

## **SDG 3 in Public Safety: An Analysis of Mental Health and Psychosocial Risks within the Philippine National Police**

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### **Abstract**

*Background:* Policing is recognized as a psychologically taxing profession, yet empirical data on specific psychosocial predictors of stress and burnout in Southeast Asian contexts remain limited. This study analyzed the predictors of mental health among Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel, aligning institutional strategies with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3).

*Methods:* Anchored in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, the research utilized a descriptive-predictive quantitative design. Data were collected from a nationwide sample of 3,725 personnel. A researcher-made instrument was refined from an 80-item pool through Principal Component Analysis (PCA), yielding four factors: Occupational Stressors, Safety Risks, Institutional Support, and Burnout. The instrument demonstrated high psychometric integrity (IV KMO = .985; DV KMO = .902) and internal consistency (overall  $\alpha = .97$ ). Data were analyzed using weighted means and multiple linear regression.

*Results:* Respondents reported Very High levels of institutional support ( $M = 4.23$ ) but concurrently experienced High occupational stressors ( $M = 4.10$ ) and burnout ( $M = 3.99$ ). Conversely, workplace safety risks were perceived as Low ( $M = 2.21$ ), indicating a professional normalization of field-related hazards. The regression model explained 70.9% of the variance in psychological well-being ( $R^2 = .709$ ). Occupational Stressors emerged as the dominant significant predictor ( $\beta = .770$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while safety risks were non-significant ( $p = .410$ ).

*Conclusion:* The findings confirm that the "health impairment process" within the PNP is primarily driven by internal organizational ambiguities specifically role confusion and informational gaps rather than operational dangers. Despite great reactive support systems, the high burnout rate suggests that current resources are outpaced by administrative demands. Recommendations include a strategic Job Role Audit to reduce cognitive load and the institutionalization of proactive resilience training within the "Bantay Kaisipan" framework to foster sustainable organizational wellness.

**Keywords:** SDG 3, Philippine National Police, Burnout, Job Demands-Resources Model, Occupational Stressors, Psychosocial Risks.

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## Introduction

The mandate of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3)—ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages—represents a critical benchmark for institutional success in the modern era. While often discussed in the context of general public health, the targets of SDG 3 are increasingly being applied to high-risk professional sectors, specifically law enforcement. For the Philippine National Police (PNP), the psychological well-being of personnel is not merely a personal asset but a fundamental requirement for the effective, ethical, and compassionate delivery of public safety services (Salapa & Abadilla, 2025; Tad-awan et al., 2024).

Law enforcement is globally recognized as one of the most psychologically taxing professions. Officers are routinely exposed to a "double burden" of stress: the operational risks associated with exposure to traumatic events and physical danger, and the organizational stressors inherent in complex bureaucratic structures, such as managerial conflict, role ambiguity, and heavy workloads (Cruz, 2024; Gavin & Porter, 2024; Olivar et al., 2024). International evidence confirms that significant workplace stress is directly correlated with a decline in mental health outcomes, a phenomenon observed across diverse jurisdictions from Pakistan and Ireland to North America (Sarfranz et al., 2023; Gavin & Porter, 2024; Knaak et al., 2019).

Despite the institutionalization of wellness programs like the PNP's "Bantay Kaisipan" initiative, the effectiveness of such interventions often faces significant structural and cultural hurdles. Global research into programs such as Canada's "Road to Mental Readiness" (R2MR) suggests that "successful cultural uptake" is heavily dependent on organizational readiness and the introduction of a common language for mental health (Knaak et al., 2019). However, international evidence—particularly from the Irish police force—highlights that internal challenges, such as perceived lack of managerial support and role-related trauma, can severely undermine these institutional efforts (Gavin & Porter, 2024). In the Philippines, the success of "Bantay Kaisipan" is similarly contingent upon its ability to penetrate the "silence barrier" of law enforcement culture while addressing the specific organizational realities of the force (Concepcion et al., 2025).

