



Job Resources as Drivers of Police Work Performance: A Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

Law enforcement agencies function in high-stress, high-reliability environments demanding sustained officer work performance for public safety, operational readiness, and institutional trust. While previous empirical scholarship in policing settings nearly exclusively focuses on occupational stress, physical hazards, and operational burnout, research suggesting positive workplace resources that actively fuel officer output is limited. Developed within the framework of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, this conceptual paper proposes a holistic theoretical model illustrating the structural relationships linking five key job resources (job autonomy, supervisory coaching, development opportunities, performance feedback, and social support) to police work performance. The study utilizes a conceptual research design with a delineating and summarizing synthesis approach to integrating multidisciplinary literature from public administration, organizational behaviour, and police management to generate theoretical postulations. The proposed framework indicates that five job resources result in improved police work performance. By isolating different motivational mechanisms, this study theoretically hypothesizes that the JD-R motivational pathway operates in command-and-control public safety settings, closes the construct disaggregation gap, and connects specific resources to performance outcomes. The model offers a practice-based pathway for police commanders and human resource strategists to implement evidence-based practices towards a structured operational autonomy or coaching versus command style of leadership, career development pathways, performance feedback, and embedded peer support systems that work together as driving forces to optimize overall performance in policing as well as an optimal state of operation.

Keywords: conceptual framework, Job Demand-Resources, job resources, police, work performance

INTRODUCTION

Law enforcement agencies continue to face new challenges in an era of changing security concerns, fast-paced technology development, and growing public criticism. Maintaining public order and service delivery is becoming increasingly difficult (Matvejevs, 2021). Police organizations serve the critical function of securing and protecting the law and public safety order, and as such, they operate at the heart of the national security system within a broad range of different and complex operational environments (Matvejevs, 2021). Police staff operate in one of the most career-seeking professions that exposes them to considerable job demands through physical hazards, irregular work hours, rigid discipline, and constant criticism from the public (Wolter et al., 2019). In these demanding work environments, performance that includes strict adherence to each task (task performance) and providing additional services that go beyond the requirements of the job (contextual performance) (Bakker et al., 2004) becomes an imperative for sustaining the confidence of the institution and the safety of the public.

Understanding the relation between workplace environments and the resultant organizational outcomes has been aided by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model in the extant literature on management and occupational health (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2023). In the JD-R Model, all the characteristics of a job can be classified as job demands or job resources (Lesener et al., 2020; Demerouti et al., 2001). Job demands require

a worker to put in sustained effort, whether in a physical or psychological sense. In contrast, job resources are defined as the organizational, social, or physical factors that help accomplish a goal, lessen the strain of work, and promote a worker's development and learning (Lesener et al., 2020; Demerouti et al., 2001). Job resources operate via a core motivational process and satisfy the basic psychological needs of the worker; these are needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which engender employee engagement and excellent performance (Mazzetti et al., 2021; Bakker et al., 2023).

While traditional public administration approaches tend to center more on better compensation and stress-relief systems, a rising trend in general management literature focuses on more advanced workplace resources. As such, the more fine-grained resources such as job autonomy (decision-making liberty), supervisory coaching (managerial guidance and support), development opportunities (training and pathways), performance feedback (evaluation and progress guidance), and social support (peers and management support) have been found to be essential workplace catalysts in improving employee effectiveness (Bakker, 2014; Li et al., 2026; Rey-Tienda et al., 2026; van de Ven & Hendriks, 2026).

Although the JD-R model has good theoretical support in various sectors, including health care and corporate sectors, empirically studying how job resources function in high-reliability public safety institutions is still largely unexplored. In the law enforcement literature, for many decades, studies have been predominantly focused on operational stress and negative psychological consequences, such as burnout and job strain (Contreras & Novaco, 2026; Ricciardelli & Towns, 2026; Mohammed et al., 2026; Mojallal et al., 2026). This creates a considerable void in the literature regarding the positive resources that can enhance and build performance through constructive and positive measures.

This study aims to develop a conceptual framework based on the JD-R model to overcome the constraints. This conceptual paper focuses on the direct theoretical connections between five major job resources (job autonomy, supervisory coaching, development opportunities, performance feedback, and social support) and work performance among police officers. By bringing together the theories and developing concepts, this study creates a useful framework for law enforcement administrators and human resource practices dealing with policy formation for improving the operational readiness of law enforcement and the quality of service.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROPOSITIONS DEVELOPMENT

Job Demands-Resources Model

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model underpins this study (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). JD-R suggests that working conditions in all professional settings can be classified into: job demands and job resources. Job demands include job components that entail a physical or social effort at a cost of physiological and/or psychological expense. On the other hand, job resources are physical, social, or organizational factors that help in accomplishing work-related goals, lessen job demands, and stimulate individual growth (Lesener et al., 2019).

