s endeavour to avenge feelings of abandonment by loved ones. It is argued that it is often marital troubles that are predominant factors in the majority of suicide cases, which is supported by the conclusion of both Friedman’s (1968:448) and Danto’s (1978:38) research. Allen (1986:7) argues that suicide is an “expression of individual aggression and self-destruction”. According to Henry and Short (1954), suicide is an anger for which outside appearance towards others is refused.

However, similar to Freud’s argument, Henry and Short argue that frustration and the blockage of outside aggression may result in suicide. Loo (1986:365) found in his study that officers committed suicide as an escape. He argued that most law enforcement agents kill themselves in reaction to life circumstances that were hard for them to bear. Halbwach is of the perception that the act carried out by an individual that will lead to their own death by their own hand is not necessarily an act of sacrifice. The scholar therefore, unlike Durkheim (1966:376), questions whether the act of suicide is deliberate or not.

In view of the above discussion, it can be argued that Halbwach’s definition provides for the fact that some individuals may not kill themselves deliberately, but rather that they are sometimes forced by circumstances to contemplate and commit suicide (Baechler, 1979:10). It is in this context that Cooper (1999:5) defines suicide as “all behaviour that seeks and finds the solution to an existential problem by making an attempt on the life of the subject.” This definition takes into account that an individual does not simply commit suicide, but may also attempt to commit suicide and fail. Baechler (1979:11) also acknowledges that there are many different methods of killing oneself and that there are cases of such attempts where death is not the result. All the arguments presented above highlight the diverse views of the phenomenon of suicide that have led to different perceptions of the concept of suicide.

2.2.2 Suicide attempt, or parasuicide

Alonso-Betancourt (2012) says Parasuicide or suicide attempt “is a term coined by Dyer and Kreitman(1984). Alonso-Betancourt (2012:8) says “Suicide attempt is a non-fatal act in which an individual causes self-injury by whatever means”. Suicide endeavors, especially life-debilitating endeavors, are now and again alluded to as parasuicide. However, Alonso-Betancourt (2012:7) criticizes the use of this term, arguing that in precise “terms parasuicide means something which is not suicide (prefix para= alongside, beside something)”. Furthermore, he said that in daily medical practice, health care workers view ‘parasuicide’ cases as people seeking for attention or a self-harm act that is not truly dangerous, while the actually the critical hazard figure for suicide is a past suicide endeavor

According to Alonso-Betancourt (2012), the understanding of suicide attempt is essential because 30% to 60% of people who commit suicide have been precipitated by suicide endeavor and the police officers who have made efforts of committing suicide ultimately kill themselves; at a ratio approximately 100 times greater to that of the over-all populace. Information on suicide endeavors are even less dependable than for suicides because of the absence of solid national records and heterogeneity of arrangements in view of differing plan and lethality (Alonso-Betancourt, 2012). Studies worldwide have indicated that the occurrence of parasuicide in the overall populace varying from 0.04% to 4.6% for the lifetime danger and about 0.8% per annum general, or 0.2% to 0.6% per seemingly life-threatening actions (Keesler, 1999).

International reviews have detailed the pervasiveness for suicide endeavors in the all-inclusive community running from 0.04% to 4.6% for lifetime chance and around 0.8%/year generally speaking, or 0.2% to 0.6%/year for evidently life-undermining acts (Keesler, 1999). The proportions of endeavors/suicides in the all-inclusive community have shifted from 6:1 to 25:1, and midpoints around 18:1 around the world (Keesler, 1999).

2.2.3 Police suicide

According to Violanti (1996:54), police suicide can be defined in terms of an interactional process, whereby the influence of the police setting on psychological and the social functioning of police officers is taken into consideration. Hackett and Violanti (2003:64) regard suicide as a result of an interaction of environmental, psychological and cognitive factors. In view of the above arguments, this study regarded suicide as an act committed as a result of the person's perception of his/her problematic situations as extremely difficult and impossible to deal with. The police force is regarded as prone to suicide acts more so than similar acts among the general public (Woody, 2006:95; Hem, Berg, & Ekeberg, 2001:1).

Suicide incidences in the police force have been described as an epidemic all over the world (Violanti, 1996). In the year 1996, suicide rates among New York City police officers were the highest when compared to other professions (Helmkamp, 1996:117). According to Violanti (2009:272), a study conducted in 2009 in the United States of America showed that "police officers had a suicide rate of 18.1 per 100 000, while the general public only reported a rate of 11.4 per 100 000". It is also contended that, in contemporary times, most police members are murdered by themselves than by the firearms of other people (FAQs on Police Mental Health, 2010). Schmidtke, Fricke and Lester (1999:188) reported "an average suicide rate of 23.03 per 100 000 police officers in Germany in 1996". In a similar period, the normal suicide rate for New York City police members was around 29 for every 100 000 every year (Vallone, 1995). Lindsay and Lester (2001:226) reported "an average annual suicide rate for North-Eastern American police officers of 25 per 100 000 for the period 1987 to 1999".

In South Africa, suicide among members of the police force continues to pose a major problem. In 1995, the research that was done in police suicide uncovered that the South African Police Services members were 11 times more prone to kill themselves as compared to the general South African populace. A media release on 14 March 2007 indicated that police suicide had gone up by 50% from the foregoing years. In the same year, the Inkatha Freedom Party complained that Safety and Security indicated that South Africa had turned out to be a standout amongst the most dangerous nations in the universe for police officers and emotional harm was unmistakably obvious in the risen number of police suicides that had occurred half of 2006 (Inkatha Freedom Party, 2007). Between January and June 2006, only 23 policemen and police women committed suicide, compared to the period from 2000 to

2005, when 506 police officers committed suicide (Mangwani, 2012:18). The statistics also showed that South Africa had 155 532 police officers in 2006, which means the number of suicides during that period was 46 suicides, exactly double the number of suicides that had been committed in the first half of 2006. In 2009, 73 police officers committed suicide while in 2007 a total of 97 lost their lives due to suicide. In the year 2011, 85 police officers committed suicide while in 2012, 98 police officers took their own lives (Minister Mthethwa, 2013). It has been argued that it is clear that the South African Police Service finds itself in a very dismal state of affairs and that, "...without clear commitment from Government to improve the conditions in which police officers go about doing their duties every day, things can only get worse" (Inkatha Freedom Party, Media release March, 2007).

However, the argument that suicide rates are higher for police officers compared to the general population is disputable, according to Marzuk, Nock, Leon, Portera and Tardiff (2002:37). Garrison (2012:5) contended that "there is no such thing as police suicide; that a suicide is a suicide and the fact that they are police officers is incidental. Methodological variations in previous studies on suicide make the analysis of the findings difficult to draw definite conclusions". Some studies found increased suicide rates among police officers (Hem, Berg and Ekeberg, 2001); others "showed an average or low rate of suicide" (Lindsay & Lester, 2001:226). Moreover, the rates change broadly and are conflicting and uncertain, particularly as a result of methodological weaknesses. Most importantly there are numerous factors that a scholar need to be aware of when researching police members and comparing them to the general public. The researcher is cognizant of the reality that suicidal tendencies are also affecting South Africa's Metro Police Service. Research into this phenomenon in the Durban Metro Police Service is therefore warranted.

2.2.4 Suicide history

Suicide can be back dated way far from the beginning of the human era. According to Robinson, (2009) the bible has got many scriptures where suicide issue is deliberated and to some extent labelled more especial in the Old Testament (i.e. Hebrew Scriptures). One of the most popular classification was developed by a French Sociologist Emile Durkheim, who pioneered the modern sociology; he classified suicide as egoistic, anomic and altruistic One of the most popular classifications originated from Émile Durkheim, a French sociologist, one of the pioneers of present day social science, who separated suicide into 'egoistic',

‘anomic’, and ‘altruistic’ categories (Durkheim, 1951 as cited by Alonso-Betancourt, 2012). These classifications are detailed below in section 2.4.

Previously, various cultures forbade for people who have terminated their life span to be buried normally like people who died naturally, even though, limitations differed based on the area and time (Alonso-Betancourt, 2012). For instance England adopted a custom of burying someone who have killed himself/herself during the evening time at the junction with a stake driven through the heart. France had a different approach for burying people who have committed suicide to that of England; in France the body was hauled through the streets and later hanged from public gallows. Alexandra 2000 says that in Prussia, the primitive regulations mandated that the victim has to be buried underneath the gallows

As the science developed the authorized view regarding suicide changed and also the dominating philosophical and religious ideologies changed (Alonso-Betancourt, 2012). Succeeding discussion concludes the background and developments that came from Tondo and Ross (2001).

2.2.4.1 Ancient cultures

In Western cultures, suicide has continuously been deliberated with vigilance and at diverse levels of acceptance or sanction. According to Alonso-Betancourt (2012:8), suicide in ancient Greece was regarded as a crime against the government and suicide victims were not allowed to public graves. The bodies were every now and then injured. Suicide was generally damned but in certain circumstances accepted as an act of honour, mainly for soldiers who were defeated in war. The Japanese Kamikaze pilots during the Second World War is a case in point. Durkheim (n.d) also wrote: “At Athens, if he asked authority of the Senate before killing himself, stating the reasons which made life intolerable to him, his request was regularly granted. Suicide was considered a legitimate act.”

2.3 The Causes of Suicide

This section presents the causes of police suicide as established from a review of the literature. The literature indicates that there are several causes of police suicide which are categorized as follows: organizational and operational stressors; post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); training and conditioning; alcohol abuse; and relationships.

2.3.1 Organizational and operational stressors

Police work is thought to be an exceptionally upsetting occupation that is described by flighty occasions, presentation to injury, developed times of fatigue, conflicting movement work, and pressure related with work related issues (Chae & Boyle, 2013:92; Violanti, O'Hara & Tate, 2011:94). Despite the fact that scientists have recognized different sorts of stressors inside the law implementation calling, unmistakable researchers agree that police strain might be attributed to both authoritative (basic/utilitarian stressor from the police organisation) and operational pressure (everyday strain from routine police work) (Lantermann, Boyle, Pascarella & Furrer, 2010; McCreary & Thompson, 2006:192; Paton, Violanti, Burke & Gehrke, 2009:63; Shane, 2010:44).

Firstly, organizational strain materializes as a consequence of the stress of the hierarchy in the police departments and also the functions that are performed within the departments (Lantermann et al., 2010:130; Shane, 2010:44). Structural stressors are attributed to the departmental and administrative culture, which includes bureaucratic styles of management, lack of autonomy, and interpersonal conflicts among officers (Chae & Boyle, 2013:92). Functional stressors consist of aspects of organizational life that cause emotional strain, such as rotating shift work, irregular work hours, and consecutive work days (Kecklund et al., 2008; Vila, 2006:52).

Secondly, operational stress materializes from routine policing responsibilities within the community (Chae & Boyle, 2013:92). Operational stressors are caused by the increasing impacts of exposure to extended periods of inactivity and boredom punctuated by emotionally intense experiences of potential trauma and fear. Operational stress also arises

from critical incident experiences in policing, which include the violent and dangerous nature of some aspects of police work (Chae & Boyle, 2013:92).

According to Violanti (2007:20), many police organisations function from autocratic model of leadership in which police officials are classified according to the ranks and status. Normally, law enforcement departments sustain the culture of extreme procedure and custom whereby suitable processes and guidelines function as major aspects of everyday operations. These procedures are stationary with the autocratic method of military governance (Chae & Boyle, 2013:95). Wester and Lyubelsky (2005:8) compare police training to army boot camps where officers “are not paid to think, but to follow their superior’s order – right, wrong, or indifferent”. This managerial paradigm give free role to the supervisors to use subjective ruling in giving directives and sometimes micro-managing, the juniors to remain on the regulations and protocols (Stinchcomb, 2004:17). Loyalty to the firm autocratic governance like this one can give problems to the productivity of the department more especially when it come to the social communication and teamwork. Shame (2010) reported that the police members who brought forward the severity of the communication breakdown obtained performance evaluation which show them as less performers. These results emphasis the apprehensions that were raised by McCreary and Thompson (2006), state that the communication breakdown between the lower rank police officers and their supervisors may influence the productivity of the organisation which will eventually affect the functioning assessment of the employee (junior member).

Miller (2006) and Paton et al. (2009) likewise pointed out concerns about the execution of duty’s evaluation in the police departments. Shane (2008) reported that the managers and the superiors have got a propensity of using an approach that is focusing on one side when evaluating productivity or performance. He indicates that there are factors that can impact on the development in the police department, which are favouritism, coercion, and being unable to conform to the police subculture. Paton et al. (2009) add that even the process of promoting police officers is seen as lacking honesty and merit. For instance, they depict different situations where officers were advanced therefore of political impact and social associations, as opposed to justify.

Gardner and Pierce (1998:47) found that when power inside associations was not scattered, representatives may feel their commitments to the work environment were not perceived and esteemed. Accordingly, representatives may encounter debilitated employment fulfillment,

diminished inspiration, and raised anxiety. Given the mind-boggling nature of police stressors in the association, it is not amazing that a few officers confirm that untimely retirement might be their best alternative (Violanti, 2007). Brough and Frame (2004) found that officers who revealed insufficient supervisory support and scored high on measures of occupation disappointment by and large anticipated high employment turnover rates. Johnson et al. (2010) concentrated Federal Law Enforcement work force to figure out if work fulfillment and level of coinciding (degree to which an officer's aptitudes coordinated the prerequisites of the livelihood) anticipated occupation turnover. The scientists found that low scores on both factors were huge indicators of work related turnover and, in a few examples, of suicide frequencies.

The media endorsed that the police stress and signs of lack of psychological functioning are the exact outcomes of being exposed to traumatic and critical events. Nonetheless, the empirical studies have reported that mental health issues with police officers may be better accounted for by organizational inefficiency, lack on management and work related stressor in routine policing (Lieberman Best, Meltzer, Fagan, Weiss & Marmar, 2002; Maguen, Metzler, McCaslin, Inslicht, Henn-Haase, Neylan & Marmar, (2009). For instance, Gershon, Barocas, Canton, Li and Vlahov (2009) analysed the impact of the identified occupational stress in the law enforcement officers in a bigger municipal department. “The results of their study indicated that organizational stressors, and not critical incidents, were forceful predictors of clinical depression (OR ¼9.9), anxiety (OR ¼6.1), and traumatic stress symptoms (OR ¼3.25)” (Chae & Boyle, 2013:95). The study also indicated that police officials who reported increased levels of organizational occupation disappointment were three times (OR ¼3.2) more prone to experience hoisted levels of work stress.

Amaranto, Steinberg, Castellano and Mitchell (2003) also carried out occupational related stress research related to the vulnerability to violence in different law enforcement departments in the municipal area. The outcomes demonstrated that most of the members recognized stressors inside the setting of the police association as most conspicuous. Regular topics noted by officers included: low spirit, absence of affirmation for accomplishments, and political boundaries related with headway and advancement (Chae & Boyle, 2013:96). Additionally, the informants revealed that the superiors were perhaps too harsh when giving motivation methods like “excessive punishment for a minor infraction” and ensuring “one’s firearm confiscated” when the police member divulged he or she was undergoing “stress-related problems” (96).

Brough (2004), Carlier et al. (1997), Plaxton-Hennings (2004), Violanti and Aron (1995) and Violanti and Aron (1995) also suggest that law enforcement departments do not provide necessary support as well as response to their employee's necessities which lead to increased incidences of suicide. Investigations into the excellence of support services that are provided to the police officers that have been involved in dangerous occurrences emphasized the reappearing complaint from the police members that were recuperating, was that the organizational superiors did not give the impression that they were anxious about police members that were recuperating from serious injuries on duty (Plaxton-Hennings, 2004). Brough (2004) and Plaxton-Hennings (2004:59) concluded that, following critical events, "...the department tended to separate itself from their deputies".

