



**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

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**Police Officers Perceived Levels of Organizational Stress, Operational Stress, and Coping Strategies in San Jose, Antique, Philippines**

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**Abstract**

Police service is considered difficult and commonly regarded as a high-stress profession. Police officers deal with numerous complex daily challenges and must make split-second judgments. Thus, it is vital to investigate and assess law enforcement officers' operational stress, organizational stress, and coping strategies, as they are linked to their performance in the police organization. In this research, a descriptive-correlational study was employed using a purposive sampling method with police officers from the Municipal Police Station of San Jose de Buenavista in the Province of Antique, Philippines. The findings revealed that police officers could handle work-related issues caused by various stressors, whether in their operational or organizational functions. Furthermore, police officers can cope moderately with stress, indicating they can manage and deal with it effectively. Additionally, demographic groups perceive similar work stress for operational and organizational functions, including coping strategies. Finally, police officers' coping mechanisms often become influenced by operational and organizational stress. With this, the present study's findings strongly support the notion that operational and organizational stressors are fundamental to policing; as a result, police officers may adopt more effective coping strategies to combat the impacts of stress and enhance their work-related well-being. Police personnel may benefit from interventions and programs to reduce the effects of occupational stress.

**Keywords:** *Coping Strategies, Operational Stress, Organizational Stress, Police Officers.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Police work is consistently ranked as one of the most challenging and stressful jobs in the world (John-Akinola et al., 2020). Every day, police officers must address and solve a wide range of complicated problems and make decisions in a split second. They must keep working and figuring out how to deal with new problems, like preventing the virus from spreading (Stogner et al., 2020). Officers are always criticized in the media, put at risk for their safety, and put through much emotional stress (Burns et al., 2008). During the COVID-19 global pandemic, when it was at its worst, police officers worldwide were seen as essential workers. Even though the problems police face today are different from those they faced in the past, the complexity of their work still makes being a police officer a physically and mentally stressful job (Webster, 2014; Purba & Demou, 2019).



Occupational stress is a pattern of reactions in the workplace that occurs when employees are presented with work demands that are not matched to their knowledge, skills, or abilities and challenge their ability to cope. (Haradhan, 2012)

According to Violanti et al. (2017), one of the duties and responsibilities of today's law enforcement professionals is to develop the ability to deal with risk, ambiguity, and unpredictability in their field of work. Because of the increased stress in the workplace, which can lead to weariness, psychological or mental diseases, or even suicidal behavior, police officers need to be resilient and learn how to cope with the many demands of their profession (Queirós et al., 2020). Nevertheless, various stresses exist; some are considered adaptive or performance-enhancing (Lockey et al., 2022). However, if these stressors are not addressed, they can lead to negative results, such as dissatisfaction with one's career or mental health problems if allowed to continue unabated (Purba & Demou, 2019).

The National Center for Mental Health (NCMH) defines stress as tension, which is how a person feels when in a new, unpleasant, or dangerous situation. Pressure or demand causes it. It could be a threat, a challenge, or any other change that forces the body to act immediately. Mental stressors include decreased concentration and memory, confusion, and a loss of humor. Physical stressors include tiredness, headaches, and frequent colds. Emotional stressors include depression, anger, frustration, worry, fear, irritability, impatience, and a short temper (Philippine Official Gazette, 2013, May 29). In addition, Silverman et al. (2010) define stress as a physiological response to a change that requires a response, management, and physical, psychological, or emotional adaptation. Any scenario, condition, thought, or state that induces irritation, anger, uneasiness, or anxiety can produce stress.

Previous studies have identified several sources of stress for police officers; however, these sources of stress are typically categorized as either organizational or operational (McCreary & Thompson, 2007; Shane, 2010). There is a correlation between operational stressors and aspects of policing such as working shifts, danger, essential incidents, emotional trauma, public scrutiny of police conduct, the public perception of policing, concern over the use of excessive force, confrontational interactions, work-family conflict (McCreary & Thompson, 2007; Purba & Demou, 2019; Queirós et al., 2020). Stressors related to operations, like danger, unpredictability, and extended duty hours, can be problematic but are also expected (Shane, 2010; Violanti et al., 2017). Despite being detrimental to police personnel, these operational-related pressures must also be anticipated due to the nature of their work.

On the other hand, organizational stresses are associated with the police as a structure or organization. These include organizational factors specific to each police department, command,



or station, as well as stresses, including conflicts with superiors or coworkers, a shortage of resources or staff, job overload, excessive administrative labor, issues with leadership, and work overload. These stressors may be associated with the organization's administrative structure or social pressures (Shane, 2010; Violanti et al., 2017; Galanis et al., 2018). Officers frequently view organizational stressors as required but unnecessary, so they view them as more problematic.

Given the hazards of policing and the challenging working conditions, police employees must be resilient and employ coping mechanisms to combat burnout, stress, and the psychological effects of significant events. They also need to be able to deal with the aftermath of traumatic events. According to Fung (2020), resilience is a method of dealing with stress that helps one handle difficult circumstances and quickly recover and thrive when overcome. It is the process of responding favorably to adversity in a constructive manner both while it is happening and after it has already occurred.