The JD-R model is grounded in two main processes: the health impairment process and the motivational process (Bakker et al., 2017). In this study, we are focusing mainly on the motivational process, which suggests that the fulfillment of job resources also satisfies the basic psychological needs of employees and intrinsic motivation, resulting in an increase in employee motivation and effort, and a positive impact on the organization (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Bakker et al., 2004). In extremely demanding public service work environments, such as the police, where job demands are high and largely uncontrollable, a unique type of job resource i.e., developmental job resources, such as coaching, opportunities for growth, and feedback on the performance has the potential to influence task accomplishment, operational discipline, and optimal performance of work (Bouckenooghe et al., 2022; Lyons & Bandura, 2022; Hosen et al., 2024).

Work Performance in Law Enforcement

Work performance describes the value of a person's discrete behaviors over a period of time to an organization (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015). As described in literature on organizational behavior, it is a multidimensional construct consisting of two main components: task performance and contextual performance (Borman &

Motowidlo, 1993). Tasks include the functional duties and the required steps of a job (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015), while contextual performance, or organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), consists of voluntary extra efforts that maintain the overall well-being and functioning of an organization: for instance, the end-goal commitment of a team member, self-control, and organizational commitment (Organ, 2018). In the public sector, especially in the law enforcement field, evaluating work performance means assessing technical performance (i.e., task performance) and discretionary supportive performance (i.e., contextual performance) in the demanding conditions of operational job performance. While previous literature identified task and contextual dimensions of performance, the present study treats performance as a unidimensional construct in sizing up total function within policing domains for the purpose of establishing an overall benchmark assessment of operational effectiveness; this is also consistent with administrative practice favoring holistic performances indices to support evaluative purposes over disaggregated behavioral metrics.

Job Autonomy and Work Performance

Job autonomy is the degree of independence and discretion an employee has in deciding how and when to perform a job and in choosing the methods to be used in performing the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). In the JD-R theory, job autonomy is a primary structural resource that promotes intrinsic motivation and psychological empowerment, as well as personal accountability (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In police organizations, although strict hierarchies characterize discipline, frontline employees deal with unstructured and unpredictable situations that require independent judgment (van den Heuvel et al., 2014). Where operational autonomy is maintained within prescribed limits, operational autonomy is reflective of officers' ability and willingness to engage in problem-solving, adaptive behavior, as well as positively engage the community (Vejaratnam et al., 2024). A substantial amount of empirical research shows that work autonomy enhances performance (Khoshnaw, S., & Alavi, 2020; Ha et al., 2026; Shahid & XU, 2026). Thus, it is proposed that:

P1: Job autonomy positively impacts police officers' work performance

Supervisory Coaching and Work Performance

Supervisory coaching refers to the ongoing relationship of giving support, delivering advice, and modelling to junior officers, at their operational level, by senior officers or departmental commanding officers. (Aguilar, 2020). In the JD-R model, the motivational pathway describes supervisory coaching as a social and operational resource that helps the development of job competencies, role understanding, and the presence of psychological safety (Gallwey, 2014; Giráldez Hayes & Van Nieuwerburgh, 2016). Mentoring by police managers in post-operation briefings and by on-field guidance and skill coaching helps in the reduction of role ambiguity and increasing their operational self-assurance. Contemporary studies show that structured coaching helps to mitigate operational blunders, helps to implement the correct procedures, and aids in incremental performance (Garengo & Betto, 2026; Ha et al., 2026; Kirschner & Terblanche, 2026). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

P2: Coaching positively impacts police officers' work performance

Development Opportunities and Work Performance

Developmental opportunities are defined as purposefully designed systems that help develop employees' know-how, technical skills, and long-term career growth, and often include specialised training, leadership programs, and defined career pathways (Narseen & Odhiambo, 2018; Shuler, 2019). Based on the JD-R model, developmental opportunities are considered developmental job resources that support an employee's growth, self-efficacy, and professional development (Bakker et al., 2023).