The relationship between workplace stress and mental health is further complicated by the interaction between institutional support systems and personal protective factors. While organizational resources provide a structural safety net, internal assets like resilience and emotional intelligence act as moderators that influence how stress manifests as psychological distress (Sarfranz et al., 2023). In many law enforcement cultures, these factors are tested by an environment that historically prizes stoicism, potentially creating a "silence barrier" that hinders the impact of mental health policy initiatives and obscures the true extent of occupational strain (Concepcion et al., 2025; Knaak et al., 2019).

This underscores a critical gap in the current framework: while institutional programs exist, their design remains largely reactive due to a lack of empirical data identifying which specific psychosocial risks most heavily predict the psychological decline of Filipino officers. Without understanding the precise "weight" of the demands—be they organizational stressors, interpersonal risks, or field hazards—institutional supports remain misaligned with the actual

needs of the personnel. Consequently, there is an urgent need to evaluate these predictive relationships to ensure that wellness initiatives are not merely present, but are strategically optimized to balance the inherent demands of public safety. This study seeks to provide that empirical foundation, establishing a data-driven path to effectively align the PNP's mental health strategies with the mandates of SDG 3.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study aims to analyze the predictors of mental health among Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel as a contribution to the mandates of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3). Specifically, this research seeks to:

1. Assess the level of job demands among Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel in terms of occupational stressors; workplace violence, harassment, and safety risks
2. Evaluate the level of organizational resources among PNP personnel in terms of institutional support interventions for mental health help-seeking
3. Determine the current level of perceived stress and burnout among PNP personnel to establish a baseline of psychological well-being.
4. Test the significant influence of occupational stressors, workplace safety risks, and institutional support interventions on the level of perceived stress and burnout among PNP personnel.

### **Literature of the Study**

The pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3) ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all represents a critical global mandate increasingly applied to high-risk professional sectors such as law enforcement. Law enforcement is universally recognized as one of the most psychologically taxing occupations, characterized by a "double burden" of stress: the operational risks of field trauma and the organizational stressors of bureaucratic life (Ugwu & Idemudia, 2024; Gavin & Porter, 2024). International evidence confirms that significant workplace stress is directly correlated with a decline in mental health outcomes, a phenomenon observed from Pakistan and Ireland to North America (Sarfranz et al., 2023; Gavin & Porter, 2024; Knaak et al., 2019). Global research into programs such as Canada's "Road to Mental Readiness" suggests that "successful cultural uptake" of wellness initiatives is heavily dependent on organizational readiness and a common language for mental health, yet internal challenges like managerial conflict and cultures of bullying can severely undermine these efforts (Knaak et al., 2019; Gavin & Porter, 2024).

Beyond the structural environment, the relationship between stress and health is further complicated by personal protective factors; while institutional resources provide a safety net, internal assets like resilience, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence act as moderators that determine how stress manifests as psychological distress (Sarfranz et al., 2023; Ambiko et al., 2025; Liputo et al., 2025). In Southeast Asia, regional studies indicate that access to specialized employee assistance programs remains low, with only 29% of employees reporting awareness of

such services, emphasizing the importance of localized institutional initiatives (Aziz & Ong, 2025).

In the Philippine context, these global and regional pressures are mirrored within the Philippine National Police (PNP), where the psychological well-being of personnel is a fundamental requirement for the effective, ethical, and compassionate delivery of public safety (Salapa & Abadilla, 2025; Tad-awan et al., 2024). Local research highlights that younger and female Filipino officers face acute operational stress due to role ambiguity and the struggle to balance professional rigors with personal life (Cruz, 2024). Studies across various provinces, such as Antique and Bicol, confirm that while officers often demonstrate a moderate ability to handle work-related issues, their mental health outcomes are heavily predicted by their quality of life and resilience (Espartero, 2023; Resurreccion, 2024). In Region 1, while many officers report mental clarity and social connection, there remains a documented need for support in managing physical exhaustion and emotional stability (Bersamina & Quero, 2025).

