

Gearing Towards Gender Equality: Insights from Female Police Officers in their Experiences at Their Workplaces

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ABSTRACT

Addressing the experiences and promoting gender equality in law enforcement is crucial not only for the well-being of women officers but also for creating safer and more just communities for all. This study explored the insights of the female police officers in their experiences at their workplace towards gender equality in the province of Misamis Occidental during the year 2023. Descriptive phenomenology was the research design used in the study. Seven women police officers participated in the study, who were chosen using purposive sampling. An in-depth interview was done to gather data using interview guide questions. The participants' responses were transcribed, coded, and organized to form themes based on the study's objective using NVivo software. Data were then analyzed and interpreted using Moustaka's steps of data analysis. Results revealed that majority of the women police officers were at the age middle age married with the rank of police corporal. Moreover, their insights resulted to seven themes: handling gender based-cases, being given simpler work and belittle in their competence, desiring to perform male tasks, having lesser opportunities in leadership and promotion, using varied coping mechanisms in dealing with gender inequality; the need for equal treatment and opportunities, and aspiring for support system, clubs, programs, and laws to empower women. Female police officers have to be provided with opportunities for professional growth and development by ensuring that female police officers have equal access to leadership positions, training, and promotional opportunities, establishing support systems, clubs, and programs that empower and promote the advancement of women in law enforcement; and advocating for laws and policies that protect the rights and promote the advancement of women in law.

Keywords: competence, coping mechanisms, empowerment, gender-based cases, gender equality

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a fundamental human right (Roseboom, 2020). People of all genders have equal chances, rights, and responsibilities. According to Pirani et al. (2020), achieving gender equality is more than just a goal since it is necessary to tackle the problems of eradicating poverty, advancing sustainable development, and fostering good governance. Equality is the condition in which everyone is treated equally regardless of class, gender, color, profession, or rank (Gau & Paoline, 2020). Another way to think about equality is as a condition where everyone has the same rights and opportunities for success (Absori et al., 2020).

Regardless of whether a person was born male, female, or intersex, the phrase "all human beings are born equal" (found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) suggests that everyone should be able to realize their full potential and live in freedom and dignity (Koyama, 2020). According to the study by Ahern (2019), the governments focus on gender equality, and legal protections improve. When they try to address stereotypes and inequities, it improves the legal system. She also added that conflict is less likely to reoccur when women are active in peace negotiations. Many nations currently mixed up in protracted conflicts offer

very few rights and protections for women.

In the UN Women's Report (2015), several connections between gender equality and conflict are made, which states that women's participation is crucial to lasting peace.

Additionally, the Philippine National Police (2021) received recognition for its efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) strengthen their partnership to step up the PCW's gender mainstreaming programs and, in return, better equip the PNP to provide services to women and girls that are gender-responsive (Philippine Progress Report, 2019). The Philippine Commission on Women (2022) continues to support and encourage the creation of a just, peaceful, and inclusive society by strengthening gender mainstreaming in the organizations that fall under this sector.

The enactment of the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710) has been regarded nationally and internationally as a significant milestone in empowering Filipino women (Francisco, 2022). The law provides entrenched women's rights, particularly among marginalized, underserved, and discriminated against. Based on the above-cited premises, these gender issues and other relevant concepts are explicitly integrated into the PPMP's training and communication tools and materials (Heldman, 2018).

In Misamis Occidental's study of Cimene et al. (2020), he mentioned that even though there is a compelling argument for much more female involvement in law enforcement, there is a clear disparity between effective integration tactics and favorable gender policies in many agencies. Basic statistics on women's development sometimes need to be revised. Dashper (2019) mentioned that gender inequality has long existed in the workplace. It appears in law enforcement with the first admission of women into the law enforcement community. The bias has lessened since the early days of female policing but has not gone away.