Responding to the increasingly complex nature of contemporary crimes, from low-level cyber-aided fraud to the presence of sophisticated organised crime networks, it is imperative that law enforcement agencies are committed to employee developmental opportunities. Developmental opportunities also have the positive effects of enhancing officers' technical skills and increasing their investigative efficiency, as well as enhancing career-related commitment (Khan et al., 2026). Developmental resources have been shown to enhance performance

and serve as a driving force for engagement in extra-role behaviours (Munawaroh et al., 2023; Sari et al., 2024; Martua & Pragiwani, 2025). Thus, it is posited that:

P3: Developmental opportunities positively impacts police officers' work performance

Performance Feedback and Work Performance

Performance feedback is the communication to employees regarding their compliance with behavioral expectations, achievement of goals, and effectiveness in completing task-related obligations in an organization (Gonzalez-Mulé et al., 2016). In the JD-R model, feedback is an important resource of information that articulates organizational goals, indicates performance deficits, and provides alternatives for behavioral self-regulation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In the context of policing, feedback based on case clearing rates, performance reviews, and evaluations of command personnel enables police officers to adjust their operational means and to operate within the confines of the law. Continuous feedback diminishes the sense of uncertainty and stimulates police officers to continuously maintain a high level of accuracy regarding task obligations, as well as a high level of discretionary supporting behaviors (Johnson et al., 2023). The relationship between feedback environments and performance has been well validated in the empirical literature (Choi et al., 2018; Favero et al., 2016; Guo et al., 2014; Su et al., 2019; Zheng et al., 2015). Therefore, it is proposed that:

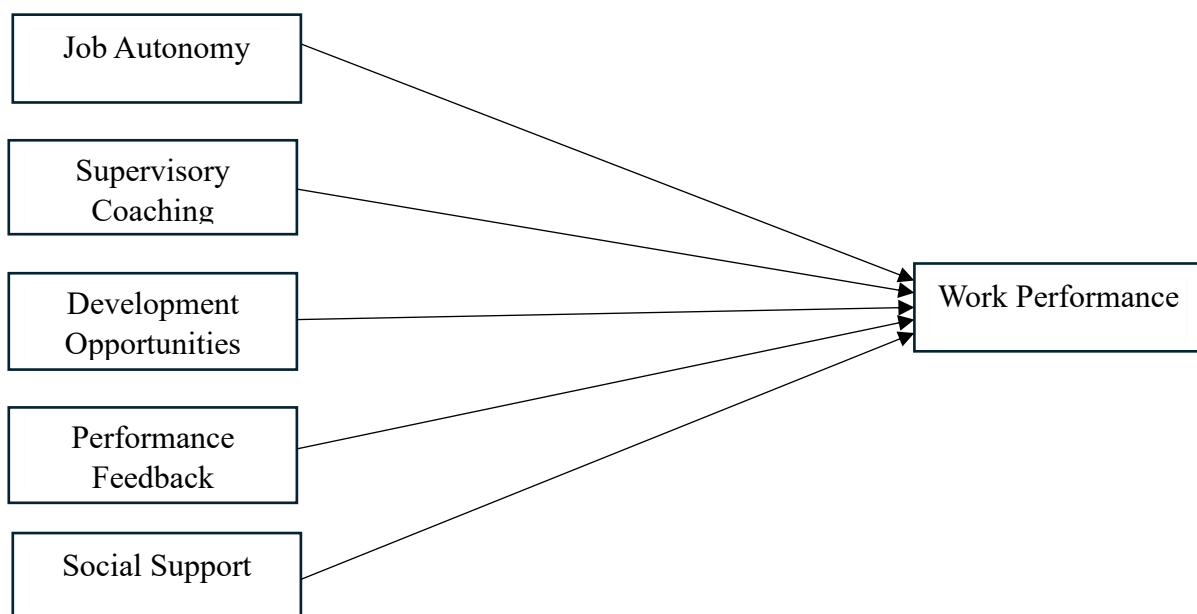
P4: Performance feedback positively impacts police officers' work performance

