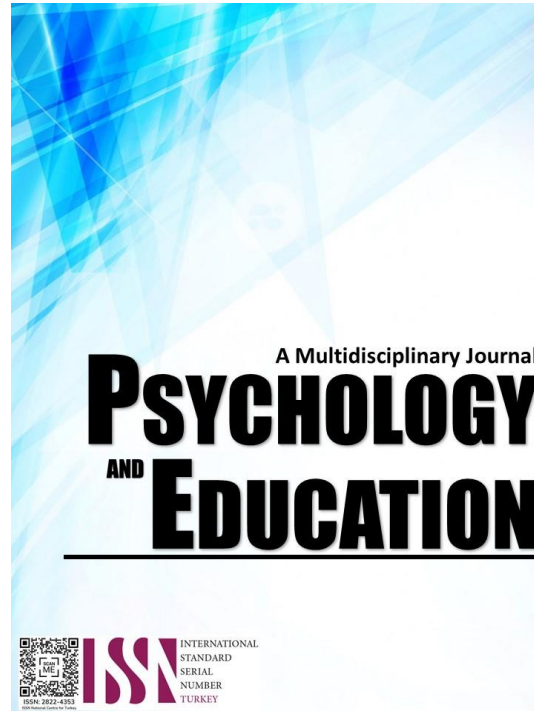


# **#HERSTORY: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING, LIVED EXPERIENCES, AND CHALLENGES FACED BY FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS**



**PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL**

2023

Volume: 7

Pages: 20-32

Document ID: 2022PEMJ513

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7595194

Manuscript Accepted: 2023-27-1

## #HerStory: the Psychological Well-Being, Lived Experiences, and Challenges Faced by Female Police Officers

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### Abstract

Police officers are vital to maintaining security and the continuity of national functions. Thus, Police officers are more exposed to different kinds of psychological concerns. However, a female in this kind of profession, based on various studies, experienced higher levels of stress because of other factors. Further, the primary goal of this study is to investigate the psychological well-being, lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of female police officers. Employing the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, the findings of this study were: (1) Female police officers had conceptualized themselves as brave, flexible, and adaptive. And they cope with stress with positive thinking that results in healthy psychological well-being. (2) Female police officers showed dedication and engagement to serve the people. They even used their resources for the public and sacrificed most of their time in the office. (3) Female police officers' primary motivation to continue their careers is their families, and serving the public brings joy to them. (4) However, female police officers experience disrespect while working in the field, and they always have fear in their life as police officers. Moreover, they need more time to spend with their families. Furthermore, it is highly suggested to provide opportunities for enhancing quality time with their family, specifically with their children.

**Keywords:** *psychological well-being, lived experiences, challenges, female police officers, Philippines*

### Introduction

Police officers are crucial in preserving security and the continuity of critical national functions. However, their work exposes them to a broad spectrum of mental health effects due to natural or human-caused calamities. (Benedek et al., 2007; as cited in SAMHSA, 2018). Some of the factors include working long hours, working numerous shifts at once, getting little sleep, going through physical hardships, or being directly or indirectly exposed to death, sadness, injury, pain, or loss (Botha, Gwin, & Purpora, 2015; Heavey et al., 2015; Patterson et al., 2012; Quevillon, Gray, Erickson, Gonzalez, & Jacobs, 2016). According to Badge of Life (2017), in 2016, 108 police officers took their own life suffering from anxiety and stress disorders. For every police suicide, estimates have stated that 1,000 police officers continue to work while suffering the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The study of Kurup and Lasar (2017) revealed that male and female police officers faced the same occupational stress. However, female police officers experience higher levels of stress than their male counterparts and primarily meet physical, occupational, psychological, and cognitive stress (Kurup & Lasar, 2017). According to Sherwood et al. (2019), having inadequate social support, being highly

neurotic, and using avoidant or passive coping mechanisms were all linked to adverse psychological outcomes. In addition, Beshears (2017) stated that the stress of police officers could go unnoticed and unacknowledged. They often repress their emotions and do not seek treatment as they fear they will appear weak and incapable at work.