With this background, the researchers ventured to investigate the different insights of female police officers in their experiences at their work towards gender equality. This study determined the extent of gender equality implemented in the workplace. The researchers chose this study as gender inequality and gender oppression have still become rampant today. Many discriminate against the weak, especially women, which is also the case in law enforcement. It is still a wonder why the percentage of women in law enforcement has remained relatively stagnant for the past few decades and why there is only a small quota for women compared to men. Thus, this study explored the insights from female police officers in their experiences at their workplace towards gender equality. Specifically, the study answered the following objectives: determine the profile of the female police officers in terms of their age, civil status, rank, and years of service; determine the experiences of female police officers in gender equality in the workplace; determine on how the female police officers cope with their experiences.; and determine the insight of the female police officers in relation to their experiences in the workplace.

METHODS

This study used the qualitative approach using the descriptive phenomenological design. The descriptive phenomenology of research consists of four steps: bracketing, intuiting, analyzing, and describing (Bahtiar & Sahar, 2022). Intuition entails remaining open to the meanings assigned to the phenomenon by individuals who have experienced it. Using this method, the researchers approach the phenomenon in a new, rather naive way (Churchill, 2018). Carcary (2020) implies that analysis focuses on discovering and extracting key remarks and reflections from persons interviewed, categorizing and evaluating them for their contribution to understanding the phenomenon under study. Researchers will perform the last step by simply

describing their conclusion drawn from the data analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

This research design is considered to explore the insights of female police officers in their experiences at their work towards gender equality.

Setting

The study was conducted in police stations in Misamis Occidental, Philippines. A police station is a place where local police officers work. A police station, often known as a station house or just a house, is a structure that houses police officers and other members of staff (Abiodun et al., 2020). With the community's support, the station enforces the law, prevents and controls crime, maintains peace and order, and ensures public safety and internal security. The researchers chose Misamis Occidental because of the police stations and active female police officers in the area relevant to the study. It also fits the time frame and resources of the researchers. The land area of the province of Misamis Occidental is 2,006.63 square kilometers or 774.76 square miles. Six hundred seventeen thousand three hundred thirty-three people were living there as of the 2020 Census. This amounted to 12.29% of the entire Northern Mindanao region's population, 2.35% of the entire Mindanao Island group's population, or 0.57% of all Filipinos. There are three cities and 14 municipalities in Misamis Occidental. Aloran, Baliangao, Bonifacio, Calamba, Clarin, Concepcion, Don Victoriano Chiongbian, Jimenez, Lopez Jaena, Oroquieta, Ozamiz, Panaon, Plaridel, Sapang Dalaga, Sinacaban, Tangub, and Tudela are among the 490 barangays in the province.

Participants

To investigate the underlying questions of this study, the participants were seven (7) selected female police officers, given that they met the predefined criteria below. In addition, the researchers utilized purposive sampling. Purposive sampling refers to non-probability sampling techniques in which units will be selected because they have characteristics that the researchers need in the sample (Nikolopoulou, 2022). The criteria for the selection of the participants include the following: (1) police officers, (2) female ; (3) at least five years in service.

Instruments

The study utilized an interview guide in gathering the data information needed to know the insights from female police officers in their experiences at their work towards gender equality. The interview guide consists of different but interrelated questions that were answered by the participants based on their experiences.

The interview guide questions were translated into the vernacular, consisting of opening, core, and closing questions. The interview was recorded using an audio recording device to capture the essential information. The recorded data were used to identify the themes from the participant's responses.

Data Collection

In gathering the data, the researchers asked permission from the College of Criminology at Misamis University to conduct the study. Moreover, after the approval, the researchers asked permission from the head of Police in Misamis Occidental and Ozamiz City to survey the selected respondents. After obtaining permits, the researchers prepared a consent letter for the participants. The researchers explained the importance of the study to the participants. An approved interview guide was prepared by the researchers to be used in gathering information. Pseudonyms were used in the document analysis process to keep the information confidential. This method of conducting interviews was adopted in line with COVID-19 social distancing guidelines to prevent infection from one person to another. The researchers asked the

participants' permission to record the interview.

