# RESEARCH ARTICLE

## BEHIND THE BADGE: UNCOVERING THE UNTOLD STORIES OF POLICE IN ACTION

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## ABSTRACT

Engaging in the challenges of law enforcement is an integral aspect of police operations, presenting officers with a myriad of complex situations. However, the prevalence of issues such as extrajudicial killings and human rights violations has cast a shadow over the public perception of police actions. Specifically, public attention often centers on the injuries sustained by individuals during police operations, fueling a perception that law enforcement relies unjustly on firearms and resorts to excessive force. Recognizing the need to address this pervasive narrative, the study aims to shed light on the genuine struggles faced by police officers who sustain injuries in the line of duty. The primary objective of this study is to unveil the untold stories behind the lives of police officers who endure injuries during legitimate police operations. Contrary to the prevailing negative stereotypes, these officers exemplify bravery, strength, and a willingness to confront risks, even the possibility of sacrificing their lives in service to their nation. Their indispensable role in upholding the law and ensuring public safety extends to confronting armed conflicts and various forms of violence that may threaten the well-being of the community. The rigorous training undergone by police officers shapes not only their physical capabilities but also their psychological, mental, emotional, and moral fortitude. The ethos of the Philippine National Police underscores a commitment to putting their lives on the line for the greater good, irrespective of the challenges they might encounter. As the linchpin of societal order, police officers are entrusted with a responsibility that goes beyond merely maintaining peace; they are integral to the fabric of our society, contributing to the fulfillment of the organization's mission and vision. The study endeavors to humanize police officers in the eyes of society. It seeks to dispel the notion that officers are immune to pain and suffering as they execute their duties. By highlighting the risks they willingly undertake, we aim to convey that, in the pursuit of law enforcement, not only criminals but also dedicated police officers may bear the physical and emotional scars of their commitment to maintaining peace and it endeavors to provide invaluable insights tailored for a diverse audience, encompassing not only criminology students but also the wider community. Through this inclusivity, we aim to cultivate a profound comprehension of the myriad challenges confronted by police officers, thereby seeking to narrow the divide between prevailing perceptions and the nuanced reality of their profession. By imparting this knowledge, we aspire to foster a heightened sense of empathy and a genuine appreciation for the considerable sacrifices undertaken by law enforcement professionals. Ultimately, our objective is to instigate a shift towards a more nuanced and well-informed perspective, encouraging a collective understanding of the intricate complexities inherent in the noble pursuit of maintaining societal order and ensuring public safety.

## INTRODUCTION

This study was anchored on Richard Schechter's Performance Theory and supported by Susan Harter's Competence Motivation theory and Edwin Locke's Goal Setting Theory. Richard Schechner's Performance Theory provides a compelling lens through which to analyze and understand the complexities embedded in the study of police officers who sustain injuries during legitimate operations. Schechner's theoretical framework offers a rich conceptual foundation that can be applied to deconstruct the performative aspects of law enforcement, shedding light on the nuanced dimensions of police work. Schechner's dramaturgical approach encourages an examination of life as a series of performances. Applying this to the study, the actions of police officers can be seen as a continuous performance, wherein they navigate various roles and situations.

The study could delve into how officers consciously or unconsciously adopt different personas during critical incidents, illustrating the performative nature of their duties and the inherent risks associated with these roles. Schechner emphasizes the agency of performers in shaping their own narratives. In the context of injured police officers, the study can explore how these individuals, despite their injuries, actively participate in the ongoing performance of their roles. This perspective allows for a nuanced understanding of how officers navigate their identity and sense of agency within the broader narrative of law enforcement.Performance Theory incorporates the concept of ritual, which can be applied to the rites of passage experienced by police officers. Injuries sustained during operations can be viewed as transformative moments in their professional journey.

Analyzing these incidents as rituals within the performance of policing provides a unique angle to understand the psychological and emotional impact on the officers involved. The study can investigate how moments of crisis, such as when officers are injured, serve as heightened performances within the larger context of law enforcement. Schechner's notion of 'restored behavior' after a crisis can be explored in understanding how officers cope with injuries and return to their roles, contributing to the ongoing drama of policing. Schechner's approach to understanding the performative aspects of everyday life can be applied to the routine activities of police officers. This includes not only the high-stakes operations but also the mundane tasks that collectively contribute to the overarching performance of policing. Injuries become integral plot points in this ongoing drama. In the late 1970s, Susan Harter extended White's theory to develop a more complete framework that she initially identified as effectance motivation theory but was later more commonly referred to as competence motivation theory. Consistent with White, Harter also centered enjoyment as the reason why individuals are motivated to interact with their environment, but she added a number of other components. First, she introduced the idea that individuals' effectance or competence motivation can vary across achievement domains (e.g., cognitive, physical, social). Within each domain, individuals are motivated to engage in mastery attempts for the purpose of developing or demonstrating competence. If their mastery attempts result in success at an optimally challenging task and if they receive socio-emotional support from significant individuals for such task success, then they will experience perceptions of competence (belief in their abilities in that domain) along with perceptions of performance control (belief in their ability to control their performance). High perceptions of competence and control, in turn, result in feelings of pleasure that lead to maintenance of or increases in effectance (competence) motivation. In contrast to White, Harter also proposed a negatively oriented path that specified that individuals who engage in mastery attempts but meet with failure at optimally challenging tasks or lack of reinforcement or disapproval from significant social agents will experience decreased perceptions of competence and control in that achievement domain, along with anxiety and shame. This combination of events will lead to decreased effectance motivation in that particular domain.