Thus, Kuppusamy et al. (2016) discovered that female police officers who experienced gender inequality experienced significantly more stress than those without gender issues. In the study of He et al. (2002, as cited by Chen, 2015), they stated that the effects of unpleasant work conditions, social support, and constructive coping techniques on various job-related stressors were diverse among females. Moreover, this indicates that the policing structure causes female officers to encounter burnout more frequently than male police officers. According to the findings of Balmer et al. (2013), psychological functioning is insignificant to the resilience of police officers; instead, greater use of rational coping and less service of emotional coping predicted stability. These findings imply that police officers focus more on acceptance and exposure than on handling their emotions.

Moreover, Chen (2015) consistently found common motivations among men and women when seeking employment in policing. Nonetheless, since female police officers are frequently oppressed in a male-

dominated workplace, they are deprived of the chance to demonstrate their strengths, which causes their motivation to continue to decrease. On the other hand, the job satisfaction of female police officers is unpredictable for various reasons like work pressure, poor work support, lack of lucrative wages, and inconvenience (Vidya & Kotian, 2014). However, Chitra and Karunanidhi (2018) uttered that resilience training was beneficial in improving female police officers' resilience, work satisfaction, and psychological well-being, as well as minimizing work-related stress.

Thus, this study aims to investigate the psychological well-being further, lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of female police officers in the Philippines. Moreover, it also seeks to determine the gap of lacking data about the lived experiences and challenges of female police officers in the Philippine context. Also, the previous studies needed to clarify the coping mechanisms in their further studies.

Furthermore, this study aims to provide perspectives from female police officers on their psychological well-being, experiences, and life challenges. In addition, it will provide insights into the situations and coping mechanisms of female police officers in the Philippines. This study will explore the psychological implications and well-being of female police officers.

### Research Questions

This study explores the psychological well-being, lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of female police officers. In particular, the study sought to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of a female police officer?
2. What are the challenges faced by a female police officer?
3. What are the coping mechanisms of a female police officer?

### Methodology

This study employed Heideggerian phenomenology to explore the participant's lived experiences.

### Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were fifteen (15) female police officers who were actively operated and assigned in any area in Bulacan, Philippines. As shown in Table 1, the ages of the participants range from 36 to 46, and most have a single marital status. Furthermore, their years in the service range from 7 to 19 years, and they are assigned to different departments within the scope of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

### Instrument of the Study

The researchers used a semi-structured interview guide to elicit female police officers' lived experiences in Bulacan. It is subjected to extensive content validation by various professionals in the field to ensure the reliability of the interview guide.

Before the actual data collection, an informed consent letter was presented and given to the participants following research ethics guidelines. This process is required to ensure that participants have enough information to consider before deciding to participate willingly in the study. Furthermore, the interview guide consists of twenty-one (21) questions, plus questions regarding the personal profiles of the participants. This interview guide narrowed down the three main themes of this study: the lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of female police officers in Bulacan.

### Data Collection Process

In the findings of this study, the data collection process included the use of the semi-structured interview guide, which consists of twenty-six (26) questions in total and can take at least twenty (20) to thirty (30) minutes.

Before the interview with the participants and to ensure compliance with legal requirements, researchers presented a consent letter to each participant to ensure that the participants had enough information about the study. The researchers also respectfully asked the participants if it was okay with them that the researcher would record the said interview for transcription purposes only. During the interview, participants are urged to state any concerns or clarifications that may arise from confusing questions. Additionally, the researchers did a thorough transcription and analysis to make sense of the data gathered in the interview. It was decided that the

interview guide would consist of fifteen (15) questions that may run up to thirty(30) minutes. The participants were instructed to voice any clarifications, problems, or confusing questions after the opening situations of the meeting as a result of any technical breaks that may occur. Following a hard copy of the structured interview and extensive transcription, the analysis was conducted to make sense of the information acquired. The interview transcription contains the precise verbatim responses of each participant to any uncertainty about the data collection's contents.

### Ethical Considerations

The researchers obtained consent from their research professor for the data collection and instruments used, and the researcher followed ethical standards to ensure that the support was certified. The research participants are analyzed, the criteria are determined, and the participants are asked to consent or waive. The consent form contained the protocol for data collection, and legal aspects were followed in collecting data about the participants. As required by Republic Act No. 10173, a person's private information should be protected. The data and responses contained in this research will be kept confidential, will not be handed down, and will only be used as stated in the written consent.

