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COPING STRATEGIES FOR STRESS-RELATED PROBLEMS UTILIZED BY POLICE OFFICERS IN THE 1ST QUEZON PROVINCIAL MOBILE FORCE COMPANY: BASIS FOR PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the coping strategies utilized by police officers in managing stress-related problems in the 1st Quezon Provincial Mobile Force Company. Specifically, it sought to determine the demographic profile of the respondents, identify the stress-related problems commonly experienced by police personnel, assess the coping strategies they utilize, determine the relationship between stress-related problems and coping strategies, and develop a proposed action plan based on the findings of the study.

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to personnel of the 1st Quezon Provincial Mobile Force Company. Statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and correlation analysis were used to analyze and interpret the data collected.

The findings revealed that police personnel frequently experience stress-related problems associated with their duties and responsibilities. Among the most commonly reported stressors were emotional exhaustion, workload pressure, discouragement in reporting for duty, and difficulty relaxing because of work-related demands. These findings indicate that occupational stress remains a significant concern among police personnel due to the nature of their profession and operational responsibilities.

The study further revealed that respondents utilized various coping strategies to manage stress. These strategies helped personnel deal with occupational pressures and maintain their performance in the workplace. Moreover, the results showed a weak but significant relationship between stress-related problems and coping strategies. This suggests that while coping strategies contribute to stress management, other factors such as organizational support, workload, leadership practices, and work environment also influence the level of stress experienced by police officers.

Based on the findings, a proposed action plan was developed focusing on stress management seminars, wellness programs, mentoring activities, counseling services, and support mechanisms designed to enhance the well-being and resilience of police personnel. The study recommends the continuous implementation of mental health and wellness programs, regular assessment of stress levels, and the strengthening of institutional support systems to promote a healthier and more productive work environment for police officers.

KEYWORDS: *Stress-Related Problems, Coping Strategies, Police Officers, Occupational Stress, Stress Management, 1st Quezon Provincial Mobile Force Company.*

INTRODUCTION

Police work is widely recognized as one of the most stressful professions due to its combination of physical danger, emotional tension, unpredictable schedules, and continuous public expectations. In the Philippines, police officers face additional pressures brought by understaffing, resource limitations, and the increasing complexity of security operations. Within the 1st Quezon Provincial Mobile Force Company (1st QPMFC), these demands are further intensified by frequent Internal Security Operations (ISO) with the Philippine Army, constant readiness for deployment across Districts I and II of Quezon Province, and recurring assignments to major provincial events and law enforcement activities. These operational realities contribute to a work environment where prolonged fatigue, emotional strain, and psychological exhaustion are common experiences among personnel.

Recent observations within the 1st QPMFC reveal that many officers experience stress levels that significantly affect their performance, attitude, and behavior. Manifestations include tendencies to go on absence without leave (AWOL), increased irritability and involvement in conflicts, emotional instability, reduced motivation, and a desire to transfer to other units in hopes of escaping overwhelming work demands. Some officers also struggle with financial strain, long working hours, frequent nighttime operations, and insufficient rest—all of which worsen stress-related outcomes. These issues do not only compromise individual well-being but also weaken the collective efficiency, morale, and operational readiness of the unit.

Despite the availability of standard support systems within the Philippine National Police, many personnel cope with stress on their own through varied strategies, some adaptive and others maladaptive. However, little is known about which coping strategies are commonly used by mobile force personnel and whether these strategies effectively address the stressors they face. Understanding these

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coping patterns is essential because effective coping mechanisms can enhance resilience, prevent burnout, and sustain officers' motivation to perform their duties. Conversely, ineffective strategies may lead to behavioral problems, ethical lapses, and declining performance.

Given these concerns, the study aims to examine the coping strategies utilized by police officers in the 1st QPMFC and identify how these strategies relate to the stress-related problems they encounter. By establishing a clear picture of what officers experience and how they cope, the research seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations that can guide the development of a practical, context-appropriate action plan. Ultimately, the goal is to help strengthen the well-being, job satisfaction, and operational effectiveness of the personnel, enabling them to perform their duties with sustained motivation and resilience.

Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which explains how individuals perceive stressors and apply coping strategies to manage their impact. In the context of the 1st Quezon Provincial Mobile Force Company, police officers encounter operational, administrative, and emotional stressors that challenge their well-being and work performance. The model posits that the effectiveness of coping strategies—whether problem-focused, emotion-focused, or avoidance-oriented—directly influences outcomes such as job satisfaction, resilience, motivation, and behavioral responses to stress.

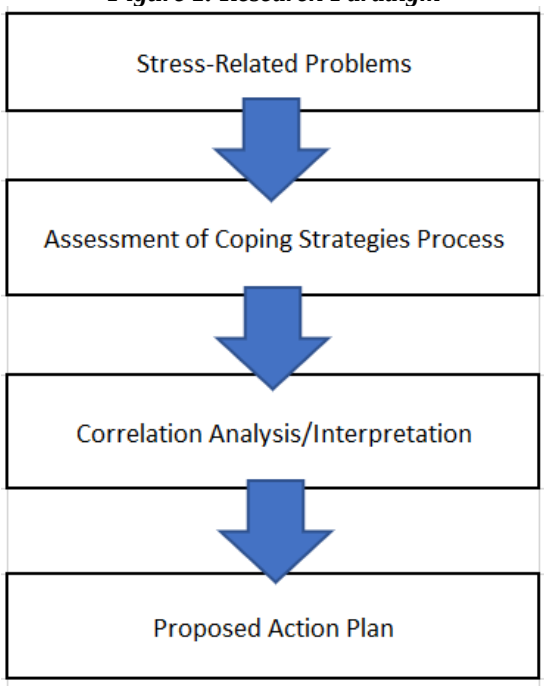
In this framework, stress-related problems are viewed as the independent variables, encompassing fatigue, burnout, emotional tension, absenteeism, interpersonal conflict, and decreased motivation. Coping strategies serve as the mediating variables, representing the mechanisms officers use to manage these stressors, including adaptive approaches like social support, time management, and relaxation techniques. The expected outcome is the development of a proposed action plan, which aims to enhance effective coping, reduce stress-related problems, and improve overall personnel well-being and organizational performance.

Statement of the Problem

This study seeks to examine the coping strategies utilized by police officers of the 1st Quezon Provincial Mobile Force Company in response to stress-related problems and to use these findings as the basis for a proposed action plan. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:

1. What stress-related problems are commonly experienced by the personnel of the 1st QPMFC?
2. What coping strategies do police officers employ to manage these stress-related problems?
3. Is there significant effect between the stress-related problems experienced and the coping strategies utilized by the officers?
4. Based on the findings, what action plan may be proposed to strengthen coping mechanisms and reduce stress-related problems among the personnel of the 1st QPMFC?

Figure 1. Research Paradigm



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METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive causal research design, which is appropriate for examining the relationship between stress-related problems and the coping strategies used by police officers without manipulating the variables. Descriptive-correlational research allows the investigator to describe existing conditions, identify patterns, and determine the strength and direction of relationships between variables in a natural setting (Creswell, 2014).

In this study, the descriptive component involves identifying and categorizing the stressors experienced by personnel of the 1st Quezon Provincial Mobile Force Company and documenting the types of coping strategies they employ. The component investigates whether a significant effect exists between the level of stress and the coping strategies applied, thereby providing a basis for recommending practical interventions to address stress-related problems.

This design was chosen because it enables the researcher to capture the real experiences of all personnel within the 1st QPMFC while maintaining the integrity of their natural work environment. It also allows for the use of standardized instruments and statistical analysis to ensure that findings are valid, reliable, and comparable to similar studies in law enforcement and occupational health (Polit & Beck, 2017). Furthermore, the design is suitable for total enumeration, as all 139 personnel of the unit will participate, providing a comprehensive view of stress and coping patterns within the organization.