Police officers in Antique, Philippines, likewise experience work stress. Yap (2022, December 12) reported that two policemen were wounded in a 10-minute gunfight with 16 New People's Army (NPA) insurgents led by Harold Mariano or "Ka Rod" in San Remegio, Antique. Moreover, eleven commissioned officers of the Antique Police Provincial Office were instantly relieved from their posts for various reasons ranging from failure to stop the Peryahan Games (or Peryahan ng Bayan) operations, non-observance of Tamang Bihis (proper attire), a blunder to follow instructions and to not knowing their area of operations well (Rendon, 2022, September 14). Meanwhile, in another news article by Rendon (2021, October 18), the Philippine National Police mourned the death of a member of Bugasong Police Station in Antique who died after trying to arrest a suspect shooting afternoon of October 15, 2021. The events above prompted the researcher to conduct this study in the Municipality of San Jose de Buenavista, Province of Antique, to understand better how police officers experience stress during their daily duties and to improve their coping strategies through professional programs for the improvement of police service.

Stress and coping strategies impact police officers' careers and well-being. This study contributes knowledge across several aspects. First, police stress and coping strategies in organizational and operational contexts will be examined. Second, understanding how different police personnel groups perceive operational stress, organizational stress, and coping strategies can assist law enforcement agencies and police administrators improve administrative policies and stress management programs. Third, evaluate if demographic groups view work stress and coping strategies differently. Finally, this study can promote and support focused intervention to reduce stress and improve coping strategies among Philippine police officers by addressing occupational health.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

Many police stress studies are based on the idea that stress is a phase of dynamic processes, starting with stressors, stress mediators like coping and social support, and stress outcomes like psychological states and physical symptoms that show how well someone is responding (Yun et al., 2013; Webster, 2014). Thus, stress affects everyone, but few understand its causes, effects, or management. Excessive stress causes illness, death, and unhappiness (Blau, 2013). In policing, stress among police personnel shows pressure through weariness, unhappiness, inability to focus, impatience, and compulsive behavior; according to Bano (2011), police must keep work logs to reduce this risk. This study includes workplace pressure and other hurdles to job efficiency education initiatives.

In this light, we also require a deeper comprehension of how police officers' "stress at work" can affect their efficiency and effectiveness on the job (Mark, 2013). Many jobs indeed come with a lot of tension and anxiety. A typical example is how the role of a police officer is commonly linked to feelings of stress and worry. Various strategies can be used to reduce police officers' exposure to stress in the workplace (Nyaga, 2006). (Hodges IV, 2015) claims that most police officers' stress is unavoidable due to the organizational design of their departments. Results indicated that some occupations, such as those in the military, on an aviation crew, or in law enforcement, place much stress on the individual and increase the risk of cardiovascular illnesses (Adegoke, 2014).

### *Operational Stress at Police Work*

First responders and people who work in public safety face unique operational pressures (Cross & Ashley, 2004). According to the most recent body of research, operational stressors are singular to law enforcement and innate to the job. These occupationally specific stresses include but are not limited to the possibility of being physically harmed, being exposed to violent and possibly horrifying occurrences, shift work, and requests for extra work (McCreary et al., 2017). Police officers may have to deal with traumatic events like car accidents or crimes against children. They may also have to deal with the dead (Dabney et al., 2013), threats to their safety (Woody, 2006), violent encounters, and the aftermath of natural disasters (Dabney et al., 2013). Given this, it is unsurprising that police officers often feel stressed on and off the job (Fayyad et al., 2021).

Law enforcement officials face scrutiny from the public because of their prominent cultural and societal roles in maintaining order and protecting residents through law enforcement. This highly visible dynamic obscures the origins of operational strain (Kukić et al., 2022). According



to a survey of law enforcement professionals, the three most stressful aspects of the job are: (1) being held accountable for an officer-involved shooting, (2) witnessing the loss of a comrade in the line of duty, and (3) surviving a physical attack (Violanti et al., 2009). Meanwhile, recent qualitative research on law enforcement stress found that because of repeated exposure, police officers often get used to situations that seem traumatic, which may help protect them from stress (Dabney et al., 2013).

### ***Organizational Stress at Police Work***

It is widely accepted that the bureaucratic nature of law enforcement institutions contributes significantly to the stress experienced by these authorities. According to studies, distinctive characteristics of law enforcement agencies are crucial predictors of police agencies' stress levels (Kim, 2014). Organizational stressors include incidents that are caused by the management of the law enforcement agency and that are challenging for the agency's personnel (He et al., 2002).

It is generally accepted that the potentially dangerous nature of police work, which includes exposure to potentially violent situations, may be exceedingly stressful and is associated with poor mental health results (Chopko, 2010). Nevertheless, police violence is relatively minimal (Piquero et al., 2013). Organizational stressors, such as insufficient help from superiors and a lack of cooperation with coworkers, are more likely to be persistent for officers. It may increase the likelihood that officers will experience burnout (Adams & Buck, 2010). Since they represent unavoidable daily patterns, these stressors have a stronger association with stress than operational factors (Shane, 2010; Violanti et al., 2017). Several organizational pressures, such as a lack of support and opportunities, harassment, and bias, can hurt well-being (Morash et al., 2006).