Moreover, when Plaxton-Hennings (2004) interviewed police officers who were injured, the findings revealed that many of the police members did not display traumatic stress symptoms because of the life-threatening occurrence, rather due to the absence of the debriefing and support from their police departments. In this regard, Carlier et al. (1997:501) deduced that it appeared that "the traumatic event may not be the event itself, but rather the organization's response to the officer, making them feel isolated, unsupported, disempowered, and ultimately, traumatized".

An expanding number of studies have inspected auxiliary elements related with policing and hazard for suicide. For instance, Rothmann and Strijdom (2002) found that officers who revealed deficient manager bolster, unavoidable managerial and departmental strain, and low levels of employment fulfillment demonstrated a more prominent probability of being at hazard for suicide. Correspondingly, Pienaar et al. (2007) found that officers who experienced broad hierarchical anxiety tended to utilize evasion sort adapting styles and were less required with their profound confidence. The creators reasoned that the connection of stressors and utilization of avoidant adapting styles anticipated hazard for self-destructive ideation.

2.3.2 Post-traumatic stress disorder

Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been highlighted as one of the basic contributory factors to police suicide (Louw & Viviers, 2010). PTSD was first identified as a diagnosable

condition in 1980. PTSD is most often associated with ex-combatants who have returned from their placements and troubled their past through remembrance and imaginations of their experience. However, some specialists are of the opinion that police officers are more exposed to increased occurrences of PTSD as compared to the soldiers (Violanti, 2007). The argument behind this suggestion is that soldiers come across terrible situations lesser, while police members are more vulnerable to the terrible situations throughout their career. In every day of their lives police members are subjected to vulnerable occurrences. (FAQs on Police Mental Health, 2010). PTSD exposure is divided into two categories, namely critical incidents and cumulative PTSD.

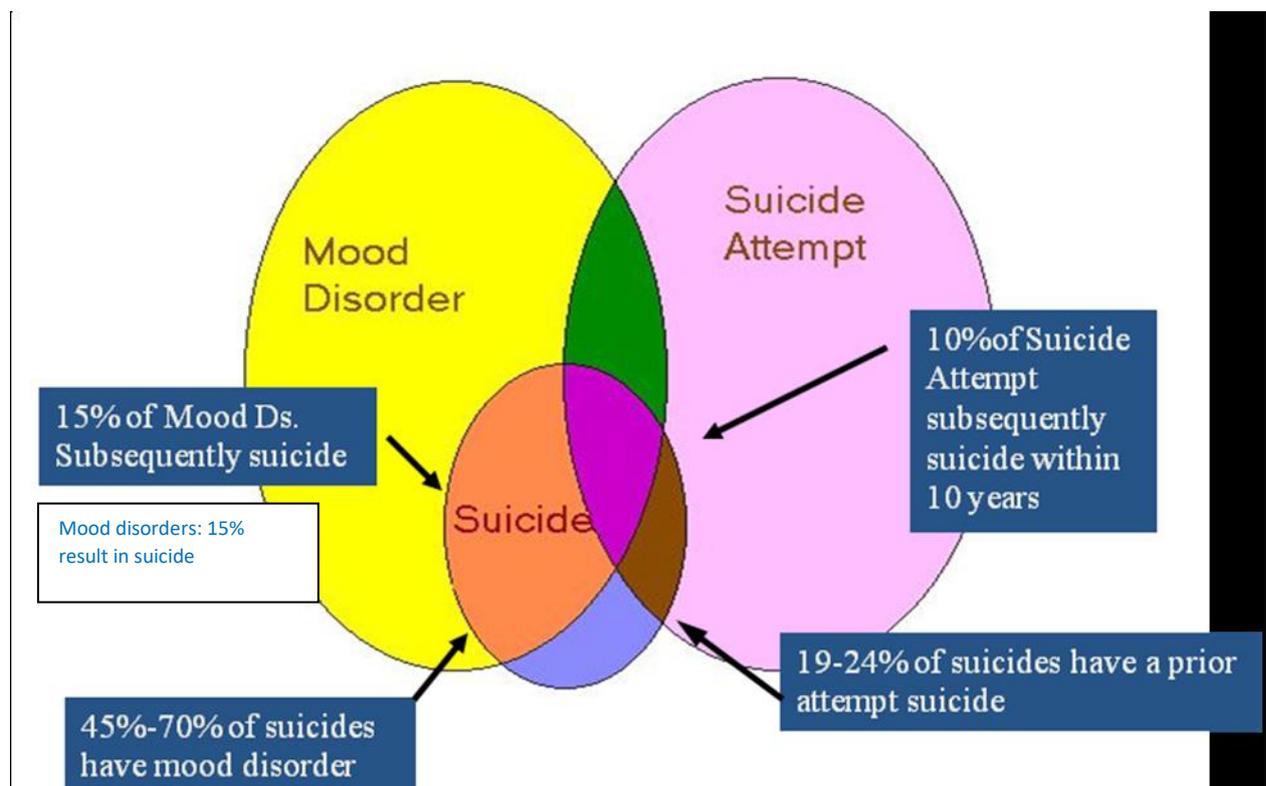
2.3.2.1 Critical incidents

Critical incidents refer to those extremely stressful occurrences or mood disorders that tend to influence police officers so severely that they opt for suicide as an escape. Figure 2.1 summarizes the “correlation between mood disorders, suicide and suicide attempts” as posited by Alonso-Betancourt (2012:14). Cases incorporate officers who are included in shootings, losing a collaborator or accomplice, or the death of a child (Who Will Go, 2010). In such cases, the police office as a rule intercedes to offer different sorts of questioning and to offer enthusiastic support. A few divisions allow the officer to take regulatory leave; this permits them an opportunity to recuperate from the occurrence.

2.3.2.2 Cumulative PTSD

Cumulative PTSD is described by undergoing a concatenation of small incidents, one after the other, building up over time and causing emotional drain (Chae & Boyle, 2013:96). The police officers conceal the feelings about the organizational and family related problems, after numerous number of years keeping the emotional stress, majority of police officers get to a point where they can no longer withstand the emotional stress, and subsequently they are

triggered by a minor event to commit suicide (Who Will Go, 2010). These categories of suicide are hard to avoid as there is no guaranteed life changing occurrence and the organisation and fellow employees are ignorant that a police member requires intervention and support. Such suicides are those that leave the remaining officers and superiors of the department wondering what transpired. According to Violanti (2007), the cumulative PTSD suicide can subsequently trigger a traumatic event in another officer's life. In some ways it can be seen as a cluster effect (Chae & Boyle, 2013). Violanti (2007) investigated these clusters and concluded that suicide may be the result of a contagion effect.



10% of suicide attempts resulted in suicide within 10 years

19% - 24% of suicide were preceded by a suicide attempt

45% - 70% of suicide victims had mood disorders

Figure 2.1: Correlation between mood disorders, suicide and suicide attempts

Source: Alonso-Betancourt, 2012:14

2.3.3 Training and conditioning

Some forms of training and conditioning within the police force are viewed as contributing factors to police suicide. Pagonis (2012) suggest that in law enforcement departments, employees are encouraged not to open up about their daily experiences, even traumatic events. They are expected to be in command in all the situations they encounter, and pretend as if nothing happened. “Years of suppressed feelings can begin to eat away at an officer, both physically and emotionally” (Garrison, 2012:12).

Police members are also trained to use certain force to apprehend suspected criminals when the suspect resists arrest, this techniques condoned the use of violence by police officers. They are also skilled to be in command of certain incidents by using the required force and violence (Garrison, 2012). “Police officers are also frequently the victims of violence” (Chae & Boyle, 2013:96). This can quietly desensitize officers to viciousness. Suicide can turn into a savage self-started reaction to their issues, giving them control over the circumstance (Garrison, 2012).

2.3.4 Alcohol and police suicide

Outside their places of work, police officers also face challenges that might result in suicide. The use of alcohol has been identified as one of the factors contributing to suicide among police officers across the world. Alcohol addiction and misuse has long been alleged as a problem among police officers (Chae & Boyle, 2013:99). Alcohol is said to be a major contributing factor to suicide in South Africa. It is estimated that about one-third of all suicides recorded in South Africa is attributed to alcohol use or abuse (Clark, 2004). Several studies have indicated that many police members drink alcohol as a way of coping with the daily stressors and tensions inherent in their work (Lindsay & Shelley, 2009:90; Madonna & Kelly, 2002:142; Richmond, Wodak, Kehoe & Heather, 1998:1732). Researchers such as Lindsay and Shelley (2009:91) suggest that police departments have historically been recognized as a culture of drinking in many countries. Dietrich and Smith (1986: 304) reveal

that for police officers, “alcohol is not only used but very much accepted as a way of coping with the tensions and stress of the day”.

According to Chae and Boyle (2013:99), “despite the seemingly ubiquitous approval of disproportionate drinking, hazardous consumption of alcoholic beverages has been identified as a major maladaptive approach to coping, which in turn has contributed to increased risk for suicidal ideation and other health-related concerns”. Violanti (2004) discovered police members who drank alcohol excessively as their coping mechanism to control the signs associated to stress were significantly more prone to go through suicidal thought.

Pienaar and Rothmann (2005) observed that South African law enforcement members who utilized liquor as a method for decreasing mental strain will probably report work disappointment and constant conjugal issues. Chae and Boyle (2013) additionally found that the incremental increment in utilization of mixed drinks every week was specifically identified with raised hazard for self-destructive ideation. In an example of 287 South African cops, Rothmann and Van Rensburg (2002) discovered that officers who expended at least 14 mixed beverages seven days were at expanded danger of self-destructive ideation. They likewise scored considerably bring down on measures of dynamic adapting, self-adequacy, and eagerness to look for assist contrasted and the control bunch (Chae and Boyle, 2013).

The lifestyle and behavior of the police members in United Kingdom was evaluated by Richmond et al. (1998), and they elicited that too much utilization of alcohol was common issue. In 852 police members, about 48% of men and 40% of women were extremely consuming alcohol (for instance harmful and binge drinking). Additionally, in Australia, the explanatory research study that was done on police suicide reported that above 50% of the deceased police members were detected to be having issues that also encompasses alcohol problems.

As per Lindsay and Shelley (2009:91), for some police officials liquor utilization is not just a socially satisfactory method for adapting to stretch, however it likewise fills in as a method for mingling all the more effortlessly inside the police group. Davey, Obst and Sheehan (2001) contend that many officers feel influenced to expend mixed refreshments with different officers. Their exploration demonstrated that within the police members who drank,

31% expressed that they saw non-consumers as suspicious and unsociable. Lindsay and Shelley (2009:90) found that police officers expended liquor to adapt to push and to mingle all the more effortlessly with different officers. Richmond et al. (1999:1517) referred to an officer who noticed that drinking liquor was one of the main ways he could utilize to shoulder the hierarchical governmental issues: *“The only way that I’m going get into that group is to be one of them, so I’ve got to start drinking alcohol whether I like it or dislike it, so it can have a massive positive impact on the workplace”*.

The review presented above suggests a great connection among police officers and alcohol use. Particularly, research studies which were referred to expose that police members use alcohol not only as their coping mechanism but also to attain belonging in the police officers subculture groups (Chae & Boyle, 2013). Interestingly, in both situations the method of reasoning for liquor utilization is ascribed to improving life stressors and upgrading social execution. As a way of responding to frequently held opinions, Goldman, Brown and Christiansen (1987: 200) note the following: *“If any characteristic has been seen as a central, defining aspect of alcohol use, it is the presumed capacity of alcohol to alter anxiety, depression and other moods”*. Actually, the study has indicated that increased alcohol use has got probability bring symptoms of psychological disorders instead of promoting mental health (Caetano & Kaskutas, 1995).

2.3.5 Relationships and police suicide

Violanti and Samuels (2007) highlighted the hardships in discussing the work of the police officers, family life and their love life. The empirical studies report that the increased levels of stress in law enforcement could have dangerous impacts that can permeate other aspects of police member’s personal life. *“It is not uncommon, therefore, for officers to allow their work stress to manifest in their interactions with a significant other as well as with other family members”* (Reese & Castellano, 2007:94). Street and Arias (2001:73) note that *“marital discord is not uncommon among police officers and their spouses. Their results indicated that 60% of 479 spouses of officers was verbally and emotionally abused”*. Nonetheless, the researchers highlighted majority of the voiced out reluctance in reporting to the police for their mediation as they are afraid of the outcomes of violating the *“code of silence”* (Chae & Boyle, 2013:100).

In the research study that was conducted by Berg et al. (2003) on 3272 Norwegian police officers aiming to evaluate numerous factors such as mental health problems, marital and family relations, job dissatisfaction, and suicidal thought. Their study reported that police officers who went through reduced job satisfaction, long-lasting stress in work environment and insufficient departmental support were more prone to go through work related stressors in their personal and family life. The anger and frustration of the majority these police officers were more redirected to the family member more especially children and wives.

Berg et al. (2003) found that officers who were included in place relational unions or sound, conferred connections were impervious to such stressors. Nonetheless, the consequences of their review demonstrated that the impact of various hazard variables anticipated expanded hazard for self-destructive ideation. In particular, stressors related with being female (OR¹/₄3.2), isolated or separated (OR¹/₄6.4), and uneasiness (OR¹/₄4.15) essentially expanded the hazard for self-destructive ideation. Berg et al. (2003) reason that self-destructive ideation is not something that is brought about by one stressor experienced at one point in time. Or maybe, it develops accordingly of the connection of complex stressors experienced over an amplified time, in the long run prompting to the steady narrowing of saw life alternatives.

Neidig et al. (1992) carried out a research of the male police officers and their significant others who were invited to attend an in-service police training session in South America, 385 male police and 115 spouses attended the training. The scholars evaluated the degree to which the aggressive behavior occurred in their households in which one of the partners was a police officer. As revealed by the data round about 40% of intimate relationships have gone through physical violence in their relationships. The study also indicated that long working hours on average per week were directly proportional domestic violence. For instance 26% percent of the wives of police officers who are males who were on duty for 40 hour per week reported domestic violence interaction. However, an escalated 47% percent of the wives of the male police officials who were on duty for more than 50 hours weekly reported violent interaction. Neidig et al. (1992) were of the view that the escalated violent interaction was caused by the stressors from shift work, over time duties, and departmental politics. Furthermore, Johnson et al. (2005) discovered that the extreme consumption of alcohol increased the hazard for dangerous domestic violence encounters as well as self-destruction ideation.

About 134 police members were put through assessment for duty fitness in the research by Janik and Kravitz (1994). Within the officers that were assessed, psychiatric records indicated that 55% (n=74) of police officers have attempted to commit suicide. However, the other 60 police members (45%) were known to misbehaving but there was no traced intention to commit suicide. Additional examination reported that the group of officer who had suicidal tendencies also were revealed to be having marital hardships compared to the other police members with no suicidal thoughts and behavior. The logistic regression evaluation reported that police members who had family and marital issues and also attempted to commit suicide were roughly five times (OR¹4.8) more prone to be associated with risky behavior of terminating their lives than the group that never attempted to commit suicide. Chae and Boyle (2013:101), were of the view that “the combination of work problems, relational issues, and mental health concerns collectively predicted suicidal ideation”. The excessive stress experienced by the police officers due to work related issues combined by other dangerous factor can extensively increase the risk of exhibiting aggressive and violent behavior with intimate partners and the family members. Lott (2007) contends that the utilization of psycho-training and suicide anticipation programs must turn into a fundamental segment of the hierarchical structure of law authorization offices.

The causes of police officer suicide are wide and varied across the world. Table 2.1 below summarizes the suicide causal factors that affect police officers globally.

