

Assessing the Stress Factors Experienced by Caloocan Police Personnel: Basis for a Training Program

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Index Terms:

stress factors, police stress, organizational stress, operational stress, coping mechanisms, law enforcement personnel, training program

Abstract. This research aims to evaluate the effects of stressors on the performance of police personnel deployed at the Caloocan City Police Station, including personal, physical, psychological, social, organizational, and operational aspects. This research will also investigate the coping mechanisms used by police personnel to deal with occupational stress and design a training program to improve their resilience. The current research uses a convergent parallel mixed-methods design to combine both quantitative and qualitative results, providing a holistic insight into police stress. The quantitative phase involved 229 active police officers, while the qualitative phase involved ten informants who shared their experiences of coping with stress in semi-structured interviews. Analysis of the findings reveals that stress factors influence police performance in all areas, with non-commissioned officers (PNCOs) showing higher levels of psychological and operational stress than commissioned officers (PCOs). The qualitative findings confirm the effectiveness of stress-coping strategies such as family bonding, prayer, recreation, and positive thinking, while also emphasizing the need for improved support. The research concludes that stress is a natural part of the police role, but it can be managed by the use of systematic interventions. Therefore, a Resilience and Stress Management Training Program was designed to improve the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of police officers. This study is particularly valuable as it not only highlights the specific stressors affecting police officers but also provides practical, evidence-based strategies to enhance resilience, thus supporting both individual and overall organizational effectiveness. By addressing these challenges, the research provides actionable insights for policymakers, police organizations, and training officers, making it a significant contribution to current literature on police stress and police performance.

Introduction

Stress is a ubiquitous problem in modern society, permeating the lives of people from all walks of life. In the field of law enforcement, police officers are faced with a unique profile of stressors that increase the risk of negative mental, physical, and social consequences. These stressors include constant exposure to danger, unpredictable working conditions, and increased demands to maintain law and order under stressful conditions (Purba & Demou, 2019). While research has been conducted on the effects of occupational stress on police officers worldwide, there is still a need to fill the gaps in understanding the effects of geographic, cultural, and organizational factors on these experiences (Otto & Gatens, 2022).

In the Philippines, especially in highly urbanized municipalities like Caloocan City, law enforcers are faced with compounded challenges arising from fast-paced urbanization, high population density, high crime rates, and resource constraints (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021). These factors not only require physical stamina but also high mental resilience, making the study of stressors on law enforcers both timely and relevant.

Stress is a complex phenomenon that includes psychological distress, physiological overload, and behavioral disruption. High levels of stress can decrease work productivity, impair decision-making, and lower job satisfaction (NSW, 2018; Sharif,

2023). In the workplace, stress is most commonly caused by workload, interpersonal conflicts, poor compensation, and time constraints (Sousa & Fontainha, 2009). For police officers, these are compounded by occupational risks such as violence, traumatic events, and long working hours (Bailey, 2021; Galanis et al., 2021; Papazoglou & Tuttle, 2018). The current situation in the Philippines is a pressing concern that needs to be addressed. It has been reported that 87% of Filipinos are experiencing work-related stress (Lauengco, 2024), and 3.6 million people are suffering from mental health issues like depression and mood disorders (Paunan, 2023). Police personnel are more susceptible to stress, and studies have shown that their stress levels are not only work-related but also a result of personal stressors like family, financial, and health-related issues (Gutierrez et al., 2015; Vicente et al., 2020; Lidawan & Trinidad, 2024). These factors cumulatively affect the performance and mental well-being of police personnel.

In addition, police personnel are more prone to burnout and suicide than the general population (Lawrence et al., 2024). This highlights the need for proactive wellness programs and interventions. Best practices from around the world, such as peer support programs and resilience-building, have shown promise in alleviating stress (Santre, 2024); hence, the need for localized interventions that are context-specific.

Taking into consideration the above factors, the current study seeks to identify the stressors that the Caloocan City Police Personnel are faced with, with the aim of providing empirical support for the development of a training program on stress management, resilience, and mental wellness. Through the assessment of stressors from both the organizational and individual perspectives, this study aims to provide a holistic approach to the factors that influence police officers in one of the most difficult environments in Metro Manila.

The results of the study are expected to improve the existing knowledge on police stress. The proposed training program in this study is a proactive approach to endow the Caloocan City Police personnel with the necessary tools to effectively manage stress, allowing them to continue serving and protecting the community with integrity.

According to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, a state agency based in Chicago and focused on improving the administration of criminal justice in Illinois, United States, research has provided important information on the causes and effects of stress among police officers; however, significant gaps exist that require further research. However, further research is needed to better understand the ways in which stressors may differ in various geographical and organizational settings of police departments. Furthermore, the efficacy of support services for police officers suffering from stress and mental health problems remains a concern that needs to be improved and explored (Otto & Gatens, 2022).

An article published in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin states that depression, a mental health issue, is a common problem that affects millions of Americans. In particular, the incidence of depression is almost twice as high among first responders compared to the general population. However, depression can be caused by a variety of factors, and stress at work is a major contributor to the development of depressive symptoms among first responders. The high levels of stress and traumatic events that are part and parcel of their work can be a contributing factor to the development of depression. Therefore, it is important that agencies and individuals work to identify and treat depression before it becomes a major problem, using a variety of evidence-based strategies to mitigate the effects of depression (John-Akinola et al., 2020).

In addition, an Italian study entitled Occupational Stress, Anxiety and Coping Strategies in Police Officers found that training and support initiatives are important for Italian police officers due to the stressors that are typical of police work. Moreover, variables such as age, gender, job, and type of work are factors that influence stress in police officers (Acquadro Maran et al., 2015).