More so, studies show that most tiring jobs call for elevated stress levels that are at odds with the training and experience of police officers. A lack of management, an undesirable work atmosphere, dissatisfied employees, and a lack of recognition from peers and superiors can all contribute to workplace stress (Divacar, 2015). In addition, a lack of organizational support is believed to contribute to an individual's elevated levels of job stress. Administrative assistance was projected to have a tenuous relationship with police officers' workload (Frank et al., 2017).

In a similar sense, it is stated that a tumultuous work environment leads to the degeneration and extinction of an organization. An occupationally stressful leader needs to achieve organizational success. Occupational stress occurs due to professional variables linked to employees' psychological and physiological situations, which usually lead the individual's mind or body to deviate from normal functioning (Suleman et al., 2018). Thus, one of the sources of stress for police employees in the workplace. This may be physical or emotional, as uncomfortable working conditions, inadequate lighting, inappropriate temperature, and



inadequate noise management contribute to workplace tension. In the current context, which includes countries impacted by global terrorism, police personnel perform their tasks despite increased pressures and perilous conditions (Kula, 2011).

### ***Coping Strategies in Stress among Police Officers***

There are a variety of factors that can affect how individuals choose to manage stress. Given the specific nature of police work and the difficulties inherent to their profession, police personnel may primarily rely on supportive elements to cope actively with stress. Although authors such as Ménard and Arter (2013) assert that support from family, friends, coworkers, and supervisors may also influence how individuals cope with stress, the type and intensity of stress in an individual's employment may influence the coping mechanisms employed.

In addition, Rajeswari and Chalam (2018) noted that high-stress job expectations include emergencies, endless documentation, performing duties not specified in the job description, and attempting to perform the responsibilities of others. Police officers have also been significantly concerned by the release of offenders. Hence, interactions between police and the public can be stressful. With this, police officers' stress-coping capacities may differ by personality. Knowing the relationship between a police officer's personal attributes and job environment can predict whether they can handle occupational stress. This confirms the findings of Wald (2009) that personal attributes suggest that stress tolerance differs by person.

Meanwhile, Dai et al. (2011) argued that varied life experiences led to different responses, management strategies, and coping mechanisms for stress among police officers. The coping habits developed to deal with stress can be beneficial or detrimental, depending on the life circumstances that led to their development. Individual variances also play a role in what is seen as a stressful situation. Some police officers are better qualified than others to accomplish the numerous tasks of being a police officer.

The positive outlook of police officers is destroyed when they are subjected to psychological stress or dissatisfaction, leading to absenteeism, unemployment, immorality, depression, melancholy, violence, and other adverse outcomes. Various contributing elements to police officer pressure should be considered to improve coping techniques (Agolla, 2009). Relieving pressure can also be accomplished through other methods, such as relaxing activities, physical activity, etc. As a result, it will be effective if it reduces depressive symptoms and increases satisfaction at work (Rajeswari & Chalam, 2018).

### ***Factors Affecting Police Stress***

The profession of policing is characterized by an organizational culture that emphasizes themes such as loyalty, masculinity, the image of a crime fighter, a "us versus them" mentality,



and opposition to norms about the procedure (Terrill et al., 2003). Even though the values that constitute police culture vary depending on factors like workgroup, gender, and rank (Ingram, 2013), a few characteristics are consistently upheld across the board (Sierra-Arévalo, 2019).

According to Kim et al. (2016), just as there are disparities between female and male workers in other sectors, there may be variations between female and male law enforcement personnel in how they think about and react to stress. Research on stress from a variety of fields has significantly benefited from including gender (Kim, et al. 2016). When it comes to the definition of a stressful work environment, men and women tend to view the world differently. By contrast, male police officers are more concerned with being ridiculed by coworkers and placed in dangerous situations, whereas female officers are more concerned with a lack of job-related information, acceptance as officers, support, security, language, and sexual harassment (Morash et al., 2011; Backteman-Erlanson et al., 2013; Violanti et al., 2016). In contrary to males, who are wired to respond with a "fight or flight" mechanism, it is posited that females are more likely to exhibit a "tend and befriend" response (Taylor et al., 2000).

Moreover, all officers endure stress; nevertheless, race, ethnicity, and gender influence stressors, especially psychosocial ones such as social support. (Morash et al., 2006) They discovered that a lack of control over one's work and experiencing racial, ethnic, and gender bias were significant predictors of officer stress. Moreover, there is evidence that race influences stress. Non-white police officers experience more significant job-related stress than white officers (Padilla, 2020), including stress from colleague mistreatment (Repasky et al., 2020).

Diana and John (2016) found that age and length of service significantly affected police stress in Chennai Police Commissionerate, India. In the Central Reserve Police Force, age and experience are strongly linked to stress. Compared to individuals with less experience, police officers with 11–20 years of experience were substantially more stressed (Balakrishnamurthy & Shankar, 2009). The length of law enforcement service also affects stress exposure and its effects (He et al., 2002).

In addition, younger age groups, lower-ranking police personnel, and women are more likely to experience adverse health effects due to stress. Concerned authorities must respond promptly to their concerns regarding their bodily and emotional well-being (Rajesh et al., 2017). In addition, the peculiar working conditions of law enforcement officers are the most significant contributor to the stressful nature of law enforcement tasks (Kim, 2014).