Table 2.1: International causal factors of suicide

Contributing factors	Literature review		National media research		Combined	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Legal trouble	0	0.0	59	21.2	59	14.8
Relationship problems	41	13.8	28	10.4	69	17.3
General personal problems	0	00	18	6.7	18	4.5
Work-related stress	13	10.2	14	5.3	27	6.8
Death of fellow officer	0	0.0	5	1.9	5	1.3
Death of friend/family member	0	0.0	5	1.9	5	1.3
Critical incident	7	5.4	0	0.0	7	1.8

Physical pain/illness	3	2.3	4	1.5	7	1.8
Shame over minor work problem	0	0.0	4	1.5	4	1.0
Financial problems	9	7.0	2	0.7	11	2.8
Psychological problems	16	12.4	0	0.0	16	4.0
Alcohol abuse	6	4.7	0	0.0	6	1.5
Unknown	30	23.4	97	36.1	127	31.9

Source: <http://www.policeone.com/health-fitness/articles/137133-Police-Officer-Suicide-Frequency-and-officer-profiles>, 2001

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study was Emile Durkheim's (1966) theory of suicide. Durkheim proposes two social forces that impact suicide, which are solidarity and social control. It is argued that these forces impact the shot of a man taking his/her own particular life. Durkheim (1966) alludes to solidarity as a level of connectedness a man feels to others in the earth, and social control as social instruments that manage a man's activities.

Durkheim (in Rose, 2015) identifies four types of suicide that are the end result of low solidarity as well as exceptionally high solidarity and that are related to levels of social control. These types of suicide are: egoistic, altruistic, fatalistic and anomic suicide. These types of suicide are discussed in the following sub-sections.

2.4.1 Durkheim's type of suicide

Egoistic suicide occurs when the individual is disintegrated from society or from social groupings. Durkheim (in Mashela, 2012) argues that when a person is lacking solidarity, that person is likely to commit suicide. However, Durkheim (1966:376) emphasizes that not all loners are suicidal, but that it has been shown that low levels of solidarity increase the probability of egoistic suicide. He further states that there are a number of different factors that influence individuals to commit suicide. As far back as 1951, Spaulding and Simpson (1951) articulated that suicide rates were higher in male police members than female police members, higher for the individuals who were not married than for the individuals who were married, higher for individuals without kids than for those with kids, higher with combatants

than among regular employees, and higher during the peaceful times as compared to the times of war.

Durkheim (1966) also argues that social factors are the causes of suicide and that individual personality does not determine whether one will commit suicide or not. According to the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (1996), the most important role of the police officer is to take care of the community, yet no one is taking care of police officers. The researcher is of the view that when police members are disintegrated and they do not have anyone to talk to, they resort to suicide. Mashela (2012) suggests that the ability to willingly seek help might assist in diminishing suicide in different people's lives.

Altruistic suicide occurs when the levels of solidarity are extremely high. With this type of suicide, a person is entirely connected to the group and she/he views the best interest of the group as superior to all other interests (Chae & Boyle, 2013:91). Blumenthal (1990:691) argues that "altruistic suicide occurs as a result of society's expectations of the individual". Under this type of suicide, the police member is expected to protect the community regardless of how dangerous the situation is. According to the FBI Law Enforcement Law Bulletin (1996), police officers are told to take control of everything during their training sessions. The article adds that police officers respond to the community when the situation is unpleasant, which also indicates that the community regards the police as the masters of everything as well. The researcher is of the view that, once the police members have failed to protect the community, they resort to suicide as their best alternative as they do not want to be viewed as failures because of the strong solidarity they have with the community and the police department.

Fatalistic suicide is associated with the level of a person's social control of situations (Spaulding & Simpson, 1951). In modern times, Mashela (2012) asserts that this type of suicide occurs when an individual is over regulated by society. For instance, a police officer might feel oppressed and powerless in front of his or her commander, and failure to cope with the stress might contribute to the officer committing suicide. Durkheim (in Mashela, 2012) emphasizes that this form of suicide takes place when a person feels that his or her future is miserable.

Anomic suicide is caused by a lack of moral discipline. Anomic suicide refers to the social instability caused by economic and social disorder. Durkheim (in Mashela, 2012) argues that anomic suicide would be increased by new situations and these adjustments in turn result in a

change of societal rules and norms. For example, an assumption related to this type of suicide is that police officers might take their own lives because of economic instability or societal disorders. In this context, the researcher is of the opinion that when a police officer is about to face disciplinary measures, anomic suicide is most likely to occur because there is a high probability of losing the job which will ultimately lead to losing police power and status. However, some police officers might have the same problems but they might not commit suicide.

2.5 Methods of Suicide

According to a study that was conducted in 16 countries involving the European Alliance Against Depression, hanging was found to be the most popular method used to commit suicide by both males and females. This was followed by the use of firearms, especially by men. The use of poisonous gas and jumping from high places occupied the third and fourth positions respectively (Suicide Methods in Europe, 2008). Results with a similar pattern were also found in the study conducted by the Oxford University for Suicide (2008).

In South Africa, Smith, Segal and Robinson (n.d.) indicate that the use of firearms is popular in suicide incidences while hanging and the use of poisonous gases also recorded high percentages. However, the issue of which method is used in terminating one's own life is dependent on the availability of and accessibility to a particular method at a particular point in time. According to Mashela (2012:23), firearms might be a popular self-slaughtering tool because their affordability makes them available to working class people.

2.6 Suicide Prevention Strategies in the South African Police Services

The contemporary police force, more than ever before, is exposed to crimes that pose a serious threat to officers and others due to their "own anger, fear, vulnerability, depression or lack of emotional control" (James & Gilliland, 2005:578). Police officials should be accorded the necessary support so that they will be able to cope in their work environment. Baker and Baker (1996:69) indicate that future research should focus on supportive measures that can be adopted in police departments in order to reduce police suicide. Baker and Baker (1996:69) also recommend a renewed commitment in the establishment of suicide prevention

workshops. Officials with leadership positions within the police service need to be the first beneficiaries of such workshops so that they can serve as motivators to encourage their subordinates. This study proposes that police management has to take part in putting measures in place that will reduce and possibly curb police suicide. Some studies found that although a suicide prevention programme had been put in place, some officials still resisted the programme and therefore needed continued encouragement in order to take part. Violanti (1996:16-22) found that some law enforcement agents refused to attend awareness sessions and workshops and simply walked out of the lecture room while the session was still in progress. In addition, she found that some officials refused to be referred when they had problems and pretended that their problems were under control. In most instances, referrals for psychological support came too late.

In view of the above, it is therefore proposed that the government, together with non-government organisations, make joint efforts in educating officials about suicide, its warning signs and symptoms, and how it can be prevented. The government and non-governmental organisations can start introducing awareness campaigns within the police department in order to educate officials about how to deal with the challenges of life in general. Assignment officials or social workers within the department should be taught the skills of how and when to refer others to get professional help. The focus of such awareness campaigns should be on educating police officials on the importance of early identification of problems and obtaining knowledge about where to go for help.

Awareness campaigns on suicide prevention should also focus on efforts taken by the multidisciplinary team (social workers, church members and psychologists) to improve co-ordination and collaboration amongst police officials. The strong bond amongst them might contribute to the respect accorded to their services by officials. In addition, awareness campaigns should emphasize the ability of police management to track potential suicides and suicide attempts and to keep record of their findings.

By employing the above approach, suicide statistics will determine the type of preventative measures to be put in place in an attempt to reduce suicide. It has been emphasized that suicide prevention programmes should be responsive to the needs of different people in terms of age, culture and gender within the police service. However, there have been challenges related to awareness campaigns and the education of officials. According to Erasmus, Loedolff and Nel (2006:228), training of personnel in most departments fails for various

reasons. For example, it is difficult to motivate police officials to attend training sessions, management often does not support training programmes, no rewards are offered for those who attend training programmes, there is insufficient time to execute training programmes, and the work environment fails to support new behaviours that are acquired through training.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature that was related to this study. The reviewed literature revealed that it is not only South Africa that faces the challenge of suicide among its law enforcement agents, but that it is an international challenge. The chapter presented various definitions of the concept of suicide, an overview discussion of the suicide concept, and the possible causes of suicide. The chapter further presented a discussion on possible preventative strategies to address suicide by police members. The next chapter presents the research methodology that was employed in the study.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on an illumination of the qualitative research methodology that was employed in this study. The interpretive paradigm and qualitative case study research design of this study are discussed. The sampling procedures, how access was gained to the study site and the participants, and the research ethics are also elucidated and the data collection and analysis strategies and the trustworthiness of the study are discussed.

3.2 Qualitative Research and Research Goals

The qualitative research methodology is based on the naturalistic phenomenological philosophy that considers reality as multi-layered, interactive and “a social experience” (Chindanya2011:46). In the study, this involved the use of multi-method strategies of data collection involving structured and semi-structured interviews in which open-ended questions were asked to study police officers’ perceptions on police suicide in the DMPS.

A qualitative research methodology was chosen because it allowed the researcher to derive meaning from the research participants’ perspective (De Vos, 1998; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study focused on the perceptions of police suicide in the DMPS with the view of identifying the causes as well as the ways that may be adopted to reduce police suicide rates not only in this municipality, but also in the country as a whole. When the causes of police suicide were identified, it became possible to generate relevant solutions in to address this phenomenon. Within the qualitative research methodology there are a number of perspectives or paradigms. The interpretive paradigm was chosen for this study. This paradigm is briefly described and the reasons for this choice are presented in the next section.

3.3 The Interpretive Paradigm

A paradigm is understood as a world view, a general point of view, and a method for separating the unpredictability of this present reality (Babbie, 2011; Mertens, 2005). As it were, the interpretive worldview is a method for taking a gander at the world by assessing the suppositions individuals have about what is essential and what makes the world work. It is a hypothetical introduction (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007) that is persuaded by the conviction that there are imperative social elements that are ineffectively served by the rationale and discernment of the logical strategy. The logical strategy goes for finding laws and standards of general legitimacy (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). It often confines itself to the *where* and *how* and neglects the *why* (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). For instance, the logical strategy frequently fails to address why certain practices are available in a specific setting. It is along these lines open to contention that techniques fitting to normal sciences can't clarify the implications of human activities. The positivist technique strips settings of implications during the time spent creating quantitative measures of marvels. Not at all like the positivist technique, the interpretive paradigm incorporates research members' implications and understandings in the information that are gathered. It doesn't force outcasts' implications and elucidations on information (which logical enquiry does), along these lines trading off revelation (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). As indicated by Corbin and Strauss (2008:13), "qualitative researchers enjoy serendipity and discovery" and resonate to "the endless possibilities to learn more about people". Not at all like quantitative analysts, subjective specialists don't need remove amongst themselves and their members, however need the chance to "associate with them at a human level" (Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

This review perceives that the reasons for police suicide are setting based and along these lines methodologies to manage them should be setting based. In this view, the interpretive strategy was esteemed applicable on the grounds that it completely considers the importance of setting in connection to significance. It expect that all human activity is important and must be translated and comprehended inside the setting of social practices. With regards to the interpretive custom, the analyst looked to comprehend members' translations of their general surroundings (Cohen and Manion, 1994), with reference to the impression of police officers on suicide inside the DMPS.

As the researcher looked to get to the implications that the participant's alloted to the matter being examined, he communicated with the informants and made information that was value-based and subjective in nature (Rezal, 2007). As such, the principal investigator and the informants shared the similar traits to be mediators or sense-producers. This truly implied, as an interpretive researcher, this scientist looked for a mutual comprehension with the participants in regards to what constituted the reasons for police suicide inside the DMPS, what the police officials' perceptions on suicide were, which challenging that disturbing the process of reducing police suicide, and what number of stumbling blocks that can be overpowered. In quest for that mutual comprehension, the principal investigator was cognizant of the fact that historical, ethnical and societal values could affect the point of view and interpretations of the principal investigator and the participants (Rezal, 2007). Perhaps, a number of participants assumed that management should encourage police officials to trust social workers and psychologists to whom they are referred to, to provide them with advice and counseling and thus make necessary interventions. However, there was also the contestable belief that if managers got involved too much in the affairs of their subordinates, they would risk losing their authority and respect.

As indicated by the interpretive paradigm, all learning is point of view bound and incomplete. Cohen and Manion (1994) loan credibility to this moment that they battle that activities are significant to the degree that one can find out the expectations of performing artists (i.e., the members) and in this manner share their encounters.

Because the intention of this study was to have an understanding of police perceptions on suicide within the DMPS (Rezal, 2007), the paradigm that was chosen assumed a representational methodology which emphasizes review in natural settings. Hence, the study employed more than one method of data collection at the best comfortability of the participants.

This approach permitted the principal investigator to set up what the informants viewed as positive and negative impacts of the involvement of counsellors and social workers within the DMPS. In brief, the study was situated inside the interpretive worldview with the perspective of increasing comprehension of the subject matter (i.e., the perceptions of suicide among members of the DMPS) and to analyse meaning within the social and cultural context of the natural setting. The principal investigator made means to elicit the thoughts of the participants on the subject matter through the use of interviews and focus group discussion.

The interpretive paradigm was intended to permit the principal investigator to grasp the perceptions of the causes of police suicide and to suggest mechanisms to solve this problem.

In the context of qualitative research, a qualitative case study was chosen for this research.

3.4 The Qualitative Case Study

The qualitative case study method was chosen because it involves the gathering of wide data in order to produce a greater understanding of the subject that is being researched (Borg & Gall, 1989). It enables a researcher to investigate an ongoing occurrence within a real life context using numerous sources (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005) in order to produce a case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007). It allows a researcher to probe deeply and to analyze a phenomenon intensively (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

Therefore, in order to be able to make sound recommendations at the end of this research study, the researcher desired to absolutely understand what the informants viewed to be the causes of police suicide and what they thought needed to be done to effectively address the causes of police suicide. This made the case study approach appropriate for the study at hand as it allowed the research to focus on contextual meaning-making rather than on generalized rules (Babbie, 2013). In other words, the researcher concentrated on making and generating meaning within a context.

Furthermore, a case study examines individuals or small groups within naturalistic settings (O'Hanlon, 2003) which is an approach that allows the researcher to discover rich data about the phenomenon being investigated. To achieve this, the researcher deals with real people and events in real situations (Cohen, Manion & Morris, 2000).

In the context of the current study, the intense probing characteristic of the case study led to the finding of previously unanticipated relationships associated to police suicide (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1996) and given a principal investigator a chance to elicit rich explanation of the participants' experiences and perceptions of this phenomenon (Cohen, Manion & Morris, 2000). In other words, the case study made it possible to get a detailed description of the participants' perceptions on the importance of curbing police suicide within the DMPS. This was done by means of semi-structured interviews, open-ended questions in focus group discussions, and participant observation.

3.5 Research Site

The study site was Durban in the KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. It comprises a total area of 225.9 square kilometres with a population density of 884.34 households per square kilometre (Census; 2011). The eThekweni municipality is divided into five regions. In all these five regions there are Durban Metro Police Service stations; for instance, in the central region there is the Headquarters of DMPS which also houses its specialized enforcement units such as Public Transport, Warrants, Freeway, Abnormal Loads, Speed Timing, Dog Unit, Mounted (horse) Unit, and the Alcohol Evidence Centre. Police stations are located in Albert Park and Boscombe Place. Police stations in the southern region are located in Isipingo, Umlazi and Chatsworth. In the Outer West region there are two DMPS police stations namely Gillits and Hammersdale. In the Inner West region DMPS stations are located in Queensburgh, Westville and New Germany, and in the northern region DPMS stations are located in KwaMashu and Verulam. It was not possible to interview the entire police officer population within the study site and thus a sample was selected. The sampling procedures used for this study are described in the next section.

3.6 Sampling

The selection of a study site and the sampling of study participants are prompted by the technique of enquiry used by the researcher (Merriam, 2009). The term sampling refers to “the procedure a researcher uses to select people, places, or things to study” (Siririka, 2007:34). Furthermore, he added that the quality of the findings of the study are determined by the quality of the sample.