In conclusion, the mental health needs of police officers and first responders are an important issue that has international implications.

In the Philippines, stress and mental health problems are identified as important public health concerns. According to the World Health Organization (2021), more than 100 million people in the Western Pacific Region, including Filipinos, suffer from mental disorders. Recently, a survey shows that 45% of Filipinos have stress levels higher than the global average, making the Philippines the highest in Southeast Asia in this area (Awalianti, 2023). According to the Department of Health, there are approximately 3.6 million Filipinos with mental health issues such as depression, mood disorder, and bipolar disorder (Paunan, 2023).

Police officers, who are at the forefront of public safety, are also not exempt from mental health problems. They are exposed to various sources of stress, such as high crime rates, violence, irregular working hours, organizational problems, and public criticism. Research studies show that resource deprivation, political pressures, and internal corruption are factors that increase stress among law enforcement personnel (Gumani, 2019; Lawson et al., 2022). If left untreated, stress can negatively impact the mental health of law enforcers and can also affect their performance, judgment, and community relations.

There have been significant incidents that prove the mental health of police personnel. In 2021, a police trainee attempted to end their life in Cavite, which prompted then-PNP Chief Guillermo Eleazar to encourage regular neuro-psychiatric testing for trainees and active personnel (Luna, 2021). Other violent incidents involving police include the 2020 Paniqui, Tarlac shooting, where a police officer shot two civilians, and the 2023 shooting, where a police officer shot a colleague in a dispute over food. These events could be related to undiagnosed stress.

In response to these concerns, the Philippine National Police (PNP) has initiated various mental health programs. The Bantay Kaisipan strategy is derived from Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 2021-115, in accordance with Republic Act No. 11036, the Philippine Mental Health Act of 2018. The strategy aims to monitor and support police personnel. Another program is PNP Memorandum Circular No. 20-2020, which includes preventive programs such as the Stress Management and Squadding Concept (Squad Weekly Interactive Meeting, SWIM), which holds weekly “kumustahan” sessions between supervisors and subordinates to check on psychological well-being (Daniel, 2023). Although these programs are well-intentioned, they are still narrow in scope and impact, especially in the high-pressure policing environment. Despite the crucial role of police personnel in the country’s national security, the concern about occupational stress in the Philippine police has not been fully explored. The current programs lack a strong scientific basis. This is a call to conduct research that can help identify the particular stressors that police officers experience and develop programs that protect psychological strength while improving the ability to serve the public.

Caloocan City, located in the northern part of Metro Manila, is one of the most populous municipalities in the Philippines, with a population of over 1.6 million (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021). The rapid urbanization and high population density are characteristic of the city, creating a unique environment for law enforcement agencies, especially in their efforts to ensure peace and order in a densely populated area. The socio-economic condition of the city, which has large numbers of low- and middle-income residents, is directly linked to high rates of crime, theft, drug abuse, and community conflicts (Asian Development Bank, 2020). For law enforcers, this translates to regular engagement with high-pressure situations that demand quick decision-making, physical endurance, and mental toughness.

Being one of the cities with a high incidence of crimes in Metro Manila, Caloocan City places its law enforcers on the frontline in the battle against robbery, gang crimes, and illegal drugs (Philippine National Police – National Capital Region Police Office, 2022). In this capacity, they are constantly exposed to life-threatening situations, and prolonged exposure to violence and traumatic events can result in significant psychological distress (Papazoglou & Tuttle, 2018). Being a police officer is not only about preventing crimes. They also do community policing, such as regulating traffic, assisting in times of disasters, and enforcing health protocols. For instance, during the time of COVID-19, they had to enforce the restrictions on movement and health protocols, which added to their stress and workload (Ballano, 2021).

Stressors from the outside are further exacerbated by issues within the organization that some officers may face. Shortage of personnel, lack of logistical support, and low salaries often make it difficult for police to work under stressful conditions (Vicente et al., 2020). In a city as challenging as Caloocan, these factors are further exacerbated, making it difficult for officers to work longer hours, have limited resources, and be at risk of their personal safety.

In light of these considerations, Caloocan City is an important setting for examining the factors of stress that affect law enforcement officers. The interplay of the density of the city, the high crime rate, and the organizational factors provides important information about the particular challenges that officers face in this setting. This local analysis provides the foundation for a training program that will enable Caloocan City police officers to develop effective stress management techniques.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), provides the most appropriate theoretical framework for this study. This model views stress as a product of the dynamic relationship between an individual and their environment, where stress arises when an individual appraises a situation as taxing or exceeding their resources and endangering their well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The key components of the Transactional Model align well with the statement of the problem in this study. The first stage, primary appraisal, involves the police personnel assessing stress factors in terms of their demographic profile, including age, gender, civil status, rank, assignment, and length of service. This appraisal determines whether the stress factors pose a threat to their well-being and performance (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

In the secondary appraisal stage, the police respondents evaluate the contributing organizational and operational factors in relation to their work. They also assess their coping resources and mechanisms to manage the stress they experience (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The coping strategies employed by the police personnel, including the implemented intervention programs, are crucial in determining the impact of stress factors on their overall well-being and performance (Violanti et al., 2018).

The outcomes of the coping strategies, as outlined in the Transactional Model, can then inform the development of an action plan and training program to help mitigate the stress experienced by the Caloocan police personnel (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). By applying this theoretical framework, the study can provide a comprehensive understanding of how the police personnel appraise and cope with stress factors, ultimately guiding the creation of targeted interventions to enhance their well-being and performance (Andersen et al., 2015).

