

# Quarter-Life Crises of Police Officers in Baguio City Police Office

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## ABSTRACT

Not all heroes wear capes. You can see some of them in police uniforms, managing the traffic flows, maintaining peace and order, and protecting the innocent lives of everyone. However, our modern heroes also had to deal with struggles to develop stronger and better characters. This paper deals with the findings on the professional crises experienced by the Baguio City Police Officers. The study's main objective is to explore the quarter-life crises of Police Officers in Baguio City Police Office and how it affects their work performance. This study has used a qualitative research method through an interpretative phenomenological research design. The key informants of this research were twenty (20) police officers aged 25-30 years old in Baguio City Police Station. The major instrument used for data collection was an interview guide. Using the axial coding technique, the related data revealed codes, categories, and subcategories grounded within the participants' experiences. The findings revealed that the professional crises experienced by police officers include organizational workload, lack of work-life balance, conflict of ideas, superiority complex, police-citizen encounters, and financial problems. Moreover, the above-mentioned have led them to low morale, low self-esteem, mental strain, weakened police-community ties, career disappointment, poor work performance, and inconsistent sleeping and eating routines.

**Keywords:** Quarter-life Crises, Baguio City Police Officers, Professional Crises, Police Performance, and Impacts of Professional Crises

## INTRODUCTION

Quarter-life crisis is a phenomenon that is a part of the state of human life in this modern world. According to Agarwal et al. (2020), quarter-life crisis is a common nickname describing experiences of developmental problems and crises that occur between the ages of 25 and 30. Crises frequently result in a thorough examination of one's current way of life, values, and understandings.

Similarly, the book entitled "Quarter-life Crisis: The Unique Challenges of Life in Your Twenties" first popularized the concept of a quarter-life crisis (Rossi & Mebbert, 2011). It explains the difficulties people confront as they make decisions about their employment, income, living arrangements, and relationships in the book. It defined the period following college graduation as uncertain, unpleasant, and anxiety-provoking, which can lead to emotions of indecisiveness, helplessness, and panic based on their own experiences and those of 100 peers. As a person's identity and sense of self fluctuate dramatically in reaction to the many obstacles that life provides, depression is all too easy to develop. Individuals frequently believe they are alone in their fight and lack the resources necessary to meet or overcome their numerous obstacles. Acquaintances who used to live right around the corner have dispersed, making maintaining an active social life much more difficult. There are few coworkers of the same age, and limited financial

resources make it hard to participate in social activities. Furthermore, entry-level occupations can be tiresome and do not always lead to advancement on the career ladder. These negative aspects of post-college life can be overpowering, leading to feelings of inadequacy and failure.

Herawati and Hidayat (2020) describe that a quarter-life crisis is a regular occurrence in people between the ages of 20 and 30. Moreover, Azis (2021) added that personal and professional growth are the most important duties in early adulthood. Students' developmental phase duties and knowledge provide many different paths and options for their future, but some also impact psychological dynamics and cause worry. This can be considered one of the quarter-life crises' characteristics. Furthermore, Walshe (2018) also found out that work-related stress and unhappiness, as well as relationship and mental health concerns, were found to be key contributors in a quarter-life crisis phase, with physical exercise, positive thinking, and talking therapy being effective adaptive coping techniques to deal with the crisis. Although the transition to adulthood was viewed differently by individuals, one consistent trait was that they felt unprepared for the version of adult roles they were playing and hence saw maturity as forced. The term "forced" describes the experience of being forced into an adult role with little choice or preparation (Duara et al., 2021). In contrast, Nabila (2021) stated internal variables, such as the transition from adolescence to adulthood, and external factors, such as expectations from the environment, parents, and social media. Individuals who use social media to compare their lives to others are more prone to feeling inadequate.