In qualitative study a small, distinct group of participants is commonly investigated to enable the researcher to “understand the problem in depth” (Babbie, 2013:37). Purposeful sampling is usually employed. This is the process of selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study (Creswell, 2014). The participants who are chosen are “knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher is investigating” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:378) and these participants are expected to be willing to talk openly and frankly about the matter being investigated (Merriam, 2009). The study sample consisted of total of 30 participants. Distribution of the study sample is illustrated on table 3.1 and table 3.2.

Table 3.6.1.: Focus Group: Durban Metro Police Service

Focus group One (Six Participants)	Focus group two (Six Participants)	Focus group three (Six participants)
Rank: Constables x3 Sergeants x3 Inspectors x3	Rank: Captains x6	Rank: Superintendent x3 Senior Superintendent x3

Source: Author, 2016

There were three focus groups of police officials: the first group comprised of police members (three Constables, three Sergeants, and three Inspectors), the second group comprised of officers (three Superintendents and three Senior Superintendent). The groups were divided according to rank so that each group would be able to express their views and experiences freely and without fear of their seniors. This less threatening atmosphere created a free, favourable environment that yield maximum input from the participating police members.

Table 3.6.2: In-depth Interviews

Interviews (Nine Participants) DMPS
Rank: Directors X4

Deputy Chief of Police X1

Chief of Police X1

Human Resource Manager X1

Psychologist X1

Project Executive X1

Source: Author, 2016

In-depth interviews allowed the researcher and the participants to explore additional questions for clarity. It also allowed the participants to express their thoughts and perceptions regarding the questions, as suggested by Maree (2007). The in-depth interviews were conducted with six senior police officials (four Directors, one Deputy Chief of Police and one Chief of Police) and three civilian staff members (a Human Resource Manager, a Psychologist, and a Project Executive).

3.6.1 Background of the Participants

A total of 30 participants took part in this research. A total of nine participants responded to the in-depth interviews as key informants while a total of 21 participants were interviewed as members of three separate focus groups. The first group comprised six participants (see Table 3.2), group two comprised six participants (see Table 3.3), while the third group comprised nine participants (see Table 3.4). English was used as the medium of communication.

In-depth interviews were conducted with Directors, a Deputy Chief of police, the Chief of Police, a Human Resource Manager, a Psychologist, and a Project Executive. For ethical reasons, the participants are referred to by pseudonym.

Of the nine key informants who responded to the in-depth interviews, eight were males while only one participant was a female. All the participants were above the age of forty. There were three Africans, two Whites, three Indians and one Coloured participant. A total of seven of the key participants held university degrees while only two had diplomas. Two were

divorced while the other seven were married. The average years of service in the Durban Metro Police Service was 22.6 years.

The study also made use of focus group discussions. A total of three focus groups were used as detailed in the tables below. Focus Group One: The first focus group comprised of Superintendents and Senior Superintendents. A total of six participants were interviewed.

The table below illustrate the profile of key participants.

Table 3.6.3: Profile of Key Participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Race	Educational level	Marital status	No. of years at DMPS
Participant 1	Male	55	African	Degree	Married	14
Participant 2	Male	56	white	Degree	Married	26
Participant 3	Male	57	African	Diploma	Married	32
Participant 4	Male	50	Indian	Diploma	Married	30
Participant 5	Male	49	Coloured	Degree	Married	18
Participant 6	Male	55	White	Degree	Divorced	33
Participant 7	Male	58	Indian	Degree	Divorced	35
Participant 8	Male	51	African	Degree	Married	09
Participant 9	Female	42	Indian	Degree	Married	07

Source: Author, 2016

Three female and three male participants were interviewed in this group. All the participants were above the age of forty. Three were still married; two were divorced while one participant (age 54) was still single. All the participants held university degrees except one who had a diploma. The average number of years of service within the Durban Metro Police Service was 20.3 years. Table 3.6.4 bellow illustrate the above information.

Table 3.6.4.: Focus Group One

Participants	Gender	Age	Race	Educational level	Marital status	No. of years atDMPS
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Participant 1	Female	48	Coloured	Degree	Divorced	21
Participant 2	Female	60	African	Degree	Divorced	21
Participant 3	Female	54	African	Degree	Single	18
Participant 4	Male	46	African	Degree	Married	22
Participant 5	Male	43	African	Degree	Married	19
Participant 6	Male	41	Indian	Diploma	Married	21

Source: Author, 2016.

Focus Group 2: The second focus group comprised of the Captains. A total number of six participants took part in focus group discussion. All the participants in this focus group (two) were Captains in the DMPS. The gender composition was three males and three females. All the Captains were above the age of forty. Two were Africans, two were Indians, one was Coloured, while only one was White. A total of four participants held diplomas while two held university degrees. Three participants were single while the other three were married. The average years of service in the Durban Metro Police Service was 20 years. The table below illustrate the above information.

Table 3.6.5: Focus Group Two

Participants	Gender	Age	Race	Educational level	Marital status	No. of years at DMPS
Participant 1	Male	44	African	Degree	Married	23
Participant 2	Male	44	Indian	Degree	Married	20
Participant 3	Female	47	Coloured	Diploma	Single	21
Participant 4	Female	41	Indian	Diploma	Single	21
Participant 5	Female	43	White	Diploma	Married	18
Participant 6	Male	46	African	Diploma	Single	18

Source: Author, 2016

Focus Group 3: The third focus group comprised of Inspectors, Sergeants and Constables. A total of nine participants that participated in the focus group discussion.

Table 3.6.6: Focus Group Three

Participants	Gender	Age	Race	Educational level	marital status	No. of years at DMPS
Participant 1	Male	38	Indian	Diploma	Married	17
Participant 2	Male	48	African	Diploma	Single	19
Participant 3	Male	53	African	Certificate	Single	19
Participant 4	Male	45	African	Certificate	Married	18
Participant 5	Male	43	Indian	Certificate	Married	20
Participant 6	Female	37	African	Degree	Single	16
Participant 7	Female	33	African	Degree	Married	07
Participant 8	Male	35	African	Diploma	Single	07
Participant 9	Male	34	Coloured	Diploma	Single	08

Source: Author, 2016

The third focus group comprised of Inspectors, Sergeants and Constables. Of the nine members of this group, seven were males while only two were females. A total of six were Africans, two were Indians and one was Coloured. All the participants in this group were above the age of 30. A total of four held diplomas, three held certificates, while two had a university degree. Four of the participants were married while five were still single. There were no divorced participants in this focus group. The average years of service in the Durban Metro Police Service was 13.8 years.

3.6.2 Purposeful sampling

Purposeful sampling involves the selection of the participants that better understand the subject that is discussed in the research at hand (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Judgmental sampling technique allows the researcher to choose participants that the sample will be based on, which is the researcher's judgement of their typicality (Merriam, 2009). It is comprehensive of sampling by case (a procedure where the researcher chooses irregular cases

that will no doubt yield the data that is required), system or snowball inspecting (which is member referral where each progressive member or gathering is named by a former gathering or individual– the researcher recognizes and builds up a specific profile of qualities or characteristics that is looked for and every member is made a request to propose different members who may fit the profile), far reaching sampling (a procedure where every member or gathering, setting or other applicable data is analyzed), and most extreme variety examining (which is a technique to speak to sub units of the real unit) (Creswell, 2014; Babbie, 2013; Bryman, 2012). Network sampling (also known as snowball or chain reference sampling) and sampling by case were employed to select the participants for this research.

3.6.3 Network sampling and sampling by case

Using network sampling, the researcher began by identifying and developing a profile of the attributes or traits of the participants who were sought for this study (Hoberg, 1999). Then, with the help of three insiders (senior managers), six individuals who had the characteristics the researcher required were identified (Hoberg, 1999). Thus, the total number of the key informants was nine (Table 3.2). The members of the focus groups were also chosen in the same manner (Table 3.1). The inclusion characteristics of participants are indicated in section 3.6.2.1 below. The three managers who were originally identified therefore gone about as witnesses who recommended different members who may, as per their judgment, fit the built up profile.

3.6.3.1 Inclusion profile and attributes of the Superintendents

The criteria for inclusion of the Superintendents were that they had to:

- Have more than 10 years' experience in the DMPS
- Hold a degree or diploma in policing
- Be above the age of eighteen
- Be keen to be interviewed
- Be prepared to complete the interviews.

3.6.3.2 Inclusion profile of the Captains

The criteria for inclusion of the Captains were that they had to:

- Hold a management qualification
- Have at least five years' experience

- Be eager to be interviewed
- Be prepared to complete the interviews.

3.6.3.3 Profile of the Constables/Sergeants/Inspectors

The criteria for inclusion of the Constables/Sergeants/Inspectors were that they had to:

- Minimum of five years serving in police department (DMPS)
- Having an understanding of police suicide
- Be eager to participate
- Be prepared to finish the interviews.

Having chosen the study site and research informants, the issue of accessing the investigation setting and addressing the ethical issues were tended to.

3.7 Research Ethics and Gaining Access

This section provides a discussion on the ethical considerations that applied to this study.

3.7.1 Gaining access

Prior to the data collection the permission was granted after seeking the consent of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) (Appendix Two), the DMPS (Appendix Three), and the possible informants (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). The authorisation of the individuals who participated in the study was required from the participants, not through third parties to ensure that they participate in the study voluntarily and willingly. The participants (potential) were made aware of the aim of the study and what were the expectations of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Aryt et al., 1996). The nature of the investigation and the envisaged purposes of the results were clearly explained (Marshall & Rossman (2011). The potential participants were informed about the process of data collection which included recording, signing of the informed consent together with declaration of consent (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The researcher was willing to listen to any of the discomforts from the research participants pertaining the process of data collection, even if it take to decline the participation in the study.

3.7.2 Research ethics

Ethics in research are values of right and wrong that a particular group (such as a researcher) accepts (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Such values compel the principal investigator to respect the rights, dignity, privacy and sensitivity of participants (Ary et al., 1996). Essential issues in research ethics encompass safety of the participant/s, protection of the participants from any physical and emotional victimisation, right to privacy, and most importantly the consent to participation (Babbie, 2013). When conducting studies human or animals as subject, ethical principles must be adhered to, and research may not be conducted if those ethical process are not followed. Conducting a research without full approval by the ethics committee of a concerned institution is unacceptable and such study cannot be published in 'reputable, peer reviewed science journals' (Richard, 2014). Ethical issues are concerned with conformity to the set of codes or principles by a researcher. Ethics helps the scholars to understand their responsibilities as ethical investigators and prevents research abuses. Ethics places emphasis on the humane and sensitive treatment of research participants who may be placed at varying degrees of risk by research procedure (Bless et al, 2006:140).

3.7.2.1 Informed consent

The principal investigator highlighted to the potential participants mutually in verbally and in writing that the participation in the study is chiefly voluntary (Christians, 2005) and that they are free to withdraw from the study anytime if they are not comfortable to continue (Babbie, 2013; Creswell, 2014). The consent form is attached as Appendix Four. The researcher clearly stipulated that forming part of this research would have no consequences for any participants. The way of the review, its points, conceivable preferences to every member and dangers, risks and commitments that would be included were additionally uncovered to the participants (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001; Cohen, et al., 2003). This implied their assent depended on full and open data (Christians, 2005). This data was verbally conveyed to the potential participants when they were welcome to take an interest in the review. They were likewise educated that the examination discoveries would be distributed yet that their personalities would be secured. The participants were given the chance to look for illumination on any matter of worry to them (Babbie, 2013; Bryman, 2012). As Bryman (2012) advises, alert was taken to guarantee that educating informants was not done in a way

that would negate the study discoveries. At the end of the day, the informants were not made to think or feel that they needed to reply in certain ways.

3.7.2.2 The right to privacy

With regards to right to privacy, the principal researcher informed the participants verbally and in writing that their right to anonymity would be completely respected (Babbie, 2011) and that pseudo names would be used in the research report. The participants were guaranteed that privacy will be extremely maintained as the subject of the study was very sensitive. Creswell (2014) and Christians (2005) caution that exposure of secret data could end up being most unsafe and harming to a distinctive individual. Along these lines, consolation of security would likewise work to the researcher's leverage as participants would perpetually react all the more genuinely to inquiries and exchanges. To secure the participants pride and personality, the analyst guaranteed that all the exploration material that was gathered would be remained careful even after the end of the research (Creswell, 2007; Christians, 2005).

3.7.2.3 Protection from harm

The participants were informed and were provided with informed consent and the declaration of consent, this was done to ensure that participants are protected from any harm either emotional, social, physical and verbal (Creswell, 2007). The participants were made aware that they were going to be treated with dignity and their rights respected by the researcher, and will not be humiliated in anyway. The questions that would be asked would not be insulting or intended to insult or unnecessarily upsetting. Prior the start of the discussion or interviews the principal investigator emphasised that the participants should signal if they feel embarrassed, insulted or not comfortable with disclosing some certain information (Babbie, 2013). Additionally, the researcher made it clear to the participants that they are free to withdraw anytime when they feel their safety, comfortability is compromised.

3.8 Data Collection Strategies

This study employed qualitative methodology, where individual interviews and focus group discussions were used to elicit rich data from the targeted population. Following are the reasons for the use of these data collection techniques:

3.8.1 Unstructured interviews

An unstructured interview was conducted with each voluntary participant in an effort to establish the participant's viewpoints and insights concerning police suicide at DMPS. With its greater flexibility and freedom, the unstructured interview best fitted the qualitative paradigm that was employed in this study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). It allowed the researcher to gain understanding, in considerable detail, of what senior managers and captains thought about police suicide and how they came to develop the perceptions they held. As opposed to utilize a detailed guide, the investigator utilized a general arrangement, made inquiries and made remarks that were intended to direct the informant toward offering information to meet the study objectives. The interviews were conducted in English. A portion of the inquiries utilized as a part of the semi-organized and focus group discussions were considered as a outcome of the unstructured interviews.

3.8.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Constables, Sergeants and Inspectors in a focus group interview to better understand their views on police suicide. The aim was to elicit their understanding of the effects of suicide, how they dealt with it within the DMPS, what they thought were barriers to efforts meant for reducing the problem, and what they thought needed to be done in order to deal with police suicide in the municipality.

The semi-structured interviews (lasting about sixty minutes each) permitted for important communication amongst the investigator and the informants. The advantage of the interview method was that, while it was rationally objective, it also allowed a more methodical perceptive of the informants opinions and reasons behind them that would have been impossible using mailed questionnaires. The semi-structured interviews combined objectivity and depth and generated valuable data that would not have been productively acquired had

any other approach been used (Creswell, 2014). The interviews allowed the principal investigator to obtain momentous information through a comprehensive approach in the form of unrestricted questions.

The topic title of the study was introduced by the principal investigator. The discussion was guided by the researcher with the aid of the interview guide, however the participants were free to elaborate on the questions asked by the researcher. Though the interview guide was used to guide the research but the researcher had follow up question to probe for further information as permitted by the semi-structured data collection technique.

3.8.3 The semi-structured interview guide

The semi-structured interview guide allowed the researcher to elicit the deep information that was desired to cover the objective of the study (Babbie, 2013; Bryman, 2012). The question that the researcher asked were listed in the semi-structured interview guide, and they were arranged in logic that the researcher preferred. The interview guide also assisted the researcher with the manner of opening and closing the interview. The questions were asked as they appeared in the guide but the interviewer had the latitude to pursue an additional range of topics depending on the direction that the interview took. The interview schedule that was used to guide this study is attached as Appendix four.