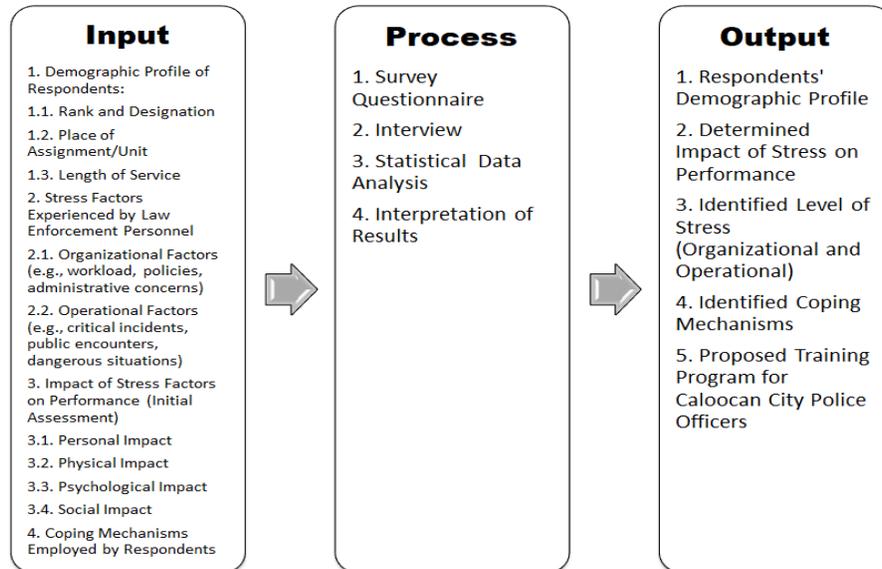


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

Figure 1 shows the paradigm of the study. The study used the Input-Process-Output (IPO) to explain how the study was conducted.

Input consists of the respondents' demographic profile, rank and designation, place of assignment/unit assignment, length of service, the stress they experienced (organizational and operational factors), the impact of stress factors in their performance (personal, physical, psychological, and social), and the coping mechanisms employed by them.

Process of data gathering includes the utilization of survey questionnaire and interviews, analysis of data statistically, and interpretation of results.

Outcome consists of the respondents' demographic profile, the determined impact of stress on performance, the identified level of stress (organizational and operational), identified coping mechanisms, and the proposed training program for Caloocan City Police Officers.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to assess the stress factors experienced by Caloocan Police personnel and proposes guiding recommendations for a training program.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Rank
 - 1.2 Unit Assignment/Designation
 - 1.3 Length of Service
2. What is the impact of the stress factors on the performance of the respondents, in terms of the following aspects:
 - 2.1 Personal;
 - 2.2. Physical;
 - 2.3. Psychological;
 - 2.4. Social;
3. Is there a significant difference in the impact of stress factors on the performance of the respondents in terms of personal, physical, psychological, and social aspects when grouped according to their profiles?
4. What is the level of stress experienced by law enforcement personnel, in terms of;

- 4.1 Organizational Factors;
- 4.2 Operational Factors;
- 5. What are the Coping Mechanisms employed by the respondents?
- 6. Based on the findings of the study, what proposed training program may be formulated to address the stress factors among the personnel of the Caloocan Police?

Hypothesis of the study

There is no significant difference in the impact of stress factors on the performance of the respondents in terms of personal, physical, psychological, and social aspects, when grouped according to their profile variables such as rank, unit assignment, and length of service.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design employed in the study is Convergent Parallel Mixed-Method Design. This means that they gathered numbers (quantitative data) and stories (qualitative data) simultaneously and then analyzed them separately, and finally combined the findings to gain a complete understanding of the research problem. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), this design allows the researcher to assign equal weight to both types of data, which means that the findings will be accompanied by explanations from the interviews. In this study, the numbers gauged the effects and extent of stress factors on the Caloocan City police personnel, while the interviews focused on how they deal with the stress factors. By combining both findings, the researchers were able to provide a clearer understanding of the effects of stress on police performance and how they deal with work-related stress factors.

The research employed a Mixed-Method Approach, combining numbers and stories to gain a better insight into stress and coping mechanisms among police personnel. Mixed methods combine numerical information with stories, allowing for verification and validation of results (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019).

In the quantitative method, a structured survey was administered to 229 active police personnel from the Caloocan City Police Station. This helped generate quantifiable information about stress factors in personal, physical, psychological, social, organizational, and operational contexts. The results were statistically analyzed to identify general trends and differences according to rank, unit, and service duration.

The qualitative method employed semi-structured interviews with ten purposively selected police officers. This enabled participants to express their experiences, emotions, and stress-coping strategies. The interviews were recorded and analyzed using the Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis technique: familiarization with data, coding, theme identification, and interpretation.

The combination of both methods provided a well-rounded perspective: the numbers indicated the magnitude of the stress, while the stories explained the reasons and coping mechanisms. This design aligns with a Convergent Parallel Mixed-Method Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), as it provides proof-based and meaningful results.

Population and Locale of the Study

The research involved all the active police personnel assigned to the Caloocan City Police Station. This included Police Commissioned Officers (PCOs) and Police Non-Commissioned Officers (PNCOs) from the patrol, investigation, and administration sections. Employees on extended or medical leave, civilian employees, and personnel from other regions were not considered.

For the quantitative component, simple random sampling was employed. This gave all eligible officers an equal chance of being selected. A total of 229 police personnel responded to the validated survey.

For the qualitative component, ten informants were intentionally selected (purposive sampling) to provide rich, relevant, and diverse information on how they deal with job-related stress. The informants included personnel of various ranks, genders, and service years to provide a range of perspectives.