In context, law enforcement is a profession with a higher chance of psychological and physical harm since its personnel are called upon to act as first responders to life-threatening situations, terrorist attacks, severe weather, and upsetting occurrences (Drew & Martin, 2020). Moreover, Weislander (2019) found out that Swedish police recruits are having trouble balancing competing expectations. The aim of enhanced social equality clashes with a discourse that maintains exclusion and inequality. Equal rights are an intellectual ideal that contrasts and even conflicts with the idea of a neutral authority and the mandate, realities, and limitations of police work. The police's responsibility to protect democratic rights is hampered by the need to keep society in order. Resistance to diversity-related change is founded on arguments for the sake of society and effective police work. Because of the toxic nature of police work and the unknown dangers they face, law enforcement professionals experience a specific sort of occupational stress or the transfer of stress from work to home. Officers are at risk for negative physical and psychosocial outcomes as a result of their work stress. While it has been shown that work stress can negatively impact police officers' health, less is known about how spillover affects other aspects of their lives, such as marital relationships (Giano et al., 2018). Moreover, when dealing with individuals with precarious political, legal, and social positions, street-level bureaucrats are frequently confronted with conflicting expectations from their political superiors, target groups, and the general public. Furthermore, migration and border authorities are tasked with balancing a professional ethos with their moral convictions, which requires them to make complex discretionary decisions and use coercive means (Borrelli & Lindberg, 2018).

Those who serve in law enforcement in today's society face a variety of challenges. They are put in harm's way daily, aggravated by the societal problems plaguing our society, such as the hostility toward police officers and the calls for the police to be cut off from their budget (Goodlatte, 2017). Intervention may be required, as mandated by law if an officer decides that he is dealing with and undergoing a mental health crisis and is a threat to themselves. According to Queirós et al. (2020), due to the psychological harm they cause to the individual and their effects on police performance and interactions with citizens, burnout and stress among police officers have drawn more attention from the scientific community and society. This is because these conditions increase the likelihood of all interactions being viewed as potentially dangerous or tending to use excessive force.

Moreover, Mendoza et al. (2020) stated that the administration, corruption, and threats to national security are only a few of the many difficulties the Philippine National Police (PNP) must overcome. A

strong leadership pipeline that is prepared to handle these issues is essential to increase policy effectiveness and broad security sector changes. On the other hand, Fedorenko et al. (2020) discovered that there has been little progress in professional burnout among police officers at the start of their careers has been reversed relationships with psychological defense mechanisms such as substitution, objection, projection, and copying of avoidance, as well as direct associations with manipulative behavior, distancing, and social contact coping. The signs of burnout among police officers with five to fifteen years of experience are negatively connected with strong, aggressive, and impulsive coping strategies and defensive rationalization.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started in 2020, police officers faced the tough burden of maintaining community safety and stopping the spread of COVID-19 while putting their bodily and mental health at risk. This complicates their job during the coronavirus pandemic (Edwards & Kotera, 2020). Compared to the general population, there is a higher risk of infection in policing, which is commonly acknowledged as a high-risk profession. One of the main sources of concern among officers during the pandemic has been noted to be the possibility of spreading the disease to others (Frenkel et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Grover et al. (2021) discussed that while the COVID-19 pandemic's ongoing mental health and psychological issues are largely acknowledged and being reported from various parts of the world, security personnel's mental health problems—specifically, the police who are actively involved in maintaining the lockdown all over the world—are largely neglected and underreported. Laufs and Waseem (2020) found that there are challenges they posed for police-community relations, the effects of such crises on the mental health and overall well-being of police officers, the disruptions to police departments' intra-organizational dynamics, and their effects on interagency cooperation, communication, and collaboration are the four broad thematic categories that emerged from their literature. Likewise, Frenkel et al. (2021) found out that during the COVID-19 pandemic, police officers have experienced numerous challenges and require assistance from good crisis management to meet the demands. They also suggest a genuine grasp of the officers' stress levels and challenges. Officers utilizes a variety of coping strategies to deal with stressful situations. Their study showed that dilemmas are also stressful situations for police officers, such as tough decision-making that makes it their responsibility when something happens. It was also exposed that the crisis of law enforcers that affects during the performance of their duties are divided into two categories which are the professional crisis and personal crisis.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Generally, this study explores the quarter-life crises of police officers in Baguio City Police Office. Specifically, to determine the following the various professional crises experienced by police officers and the effects of these crises to their work performance

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study utilized an interpretative phenomenological research design. The design is administered to determine the variables focused on the respondents' quarter-life crisis experiences and the researchers' interpretation of their narratives. This concept is suited to the researchers' objectives of allowing the informants to convey their experiences on their professional crises and their effects to their duties as police officers. This study was conducted on all stations of Baguio City Police Office (BCPO), Baguio City, Philippines whereby the informants were aged twenty-five to thirty (25-30 years old). The selected participants were able to determine their actual experiences, personal dilemmas, and quarter-life crisis while working as law enforcers, which is the study's main goal.