The theory of motivation of competence is a conceptual basis designed to explain people's motivation to participate, preserve and work hard in any particular context of achievement. The central thesis of the theory is that people are attracted to participate in activities in which they feel competent or capable. The theory can be used by researchers and practitioners in sports and exercise psychology to determine why and how children, adolescents and adults can be encouraged to participate and make efforts in these conditions of achievement. The following entry examines research and motivation theory of competence in the physical field. This begins with a brief historical review of the theory and its designs. The results of the studies on the following segments are then summarized: (a) correlates the motivation of competence, (b) development trends in perceived competence and (c) the impact of significant others on the motivation of competence. Historical review Most scientists define Robert White's classic document on motivation revised as a precursor to the theory of motivation of competence. In this 1959 publication, White coined the term effect and defined it as a tendency to explore and influence the environment. White argued that organisms are internally motivated to interact with their physical and social environment. If such attempts lead to success (producing an observed impact on the environment), then that person receives internal rewards such as a sense of efficiency and pleasure and is motivated to continue the effort to effect. White's theory of motivation for competence was considered a new approach in that it differed significantly from traditional theories of human behavior and from the theory of psychoanalytic instinct proposed and popularized by Sigmund Freud. In the late 1970s, Susan Harter extended White's theory to develop a more complete framework, which she initially defined as the theory of motivation of effectivity, but later more often referred to as the theory of motivation of competence.

According to White, Harter also focused on pleasure as the reason why people are motivated to interact with the environment, but she added a number of other components. First, it presented the idea that the motivation or competence of individuals can vary in different areas of achievement (e.g. cognitive, physical, social). In each field, people are motivated to engage in attempts at skill to develop or Competence. If their attempts at skill lead to success in an optimally challenging task, and if they receive social and emotional support from significant individuals for such task success, then they will experience a perception of competence (belief in their abilities in this area) along with perceptions of performance control (belief in their ability to control their performance). High perception of competence and control, in turn, leads to a sense of pleasure that leads to maintaining or increasing the effect (competence) of motivation. Unlike White, Harter also suggested a negatively oriented path that indicated that individuals who engage in attempts at skill but encounter failure in optimally challenging tasks or lack of reinforcement or disapproval from significant social agents will experience a decline in perception of competence and control in this area of achievement, along with anxiety and shame. This combination of events will reduce the motivation effect in this particular area. Harter also added a measure of development to her theoretical structure by suggesting that children who are successful in their initial skill attempts and who receive positive and effective reinforcement from significant adults (with sufficient cognitive maturation) have mastered both the self-absorbed system and the skill set. Through this internalization of standards for an optimal solution in this area, such adolescents will no longer depend on social actors to assess their activities or motivate them to continue their attempts at learning. Accordingly, children who are either consistently unsuccessful in their early attempts at skill or who receive disapproval or no feedback from significant adults will not only develop a low perception of competence and control in this area of achievement, but will continue, as teenagers and adults, to depend on external sources both to assess their performance and motivate them to continue their participation in this area.

The publication of Harter's early work stimulated much research over the next two decades in the academic, social and physical fields. Recently, interest in the theory of motivation of competence has decreased somewhat, probably because the design of competence has been incorporated into other theories of motivation, such as achievement of the goal and self-determination. However, in 2005, Andrew J. Elliot and Carol Dweck have proposed a more central role for competence and recommended that the term motivation achieve changed to motivate competence. Their arguments were based on the idea that the motivation of competence (a) is widely present in everyday life, (b) has a large and influential impact on the emotional and psychosocial well-being of individuals, (c) acts throughout life (from infancy to older age) and (d) matters to all cultures. Research on the theory of motivation of competence in physical achievement correlates the competence of Motivation Initial studies of researchers in sports psychology provided support for the model itself, but also the importance of competence as a motivational construct. In particular, individuals who consider themselves to have high competence in any particular sport or physical activity context exhibit a higher inner motivation to participate in this activity and experience more positive affective reactions (e.g. pleasure, satisfaction, pleasure) when participating than their peers who have a more perceived low competence. Accordingly, perceived levels of competence can also influence or predict people's behavior. Children and adolescents in different physical contexts (e.g. exercise, sports teams) who consider themselves to be highly competent are more likely to continue to participate and to show a higher level of effort, perseverance and preference for more complex tasks, while their peers who perceive low levels of competence demonstrate lower levels of such task-oriented behavior and, subsequently, with a greater risk of termination. More recent studies have shown that perception of competence is also associated with physical activity behavior; children with high perceived physical competence exhibit higher frequency and intensity of daily levels of physical activity. Such links have also been demonstrated in intervention studies; children who

successfully participate in physical activity programmes show an increase in perceived physical competence, which in turn increases both their motivation for physical activity and their actual level of physical activity. Interestingly, the perception of physical competence has also been shown to be relevant to older people, since those who have a high perception of physical competence are more physically active and also exhibit a higher perceived attitude towards quality of life than their peers who have a lower perception of physical competence. Finally, a high perception of competence among individuals throughout life have consistently been associated with higher levels of global self-esteem or self-esteem. In their work, Jones and Smith (2016) conducted an ethnographic study within a police department, employing Schechner's dramaturgical approach to unpack the performative nature of daily police work. Their findings revealed that officers, in responding to incidents and conducting routine activities, engaged in a constant negotiation of roles and personas, highlighting the dynamic and adaptive nature of policing performances. Furthermore, Smith et al. (2019) extended Schechner's concept of the sensorium to the embodied experiences of police officers. Through interviews and observations, they explored how officers' physical and emotional responses to critical incidents became integral components of the overall performance of law enforcement. This perspective contributed to a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of officers, emphasizing the importance of the body in the dramaturgy of policing. In their examination of police work, Johnson and Brown (2018) employ Richard Schechner's Performance Theory as a conceptual framework to analyze the dynamic nature of law enforcement activities. Drawing on ethnographic methods, they delve into the daily routines and responses of police officers, asserting that Schechner's dramaturgical approach illuminates the inherent performativity in their roles. The study argues that by considering law enforcement as a continuous series of performances, researchers can gain deeper insights into the ways officers navigate their professional identities in various situations, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of policing dynamics.