The participants were then interviewed face-to-face to allow the researchers to identify and solicit knowledge from them. All the interviews lasted for a minimum of 5 minutes.

This data collection benefited the researchers by being able to clarify questions, ask further probing questions and observe non-verbal communication. In addition, this technique provided voluntary reactions and ideas that the researchers could observe and take notes about their thoughts and emotions. Furthermore, a voice recorder was used for the researchers' interview. It was used by the researchers in transcribing information from the interview. The researchers then analyzed the transcriptions using Hyperresearch software to code subthemes and themes. The researchers then interpreted the themes and supporting responses from the participants. The study findings were then sent back to the participants for verification.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Any time research is conducted on humans, it is important to consider ethical concerns. This research utilizes the following safety measure to ensure the participants' rights in the study. All the research participants were advised of the research objectives being conducted through verbal notification. Additionally, they have the chance to ask questions. Additionally, the consent form that the research subjects signed gave them the freedom to leave the study without giving a reason. As this is a sensitive subject, the researchers provided participants with information on counseling and supporting services. Before the conduct of the research, approval from the Misamis University – Ozamiz City was sought. Letters were sent to the participants asking for their consent to be the participants in the study.

The participants were assured that confidentiality in data collection, use, and presentation was strictly observed. In the case of confidentiality, the anonymity of the participants was protected during the study. Concerning the participant's identity, the researchers applied the measure to promote anonymity and secrecy by not mentioning the participants' names during the interview. The names of the participants were not disclosed in the results and discussions. The researchers adhered to the guidelines set by the Republic Act No. 10173, known as the "Data Privacy Act of 2012". This process helps ensure an ethical and safe research process for human participants. The formal interview followed the Inter-agency Task Force's health protocols (IATF).

Data Analysis

This study employed Moustakas Phenomenological data analysis. In the way of thinking phenomenological data, Moustaka's statement says, follow a systematic procedure that is flinty yet accessible to qualitative research. This method is used to transcript all information gathered from the interviews that will be analyzed using the Moustakas (1994). The Moustakas' Data Analysis or transcendental phenomenological reduction is the best suited methodologically for the study and used to achieve a textural-structural synthesis and essence of the experiences or challenges. This method will serve as a guide in analyzing the data gathered. The steps in this method are (1) Bracketing, (2) Horizontalization, (3) Clustering into Themes, (4) Textural Description, (5) Structural Description, and (6) Textural-Structural Synthesis.

Bracketing. The bracketing method will lessen the impact of assumptions and impressions made before the study starts. It involves putting judgments and preconceptions on hold.

Horizonatilation. Technically speaking, horizontalization refers to a list of all the verbatim phrases that will be relevant to the study. Initially, the researchers will look into each statement with equal value. Statements that are deemed to be irrelevant, redundant, overlapping, or beyond the parameters of the research will therefore be disregarded. After the data has been cleaned up, the remaining sections—called horizons—will

be regarded as the essential and significant components of the phenomenon. Moustakas states, “Horizons are unlimited, and horizontalization is a never-ending process” (Moustakas, 1994).

Clustering. The final step in concluding the study is clustering. It involves the reduction of experiences to invariant horizons, creating core themes, and validating the invariant horizons using multiple data sources. In reducing the statements into horizons, the researchers will cluster them into themes and ensure that each theme is implied with only one meaning. This is considered as placing the phenomenon into a “textural language.” To validate the invariant horizons obtained from the study, the researchers will review the findings of research studies using methods other than the data-gathering methods used in the study, like observation, field notetaking, focus group interviews, and related literature. This validation process is crucial to the accuracy and clarity of the representations.

The textural description refers to an account that describes the perception of the phenomenon. In obtaining the textural description of the participants’ experience, researchers will use the verbatim excerpts from the interview and provide a narration of the meaning units derived from the themes. Structural description, or how it occurred, integrates imaginative variation, an ingenious outlook, and insights into the textural description.