3.8.4 Personal journal

The personal journal was used as part of the observation process. It increased the complexity of the data attained through observation as the investigator recorded his personal elucidations that could depict any preconceived notion (Creswell, 2007). The researcher kept a personal journal or reflexive log in which he recorded accounts of his thoughts, feelings, assumptions, motives, and rationale for decisions. Ary et al. (1996:479) proclaim that this is “one way the qualitative inquirer addresses the issue of the inquiry being value-bound”. The posture, expression, feeling and the way informants carried themselves and the way they behaved throughout the interviews and focus group discussions was written in the personal journal of the principal investigator; this would help the researcher when analysing the data for the study.

3.9 Data Analysis

Qualitative research often produces a huge body of data (Creswell, 2009) that need to be sorted out. This process includes manually organizing and splitting the information. Additionally it involves separating information into significant sections, (Babbie, 2011).

Information gathering, examination and recording should not to be considered in detachment yet rather as interrelated concurrent methods that are progressing (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Creswell, 2007). This means that the collection of data, analysis of data are carried through concurrently. As a result the principal investigator mirrored on the sense of the information received (seen and heard) from the first interview, “developing hunches (working hypothesis) about what it means and seeking to confirm or disconfirm those hunches in subsequent interviews or observations” (Ary et al., 1996:481). This is inductive data analysis (i.e., proceeding from data to hypothesis to theory).

Saunders et al. (2009) clarify the idea of information examination by clarifying it as the procedure of deductively looking and positioning interview transcripts, field notes and different materials that the investigator gathers to expand his/her comprehension of them and to empower him/her to present what he/she has found to others. The nature of qualitative research, data analysis is a thorough procedure including working with the information, sorting it out into reasonable units, arranging, looking at, orchestrating it, scanning for examples, finding what is imperative and what is to be realized and choosing what the

principal investigator will tell others (Creswell, 2014; Babbie, 2013; Bryman, 2012). It is imperative that qualitative researcher incorporate the operations of arranging, examining and interpretation of data and call the whole procedure data analysis (Babbie, 2013).

One method for arranging subjective information, which this researcher utilized, was to create and utilize coding classifications. Marshall and Rossman (2006) allude to coding of information as the formal representation of investigative considering. As per them, producing classifications and subjects constitutes the intense scholarly work of investigation. Since coding is not an only specialized undertaking, as information is coded new understandings may develop in this way requiring conformities or changes to the first arrangement. The researcher started coding not long after the primary meetings were finished in light of the fact that the principal information filled in as an establishment for ensuing information accumulation and examination (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). The researcher read through the information taking note of specific words, phrases, examples of conduct, subjects' state of mind, and occasions that were rehashed or which emerged. Regularities, examples and subjects rose. The words and expressions alluded to above are coding classifications. They are the method for sorting the unmistakable information gathered (Babbie, 2011).

According to (Chindanya, 2002), some coding classes will develop while information are being gathered. These coding classifications should be scribbled down for some time later. Specific research questions and concerns additionally create classifications. Chindanya (2002) recommends various coding families that will give the researcher a few apparatuses for creating coding classes that will, thusly, be useful in sorting out subjective information. The researcher utilized a portion of the codes portrayed underneath as proposed by Chindanya (2002) close by new codes that were recommended by the rising information:

- *Definition of situation codes*: The aim is to identify units of data that tell the researcher how the subjects define the setting or particular topics – their worldview, how they see themselves in relation to the setting or the topic;
- *Perspectives held by subjects codes*: This includes codes oriented towards ways of thinking that subjects share and that are as general as their overall definition of the situation but that indicate orientations toward particular aspects of a setting;
- *Subjects' way of thinking about people and objects codes*: The subjects' understandings of each other, of outsiders, and of objects that make up their world;

- *Process codes*: This is the coding words and phrases that facilitate categorizing sequences of events, changes over time, or passages from one type or kind of status to another;
- *Activity codes*: These are codes that are directed at regularly occurring kinds of behaviour;
- *Strategy codes*: Tactics, methods, ways, techniques, etc.;
- *Relationships and social structure codes*: Units of data that direct one to cliques, friendships, coalitions, enemies, etc.

These codes gave the researcher ideas of what to look for when coding.

3.9.1 The process of data analysis

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), analysis involves interpretation and suggests the investigator's comprehension of occasions as related by the informants. In this study, information investigation was accomplished by method for analyzing the reactions of every informants that had been part of the study. In dissecting the information, the researcher took after the means (the consistent near strategy) displayed by Maykut, Maykut, and Morehouse (1994).

The steps followed in this research are outlined below:

Step 1: Conducting the interview, recording it and reflecting on it in writing immediately after the interview and augmenting it by carrying out observations, writing field notes, and observer comments

Step 2: Transcribing data verbatim immediately after the interview and placing additional comments in brackets

Step 3: Reading through the data and coding of data according to emerging categories

Step 4: Unitizing the data and identifying units of meaning in the context of the research questions and the topic

Step 5: Identifying provisional categories and sub categories (the phenomena represented by a category were given conceptual names), matching unitized data cards to a category

Step 6: Refining categories and making a list of key items (main ideas), words, and phrases, doing a literature check to confirm whether the respondents' responses during the interview

bore some similarities to the research topic and what other respondents concluded in similar studies. This was a final check for *validity*.

To sum things up, in the means illustrated over, the reactions created amid the meetings were translated verbatim from the audiotape. The utilization of an audiotape is honorable to the degree that it encourages both the accumulation and investigation of information as assumptions are disposed of (Creswell, 2009). An inductive examination of the information was completed to uncover the creating topics that rose up out of the meetings. As indicated by Saunders et al. (2009), inductive examination includes the disclosure of examples, topics, and classifications in one's information. It is not at all like deductive information investigation where systematic classifications are stipulated in advance as indicated by a current structure. The steady near strategy was utilized where the specialist first read the information over rapidly to yield an impressionistic perspective of repetitive topics/classes produced by the information (Babbie, 2011; Creswell, 2014). At this stage the point was to use the information "to think with". This provisional examination was trailed by serious and rehashed perusing of the reactions. "Perusing, rehashing, and perusing the information again" (a procedure frequently alluded to as inundation in the information) constrained the analyst to wind up "personally acquainted with those information" (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:158).

The escalated and rehashed perusing helped with conquering the issue of relating the material too hurriedly to individual questions and to stay away from over-looking material whose connection to the researcher's question (demonstrating the scientist's own desires or earlier convictions) was not promptly self-evident (Flick, 2005). The asking of questions in connection to the information and making correlations was utilized as the primary scientific procedure for explaining the examination, as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008). It should be noticed that, as classes and subjects were created and coding was well in progress, the researcher began making integrative understandings of what had been realized. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006:161-162), interpretation "brings meaning and coherence to the themes, patterns, categories, developing linkages and a story line that makes sense and is engaging to read."

To represent the openness of the discussions/ interviews, the author did not just considered classifications or redundant topics proposed by the question introduced to the participants,

additionally considered the "new" subjects/classifications that had not been anticipated in the interview guide but rather that appeared from the gathered information – thus the utilization of open coding which accommodated inspecting the interviews in detail. The analytic process of generating categories and themes required “a heightened awareness of the data, a focused attention to this data, and openness to the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:158-159). Through delayed engagement with the information (text), the researcher produced the classes which enhanced those recommended by the questions exhibited to the informants. Classification cohort included taking note of examples apparent in the setting as communicated by the informants.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability were also important aspects in this study. The study adopted criterion validity for the purpose of measuring the theoretical concept that was applied in the study. There are several criteria for validity. However, for the purpose of this study, concurrent validity was adopted. Concurrent validity allows the possibility of distinguishing among individuals (Drost, n.d:106). Police members and officers employed by the DMPS who had had five years’ and more work experience in the police department were chosen as participants. By utilising knowledgeable participants, the researcher had the advantage of measuring the exact construct he wanted to measure.

Reliability is defined by Drost (n.d:106) as “the extent to which measurements are repeatable when different persons perform the measurements, on different occasions, under different conditions, with supposedly alternative instruments which measure the same thing.” The results of this study were reliable because the construct that was measured had been clearly conceptualized and operationalized.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research paradigm, the research design and the approach that was used in the undertaking of this study. The qualitative research methodology was chosen as the most appropriate research design as it would most likely facilitate the generation and transformation of raw data into new knowledge in terms of the topic under investigation. The

sampling procedures for the case study, research ethics, data collection methods and data analysis procedures were all carefully considered to assure the trustworthiness of the study. Chapter Four focuses on data presentation.

Chapter Four

Findings

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research methodology that was used for the study. This chapter presents the data that were generated from semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, questionnaires, field notes and a personal journal. The data include information pertaining to suicide victims such as rank, gender, age, education level and marital status. The chapter makes an extensive use of quotations (comments, remarks and statements) so as to provide a qualitative ‘feel’ of the responses. These quotations are presented verbatim; therefore no effort was made to edit the language in an effort to maintain the authentic expressions and views of the participants and to give credence to their voices. The quotations reflect common rather than distinctive responses.

The chapter is divided into six broad sections of which this introduction is the first. Section 4.2 presents the background of the participants of the study. Section 4.3 provides the findings that were gathered during fieldwork. The perceptions and attitudes of the participants towards suicide are detailed in this section. In the section 4.4, the themes that emerged are discussed while section 4.5 provides the general comments made by the participants during the interviews on suicide and suicide attempts. This then leads to section 4.6 which is the conclusion of the chapter.

4.2 Research Findings

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with the participants to gain insight into their general perceptions about police suicide and its causes. The findings revealed that the perceptions differed considerably between the participants who responded to the questions in the in-depth interviews and those who participated in the focus group discussions. The perceptions of police suicide and suicide in general will be presented first before the themes that emerged from the discussions will be illuminated.

4.2.1 Perceptions and experiences of suicide

The general perception about what constitutes suicide and how it can be defined differed considerably among the participants, particularly according to rank. The definition of the term 'suicide' varied across participants of various employment placements and departments. A senior key informant who was interviewed at Doves commented as follows:

Suicide, in the strictest sense of the word, is just a person taking their own life. There are certain social, religious, emotional connotations attached to it and inevitably, as a society, we tend to frown upon people who commit suicide as we see it as being weak or unable to cope and deal with their problems. [It is] mostly related to emotional stresses such as marriage, financial issues, peer pressure.¹

One chief participant simply understood suicide as follows:

Basically [it is] someone taking their own life by shooting or by overdosing - those types of things.²

Other participants, including the only psychologist who participated in the study, understood suicide according to its causes. This participant reported the following:

Alright, I think for me in terms of suicide it's about a person being in intense emotional pain where they can't handle it, where they believe at the end of the day they've got no other choice but to basically end their life. So taking their own life, you know, would lead to suicide.

Another participant of high profile also understood suicide in similar terms as those indicated above. This participant responded as follows:

There are lots of reasons. We can start with reasons such as: having family issues, spousal issues, having financial problems, having disputes with family members. Sometimes you get there...not spouses...but with the family there's issues like who is going to inherit this, etc. It can get people to commit suicide because of that. Relationship problems! I spoke about financial problems. Well,

¹ Interview with participant, 03/10/2016

² Interview with participant, 04/10/2016

sometimes there is peer pressure. Work related maybe, you know, the person can't perform and is being pressurized and they are not able to cope – [this] is also the reason they can do that.

4.2.2 Perceptions and attitudes on police suicide

Most participants' perceptions about police suicide centred on satisfaction of individual needs. This was particularly evident as most participants reported that overpowering needs of financial, social and work satisfaction were some of the major contributory factors to suicide by members of the Metro Police. According to the data, such satisfaction needs are two-fold: They are either work related or personal.

Perceptions regarding the fact that police officials commit suicide also differed. Some respondents understood and condoned suicide by Metro Police officials, while others used the strongest terms to register their disgust of the act. For example, one participant indicated that although suicide could never be justified whatever the reason or circumstances motivating it, situations arise in life that leave many people, including police officials, with very limited options. One responded commented as follows:

“Then on the opposite side you could commit suicide because of personal circumstances. You have gotten yourself into so much debt, you have three ladies pregnant and do not know which one to choose, you have taken out loans from loan sharks and in the meantime the loan shark is a drug dealer and the drug dealer wants to come and break your legs and then as a police officer to me there are two aspects. I do not believe that police officers commit suicide because of police work; they commit suicide because they have done something wrong in the police work and the rest is to me in a personal capacity.”³

Another participant revealed his disappointment in law enforcement agents who terminate their own lives in very harsh terms:

³ Interview with key participant in Durban, 02/10/2016

I think they fall in the same category with all the other people who have weak minds.⁴

This view was also reiterated by another participant holding a very senior rank within the police service. This participant commented:

I think they are cowards because there are so many organisations, so many resources and places they can go to for assistance before they can even think of killing themselves. Killing themselves is an easy way but it's a cowardly way of handling a situation. I believe there are so many ways [other] of dealing with situations than killing themselves. But people get easily taken away and they take the easy way out but they do not want to think of the consequences that they leave for their families and the kids growing up without somebody in their lives. It affects so many people's lives when somebody commits suicide.⁵

The views of the male participants differed from those of the women. While the women largely condemned that act of suicide, men had mixed reactions and views. One male participant who held a senior position in the police service stated the following:

If I have to tell you openly everybody tells people or thinks that people that commit suicide are cowards. I think that somebody that commits suicide is the greatest and bravest person ever. If you think of it, you are doing something you cannot turn back from. You jump off a building and when you are half way down you say, "I should not have done this!" and at that time you hit the pavement. I am not saying suicide is right or wrong, but there are many issues around suicide. But I do not see the people that commit suicide as being cowards; I actually see them as very brave even though I think it leaves other people unhappy.⁶

⁴ Interview with a key informant in Durban, 02/10/2016

⁵ Interview with participant in Durban, 07/10/2016

⁶ Interview with participant in Durban, 05/10/2016

4.3 Themes

A total of three major themes and sub-themes emerged from the data. The table below summarizes these major themes and sub-themes. These themes are discussed in detail in the sections that will follow later in the chapter.

Table 4.1: Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data

Major themes	Sub-themes
Perceptions on Metro Police suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The understanding of suicide • Methods of suicide • Suicide and gender • Suicide and level of education or training • Measures to prevent suicide
Causes of suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal problems • Work related problems • Utilization rate of the suicide prevention workshops
Police culture and suicide	
Suicide prevention strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of the suicide prevention workshops • Reduction of police suicide • Upgrading of the contents of suicide prevention workshops

Source: Author, 2016

4.3.1 Understanding of suicide

Many factors were cited as contributing to suicides in the Metro Police and in the police service in general. These factors ranged from personality traits and characteristics to family problems and relationships and included problems at work and other related factors. The first theme that emerged from the study was the extent to which the respondents understood the

term 'suicide'. According to the research participants, people terminate their own lives on purpose as a result of problematic situations which they personally think cannot be solved.

The following statements reflect the views of most participants with regards to their understanding of suicide:

- *“Suicide is a process where an individual is taking his or her life by killing him/herself.”*
- *“Suicide is about a person being in intense emotional pain where they can't handle it, where they believe at the end of the day they've got no other choice but to basically end their life.”*
- *“Suicide is when a person takes his or her own life; when persons kill themselves.”*
- *“Suicide in general is obviously when a person is in an unhappy space with the environment he is in that they do not see other options to remain living on the planet; hence they take an extreme measure of wanting to end their life.”*
- *“If you think of it, you are doing something you cannot turn back from; you jump off a building and when you are half way down you say, 'I should not have done this!' and at that time you hit the pavement. I am not saying suicide is right or wrong, but there are many issues around suicide.”*
- *“Suicide is an intentional method used to kill oneself as a result of exposure to problematic situations.”*

4.3.2 Methods of suicide

There was a strong perception that exposure to stressful circumstances at work or within the family highly contributed to suicidal incidences within the Durban Metro Police Service. This was deemed so particularly in the face of firearm accessibility. The participants reported that the method commonly used by officers to terminate their own lives is a firearm. Participants revealed that due to the nature of their work, the Metro Police have access to firearms. The firearm is quick and probably not very painful in performing the suicide act. One senior participant explained the use of firearms by the Metro Police in the following terms:

“Well, the easy way out is to shoot yourself. They carry a firearm – I think the thought is there. I got the firearm here, let me use it. It's accessibility of a firearm.”