Social Support and Work Performance

Social support at work refers to assistance provided by managers and colleagues in the forms of emotional, informational and instrumental support (Maher et al., 2006). Within the JD-R model, social support in the workplace builds trust, cohesion, and a collective commitment to achieve the organizational goals (Bakker et al., 2023; Violanti et al., 2017). In law enforcement, interdependence means that the safety of an individual officer is dependent on the trustworthy behavior and the quality of leadership of their peers during dangerous encounters. An abundance of social support in police units builds psychological resilience and decreases operational stress while promoting helpful peer behaviors, informal training and skill sharing, and unit commitment (Hassan et al., 2024; Organ, 2018). Social support in the workplace has been consistently shown to be a strong predictor of superior performance (Gio et al., 2020; Vuong et al., 2023; Zhang & Qian, 2024), and therefore it is hypothesized that:

P5: Social support positively impacts police officers' work performance

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes the conceptual research methodology to build a new integrative conceptual model that describes the relationship between job resources and police work performance as depicted in Figure 1. As described by Snyder (2019), conceptual papers describe theoretical ideas without primary empirical research. Rather, they rely on the integration of existing theory and analysis of the literature. This integrative approach generates theories that can be empirically verified.

For this study, the methodology includes a comprehensive synthesis of the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2023). Following the conceptual development approach outlined by Jaakkola (2020), this study utilizes a conceptual design that includes delineation and summary. First, we reviewed published literature on law-enforcement-related stress, publications on public administration, and human resource management to identify the current conceptualization of organizational resources. Second, we specifically isolated and unbundled the following five job resources (job autonomy, supervisory coaching, development opportunities, performance feedback, and social support) from the broad resource frameworks to examine their mechanisms and theories. Finally, while theoretically conceptualized as task and contextual performance in work performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993), for this study, performance is treated as a unidimensional construct that represents total operational effectiveness in order to assess how the five job resources together contribute to overall officer output within policing. By combining these disparate literature strands, this conceptual methodology develops an integrative framework joining general theories of organizational behavior to the operational specifics of high-reliability law enforcement environments. The framework and propositions (P1-P5) developed herein represent an analysis roadmap intended to inform the design of subsequent examinations employing quantitative structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in the police domain.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this paper is to build an integrative theory illustrating how the JD-R model explains how five job resources (autonomy, supervisory coaching, opportunities for development, performance feedback, and social support) influence work performance in law enforcement. By treating work performance as a unidimensional construct, the proposed framework shows that some organizational resources are needed for police operational preparation and discretionary performance.

Theoretical propositions (P1-P5) are strongly aligned with the JD-R framework and job resources theories (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2023). More specifically, job resources fulfill the psychological needs of workers and enhance effort and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2023). Specifically, job autonomy is a key structural resource that provides frontline officers with liberty and discretion to make decisions in the field (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Given its structured operational limits, autonomy may provide psychological empowerment and enable officers to meet field requirements of problem-solving electronically and with the community in order for policing systems to deliver surging overall output (Vejaratnam et al., 2024). Second, supervisory coaching functions as an important avenue for the social and informational support offered within command instructions, guidance, and modeling (Aguilar, 2020). Constant coaching and debriefing after execution erases role ambiguity, reduces operational errors, and forces officers to act accordingly with procedures and KPIs. Third, opportunities for development, like formal training initiatives that articulate paths to advancement, also serve as a resource related to their effectiveness (Bakker et al., 2023). It prepares officers for the challenge of modern sophisticated crime, increasing both technical investigative efficiency and organisational buy-in in the long term (Khan et al., 2026). Fourth, performance feedback provides critical informational cues about goal attainment and adherence (Gonzalez-Mulé et al., 2016). Evaluative feedback reduces the uncertainty embedded in actual operations, allows officers to better regulate their behaviors, and forces them to stay on procedural task accuracy over time. Lastly, social support is the perception and actuality that one is cared for and has assistance available from others, which includes emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance provided by peers and supervisory personnel (Maher et al., 2006). For example, robust support networks increase psychological safe space, decrease operational stress, and enhance unit cohesion in high-risk law enforcement environments, leading to high operational performance.

This conceptual model differentiates five sub-dimensions of job resources instead of considering them as one higher-order dimension. As a result, this model captures the importance of different dimensions of resources in high-reliability public safety organizations. Also, this model addresses contextual gaps by showing that in a rigid, hierarchical, and command-and-control sub-system like policing, resources cannot support fulfillment of procedural obligation while discouraging citizenship behaviors.

Research Implications

The framework developed in this paper makes theoretical and practical contributions to the organizational behavior literature, and to the leadership of law enforcement agencies and public sector HR professionals.