By employing a descriptive-correlational approach, the study aims to produce actionable and evidence-based insights that can directly inform the development of a proposed action plan for enhancing the well-being, resilience, and job performance of police officers in the 1st QPMFC.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study aimed to determine the stress-related problems commonly experienced by police personnel in the 1st Quezon Provincial Mobile Force Company (QPMFC), identify the coping strategies they utilize in managing stress, and examine whether stress-related problems significantly affect the coping mechanisms employed by the officers.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents according to the Length of Service and Rank

	Length_of_Service				
Rank	11–15 yrs	16 yrs & above	6–10 yrs	Below 5 yrs	Total
Patrolman	0	0	0	21	21
Patrolwoman	0	0	0	25	25
Police Captain	0	1	0	0	1
Police Chief Master Sergeant	0	16	0	0	16
Police Corporal	0	0	26	0	26
Police Executive Master Sergeant	0	2	0	0	2
Police Lieutenant	0	2	0	1	3
Police Lieutenant Colonel	0	1	0	0	1
Police Major	1	0	0	0	1
Police Master Sergeant	8	0	0	0	8
Police Senior Master Sergeant	13	0	0	0	13
Police Staff Sergeant	22	0	0	0	22
Total	44	22	26	47	139

Note. Each cell displays the observed counts

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents in terms of rank and length of service in the 1st Quezon Provincial Mobile Force Company (QPMFC), involving a total of 139 police personnel. The results show that most respondents belong to lower to middle operational ranks, particularly Patrolwoman, Police Corporal, and Police Staff Sergeant. This indicates that the study largely captured the perspectives of personnel who are directly engaged in field operations and frontline policing duties. These roles are typically associated with high exposure to public interaction, operational demands, and situational stress, making them highly relevant respondents for examining work-related stress and coping mechanisms within the police organization.

In terms of length of service, the findings reveal that the largest group of respondents are those with below five years of service, followed by those with 11–15 years, 6–10 years, and 16 years and above. The dominance of personnel with shorter years of service suggests that a significant portion of the workforce is relatively new in the organization. These individuals are likely still in the process of adjusting to the demands, discipline, and expectations of police work. As such, they may be more susceptible to stress due to limited experience, exposure to high-pressure situations, and continuous adaptation to organizational routines and operational responsibilities.

The results further demonstrate a clear relationship between rank and length of service. Entry-level positions such as Patrolman and Patrolwoman are mostly composed of personnel with below five years of service, indicating that newly recruited officers typically start at the lowest ranks. On the other hand, higher-ranking positions such as Police Chief Master Sergeant, Police Executive Master

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Sergeant, and Police Lieutenant Colonel are primarily occupied by individuals with 16 years and above of service. This pattern reflects the structured and experience-based promotion system within the police organization, where advancement is largely dependent on tenure, performance, and accumulated service experience.

Additionally, mid-level ranks such as Police Staff Sergeants and Police Senior Master Sergeants are predominantly represented by officers with 11–15 years of service. This suggests that these personnel have already gained substantial field experience and may now be balancing both operational duties and administrative responsibilities. As a result, their stress experiences may differ from those of both junior and senior officers, as they are positioned between frontline enforcement and leadership functions. This distribution highlights how stress levels and coping strategies may vary depending on rank and years of service, as different positions involve different levels of responsibility and workload.

In terms of impact, the findings imply that the composition of personnel in QPMFC is heavily weighted toward operational-level and relatively less experienced officers, who are more likely to encounter high levels of job-related stress. This highlights the need for targeted interventions such as stress management programs, mentoring systems, and continuous training to support younger and lower-ranking personnel. Strengthening support mechanisms for these groups may improve their resilience, job performance, and overall well-being, ultimately contributing to more effective and sustainable police service delivery.

Table 2. Stress-related problems commonly experienced by the personnel of the 1st QPMFC.

Item Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. Felt unable to control important aspects of your police work	2.81	0.9446	Often
2. Felt confident about handling your work responsibilities (reverse-coded)	2.82	0.9799	Often
3. Felt stressed because of unexpected work demands or deployment	2.71	0.9872	Often
4. Felt that your workload was overwhelming	2.78	0.8745	Often
5. Felt difficulties piling up beyond your control	2.87	0.8667	Often
6. Felt emotionally drained after duty	2.88	0.8719	Often
7. Felt irritated or short-tempered due to work pressure	2.76	0.9599	Often
8. Felt unable to relax because of police responsibilities	2.86	0.8728	Often
9. Felt that work affected your personal or family life	2.78	0.9406	Often
10. Felt discouraged or unmotivated to report for duty	2.98	0.8637	Often
Mean	2.83	0.9162	High

Legend: (4) 3.50-4.00 Very High/Very Often; (3) 2.50-3.49 High/ Often; (2) 1.50-2.49 Low/Sometimes; (1) 1.00-1.49 Very Low/Never

Table 2 presents the stress-related problems commonly experienced by police personnel in the 1st QPMFC, showing an overall mean interpreted as “High” or “Often.” This indicates that stress is a frequent and recurring experience among respondents, reflecting the highly demanding nature of police work. The findings suggest that officers are regularly exposed to situations involving pressure, responsibility, and risk, which collectively contribute to elevated stress levels in the performance of their duties. This overall result highlights that occupational stress is not an occasional occurrence but a persistent condition within the police environment.