Both the quantitative and qualitative components were adequately represented through random sampling for the quantitative component and purposive sampling for the qualitative component, as indicated in the Convergent Parallel Mixed-Method Design.

Phase of the Study	Sampling Method	Sample Size	Remarks / Notes
Quantitative Phase	Simple Random Sampling	229	All qualified personnel were given equal opportunity to participate; respondents completed the validated survey questionnaire.
Qualitative Phase	Purposive Sampling	10	Informants were chosen based on relevance and ability to provide rich and meaningful insights through semi-structured interviews.

Table 1. Population of the Study

The research was conducted at the Caloocan City Police Station, which belongs to the Northern Police District of the Philippine National Police (PNP). Caloocan City is a highly populated urban area in the National Capital Region (NCR), with a population of 1.7 million as of 2024 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2024). The city has two areas: North Caloocan and South Caloocan. It is famous for having a very densely populated population, fast urbanization, and complicated peace and order problems that pose huge challenges to the police. Caloocan City has been experiencing police-related challenges such as community policing, crime, and work-related stress among police personnel. These environmental and work-related stresses make Caloocan City an ideal site to conduct research on stress among police officers and how they cope in a stressful environment.

The research site was also chosen because it is easy for the researcher to collaborate with the Caloocan City Police Headquarters, which assisted in the distribution of the survey and conducting of interviews. The study of this police station can serve as an important source of information not only for Caloocan City but also for other urban police stations that seek to develop their own stress management strategies for police officers.

Data Gathering Tools

The two primary tools used in the study for data gathering were a researcher-made survey questionnaire for the quantitative approach and a semi-structured interview guide for the qualitative approach. Both tools were developed after an extensive review of many studies on occupational stress, police performance, and strategies for coping. The survey questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part dealt with the respondents' demographic characteristics, such as rank, unit, and length of service. The second part focused on the impact of stress factors on personal, physical, psychological, and social aspects. The third part focused on stress factors emanating from organizational and operational aspects. Each question used a four-point Likert scale, allowing the respondents to indicate the degree of their agreement or stress level.

Before administering the questionnaire, experts validated and ensured the reliability of the tool. Three experts validated the questionnaire: a PNP officer from the Caloocan City Police Station, a licensed psychometrician, and a faculty member. They validated the questionnaire for its face and content validity, and the feedback was used in finalizing the questionnaire.

Validation was done using Aiken's V Coefficient to determine the level of agreement between experts on the relevance of items. The values varied from 0.9111 to 1.000, with an average of 0.963, which was Very Valid. The reliability test was conducted through a pilot study on 20 police personnel who were not part of the main study. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The values varied from 0.755 to 0.902, with an average of 0.85, which was Reliability. This indicates that the instrument was statistically reliable and content valid for the main study.

For the qualitative study, a semi-structured interview schedule was designed to explore how police personnel deal with work-related stress. The schedule consisted of open-ended questions that allowed the participants to provide elaborate responses to their experiences.

Data Gathering Procedures

Before the research was conducted, the researcher obtained formal approval from the Dean of the Graduate School and collaborated with the Caloocan City Police Station to ensure that the data gathering process could be done smoothly and

legally. After obtaining approval, the researcher conducted both the quantitative and qualitative components simultaneously, employing the Convergent Parallel Mixed-Method Design.

Quantitative part includes distributed proven survey questionnaires to 229 randomly chosen police personnel. The purpose of the study was explained, and consent was obtained.

The respondents were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and that they could withdraw at any time. After completing the task, the questionnaires were gathered and reviewed for completeness and accuracy before the statistical analysis.

Qualitative component involved selecting ten informants to participate in individual semi-structured interviews. Before conducting the interview, the participants were informed about the nature of the study and that the participation in the study was voluntary. They were asked for permission to participate in the study and to have their data recorded so that the results could be accurate. The interviews took place in a quiet room at the Caloocan City Police Station to allow the participants to freely express themselves. The interviews lasted 10 to 15 minutes, and the recordings were transcribed word for word.

After the completion of both components, the data gathered from the quantitative component was entered and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while the data gathered from the qualitative component was analyzed using thematic analysis. The results from both components were then compared and integrated during interpretation to ensure consistency and validation of the findings, employing the Convergent Parallel Mixed-Method design.

Treatment of Data

The data gathered from the study was processed, analyzed, and interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics through the use of SPSS version 17. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and median were employed to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to indicate the extent to which stress factors influenced police personnel. The four-point Likert scale was employed to measure the extent to which the respondents felt the effect or stress of each statement. Since the data collected using the Likert scale is ordinal, the median was employed as the measure of centrality, as recommended by Cohen et al. (2000) and Hansen (2004).

Numerical Value	Median Range	Verbal Interpretation (Impact of Stress Factors)
4	3.26 – 4.00	High Impact
3	2.51 – 3.25	Moderate Impact
2	1.76 – 2.50	Low Impact
1	1.00 – 1.75	No Impact

Table 2. Verbal Interpretation of the Impact of Stress Factors

Numerical Value	Median Range	Verbal Interpretation (Level of Stress Factors)
4	3.26 – 4.00	Very Stressful
3	2.51 – 3.25	Stressful
2	1.76 – 2.50	Slightly Stressful
1	1.00 – 1.75	Not Stressful