When asked as why firearms were made easily accessible in the SAPS, one respondent indicated that it is “because police are supposed to have guns”.⁷

Other methods of suicide by Metro Police officers included jumping from high buildings, hanging, and also taking a medication overdose.

4.3.3 Suicide and gender

All the participants confirmed that suicide was rampant within the Durban Metro Police Service. They reported that in many stations, suicide and suicide attempt reports continued to be registered within the department. However, the participants revealed that male officials were more vulnerable to suicide or suicidal attempts when compared to their female colleagues. This bias was explained by the participants as being caused by men’s pride as they fail to disclose and communicate their problems.

In contrast, females were applauded for quickly seeking professional help in times of problematic situations. In addition, women were also commended for their ability to deal with stressful situations while men, due to jealousy and pride, were sometimes encouraged by the desire to take revenge to kill their spouses and even their children, and then themselves. There were however mixed reactions concerning this finding. While some participants thought that when compared to females, males were weak and therefore found it difficult to solve problems, it was also argued that men were more likely to kill themselves and everybody whom they regarded as obstacles or the cause of insurmountable problems in their lives. Conversely, one participant with a high-ranking profile commented as follows:

*... I think that somebody that commits suicide is the greatest and bravest person ever. I am not saying suicide is right or wrong but there are many issues around suicide. But I do not see the people that commit suicide as being cowards; I actually see them as very brave even though I think it leaves other people unhappy.*⁸

⁷ Interview with participant 27/09/2016

⁸ Interview with participant, 05/10/2016

4.3.4 Prevention measures and support services

The key informants interviewed reported that there were several mechanisms in place to assist Durban Metro police members. Such mechanisms that were referred to include the office of the Human Resource Manager, as well as the support from supervisors and managers. The participants revealed that officials who were facing personal or work related challenges were encouraged to approach these structures for assistance. In addition, they referred to other external institutions that could be approached for help, such as Careways. One participant stated:

Basically you got the person who's got issues they should be able to approach their superiors. Their superiors should be able to deal with work related matters because if it is work related matters, it is issues of operations etcetera. Let's say issues of uniforms. If supervisors can't assist, they should be able to speak to Human Resources where we can assist them in terms of policies etc. Also, we then have Careways if they don't want to speak to the supervisor or Human Resources and want somebody external. Careways can do a report, then come back to the manager and they will outline to say what they picked up; they will say the issue and how it's affecting the employee.”⁹

Another participant echoed the sentiments above, and stated the following:

The first thing to find out is if the member has challenges; if the member has challenges we have the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), Occupational Health, and ICARE where you can phone the psychologist and things like that. I think we also have a permanent psychologist that sits at Queensburgh and then of course things like drug abuse and alcohol abuse, the council has those places where you can get admitted to reduce your substance abuse.¹⁰

However, despite the existence of such facilities, Metro officials continue to face suicidal related challenges. The participants mentioned that some officials simply did not disclose their problems. They also thought that other officials did not seek help because of pride.

⁹ Interview with participant, 06/10/2016

¹⁰ Interview with participant, 05/10/2016

Some participants believed that more still needs to be done within the Durban Metro Police Service in order to reduce suicide incidences. One participant stated:

“I do not believe that we have advanced training. The wellness workshops are not specifically aligned to that. In essence, this is something that we need to improve on.”¹¹

The participants were aware of support services that can be accessed by officials within the department. First, support is provided within the management structure in terms of performance assessment. Management assesses an employee in order to determine performance. At this point, assistance can be provided because supervisors measure the progress of their subordinates. One key participant stated:

As a supervisor you can see that the progress of this employee is no longer as it was before. When you assess the person, you can see the symptoms [and you know that he or she is] having some problems. The professional assistance is provided by Careways. That is where after you have done the assessment with human resources and you really see that the person requires external professional assistance, then you can refer that particular individual.”¹²

However, the participants emphasized the importance of constant communication and the constant monitoring of the performance of employees by supervisors in order to detect any problems, as suicidal tendencies are often not obvious.

4.3.5 Causes of suicide

The participants indicated that both personal and work related challenges had an impact on police suicide. According to the participants, suicidal incidences were more common among police officers from the lower ranks such as Constables, Sergeants and Warrant Officers than among officers who held the rank of Captain and above.

It's in the lower ranks, mostly from Captain down. From Captain up, there is a maturity from those people. From Captain down the level of thinking is not mature enough because those people have not seen much in life. Senior people

¹¹ Interview with participant, 05/10/2016

¹² Interview with participant, 28/09/2016

*like Captain upwards are at a level of supervisory; they behave like parents at work.*¹³

The participants mentioned that the prevalence of suicidal tendencies among the lower ranks might be caused by the fact that these officers conduct the operational duties of police work such as arresting criminals, witnessing traumatic incidents, and being involved in shooting incidents. Some participants also mentioned the availability of firearms as a possible driver of suicide within the Metro Police service. In addition, it was proposed that much exposure to traumatic incidents perhaps exposed them to ‘the darker side of policing’ compared to the relative safety in which their higher ranking counterparts function.

Themes emerged from the factors that the participants felt contributed towards police suicide. Both personal and work related issues were identified as factors that contribute towards police suicide.

4.3.5.1. Personal problems

The participants and the literature that was reviewed revealed that personal problems contribute to suicidal idealization and to its accomplishment. The participants had the following to say about personal problems as the causes of suicide:

- *“Police officers are working under severe stress.”*
- *“Financial problems cause suicide.”*
- *“Drugs and alcohol abuse [are contributing factors].”*
- *“Depression causes suicide by police officials.”*
- *“Breakdown of a marriage relationship at home...”*
- *“Divorce and domestic violence...”*

4.3.5.2. Work related problems

The participants proposed that work related stressors such as long working hours, shifts, emotional immaturity, psychological instability, access to firearms, witnessing traumatic incidents, and corrupt tendencies by other officers contributed to (if not caused) suicide

¹³ Interview with participant, 28/09/2016

among Metro Police officials. The following are statements made by the participants with regards to their work related problems.

- *“Pressures that they go through because of the work...”*
- *“Work pressure combined with other issues...”*
- *“Very high stress levels, to the extent that they are sitting with many demands...”*
- *“Depression and post-traumatic stress...”*
- *“We recruit people generally when they come into our training academy; they are fresh out of school so if you look at an average, the age of a police Constable will be in the 20 – 22-year-old age bracket. Without any disrespect to individuals, most people at that age are still struggling to find themselves emotionally; they are still trying to discover who they are.”*
- *“I think if you look at suicides amongst the police, it [is] always with a firearm; it’s always by firearm.”*

4.3.8 Police culture and suicide

Another theme that emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions was the influence of police culture on the suicide phenomenon among Metro Police members. The Metro Police Service is said to have developed a culture that has resulted in the hardening of employees. This situation has brought these members of society into a situation where they are vulnerable to suicide and suicide attempts. When asked to expand on the influence of police culture with regards to suicide within the Durban Metro Police Service, one participant had the following to say:

This is my understanding because we are meant to fight the war and not cry about the war. I think the hardened aspect of policing definitely does affect how people view themselves eventually. Even though we have the facilities that once you have been in a situation that you have been shot at or where you shot somebody, you can go within 24 hours for counselling and things like that. The officers are inclined to say, “A cry baby goes for counselling, so it does not really bother me”. Or you are out on the road and you come across an accident and there are sixteen children lying there on the road and body parts all over the road and everyone offers counselling and no, you do not want to because

*you do not want to be seen to be in the cry baby type of situation. So culture does affect people negatively, if I can say.*¹⁴

However, some participants' views differed from those recorded above. One participant mentioned the following:

*It is not culture because a culture can have a lot of dimensions when it comes to the policing environment. I tend to believe that we have a police officer working in a police environment where she is subject to a lot of trauma on a regular basis.*¹⁵

4.4 General Comments

The general perception among the respondents was that suicide was a problem among the Durban Metro Police officials just like it was within the South African Police Service.

The participants reported that both personal issues and work related challenges impacted police suicide and they also referred to lack of opportunities as a major contributory factor to suicide. Personal issues such as those related to finances, marital relationships, drug abuse and pride were indicated as primary drivers influencing and causing suicide and suicide attempts by police officials. Work related challenges such as shifts, working long hours and witnessing traumatic events were also cited as secondary motivations.

From the general comments that emerged from the focus group discussions, it was clear that the respondents viewed suicide within the Metro Police Services in Durban as being biased towards gender, age, rank and work experience. Male officials were said to be more prone to committing suicide compared to their female counterparts. In addition, young police officials were said to be at risk compared to older and more experienced officials who had learned how to deal with stress and trauma. However, a general perception among all the respondents (interviews and focus groups) was that incidences of suicide were decreasing within the Durban Metro Police Service.

¹⁴ Interview with key informant, 05/10/2016

¹⁵ Interview with key informant, 05/10/2016

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings based on the data that had been gathered during the fieldwork phase of the study. The respondents' views regarding the causes of suicide and the methods used to commit suicide were illuminated. The themes that emerged from the various perceptions of the participants on police suicide were discussed. The three major themes and sub-themes that were identified from the data were illuminated. The chapter gave background of the participants, research findings are illustrated on this chapter. Perceptions and experiences of suicide together with perceptions and attitudes on police suicide were identified with themes and substantiated. The next chapter presents a discussion of the results pertaining to the analysis of the data.

Chapter Five

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. This chapter provides the interpretation of the findings. The layout of this chapter corresponds with the layout of Chapter Four. The findings are interpreted with reference to the theoretical framework concerning police suicide. This framework was introduced in the first chapter and developed in Chapter Two.

5.2 Background of the Participants

The key informants who occupied senior positions in the Durban Metro Police Service were all above the age of 40 years and most of them had more than 20 years' of service. It was clear from the data that were obtained from the interviews that age and position (or rank) influenced the nature and focus of the responses provided by the participants. The more senior participants responded in a manner that indicated that because they were older and had senior positions, they were able to control situations and therefore did not understand why their subordinates failed to emulate them as senior managers. For instance, one participant who was older than 40 years indicated that a young age (thus mental and emotional immaturity) causes suicide and suicide attempts. The participants tended to brush aside all the problems leading to suicide by officials as simply acts of immaturity. They responded in the interviews in their capacity as seniors who had solutions to issues that affected their subordinates and therefore failed to provide insight into the issue of suicide among police officials. These participants generally felt that the suicide victims were to blame for their act of suicide or attempted suicide. One participant said:

It's in the lower ranks, mostly from Captain down. From Captain up, there is a maturity among those people. From Captain down the level of thinking is not mature enough because those people have not seen much in life. Senior people

*like Captain upwards are at a level of supervisory; they behave like parents at work.*¹⁶

5.3 Discussion of Themes

This section presents an analysis of the themes that emerged from the data. Four major themes and seven sub-themes were identified. The major themes were: perceptions regarding Metro Police suicide; causes of suicide; police culture and suicide; as well as suicide prevention strategies. The sub-themes that were identified were: understanding of suicide; methods of suicide; suicide and gender; suicide and level of education or training; prevention measures of suicide; and personal and work related problems.

5.3.1 Perceptions of police suicide

The first theme that emerged from the data was the various perceptions the respondents held regarding police suicide. The following sub-themes were identified under this theme: understanding of suicide; methods used to commit suicide; gender and suicide; and prevention of suicide.

5.3.1.1 Understanding of suicide

According to the informants who participated in the focus group discussions, police officials killed themselves as a result of their exposure to problematic situations and their failure to openly disclose personal and work related problems, Mashela (2012) concurs with the participants, he reported that member's cry for help, together with some of the standing orders or National Instruction (for example, not allowed to take leave if crime is high in your area), are some of the factors that make police officers to be depressed in the sense that they end up taking their own life. One participant stated,

Suicide is about a person being in intense emotional pain where they can't handle it, where they believe at the end of the day they've got no other choice but to basically end their life.

¹⁶ Interview with key participant in Durban, 28/09/2016

Responses such as these correlate with Berg and Theron (2011:388) who argue that suicide may emanate from intense feelings before, during and after certain traumatic events. The respondents indicated that Metro Police officials who committed suicide felt hopeless and helpless about their own lives. Police officials that felt that their lives were hopeless and helpless regarded death as the only appropriate and permanent solution to escape from their perceived problems.

The understanding of suicide by the participants was consistent with Durkheim's categories (cited in Giddens, 2011:10-11), that indicate that egoistic suicide takes place when individuals fail to disclose their problems because they are isolated and maybe selfish. When such individuals fail to disclose their problems and seek help, they end up failing to secure any support system to rely on, and thus they come to regard death as the only solution. Police officials encounter a lot of challenges in the course of their day-to-day duties. According to Durkheim, anomic suicide occurs when people encounter lots of problems combined with a lack of moral discipline. Suicide is therefore linked to social instability and is caused by economic and social disorder.

Furthermore, Durkheim (in Mashela, 2012) argues that anomic suicide may be increased by new situations and that the required adjustment results in a change of societal rules and norms. The assumption about this type of suicide is that people will take their own lives because of economic instability and societal disorders. For example, the researcher is of the opinion that when a police member or officer is about to face disciplinary measures, anomic suicide is most likely because there is a high probability that the affected officer will lose his/her job, which will ultimately lead to a loss of power and image. However, some police officers might grapple with the same problems without contemplating suicide.

On the other hand, fatalistic suicide takes place when the individual feels oppressed and he/she feels hopeless and powerless and regards death as the only solution. According to Faull (2010:70), police suicide continues to be a challenge because police officers have learnt from their training institutions that they have to trust and rely on themselves. This isolates them from friends and family and they become reluctant to disclose their problems to other people. According to Schlebush (2005), the individual's exposure to various psychological, social, cultural and biological factors may also contribute to the decision to commit suicide. The research findings correlate with findings in the literature where it is indicated that failure

to deal with problems through open communication, coupled with certain personality traits, can contribute to the idea of suicide and to suicide itself.

5.3.1.2 Methods of committing suicide

The participants revealed a strong belief that exposure to stressful circumstances, coupled with the accessibility of firearms, played a significant role in terms of suicide rates in the Metro Police Service. The respondents agreed that the method most commonly used by police officers when they commit suicide is the use of a firearm. They indicated that firearms are easily accessible and that this form of death is probably less painful because it is quick and it is perceived that death will be almost instantaneous.

In reviewing the record of Metro officers who committed suicide in the Durban Metro, the study discovered that the majority of those deaths by suicide had been accomplished by the use of firearms that had been acquired at work. It is therefore reasonable to argue that the accessibility of firearms contributes to police suicide. According to Bezuidenhout (2003:107), the will to die and the availability of the means to die contribute to high suicide rates in the police services in general, but particularly in South Africa. Hendricks and Byers (1996:72) argue that suicide in the police services emanate, in part, from traumatic incidents and to a large extent from the access to weapons which increases lethality. Violanti (1996:51) concurs that police suicide is associated with the availability of firearms.

5.3.1.3 Suicide and gender

All the participants reported that suicide was still occurring within the Durban Metropolitan Police Service. The participants were also aware of the fact that suicide and suicide attempts occurred in other metropolitan areas such as Johannesburg and the Western Cape. The participants were also of the view that suicide and suicide attempts were gender biased. They based this proposal on their perception that male police officials were more vulnerable to suicide compared to their female counterparts. Men's vulnerability to suicide and suicide attempts was explained by the participants as being caused by men's sense of pride which results in their failure to disclose and communicate their problems. Conversely, it was argued

that, while men do not seek assistance in time due to their pride, women quickly seek professional help in times of problematic situations. This probably accounts for the low levels of suicide by women. In addition, the low levels of suicide and suicide attempts recorded for women can be explained by the fact that women are usually more capable of dealing with stressful situations while men, due to jealousy and pride, are sometimes encouraged by the desire to take revenge. They often do this by killing their spouses and sometimes children, and then themselves.