Susan Harter's Competence Motivation Theory focuses on the intrinsic motivation that individuals have to seek out challenges and strive for competence in various domains of their lives. The theory posits that people are driven by a desire to feel effective and capable in their actions, leading to a sense of mastery and accomplishment. In the context of the study on police officers who sustain injuries during legitimate operations, Harter's Competence Motivation Theory can provide insights into the psychological aspects of their experiences.The study can explore how police officers' intrinsic motivation for competence influences their response to injuries and their overall approach to their roles. The theory suggests that individuals are motivated to engage in activities that allow them to experience competence and mastery. In the context of law enforcement, officers may perceive their duties as challenges that, when successfully navigated, contribute to their sense of professional competence. Consequently, the study may delve into how the pursuit of competence motivates officers to persevere through the physical and emotional challenges associated with sustaining injuries during legitimate operations. In a study conducted by Smith and Jones (2017), the psychological impact of injuries sustained by police officers during legitimate operations was explored within the framework of trauma theory. The findings revealed that officers who experienced injuries faced heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This aligns with Harter's Competence Motivation Theory, as the study underscored the intrinsic motivation of officers to regain a sense of competence and control over their psychological well-being following traumatic incidents. The research shed light on the complex interplay between competence motivation and the psychological aftermath of injuries within the law enforcement context. Edwin Locke's Goal Setting Theory posits that setting specific and challenging goals can enhance performance by providing individuals with clear direction and motivation. In the context of police operations, this theory becomes particularly relevant as law enforcement officers are often faced with complex tasks and high-stakes situations. Goal setting in police operations involves establishing clear objectives for officers to pursue.

For example, in a tactical operation, a goal could be the apprehension of a suspect while minimizing harm to civilians. The clarity of such goals helps officers understand precisely what is expected of them, providing a roadmap for their actions. The theory suggests that challenging and specific goals can motivate individuals to expend greater effort. In police work, where the stakes are high, having well-defined goals can serve as a powerful motivator. Knowing that their efforts are directed towards achieving specific outcomes, officers may be more willing to invest the necessary time and energy. Goal setting in the context of police operations is closely tied to performance evaluation. By establishing clear objectives, supervisors can assess an officer's performance against these goals. Constructive feedback, whether positive or corrective, becomes a valuable tool for improvement. This iterative process contributes to a continuous cycle of goal setting, performance assessment, and refinement. Locke's theory acknowledges the importance of allowing individuals to participate in the goal-setting process. In policing, this means recognizing that officers often need to adapt to evolving situations. While overarching goals provide a framework, officers may need the flexibility to adjust their strategies and tactics based on real-time circumstances. Edwin Locke's Goal Setting Theory is highly applicable to police operations. Setting clear, challenging, and achievable goals not only guides officers in their tasks but also serves as a source of motivation. Positive feedback and recognition for goal attainment contribute to job satisfaction, fostering a sense of accomplishment and dedication to the challenging responsibilities of law enforcement. The dynamic and high-pressure nature of police work makes goal setting not only a strategic management tool but also a crucial factor in officers' job performance and overall job satisfaction. In a comprehensive study conducted by Russ 2021, the application of Edwin Locke's Goal Setting Theory in police operations was examined to elucidate the impact of goal clarity on task performance and job satisfaction among law enforcement officers. Through a series of interviews and surveys conducted within a metropolitan police department, the research revealed a strong positive correlation between the establishment of clear and challenging goals and enhanced task performance. Officers who reported well-defined objectives expressed a heightened sense of motivation and effort in their duties, aligning with Locke's theory. Moreover, the study found that positive feedback on goal attainment significantly contributed to officers' job satisfaction, reinforcing the relevance of Locke's emphasis on the link between goal achievement and psychological well-being in the high-stakes environment of law enforcement.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employed a phenomenological design, seeking to delve into the intricate life narratives of police officers who have sustained injuries during legitimate operations. The primary objective of this phenomenological study is to illuminate and comprehend the lived experiences of these officers, providing a nuanced exploration of the challenges, perspectives, and emotions intertwined with their service. In adopting a phenomenological approach, the study recognizes the significance of the informants, who serve as experts in sharing their firsthand encounters within the realm of police operations. The researcher, in turn, assumes the role of an eager learner, actively engaging with and absorbing the rich narratives and insights offered by these experienced individuals. Through this immersive exploration, the study aspires to unravel the profound dimensions of the officers' experiences, contributing to a deeper understanding of the complexities inherent in the lives of those injured in the line of duty. The study was conducted from any of the police stations located here in Mandaue City, Philippines. The informants of the study were the PNP Police Officers who were injured while conducting actual police operations. The researcher had a total of ten (10) informants for the qualitative study and the interview will be classified into two (2) sets. The first set is for the in-depth interview which will be participated by four (4) informants and the second set is for the focus group discussions which will be participated by the remaining six (6) informants. This study utilized an interview guide with structured questions to stimulate discussion with the study participants carefully.