Table 3. Verbal Interpretation of the Level of Stress Factors

To determine whether stress factor impacts differ across profile groups, non-parametric tests were employed. The Mann-Whitney U Test was employed to compare two groups (for example, PCO and PNCO), while the Kruskal-Wallis H Test was employed to compare three or more groups (for example, assignment and length of service). A p-value of 0.05 or lower was considered statistically significant. For the qualitative component, the data gathered from ten informants was analyzed using Thematic Analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). The transcripts were read, coded, and sorted into themes that revealed common coping strategies and experiences of police personnel in dealing with stress. Finally, the results from the quantitative and qualitative components were integrated and compared during interpretation to identify agreements and insights, as described in the Convergent Parallel Mixed-Method Design.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to all the ethical standards for research involving human subjects. Before gathering data, the researcher sought formal approval and coordination from the Dean of the Graduate School, the Department, and the Caloocan City Police Station. All the participants were informed about the purpose and scope of the study, that their voluntary participation was sought, and that they were free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Before conducting the survey and conducting the interviews, informed consent was sought. The participants were assured that their names and responses would remain confidential and anonymous, and that the data would only be used for academic purposes. In the qualitative study, the participants were also asked for permission to tape-record the interviews to aid in transcribing the data accurately.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of the Students

Category	Subcategory	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Rank	PNCO	206	90.0
	PCO	23	10.0
	Patroller	157	68.6
	Office Personnel	15	6.6
Assignment	Investigator	6	2.6
	Custodial	25	10.9
	Supervisor/Commander	26	11.4
	1 – 5 years	62	27.1
Length of Service	6 – 10 years	68	29.7
	11 – 15 years	38	16.6
	16 years and above	61	26.6
Total Respondents		229	100

Table 4. Summary of the Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 4 summarizes the demographic profile of the respondents. The study predominantly involved PNCOs (90%), most of whom are patrollers (68.6%), reflecting the frontline structure of the Caloocan Police Force. In terms of tenure, over half of the respondents (56.8%) have 1 to 10 years of service, suggesting that the sample largely consists of personnel in the early to mid-stages of their policing careers. These findings ensure a representative distribution of respondents across ranks and assignments, providing a credible foundation for subsequent analyses of stress factors.

Impact of Stress Factors on the Performance of Respondents in terms of Personal, Physical, Psychological, and Social Aspects

Stress Factors	PCO Median	PCO Int	PNCO Median	PNCO Int	Overall Interpretation
Personal Factors	3.02	Moderate Impact	3.11	Moderate Impact	PNCOs slightly more affected

Physical Factors	2.89	Moderate Impact	3.18	Moderate Impact	PNCOs experience more physical stress
Psychological Factors	2.93	Moderate Impact	3.23	Moderate Impact	PNCOs experience higher mental strain
Social Factors	2.95	Moderate Impact	3.26	High Impact	PNCOs highly affected by social stress
Overall Median	2.95	Moderate Impact	3.20	Moderate Impact	PNCOs more affected overall

*Legend: *Statistical Limit: 3.26–4.00 = High Impact; 2.51–3.25 = Moderate Impact; 1.76–2.50 = Low Impact; 1.00–1.75 = No Impact.*

Table 5. Overall Findings on the Impact of Stress Factors Experienced by Law Enforcement Personnel

Table 5 shows the overall findings on the impact of stress factors experienced by law enforcement personnel. Both Police Commissioned Officers (PCOs) and Police Non-Commissioned Officers (PNCOs) experience significant stress across all four domains—personal, physical, psychological, and social factors. However, PNCOs consistently reported higher median scores in every domain, obtaining an overall median of 3.20 (Moderate Impact) compared to 2.95 (Moderate Impact) for PCOs. This indicates that while stress is a shared occupational experience, PNCOs bear a heavier burden, largely due to the operational nature of their duties involving constant field exposure, irregular hours, and public interaction.

Among all domains, social stress factors showed the highest overall impact for PNCOs (3.26, High Impact), emphasizing that *long working hours, limited family interaction, and negative public perception* are the most influential contributors to their stress. This finding aligns with Galanis et al. (2021) and Paoline and Gau (2023), who noted that extended shifts, strained family ties, and critical community relations exacerbate occupational stress among frontline officers. The compounding effects of media scrutiny and misinformation—as discussed by McCarty et al. (2019) further intensify the social pressure and erode morale among law enforcers.

In the psychological domain, PNCOs (3.23) also reported higher stress than PCOs (2.93), particularly due to *frequent exposure to violence, critical decision-making, and moral dilemmas*. The most severe stressor was *moral conflict and regret in operational contexts* (3.36, High Impact), reflecting the emotional strain associated with fieldwork and accountability. These results are supported by Carleton et al. (2020), Violanti et al. (2017), and Tajvar et al. (2021), who emphasized that trauma exposure and mental health stigma contribute significantly to psychological distress among officers, often preventing them from seeking professional help.

Regarding personal stress factors, both groups experienced moderate levels, but PNCOs (3.11) again rated slightly higher than PCOs (3.02). The leading stressors were *unpredictable work schedules* (3.25) and *emotional demands of the job* (3.16), underscoring the difficulty of balancing personal stability with demanding duty rotations. This finding mirrors Pearsall (2019) and Lee et al. (2021), who observed that inconsistent schedules and emotional exhaustion are primary sources of stress and fatigue among lower-ranking officers.

For physical stress factors, PNCOs reported greater strain (3.18) than PCOs (2.89), particularly from *irregular working or sleep schedules* (3.32) and *anticipated physical confrontations* (3.35). These stressors illustrate the physical intensity of frontline operations. Studies by Anderson et al. (2015), Johnson and Andrews (2020), and the National Institute of Justice (2011) corroborate that prolonged shifts, exposure to danger, and heavy equipment contribute to chronic fatigue and reduced physical well-being among operational police personnel.

Overall, the data show a consistent pattern, PNCOs experience higher stress levels across all domains, most notably in the social and psychological aspects. This trend underscores the disproportionate strain borne by frontline officers due to their operational responsibilities, limited rest, and community engagement.