Further, the data were collected using an interview guide. A one-on-one interview was conducted to supplement the data acquired from the questions. A content tool validator helped to ensure the reliability and

credibility of the data. The interview started by getting the informants' informed consent and reiterating all ethical considerations. Questions were repeated twice, and their responses were recorded by taking down notes and using a voice recorder. Each key informant was given a pseudonym, such as "Key Informant 1" and "Key Informant 2". Necessary follow-up questions were asked to clarify their responses and probe for additional details. The researchers transcribed and interpreted the interviews after all data gathering had been completed. Lastly, the researchers used thematic analysis through axial coding to highlight the similar responses of the key informants for every question.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Professional Crises Experienced by the Police Officers

#### Organizational Workload

Most informants shared that they have experienced too much workload in their profession. They handle two or more designations, and within those designations are piled up requirements. KI1, 2, and 3 stated that they have multiple designations and other tasks that need to be done as a police officer. Matching this, KI20 mentioned, *"I am one of the Team Leaders. I am one of the Drug Enforcement Unit Personnel, Intelligence, and likewise Investigator and I have other additional compliances so my professional crisis is the multi-functioning or being all around."* In the same interview with KI7, he stated, *sometimes, when there is lack of personnel, you are assigned as a mobile driver or follow-up operative.* In support to this, Altaf and Awan (2011) stated that individuals who have too many tasks to do within a given set of time have a hard time completing unfinished tasks and usually suffer unreasonable workloads, long working hours, more demanding work schedules, feel stress to work overtime, and receive shorter rest periods. Likewise, KI6 mentioned, *"You have so many complaints. After you work on that, there are more compliance that we need to comply with as ordered from the Headquarters."* In the same interview with KI13, he shared, *for me, I cannot concentrate on one task because of my workload.* With their responses regarding their overlapping work, their focus is mainly being affected. Meadow (2018) stated that even if overloading employees may seem profitable for some workplaces, several negative outcomes can occur. Most commonly, having too much work creates a loss of focus on one task leading to stress.

Given the high workload, several participants shared that they have experienced time pressure. Both KI9 and KI14 mentioned that they are given tasks within a short period of time. Matching this, KI9 said, *when I am alone at work, I am tasked with a letter order on other rushed activities and later asked to report to my Senior Officer. I do not know what task to prioritize, so sometimes I stay at the office longer.* The numerous tasks to be performed and delivered can often lead to a high risk of time pressure. Mangalaselvi (2017) stated that time pressure often occurs when an individual has a larger number of tasks to carry out and there is insufficient time available for him to finish and complete tasks given by the organization. Moreover, according to Panmalee et al. (2021), time pressure is a lead factor responsible for long working hours in an individual's workplace.

#### Lack of Work-Life Balance

Another professional crisis experienced by police officers is lack of work-life balance in which they cannot focus on their work affecting their performance on the assigned duties and compliance.

KI1 stated, *my biggest problem is when I was assigned far away from my family and that my nature as a mother, I cannot fully concentrate on my work especially when my child is sick.* In this case, KI1 cannot focus on work because she is overthinking about her family especially her child.

Moreover, KI2 shared, *as much as I want to continue learning, when I became a Police Officer, I was stuck, and I couldn't pursue master's degree because it is hard to simultaneously work and study.*

It is relatively easy to do both but it became impossible because of the fact that I have 12 hours of duty and weekends were canceled. On the other hand, KI3 added, my focus was divided between work and family. It is like there is no time for family. KI3's statement is the same as KI1's, they cannot focus on work because they are thinking about their families.

