



EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF POLICE OFFICERS ON WORK MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION IN THE HEADQUARTERS SUPPORT SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

Motivation in police service is not sustained by commitment alone; it is continually shaped by the organizational realities officers encounter in their daily work. This study explored the lived experiences of police officers assigned to the Headquarters Support Service in relation to work motivation and job satisfaction. It examined situations that strengthened or weakened motivation, factors influencing the performance of duties, the meanings officers assigned to job satisfaction, workplace challenges, and coping strategies. A qualitative descriptive phenomenological design was employed with 20 sworn police officers selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through one-on-one semi-structured interviews conducted according to participant preference and analyzed through a phenomenologically oriented thematic process. The findings indicated that motivation and job satisfaction were strengthened when officers experienced meaningful service and accomplishment, recognition, supportive relationships, clear guidance, fair supervision, adequate resources, manageable demands, professional growth, and belonging. Conversely, heavy or repetitive workload, unclear tasking, poor communication, inadequate resources, insufficient recognition, perceived unfairness, negative workplace relationships, and emotional strain weakened motivation and fulfillment. Participants understood job satisfaction as a developing sense of fulfillment associated with accomplishment, service, recognition, respectful relationships, growth, stability, and well-being. Coping involved emotional self-regulation, positive reframing, practical task management, help-seeking, faith and family support, collegial support, rest and recovery, physical activity, hobbies, and renewed connection to professional identity and service purpose. Taken together, the findings show that motivation and job satisfaction were context-sensitive experiences produced through the interaction of personal commitment and organizational conditions. The study recommends strengthening task clarity, communication, recognition, fair supervision, workload and resource management, teamwork, personnel well-being, and professional development within the Headquarters Support Service.

KEYWORDS: Police Officers, Work Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Lived Experiences, Organizational Support

INTRODUCTION

Police organizations depend not only on formal procedures, equipment, and command structures but also on the sustained motivation and job satisfaction of personnel who carry out everyday responsibilities. In headquarters support environments, officers perform administrative, logistical, coordination, security, and other enabling functions that allow the broader police organization to operate. Although these duties may receive less public attention than frontline operations, the quality, continuity, and responsiveness of support work can affect how effectively organizational responsibilities are carried out. For the officers who perform these functions, motivation and satisfaction are therefore shaped by the daily relationship between what the job requires and the conditions under which it is performed.

Work motivation is not a single or purely individual condition. It may arise from the perceived meaningfulness of work, opportunities for achievement, recognition, competence, responsibility, supportive relationships, and other features of the work environment. Herzberg's two-factor perspective distinguishes motivating conditions, such as achievement,

recognition, responsibility, and growth, from hygiene conditions associated with dissatisfaction, including supervision, working conditions, organizational policies, and other contextual factors (Herzberg, 1966). Self-Determination Theory likewise emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as psychological needs relevant to internalized motivation and positive functioning (Deci et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2000). These perspectives suggest that officers may remain motivated when they can see purpose in their duties, experience competence and accomplishment, and work in an environment that supports rather than obstructs effective performance.

Job satisfaction is similarly multidimensional. It may involve positive evaluations of the work itself, relationships with supervisors and colleagues, recognition, career development, stability, and the ability to experience a sense of accomplishment. Job Characteristics Theory proposes that skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback can strengthen meaningfulness, responsibility, and knowledge of results (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). In police organizations, these dimensions intersect with public service motivation because



personnel may derive meaning from contributing to public safety and institutional service. Research on public service motivation indicates that prosocial purpose can coexist with organizational and extrinsic considerations, making the quality of the work context important to sustained engagement (Ritz et al., 2016).

At the same time, police work involves occupational and organizational stressors. Heavy workload, administrative demands, role ambiguity, limited resources, interpersonal conflict, and insufficient organizational support can contribute to stress and reduced well-being. Reviews of police occupational health literature have documented the relationship between chronic occupational stressors and adverse well-being outcomes (Purba & Demou, 2019; Violanti et al., 2017). The Job Demands-Resources framework provides a useful explanation: demanding aspects of work may consume physical and psychological resources, whereas job resources such as supportive supervision, clear procedures, adequate equipment, and collegial support can facilitate engagement and help buffer demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017). Thus, understanding motivation and satisfaction requires attention to both individual commitment and organizational conditions.