Stress causes roughly twice as many mental health problems in the general population as in the police service (Syed et al., 2020). In the police force, the factors contributing to stress can





also influence job satisfaction and length of service. According to the findings of specific studies, police officers who report experiencing higher levels of stress on the job are less content with their jobs and more likely to have feelings of wanting to change careers (Allisey et al., 2014; Kuo, 2015; Lambert et al., 2017). It is imperative that departments continually evaluate the elements contributing to stress to preserve a healthy workforce and attract talented personnel.

### **Previous Studies of Stress and Coping Strategies in Law Enforcement**

#### ***Local Literature***

Moreover, perception barriers, the work environment, frustration, and discomfort can predict occupational stress. In the study conducted by Falloran et al. (2022), the levels of occupational stress, work environment, and frustration discomfort were rated as high, while the perception of barriers was rated as moderate. There was also a correlation between recognizing barriers and experiencing stress at work, between the work environment and experiencing stress at work, and between feeling frustrated and uncomfortable and experiencing stress at work.

Moreover, a study conducted by Lim and Parreño (2020) found that even when PNP first responders face challenges at work and develop negative behavior, they are still able to cope and adjust within the environment, most likely with the assistance of their family, friends, and respective support system. The substantial repercussions of this on these professionals may include exhaustion, absenteeism, a decline in the level of satisfaction they had previously derived from their work, a reduced capacity to make decisions, and other adverse outcomes. Responders scored high in compassion fatigue, yet a law enforcement career still entails significant stress and trauma risks.

According to the findings of Gutierrez et al. (2015), factors that contribute to stress at work include having an excessive amount of work to do, having superiors who are demanding and strict, missing goal deadlines, having a mismatch between one's current position and career goals, and having insufficient ventilation. Stress is dealt with in a variety of ways by respondents. There were occasional opportunities for relaxation and social support.

#### ***Foreign Literature***

According to the findings of the study "Experience of Stress and Coping Mechanism among Police Officers in South Western Nigeria" by John-Akinola et al. (2020), many law enforcement officers perceive stress as a medical illness, while others disagree. Many respondents turned to religion and others to active coping strategies to cope with stress, but overall, respondents' awareness of the health implications of stress needed to be improved.

Another study by Furmeen and Reddy (2019) confirmed that police personnel face stress due





to the demanding nature of their work. Even if they have achieved success in their occupations, the demands of their work sap their energy, leaving them in a position that will prohibit them from finding fulfilment in other areas of their lives in the long run. The officer's physical health is in peril when he is subjected to nothing but pressure from all directions. If individuals acquire healthy coping methods, they can handle their stress better.

Moreover, Ragesh et al. (2017) discovered that police officers experience high levels of job-related stress. Younger individuals, police officers with lesser ranks, and women are more likely to experience stress. Concerned authorities should address their urgent physical and mental health issues swiftly.

Meanwhile, Jonyo (2015) discovered that police officers are exposed to high levels of occupational stress and are rated as having average job performance. In addition, the research demonstrated that occupational stress negatively impacts the job performance of police officers. Despite the demanding nature of their jobs, police personnel has no access to a welfare support network, according to the study.

Although the effects of stress change according to the specifics of the situation and the characteristics of the people involved, the severity of those effects is consistent across the board. There is a possibility of experiencing negative emotions such as depression, worry, and discontentment. The most common mental and physical health issues that have been connected to the stress that police officers experience are depression and cardiovascular disease. The stress that police officers experience can have various adverse effects on their behavior, including aggression toward their coworkers and family members and excessive alcohol consumption and addiction (Kula, 2011).

The relevant research and Literature offered the most crucial knowledge and context for the researched topic, especially in terms of the interaction between the variables and how the indicators of the variables influence one another. The present study is comparable to other relevant studies and publications that have been evaluated. These are related since the fundamental concern is operational and organizational stress among police officers and their coping strategies. Considering the current study, this may give the researcher a road map for collecting further knowledge and information since, in other countries, there is a considerable amount of research exploring the variables that influence stress and coping strategies among police officers. However, there needs to be more research in the Philippines that identifies and explores the stress levels and coping strategies among members of the Philippine National Police. Lastly, numerous studies that may validate or negate the current study's conclusions were cited.



### ***Research Hypotheses***

**Ho1:** There is no significant difference in the operational stress of the police officers when categorized as age, sex, and length of service.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference in the organizational stress of the police officers when categorised as age, sex, and length of service.

**Ho3:** There is no significant difference in the coping strategies of the police officers when categorized as age, sex, and length of service.

**Ho4:** There is no significant relationship between operational stress and coping strategies of the police officers at San Jose Municipal Police Station.

**Ho5:** There is no significant relationship between organizational stress and coping strategies of the police officers in San Jose Municipal Police Station.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Design***

The researcher employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design for this analysis. Descriptive correlational design is employed in studies that aim to produce static depictions of circumstances and establish the relationship between variables (McBurney & White, 2009). According to McCombes (October 10, 2022), descriptive research's objective is to accurately and systematically evaluate a population, situation, or occurrence. This research design can also use various research methods to analyze one or more variables. Meanwhile, correlational research design examines associations between variables without changing or manipulating them (Bhandari, 2022). Thus, this research design is appropriate since it looks at how police officers at the San Jose Municipal Police Station in the Province of Antique cope with organizational and operational stressors and the relationship between these two variables.