Among the specific indicators, the most prominent concern is the feeling of being discouraged or unmotivated to report for duty, which obtained the highest mean and was interpreted as “Often.” This suggests that many personnel experience reduced morale and emotional exhaustion, which may be indicative of early burnout. Closely related to this are feelings of emotional fatigue after duty and difficulties that seem to pile up beyond their control, both of which further reflect psychological strain. These experiences point to the continuous mental and emotional pressure faced by officers as they deal with demanding and often unpredictable law enforcement responsibilities.

The results also reveal that respondents frequently feel unable to relax due to police responsibilities and overwhelmed by workload demands. These findings imply that the effects of police work extend beyond duty hours, affecting the officers’ ability to recover mentally and emotionally. Additionally, feelings of lack of control over important aspects of work suggest that operational challenges and unpredictable assignments contribute to heightened stress levels. Such conditions are typical in policing environments where officers must respond to emergencies, enforce public safety, and adapt to rapidly changing situations.

Furthermore, the findings show that work-related stress significantly affects the personal and family lives of police personnel. Irregular schedules, extended duties, and deployment requirements often limit time spent with family, leading to work-life imbalance. Respondents also reported irritability and emotional strain due to job pressure, emphasizing the emotional toll of constant exposure to stressful conditions. Although all indicators were interpreted as “Often,” the relatively close mean scores suggest that stress is consistently experienced across multiple dimensions of police work, confirming its multidimensional nature within the organization.

In terms of impact, the findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive stress management and wellness programs within the 1st QPMFC. Strengthening psychological support services, implementing counseling programs, and promoting work-life balance

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initiatives may help reduce emotional exhaustion and improve officers' mental well-being. Addressing these stress-related concerns is essential not only for enhancing the health and resilience of police personnel but also for improving job performance, operational effectiveness, and overall quality of public service in law enforcement.

Table 3. Coping strategies police officers employ to manage their stress-related problems.

Item Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
A. Problem-Focused Coping	2.56	1.006	
I try to find ways to solve work-related problems	2.63	0.9801	I do this a lot
I plan my tasks to better manage work stress	2.62	0.9735	I do this a lot
I take action to improve stressful work situations	2.45	1.0644	I do this a lot
B. Emotion-Focused Coping	2.69	0.9661	
I talk to colleagues or friends about my stress	2.63	0.9801	I do this a lot
I seek emotional support from family or trusted people	2.79	0.9362	I do this a lot
I pray, meditate, or rely on spiritual beliefs	2.53	1.0165	I do this a lot
I try to stay positive despite work difficulties	2.81	0.9316	I do this a lot
C. Avoidance / Maladaptive Coping	2.65	1.0252	
I avoid thinking about stressful police duties	2.64	1.0286	I do this a lot
I isolate myself when stressed	2.66	0.9597	I do this a lot
I engage in unhealthy habits to escape stress	2.66	1.0872	I do this a lot
Overall Mean	2.83	0.9162	High

Legend: (4) 3.50-4.00 Very High/I dos this most of the time; (3) 2.50-3.49 High/ I do this a lot (2) 1.50-2.49 Low/I do this a little; (1) 1.00-1.49 Very Low/I don't do this at all

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of rank and length of service within the 1st Quezon Provincial Mobile Force Company (QPMFC), involving a total of 139 police personnel. The distribution of respondents indicates that most participants belong to the lower and mid-level operational ranks such as Patrolwoman, Police Corporal, and Police Staff Sergeant. This suggests that the study primarily reflects the perspectives of personnel who are actively engaged in field operations, law enforcement duties, and direct public service responsibilities. These positions are typically characterized by high workload demands, exposure to unpredictable situations, and operational stressors, making them highly relevant to a study focusing on stress experiences and coping mechanisms.