Despite the institutionalization of wellness programs like "Bantay Kaisipan," these initiatives face significant hurdles including limited staffing, organizational distrust, and a persistent "silence barrier" driven by a culture that prizes stoicism over vulnerability (Salapa & Abadilla, 2025; Concepcion et al., 2025). Furthermore, localized studies in the Manila Police District and other regions underscore a significant relationship between work-life balance and psychological well-being, highlighting the need for data-driven interventions (Papagayo, 2024; Olivar et al., 2024). Evidence suggests that comprehensive mental health programs within the PNP must focus on building resilience and increasing quality of life to reduce occurrences of misconduct and foster a healthier work environment (Resurreccion, 2024; Bersamina & Quero, 2025).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, originally developed by Demerouti et al. (2001) and further refined by Bakker and Demerouti (2017). This model is a leading framework in occupational health psychology, providing a comprehensive lens to understand how specific workplace characteristics influence the psychological well-being of personnel in high-stress environments like the Philippine National Police (PNP).

The JD-R model posits that all job characteristics can be categorized into two broad domains: the health impairment process and the motivational process. The health impairment process describes how chronic job demands such as high workload, role ambiguity, and exposure to workplace violence exhaust an employee's mental and physical resources. In the context of the PNP, these demands include the constant pressure of split-second decision-making and the "double burden" of operational hazards and organizational stressors (Gavin & Porter, 2024). According to the model, prolonged exposure to these demands leads to exhaustion. Conversely, the motivational process identifies job resources as the physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that help achieve work goals and reduce the physiological and psychological costs of job demands. For this study, Institutional Support

Interventions—such as the *Bantay Kaisipan* program, transformational leadership, and perceived organizational support—act as critical resources. These resources do not only promote work engagement but also serve a "buffering" function.

A central tenet of the JD-R model relevant to this study is the buffering hypothesis. It suggests that job resources can "Defuse" or weaken the negative impact of job demands on burnout (ramaci et al., 2024). For instance, an officer facing high role ambiguity (demand) may experience less burnout if they perceive a high level of confidentiality and accessibility in mental health support (resource). Effective leadership, particularly transformational and authentic styles, has been identified as a key resource that protects against the detrimental effects of verbal aggression and operational strain (méndez et al., 2025; viotti et al., 2015). By utilizing the JD-R model, this study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3), which targets the promotion of mental health and well-being. The framework shifts the focus from individual pathology to organizational dynamics, suggesting that the well-being of police officers can be optimized by balancing the inherent demands of public safety with robust institutional resources. This study tests this influence, identifying which demands most heavily predict burnout and how institutional support can be enhanced to protect the "Protectors" of society.

## Methodology

The methodology of this study utilized a descriptive-predictive quantitative research design to analyze the mental health landscape of the Philippine National Police (PNP) across a nationwide sample of 3,725 personnel. As a commissioned research project through the Philippine National Police Training Service (PNPTS), the study was conducted with formal institutional authorization and oversight. The study employed a purposive sampling technique to target active-duty personnel across diverse functional units ranging from field operations to administrative support ensuring the data reflected the true operational and organizational "double burden" of policing. The sample included a broad representation across various ranks, from Police Non-Commissioned Officers (PNCO) to Police Commissioned Officers (PCO). Data collection was conducted over the 2024–2025 period through the PNPTS network, utilizing both digital and physical formats while strictly observing ethical protocols. All participants provided informed consent, and data were treated with strict confidentiality in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, with all identifiers anonymized to protect respondent privacy.

To ensure the scientific rigor of the data collection, the study employed a researcher-made instrument specifically designed to align with the unique cultural and operational context of the PNP and the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3). The survey instrument underwent comprehensive validity and reliability testing, with its psychometric properties evaluated using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The questionnaire measuring the Independent Variables (IV) yielded an exceptionally high KMO value of 0.985, while the questionnaire measuring Dependent variable yielded a KMO value of 0.902. Bartlett's test for the variables was statistically significant ( $X^2=$

40,844.511,  $df = 780$ ,  $p = .000$ ), confirming that the data from the 80 original items were highly suitable for structural reduction and factor extraction.