### ***Population and Locale of the Study***

Purposive sampling was used to sample 41 police officers, focusing on selecting participants with characteristics relevant to the research study (Nikolopoulou, 2022, December 01). The study population consisted of 59 police assigned to the Municipality of San Jose de Buenavista in the Province of Antique. To qualify as a respondent for the study, all uniformed police personnel must be permanent officers with a minimum of one year of service at the municipal police station. The withdrawal criteria would include abuses of privacy and confidentiality. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included non-uniformed individuals, those who were unavailable during the time of data collection, and those who refused to participate.

The research study was conducted at San Jose de Buenavista, a first-class municipality and

the provincial capital of Antique. This police station was chosen primarily due to its location in the province's most populous municipality. According to Husain (2020), metropolitan police personnel are assigned jobs that are considerably more demanding than their rural counterparts. In addition, this is the only police station selected due to time constraints and because it is the only police station located in the only first-class municipality of the province. Hence, it is essential to investigate the amount of stress and coping strategies employed by the police officers deployed to this locality.

### **Research Instruments**

The research instrument for this study involved using a four-part research questionnaire which was written in the English language. Part I obtained personal information from the respondents, such as their age, sex, and length of service.

Police stress was studied using the research instruments Parts II and III. In this study, McCreary and Thompson (2007) police stress instruments were utilized. In order to quantify relevant stressors from both operational and organizational aspects of occupational police stress, the Police Stress Questionnaire-Operational (PSQ-Op) and Police Stress Questionnaire-Org (PSQ-Org) were employed in this study. The PSQ-OP was modified to include an item on personal safety written as "experiencing critical incidents with a threat to personal safety or that of another" and an item on "excessive paperwork. These measures include 20 items using a modified 5-point scale from 1 (no stress at all) to 5 (much stress). The scores of an individual respondent in this part of the instrument were determined by adding the numerical equivalents of the option chosen, and the Mean was computed. The Mean was transformed into a numerical scale with a corresponding verbal description, as shown in Table 1:

**Table 1. Mean Score and Interpretation for Police Stress.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
5	4.50-5.00	Very high stress
4	3.50-4.49	High stress
3	2.50-3.49	Moderate stress
2	1.50-2.49	Low stress
1	1.00-1.49	No stress

The coping Inventory for Stressful Situations was included in Part IV of the questionnaire. The CISS model of human resilience was developed by Endler and Parker (Avero et al., 2003). There are three types of coping strategies: task-oriented coping (doing an action to address the issue at hand; items 1–7), emotion-oriented coping (expressing or feeling emotions; items 8–14), and avoidance-oriented coping (doing another thing to reduce stress, consists of items 15-21). A 5-point frequency scale with a range of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) was used to evaluate the items. The scores of an individual respondent in this part of the instrument were determined by

adding the numerical equivalents of the option chosen and the Mean was computed. The Mean was transformed into a numerical scale with a corresponding verbal description as depicted in Table 2:

**Table 2. Mean Score and Interpretation for Coping Strategies.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
5	4.50-5.00	Can cope very effectively
4	3.50-4.49	Can cope effectively
3	2.50-3.49	Can cope moderately effective
2	1.50-2.49	Can cope less effectively
1	1.00-1.49	Cannot cope effectively

### ***Data Gathering Procedure***

The Office of the Officer-In-Charge of the Police Station in the Municipality of San Jose de Buenavista, Antique, granted permission to conduct the study. The researcher personally gave the surveys to the police officers stationed at the Municipal Police Station after obtaining the necessary permit. The data-gathering period lasted for two weeks. It started on the second week of December 2021 and ended on the fourth week of the same year. The data were collected, placed through a software program, examined, and interpreted. Upon retrieval of the accomplished questionnaires, these were reviewed for completeness of data.

### ***Statistical Tools***

The data gathered for the study were statistically analyzed as follows:

**Frequency.** This was utilized to determine the number of respondents and when classified into specific categories.

**Percentage.** This was used to interpret the frequencies obtained in each category of variables.

**Mean.** This was used to determine the operational stress, organizational stress, and coping strategies among police officers.

**Standard Deviation.** This was utilized to examine the respondents' similarity and variance in terms of their operational and organizational stress experiences and their coping strategies.

**T-test.** This test examined the significance of profile differences in operational stress, organizational stress, and coping strategies among police personnel.

**Pearson r.** This test was used to examine whether operational stress and coping strategies and organizational stress and coping mechanisms were significantly correlated among police officers.

The significance level for inferential statistics was set at 0.05. The IBM-Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 software was utilized to process all data analysis.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

The respondents' information was protected by informed consent, which proved that they voluntarily participated in the study. This ensured that any information relating to the respondents' identities would be safeguarded and preserved. Their willingness and interest to participate in the study were also considered. Also, participants were informed that they could decide not to complete the survey or withdraw from taking part in the study at any moment if they were uncomfortable. Finally, the survey participants got no financial incentive, reward, or promise. The researcher's password-protected database, to which only the researcher has exclusive access, contains the information that respondents provided.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Demographic Profile of the Respondents***

Alnaqbi (2011) asserts that defining the profile of the respondents gives evidence that a sample reflects the population's characteristics. The study analyzed the following police officer characteristics: age, sex, and length of service.