Organizational justice and procedural fairness are particularly relevant in police settings. Officers work within hierarchical structures in which decisions about tasking, supervision, recognition, opportunities, and resource allocation may influence how personnel interpret their workplace. Research on organizational support and justice has linked supportive and fair organizational conditions with stronger work engagement among police officers (Piotrowski et al., 2021). Procedural justice scholarship further emphasizes the importance of fair processes and respectful treatment in organizational and policing contexts (Tyler, 2015). These perspectives indicate that motivation may be sustained not simply by the content of a task but also by how personnel experience the organizational processes surrounding that task.

Literature Review

International literature provides substantial evidence on the organizational and psychological conditions associated with police motivation, satisfaction, and well-being. Piotrowski et al. (2021) reported that perceived organizational support and organizational justice are relevant to police work engagement. Similarly, research on police duties has connected public service motivation with job satisfaction, indicating that service-oriented motives can contribute to positive work experiences when organizational conditions support them (Prysmakova & Vandenabeele, 2020). Studies of police well-being also show that occupational stress is influenced by organizational and individual factors rather than by operational danger alone (Phythian et al., 2023; Violanti et al., 2017). Research on coping has identified emotional regulation, social support, and other personal resources as ways officers manage stress and sustain functioning (Queirós et al., 2020; Singo & Shilubane, 2022).

Philippine research reflected in the source thesis likewise points to organizational support, leadership, recognition, occupational stress, and police job satisfaction as important

concerns. These studies indicate that motivation and satisfaction cannot be understood solely through individual characteristics because police officers work within formal command structures, policies, resource constraints, and occupational cultures.

Despite this body of literature, the source thesis identified a more specific empirical gap: headquarters support environments remain less visible in qualitative research than frontline or station-level policing. Quantitative and correlational studies can identify associations among organizational support, stress, engagement, and satisfaction, but they do not fully capture how officers themselves interpret meaningful work, recognition, fairness, ambiguity, workload, relationships, and coping in the course of daily support-service duties. A phenomenological approach is therefore appropriate because it centers first-person accounts and examines how experiences are understood and given meaning by those who live them.

The present study addresses this gap by examining the lived experiences of sworn police officers assigned to the Headquarters Support Service. Rather than treating motivation and job satisfaction as fixed individual traits or single measurable outcomes, the study considers them as context-sensitive experiences shaped through interaction with work demands, organizational resources, relationships, recognition, professional purpose, and coping.

Within the Headquarters Support Service, these issues take on a distinctive organizational character. Support-service officers operate within a police institution whose effectiveness depends on coordination among personnel, timely completion of assigned tasks, adherence to directives, and the availability of operational resources. At the same time, support work may involve routine, repetitive, or administrative responsibilities that are not always accompanied by immediate public recognition. The source thesis indicates that participants nevertheless attached meaning to these duties when they could see the contribution of their work, receive acknowledgment, exercise competence, and experience positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors. This makes the headquarters context analytically important: the absence of frontline visibility does not necessarily imply the absence of professional purpose, while routine work does not necessarily produce dissatisfaction. Instead, the meaning of work appears to depend on how officers interpret their contribution and how organizational conditions enable them to perform it.

The source thesis also demonstrates why a phenomenological treatment is useful for this problem. Participants did not describe motivation and satisfaction as stable levels that could be inferred from rank, position, or length of service alone. Instead, their accounts changed according to situations: a promotion, successful completion of a task, appreciation from others, supportive supervision, or the opportunity to use professional skills could produce a strong sense of motivation, whereas unclear communication, heavy workload, inadequate resources, conflict, or perceived unfairness could weaken that experience. Similarly, satisfaction was described as something that developed through accumulated experience. Officers learned from routine duties, adapted to changing responsibilities, built confidence, and gradually