In terms of length of service, the data reveal that a substantial portion of respondents are relatively new in the police organization, particularly those with less than five years of service. This indicates that the workforce is largely composed of younger or newly recruited personnel who are still undergoing adjustment to the demands and structure of police work. At this stage, officers are often in the process of developing professional competence, adapting to organizational culture, and gaining field experience, which may increase their vulnerability to stress due to unfamiliarity with complex operational situations and performance expectations.

The results also show a clear relationship between rank and years of service, reflecting the structured and hierarchical nature of the police organization. Entry-level ranks are predominantly occupied by personnel with shorter service duration, while higher-ranking positions are held by officers with longer years of experience. This pattern suggests that career advancement within the organization is closely tied to tenure and accumulated experience. Mid-level officers, who typically fall within the intermediate years of service, likely occupy roles that require both administrative responsibilities and field supervision, placing them in a dual-pressure environment that may influence their stress levels differently from junior or senior personnel.

Furthermore, the distribution implies that mid-ranking officers have already gained significant exposure to operational duties while also being assigned leadership functions. This combination of responsibilities may result in unique stress experiences, as they are expected to balance supervisory roles with direct operational involvement. Meanwhile, junior officers may face stress primarily due to adaptation and field exposure, while senior officers may experience stress related to administrative decision-making and leadership accountability. This demonstrates that stress experiences within the organization may vary depending on rank and length of service.

Overall, the profile of respondents has important implications for understanding the nature of stress within the 1st QPMFC. Since the majority of respondents are operational-level personnel with relatively limited to moderate years of service, the findings of the study are likely reflective of the experiences of front-line officers who are most exposed to direct policing demands. This composition highlights the need for targeted interventions such as stress management training, mentoring programs, and psychological support systems, particularly for younger officers. Strengthening support mechanisms across ranks and service levels can help improve resilience, enhance job performance, and promote long-term well-being within the police organization.

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Table 4. Significant effect between the stress-related problems experienced and the coping strategies utilized by the officers

Linear Regression

Model Summary - Coping mechanism

Model Summary - Coping mechanism										
Model	**R**	**R^2**	**Adjusted R^2**	**RMSE**	**R^2 Change**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**	**Decision**	**Interpenetration**
M_0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.308	0.000	0	137			
M_1	0.074	0.005	-0.002	0.309	0.005	1	136	.391	Do not reject H_o	Not significant

Note. M_1 includes Stress-related

Table 4 presents the regression analysis examining the significant effect of stress-related problems on the coping strategies utilized by police officers in the 1st QPMFC. The model summary shows that the relationship between stress-related problems and coping mechanisms is extremely weak, as indicated by a very low correlation coefficient (R = 0.074). This suggests that stress-related problems have only a minimal association with the coping strategies employed by the respondents. The result implies that although stress is present among officers, it does not strongly determine or predict the type or intensity of coping strategies they use.

In terms of explanatory power, the coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.005) indicates that only a very small portion of the variation in coping strategies can be explained by stress-related problems. The adjusted R^2 further drops to a negative value, which suggests that the model does not improve prediction compared to a simple mean-based model. This finding reinforces the idea that stress-related problems, as measured in the study, are not strong predictors of coping behavior among police personnel. It also implies that other unmeasured variables may play a more important role in influencing how officers cope with stress.

The overall regression model yielded a non-significant p-value of 0.391, which is higher than the 0.05 level of significance. This means that the relationship between stress-related problems and coping strategies is statistically insignificant, leading to the decision to fail to reject the null hypothesis. In practical terms, this suggests that variations in stress levels among officers do not significantly influence their choice of coping strategies. Regardless of the intensity of stress experienced, officers tend to use coping mechanisms in a relatively consistent manner.

Overall, the findings imply that coping strategies among police officers in the 1st QPMFC may not be directly driven by the level of stress-related problems they experience. Instead, coping behaviors may be influenced by other factors such as personality traits, training, organizational culture, peer support systems, or prior experience in handling stressful situations. The weak and non-significant relationship highlights the complexity of coping mechanisms, suggesting that stress alone is not sufficient to explain how officers manage occupational pressures. This underscores the need for further studies to explore additional psychological and organizational variables that may better predict coping strategies among law enforcement personnel.