The above arguments are supported by the literature. Studies have revealed that the number of police officers who committed suicide or made suicide attempts is higher for male than for female police officers. For example, Lauer (1995:349) and Zastrow (2010:464) present strong arguments that the suicide rate for men is higher than for women. Smith et al. (n.d.) also point out that males, more so than females, are always at high risk of committing suicide. Based on statistics, they also state that more suicide attempts are reported for females than actual suicides.

5.3.1.4 Suicide and level of education or training

The field work results revealed that suicide and suicide attempts did not only occur in the lower police force structures, but that they were also related to the levels of education of the victims, Pienaar, and Rathmann (2005) collaborate that police members with the rank of constables and sergeant particularly with lower level of education might find difficult to cope with the conditions in South African police Services (SAPS). Of the ten constables and sergeants who participated in the third focus group discussion, only one member possessed a university degree while the rest had diplomas and certificates. The participants argued that it was this group of officials that was most prone to committing suicide. It was felt that this was so because higher ranking police officials, from Captain up, had higher levels of maturity while from Captain down, the level of thinking was not mature enough because at this level the young police officials had not seen much in life. Senior officers such as Captains function in supervisory capacities, which implies that their level of maturity, their older age, and their longer years of experience in which they could develop coping strategies, stand them in good stead as a bulwark against the act of suicide. Has reported by Pienaar, and Rathmann (2005) the higher levels of education and senior officials' ability to apply their minds to resolving challenging situations was also cited as reasons why the rate of suicide was lower in this echelon.

5.3.1.5 Prevention of suicide

The participants indicated that managers and supervisors can play a leading role in encouraging police officers to make use of internal service providers to assist them in dealing with the challenges that can eventually lead to suicide or suicide attempts. These services include structures such as the Employees' Assistance Services. Both the key informants and focus group participants emphasized the effectiveness of these internal structures that can be utilized by officers.

The views and attitudes towards these service structures corroborated the views of Hackett and Violanti (2003:8-11), who argue that prevention strategies can be effective if supervisors and managers are trained and well educated on how to identify troubled employees and know what they are supposed to do under such circumstances. Baker and Baker (1996:69) also highlight that the supervisor has to encourage members to have consultations with supporting professionals. It should always be stressed that such consultations will not impact negatively on issues of promotion and job security. The researcher is of the view that because supervisors are the immediate superiors of their subordinates, their involvement in more junior officers' lives might help to improve their working relationship. In this way troubled employees will be able to cooperate with their supervisors during referrals to EAS. According to Baker and Baker (1996:69-71), the policies of the police department should be drafted in such a way that they encourage and motivate officers to seek professional help when they encounter problems. Marks (1995) proposes that the establishment of self-help groups comprising of police officers at station level can assist in reducing suicide by police officials.

The Suicide Prevention Programme was established in 1998 and is coordinated by the Psychological Services of the South African Police Services. Social workers employed by the department are also involved in this programme. In order to deal with suicides, lectures that are designed to inform Commanders and other personnel regarding the early identification of possible suicide candidates have been offered on a regular basis. This initiative forms part of the Helping Profession and key role-players have been involved in the establishment of the National Suicide Prevention Programme (Mangwana, 2012:81). The intention of this project is to keep the suicide rate within the country's police services within the parameters of the micro and macro (general population) environment by empowering law enforcement agents to function in a demanding physical and mental working environment. The social workers

employed within these structures are involved in programmes that are aimed at preventing suicide. They also conduct various lectures to inform Commanders and personnel regarding the early identification of a possible suicide candidate (Van der Merwe & Snyman, 1998: 162).

Reportedly, the number of police counselling services has increased considerably since the project was launched. According to Masuku (2012), the major challenge for suicide prevention projects that are intended for law enforcement agents is to promote counselling services to officials and to determine why the use of these services varies so dramatically among the provinces. One way of encouraging police officials to use these services could be the development of peer counselling strategies. Another focus could be to reduce work related stress through efficient management. Police top and middle managers need to pay particular attention to the morale and signs of distress among members in their ranks.

According to Steyn and Nel (2008:12), many direct and indirect strategies are being employed in South African law enforcement departments in order to address the problem of increased suicide rates. One of the more direct approaches is suicide prevention workshops. The primary aim of these workshops is to destigmatize suicide, increase police members' awareness of the indicators of suicidal behaviour, and to teach them how to manage a suicidal person. The workshops also provide guidelines on how to handle stress and stress reaction (National Suicide Prevention Programme Committee, 2000).

In addition to suicide prevention training programmes, generic stress management training programmes are presented in the DMPS and other law enforcement departments. Similarly, critical incident debriefing forms an important part of the prevention strategies implemented in the police services. The commitment of the DMPS management in this regard is evident from the fact that all personnel exposed to trauma are obliged to seek critical incident debriefing following such exposure (South African Police, 1998:4). The Mitchell Critical Incident Debriefing Model (Jacobs & Raphael, 1998:21-27) was adopted as a standard procedure in the South African Police Service.

5.3.2 Causes of police suicide

The key informants and focus group participants indicated that both personal and work related problems had a strong and direct impact on suicide and suicide attempts, Miller (2015) like most people, police officers commit suicide as a maladaptive response to intolerable personal, family, and/or work situations they feel they cannot resolve. Suicide amongst lower ranked police officers such as Constables, Sergeants and Warrant Officers is significantly higher than among officers occupying the ranks of Captain and above. One key informant revealed the following:

It's in the lower ranks, mostly from Captain down. From Captain up, there is a maturity from those people. From Captain down the level of thinking is not mature enough because those people have not seen much in life. Senior people like Captain upwards are at a level of supervisory, they behave like parents at work.¹⁷

This perception, and others like it, imply that it is officials within the lower ranks who undertake the operational duties of police work such as arresting criminals, witnessing terrible accidents, or getting involved in shooting incidents. It is members in these ranks who are vulnerable and thus prone to suicide.

This theme focused on the factors that contribute towards police suicide. It was found that a combination of personal and work related problems is often cited as a contributing factor that impacts suicide and suicide attempts, Miller (2015) within the DMPS. This section also offers a discussion on the possible reasons for the low utilization of suicide prevention workshops.

5.3.2.1 Personal problems

The participants and the literature consulted revealed that personal problems contribute primarily to suicide idealization. The researcher believes that there is a correlation between Durkheim's classified types of suicide and the research findings, because the respondents reported that some of the officials who had committed suicide had left written notes in which

¹⁷Interview with key participant in Durban, 28/09/2016

they indicated that they had a lot of pressure, including financial problems. This correlates with the research conducted by Schlebush (2005), who found that depression, stigma surrounding diseases such as HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, and stress resulting from both marital and financial problems were some of the causes of suicide. The research findings relating to suicide in the DMPS revealed that feelings of hopelessness, depression and aggression continued to contribute to the suicide rate among Durban Metro Police officials.

5.3.2.2 Work related problems

The findings based on data obtained from the reviewed literature and from the field work that had been conducted in the DMPS indicated that work related stressors such as long working hours, distant relationships (such as having families far away from work places), witnessing traumatic incidents (such as car accidents and shootings) and the involvement of police officers in forms of corruption in which they are implicated are drivers of suicide (Faull, 2010; Schlebush, 2005; Giddens, 2001; Violanti, 1996).

The researcher therefore believes that exposure to both personal and work related problems contributes to police suicide, particularly if the problems are not dealt with timeously. Unfortunately, police culture, as indicated in Chapter Two, seems to play a major role in police officers' perception that they are the problem solvers of the community, and therefore should cope and be strong at all times. As a result, it becomes difficult for them to seek help from the community that relies on them for solutions and safety. According to Violanti (1996:66), informal police culture places extra pressure on officers to conform to a distinctive police role, but for different purposes. The informal police culture seeks to attach officers against what it views as the evil of the world. This culture prescribes a theme of solidarity among officials which appears to compel them to grapple with rejection from the greater society rather than to seek help for feelings of anxiety and fear. According to Burgers (1994:7), "the expression of personal feelings is extremely limited in police culture." Ainsworth (1995:157) reports that the police service "has come to be regarded as having a closed occupational subculture... Hence 'outsiders' are treated with suspicion or even contempt." Law officers thus often become alienated from society due to their particular work situations and social exclusion from those who want nothing to do with the police.

The responses from the participants in the DMPS were consistent with the findings of Faull (2010:146-156), who found that the nature of police work was physically and psychologically demanding as it exposed them to stressful situations such as witnessing shootings and other traumatic incidents. Violanti (1996:51-54) indicates that exposure to traumatic incidents, criminal justice inconsistencies, social strain and negative police image contribute towards police suicide. Hendricks and Byers (1996:72) further indicate that the culture within the police organization has been structured in such a way that police officers must always comply with the instructions imposed on them by their supervisors/commanders, irrespective of how strict and demanding they are. Hendricks and Byers (1996:72) therefore conclude that the exposure of police officers to stressful situations and corruption in their working environment leads to perturbation and public scrutiny, which contributes towards suicide incidents. The research conducted indicated that police work is very demanding and stressful as police officers, in their line of duty, have to witness traumatic incidents and comply with instructions from their commanders that cannot be challenged as a matter of routine in their daily lives.

5.3.2.3 Utilization rate of suicide prevention workshops

According to the reviewed literature (Faull, 2010; Schlebush, 2005; Giddens, 2001; Violanti, 1996), it is essential that senior police members encourage, mandate or instruct their subordinates to attend EAP services. The study found that the key informants (who also comprised the management of the DMPS) appreciated the important role of prevention workshops, and hence they recommend their subordinates to attend them. However, as expected in any organization, employees always resist such referrals due to a lack of understanding, stubbornness and fear of lack of confidentiality and stigma.

The findings based on the responses of the participants suggest that those who were nominated to attend the EAP thought that they had been classified as troubled employees who were incapable of dealing with their concerns. As a result, they resisted by declining the nomination for attending such a workshop. These attitudes and perceptions as expressed by the participants are in line with the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (1996) that indicates that, during training, police officers are told to take control of everything: the scene, the suspects and their (police officers') emotions. This 'control' often becomes so overpowering that police officers ignore the need for emotional and psychological relief. The FBI is largely

recognized as a well-established institution that deals with law and order and therefore its researches are considered valid and reliable.

The participants also mentioned that police officers always responded to the community when the situation was unpleasant. This implies that the community regards them as professionals who have been trained to attend to anti-social behaviour, which is often unpleasant and demanding. The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (2010) adds that due to the military nature of the training that police officers receive, they become reluctant to seek help during stressful situations because they were told to take control of everything, including their emotions. The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (2010) also indicates that police officers completely associate themselves with the role of being a law enforcer; hence they fail to seek help. According to Hackett and Violanti (2003:68), police officers do not want to be declared weak by their superiors because they are afraid that they might be encouraged to have stress leave and that might jeopardize their chances for promotion.

5.3.3 Prevention strategies

The importance of prevention strategies is another theme that emerged from the findings of the field work conducted in the DMPS. The study identified some empirical data concerning the suicide prevention workshops. The following sub-themes were identified: the impact of the suicide prevention workshops on police officers; the role of suicide prevention workshops in reducing suicide; and recommendations in terms of upgrading these workshops.

5.3.3.1 The impact of the suicide prevention workshops

The Suicide Prevention Programme was developed in the year 2000. During the suicide prevention workshops that fall under the auspices of this programme, police members are taught how to identify and assist a suicidal person and the steps to be taken in the prevention of suicide. The interviewed participants provided their own perceptions with regards to suicide. These perceptions included the following:

- *“Suicide is a process where an individual is taking his or her life by killing him/herself.”*

- *“Suicide is about a person being in intense emotional pain where they can’t handle it, where they believe at the end of the day they’ve got no other choice but to basically end their life.”*
- *“Suicide is when people take their own lives; when they kill themselves.”*
- *“Suicide in general is obviously when a person is in an unhappy space with the environment he is in that they do not see other option to remain living on the planet; hence they take an extreme measure of wanting to end their life.”*

The statements above correlate with the view of Baker and Baker (1996:69-71) that police suicide can be reduced if all police personnel can be taught about the warning signs of suicide and how to deal with depression. The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (2010) further argues that police departments should focus on educating both the police officers and their families about measures in order to cope with stressful situations, and to be able to identify a troubled police officer at an early stage.

5.3.3.2 Reduction of police suicide

The Durban Metropolitan Police Service officials who were interviewed indicated that suicide was increasingly becoming an issue calling for an urgent resolution within their municipality. It is therefore likely that Metro Police officials in this municipality might be experiencing high levels of stress which might contribute to an increase in the suicide rate. In the year 2015, a large number (13 736) of crimes was recorded in the Durban central area only (Crime Statistics South Africa, 2015). The participants indicated that the workshops to assist police officials operating in the municipality are useful in the sense that, somehow, they have helped to reduce suicide. However, the focus group participants admitted that they had not attended such workshops, particularly as police culture insists that their strength and pride mitigate against any emotional weakness. However, they all believed that more needs to be done to save the lives of police officials. The participants reiterated that suicide levels among police officials in the DMPS could only be successfully dealt within if some effective mechanism to detect the early signs of suicide were put in place.

This view correlates with that of Baker and Baker (1996:69) who argue that early identification of suicidal signs by supervisors will help to reduce suicide in the sense that

preventative measures will be put in place at an early stage. It was also proposed that managers and supervisors should be able to address their subordinates' problems and even schedule appointments with support professional services for assistance. The researcher also believes that Station Commanders, as the managers of police officers, can play a leading role in reducing police suicide if they are trained in suicide prevention. This will assist them in developing skills to assess the problems experienced by their subordinates and to refer them timeously for assistance.

5.3.3.3 Upgrading the content of suicide prevention workshops

The key informants of the study indicated that the reduction of suicide rates is the responsibility of every citizen. They also emphasized that education and training on suicide could help in lowering its current levels. These views by the participants concur with Baker and Baker's (1996:69-71) affirmation that all police personnel should be taught about the warning signs of suicide as well as measures to deal with depression. It was also proposed that supervisors should play a more active role in encouraging members to seek help and to be sensitized about how to deal with personal and work related problems. The FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (2010) suggests that police officers should be trained as peer supporters, particularly in terms of effective communication and listening skills so that they will be able to communicate effectively with their colleagues without being judgmental.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter elucidated the attitudes towards and perceptions of police suicide with particular reference to the plight of suicidal police officers in the DMPS. The causes of and methods used to commit suicide were also discussed. The issues of gender and education levels in relation to police suicide were highlighted. Members who might be at risk in terms of the ranking structure were identified. The chapter also presented an analysis of the impact of suicide prevention workshops on suicide rates, and discussed the manner in which such workshops can be upgraded to result in more positive outcomes for both managers and suicidal police officers. The next chapter presents the major conclusions and recommendations of the study

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

An empirical study of a qualitative nature was conducted with the primary aim of establishing the perceptions of police officials concerning suicide. Officials at the Durban Metro Police Service in KwaZulu-Natal were used as a microcosm of the larger society. This chapter serves as the final evaluation of the research process and results. In order to enable the researcher to provide an effective research report, certain conclusions are drawn and recommendations are offered.