Furthermore, KI7 said, *we render duty beyond the time that is required or that is defined in our duty detail as it is public service*. This means that KI7 understands their nature of work as a public servant. In relation to this, KI9 also added, *anytime, you will be called and deployed even if it's your day-off or rest day thus, you have to go. You are not allowed to decline because it is a call to duty*. KI9 and KI7 have the same experience that even if they are on their rest day, they are being called to report for duty. Furthermore, KI13 stated, *you need to be flexible and multi-tasking, like a while ago I had a Zoom Meeting, at the same time I was rushing compliance and dealing with incoming clients*.

Therefore, it shows that a police officer needs to practice flexibility and ability to do multitasking because of the workload and many tasks to comply with, as KI13 stated. On the other hand, KI18 stated, *we are encountered with time management. This means that in responding to an incident, time matters when it comes to carrying out a task, and this is impracticable if there were tons of compliance to deal with*. This was supported by the study of Arun (2017), which explains that people frequently multitask or engage in multiple projects at once to manage their time. It does not increase the effectiveness of multitasking. There would be satisfactory outcomes if one concentrated on one task at a time rather than completing several activities simultaneously.

### **Police Citizen Encounter**

As public servants, the duties and responsibilities of police officers are focused on serving the government and community. However, some police officers need help to avoid having problems or issues with the citizens.

The study exposed another experience of police officers inside their workplace, wherein they also encounter some problems when interacting with other citizens. In an interview with KI8, he stated, *"I'm new here, and I am assigned as a traffic officer. I've encountered people with no patience in waiting before crossing the pedestrian lane and it's difficult to stand under the sun while doing traffic duty"*. KI16 also added in the interview, *I was assigned to Police Station X, there was a client who was renting an apartment, and a theft incident happened. They have complained regarding the said incident. It was stressful when the client demands them to locate the missing item and identify the person as soon as possible*. He also added, *during that time I am holding three designations, as supply, finance, admin and Human Resources Development Division*. Therefore, their statements portrays the flexibility of police officers to handle concerns of citizens while performing their job.

While KI19 stated, *"The number one crisis while working as a police officer is yung pagresponde sa mga problema ng tao, kung paano mo ihahandle yung situation."* (The number one crisis while working as a police officer is how to respond to the problem of citizens, and how to handle the situation) Personal Communication, October 17, 2022. He further added, *"Yung di ka pa tapos sa isang responde, meron na naman. Kaya kung minsan, nagkakaroon kami ng backlog."* (When you are not done yet with the first compliance, there's another compliance that's why sometimes we're having a backlog).

Thus PNP officers have to understand that incidents as such might happen unexpectedly, as explained in the study of Fontanella (2020), where he stated that nobody plans their mistakes and often occur at the worst possible time. While no one wants to anticipate failure, an individual is ready to handle multiple types of crises that arise. Little mistakes can quickly snowball into a costly endeavor that an individual did not see coming. Whether it was an individual's fault or not, minor issues can quickly get out of hand until they have

escalated to a full-on crisis.

### **Superiority Complex**

The stress that arises from considering how one's superiors will react to ideas someone makes and how one's superiors will respond to those proposals is a common cause of anxiety for police officers.

KI3 stated in the interview, *seniority, wherein as patrol officers, we have to follow whatever the higher-ranking officers would suggest. Due to Seniority, some junior officers cannot voice their ideas or opinions.* Some junior officers have a hard time adjusting to the workplace, but they took it as part of their job. KI10 also added that, *you need to sacrifice, for example, if you have other plans and your senior officer can't report, you should be the one to adjust. Your senior will not adjust because he is your senior officer.*

The challenge of being a subordinate is how to deal with their superiors professionally; thus, to avoid having unhealthy relationships inside the workplace, one should allow himself to be a beginner and have to fully understand that their seniors have tasks to carry out also, and that is to build their characters. Every human being experiences feelings of inferiority at some point in their life. Adler (2019) stated that this is a good thing because a sense of inferiority motivates an individual to excel and achieve the goals set for oneself. Simply put, it is the driving force or motivation behind an individual's desire to succeed. However, some people cannot cope with the new standards they have set for themselves and end up in one of two extremes: the inferiority complex, which is a lack of self-esteem, or the superiority complex, which is an exaggerated sense of self-importance.