ANOVA								
Model		**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**p**	**Decision**	**Interpenetration**
M_1	Regression	0.070	1	0.070	0.740	.391	Do not reject H_o	Not significant
	Residual	12.95	136	0.095				
	Total	13.02	137					
Note. M_1 includes Stress-related								

Note. The intercept model is omitted, as no meaningful information can be shown.

Table 4 (ANOVA results) presents the overall significance of the regression model examining whether stress-related problems significantly influence the coping strategies of police officers. The results show that the regression sum of squares (0.070) is very small compared to the residual sum of squares (12.95), indicating that only a minimal portion of the variation in coping strategies is explained by stress-related problems. The total variation in coping mechanisms remains largely unexplained by the model, suggesting that stress-related problems contribute very little to predicting coping behavior among respondents.

In terms of mean square values, the regression mean square (0.070) compared to the residual mean square (0.095) results in an F-value of 0.740. This low F-statistic indicates that the explanatory power of the model is weak and insufficient to account for meaningful differences in coping strategies based on stress levels. The closeness of the regression and residual mean squares further reinforces that the independent variable does not significantly improve the prediction of the dependent variable.

The significance value (p = 0.391) confirms that the model is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This means that the observed relationship between stress-related problems and coping strategies could have occurred by chance. As a result, the null hypothesis is not rejected, indicating that there is no significant effect of stress-related problems on coping strategies among police officers in the study. This finding aligns with the earlier regression coefficient results, which also showed a weak and non-significant relationship.

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Overall, the ANOVA results strengthen the conclusion that stress-related problems do not significantly influence how police officers choose and apply coping strategies. Despite experiencing varying levels of stress, officers appear to adopt coping mechanisms that are not directly dependent on stress intensity alone. This suggests that coping behavior is likely shaped by other psychological, social, or organizational factors rather than stress level alone. The implication of this finding is that interventions aimed at improving coping strategies should focus not only on stress reduction but also on strengthening adaptive coping skills, resilience training, and organizational support systems.

Coefficients						
Unstandardized	**Standard Error**	**Standardized**	**t**	**p**	**Decision**	**Interpenetration**
2.644	0.026		100.8	< .001		
2.887	0.284		10.18	< .001		
-0.086	0.100	-0.074	-0.860	.391	Do not reject H_o	Not significant

Table 4 (Coefficients) presents the detailed regression results showing the effect of stress-related problems on the coping strategies of police officers in the 1st QPMFC. The intercept value of Model 1 (B = 2.887, p < .001) indicates the expected level of coping strategies when stress-related problems are held constant. This suggests that, in general, officers already exhibit a baseline level of coping behavior regardless of the presence or absence of stress-related problems, reflecting an inherent tendency to manage work-related pressures.

In terms of the predictor variable, stress-related problems obtained a negative unstandardized coefficient (B = -0.086) and a standardized beta value of -0.074. This indicates a very weak inverse relationship between stress-related problems and coping strategies, meaning that as stress increases, coping strategies slightly decrease; however, this relationship is extremely minimal. The t-value of -0.860 further supports this weak effect, showing that the predictor does not meaningfully contribute to explaining variations in coping behavior among the respondents.

The significance value (p = 0.391) confirms that the relationship between stress-related problems and coping strategies is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This leads to the decision to fail to reject the null hypothesis, meaning that stress-related problems do not significantly influence the coping strategies of police officers. The results indicate that even though stress is present, it does not have a measurable or reliable effect on how officers choose to cope with it.

Overall, the findings suggest that coping strategies among police officers are not directly determined by the level of stress they experience. The weak negative relationship implies that other factors beyond stress-related problems may play a more dominant role in shaping coping mechanisms, such as personality traits, training, peer support, or organizational culture. This highlights the complexity of coping behavior and suggests that interventions should not only focus on reducing stress but also on strengthening adaptive coping skills and institutional support systems to enhance officers' psychological resilience.

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AI Declaration

The researchers used Grammarly Pro as an AI-assisted language editing tool during the preparation of this manuscript. Its use was limited to correcting grammatical errors, improving sentence structures, and enhancing readability. The conceptualization of the study, data collection, interpretation of findings, and writing of the substantive content were performed by the researchers. All AI-generated suggestions were critically reviewed before incorporation into the final document.