In *the textural-structural synthesis* process, researchers will gather the meaning units of each participant and develop a composite of textural and structural descriptions that are common to them. A narrative or synthesis represents all participants written in a third-person perspective. The primary goal of this final step of Moustakas’ method is to obtain the essence of the experience of the phenomenon. Responses of the study participants will be analyzed through the NVivo software that produces the final themes of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This qualitative research explored explore the insights of female police officers in their experiences at their work towards gender equality. The study participants were seven (7) female police officers in selected stations of Ozamiz City. They were already working in the field.

Profile of the Female Police Officer

Most female police participants are in the 31-40 age range, which may indicate that this age range is a common point in a woman’s career where they have gained enough experience and skills to become effective police officers. However, it is important to note that age alone does not necessarily determine an officer’s effectiveness. Individual factors such as training, education, and personal qualities also play an important role. There was also diversity in age among the female police participants, with some falling in the younger age range of 21-30 and others in the older range of 41-50. This suggests that women from different stages in their careers and life experiences are represented in the police force, which can provide a range of perspectives and strengths in handling different situations. Therefore, it is important to value and respect the contributions and experiences of police officers of all ages and to provide them with the necessary resources and support to succeed in their roles.

Many women police officers were married, but some were single and working in a workplace with married colleagues. It implies that the workplace culture and dynamics may differ for these two women groups, which could affect their experiences and interactions with their colleagues. For example, married women may have different priorities and responsibilities outside of work, such as caring for children or elderly family members, which could affect their availability for overtime or shift work.

They may also have different social networks and support systems than their single colleagues. On the other hand, single women may have different priorities and interests compared to their married colleagues and

may face different challenges related to work-life balance and personal relationships.

The women police participants are represented in different ranks within the force, with the women police corporal participants being almost equal in number to the patrolwomen. This suggests that women can advance to higher ranks within the force, which can provide them with increased opportunities for leadership and influence in shaping the policies and practices of the police force. Therefore, it is important to continue to support and promote gender diversity and representation within law enforcement to ensure that all voices and perspectives are heard and valued.

According to a report by the National Center for Women and Policing, women make up only about 12% of all law enforcement officers in the United States (Hickman & Reaves, 2017). But as more women pursue careers in law enforcement, this number has been rising recently.

In terms of the age distribution of women police officers, one study found that the average age of women police officers in the United States was 38 years old, which is similar to the age range mentioned (Lambert, 2010). This suggests that the 31-40 age range is a common point in a woman’s career where they have gained enough experience and skills to become an effective policeman.

The “glass ceiling” theory has been proposed to explain women’s barriers to advancing to higher ranks within law enforcement. This theory suggests that women are often prevented from advancing to higher ranks due to systemic barriers and discrimination, including gender bias in promotion decisions and lack of access to mentoring and training opportunities (Morrison, White, & Van Velsor, 1987). Therefore, police departments need to be aware of and address these barriers to ensure that women have equal opportunities to advance in their careers.

However, research on the experiences of female police officers suggests that marital status can impact their work experiences. For example, a study by Bratton and Dodd (2013) found that married female police officers experienced more challenges in balancing their work and family responsibilities than their male counterparts. This was particularly true for women with young children, who reported feeling guilty for missing important events and struggling to find adequate child care.

Employers and colleagues in police organizations need to recognize and respect all employees’ diverse needs and experiences, regardless of their age, marital status, and rank. Creating a supportive and inclusive workplace culture can help all employees feel valued and supported, leading to greater job satisfaction and productivity.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants (n=7)

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
21-30	1	14.00
31-40	4	57.00
41-50	2	29.00
Civil Status		
Single	2	29.00
Married	5	71.00
Rank		
Patrolwoman	3	28.55
Police Corporal	4	14.29

Experiences of Female Police Officers in Gender Equality in the Workplace

Each participant expressed their experiences and challenges in the workplace. The common insights they have based on their responses resulted in six themes that emerged from the data analysis: 1) handling gender-based cases; 2) being given simpler work and belittle in their competence; 3) desiring to perform male tasks; 4) having lesser opportunities in leadership and promotion; 5) using varied coping mechanisms in dealing with gender inequality; 6) the need for equal treatment and opportunities; and 7) aspiring for support systems, clubs, programs, and laws to empower women.