### Data Analysis Procedure

Data collection for qualitative analysis can take several forms. However, recorded and transcribed interviews provide the most reliable data, reducing contextual errors. Collecting data by interview can yield more accurate data, avoiding misinformation about the said data. All the information that the female police officer shares will be studied and analyzed by the researchers and transcribed word for word. Thus, phenomenology aims to define the phenomenon being studied by looking at the stories of persons who have experienced it (Moustakas, 1994).

Moreover, the researchers employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). According to Vanscoy and Evenstad (2015), it is an approach that focuses on discovering and comprehending the actual lived experience of a given phenomenon. It is anchored in the Modified van Kaam approach that was popularized by Moustakas and used to analyze and generate qualitative data findings. The modified van Kaam analysis has seven steps: (1) listing and grouping, (2) reduction and elimination, (3) clustering and thematizing, (4) validation, (5) individual textual description, (6) individual structural description, and (7) textural-structural description.

## Results and Discussion

The analysis and interpretation of the data gathered revealed five themes of this study, which will be presented in the following section. These themes are (1) the woman of stature; (2) an altruistic mindset; (3) inspired life; and (4) the unfortunate events. These four themes illustrate the lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of female police officers. Thus, this section will further elaborate on each subtheme by giving the actual transcripts of various participants.

### The Women of Stature

Police officers, regardless of gender, are trained to have the necessary qualifications to perform better. However, Riccucci et al. (2014) revealed that female police officers had attained a positive influence over people as they have the qualities of effectiveness, credibility, and fairness. As their job is to respond to the threats and emergencies of the local citizens, compared to male police officers, female police officers are also trained to have bravery and compassion towards their job (Goodwin University, 2022). In this theme, participants have an explicit self- concept.

**The mark of bravery.** According to Emberlin (2018), it is a misconception to believe that officers are always psychologically strong, as fear can limit their courage. Courage is a psychological aspect characterized by perseverance, determination, and accomplishment in facing life's challenges (Cheng & Huang, 2022). Emberlin (2018) added that an individual needs to pass the fear, even if it is overwhelming, to get the courage. However, Gumbo (2014) stated that police officers are psychologically and physically strong. However, it does not mean they are immune to fear because the intense training has strengthened their minds and muscle to be more capable of adapting to the fear of their job.

As the interviewer asked the participants how they see themselves as female police officers, most claimed they are brave enough. Bravery is the capability to overcome something undesirable, challenging, or dangerous without fear (Warshaw, 2019). According to Ruch et al. (2020), one of the significant indicators of courage is bravery. Participant 2 described herself

as a police officer with a strong personality. According to her, it is like a required personality before entering their job.

Nakikita ko ang aking sarili bilang isang Pulis na may personality ng pagiging strong which is kailangan meron ka non kapag pumasok ka sa pagiging Pulis.

Indirectly, but most officers shared the same self-perception. This evidence shows that female police officers perceive themselves as courageous.

**Trained under pressure.** Job stress occurs to individuals when they are exposed to work demands that are incompatible with their current abilities, making it extra hard for them to handle (Rafique et al., 2022). According to Queiros (2020), police officers experience job stress that leads to burnout, anxiety, and depression. As the interviewer asked the participants how they handle stress, Participant 5 answered that they manage stress and control their emotions as taught in their training.

Napag daanan namin sa training yung mga ganyan, so yung mga stress management, mga maximum tolerance sanay kami dyan walang kahit sobrang stress kana wala kang ibang dapat gawin kundi ipag patuloy lang yung buhay mo, yung trabaho mo.

This evidence shows that job stress is a part of being a police officer, but female police officers claimed they could handle it just fine. Furthermore, participant 6 said she could take stress easily by smiling and having a positive mindset.

Sa stress, well, life is beautiful kahit naiistress ka smile ka parin diba kahit na medyo naiinis ka sa tao, ipakita mo na nakangiti ka parin diba ang saya saya paring kausap. So, 'yun lang normal naman talaga yung stress kaya nga lang syempre we have to be adaptive.