This study covered a sample of 41 police officers, with the majority of respondents (56.1%) above 30 years of age and 43.9% below 30 years of age. Meanwhile, most participants were male (73.2%), whereas only 26.8% were female. The data indicate that there was a gender disparity in favor of men. Finally, regarding the length of service, 51.2% of respondents have 10 years and below experience, while 48.8% have more than 10 years of experience. Table 3 displays the demographic profiles of the respondents, including their frequency distributions and percentages.

**Table 3. Demographic Profile of the Respondents.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Entire Group	41	100.0
Age		
30 and below	18	43.9
Above 30	23	56.1
Sex		
Male	30	73.2
Female	11	26.8
Length of Service		
10 and below	21	51.2
Above 10	20	48.8

Source: Field survey, 2021

### ***Level of Operational Stress Among Police Officers***

The results presented in Table 4, revealed that police officers have a moderate operational

stress level ( $M=3.40$ ,  $SD=.88$ ) when taken as an entire group. When classified as to age, police officers aged 30 years old and below ( $M=3.18$ ,  $SD=.78$ ) have a moderate operational stress level while those above 30 years old ( $M=3.57$ ,  $SD=.93$ ) have a high level of operational stress. As to sex, both male ( $M=3.49$ ,  $SD=.85$ ) and female ( $M=3.16$ ,  $SD=.95$ ) respondents have moderate levels of operational stress. Finally, as to the length of service both 10 years and below ( $M=3.32$ ,  $SD=.83$ ) and above 10 years ( $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=.94$ ) have moderate operational stress levels.

These data show that police officers have moderate operational stress irrespective of their sex or years of service. Nevertheless, police personnel over 30 had higher operational stress than those under 30. Old age significantly contributes to police officers' psychological distress during China's COVID-19 pandemic (Huang et al., 2021). Another 466 Norwegian law enforcement personnel study found that senior officers reported increased stress levels, apathy, and diminishing efficacy as their careers ended (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2006). Frontline cops are more likely to face cumulative trauma and persistent systemic conflicts, which increase operational stress as they gain experience. This contradicts (Ragesh et al., 2017), who found that younger officers experience more operational stress. This may be because most of the youngsters are in their first year of police service.

Despite the fact that both male and female police officers experience the same levels of operational stress, male officers perceive higher operational stress than female officers, as demonstrated in table 4. This finding validates gender disparities in police officers' perceptions of work stress (Kim et al., 2016; Violanti et al., 2016; Huang et al., 2021). This is mostly because more male police officers perform operational duties and work in the field. This study supports the concept that male police officers face greater work stress due to the nature and structure of their work (Lucas et al., 2012).

**Table 4. Level of Operational Stress Among Police Officers.**

Variables	Mean	SD	Description
Entire Group	3.40	.88	Moderate stress
Age			
30 years old and below	3.18	.78	Moderate stress
Above 30 years old	3.57	.93	High stress
Sex			
Male	3.49	.85	Moderate stress
Female	3.16	.95	Moderate stress
Length of Service			
10 years and below	3.32	.83	Moderate stress
Above 10 years	3.48	.94	Moderate stress



**Legend:** Very high stress=4.50-5.00, High stress= 3.50-4.49, Moderate stress= 2.50-3.49, Low stress= 1.50-2.49, No stress=1.00-1.49

***Level of Organizational Stress Among Police Officers***

The results in table 5 revealed that police officers have moderate levels of organizational stress (M=3.32, SD=.84) when taken as an entire group. When classified as to age, both police officers aged 30 years old and below (M=3.21, SD=.81) and above 30 years old (M=3.40, SD=.87) have moderate levels of organizational stress. As to sex, both male (M=3.41, SD=.85) and female (M=3.07, SD=.79) respondents have moderate levels of organizational stress. Lastly, as to the length of service, both 10 years and below (M=3.28, SD=.78) and above 10 years (M=3.36, SD=.91) police officers have moderate levels of organizational stress.

This simply indicated that police officers have a moderate amount of organizational stress when considered as a whole and classified by age, sex, and time of service. Consistent with the findings of Wlodyka (2017), police officers at medium-sized departments in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia reported low to moderate levels of overall police organizational stress. Despite the fact that male and female police officers experience the same levels of organizational stress, male police officers report higher levels of stress, as seen in Table 5 of the study's findings. This conclusion contrasts the findings of Rief and Clinkinbeard (2020) and Schulze (2012), who found that women were more stressed in the workplace than men. This may be owing to gendered factors that are more likely to have a negative effect on women, such as gendered rules, unequal training, and academic procedures, a male-dominated culture, or exposure to incivility and harassment.