Handling Gender-based Cases

One of the experiences of female police officers in their workplace is handling gender-sensitive cases. As a result, they may be more attuned to the needs of victims and better equipped to provide them with the support and resources they need. Patrolwomen can respond to reports of child abuse and work with child protective services to ensure that children are safe. The lines of the participants supported these.

“Female officers play a major role in the PNP organ because most are designated to handle gender-based cases.” (P6)

“Female officer is important in police service because there are cases or activities in the investigation that needs female hands. This is true for Women and Children Protection Desk.” (P7)

There were also times that the women police officers handled very sensitive cases like rape cases where victims may be hesitant to speak with male police officers. This can be particularly in sexual assault victims, where the victim was comfortable speaking with someone of the same gender. Victims may also feel that they were treated with respect and dignity. Participant 1 supported this claim.

“Very important also because there is some very sensitive case, especially the cases of RAPE or cases of violation of RA 9262. The woman police officer can only handle respecting victims’ dignity and privacy as a female.” (P1)

Some studies support the experiences of police as they handled sensitive gender-based cases. For example, in Saudi Arabia, women police officers face challenges handling these cases due to societal norms and cultural attitudes toward gender-based violence (Kholoud Al-Qahtani & Mona Al-Tabban, 2021). In Malaysia, in handling domestic violence cases, women police officers face challenges in handling these cases due to a lack of training and resources, as well as cultural attitudes toward domestic violence (Siali et al., 2019). In Delhi, India, women police officers have faced challenges accessing resources and dealing with cultural attitudes towards violence against women (Rao, 2018).

Hence, women police officers be supported by their immediate heads as they handle gender-based cases. In addition, they have to be given enough training and resources to support them in their work. By these, women officers will be empowered to continue their job with service and dedication.

Being Given Simpler Works and Belittled in their Competence

Women police officers expressed their feelings that they were given simpler work in their workplace. Since they were females, lighter activities or office work were assigned to them, unlike male police officers deployed in the field. The tasks given to female police were also limited to the female role.

Participants 6 and 7 attested to this finding.

“Yes, the police head assigned women to the finance section since they were females. They cannot perform other activities like in the field.” P6

“Yes, in our training, female police were given lighter activities than the male that needs hard work.” (P7)

“I experienced gender inequality based on what I observed in this matter. In the PNP station, we as a woman has limited function only in our work.” (P1)

“There was a limitation only to the task and function of the female PNP personnel.” (P1)

Women police officers were not exposed to training and other crime investigation outside the office, like conducting the arrest of the perpetrators. They were only assigned to the office. These lines were mentioned by participants 7 and 1.

“During training days, women are exempted.” (P7).

“Some policewomen are assigned to the Women and Children Assistant’s Desk, others in the PCR division but never in the traffic investigation, intelligence division, investigation division, or even the first respondent whenever crimes happen, the one who will conduct arrest to the perpetrators.” (P1)

“Females are good at office work, and males are needed in dealing with the community” (P2)

Some women police officers experience being belittled in the workplace. For them, they were regarded as somebody who was not strong as men can do. These were uttered by participants 3 and 2.

“However, women sometimes were judged as having their ideas dismissed or belittled.” (P3)

“This is because we, as women, were regarded as not as strong enough as men.” (P2)

Some studies have supported giving simpler tasks and belittling women police officers. Women officers are often given less challenging assignments and opportunities for advancement and are belittled in their competence and skills (Martin, R., Turchik, & Wilson, 2020). They are often given less challenging assignments and are belittled in their competence and abilities (Mullins & Shankle, 2019). As a result, they are often passed over for promotions, despite having similar qualifications and experience as their male counterparts. Women officers also reported feeling belittled in their competence and abilities (Conser & Stockdale, 2021).