This data supports the studies (Paddock, 2012; Coles et al., 2019) suggesting that positive facial gestures, such as smiling, alter one's emotions into feeling positive. Moreover, Naseem and Khalid (2010) revealed that positive thinking makes coping with stress more manageable. As female police officers have a positive mindset when dealing with job stress and are still able to smile, there is a possibility that they possess healthy psychological well-being in their work.

**Flexibility and Adaptability beyond compare.** According to Motahari-Nezhad (2013),

policing can be unpredictable, primarily when working on a case and managing different concerns in different fields. Thus, being adaptive to the job helps police officers adjust to various issues and scenarios that often occur in their work (Monties & Gagnon, 2022). When the researchers asked the participants about themselves in their work, most saw themselves as adaptive. Participant 6 described herself as a police officer that is disciplined, responsible, sociable, flexible, and adaptive. According to her, it is a characteristic that a police officer must attain.

Isa ako sa mga pulis na desiplinado, responsible, madaling pakisamahan at madali di naman akong makisama kung baga kasi kailangan sa pulis na flexible at adaptive ka.

This data implies that female police officers can adjust to different people and situations as they feel responsible for attaining the qualities that a police officer must possess. However, several participants find it difficult as changes can put them in various emotions. According to participant 2, she felt unmotivated to work when she was moved from a different department as it was hard to adjust to the field of work with a different process.

This past few days dahil PCR PNCO nga ako tapos bigla akong nalipat na Patroller, ang bigat tapos ang daming changes.

This data indicates that even though the majority of female police officers can adapt quickly, there are still police officers like participant 2 who need help to adapt to the changes immediately. Based on the participants, this situation may lead them to feel unmotivated, exhausted, and frustrated. According to participant 1, being a police officer is being a continuous learner as they need to adapt to the changes like in a newly implemented law.

Kasi dito continuous learning hindi pwede na yung alam mo yun lang, kasi kamukha nyan ang daming ano, napa-pasa na bagong batas.

Thus, adapting and flexible to job changes is necessary as it is continuous learning.

As discussed, the highlight of this subtheme shows that female police officers are adaptive, mainly because the job requires them to be. However, the adjustment leads them to feel unmotivated in their work. According to Blumberg (2019), police officers' training must also focus on cognitive, emotional, social, and moral to understand and adapt to new modern knowledge.



## Altruistic Mindset

Altruism refers to being more focused on the well-being of others than one's self (van der Wath et al., 2020). In maintaining the public's safety and attaining the effectiveness of being a police officer, a strong relationship built by mutual trust between the police officers and the communities is essential (Zoe, 2012). As the relationship between police officers and communities builds trust, it gives the police officers the dedication to work effectively and beyond their assigned tasks. Additionally, as police officers are motivated to work, they become more engaged in altruism (Basinka and Daderman, 2019). This theme classifies the female police officers as altruistic because they show selfless care for the people rather than their safety and selfish desires.

**Result oriented.** Female police officers offer services to people in different departments to which they are assigned. Participant 4 said that there was an experience where she became a part of a successful drug-clearing operation in Donya Remedios Trinidad in Norzagaray Bulacan. She added that achieving that kind of responsibility for her community is one thing she will always be proud of that can motivate her to continue doing what she is doing.

Meron kami ngayon na tinatawag na drug clearing dito sa Bulacan. Galing ako sa Donya Remedios Trinidad [proud ako] at masasabi kong drug cleared na ang lugar na 'yon nung ako ay nandoon.

This statement shows high self-efficacy as defined by Hopper (2021) that self-efficacy is a set of beliefs regarding an individual's capability to accomplish a specific task and an outcome of past experiences, perceptions, persuasions, and emotions. As observed, the operation's success has made participant 4 satisfied with her work, as she feels proud of her efficiency. When she was assigned to Meycauayan Bulacan, she happily reported that drug cases were decreasing because of them.

Ngayon nandito ako sa Meycauayan at so far, tumataas na yung mga barangay na na-dudrug clear na rin namin.