### **Financial Problems**

Concerns over one's financial situation are unavoidable for everyone and can never be eliminated. Not everyone is blessed with good fortune, and some people are not fortunate enough to be born into financially successful families.

One of the police officers expressed his concerns regarding his financial crisis. KI6 shared, *we need financial support for our family and for our basic necessities.* Though the Philippine National Police payslip provides a food allowance, it is not enough if you have a family to feed. It is only intended for a single person, most especially for those who are renting and have other bills to pay. Police Officers are also exposed to personal debt problems for various reasons. Subject to the respondent's answer, some police officers tend to loan money for their family needs, especially if there would be cases such as a family member needing financial or medical assistance. Debt may also arise from poor household budgeting, wherein some police officers tend to loan high amounts without properly budgeting the money.

Based on the study by Mendoza et al. (2021) entitled "Diagnosing factors behind officers' performance on the Philippine National Police, Police Practice and Research," the PNP faces myriad challenges, spanning governance, corruption, and national security threats. Hence, these contribute to the financial crises experienced by police officers nowadays. Based on the study by Mendoza et al. (2021) entitled Diagnosing factors behind officers' performance on the Philippine National Police, Police Practice and Research, the PNP faces myriad challenges, spanning governance, corruption, and national security threats. Hence, these contribute to the financial crises experienced by police officers nowadays.

Financial problems also create risks for police services. For example, if police officers become vulnerable financially, there is a greater possibility of them committing corrupt activities. Another is that it affects the quality of police work in a way that causes stress, which can affect the officers' mental and physical health (Cruz, 2019).

## Impacts of these Crises in the Performance of Police Officers in Baguio City Police Office

### Low Morale

When morale is low, police officers feel unproductive and lose competitiveness. They may be dissatisfied with their level of responsibility and even lose interest in the organization, which results to poor performance and tardiness.

In an interview with KI3, he expressed, *instead of being on the course of doing your job right, these professional crises negatively affects your morale in the workplace. Some officers take AWOL or Absence Without Leave while some may even commit crimes if they cannot cope with the severe stress due to professional crises.* He added, *the stress level is severe because instead of being stressed at work, you become more stressed with your colleagues.* Meanwhile, KI20 stated, *sometimes it affects my mood and my focus to encourage my colleague on how to start the day.*

The respondents being unmotivated may have caused a large impact on their performance whereas Shaban et al. (2017) highlighted that low productivity and loss of competitiveness result from low morale and low motivation. They can sometimes lead to additional undesirable symptoms such as absenteeism and sabotage. Hartman (2017) claimed that employees prefer to spend their working hours attending to personal issues or socializing. In addition, an article entitled How to Deal With Low Morale in the Workplace stated that when employees don't enjoy their work environment, they often take time off more frequently and arrive late for work.

Meanwhile, KI18 said, *of course, we are experiencing low morale. Instead of having a positive response, although it has, usually the feedback we are receiving is mostly negative, causing dissatisfaction to the PNP. We have low morale. We are lacking focus. We cannot do the proper, we are thinking of the image because all feedback that we are receiving is negative.* The respondents' answers only signify that proper credits, compliments, and recognition is helpful for them to stay motivated. A statement supported this that employees may feel unappreciated when great performance is not recognized at work (Anonymous, 2022). Samuel (2021) stated that individuals with low morale feel directionless and hopeless at work, which causes them not to utilize their full potential. Receiving such words, whether a small compliment or constructive criticism, helps them become more enthusiastic about working.

Legoabe et al. (2020) indicate that morale affects the well-being of employees, influencing the quality of workplace performance, labor productivity, and work life. Low morale in an employee makes them feel directionless and hopeless in their work, which leads them not to utilize their full potential (Samuel, 2021).

Relative to this, police officers who are praised, recognized, and receive positive feedback certainly have high morale. They tend to be more productive, appreciated, and empowered to perform well and improve the quality of their work. The higher the morale, the higher the productivity. The lower the morale, the poorer the work performance.