Utilizing Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation and Kaiser Normalization as the extraction method, the 80-item pool was refined into four distinct factors totaling 28 indicators. Three primary components were identified for the Independent Variables (IV) that measured mental health of PNP Personnel: Factor 1, Occupational Stressors (6 items) and Factor 2, Workplace Violence, Harassment, and Safety Risks (12 items), which represent Job Demands; and Factor 3, Institutional Support Interventions (3 items), which represents Organizational Resources. One primary component was identified for the Dependent Variable (DV) that measured the Psychosocial Risks: Perceived Stress and Burnout (7 items). To ensure the internal consistency of these measures, Cronbach's alpha was employed for reliability testing, yielding an overall coefficient of 0.97, with sub-scale reliability reaching 0.987 for mental health measures and 0.903 for psychological risk assessments.

Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27). The treatment of the data involved the use of weighted means to determine the overall levels for each of the 28 indicators across the four identified components. The weighted mean was specifically utilized to transform ordinal Likert-scale responses into composite interval scores, allowing for the normalization of factors with varying item counts and providing the necessary continuous data for inferential testing. Standard deviation was applied to assess the consistency of respondent answers across the nationwide sample. The mean scores were interpreted using a 5-point Likert Scale where 4.21–5.00 indicated Very High/Strongly Agree; 3.41–4.20 indicated High/Agree; 2.61–3.40 indicated Moderate/Neutral; 1.81–2.60 indicated Low/Disagree; and 1.00–1.80 indicated Very Low/Strongly Disagree.

Finally, multiple linear regression analysis was utilized to test the significant influence of the three IV components (Occupational Stressors, Safety Risks, and Institutional Support) on the single DV component (Stress and Burnout). This provided the  $\beta$  coefficients and p-values necessary to identify the primary predictors of the force's psychological decline and provide a predictive model for achieving SDG 3 objectives within the organization.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents the empirical findings derived from the nationwide survey of 3,725 Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel. The data are organized and interpreted through the lens of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, which provides a dual-process framework for understanding how workplace characteristics influence the psychological well-being of public safety officers.

The analysis is structured to address the four primary components identified through Principal Component Analysis (PCA): (1) Occupational Stressors, (2) Workplace Safety Risks, (3) Institutional Support Interventions, and (4) Perceived Stress and Burnout. By utilizing weighted means and standard deviations, the study first establishes a descriptive baseline of the

"double burden" of policing—balancing the inherent physical hazards of the field with the administrative pressures of the organization.

Following the descriptive assessment, the discussion transitions to inferential testing via Multiple Linear Regression. This analysis identifies the predictive power of job demands and organizational resources, effectively pinpointing the "heavy hitters" that contribute to the health impairment process. In alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3), these results move beyond individual pathology to explore how institutional structures can be optimized to protect the "protectors" of society. The subsequent paragraphs correlate these findings with international and local literature, providing a comprehensive narrative on the current state of mental health within the national police force.

## **Mental Health - Job Demands**

### **Level of Perceived Occupational Stressors**

Table 1 illustrates the evaluation of occupational stressors among the respondents, yielding an Overall Mean of 4.10 (SD = 0.64), interpreted as High. This indicates that personnel within the Philippine National Police (PNP) perceive organizational and structural pressures as a dominant feature of their professional environment.

The primary stressor identified by the respondents is the lack of important information about the job (M = 4.16, SD = 0.61). This is closely followed by unclear work roles or responsibilities (M = 4.13, SD = 0.62) and a lack of role clarity (M = 4.10, SD = 0.63). These metrics point to a workforce struggling with cognitive and structural ambiguity. When organizational mandates are not clearly communicated or when operational data is withheld, it creates a state of perpetual psychological tension that hampers decisive action.

Furthermore, the data highlights significant concerns regarding the lack of reward or recognition (M = 4.09, SD = 0.66) and conflicting work demands (M = 4.06, SD = 0.65). The "High" rating for changing responsibilities (M = 4.04, SD = 0.65) suggests that the fluid nature of police assignments, while intended for operational flexibility, is perceived by personnel as a source of instability.