This data indicates that participant 4 was fulfilled after a successful operation. As the study discusses the participants' self-efficacy, the researchers discovered that female police officers' ability to accomplish their cases greatly fulfills them and makes them more

motivated. Furthermore, public service and being able to fit into the environment allow police officers to gain job satisfaction and higher self-efficacy. Having this said, it means that female police officers have a healthy psychological well-being.

**Selfless service.** Providing service and helping people are common objectives of being a police officer. Thus, their main concern is protecting people from possible threats and preventing crimes in a community as they promote peace. According to Fortenbery (2015), the dedication and desire to serve the righteous ethical cause of police officers influence how productive and motivated officers are at work. As the participants shared their experiences towards their work, some mentioned the support they have provided for people even if it is not an extent to their work. According to participant 1, when she encountered a woman being physically abused by her husband, she immediately responded with DSWD to provide her with help and justice. However, the process made the police officer use her own money and car.

Sa ibang pag-iimbestiga, sakin personal 'kong pera, personal 'kong sasakyan, yung medico legal kasi nga ngayon dinadala na sa Olivas, sa San Fernando, Pampanga.

This statement implies that whenever there is a case regarding women who are abused, female police officer often responds to them. Even though participant 1 often experienced using her own money and car with them, she kept doing it as she wanted to help people with their cases. Thus, their passion for helping people was emphasized as they helped without expecting anything in return. Participant 1 added that she was emotionally moved when people cried as they gave thanks.

Tsaka ano lang, naiiyak sila na nag-papasalamat sila, na-aano na ako non, natutuwa na ako.

Indeed, the gratitude from the people they helped provides female police officers satisfaction in their work. Being initiative towards their job shows passion and dedication to serve and protect the people in the community.

**Always on the go.** Most female police officers in this study spend most of their time in the workplace as they extend their time in duties and on-call cases. Thus, it highlights the passion and responsibility of female police officers as they sacrifice most of their time in their work. Participant 1 shared that even though there is a shift in their duty time, she still handles on-call

cases and responds, especially when there are concerns regarding women.

Pag gabi [ang duty] at merong may case, on-call ako. So anytime dapat makatakbo ako dito lalo na kapag molestation and rape cases kasi hindi naman pwede yun sa lalaki.

This statement indicates that duty continues after their shift, as they must respond to different cases every time. Participant 1 added that to take action immediately on on-call issues; she decided to live nearby the office. Thus, being exposed to work every time makes them feel stressed, as workloads mediate.

Masyadong stressful yung trabaho, masyadong maraming workload, ma-kaso.

This data implies that female police officers spend most of their time at work and, as a result, they feel stressed. According to Papazoglou and Tuttle (2018), police officers encounter stress while performing their duties, which may severely affect their health and well-being.

### Inspired Life

One of the most important aspects of being a female police officer is staying engaged and motivated. Furthermore, job motivation refers to the willingness of an individual to exert effort in one's work (Thao- Vyet al., 2022). Generally, job motivation among workers is significant to their job performance (Zaidee et al., 2015). In this theme, the inspired female police officers are the individuals motivated in their job, and the factors of their motivators are discussed in the following subthemes.

**My family motivates me.** Family is crucial in keeping female police officers inspired to continue and do well in their jobs because the study by Saleem and Ajmal (2018) revealed that women are naturally relationship-oriented and are well committed to their role as family members. Additionally, the father of a female police officer plays a vital role in influencing their child to choose a male-dominated career. As their father affects them, they become one of their job motivations for achieving a specific goal in the workplace. Participant 3 shared that her job motivation mainly comes from her family and dedication to serving the public.

Nakakapag bigay ng motibasyon saken ay yung family ko.

Furthermore, Participant 2 said that family is her

primary motivation to work. She added that she has a stable job and thinks that she needs to stay on her career for her family.

Yung family ko yung motivation ko, kasi nga stable job 'to iniisip ko na kailangan mag-stay dito para sa pamilya 'ko.

This data implies that several female police officers' motivation is their families. Additionally, based on their responses, most of them are breadwinners in their families, which is why, even with difficulties in their job, they are motivated to at least continue to provide for their family's financial needs. In support, the Institute for Women's Policy Research (2012) study revealed that most female workers are the breadwinners in the family.