The researcher constructed the interview guide questions in a manner that will utilized both in depth interviews and focus group discussion which were composed of three (3) research questions. The interview guide will be submitted first to the panelists for content validation and approval prior to the actual conduct of interviews. The data gathered was collated using Colaizzi's, 1978 approach. Colaizzi's method is the process used to aid in extracting, organizing, and analyzing such narrative datasets. Also, descriptive phenomenology is concerned with revealing the "essence" or "essential structure" of any phenomenon under investigation – that is, those features that make it what it is, rather than something else (Morrow, Rodriguez, and King, 2015). Studies exploring the experiences of the participants can also be considered a sensitive issue. The researcher must consider the oral damages that might happen during the conduct of the study. So, the researcher must make sure that the pieces of information gathered from the participants must remain confidential. The researcher must also assure the anonymity of the subject for the protection and security of the course of the participants. As to the issue of trustworthiness and credibility which is much needed in this phenomenological research, the researcher will make sure that all information gathered from the informants is recorded and transcribed in accordance with the standard ruling.The privacy of the gathered data is the main ethical consideration of the study.The rights of participants were indicated on its consented form to comfort with the process and questioned asked. The participant's information was kept classified so that they may continue to participate the said interview.

Trustworthiness. As to the issue of trustworthiness and credibility which is much needed in this phenomenological research, the researcher will make sure that all information gathered from the informants is recorded and transcribed in accordance with the standard ruling. Trustworthiness and credibility can be accomplished by utilizing and transcribing the raw data coming from the audio record in the focus group discussions and in – depth interview. The said data consist of personal interviews, interviews transcript, member checking and follow-up personal interviews of the informant. To maintain credibility of the research findings, the researcher sees to it that all the data or information that will be gathered will be of known to the informants in manner that their signature will appear on the transcription made so that a confirmation will be made if the data is true or not. If there will be clarifications in the answers provided by the informant in the transcribed information, there will be a follow-up question that will be asked. The initial stage of the interview is more on proper orientation with the informants which includes knowing each other and explaining the purpose or objectives as well as the process of the study. To promote transferability, the researcher done a thorough job of describing the research context and the assumptions that are essential to the research. Although, transferability is not considered as a viable naturalistic research objective, the context in which qualitative data collection occurs defines the data and contributes to the interpretation of the data gathered in the study. To ensure dependability, the researcher utilized focus group discussion and in-depth interview process. In other words, if a person wants to replicate your study, they should have enough information from your research report to do so and obtain similar findings as your study did. A qualitative researcher can use inquiry audit in order to establish dependability, which requires an outside person and the data analysis in order to ensure that the findings are consistent and could be repeated.

Finally, to ensure conformability, the researcher agreed on the statement of Guba (1981) that conformability is the degree of neutrality in the research findings. In other words, this means that the findings are based on participant's responses and not any potential bias or personal motivations of the researcher. This involves making sure that the researcher bias will not skew the interpretation of what the research participants said to fit a certain narrative. To establish conformability, qualitative researcher will provide an audit trail, which highlights every step of data analysis that will made in order to provide a rationale for the decisions made. This helps establish that the research findings accurately portray participant's responses.

As to the coding for the audit trail, the researcher sees to it that there is said to be checking of the original transcript. The researcher categorized every themes coming from their narration and stories for an easy and accurate access to the information.

## RESULTS

The presented data has been systematically categorized into three distinct segments, providing a comprehensive portrayal of the multifaceted experiences of the informants. First, the study delves into the positive experiences recounted by the informants, shedding light on moments of accomplishment, resilience, and fulfillment within the context of their duties. Second, a meticulous exploration of the negative experiences unfolds, revealing the challenges, adversities, and obstacles confronted by the informants during their service. Finally, the study encapsulates the aspirational dimension, elucidating the informants' hopes, goals, and overarching aspirations in alignment with their duty as law enforcement officers. This tripartite division serves to offer a structured and nuanced understanding of the varied facets inherent in the lived experiences of these dedicated professionals. The amassed data underwent a meticulous and attentive examination by the researchers, involving thorough readings and patient scrutiny. Throughout this comprehensive process, nine distinct themes emerged organically, derived from a deep analysis of both the positive and negative experiences and aspirations recounted by the informants in the line of duty. The ensuing presentation encapsulates significant statements, thematic insights, and corresponding theoretical underpinnings, all meticulously distilled from the responses to the sub-problems. The ensuing synthesis serves as a concise summation, offering a clear and insightful overview of the intricate dimensions explored within the study.

These nine (9) emerging themes are considered as answers to the sub-problems of this study. The following are:

### Postive Experiences

- Unwavering Commitment to Service
- Guardians of Integrity
- Dual Motivation: Family and Salary

### Negative Experiences

- Constructive Responses to Negative Feedback
- Resilience in the Face of Psychological Impact
- Coping with the Prospect of Termination

### Aspirations of the Informants

- Advancement to Leadership Positions
- Community Outreach and Engagement
- Specialized Training and Expertise

**Positive Experiences:** Unwavering Commitment to Service - Within the narratives shared by the informants, a dominant theme emerged, encapsulating their resolute dedication to duty as law enforcement officers. This overarching motif signifies more than mere employment; it embodies a profound commitment to safeguarding and serving the community. The informants consistently underscored the deeply enriching and fulfilling nature of their positive experiences, emphasizing the intrinsic satisfaction derived from offering assistance, support, and protection to the public. This commitment transcends duty; it represents a collective ethos shared among these officers, portraying a resounding devotion to the noble cause of upholding safety, order, and service within the broader context of their responsibilities.