Addressing gender-based discrimination and promoting gender diversity can help improve women’s representation and experiences in law enforcement. Police organizations can support women officers by creating more opportunities for advancement, promoting policies and laws that promote gender diversity, and addressing discrimination in the workplace. These will improve the representation and experiences of women in law enforcement.

Desiring to Perform Male Tasks

Despite the practice of the police in the workplace that they were assigned in the office works and for females only, still, the women police desired or longed to perform male tasks. In addition, they wanted to explore other tasks they believed they could do based on their capacity. The utterances of the following participants supported these:

“Those who were in the task as the female officer of the Women and Children Desk also want to explore another type of work that they believe they can do.” (P1)

“That was when I wanted to hold some tasks, but the task was only for the male-only. For instance, Investigation of reported offenses.” (P1)

“Yes, I felt down that time. I was supposed to be promoted, but because of some factors, it turned out to be nothing. I was asking myself why I have such a gender.” (P3)

The same finding is seen in Canada, which states that some women police officers desire to perform male tasks to prove their competence and fit in with their male colleagues (Burke & Nelson, 2002). Some longed to perform male tasks as a way of challenging gender stereotypes and proving their competence (Brown, 2015). However, Reiner (1990) emphasized the desire as a way of challenging gender stereotypes and proving their competence, but that this desire can also lead to conflicts with their female colleagues. Female officers often experience pressure to conform to gender norms and expectations and may need to prove themselves by performing tasks traditionally associated with male officers (Orrick & Sherry, 2019). Some women who choose law enforcement as a career often value physical and mental challenges, a sense of adventure, and the opportunity to help others (Schuck & Rosenbaum, 2020).

In this study, some women police officers desire to perform male tasks to prove their competence and challenge gender stereotypes. However, this desire can also lead to conflicts with their female colleagues. Police organizations need to promote gender equity and eliminate gender bias in work assignments and promotions. By promoting gender equity and creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment, police organizations can better serve the needs of their communities and improve the job satisfaction and career development of their female officers.

Having Lesser Opportunities in Leadership and Promotions

In some instances, women police had fewer opportunities to become field leaders. Male police were given priority to do leadership tasks in most activities in policing. They were seen as someone with better leadership skills than women could.

“In some places, girls may have limited access to opportunities, which can limit their opportunities and perpetuate gender inequality.” (P3)

“Being team leader, most commanders choose males to be team leaders in police operational activities.” (P4)

“During my training, most of the leadership jobs were given to males. Males are expected to have good leadership skills than us esp. in all the activities.” (P3)

In terms of promotion, female police officers had fewer opportunities for promotions than men. In the workplace, there were instances that the vacant job was thought to be done only by men. Hence promotion was awarded only to males. Priority was given to male police as the organization thought that only males could do the vacant position. Participant 3 emphasized this finding.

applicant, who is male, was prioritized since the place for an assignment needs male police.” (P3)

Some studies support and demonstrate that women police officers continue to face barriers to leadership and promotions in the United States and internationally. Women are significantly underrepresented in police leadership positions, and this gender gap is larger in countries with higher levels of gender inequality across 63 countries (Jang & Shin, 2021). In the United States, women police executives were less likely to hold certain executive positions and less likely to receive desirable assignments that could lead to further promotion (Pickett & Carr, 2021). Some women officers in Jordan felt the lack of support from male colleagues and supervisors, gender stereotypes, and cultural norms that view women as inferior to men (Shawaqfeh, 2020).

Policymakers and police organizations have to work to address gender bias and discrimination in the

workplace and create more opportunities for women to advance in their careers. It includes implementing policies and programs that promote gender equity, providing leadership training and mentoring programs, and ensuring that performance evaluations and promotions are based on merit rather than gender.