reinterpreted what a satisfying career meant. Capturing these shifts is important because organizational interventions based only on generalized measures may overlook the meanings that personnel attach to particular events and relationships. The present study therefore contributes an experience-centered account of how support-service police officers negotiate professional purpose, organizational demands, recognition, relationships, and coping in their everyday work.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The study was informed by complementary perspectives on work motivation, job satisfaction, organizational conditions, and occupational stress. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides a distinction between motivating factors—achievement, recognition, responsibility, and growth—and contextual or hygiene factors that may contribute to dissatisfaction when inadequate (Herzberg, 1966). Self-Determination Theory emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as conditions supporting internalized motivation (Deci et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Job Characteristics Theory explains how the design of work can generate meaningfulness, responsibility, and knowledge of results (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The Job Demands-Resources framework adds an organizational lens by distinguishing work demands from resources that facilitate engagement and help workers manage strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017). Organizational justice and procedural justice perspectives further illuminate the effects of fairness, respectful treatment, and organizational processes on work attitudes (Piotrowski et al., 2021; Tyler, 2015). Finally, public service motivation provides a basis for understanding how service purpose and prosocial commitment may sustain engagement even when organizational conditions are difficult (Ritz et al., 2016; Prysmakova & Vandenabeele, 2020).

Significance of the Study

This study is relevant to police management because it identifies workplace conditions that officers themselves associate with stronger or weaker motivation and satisfaction. For Headquarters Support Service administrators and supervisors, the findings provide an experience-based basis for examining task clarity, communication, recognition, supervision, workload, resources, teamwork, and personnel support. For police personnel, the study gives visibility to the meaning they attach to support-service work and to the coping resources they use when organizational demands are difficult. For the Philippine National Police and related policy and welfare units, the findings may inform programs concerning morale, personnel welfare, leadership development, and organizational support, subject to existing policies and operational requirements. For criminology and criminal justice scholarship, the study contributes qualitative evidence from a headquarters support context that is less frequently examined through first-person phenomenological inquiry.

Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the lived experiences of police officers regarding work motivation and job satisfaction in the Headquarters Support Service.
- To identify the factors that influence police officers' motivation in performing their duties.
- To examine the personal meanings that police officers assign to job satisfaction.
- To explore the challenges that affect police officers' motivation and sense of job fulfillment.
- To determine the coping strategies used by police officers to maintain motivation and a sense of fulfillment.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative descriptive phenomenological design to examine the lived experiences of sworn police officers assigned to the Headquarters Support Service in relation to work motivation and job satisfaction. The design was appropriate to the research questions because the study focused on how participants experienced, interpreted, and assigned meaning to their workplace conditions. It examined situations that strengthened or weakened motivation, factors affecting the performance of duties, perceptions of job satisfaction, workplace challenges, and coping practices. Individual accounts were examined to identify common patterns and meanings across participants while retaining the context of their experiences.

Research Method

The study used individual semi-structured interviews as its primary qualitative research method. The interviews provided a consistent set of questions corresponding to the five statements of the problem while allowing participants to elaborate on experiences and issues that emerged during the interviews. Probing and follow-up questions were used to clarify responses and obtain detailed descriptions of participants' experiences, perceptions, and coping practices.

The interview data were subjected to a phenomenologically oriented thematic analysis. Individual accounts were examined for significant statements and meaningful units, which were coded, compared, and clustered into categories and themes. The resulting themes were synthesized to describe the shared meanings associated with work motivation and job satisfaction among the participating police officers.

Population of the Study

The participants consisted of 20 sworn police officers assigned to the Headquarters Support Service who met the established inclusion criteria. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who had direct experience within the organizational setting and could provide relevant accounts concerning work motivation and job satisfaction.

Participation was voluntary, and only personnel who satisfied the study criteria and agreed to participate were included. Participant selection was based on the relevance of their



experience to the research questions. Because the study involved a specific organizational setting and a purposively selected qualitative sample, the findings were treated as context-bound and were not intended for statistical generalization to all police officers or all units of the Philippine National Police.

Data Gathering Tools

The primary data-gathering tool was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide organized according to the five statements of the problem. The guide contained primary and probing questions addressing situations associated with high or low work motivation, factors influencing motivation and performance, meanings assigned to job satisfaction, workplace challenges, relationships with supervisors and colleagues, and coping strategies.