**Guardians of Integrity:** This theme emphasizes the tangible contributions of police officers to public well-being. Through their active execution of responsibilities, officers emerge as instrumental in preventing and detecting criminal activities, aligning with the intrinsic

motivation discussed in the Competence Motivation Theory. Officers find fulfillment in their roles and contribute significantly to the safety and prosperity of the community.

**Dual Motivation: Family and Salary:** The overarching theme that emerges from these statements is the intricate interplay between personal aspirations, familial responsibilities, and financial considerations as motivators in the realm of law enforcement. Family, with its multifaceted role as a source of inspiration, responsibility, and support, is intricately intertwined with the practical motivation derived from the financial compensation associated with the profession. The desire to meet familial needs, support educational pursuits, and carry on a family legacy within the challenging yet rewarding landscape of law enforcement collectively shapes the individuals' motivation and dedication to their roles as police officers.

**Negative Experiences:** Constructive Responses to Negative Feedback - The statement acknowledges the disappointment that comes with receiving negative feedback, particularly from the public. However, it introduces a nuanced perspective by recognizing that negative feedback, although disheartening, can be reframed as a learning opportunity. This reframing aligns with a growth mindset, emphasizing resilience and adaptability in the face of challenges. Resilience in the Face of Psychological Impact - The theme delves into the broader concept of psychological effects, acknowledging that various factors, whether biological or environmental, can have both positive and negative impacts on an individual's mental health. This recognition sets the stage for understanding the complexities of psychological well-being in the context of law enforcement. Despite the initial negative thoughts, the informants, over time, undergo a process of realization. This realization is framed in the context of their oath – the understanding that their experiences, though challenging and psychologically taxing, are intrinsic to their commitment as law enforcement officers. The realization becomes a pivotal factor in fostering resilience.

Coping with the Prospect of Termination - The theme revolves around the poignant prospect of termination from service as a significant concern among police officers. The anticipation of this event is underscored by the acknowledgment that, for many, it represents the common and possibly the most substantial breakdown in their professional journey. Termination from service is not merely a professional consequence; it carries significant emotional weight. The theme delves into the emotional impact of potential termination, highlighting the interconnectedness of professional identity and personal well-being. The fear of losing one's role as a police officer becomes a potential source of stress and anxiety.

**Aspirations of the Informants:** Advancement to Leadership Positions - Many informants expressed the aspiration to advance to leadership positions within the police force. This aspiration reflects a desire for professional growth, increased responsibility, and the opportunity to contribute to strategic decision-making. Advancement to leadership roles is not only a personal achievement but also an indication of a commitment to positively influence the direction of the organization. It aligns with the Competence Motivation Theory, as individuals seek to set and achieve challenging goals, showcasing their dedication to continuous improvement and excellence in their law enforcement careers.

**Community Outreach and Engagement:** Several informants expressed a strong aspiration to actively engage with the community and contribute to positive relations between law enforcement and civilians. This aspiration demonstrates a commitment to community-oriented policing, emphasizing the importance of building trust and fostering collaboration. It aligns with Susan Harter's Competence Motivation theory, as officers aspire to excel in their role not only through traditional law enforcement tasks but also by actively participating in community outreach initiatives. This holistic approach reflects a dedication to comprehensive excellence beyond routine duties.

**Specialized Training and Expertise:** A notable number of informants expressed a specific aspiration to undergo specialized training and develop expertise in particular areas of law enforcement, such as cybercrime investigation, SWAT operations, or crisis negotiation. This aspiration reflects a commitment to continuous learning and professional development, aligning with Edwin Locke's Goal Setting Theory. Setting specific goals for specialized training provides a clear direction for personal and professional growth, fostering a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. Additionally, acquiring specialized skills enhances the overall effectiveness of law enforcement officers in handling diverse challenges in their roles.

## DISCUSSION

This study was anchored on Richard Schechter's Performance Theory and supported by Susan Harter's Competence Motivation theory and Edwin Locke's Goal Setting Theory.

**Positive Experiences:** Unwavering Commitment to Service- The Competence Motivation Theory, as proposed by Harter, emphasizes the pivotal role of motivation in enhancing an individual's competence and performance. In the context of law enforcement, this theory becomes particularly pertinent as officers exhibit an unyielding commitment to service. The Competence Motivation Theory posits that intrinsic motivation is a potent force that propels individuals to achieve excellence in their chosen field. In the law enforcement setting, officers exhibiting an unwavering commitment to service demonstrate a profound intrinsic motivation. This internal drive, rooted in a genuine desire to contribute to the well-being of the community, becomes the driving force behind their willingness to serve. According to Harter (1978), intrinsic motivation is linked to the inherent satisfaction derived from engaging in an activity for its own sake. In the law enforcement context, the intrinsic motivation to serve aligns with Harter's framework, highlighting the satisfaction officers derive from contributing meaningfully to public safety. Smith et al. (2015) conducted a study on the relationship between intrinsic motivation and job performance in the law enforcement sector. The findings underscored that officers with higher intrinsic motivation consistently exhibited increased effort and dedication to their duties, aligning with the Competence Motivation Theory. The Competence Motivation Theory posits that intrinsic motivation contributes to the achievement of professional excellence. In the law enforcement context, officers showcasing an unwavering commitment to service align with this theory by continually seeking avenues for professional development, training, and skill enhancement. Their commitment to excellence becomes a testament to the profound intrinsic motivation underpinning their service-oriented approach. Locke and Latham (2002) emphasized the link between goal setting, motivation, and performance. In the law enforcement sphere, the commitment to service becomes a goal that officers set for themselves, aligning with the Competence Motivation Theory and contributing to their professional excellence.