From the perspective of the JD-R model (Bakker and Demerouti 2017; Bakker et al. 2023), this study presents the applicability of the model's motivational pathway within high-reliability, command-and-control, public safety environments. The health impairment pathway and its associated literature in law enforcement have focused primarily on stress and trauma, operational stress and burnout (Contreras & Novaco, 2026; Ricciardelli & Towns, 2026; Mohammed et al., 2026; Mojallal et al., 2026). This paper shifts the paradigm to positive organizational behavior and demonstrates that in the presence of inescapable job demands, the provision of structural and developmental job resources will stimulate work motivation and performance. Additionally, this paper resolves the construct disaggregation gap present in the broader organizational literature by explicitly disaggregating job resources into five separate sub-dimensions, offering a more refined theoretical model to explain the supports at work, and influencing officers' workplace behavior (Mazzetti et al. 2023). Finally, building on the multidimensional domain proposed by Borman and Motowidlo (1993), this framework moves forward work performance for policing, showing that a confluence of the five job resources converges to form one integrated, all-encompassing operational outcome measure, providing a robust understanding of total officer performance outputs in high-reliability contexts.

The proposed framework allows police commanders, directors, and human resource planners to utilize evidence when implementing strategies for resource allocation. Pertaining to those in command, more emphasis needs to be placed on open channels, two-way communication, positive informational feedback, and less reliance on the carrot-and-stick method of little to no tactical guidance with punishments. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in law enforcement are helpful and essential; however, police administrators must allow frontline officers operational latitude and autonomy within structured operational flexibility to increase operational adaptability and, to a greater extent, address latent problems of the community. In accordance with the previous statements, human resource departments of law enforcement agencies must continuously develop officers in specialized areas such as cybercrime investigation and crisis de-escalation, and create defined, merit-based career progression avenues to boost officer involvement. Last, law enforcement should implement social support systems, consisting of designated peer-support networks and psychological first aid, to address direct Operational Trauma. These systems should encourage a safety net and protective operational stress control in order to promote higher levels of organizational citizenship.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This paper presents a strong theoretical framework, but some critical limitations should be noted. First, this is a conceptual paper, and as a result, it proposes a framework using theory and literature synthesis, rather than developing a framework with empirical data. Thus, the job resources and work performance of police officers have not been substantively aligned in an empirical context. Second, the framework is heavily weighted toward the motivational aspect of job resources, and the potential mediating factors (e.g. work engagement, psychological empowerment, satisfaction) are not included. Lastly, law enforcement agencies are situated in different contexts in different regions of the world, and thus the propositions may have different levels of applicability due to the different structures of policing, demands of policing, and levels of governance.

To advance this model further, future researchers should attempt to verify the propositions through a quantitative cross-sectional or longitudinal research study. The population of interest will include working operational and administrative law enforcement officers within the criminal investigation, internal security, public order, and traffic enforcement divisions. As a means of increasing statistical power and participation, a stratified random



sample or a multi-stage cluster sampling technique could be used among the police districts. The constructs within the proposed model could be measured using validated multi-item measures adapted from existing literature. Job autonomy, supervisory coaching, development opportunities, performance feedback, and social support can be evaluated using existing general organizational measures, while work performance could be conceptualized as tasks and contextual performance. For the proposed framework, it is suggested that structural equation modeling be used, as it is well suited for testing multi-predictor models and the nature of public sector survey data. The empirical analysis could focus on evaluating the measurement model for reliability and validity and the structural model for the overall fitness of the model and the presence of robust relationships and predictors. This framework can be expanded through other empirical studies that include mediating or moderating factors as well as other concepts such as the organizational or team climate and leadership.

CONCLUSION

This paper provides a theoretically integrative framework for understanding how the JD-R model explains the role of five targeted workplace resources: autonomy, supervisory coaching, development opportunities, performance feedback, and social support, in shaping the work performance of law enforcement personnel. By emphasizing organizational resources and their role in motivating employees in high-reliability and public safety environments, this study moves the scholarly discourse beyond the effects of work stress and health impairment. The proposed framework i) offers commanding officers and human resource managers of law enforcement agencies a set of actionable strategies; and ii) provides a basis for policymakers to understand the value of investing in specific job resources in the domain of law enforcement.

Declarations

Artificial Intelligence (AI) usage

The authors declare that the use of the generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool Gemini was limited to grammatical improvement only. The AI deployment did not influence the scientific content, study design, data analysis, data interpretation, results, or conclusions of the manuscript. The authors are solely responsible for the content.

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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