Using Varied Coping Mechanisms in Dealing with Gender Inequality

Despite the feelings of gender inequality among women police officers in the workplace, they still deal with it positively. They used varied coping mechanisms. They took positive steps to help them navigate challenges and work towards a more inclusive and equitable workplace. The coping mechanisms mentioned by the participants include personal and professional coping mechanisms.

Women police officers used personal coping mechanisms like acting as role models, controlling one's feelings and emotions, and doing their best and their job religiously. The lines from participants 6, 7, and 4 provided the claim.

Be a role model, do not be intimidated by male officers, and follow the rules, regulations, and policies of the PNP organ. (P6)

We have to control our feelings and emotions. (P7)

I just did my best and trusted God that I would survive (P4).

Let us understand each other. Let us do our job religiously. We are all equal in the eyes of God. (P7).

Additionally, women police's professional coping mechanisms were loving the profession and upgrading themselves through seminars on gender development. These were mentioned by Participants 2 and 1.

By loving the profession that I chose and accepting that woman police officers were hired in the PNP because there were some functions that only the woman could handle (P2)

They should love the profession they choose, and not all of what they have imagined from the past will be the present they will encounter (P1).

Attending symposiums & seminars on gender and development (P2).

Women police officers use various coping strategies to deal with gender inequality and discrimination in the workplace. They seek support from family and friends, exercise physically, and practice mindfulness and meditation (Velez & Bourque, 2019). Some seek social support and engage in self-care activities (Meyer & Smith, 2021). There were also women police officers who developed a strong sense of self, seeking support from other women in law enforcement and engaging in humor and sarcasm to cope with sexism and discrimination (Fortner & Gomila, 2021).

Police organizations can support women officers by providing training and resources on coping with occupational stress and addressing issues of gender inequality and discrimination. Additionally, creating more opportunities for women to advance in their careers and promoting a more inclusive and supportive police culture can help to reduce the prevalence of gender inequality and support the well-being of women police officers.

The Need for Equal Treatment and Opportunities

The women police officers expressed their intention to be given equal treatment and opportunities. They

claimed they needed to be treated equally with men since they also needed to excel and be empowered. Therefore, they can do as men do in given tasks, responsibilities, and opportunities.

“We are all public servants enjoying all rewards & privileges like the male public servants. However, we are women, and we need to be empowered. We have to excel (P2).

“It is important to continue the conversation and work towards creating a world where all individuals are treated with dignity, respect, and equality.” (P3)

We must accept that men and women have special tasks and duties to perform. Whatever jobs that can be done by the male can also be done by the female. Hence, the treatment of police has to be fair when it comes to assignment, opportunities, promotion, and other related matters in policing (7)

Women police officers said that the issue of equal treatment can be addressed through education and awareness. They need to have laws that respect gender equity so all of them will be given the opportunity that they want to have. Participant 3 emphasized the lines.

“Education and raising awareness about gender inequality and its impacts is an essential first step in addressing the issue. It can help people recognize and challenge gender biases and stereotypes and promote gender equity.” (P3)

“Policies and laws that promote gender equity, such as equal pay and anti-discrimination laws, can help address gender inequality at the systemic (P3).”

These studies highlight the ongoing need for equal treatment and opportunities for women in law enforcement. Cho & Blumberg (2019) said that there was a need for equal treatment and opportunities for women in law enforcement and suggested that improving gender diversity within police organizations can lead to better outcomes for both officers and the community. It can also improve the overall health and well-being of women police officers (Moser & Bachman, 2019). In addition, creating more opportunities for women to advance in their careers and promoting a more inclusive and supportive police culture can help to reduce the prevalence of gender inequality and discrimination (Brunson & Wade, 2021).

Police organizations can support women officers by promoting gender diversity, providing training and resources on addressing issues of discrimination and harassment, and creating opportunities for women to advance in their careers. Additionally, addressing issues of gender inequality and promoting a more inclusive and supportive police culture can help to alleviate the health and well-being of women police officers.