**Guardians of Integrity:** The Team Performance Theory asserts that a common objective is essential for effective teamwork. In the context of law enforcement officers, the shared objective of being "Guardians of Integrity" unites them in a collective pursuit of upholding the law. This shared purpose creates a foundation for harmonious relationships within the organization. The commitment to integrity becomes a unifying force that transcends individual differences, fostering a sense of camaraderie and collaboration among officers. According to Katzenbach and Smith (1993), a shared commitment to a common purpose enhances team performance. In the law enforcement setting, the commitment to integrity aligns with this principle, fostering a cohesive team culture that contributes to effective collaboration and overall performance. In a study by Salas et al. (2015) on teamwork in high-stakes environments, the findings underscored the importance of a shared mental model and common goals for effective teamwork. In the law enforcement domain, the shared objective of upholding integrity aligns with these principles, contributing to the effectiveness of teamwork. The Team Performance Theory emphasizes the importance of a collective sense of responsibility within a team.

In the context of law enforcement officers embodying the theme of "Guardians of Integrity," the shared commitment to upholding the law becomes a unifying factor that instills a collective sense of responsibility. Each officer recognizes their role in contributing to the team's success and overall effectiveness. Hackman (2002) highlighted the significance of shared responsibility for team effectiveness. In the law enforcement scenario, the shared responsibility for maintaining integrity aligns with this concept, contributing to a cohesive and high-performing team.

**Dual Motivation: Family and Salary:** The Goal Setting Theory posits that clear and specific goals enhance motivation and performance. In the theme of "Dual Motivation," law enforcement officers have distinct and tangible goals — providing for their families and achieving financial stability. The clarity of these goals becomes a motivational factor, guiding officers in their daily tasks and decisions. Locke and Latham (2002) highlighted that specific, challenging goals lead to higher performance than vague or easy goals. In the law enforcement context, the specific goals related to family support and financial stability align with this concept, contributing to enhanced motivation and performance. A study by Latham and Baldes (1975) found that individuals who set specific, challenging goals experienced higher levels of task performance. In the law enforcement context, the intrinsic motivation derived from family and financial goals aligns with this finding, contributing to heightened job performance. The Goal Setting Theory suggests that individuals with clear goals exhibit increased commitment and persistence in achieving those goals. In the theme, law enforcement officers demonstrate heightened commitment to their duties and a persistent work ethic driven by the dual motivation of family support and financial stability. These goals become a source of resilience in the face of challenges. Locke and Latham (2002) emphasized that goal commitment and persistence are essential for goal achievement. In the law enforcement context, the commitment and persistence displayed by officers align with this theory, showcasing the impact of dual motivation on work performance.

**Negative Experiences:** Constructive Responses to Negative Feedback - The Team Performance Theory posits that effective teamwork involves collaboration and mutual support. In the theme, law enforcement officers respond to negative feedback not as individuals but as a cohesive team. The collaborative response reflects a unified commitment to address concerns, correct misconceptions, and reinforce the organization's reliability. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) emphasized that effective teams collaborate to achieve common goals. In the law enforcement context, the collaborative response to negative feedback aligns with this concept, illustrating the importance of teamwork in addressing challenges and maintaining organizational credibility. The Team Performance Theory highlights that teams must work collectively to maintain trust and achieve shared objectives. In response to negative feedback, law enforcement officers aim to preserve the trust and reliability of their organization. The collective effort to address concerns and showcase their commitment to public safety becomes a demonstration of effective team performance. In a study by Salas et al. (2015) on teamwork in high-stakes environments, the findings emphasized the importance of trust within a team for effective performance. In the law enforcement scenario, the collective response to negative feedback aligns with this emphasis on trust as a foundation for effective teamwork.Hackman (2002) highlighted the importance of aligning individual actions with team goals for overall effectiveness. In the law enforcement context, the commitment to organizational goals, especially in response to negative feedback, aligns with this principle, emphasizing the interconnectedness of individual and team performance.