**The joy of serving.** As the interviewer asked about motivation, several participants shared the same sentiment as Participant 1. She said she is happy as long as she sees people doing fine even with the tiring job.

Masaya naman kahit nakakapagod [kasi] nakikita mo na, yung mga residente, yung mga alaga ko, na okay naman sila, masaya na'ko do'n.

This data shows that one of female police officers' motivations is people's good condition. Female police officers are also satisfied that they help people, proving they are altruistic (Rostamie et al., 2022).

**The people's heartfelt gratitude.** Several participants shared the same sentiments, as Participant 4 said that she feels satisfied and fulfilled when people come to her office and thank her personally.

Yung mga tao na natutulungan natin bumabalik sila eh maski di mo ineexpect kasi service nga ang aming trabaho pero meron dyan yung sa appreciate nila yung trabaho namin bumabalik sila nakakataba nang puso yun no. Parang nag papasalamat sila, yung parang binabati mo nga lang sila eh tuwang-tuwa na tapos lalo pag natutulungan mo sila tas balik-balik sila balik-balik yun yung nakakataba nang puso.

This data supports the study of Zhao, Thurman, and He (1999) that recognition often leads to police officers' job satisfaction.

### The Unfortunate Events

Based on the study of Tuttle et al. (2019), In the line of

duty, Police Officers encounter particular difficulties that endanger their health and well-being. Shift work, responding to critical incidents, and social media pressures are just a few organizational, operational, community-related, and personal stressors that Police officers face. In addition, as per Khetarpal (2016), one of the leading causes of stress among professionals is disrespect at work, followed by a lack of work-life balance, overtime, and support. The participants in this theme are labeled “The Adverse” as their stories tell unfavorable circumstances they experience in their profession.

**The hate of being female.** Being a female in a male-dominated job has made the life of a female police officer more challenging when dealing with more physical and risky work. Some participants felt uncomfortable about the public comments they received, especially since they were female police officers. In this study, being a Police Officer is more complex than ever, and it all comes down to respect. A lack of respect for law enforcement personnel who risk their lives daily to protect the community (Barr, 2019) can cause stress, as Khetarpal (2016) has revealed. Besides, Pinki et al. (2021) uttered that compared to male police officers, female police officers had higher levels of occupational stress symptoms and operational stress. In addition, the daily experiences of female police officers include criticism, bullying, and harassment (Cunningham & Ramshaw, 2019).

When the interviewer asked the Participants about the uncomfortable things within their job, most responses were related to the answer of Participant 4. She said that there are verbally abusive individuals who make her feel uncomfortable. She added that it was only because of the maximum tolerance that she could cope with the stress herself.

Pag napupunta ako sa mga maraming kalalakihan kasi babae ako. So, syempre meron dyan times na magsasalita nang di maganda sa mga babae.... Syempre bilang pulis di mo naman pupwedeng patulan yun kahit na babae ka na feeling mo nabastos ka dapat ano pa rin ah pasensya parin maximum tolerance ang tawag namin dun kaya kahit anong gawin sayong pangbabastos, panlalait o ano dapat siguro habaan ang pasensya yun na lang din.

Unfortunately, some people may disrespect female police officers. However, it is essential to remember that all police officers are trained professionals to manage this situation. According to Participant 4, even though she was insulted as a woman, she still needs to

work it.

Sila [civilians] yung medyo minsan nakakapagsalita ng di maganda na medyo nababastos kami. Nababastos yung pagkababae namin kaya maximum tolerance talaga ang baon namin.

This statement indicates that Participant 4 experienced profanity in her work. According to Ellrich and Baier (2016), 80.9 percent of police officers admitted experiencing insults thrown at them while on duty. Thus, police officers encounter verbal abuse very frequently. In addition, according to Kuppusamy et al. (2016), female police officers experienced gender inequality and experienced significantly more stress than those without gender issues.

Furthermore, Participant 2 stated that she experienced being assumed as a man because of her profession, which caused her to question her gender.

For example, may checkpoint nakita naman nakapusod ka, ang tawag pa rin sayo ay sir, kaya minsan iniisip ko babae ba ako o lalaki kasi nakapusod naman ako, minsan magagawa ko nalang biro sa tao na, kuya babae po ako sir ka naman ng sir.