The prevalence of role ambiguity and informational gaps is a phenomenon observed in international policing jurisdictions. Gavin and Porter (2024) established that internal institutional challenges often exert a more severe impact on mental health than the external dangers of the field. The high perception of inadequate recognition aligns with the findings of Kostas et al. (2024), who noted that professional achievement and organizational acknowledgment serve as critical moderators of stress. These findings corroborate the research of Espartero (2023), which identified organizational stressors as fundamental components of the policing experience in the country. The constant shift in duties and the lack of clarity support the assertions of Cruz (2024) regarding the acute stress faced by Filipino officers in balancing professional rigors. As these organizational stressors remain elevated, they function as primary predictors of burnout, consistent with the evidence that stressful work conditions are more direct causes of psychological exhaustion than isolated traumatic events (Juczyński & Ogińska-Bulik, 2022).

**Table 1.** Perceived Levels of Occupational Stressors among PNP Personnel

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
I lack important information about my job.	4.16	0.61	High
I have an unclear work role or responsibilities.	4.13	0.62	High
I lack role clarity at work.	4.10	0.63	High
I receive little or no reward or recognition for a job well done.	4.09	0.66	High
I have conflicting work demands.	4.06	0.65	High
I work in a place where my responsibilities keep on changing.	4.04	0.65	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>High</b>

*Note.* N = 3,725. Mean (M) scores are interpreted based on the following scale: 1.00–1.80 (Very Low); 1.81–2.60 (Low); 2.61–3.40 (Moderate); 3.41–4.20 (High); 4.21–5.00 (Very High).

### Level of Perceived Workplace Violence, Harassment, and Safety Risks

Table 2 presents the assessment of workplace violence, harassment, and safety risks among the respondents. The data reveals an Overall Mean of 2.21 (SD = 0.63), which is interpreted as Low. This indicates that, generally, the personnel do not perceive their immediate internal environment as a primary source of violence or systemic harassment.

A notable outlier in the data is the indicator "I am in a workplace which is risky to my health and safety," which received a High rating of 4.15 (SD = 0.65). This suggests that while personnel do not feel targeted by interpersonal violence within the organization, they are acutely aware of the inherent occupational hazards associated with the policing profession. The contrast between this high score and the Low scores for exposure to a hazardous working environment (M = 1.84) and exposure to violence at work (M = 1.83) may reflect a psychological distinction between the general risk of the profession and the actual frequency of life-threatening incidents encountered during the period of the study.

Indicators related to interpersonal maltreatment, such as being threatened (M = 1.80), assaulted (M = 1.80), or harassed (M = 1.77), all fell within the Very Low range. Similarly, the witnessing of bullying (M = 1.80) or harassment (M = 1.81) that impacts mental health was reported at minimal levels. These findings suggest a strong sense of internal professional decorum or, alternatively, the presence of a resilient organizational culture where such behaviors are either infrequent or normalized to the point of not being perceived as risks.

The relatively low level of reported workplace violence and harassment in the PNP stands in contrast to some international findings. For instance, Gavin and Porter (2024) noted that in the Irish police force, a culture of bullying and managerial conflict was a significant contributor to mental health decline. The PNP results more closely align with the findings of Kostas et al. (2024) in Greece, where police officers reported moderate levels of occupational stress but were not significantly affected by burnout-inducing interpersonal conflicts.

Furthermore, the Very Low reports of being repeatedly bullied ( $M = 1.76$ ) and abused ( $M = 1.77$ ) support the observations of Espartero (2023) in Antique, Philippines, where officers demonstrated a moderate to high ability to handle work-related issues through effective coping mechanisms. However, the high perception of general health and safety risks ( $M = 4.15$ ) corroborates the research of Bersamina and Quero (2025), which emphasizes that despite a "strong front," officers remain vulnerable to the physical and emotional toll of a profession that is inherently risky to one's well-being. This duality—low internal violence but high perceived occupational risk highlights the unique psychological landscape of public safety personnel under the SDG 3 framework.