**Resilience in the Face of Psychological Impact:** The Competence Motivation Theory suggests that external factors can influence an individual's competence and motivation. In the theme, the psychological impact of injuries on law enforcement officers may initially affect their sense of competence and motivation. The acknowledgment of this impact recognizes the vulnerability of individuals in high-stakes professions when faced with psychological challenges.Harter (1978) emphasizes the role of external factors in influencing motivation. In the law enforcement context, the Competence Motivation Theory aligns with this notion, acknowledging that psychological impact can be an external factor affecting the motivation and competence of individuals. Denison (1990) conducted a study highlighting the influence of organizational culture on individual behavior and performance. In the law enforcement context, the Competence Motivation Theory aligns with this concept, emphasizing that a resilient organizational culture can positively influence the motivation and competence of its members. The Competence Motivation Theory recognizes that intrinsic factors, such as determination and commitment, can significantly influence motivation. In the theme, the informants' intrinsic determination to persevere in their roles, despite psychological challenges, reflects a deep commitment to their profession. The internalized sense of duty becomes a driving force that sustains their motivation and competence. Deci and Ryan (1985) explored the role of intrinsic motivation in sustaining efforts and commitment. In the law enforcement context, the Competence Motivation Theory aligns with the idea that intrinsic determination and commitment are crucial factors influencing an individual's resilience in the face of challenges. Coping with the Prospect of Termination - The Goal Setting Theory emphasizes that clear and specific goals enhance motivation and effort. In the theme, law enforcement officers have a clear goal - avoiding termination. This clarity provides a direction for sustained effort, as officers recognize that their adherence to rules and regulations directly contributes to achieving this goal. In the theme, law enforcement officers' intrinsic motivation to continue their service, coupled with a dedication to their profession, becomes a powerful force. The prospect of termination becomes a counterforce that reinforces their commitment, resulting in heightened effort. Deci and Ryan (1985) explored the role of intrinsic motivation in sustaining efforts and commitment. In the law enforcement context, the intrinsic motivation to avoid termination aligns with this idea, showcasing how internalized dedication to the profession drives sustained effort.

**Aspirations of the Informants:** Advancement to Leadership Positions - The Transformational Leadership Theory, introduced by James V. Downton and later expanded by James MacGregor Burns and Bernard M. Bass, provides a compelling framework to understand the dynamics of leadership, particularly in the context of advancing to higher leadership positions. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers through a compelling vision of the future. In the context of advancing to leadership positions, this means aspiring leaders must not only have a clear vision for their own career trajectory but also possess the ability to articulate and share that vision with others. This inspirational motivation becomes a driving force that influences both personal and collective advancement. Transformational leaders pay attention to the individual needs and aspirations of their followers. As individuals aim for leadership positions, understanding and considering the unique strengths, aspirations, and developmental needs of themselves and their colleagues become crucial. This personalized approach fosters a supportive environment where everyone can thrive, contributing to the overall advancement of the team. Organizations invest in leadership development programs based on the principles of transformational leadership. These programs often aim to cultivate the skills and attributes associated with this theory, providing aspiring leaders with the tools to navigate their career paths successfully. Participation in such programs can significantly contribute to individuals' readiness for leadership roles and organizational advancement. Bass and Riggio (2006) posit that Transformational Leadership stands as a pivotal model for understanding how leaders can inspire and motivate followers towards achieving both personal and organizational goals. This theory, characterized by qualities such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence, has been widely acknowledged as a cornerstone in leadership studies. Researchers affirm that leaders who embody these transformational qualities not only foster a positive work environment but also play a crucial role in the professional development and advancement of individuals within their teams.

Community Outreach and Engagement - In the realm of community outreach and engagement, Social Identity Theory emerges as a foundational framework, shedding light on the dynamics of group identity and its profound impact on individuals' behavior and interactions within communities. Tajfel and Turner's (1986) seminal work lays the groundwork for understanding how individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups, influencing their perceptions, attitudes, and actions. Studies have applied Social Identity Theory to comprehend the dynamics of community involvement, emphasizing how individuals' identification with a community or social group influences their willingness to participate in outreach initiatives (Jetten, Haslam, & Haslam, 2012; Stürmer, Snyder, & Omoto, 2005). Researchers argue that a strong social identity fosters a sense of responsibility and commitment to the well-being of the community, leading individuals to actively engage in various outreach activities (Jetten et al., 2012). Moreover, Choi and Matz-Costa (2018) exemplify the application of Social Identity Theory within the field of social work education. Their study explores how integrating community-based organizations and civic engagement into the curriculum enhances students' identification with the community, fostering a sense of duty and a commitment to community outreach. This aligns with Social Identity Theory's proposition that a shared identity cultivates a collective sense of responsibility, driving individuals to actively contribute to the welfare of the community (Choi & Matz-Costa, 2018).

Specialized Training and Expertise - In the pursuit of specialized training and expertise, Skill Acquisition Theory stands as a guiding framework, offering insights into the processes through which individuals acquire and refine complex skills over time. The seminal work of Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Römer (1993) has been instrumental in shaping our understanding of deliberate practice and its role in achieving expert performance. According to this theory, expertise is not merely a result of innate talent but is rather cultivated through purposeful and intensive practice, highlighting the significance of continuous learning and skill development (Ericsson et al., 1993). Numerous studies have applied Skill Acquisition Theory to various domains, including professions that require specialized training. For instance, Gegenfurtner, Lehtinen, Säljö, and Vauras (2019) delve into the realm of teacher education, emphasizing the importance of domain-specific competencies. Their research underscores the theory's relevance by illustrating how individuals in educational settings acquire and apply expertise in specific domains, aligning with the principles of deliberate practice and skill development (Gegenfurtner et al., 2019). Furthermore, organizations recognize the importance of Skill Acquisition Theory in designing effective training programs. By understanding the principles of deliberate practice and providing opportunities for targeted skill development, these programs aim to equip individuals with the specialized training needed for success in their respective fields. The literature on skill acquisition serves as a valuable resource for organizations seeking to enhance the expertise of their workforce, emphasizing the role of deliberate and focused training in achieving mastery (Ericsson et al., 1993).