The interview guide was reviewed and validated by designated academic and professional validators in February 2026, as documented in the source thesis through the instrument validation certification. The semi-structured format ensured consistency in addressing the research questions while allowing participants to provide detailed accounts and permitting the researcher to pursue relevant responses through follow-up questions.

Data Gathering Procedures

Prior to data collection, the researcher secured the necessary institutional approval and permission from the concerned Headquarters Support Service authority. Formal correspondence with the Graduate School and the Director of the Headquarters Support Service was undertaken as part of the research process.

Eligible participants were informed about the purpose and scope of the study, the nature of their participation, confidentiality measures, and their right to decline or withdraw. Individual interviews were conducted in private settings to protect confidentiality and minimize disruption to official duties. Interviews were conducted in English or Filipino, according to participant preference. With informed consent, the interviews were audio-recorded to facilitate accurate transcription. The recorded interviews were subsequently transcribed, reviewed, and organized for qualitative analysis.

Treatment of Data

The interview data were analyzed using a phenomenologically oriented thematic process. The transcripts were repeatedly reviewed to establish familiarity with the participants' accounts and to identify significant statements relevant to the research questions. Meaningful units were identified and assigned initial codes. The codes were then examined for similarities and differences and clustered into related categories.

The categories were consolidated into broader themes corresponding to the five statements of the problem: lived experiences of motivation and satisfaction, factors influencing

motivation and performance, meanings of job satisfaction, workplace challenges, and coping strategies. The common meanings expressed across the 20 participants were synthesized into thematic descriptions and integrated statements of meaning. Participant-level evidence was retained throughout the analysis to ensure that the themes remained grounded in the interview accounts. The emerging interpretations were examined in relation to relevant theoretical and empirical perspectives, including Self-Determination Theory, Job Demands-Resources Theory, organizational justice, occupational stress research, and public service motivation. No statistical treatment was applied because the study generated qualitative data.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical safeguards were observed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained before participation and audio recording. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw without organizational consequence. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by replacing participant names with codes such as P1 to P20 in the presentation of findings.

Because the study involved police personnel and an operationally sensitive organizational setting, specific office names and sensitive operational details were excluded when necessary to protect participants and organizational confidentiality. Interviews were conducted privately, and participants were not required to disclose information beyond the scope of the research. Data were handled solely for research purposes.

Participants were selected using research-relevant and non-discriminatory criteria based on their assignment to the Headquarters Support Service, compliance with the established inclusion criteria, and capacity to provide relevant experiences. The findings were intended for dissemination through the completed research manuscript and appropriate academic channels for the benefit of police administrators, supervisors, police personnel, criminology researchers, and other stakeholders concerned with police motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational well-being. Confidentiality and participant anonymity were to be maintained in all forms of dissemination.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented according to the five research objectives. Across the accounts of the 20 participants, motivation and job satisfaction emerged as relational and context-sensitive experiences. Officers described stronger motivation when their work was meaningful, achievable, recognized, and supported by clear guidance and positive relationships. Motivation and satisfaction became more difficult to sustain when organizational demands were accompanied by ambiguity, inadequate resources, poor communication, unfairness, weak recognition, or negative relationships.



Table 1.

Summary of Research Objectives, Core Findings, and Integrated Themes

Research Objective	Core Finding	Integrated Theme
Lived experiences	Meaningful service, accomplishment, recognition, competence, and supportive relationships strengthened motivation and satisfaction.	Purpose and Achievement in Service
Influencing factors	Purpose, recognition, clear guidance, supportive leadership, teamwork, fairness, resources, balance, and growth strengthened motivation.	Organizational Conditions Supporting Motivation
Meaning of satisfaction	Satisfaction developed through accomplishment, service, recognition, relationships, growth, stability, and well-being.	Growth, Meaningful Accomplishment, and Positive Relationships
Challenges	Workload, ambiguity, resource limitations, weak communication, unfairness, poor relationships, and emotional strain reduced fulfillment.	Emotional and Professional Strain
Coping Strategies	Officers used self-regulation, practical management, social and spiritual support, recovery, and professional purpose.	Preserving Balance, Support, Recovery, and Professional Identity

Lived Experiences on Work Motivation and Job Satisfaction

Participants' accounts showed that motivation was closely associated with the experience of doing useful work and seeing its results. Officers described rendering service to clients, assisting personnel and tenants, responding to assigned tasks, receiving promotion, being trusted with responsibilities, and completing work successfully as experiences that generated motivation. One participant explained that being trusted and having the opportunity to demonstrate planning skills were strong motivators, particularly when the work was completed ahead of schedule and recognized by leadership. Another participant described feeling motivated when support services contributed to the safety, convenience, and well-being of people being assisted. These accounts suggest that motivation was not merely an internal feeling; it was connected to visible accomplishment and the perceived value of service.