**Table 5. Level of Organizational Stress Among Police Officers.**

Variables	Mean	SD	Description
Entire Group	3.32	.84	Moderate stress
Age			
30 years old and below	3.21	.81	Moderate stress
Above 30 years old	3.40	.87	Moderate stress
Sex			
Male	3.41	.85	Moderate stress
Female	3.07	.79	Moderate stress
Length of Service			
10 years and below	3.28	.78	Moderate stress
Above 10 years	3.36	.91	Moderate stress

**Legend:** Very high stress=4.50-5.00, High stress= 3.50-4.49, Moderate stress= 2.50-3.49, Low stress= 1.50-2.49, No stress=1.00-1.49



### **Level of Coping Strategies Among Police Officers**

The results presented in table 6, revealed that police officers can cope moderately with stress (M=3.20, SD=.81) when taken as a whole. When grouped as to age, both police officers aged 30 years old and below (M=3.42, SD=.69) and above 30 years old (M=3.21, SD=.90) can cope moderately with stress. As to sex, both male (M=3.34, SD=.91) and female (M=3.21, SD=.46) respondents can cope moderately with stress. Finally, as to the length of service both 10 years and below (M=3.36, SD=.67) and above 10 years (M=3.25, SD=.95) police officers can cope moderately with stress.

These results imply that police officers can cope moderately with stress when categorised as an entire group and grouped according to age, sex, and length of service. Burnett Jr (2001) study, in which many of the police subjects were able to regulate and cope with their stress effectively, provided support for these findings.

**Table 6. Level of Coping Strategies Among Police Officers.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Description</b>
Entire Group	3.20	.81	Can cope moderately effective
Age			
30 years old and below	3.42	.69	Can cope moderately effective
Above 30 years old	3.21	.90	Can cope moderately effective
Sex			
Male	3.34	.91	Can cope moderately effective
Female	3.21	.46	Can cope moderately effective
Length of Service			
10 years and below	3.36	.67	Can cope moderately effective
Above 10 years	3.25	.95	Can cope moderately effective

**Legend:** Can cope very effectively=4.50-5.00, Can cope effectively= 3.50-4.49, Can cope moderately effective= 2.50-3.49, Can cope less effectively= 1.50-2.49, Cannot cope effectively =1.00-1.49

#### ***Difference in Operational Stress when Categorized as to Age, Sex, and Length of Service***

Based on the result presented in Table 7, all computed p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level; thus the hypothesis of no significant difference in the operational stress level when grouped according to profile is accepted. The result implies that operational stress among police officers was similar or the same when classified according to variables.

The result implies that operational stress among police officers was similar or the same when classified as to variables. These findings were corroborated in the study of Wlodyka (2017) who reported no statistically significant results between rank, position, marital status, education, and operational or organizational stress among police officers.

**Table 7. t-test results of Difference in the Operational Stress when Categorized as to Age, Sex and Length of Service.**

Variables	Mean	df	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Age					
30 years old and below	3.18	39	-1.407	.167	Not significant
Above 30 years old	3.57				
Sex					
Male	3.49	39	1.040	.305	Not significant
Female	3.16				
Length of Service					
10 years and below	3.32	39	-0.573	.570	Not significant
Above 10 years	3.48				

*not significant (p > .05)*

***Difference in Organizational Stress when Categorized as to Age, Sex, and Length of Service***

Similarly, as shown in table 8, all computed p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level, thus the hypothesis of no significant difference in the level of organizational stress when grouped according to profile is accepted. The result implies that organizational stress among police officers was similar or the same when classified according to variables.

These results suggest that organizational stress among police officers was equivalent or the same when classified according to variables. This finding was supported by Domingues and Machado's 2017 study, which revealed that stress was frequent and similar in both police forces, showing that it was unaffected by organizational differences and had common underlying causes.

**Table 8. t-test results of Difference in the Organizational Stress when Categorized as to Age, Sex and Length of Service.**

Variables	Mean	df	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Age					
30 years old and below	3.21	39	-0.731	.469	Not significant
Above 30 years old	3.40				
Sex					
Male	3.41	39	1.157	.254	Not significant
Female	3.07				
Length of Service					
10 years and below	3.28	39	-0.317	.753	Not significant
Above 10 years	3.36				

*not significant (p > .05)*

***Differences in Coping Strategies when Categorized as to Age, Sex, and Length of Service***

The result in Table 9 showed that no significant difference was noted in the coping strategies among police officers when they were classified according to variables. This is demonstrated by the p-values, which were all greater than 0.05 level of significance. Thus the hypothesis of no significant difference in the level of coping strategies when grouped according to profile is accepted. The result implies that organizational stress among police officers was similar or the same when classified according to variables.

**Table 9. t-test results of Difference in the Coping Strategies when Categorized as to Age, Sex and Length of Service.**

Variables	Mean	df	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Age					
30 years old and below	3.42	39	0.845	.403	Not significant
Above 30 years old	3.21				
Sex					
Male	3.34	39	0.444	.660	Not significant
Female	3.21				
Length of Service					
10 years and below	3.36	39	0.433.	.667	Not significant
Above 10 years	3.25				

*not significant (p > .05)*

***Relationship Between Operational Stress and Coping Strategies of the Police Officers***

Shown in Table 10 is the data on the correlation between operational stress and the coping strategies of police officers. It can be perceived from the results that operational stress has an essential connection with the coping strategies of police officers, with an overall registered computed r-value of 0.308 with a p-value which is equal to .05. Meanwhile, the finding disclosed that the p-value is equal to the level of significance of .05 which implies that there is an essential correlation between operational stress and coping strategies.