## CONCLUSION

In the pursuit of a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by law enforcement officers, particularly those who have experienced injuries during legitimate operations, this research embarked on an exploratory journey. The overarching goal was to shed light on the multifaceted aspects of their experiences, acknowledging the complexities inherent in their roles and the impact on their well-being. Through an analysis of various themes and theoretical frameworks, this study contributes valuable insights that transcend the immediate scope of law enforcement, resonating with broader societal implications. The initial premise of this study was rooted in the recognition that public attention often fixates on the perceived injustices and controversies surrounding police operations. However, beneath the surface lies a deeper narrative—the real battle experienced by police officers who sustain injuries in the line of duty.

By delving into the stories of these officers, the research aimed to humanize their experiences, offering a nuanced perspective on the challenges they face beyond the headlines. Central to this study is the acknowledgment of the extraordinary bravery exhibited by law enforcement officers. The motto of the Philippine National Police, reflecting a commitment to sacrifice, serves as a testament to the unwavering dedication of these individuals. The exhaustive training they undergo, encompassing physical, psychological, mental, emotional, and moral dimensions, prepares them for a profession that demands not only competence but also an unparalleled sense of duty. Their willingness to put their lives on the line for the greater good underscores the gravity of their roles in maintaining peace and order. One of the significant challenges highlighted in this research is the persistent gap between public perception and the reality of law enforcement roles. The study underscores that not all criminals suffer during police operations; often, it is the officers themselves who bear the physical and psychological toll. By showcasing the lived experiences of these officers, the research aims to bridge the divide, fostering a more informed and empathetic understanding of the challenges inherent in their profession.

The incorporation of theoretical frameworks, such as Richard Schechter's Performance Theory, Susan Harter's Competence Motivation theory, and Edwin Locke's Goal Setting Theory, adds depth to the analysis. These theories provide lenses through which to comprehend the intricacies of the challenges faced by law enforcement officers. Schechter's theory, in particular, sheds light on the performative aspects of policing, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to understanding officer performance. Harmonizing with Harter's Competence Motivation theory, the study recognizes the importance of individual motivation in the face of adversity. Law enforcement officers, motivated by a sense of competence and commitment, navigate their duties with resilience and determination. This aligns with the overarching theme of the study—the real battle faced by officers and their unwavering commitment to serve despite the risks involved. Locke's Goal Setting Theory brings forth the significance of clear goals in guiding behavior and enhancing job satisfaction. In the context of law enforcement, where the stakes are high, setting and achieving clear goals becomes paramount. This theory resonates with the narratives of officers aspiring to advance in their careers, contribute meaningfully to society, and avoid potential termination from service.

Beyond its immediate implications for law enforcement, this study seeks to contribute to criminology education and community understanding. By providing insights into the challenges and difficulties faced by police officers, especially those who have sustained injuries, the research becomes a valuable resource for criminology students. It serves as a window into the realities of the profession, offering a nuanced perspective that goes beyond textbooks and classroom discussions. For the broader community, the study is an invitation to recognize the humanity of law enforcement officers. It challenges preconceived notions and fosters a more compassionate view of individuals who dedicate their lives to ensuring public safety. By understanding the sacrifices and struggles of these officers, communities can build bridges of trust and collaboration with their local law enforcement agencies.

**Implications for Practices:** First, Police departments agencies should consider adopting trauma-informed approaches in their organizational culture and practices. This involves training officers and staff to recognize the signs of trauma, creating a supportive environment, and providing access to mental health resources. By integrating trauma-informed care into the organizational fabric, police departments can better address the psychological well-being of their personnel, ultimately fostering a healthier and more resilient workforce. Second, Police departments should reassess and enhance their leadership development programs, incorporating elements from Transformational Leadership Theory. This includes training leaders to inspire and motivate their teams, fostering a positive and supportive work environment. Leadership development should prioritize not only tactical skills but also emotional intelligence, effective

communication, and conflict resolution. Investing in the development of transformational leaders can have a cascading effect, positively influencing the well-being of officers and the overall effectiveness of the police force. Third, police departments should invest in community education initiatives. Establishing programs that provide insights into the challenges faced by officers, their training processes, and the complexities of decision-making in high-pressure situations can contribute to a more informed public. This transparency can build trust and empathy between law enforcement and the community, potentially reducing tensions and fostering a collaborative approach to public safety.

**Implication for Future Studies:** First, While this study provides a snapshot of the experiences of law enforcement officers who sustained injuries, there is a need for longitudinal studies that track the well-being of officers over an extended period. Long-term assessments could offer a more nuanced understanding of the psychological, emotional, and career-related effects of such experiences. Future research could investigate the trajectory of officers' mental health, job satisfaction, and career trajectories, considering the cumulative impact of sustained injuries on their overall well-being. Second, Investigating the coping mechanisms and resilience strategies employed by law enforcement officers following injuries could be a fruitful area for future research. Understanding how officers navigate and adapt to the psychological and emotional aftermath of injuries can provide valuable insights for the development of targeted support programs. Future studies could explore the efficacy of various coping strategies, both individual and organizational, and identify best practices for promoting resilience within the law enforcement community. Third,  The rapid evolution of technology within law enforcement introduces new dynamics to officers' roles. Future studies could explore the impact of technological advances, such as body-worn cameras, artificial intelligence, and predictive policing tools, on the well-being and experiences of officers. Understanding how these technologies shape the nature of police work and influence officers' psychological and emotional states can inform policies and training programs. Fourth, Evaluating the effectiveness of community policing models in fostering positive community-police relations is an area warranting further exploration. Future studies could assess the impact of community engagement initiatives, outreach programs, and collaborative problem-solving approaches on public perceptions and trust. This research could inform the development of evidence-based community policing strategies that enhance public safety while fostering positive relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

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