This pattern is consistent with Self-Determination Theory, particularly the need for competence and relatedness (Deci et al., 2017). Officers appeared more motivated when they could demonstrate competence, contribute to others, and experience acknowledgment from supervisors or service recipients. It also corresponds with Job Characteristics Theory because task significance, feedback, and a sense of accomplishment can make work more meaningful (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Participants also described conditions that weakened motivation. Lack of clear communication, limited resources, heavy workload, and weak coordination made duties more difficult even when officers remained committed to completing them. Importantly, low motivation did not necessarily mean refusal to work. Several accounts showed that officers continued to act professionally despite conditions that reduced efficiency or satisfaction. This distinction separates professional commitment from positive work experience: an officer may continue performing duties while simultaneously experiencing reduced satisfaction, greater strain, or diminished motivation.

Job satisfaction was similarly connected to useful and manageable work, supportive relationships, and confidence in one's capacity to perform. Participants associated satisfaction with happiness, pride, fulfillment, and contentment, and with the sense that their efforts mattered. Supportive supervision and teamwork contributed to belonging and confidence, while poor cooperation, weak communication, and insufficient clarity reduced satisfaction. These findings are consistent with research showing that supportive organizational conditions are relevant to police engagement and satisfaction (Piotrowski et al., 2021).

Factors Influencing Motivation in Performing Duties

The second objective revealed that motivation was shaped by a cluster of organizational and personal conditions rather than by a single factor. Purpose and accomplishment were central. Officers were more likely to remain engaged when they understood why a task mattered and could identify a concrete result from their work. Recognition was another important influence. Praise, acknowledgment, promotion, and appreciation communicated that effort was visible and valued. This finding is compatible with Herzberg's emphasis on achievement and recognition as motivating conditions (Herzberg, 1966).

Leadership and communication were also prominent. Clear instructions reduced uncertainty and allowed officers to organize work with greater confidence. Supportive supervisors helped officers interpret responsibilities, address difficulties, and maintain a sense of fairness. In contrast, unclear tasking and weak communication were repeatedly described as sources of demotivation. From a Job Demands-Resources perspective, clear procedures and supportive supervision function as job resources because they help personnel manage demands and maintain engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Teamwork and workplace relationships were similarly influential. Participants valued cooperation, respectful communication, trust, and colleagues who could provide assistance when tasks became difficult. Conversely, conflict, poor communication, lack of cooperation, and perceived unfair



treatment added strain. This relational dimension corresponds with Self-Determination Theory's relatedness need and with organizational justice perspectives emphasizing respectful and fair treatment (Deci et al., 2017; Tyler, 2015). Police organizational research likewise indicates that organizational support and justice are associated with engagement (Piotrowski et al., 2021).

Material and structural conditions also mattered. Adequate resources, manageable workload, opportunities for growth, and reasonable balance between demands and available capacity supported motivation. When workload became repetitive or excessive, or when practical resources were insufficient, officers reported greater difficulty sustaining motivation. This finding supports occupational stress research showing that organizational stressors can affect police well-being (Purba & Demou, 2019; Violanti et al., 2017).

Personal Meanings Assigned to Job Satisfaction

Participants' descriptions of job satisfaction indicated that the concept developed over time. Immediate understandings of satisfaction could involve excitement, compensation, task completion, or the desire to prove oneself. With accumulated experience, participants increasingly associated satisfaction with stability, respect, meaningful impact, professional growth, and the ability to perform responsibilities well. One participant described learning from repeated experiences and using that learning to face future situations. Another explained that daily work became more satisfying when new knowledge was learned and repeatedly applied until difficult tasks became manageable. These accounts indicate that satisfaction was interpreted as a developmental experience rather than a fixed state.