6.2 Summary of the Thesis

The first chapter of this study introduced the study as a whole. It provided a brief discussion on suicide and suicide rates in South Africa. The chapter highlighted how increased suicide levels among law enforcement agents, particularly within the police services and especially within the metropolitan police service of Durban, motivated the undertaking of this study. The impact of adopted mechanisms in order to deal with police suicide was also highlighted with the intention of enhancing the significance of the study. The objectives, aim, research problem, research questions, limitations and delimitation were outlined in this chapter.

Chapter Two was centred on a review of literature that related to the study. The chapter began by clarifying key words used in the study before a discussion on the key concepts of the study was presented. Chapter Two further reviewed related literature in several different countries although a significant bias was made towards the literature related to South Africa. This was done in order to enhance a peripheral comparative analysis between national and international incidences of police suicide. Furthermore, the chapter presented the efforts that South Africa is making in order to protect its police officials from suicide and suicide attempts. Various mechanisms to deal with this challenge were discussed in detail in this chapter.

Chapter Three presented the research methodology that was used in the study. The paradigm that framed the study as well as how the qualitative research method was chosen was explained. The ethical considerations of the study were also outlined.

Chapter Four presented the research findings with reference to the data that had been gathered during the field work phase of the study.

Chapter Five provided an analysis of the findings with reference to the themes that had emerged from the data.

The current chapter provides the major conclusions of the study. It also presents recommendations and offers suggestions for areas of future research.

The objectives of the study were to investigate the possible reasons why police members commit suicide; to ascertain which sex is most likely to commit suicide; to establish what support police members receive from the department; to establish what occupational level is most likely to commit suicide; and to explore whether the nature of workshops on police suicide has a possible impact on the rate of police suicide.

In attempting to meet these objectives, a qualitative research method was employed. Thirty participants were interviewed in Durban. These participants included nine key informants as well as three different focus groups in order to obtain in-depth understanding of the perceptions of police officials themselves on police suicide in the Durban Metro region.

6.3 Research Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study:

The study in relation to the first objective that seeks to find out possible reasons why police members commit suicide, find that individual needs that were ascertained to the needs for money, social, and work satisfaction, were regarded as the major factors to suicide. Therefore it can be deduced that the reasons for committing suicide by police members were either personal or work related. It is also found that the personality trait of the individual police member plays a role in decision making to commit suicide. Police members who committed suicide are either cowards and not strong enough to deal with problems and challenges they faced. Low confidence in one's ability to resolve any situational problem they find themselves in is one of the contributing factors to commit suicide. In relation to the objective

that seek to explore whether the nature of police work may have an impact on police members committing suicide, no clear distinction could be found as the informants reported that police members commit suicide because of both personal and work related reasons.

The study found that males' police officers commit suicide mostly than their female counterparts. Informants attributed this to the fact that males have a pride, and that males fails to seek help when they need it most. Informants reported that males are unable to disclose problems they face and they (males) are not good in communicating. Females were reported that, they do not hesitate to seek help whenever they need it hence they (females) are not prone to the suicide.

Police officials (both in high and lower ranks) have a clear understanding of the concept and methods of suicide. The availability and the accessibility of firearms as a working tool for officials play a predominant role in police suicide. The key informants confirmed that the use of a gun is the most common method of committing suicide. Both the key informants and the focus groups acknowledged the importance of suicide prevention workshops. It was indicated that such workshops are educational in nature in that they equip members with knowledge about the warning signs of suicide and its prevention. Both personal and work related problems have a major impact on suicides and suicide attempts committed by officers in the DMPS.

Suicide prevention workshops should train peer educators. The responsibility of peer supporters will be to assist their colleagues during stressful situations and to encourage them to seek help. However, while the existence of support generated by workshops was welcomed by all the officials, some managers (who were also the key informants) reported that they were experiencing problems with their subordinates as they (the subordinates) refused to attend such workshops. The strong influence of police culture was revealed as a driver for this attitude. Regardless of the poor attendance of suicide workshops by police officers, the participants seemed to be willing to improve and promote the attendance of suicide prevention workshops. Police work is demanding and stressful. As a result, the participants emphasized the importance of consultation with EAS personnel for assistance in dealing with both personal and work related problems. Police officers should be allowed to decide on the topics to be dealt with during suicide prevention workshops so that the types of problems they encounter in life can be attended to in the workshops.

6.4 Contribution of this Research

The contribution of this research study to scholarly discourse is threefold, as it offers theoretical, methodological and practical contributions.

The theoretical contributions of the thesis can be divided into two categories. The first is the interpretation of the works of Emile Durkheim's theory of suicide that was proposed in 1966. Durkheim proposes that two social forces, namely solidarity and social control, influence the chance of a person taking his/her own life. Durkheim (1966) refers to solidarity as a level of connectedness a person feels to others in the environment and social control as social mechanism that regulates a person's actions. Durkheim (in Rose, 2015) identifies four types of suicide that are the end result of low solidarity as well as exceptionally high solidarity and that are related to levels of social control. These types of suicide are egoistic, altruistic, fatalistic and anomic suicide. The interpretation of Emile Durkheim's theory of suicide can be considered a theoretical contribution because the researcher's interpretation of his works and the case study data gathered by the researcher can be used in influencing the design of policies for the prevention of suicide not only in South Africa, but in countries across the globe.

The practical contribution of the study emanated from findings based on the case study that was conducted among functional police officers in the Durban Metro in KwaZulu-Natal. The study established the major causes of police suicide according to their views and also determined the measures that can be adopted in order to lower suicide rates in the metropolitan area. The findings of the research can be generalized to infer similar conditions in other metropolitan areas in South Africa because the data were authentically gathered. However, because the scope of the study was relatively small in view of the large police population, future studies to confirm these findings for relevance to the wider police community should be conducted.

In determining how to effectively incorporate and mainstream mechanisms to deal with suicidal challenges within metro police services, policy-makers, non-governmental organizations and the government can refer to these findings. This can help to identify challenges and factors that constrain progress in lowering the levels of suicide in the country at large. It is the researcher's considered view that unless these challenges are identified and

addressed in design and planning processes, many policies and legislation will continue to fail in South Africa.

The case study showed how to apply the theory and the framework developed with the type of data required in studying the perceptions of DMPS officials with regard to police suicide. This was consistent with the advice offered of Bryman (2006), who states that the choice of a research project should be informed by a theoretical and conceptual orientation of the study. It is the researcher's conviction that this research can be replicated using the data collection techniques discussed in Chapter three. The case study design provided the researcher with a deep understanding of the issues that hold back the progress in lowering suicide rates within law enforcement departments in South Africa.

6.5 Recommendations and Areas for Future Research

The following recommendations are offered in order to improve the perceptions of DMPS officials with regard to police suicide. These recommendations are essential in lowering suicide rates by police officials not only in Durban, but also in South Africa as a whole.

- The nature of the working relationship between police management and lower ranking employees needs to be strengthened in order to create an environment of trust and openness within the department. Management should take the lead in developing this relationship.
- Suicide prevention workshops need to be conducted on a monthly basis to try and consistently curb the suicide rate within the police department. Both the department and the State must invest resources in the development of such workshops.
- It is recommended that awareness sessions and campaigns be held with top management at both national and provincial levels in order to sensitize them to the importance of marketing the EAS. More television programmes should be run to sensitize police officers about the importance of EAS in terms of stress management and the reduction of or the establishment of coping strategies for emotional strain.
- It is also recommended that the Suicide Prevention Programme be reviewed on an annual basis in order to stay focused on relevant issues as indicated by police officers.

- Regular evaluations of the impact of suicide prevention workshops on the reduction of police suicide need to be undertaken for a sustainable approach to addressing the issue, particularly workshops that are male oriented.
- The Suicide Prevention Programme has to be situated at police training institutions so that trainees can learn about this issue whilst at college. Trainees need to learn how to deal with stressful situations on entering the profession rather than when they are already employed as police officers, which is not currently the case.
- Peer support groups that comprise of EAS functionaries and police officers should be mandatory. They should be established at station level on a monthly basis as a way of offering moral support to troubled employees.
- The attitude of DMPS officers can be changed if self-help groups are introduced to assist employees. Policy change is vital, and this initiative will encourage the development of such groups. The groups should also be encouraged to work in partnership with the EAS personnel.
- Peer group members should be trained about early identification of stressful behaviour and they should be sensitized to warning signs of suicidal tendencies as well as when and how to refer a troubled member. In this way, officers experiencing problems will be able to confide in their colleagues who in turn will refer them to EAS.
- Station management (both managers and supervisors) should act as role models to lower ranking police officers by providing them with information regarding the importance of disclosing their problems and also about the EAS.
- It is also recommended that further research of the same topic be undertaken with more participants. Research should be conducted across more metropolitan areas rather than focusing on one metropolitan area alone. It should also include all law enforcement agents including the SAPS and officers from the Central Intelligence Department. It is also recommended that, in the undertaking of such a study, other research methods besides those adopted in this study be considered.

Future research is required in order to:

- Determine the reasons why officers despise attending workshops;
- Explore the approach used by DMPS management in referring troubled officers for assistance;

- Obtain the perceptions of subordinates of their managers and the services rendered by the EAS.

6.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the researcher has summarised previous chapters of the study, conclusion has also been given. The conclusion was based on the findings drawn up by this study. Contributions of this research has been also substantiated in this chapter. Lastly Recommendations and area for future research had been highlighted in this chapter.

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Appendix one: Informed Consent



Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Title: Police perceptions on suicide amongst Durban Metro Police Services (DMPS) in KwaZulu-Natal.

Principal Researcher and Contact Information

Initial and Surname: E.M Khuzwayo

Cell no: 073 2513 425

Email: Eric.Khuzwayo@durban.gov.za

Purpose of the study:

Police services is one of the most stressful occupations worldwide (Anshel, 2000) as cited by Pienaar Guralnick, 1963; Milham, 1979; Vena, Violanti, Marshall& Fiedler, 1986; Lester, 1992). This is more prevalent to the countries with higher crimes, lack of resources, and organisational transformation. In countries like South Africa it could be the case, that police officers would be stressed as a result of suicide (Pienaar, 2005). Studies stipulate that police officers have higher suicide rates when compared to general population and those of other professions. In South Africa there have been many cases of police officers that have committed suicide. The researcher is triggered by the gradual increase of the statistics of Officers and police members that are committing suicide, and they all leave so many questions as to what might be the reasons that push them to commit suicide.

In light of the above statement the study seeks to find answers into the reasons that may push police officers to end their life (commit suicide).

Procedures:

You will be asked in an individual in-depth interview or Focus group by the researcher. You will be asked questions related to police officers and suicide. Your opinions regarding police officers and suicide will be highly required.

Confidentiality:

All the information you provide will be strictly confidential, and your name will not be mentioned. Instead pseudo name will be used to replace your original name. Your true identification will be treated as highly confidential and in any part of the research your name, surname or any clue that would be traced back to you will not be mentioned.

Note about Voluntary Nature of Participation and Statement about Compensation:

Your participation is voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action. Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

Equipment	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

If you are willing to participate in a focus group, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the focus group to be recorded by the following equipment:

Equipment	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

Information about this study:

You will be given the opportunity to ask, and to have answered, all your questions about this research by e-mailing or calling the principal researcher, whose contact information is listed at the top of this letter. All inquiries are confidential. Or you may contact my supervisor, whose contact details are written bellow:

Details of supervisor

Name: Dr Gerelene Jagganath

Telephone no: 031 2607332

Email: gerelenej@gmail.com

Furthermore, if you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant or if problems arise, which you do not feel you can discuss with the primary Investigator, please contact the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC).

University HSSREC

Name: Ms Phumelele Ximba

Telephone No: 031 260 3587

Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix Two: Declaration of Consent

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

SIGNATURE OF THE RESEARCHER

DATE

.....

Appendix Three: Consent to conduct study (Chief of Police)



The Chief of Police
Durban Metro Police Service
16 Archie Gumede Place
Durban 4001

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a registered Master's student in the Department of Criminology at the University of KwaZulu Natal. My supervisor is Dr. Gerelene Jagganath.

The proposed topic of my research is: A Comparison of Suicide Rate Amongst Durban Metro Police Services (DMPS) and South African Police Services (SAPS) in KwaZulu Natal.

The objectives of the study are:

- To find out reasons why police officers commit suicide.
- To establish which gender is most likely commit suicide.
- To establish whether police officers receives adequate support from the department.
- To find out whether the police academy adequately prepares police officers to cope with occupational stress.
- To find out whether the incidences of police suicide differ in terms of rank.
- To find out whether there is correlation on nature of work and the act of suicide

I am hereby seeking your consent to allow me conduct the study. To assist you in reaching a decision, I have attached to this letter: Research Proposal and consent informed letter for the participants.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

Supervisor telephone:

Researcher cell no: 073 251 3425

Supervisor email: pattundeeng@ukzn.ac.za

Researcher email: Eric.Khuzwayo@durban.gov.za

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the dissertation. Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Name: Eric Mandla Khuzwayo

Supervisor Signature:

Name: Dr Gerelene Jagganath

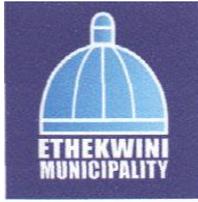
Appendix Four: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Please Note: These are the leading questions and there will be sub questions that will emanate from the interviews or focus group discussion based on the answers given by the participants.

1. What is your understanding about suicide?
2. What do you think are the reasons for the police officers to commit suicide?
3. What do you think about the people (police officers) who commit suicide?
4. Do you think supervisors of the members are able to identify police members with suicide thoughts or Suicide warning signs?
5. If you face challenges at work or home would you consider suicide as your option? Why?
6. Have you ever had suicide thoughts?
7. Which sex is most likely to commit suicide in DMPS? Why?
8. Which Police Rank is most likely to commit suicide?
9. Which suicide methods are mostly used by police members in DMPS?
10. What kind of support does the department offer for people who have challenges with work related issues?
11. What overview of emotional support offered by police academy when you still being trained to be police officers?
12. Do you think police culture has an impact on police officers who kill themselves?
13. Have you ever had any close relationship with a police officer that has committed suicide?
14. Are there any records of police members who have committed suicide?
15. Do you know of any people (Police members) who had suicide thought?
16. Any further comments?

Appendix Five: Gate Keepers Letter (Chief of Police)



EXECUTIVE
Ref: Let 031
Enquiries: 031-3112801

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER CLUSTER DURBAN METRO POLICE

16 Archie Gumede Place, Durban, 4001
PO Box 1172, Durban, 4000
Tel: 031 311 1111, Fax 031 306 0442
www.durban.gov.za

25 July 2016

Dr Gerelene Jagganath
Department of Criminology
University of KwaZulu - Natal
Durban
4001

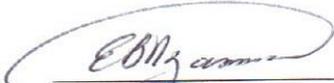
Dear Sir / Madam

**RE: CONSENT FROM THE ORGANISATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON POLICE
PERCEPTIONS ON SUICIDE AMONGST DURBAN METRO POLICE IN KWA-ZULU
NATAL**

On behalf of eThekweni Municipality (Metro Police), I hereby grant permission for Sen Supt E.M. Khuzwayo, a student of the University of KwaZulu- Natal in the Department of Criminology to conduct his research at Durban Metro Police Services.

However, we trust that all information will be kept highly confidential.

Yours faithfully



Eugene Nzama
Chief of Police
Durban Metro Police Services

Appendix Six: Ethical Clearance



12 September 2016

Mr Eric M Khuzwayo 215080541
School of Applied Human Sciences
Howard College Campus

Dear Mr Khuzwayo

Protocol reference number: HSS/1215/016M

Project title: Police perceptions on suicide amongst Durban Metro Police in KwaZulu-Natal.

Full Approval – Committee Reviewed Protocol

With regards to your response to received 08 September 2016 to our letter of 05 September 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the above mentioned application and the protocol has been granted **Full Approval**.

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Dr G Jagganath
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr TS Magojo
cc School Administrators: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



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