### Low Self-esteem

People are more likely to exhibit poor self-esteem when facing challenges in their professional lives. A number of the police officers included in the study had poor self-esteem, which made them unwilling to discuss their capabilities and duties within the unit.

KI4 mentioned, *as an individual police officer, these professional crises do affect police performance. It affects my performance in such a way that it lowers my self-esteem.* Lester (2015) stated that the large number of tasks to carry out may affect the confidence of an individual. Multiple workloads given to police

officers reduce their level of self-esteem, self-competence, and even their self-care. In addition, low trait self-esteem predicts the experience of greater stress in response to a variety of difficult circumstances.

KI4 also shared that failing to comply with the given task affects not only himself but also his colleagues. He stated, *due to these crises, I have experienced low self-esteem, I loss appetite and I felt ashamed of my colleagues because of not doing my best for the station.* This response coming from the informant might result later on to anxiety attacks or depression. According to Lecompte et al. (2014), feelings of emotional exhaustion and lack of personal accomplishment are directly reflected in feelings of depression. In the PsycINFO Database Record (2012), the subjective stress reported by 78 police officers (mean age 35 years) was related to their self-esteem but not to their belief in an external locus of control.

In connection, Sievers et al. (2007) claimed that the absence of a depersonalization effect on depression confirms the idea that cynical behavior and attitude toward partners and fellow citizens is a type of denial intended to keep unfavorable emotions from negatively influencing one's mental health in general. This implies that police officers with higher levels of self-esteem are less prone to stress problems. However, police officers perceive lower levels of self-esteem is a strong indicator of poor performance throughout their professional life.

### **Mental Strain**

Most often, unfavorable circumstances inside the workplace are responsible for the physical and mental cost it takes on everyone, which, in turn, can impact their productivity level. KI5 narrated, *the stress and overworked under traffic operations. And workload, as well as compliance.* This is related to the statement that if work overload is maintained over time, it could cause an upsetting feeling of discomfort (Rodriguez, 2022). And supported by Jonyo (n.d.), who claimed that workers who feel they must perform too long and too hard for many tasks feel more stressed, like the police who are always on duty. In addition, the strain hypothesis of the Job-Demand Control model asserts that employees are working in a high-strain job experience the lowest well-being.

Moreover, KI13 expressed that, *the stress level is severe because instead of being stressed at work, you become more stressed with your colleagues.* Bhatia (2017) revealed that co-workers' support was most closely associated with health: the meaner a colleague was, the higher their risk of dying. Another survey conducted by WorkWorries.com discovered that colleagues were a greater source of stress than bosses: 62% of respondents said this caused them more stress than bosses.

On the other hand, KI20 took the professional crises as a stressor and a challenge. She said, *"Yes, sometimes it is challenging and sometimes annoying and depressing"* Personal Communication, October 17, 2022. Relative to this, Judith (n.d.) also considers stress as life challenging and interesting. The study of Travis et al. (2020) elaborated that if the stressor is judged to be surmountable, then the circumstance in question may be viewed as a challenge or growth opportunity, which could boost performance.

Lazarus and Folkman's stress-appraisal theory asserts that what is stressful is what is perceived as stressful. Mental stress can be helpful or harmful depending on its amount (Keith, n.d.). Hence, mental strain is an individual perception that leads most police officers to suffer frustration, depression, anxiety, and anger.

### **Weakened Police-Community Ties**

Police-community relations have become weak due to police misconduct and the residents' lack of discipline. At times, police officers and civilians encounter misunderstandings and miscommunication,



leading to an argument and mistrust.

KI16 shared that clients complained because they were not satisfied with the service of the police officers. She also narrated, *sometimes, your relation with the client will be affected. Your blood pressure will increase, and you even raise your voice tone sometimes, which should not be.* Any professional's fatigue and mental and emotional instability have a massive impact on their working performance.

According to Holmes and Smith (2012), burnout can negatively impact how law enforcement officers respond to emergencies and interact with civilians. Griffin et al. (2003) also highlighted that a stressful constraining work environment might lead some police officers to exact their anger on hapless citizens as a response to the limitations imposed on them by the organization. Work overload also deteriorates as police-community relations due to police misconduct. On the other hand, individuals limit their knowledge and understanding of the tasks carried out by our police officers, which results in them raising their voices in anger at those who disobey the rules.