A central theme was growth through everyday experience. Repeated duties gave officers opportunities to learn, adjust to changing responsibilities, solve problems, and become more capable. Such experiences gradually influenced how they judged whether their work remained personally and professionally worthwhile. This finding corresponds with the competence dimension of Self-Determination Theory and with Job Characteristics Theory's emphasis on skill variety, feedback, and knowledge of results (Deci et al., 2017; Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Meaningful accomplishment and service were also central to satisfaction. Participants associated fulfillment with completing important tasks, helping others, receiving recognition, and seeing positive consequences from their efforts. Satisfaction could therefore emerge when work connected personal competence with a broader service purpose. This is consistent with public service motivation literature, which suggests that prosocial purpose and service orientation can contribute to positive work experiences (Ritz et al., 2016; Prysmakova & Vandenabeele, 2020).

Positive relationships strengthened the meaning of satisfaction. Participants described recognition, respectful interactions, teamwork, and supportive supervision as conditions that enhanced happiness, confidence, and belonging. Conversely, poor communication and weak cooperation could undermine

satisfaction even when the officer remained committed to the job. The findings therefore frame job satisfaction as an accumulation of meaningful experiences involving work accomplishment, social relationships, learning, recognition, stability, and well-being.

Challenges Affecting Motivation and Job Fulfillment

The fourth objective identified challenges that disrupted clarity, control, confidence, trust, and professional reward. Emotional and professional strain was evident when difficult conditions accumulated. Participants described frustration, fatigue, disappointment, fear of making mistakes, reduced enjoyment, and the possibility of cynicism or emotional burnout. One participant stated that accumulated challenges could lead to cynicism or emotional burnout, while another described fear of making mistakes and being judged. These accounts show that organizational challenges were experienced not only as operational problems but also as emotional burdens.

Workload and task ambiguity were particularly important. Heavy or repetitive demands could reduce the sense of accomplishment because effort was consumed by volume, repetition, or competing priorities rather than by meaningful outcomes. Unclear tasking created uncertainty about expectations and increased the perceived risk of error. These findings align with the Job Demands-Resources framework, which proposes that excessive demands without adequate resources can undermine engagement and well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Police occupational health research likewise documents the consequences of sustained organizational stressors (Violanti et al., 2017).

Resource limitations compounded these challenges. When personnel lacked sufficient practical resources, the ability to complete tasks efficiently was constrained. The resulting frustration was not necessarily interpreted as a lack of commitment; rather, officers experienced a gap between what they were expected to accomplish and the resources available to accomplish it. This distinction is important for management because increasing expectations without addressing resources may shift the burden of organizational limitations onto individual personnel.

Organizational policies and coordination practices also affected motivation. Inconsistent conditions, poor communication, perceived unfairness, and insufficient recognition could weaken trust and confidence. Workplace relationships could either reduce or intensify these challenges. Supportive supervision, cooperation, fairness, and recognition functioned as protective resources, whereas conflict and poor communication added strain. This finding is consistent with organizational justice research emphasizing fair and respectful treatment (Tyler, 2015) and with police research linking organizational support and justice to engagement (Piotrowski et al., 2021).

Importantly, participants did not describe challenges as completely eliminating professional commitment. Some continued to identify with their role and service purpose despite



frustration. One participant explained that difficult feelings did not erase overall fulfillment but encouraged reflection and consideration of new approaches. Another linked overcoming difficulties and achieving positive results with a restored sense that effort mattered. This pattern suggests that professional purpose can coexist with organizational strain. However, coping and commitment should not be interpreted as substitutes for organizational improvement.

Coping Strategies Used to Maintain Motivation and Fulfillment

The fifth objective showed that coping involved a combination of emotional, practical, relational, spiritual, behavioral, and professional strategies. At the emotional level, participants described regulating feelings, remaining positive, and focusing attention on aspects of work that they could control. Practical coping included organizing tasks, prioritizing responsibilities, seeking assistance, and recognizing small accomplishments. These practices helped officers maintain a sense of control when demands were difficult.