These findings affirm that while stress is inherent in law enforcement, effective organizational interventions, such as optimized shift management, mental health programs, family support services, and physical wellness initiatives, can substantially mitigate its effects. In line with contemporary research, the study emphasizes the importance of institutional resilience frameworks to sustain both the well-being and professional performance of police officers.

Significant Difference in the Impact of Stress Factors on the Performance of Respondents When Grouped According to Their Profiles

Grouping Variable	Aspect with Significant Difference	p-value	Interpretation	Decision on H ₀
Rank	Psychological Aspect Only	0.040*	Significant	Reject H ₀
Assignment	None	0.214	Not Significant	Fail to Reject H ₀
Length of Service	None	0.327	Not Significant	Fail to Reject H ₀

Table 6. Significant Difference in the Impact of Stress Factors When Grouped by Profile Variables
**significant @ ≤ 0.05*

Table 6 summarizes the results of the significance tests on the impact of stress factors among law enforcement personnel when grouped according to their rank, assignment, and length of service.

Among all the variables tested, only the psychological stress factor by rank showed a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.040 \leq 0.05$). This indicates that PNCOs experience greater psychological stress compared to PCOs, primarily due to their frequent engagement in operational duties and direct exposure to stressful events. This finding aligns with Calusor (2022) and Cardenas and Nabe (2024), who both highlighted that lower-ranking officers are more susceptible to psychological pressure arising from frontline responsibilities and limited decision-making authority.

For all other factors and profile variables, *p-values exceeded 0.05*, meaning there were no significant differences observed. This suggests that stress impacts are relatively uniform across assignments and lengths of service. Such uniformity implies that common occupational challenges, such as shift work, exposure to risk, administrative workload, and public expectations, affect officers consistently, regardless of position or years in service. This finding is supported by Besagas and Branzuela (2023) and Tajvar et al. (2021), who emphasized that stressors within law enforcement tend to be systemic and persistent across roles.

Overall, the results confirm that while the degree of stress remains moderate across all groups, psychological stress significantly varies by rank, underscoring the importance of developing rank-sensitive mental health interventions alongside organization-wide wellness programs that address shared occupational stressors among police personnel.

Level of Stress Experienced by Law Enforcement Personnel in terms of Organizational and Operational Factors

Category	PCO (Median / Interpretation)	PNCO (Median / Interpretation)	Overall Median	Interpretation
Organizational Factors	2.85 – Stressful	3.06 – Stressful	2.96	Stressful
Operational Factors	2.80 – Stressful	3.12 – Stressful	2.96	Stressful

*Legend: *Statistical Limit: 3.26–4.00 = Very Stressful; 2.51–3.25 = Stressful; 1.76–2.50 = Slightly Stressful; 1.00–1.75 = Not Stressful.*

Table 7. Level of Stress Experienced by Respondents (Organizational and Operational Factors)

Table 7 shows the level of stress experienced by the respondents. Both Police Commissioned Officers (PCOs) and Police Non-Commissioned Officers (PNCOs) rated organizational and operational stressors as stressful, with an overall median of 2.96. PNCOs recorded slightly higher levels of stress in both categories, indicating that lower-ranking officers experience more strain from field duties, heavy workload, and limited rest. Organizational stressors, such as insufficient manpower, poor communication, and limited recognition, combined with operational stressors like exposure to danger, night shifts, and public pressure, creating a continuous cycle of occupational fatigue. The data imply that both internal (organizational) and external (operational) environments contribute equally to the overall stress levels of police personnel.

This result supports Kurtz et al. (2020), who found that both organizational policies and operational demands are primary sources of police stress, with leadership support and fair workload distribution playing critical roles in stress reduction. Likewise, Carleton et al. (2020) and Sharif (2023) emphasized that excessive workload, long working hours, and inadequate institutional support significantly affect the stress levels and performance of officers in the field. These studies confirm that both structural and operational stressors coexist and jointly affect police well-being.

The findings indicate that police officers experience stressful levels of organizational and operational stress, with PNCOs being slightly more affected than PCOs. These results emphasize the need for organizational reforms, such as improved communication, fair workload distribution, and leadership support, as well as operational stress management initiatives to ensure officer safety, rest, and psychological stability.

Coping Mechanisms employed by the Respondents

This section presents the qualitative results on the coping mechanisms employed by Caloocan City Police Personnel in managing occupational stress. Data were gathered from ten (10) informants representing various ranks, genders, and lengths of service. Through semi-structured interviews, participants described how they manage feelings of pressure, fatigue, and emotional strain arising from their professional duties. The responses were transcribed and analyzed thematically, producing three major themes that describe how police officers respond to stress: Faith and Spiritual Reliance, Family Bonding and Social Connection, and Personal Recovery through Leisure and Rest.