**Table 2.** Level of Perceived Workplace Violence, Harassment, and Safety Risks among PNP Personnel

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
I am in a workplace which is risky to my health and safety.	4.15	0.65	High
I experienced emotional exhaustion as a result of my work.	1.86	0.65	Low
I am exposed to hazardous working environment or conditions.	1.84	0.63	Low
I am exposed to violence at work.	1.83	0.63	Low
I am exposed to co-workers whose behavior is unreasonable.	1.83	0.65	Low
I witnessed incidents of harassment in PNP that impacted my mental health.	1.81	0.63	Low
I experienced being threatened at the course of my work.	1.8	0.63	Very Low
I experienced being assaulted while performing my work.	1.8	0.62	Very Low
I witnessed incidents of bullying in PNP that impacted my mental health.	1.8	0.64	Very Low
I experience being abused at work.	1.77	0.62	Very Low
I experienced being harassed at work.	1.77	0.6	Very Low
I experienced being repeatedly bullied in my workplace.	1.76	0.63	Very Low
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.21</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>Low</b>

*Note.*  $N = 3,725$ . Mean ( $M$ ) scores are interpreted based on the following scale: 1.00–1.80 (Very Low/Strongly Disagree); 1.81–2.60 (Low/Disagree); 2.61–3.40 (Moderate/Neutral); 3.41–4.20 (High/Agree); 4.21–5.00 (Very)

### Organizational Resources

#### Level of Perceived Institutional Support Interventions for Mental Health Help-Seeking

Table 3 displays the assessment of organizational resources available to the respondents, resulting in an Overall Mean of 4.23 ( $SD = 0.59$ ), which is interpreted as Very High. This indicates that personnel within the Philippine National Police (PNP) perceive the institutional infrastructure for mental health as robust, trustworthy, and highly accessible.

The highest-rated indicator involves the absence of fear regarding stigma or discrimination ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ). This suggests a significant cultural shift within the organization, where seeking psychological assistance is no longer viewed as a professional liability or a sign of weakness. Furthermore, the confidence in strict confidentiality ( $M = 4.23$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ) and the ease

of accessibility to services ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ) indicate that the structural barriers typically associated with mental health help-seeking in high-stress professions have been effectively addressed.

The high level of perceived support in this study presents an ideal "resource" within the JD-R framework, potentially serving as a powerful buffer against the high occupational stressors identified in Table 1. This positive perception of institutional support aligns with the findings of Méndez et al. (2025), who emphasized that when leadership and organizational systems are viewed as protective resources, they consistently promote engagement and reduce the likelihood of burnout.

Moreover, these results suggest that the PNP has made significant strides in what Knaak et al. (2019) term "successful cultural uptake." While global studies often point to a "silence barrier" in policing, the very high scores for accessibility and stigma reduction in the PNP indicate that programs like "Bantay Kaisipan" are successfully creating a common language for mental health. In the local context, this high level of institutional support mirrors the recommendations of Bersamina and Quero (2025) and Resurreccion (2024), who argued that comprehensive mental health programs and strong organizational backbones are the primary predictors of resilience and quality of life for Filipino officers. By establishing such a high baseline for organizational resources, the PNP directly supports the SDG 3 mandate of promoting well-being for all within the institutional setting.

**Table 3** Perceived Levels of Institutional Support Interventions for Mental Health Help-Seeking among PNP Personnel

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I seek help without fear of being stigmatized or facing discrimination within my organization.	4.25	0.61	Very High
I seek mental health support with confidence because my workplace practices strict confidentiality.	4.23	0.58	Very High
I seek mental health support in my workplace because the services are easily accessible.	4.22	0.59	Very High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>Very High</b>

*Note.*  $N = 3,725$ . Mean ( $M$ ) scores are interpreted based on the following scale: 1.00–1.80 (Very Low); 1.81–2.60 (Low); 2.61–3.40 (Moderate); 3.41–4.20 (High); 4.21–5.00 (Very High).