In support of this, social scientists declared that many police officers are not trusted by their communities due to misconduct. Their anger is imposed beyond measure. Angry aggression theory affirmed that police officers are regularly unable to address the source of their stress; they may transfer their response to their personal lives in their intermediate environment (Griffin & Bernard, 2003). Meanwhile, job strain has increased blood pressure in low socioeconomic-status men (Landsbergis et al., 2003).

While the community diminishes trust in the organization and police officers due to police misconduct, higher chances of professional crises may be experienced by the police officers. Furthermore, male police officers are highly prone to engage in police misconduct since they primarily operate in the field and deal with different behavior than female police officers. Hence, male police officers strongly contribute to the weakening of police-community ties.

### **Career Disappointment**

Disappointment in the police officer's line of work harms their capacity to do their duties. The inability to pursue other professional interests is a significant source of dissatisfaction for many officers, particularly junior officers. KI12, one of the youngest police officers, has revealed that he was stuck and could not proceed to her master's degree because it is hard to integrate work and study. Consequently, she got disappointed for not achieving her desired goals. She stated, *I was disappointed before, but still, I have accepted it.*

Unbalanced work and life greatly affect an individual's career opportunities, often leading to frustration and depression. Maier's Frustration Theory elaborates that the experience of unrealized goals and dissatisfaction induces frustration, a state of discomfort. This leads to the abandonment of goals, a poignant indication of career discontent (Labuzan, n.d.).

Furthermore, a career that distances individuals from their goals are misaligned. Amsel (2021) explained that frustration is postulated as an underlying emotional factor that invigorates behavior when confronted with obstacles or deterrents blocking the attainment of some desired goal. Therefore, young police officers mainly experience career disappointment. In contrast, senior police officers are less likely to deal with such feelings because they have already experienced it during their younger days and accepted it in the present. Career disappointment, although challenging to realize at the moment, is a temporary state of feeling.

## Poor Work Performance

On the other hand, poor work performance is another impact of these professional crises driven by workplace disengagement, including feelings of having no motivation, lack of engagement in decision-making, or minimal appreciation for one's efforts.

A key informant expressed that these professional crises lead to the incompleteness of work and the ineffectiveness of his duty. KI13 said, *this is affecting my work, it seems that I will not be able to cooperate with the other one, it seems that my work is no longer effective or lack of input in a job*. KI7 also asserts that, *these crises affects us, especially our job efficiency*.

The overlapping of duties and responsibilities might cause inefficiency to the PNP officers, as supported by Alcaayaga (2022), discussing work overload as a risk that decreases the quality of life and productivity. Maslach (2003) also reiterates that occupational stress affects the work quality of employees and that of the organizations for which they work. In short, productivity decreases as the hours go by.

Police officers who engage more at work become more, leading to poorer quality of life. Wherefore, poor work performance is a great threat to the organization due to the risk induced by professional crises.

## Inconsistent Sleeping and Eating Routine

Enough rest and healthy eating habits play a significant role in the well-being of every police officer. However, police officers cannot meet these healthy habits due to the professional crises they encounter.

KI13 revealed that he sleeps with hunger and tiredness and sometimes even raises his voice to his colleagues. He told, *it affects my mental health. Upon arriving home, I wanted to rest and sleep, not minding my hunger for food. For my colleagues, due to stress and hunger, my voice starts to raise without noticing it*. The high level of fatigue caused by the insufficient amount of sleep and rest risks the mental health of the PNP officers.

In line with this, the research emphasizes the risks to one's physical and psychological risks associated with long and excessive working hours. According to the Energy Conservation Theory, sleep's main purpose is to reduce an individual's energy needs and expenditure at specific times of the day or night, particularly when searching for food is inefficient. Moreover, studies have shown that extended stress exposure negatively affects employees' physical and mental health and attitudes toward others (Cropanzano, 2003). Hence, multiple workloads affect the mental health and relationship of police officers with other people, making them unproductive and irritated most of the time.