Interview Question	All Responses (Reflected Verbatim from Informants)	Themes Generated
<p><i>When you start feeling stressed at work, what do you usually do to help yourself feel better or handle the situation?</i></p>	<p>I1: <i>"pagdarasal at pagtawag sa Maykapal."</i> I2: <i>"sulitin talaga yung oras sa bahay, makagpahinga atsaka makasama ang family"</i> I3: <i>"wag lang masyadong dibdibin yung mga galit sa taas para di masyadong stress pero comply pa rin syempre, pati kapag nakakauwi ng bahay, family time"</i> I4: <i>"Mostly pang laban ko sa stress yung mga nag mamahal at umaasa sakin, kahit sobrang pagud at stress na pag naisip ko na maraming umaasa saking mga mahal ko kailangan ko lang tatagan kase wala ring patutunguhan pag nag quit, may mga pag kakataon lang na sa bingit ka na talaga ng sobrang stress kinakain ka na talaga, pero same pa rin ang ginagawa ko."</i> I5: <i>"Naging coping mechanism ko na talaga is watching K-Dramas and fangirling over my favorite Idols. It helps me de-stress after a long day. It might be simple, but it really lifts my mood and keeps me mentally balanced despite the challenges of the job."</i> I6: <i>"sa bahay talaga, kasama family. Kahit monitoring pa rin kami sa Viber group at Messenger group kahit nasa bahay, yung isang araw na makauwi as opisyal, malaking bagay na."</i> I7: <i>"I just enjoy my time after duty"</i> I8: <i>"Pray lang, pahinga kasama ang pamilya kapag nasa bahay na, minsan makapamasyal kasama sila"</i> I9: <i>"I talk to my colleagues. Yung sharing of experiences, parang support system din namin."</i> I10: <i>"Kapag may bakanteng oras, ipinapahinga ko na kahit sa opisina lang. Atsaka kung makauwi ako sa bahay, yun talaga."</i></p>	<p>Faith-Based and Emotional Coping Family and Social Support Leisure and Rest as Recovery Tools</p>

Table 8. The Coping Mechanisms employed by the Respondents

Table 8 shows the coping mechanisms of the respondents with the following theme:

Theme 1: Faith and Spiritual Reliance

The first theme highlights that faith serves as the foremost coping mechanism among officers. Many participants shared that prayer and reflection help them regain composure and strength during difficult moments.

One officer expressed, *"Pagdarasal at pagtawag sa Maykapal ang ginagawa ko kapag sobrang stress na,"* (I1) while another shared, *"Pray lang, pahinga kasama ang pamilya kapag nasa bahay na, minsan makapamasyal kasama sila."* (I8). Similarly, a respondent stated, *"Mostly pang laban ko sa stress yung mga nagmamahal at umaasa sakin... pero dasal pa rin lagi, kailangan tatagan."* (I4). These statements show that spirituality acts as an emotional anchor that provides inner peace and hope. Faith allows them to interpret stress as a temporary challenge rather than an enduring burden, helping them persevere in the face of danger, fatigue, and moral conflict.

This finding supports Gumani (2021), who emphasized that spirituality promotes emotional control and positive adaptation among police officers, and Sharif (2023), who found that faith-based coping enhances optimism and prevents burnout. Carleton et al. (2020) further highlighted that spirituality, when integrated with emotional reflection, protects officers from the long-term effects of trauma exposure. In the same way, Pienaar (2018) underscored that faith-centered resilience programs strengthen moral grounding and encourage ethical decision-making among police officers under pressure.

Theme 2: Family Bonding and Social Connection

The second theme reveals that family remains the most significant emotional support for police officers. Most informants shared that spending quality time with their families allows them to unwind and find purpose after long, stressful duties. One respondent said, *"Sulitin talaga yung oras sa bahay, makapagpahinga at makasama ang family,"* (I2) while another mentioned, *"Sa bahay talaga, kasama family. Kahit monitoring pa rin kami sa Viber group, malaking bagay na makauwi kahit isang araw."* (I6). Similarly, one informant shared, *"Wag lang masyadong dibdibin yung mga galit sa taas para di masyadong stress pero comply pa rin syempre, pati kapag nakakauwi ng bahay, family time."* (I3). In addition, one officer explained the value of peer support in coping, saying, *"I talk to my colleagues. Yung sharing of experiences, parang support system din namin"* (I9). This suggests that, aside from familial relationships, peer interactions within the workplace serve as informal support systems that provide emotional validation and understanding. Texturally, the presence of family and peers provides emotional comfort, belongingness, and motivation, while structurally, it helps officers maintain balance between professional demands and personal well-being.

These findings align with Carleton et al. (2020) and Violanti et al. (2017), who found that family and peer social networks are crucial in reducing occupational stress and fostering resilience among law enforcement officers. The role of family support as a coping factor was also highlighted in local literature, where Blanco et al. (2023) and Gutierrez et al. (2015) showed that maintaining family relationships helps reduce burnout and emotional exhaustion among officers. Liu et al. (2019) also stressed that social support systems increase morale and improve emotional stability, while Santre (2022) highlighted that informal peer-support networks within police organizations can reduce isolation and promote well-being, though he also noted that such programs are often limited and need formal reinforcement.

Theme 3: Personal Recovery through Leisure and Rest

The third theme shows that officers deliberately take time to rest and engage in recreational activities as a form of emotional and physical recovery. Some respondents shared that they watch television shows or spend time on hobbies to de-stress, while others emphasized the importance of rest and sleep.

One officer mentioned, *"Naging coping mechanism ko na talaga is watching K-Dramas and fangirling over my favorite idols. It helps me de-stress after a long day."* (I5). Another added, *"I just enjoy my time after duty,"* (I7) while another said, *"Kapag may bakanteng oras, ipinapahinga ko na kahit sa opisina lang. Atsaka kung makauwi ako sa bahay, yun talaga."* (I10) These responses reflect a proactive understanding of self-care, where officers consciously set time for mental and physical recovery to maintain focus and stability. Leisure and rest function as psychological detachment strategies that allow them to recharge and regain emotional balance before returning to work.