In the case of participant 2, she coped by making a joke out of it even though she was offended. In addition, based on Participant 2, her experience impacted her well-being.

According to Roman (2020), surveys show that female police officers perceive that they receive more criticism than their male colleagues because of sexism, which negatively affects women’s experiences in law enforcement. However, in the article of Patil (2018), Police Officers did not have performance problems despite the same unfavorable public opinions. These officers generally performed as they had been trained.

This subtheme indicates the huge negative comments of the public they received as a female in this line of work despite the service they give. Even though they accept that these things are part of their profession and they are trained to handle this kind of situation, it denies that these things can still affect them. According to Kuppusamy et al. (2016), female police officers who experienced concerns regarding their gender experienced significantly more stress than those without gender issues. However, according to the majority of participants, they manage this kind of situation effectively.

**Tested through thick and thin.** Even though women



are credible and welcome in law enforcement, some still do not see the value of being a female in this line of work. Female police officers encounter people who disrespect them and question their capacity to work because of their gender, even though they only desire to serve and help the people. In this scenario, a female police officer must extend their patience.

According to Emberlin (2018), patience has a significant and critical role in all surfaces of policing, not only tactical operations. Based on the statement of Participant 4, indeed, long patience is requisite in this profession.

Dapat sa work namin mahaba ang pasensya mo. So, sa tagal ko sa serbisyo at sa edad kong ito ay masasabi ko naman na napakahaba na ng pasensya ko.

Being patient is essential in the work of police officers, as they meet different people with different cases daily. According to the participants, they exercised maximum tolerance during the training and in schooling to maintain peace among the people. This practice has enabled them to tolerate and deal with the people around them. However, it cannot deny that there are circumstances when the participants' patience is tested based on participant 4's statement.

Minsan marami talagang makukulit na talagang medyo nakakaubos ng pasensya at di mo maaalis yun pag kami ay nasa kalsada, pero syempre dahil pulis ka suot mo yung uniporme mo tinitignan ka nang tao, dapat panindigan namin yung trabaho namin.

Police Officers encounter different kinds of individuals in their profession, as their job is to serve the community. In line statement, Participant 4 stated that she often encounters situations where her patience is tested, especially when they are on the street but then, according to her, since she is wearing the uniform of police. She's protecting the image of her profession; she needs to have this long patience to manage those kinds of people. As far as the discussion goes, there should be enough evidence to show that maximum tolerance has helped female police officers deal with different people they encounter. According to Roman (2020), women are more skilled in interpersonal communication than men, which translates into more productive work habits.

Moreover, the subthemes display how female police officers exhibit a commendable level of patience and maximum tolerance to maintain their composure and remain calm in complex and challenging situations.

Indeed, this can be an essential quality for police officers because it allows them to respond to concerns in a measured and appropriate manner rather than reacting impulsively or with excessive force. However, impatience can cause various mental health problems, beginning with anxiety. Additionally, having patience enhances intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions. It contributes to the development of positive emotions in both the individual and others, and it is noteworthy that patience is characteristic of an emotionally intelligent individual (United We Care, 2021). Thus, it has been acknowledged that emotional intelligence research-proven benefits police officers (Newton, 2016; Campbell and Kodz, 2011). Furthermore, based on the results of the study by Koziol (2020), emotional intelligence plays a vital role in policing.

**Brink of Death.** According to Mukherjee (2022), fear is an automatic response to a stimulus that sets off the brain's flight or fight mechanism. When an individual imagines future events in a negative situation, they instill fear, breeds anxiety and fear. The brain then create the emotion's harmful hormones, which impact an individual's physical and mental health. However, fear is still a necessary emotion to secure one's protection from actual risks and hazards.

Moreover, it is an undeniable fact that part of being a Police Officer and wearing that blue uniform is risking their lives every day and standing a risk of being killed in the line of duty. In support, Participant 3 shares her experience of danger while on duty.

Paalis na kami muntik na akong masaksak na kung hindi ako, seguro kung hindi lang ako naging alerto seguro baka wala na ako sa serbisyo, baka wala na ako.