Relational and spiritual resources were also important. Participants identified family, colleagues, faith, and prayer as

sources of support and renewed energy. Recovery practices included rest, physical activity, hobbies, and personal time away from work. These strategies are consistent with police coping literature emphasizing social support and individual strategies for managing occupational stress (Queirós et al., 2020; Singo & Shilubane, 2022).

Professional identity was another coping resource. Some officers maintained motivation by reconnecting with responsibility, service purpose, professional identity, and commitment to duty. This finding is consistent with public service motivation research, in which service-oriented motives can coexist with organizational difficulties and support persistence (Ritz et al., 2016; Prysmakova & Vandenabeele, 2020).

Overall, coping appeared to be an active process of preserving emotional balance, practical control, relational and spiritual support, recovery, and professional identity. Coping enabled officers to continue functioning despite difficulty, but the findings caution against treating coping as evidence that organizational problems are inconsequential. Where demands remain high and resources, recognition, clarity, or fairness remain inadequate, personnel may have to invest increasing personal resources simply to preserve ordinary functioning.

Table 2.

Conditions Supporting and Weakening Motivation and Satisfaction and Coping Resources

Conditions Supporting Motivation and Satisfaction	Conditions Weakening Motivation and Satisfaction	Coping Resources
• Meaningful service and accomplishment; • recognition; • competence; • clear guidance; • supportive supervision; • teamwork; • fairness; • adequate resources; • manageable demands; • growth; • belonging.	• Heavy or repetitive workload; • unclear tasking; • poor communication; • inadequate resources; • insufficient recognition; • perceived unfairness; • negative relationships; • emotional strain.	• Self-regulation; • positive reframing; • task organization; • prioritization; • help-seeking; • family and colleague support; • faith and prayer; • rest; • physical activity; • hobbies; • professional identity and service purpose.

The integrated pattern is clear: motivation and job satisfaction were strongest when professional purpose was supported by organizational resources and positive relationships. When these conditions were weakened, officers relied more heavily on personal, relational, spiritual, and professional coping resources. The resulting experience can be understood as a continual negotiation between professional purpose and organizational conditions. This interpretation integrates the phenomenological findings with Self-Determination Theory, Job Demands-Resources Theory, organizational justice, occupational stress, and public service motivation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study found that work motivation and job satisfaction among Headquarters Support Service police officers were experienced as context-sensitive phenomena shaped by the interaction between personal commitment and organizational conditions. Officers described stronger motivation and satisfaction when they experienced meaningful service, accomplishment, recognition, competence, supportive relationships, clear guidance, fair supervision, adequate resources, manageable demands, professional growth, and belonging. In contrast, heavy or repetitive workload, unclear tasking, poor communication, insufficient resources and recognition, perceived unfairness, negative workplace relationships, and emotional strain made motivation and



fulfillment more difficult to sustain. Job satisfaction was understood as a developing sense of meaningful fulfillment that changed through accumulated work experience, accomplishment, service, relationships, growth, stability, and well-being. Coping involved emotional regulation, practical task management, social and spiritual support, recovery activities, and renewed connection to professional purpose. These conclusions are qualitative and context-bound; they do not establish statistical generalizability or causal relationships.

Recommendations

- Strengthen task clarity and communication through clear instructions, understandable expectations, timely coordination, and opportunities for clarification.
- Provide constructive feedback and meaningful recognition by acknowledging individual and team accomplishments fairly and using feedback to support competence and improvement.
- Promote fair, respectful, and supportive supervision through consistent procedures, impartial decision-making, active listening, respectful correction, and clear guidance.
- Review workload and resource concerns where operationally feasible, particularly recurring overlapping tasks, uneven workload, repetitive assignments, process delays, and resource limitations.
- Strengthen teamwork and positive workplace relationships through cooperation, mentoring, peer support, respectful communication, trust, and collaborative problem-solving.
- Maintain accessible personnel-welfare and support mechanisms, including appropriate help-seeking, peer support, recovery, physical well-being, and psychosocial resources.
- Provide opportunities for professional growth through relevant training, mentoring, skill development, learning opportunities, and developmental feedback.
- Future researchers may examine motivation and job satisfaction across other PNP units, ranks, geographic settings, and occupational functions, and may consider longitudinal or mixed-method designs to examine how organizational changes relate to personnel experiences over time.

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