Aspiring for Support Systems, Clubs, Programs, and Laws to Empower Women

With the experiences of women police officers on gender inequality, they aspired to have support systems, clubs, programs, and laws to empower them. The support system they wanted was counseling and mentorship to help them overcome the effects of negative treatment.

Providing support systems for those who face gender inequality, such as counseling or mentorship programs, can help individuals cope with the negative effects of gender inequality and develop strategies to overcome it (P3)

Additionally, women police officers suggested a ladies club promoting gender equality. It will also provide activities to educate young individuals to respect others' rights. Participants 6 and 5 mentioned the findings.

Promote gender equality and recommend organizing ladies' clubs (P6)

By using activities and teaching equality from a young age and respect for each right (P5)

Moreover, the women police officer need to have laws and policies that promote gender equality that will help address the problem in society. Through these, women can be empowered and can excel in the end.

Policies and laws that promote gender equity, such as equal pay and anti-discrimination laws, can help address gender inequality in the system (P3).

We are women, and we need to be empowered. We have to excel (P2).

These studies confirm this finding and suggest that providing support systems, clubs, programs, and laws to empower women can be effective in promoting gender diversity and advancing the careers of women in law enforcement. Police organizations can support women officers by creating more opportunities for mentorship and networking, providing resources and support for work-life balance, and promoting policies and laws that promote gender diversity and empower women in law enforcement. Participating in the association led to greater support and empowerment for women officers, suggesting that support systems and clubs can effectively empower women in law enforcement (Turchik & Wilson, 2019). Creating more opportunities for women to advance in their careers and providing support systems and programs can help improve women's representation and experiences in law enforcement (Daly & Bouhours, 2019). Women who reported having more supportive networks and mentorship were more likely to feel empowered and aspire to leadership positions in law enforcement, highlighting the importance of support systems and programs for women officers (Pickett & Nguyen, 2021).

Police organizations can take proactive steps to support women officers by providing them with the resources and support they need to succeed in their careers. This includes creating more opportunities for mentorship and networking and providing resources for work-life balance, such as flexible schedules and parental leave. Additionally, police organizations can promote policies and laws that promote gender diversity and empower women in law enforcement, such as gender-neutral hiring practices, policies that address discrimination, and initiatives to promote women into leadership positions. Finally, by creating more inclusive and supportive work environments, police organizations can attract and retain more women officers and help them to succeed in their careers.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Women police officers come from diverse backgrounds and hold different positions within the police force. Female police officers continue to face significant challenges and barriers in their professional lives, including handling gender-based cases, being given simpler work assignments, and experiencing belittlement in their competence. They also desire to perform male tasks and need more opportunities in leadership and promotions. However, they demonstrate resilience by using various coping mechanisms, both personal and professional, to address these challenges. Female police officers require equal treatment and opportunities and support systems, clubs, programs, and laws to empower them in their careers.

The following suggestions are made in light of the study's results and conclusion: Police organizations have to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of women police officers. This can be done by recognizing and valuing women's backgrounds and experiences in the police force and promoting diversity and inclusion in hiring and leadership positions. Police organizations address and eliminate gender-based discrimination by implementing policies and practices that ensure female police officers are given equal opportunities, responsibilities, and recognition for their work; and the Provision of training and education to help all police officers recognize and address gender-based discrimination. Finally, female police officers have to be supported to develop resilience through recognition and appreciation of the challenges

that female police officers face. They have to be provided with resources and support to help them cope and encourage the development of personal and professional coping mechanisms, such as mentorship programs and peersupport groups.

Female police officers have to be provided with opportunities for professional growth and development by ensuring that female police officers have equal access to leadership positions, training, and promotional opportunities; establishing support systems, clubs, and programs that empower and promote the advancement of women in law enforcement; and promoting legislation and regulations that uphold human rights and encourage women in the legal profession.

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