It is common for police officers to face danger and encounter life-threatening situations. As mentioned by Participant 3, in one of her operations, she almost got stabbed. She added that if it were not for her alertness, she claimed she is probably dead by now.

Police officers frequently encounter life-threatening critical incidents while performing their duties because of the high-risk nature of the job (Pitel et. 2018). Thus, it is not unusual for the Participants to feel fear or anxiety when wearing their uniform based on the researcher's observation in the interview. One of the factors of this fear is the potential danger that comes with their profession. In support, police officers wearing a uniform is an indication that they become easily targeted by their enemies, as stated by Participant 5.

Oo naman syempre lalo na pag nakasuot ka nang uniform mo di mo alam kung nasaan yung mga kalaban.. so yun laging may fear.

When the participant asked if she ever felt fear for her life because of the job she had, she responded to it with certainty. Participant 5 stated there is always fear, especially when wearing her police uniform. Even though police officers are trained to handle dangerous situations, there are still instances in when they fear for their lives.

Furthermore, this subtheme indicates the amount of risk and life-threatening situations of a Police officer and the fear it generates for the well-being of female police officers. All participants shared the same sentiments when they were asked if they felt fear in the profession they had. Although fear is a necessary emotion for an individual, based on the study mentioned above, it can deny that fear has a negative effect. According to Delagran (2016), People who constantly live in fear, whether due to actual or imagined threats, might suffer detrimental effects in all facets of their lives and even lose their capacity to function. Thus, constant fear can affect an individual's physical health, memory, brain processing, and mental health.

**Lack of time with family.** Female police officers are found to have more substantial stress concerning responsibility in their families. In contrast, in the workplace, responsibility and time commitments leave no time for family and personal life (Duxbury & Halinski, 2017). According to Kaur (2014), a successful police officer must constantly balance the requirements and priorities of the personal life and work spheres. Thus, the police work-life balance programs are an investment in increasing productivity, reducing absenteeism, and enhancing public service. However, based on most of the participants' statements, they cannot achieve a well-balanced life since their profession is demanding incredibly in time.

It is common for police officers to work long hours and have irregular schedules, which can make it difficult for them to spend time with their families, which is evident based on the statement of Participant 6.

Yung time talaga masyadong kulang kasi halos yung time namin is kinakain nang work so yun when it comes to family siguro uuwi sabi ko nga parang lang akong borders sa bahay namin eh kasi kinabukasan papasok nanaman ako.

Participant 6 stated that their work consumed her time; hence, there was limited or no time for her family. She even said she is just like a boarding house occupant in her own house because she has a little time to stay there.

Indeed, time for family and other personal matters is taken up by the work of female police officers. According to Ullah et al. (2022), police officers experience overloaded tasks and energy-draining working hours. Moreover, Participant 1 said there is no time for any extracurricular activities, even for her children, because of her profession.

Wala ng time eh, wala ng time for any extracurricular activities kasi nga anak ko din mismo hindi ko na naalagaan.

This data implies that they need to be on call in times of emergency at the police station, which is why their time to work does not end after their shift. Thus, female police officers' burnout is more associated with motherhood and family obligation, making it difficult for them to achieve a work-life balance (DeCruise-Fortune, 2020).

## Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the following conclusion was discussed: Female police officers can cope in male-dominated jobs by conceptualizing themselves as brave, flexible, and adaptive. However, adjusting to changes can also make them feel unmotivated at work. Moreover, female police officers work efficiently in their given departments. As a result, it fulfills and motivates them at work, which can also cause them to have a healthy psychological well-being. Thus, maximum tolerance and positive thinking are their primary coping mechanisms as they face work stress. Female police officers use their financial resources and spend most of their time working. However, it exposed them to workloads, resulting in pressure at work. Female police officers' primary motivation is their families. However, the time with their family is inadequate, and they rarely spend quality time with them.

Furthermore, Female police officers faced challenges at work, such as gender stereotypes and hazardous workplace situations. People often criticize and disrespect females in law enforcement, which make them feel offended. Thus, the threat in their job has made them fear for their lives when working in the field. Female police officers feel frustrated at work

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