This result corroborates the findings of Rajeswari and Chalam's (2018) study, which found that high-stress job demands included dealing with emergencies, endless reporting, doing activities that are not specified in the job description, and frequently trying to do the job of others; observing suspects was a fairly stressful event for police officers. As a result, the stress and depression of law enforcement officers at work have a severe impact on their job performance. This also supports the findings of Yoo (2007), who indicated that a high expectation of pressure would be significantly related to an elevated occupational risk factor. Hence, the victim's perspective in the context of law enforcement is the officers' response to a circumstance involving uncontrollable behavior. As such, the level of operational stress experienced correlates directly with the coping strategies police officers employ.

**Table 10. Pearson's-r Result of Relationship Between Operational Stress and Coping Strategies of the Police Officers.**

Independent Variables	Coping Strategies		
	r	p-value	Interpretation
Operational Stress	0.308	.05**	Significant

*\*\*significant (p < .05)*

***Relationship Between Organizational Stress and Coping Strategies of the Police Officers***

Similarly, shown in table 11 the test on the correlation between organizational stress and coping strategies of police officers attained a registered computed r-value of 0.355 with a p-value which is equal to .02. The finding disclosed that the test level of significance is lower than .05. It implies that organizational stress is significantly correlated with coping strategies.

This study found a substantial correlation between police officers' coping strategies and organizational stress. This conclusion is confirmed by a comparable study that demonstrated a strong link between coping mechanisms and occupational stress among officers in an armed police force (Yu-Ling, 2011). Moreover, the conclusion is also consistent with the findings of Frank et al. (2017) that a perceived absence of administrative support may raise stress and depression. Lack of administrative assistance can demoralize police officers and make them feel insignificant, hence raising their psychological strain. Administrative aid was projected to directly affect policemen's occupational stress. Thus, this study appears to reveal a relationship between the police officer's coping strategies and organizational stress.

**Table 11. Pearson's-r Result of Relationship Between Organizational Stress and Coping Strategies of the Police Officers.**

Independent Variables	Coping Strategies		
	r	p-value	Interpretation
Organisational Stress	0.355	.02**	Significant

*\*\*significant (p < .05)*

**CONCLUSION**

Given the demanding nature of their work, police personnel experiences significant levels of stress in both their operational and organizational functions. In this study, the operational stress levels of police officers are moderate when viewed as a whole and when categorized according to sex and length of service. Thus, they are capable to manage work-related issues caused by



multiple stressors in their operational roles. Yet, when categorized by age, older officers perceived their functions and responsibilities as more stressful than their younger counterparts. Similarly, the results and findings of this study revealed that police officers have moderate levels of organizational stress regardless of their demographic profile. At the same time, police officers in this study can cope moderately with stress which means they can able to regulate and cope with their stress effectively. Additionally, demographic groups perceive similar work stress for both operational and organizational functions including their coping strategies. These results suggest that work stress and coping strategies among police officers were similar or the same when classified according to variables. Finally, police officers' coping mechanisms often become influenced by operational and organizational stress. With this, the present study's findings give strong support for the notion that operational and organizational stressors are fundamental to policing; as a result, police officers may adopt more effective coping strategies to combat the impacts of stress and enhance their work-related well-being. Police personnel may benefit from interventions and programs aimed at reducing the effects of occupational stress.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are presented:

1. The Municipal Police Station of San Jose de Buenavista should strive to reduce police officer stress in both their organizational and operational roles. To achieve this, a gradual stress management program that strengthens police officers' coping mechanisms may be implemented.
2. The Municipal Police Station of San Jose de Buenavista should review its policies and practices that may contribute significantly to stress management among its police officers. To do this, they may consider the implementation of a peer support program and stress debriefings after critical and traumatic events.
3. The police administration, in particular the chief of the local police station, may also receive training to identify the warning signs and symptoms of occupational stress in law enforcement employees.
4. The police administration should also consider establishing connections with other experts in the municipality or province who have the training to explicitly address stress-related issues, challenges, and concerns, such as psychologists, mental health practitioners, and other mental health advocates.

## **FUTURE STUDIES**

Future research areas are suggested to better understand the relationships between organizational and operational stress and police officers' coping strategies. Some potential areas for future research are as follows:



1. Since the study relatively involved a small sample size, in order to acquire a true picture of the amount of operational stress, organizational stress, and coping mechanisms among law enforcement personnel, it is suggested that the current study be replicated among police officers in other municipalities and provinces in the country.
2. According to the findings of the study, police personnel experience moderate levels of stress due to both operational and organizational stress. However, this study did not focus on the causes of both stressors in the police force. It would be interesting to identify the operational and organizational sources of stress.
3. There are three types of coping strategies; however, this study did not investigate the particular levels of coping strategies associated with each category. As a result, it is recommended that research be conducted to determine which type of coping strategies are most commonly adopted by police officers in order to deal with the numerous stressors they face.
4. The study only includes age, sex, and length of service as the demographic profile of respondents, it is also proposed that more variables be utilized in future studies.

#### **Declaration of competing interest**

The author declares that there are no competing interests in this work.

#### **Grant information**

The author declares that this work was not supported by any grants.

#### **Ethical statement**

The researcher sought the approval from the Office of the Officer-In-Charge of the Police Station in the Municipality of San Jose de Buenavista, Antique. After securing all necessary permits, the researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout every stage of data collection. The collected data will be used solely for this study.

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