Through these results, there was a better understanding of the quarter-life crises of police officers. Whereas the more the researchers understood the quarter-life crises of the police officers, the greater possible solutions they could accomplish so that they can solve the problems and issues will be addressed.

## CONCLUSION

Philippine National Police, as one of the country's widest and busiest national agencies, have to perform challenging tasks, especially the police officers. It has been revealed that they suffer from various professional crises in the performance of their duties while effectively delivering services mandated by the organization. Thus, the overlapping and overloading of work are inevitable. While these police officers have difficulties with their work, some deal with their personal lives. They even have to face problems and issues inside or outside their office concerning the people around them. This shows that the offices of the said

organization need more employees. Moreover, with the nature of the job, some police officers have to encounter or deal with financial problems, which creates risks for the police service. In reality, most police officers suffer from low morale and low self-esteem given by the nature of their work. Eventually affected the treatment of police officers by their workmates, clients, and even their subordinates or superiors. Consequently, these professional crises are alarming due to their repercussions, not just for the organization but also for the officers themselves. It has been driven mainly by the administrative workload that led to the physical, psychological, and emotional risk of every police officer. Besides, professional crises also affect their personal lives. Although police officers suffer from these professional crises, they have nothing to do but endure and overcome them because they are in the service.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The PNP must maintain the SWIM program (Squad Weekly Interactive Meeting), which is adopted and implemented by the whole police force in the country as part of the organization's internal cleansing program to strengthen the spiritual attributes of the PNP officers. Also, the Police Information and Continuing Education (PICE) Program for Police Officers should be maintained by the PNP. Further training should be implemented as a command responsibility to create professional police values that complement the emerging COPS (Community Oriented Public Safety) Philosophy. Likewise, effective law enforcement crisis communication helps agencies ensure successful outcomes, build public trust, and keep everyone safe amid a dire situation. Cooperative activities between the police and the community and research on community attitudes toward the police can promote mutual respect between patrol officers and the community.

Proper communication can lead to healthy and meaningful relationships within the working space. They respect the decisions of everyone, especially the seniors, to motivate the juniors to be a better version of themselves in a way that does not undermine their self-esteem but instead identifies areas where they can improve to be more highly regarded by those around them. Moreover, their seniors' actions must serve as their inspiration to adapt what needs to be adjusted and change what has to be changed when they have the chance to be called "seniors." To increase the self-esteem and boost the confidence of the PNP officers, the researchers recommend a monthly performance assessment to track and monitor their improvements. Furthermore, involving them as resource speakers in seminars like the Anti-Drug Campaign, Brigada Eskwela, Career Guidance Activities, Anti-Bullying Campaign, and more will help them improve and increase their confidence.

To lessen their mental strain, the researchers recommend that PNP officers engage in recreational activities such as jogging, hiking, basketball, swimming, chess, and musical instruments to relieve frustrations. These activities may help with concentration and anxiety, and stress management. Officers who have served on the job for a long time also require ongoing motivation. They must be provided with opportunities for continuing education in areas of organizational need and personal interest, and they must be given the time and resources to take advantage of them. Those eager to advance in their careers or gain knowledge that will allow them to pursue an additional interest in another departmental arena must be encouraged and supported to do so. It can be demoralizing when their repeated requests for training opportunities are denied or delayed indefinitely without justification, cause, or explanation.

Lastly, poor work performance may be improved through continual motivation, which is necessary for officers working at their jobs for a long time. They must be given the chance and time to take advantage of continuing education programs that address organizational needs and personal interests. A sense of decorum inside the organization can also be a powerful motivator for police officers in their work performance. High achievers and propelled police officers may find it challenging to stay motivated when there is inequality, partiality, favoritism, or internal politics at work. Law enforcement officers must know they are equitably

eligible for professional advancement and promotions. Applause for a job well done is another instigation for law enforcement personnel. It is critical to support your colleagues and provide them with opportunities to improve when dealing with poor performance. An acknowledgment of an officer's performance during roll call, a formal letter of recommendation in the officers' personnel file, or a personal plaque from the chief can all serve as significant morale boosters that can be felt throughout the department. In addition to rewarding the individual officer, this encourages others in the department to perform at a high level.

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