Sharif (2023) emphasized that relaxation and recovery activities enhance emotional regulation and mental well-being, while Liu et al. (2019) found that rest contributes significantly to improved performance and work-life balance among high-stress professionals. Santre (2022) supported that peer-based recreational activities can enhance morale and reduce tension, although he noted the limited institutionalization of such initiatives. Pienaar (2018) further emphasized that rest and recovery strengthen cognitive performance and emotional discipline among police officers facing sustained pressure. In conclusion, the themes derived from the experiences of Caloocan City police officers reveal that coping with occupational stress is a multidimensional process rooted in spiritual strength, social support, and self-care practices. Faith serves as a personal anchor that sustains inner peace and moral resilience; family and peers provide social grounding and emotional security; and leisure enables physical and mental restoration. Collectively, these strategies represent adaptive responses that reflect the cultural values of resilience, religiosity, and familial devotion among Filipino law enforcement officers. However, the findings also reveal that these coping mechanisms are largely self-initiated rather than institutionally supported. While officers demonstrate personal resilience, the absence of formalized wellness programs or structured

psychological support may limit the long-term effectiveness of these strategies. Consistent with Santre (2022) and Pienaar (2018), the results suggest that while individual coping practices are beneficial, organizational interventions such as stress management seminars, peer-support systems, and family engagement programs, are essential to sustain holistic well-being and improve workplace morale.

Ultimately, these findings affirm that while stress is inherent to the policing profession, it can be managed and mitigated through the synergy of personal faith, social connection, and institutional support, ensuring both the emotional welfare and operational efficiency of Caloocan City police personnel.

Proposed Training Program

Module/Title	Objectives	Activities/ Strategies	Persons Involved	Expected Output	Estimated Budget (₱)
Module 1 Understanding Police Stress	Identify the nature, types, and sources of stress affecting police personnel.	Lecture-discussion, interactive sharing, self-assessment exercises.	PNP Psychologist / Guest Lecturer	Enhanced understanding of stress factors and awareness of its impact.	₱5,000 (materials, honorarium, venue setup)
Module 2 – Psychological Resilience and Emotional Regulation	Develop coping techniques and emotional control in stressful situations.	Mindfulness sessions, guided reflection, and group dynamics.	Psychologist / SWIM Facilitator	Improved emotional regulation and self-awareness.	₱6,000 (training kits, refreshments)
Module 3 – Managing Operational and Organizational Stress	Address fatigue, workload imbalance, and internal challenges.	Workshop on time management, case simulation, and teamwork exercises.	Station Commander / Unit Chiefs	Strengthened team coordination and operational efficiency.	₱4,000 (materials, facilitation costs)
Module 4 – Faith, Family, and Social Support Systems	Reinforce moral, spiritual, and family-based coping mechanisms.	Inspirational talk, prayer session, family involvement activities.	PNP Chaplain /Family Members	Enhanced social and family support network.	₱3,000 (tokens, printed materials)
Module 5 – Physical Wellness and Self-Care	Promote healthy lifestyle and physical fitness to reduce stress.	Group exercise, health talk, relaxation and breathing drills.	PNP Medical Officer / Fitness Coach	Improved physical stamina and stress recovery.	₱4,500 (equipment, refreshments)

Table 9. Proposed Training Program: Resilience and Stress Management for Caloocan City Police Personnel

Proposed training program is shown in Table 9. Based on the results of the study, a Resilience and Stress Management Training Program is hereby proposed to help reduce the impact of stress factors experienced by police personnel of Caloocan City Police Station. This program is anchored on the study’s findings that stress among police officers is moderate but persistent across all aspects, with Police Non-Commissioned Officers (PNCOs) experiencing higher levels of psychological and operational stress than Police Commissioned Officers (PCOs). The training aims to enhance awareness, build coping capacity, and promote mental and physical wellness among personnel, in line with the PNP’s “Bantay Kaisipan” and Squad Weekly Interactive Meeting (SWIM) programs under Memorandum Circular No. 2021-115 and No. 20-2020, respectively.

Rationale:

The findings revealed that Caloocan police officers experience moderate levels of stress in personal, physical, psychological, social, organizational, and operational aspects.

While officers cope through faith, family, and leisure, most mechanisms are self-initiated and lack institutional support. Thus, this proposed training program provides structured guidance to help police personnel develop stronger emotional resilience, improve coping skills, and manage stress effectively while performing their duties.

It also supports the PNP's holistic wellness initiatives by integrating preventive, intervention, and recovery approaches. General Objective: To strengthen the resilience, coping mechanisms, and overall well-being of Caloocan City Police Personnel in managing occupational stress and maintaining high performance.

Specific Objectives:

1. To increase awareness and understanding of stress and its effects on job performance.
2. To develop individual and collective coping skills appropriate to operational demands.
3. To enhance psychological, emotional, and spiritual resilience among personnel.
4. To promote organizational support and work-life balance through peer interaction and leadership empathy.
5. To align stress management practices with PNP mental health and wellness programs.

Conclusion and Implications

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the majority of Caloocan City Police Personnel are PNCOs engaged in frontline duties, making them more susceptible to operational and psychological stress.

The impact of stress factors on performance was found to be moderate across all dimensions; yet more pronounced among PNCOs. The only significant difference observed was in the psychological aspect by rank, indicating that lower-ranking officers experience greater emotional strain due to their direct exposure to operational risks and workload intensity.

No significant differences were found when grouped by assignment and length of service, confirming that stress is a systemic and universal condition in police work, not limited to a specific rank or tenure. Both organizational and operational stressors contribute equally to overall stress levels, affecting performance and well-being.

Coping strategies were largely personal and faith-driven, supported by social and familial relationships, but lacked consistent institutional support mechanisms. Hence, formal and structured stress management programs are necessary to sustain psychological well-being and operational efficiency.

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Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

Due to the sensitive nature of the data involving police personnel and institutional confidentiality agreements, the full response dataset is not publicly available. Anonymized data may be made available upon reasonable request, subject to institutional approval.