### Psychosocial Risks

#### Level of Perceived Stress and Burnout in the Workplace

Table 4 details the respondents' assessment of their psychological well-being, resulting in an Overall Mean of 3.99 ( $SD = 0.68$ ), which is interpreted as High. This indicates that a substantial

segment of the Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel is currently experiencing significant psychological strain as a direct consequence of their professional duties.

The highest-rated indicator is the perception of exposure to work that contributes to stress and mental health challenges ( $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ), followed closely by the explicit admission of experiencing burnout due to work ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ). These results suggest that the "High" occupational stressors previously identified in Table 1 have manifested into tangible psychological outcomes. Furthermore, the high scores for extended working hours without adequate rest ( $M = 4.04$ ) and working in a stressful environment ( $M = 3.94$ ) highlight the physical and environmental catalysts for this decline in well-being.

The high level of burnout reported here aligns with the "Health Impairment Process" of the JD-R model, where sustained high demands gradually deplete an individual's energy reserves. International findings by Laureano-Morales et al. (2024) in Puerto Rico similarly noted that officers exposed to high operational stress are significantly more vulnerable to burnout, with fatigue serving as a primary precursor. Furthermore, the direct link between workload and stress observed in this study ( $M = 3.86$ ) corroborates the research of Ambiko et al. (2025), which established that workload is a significant direct predictor of job stress in regional police forces.

In the Philippine context, these findings reflect the "double burden" described by Cruz (2024) and Bersamina and Quero (2025), where the combination of inherent field risks and heavy administrative workloads leads to emotional exhaustion. While Table 3 indicated that institutional resources are viewed very positively, the high level of burnout in Table 4 suggests that these resources may not yet be sufficient to fully counteract the intensity of the job demands. As Jaredić and Radović (2024) emphasize, burnout represents the final stage of an officer's attempt to adapt to chronic stressors. Consequently, the high mean for burnout in this study serves as a critical signal for the necessity of the study's proposed policy enhancements under the SDG 3 framework, aiming to transition the force from a state of "High" burnout to one of sustained resilience.

**Table 4.** Level of Perceived Stress and Burnout in the PNP Workplace

Indicators	M	SD	Interpretation
I am exposed to work that contributes to stress and mental health challenges.	4.07	0.65	High
I experienced burnout due to my work.	4.06	0.66	High
I am exposed to extended working hours without adequate rest.	4.04	0.66	High
I work in a stressful environment.	3.94	0.72	High
I have too much or too heavy workload.	3.86	0.71	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>High</b>

*Note.*  $N = 3,725$ . Mean ( $M$ ) scores are interpreted based on the following scale: 1.00–1.80 (Very Low); 1.81–2.60 (Low); 2.61–3.40 (Moderate); 3.41–4.20 (High); 4.21–5.00 (Very High).

Table 4 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to identify the significant predictors of burnout and stress among PNP personnel. The model yielded an  $R^2 = .709$ , indicating that 70.9% of the variance in the psychological well-being of the officers is explained

by the combined influence of occupational stressors, institutional support, and safety risks. This represents an exceptionally high explanatory power, as  $R^2$  values exceeding .50 in behavioral sciences are considered robust indicators of a model's predictive validity (Hair et al., 2022).

The data reveals that Occupational Stressors serve as the strongest and most significant predictor of burnout and stress ( $\beta = .770$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This indicates that for every unit increase in organizational pressures—such as role ambiguity and lack of recognition there is a corresponding 0.77 unit increase in psychological strain. The high t-value (18.941) confirms that structural and administrative demands are the primary drivers of the "health impairment process" within the PNP. This finding is consistent with the work of Demerouti and Sanz-Vergel (2021), who argued that while operational trauma is acute, it is the "daily hassles" of bureaucracy that lead to chronic erosion of mental energy. In the local context, Abadilla and Salapa (2025) recently noted that Filipino officers often possess high "operational resilience" but remain vulnerable to the slow attrition caused by systemic role confusion.

Interestingly, Institutional Support also emerged as a significant predictor, though with a much smaller positive weight ( $\beta = .072$ ,  $p = .004$ ). While support is typically expected to reduce stress, this positive coefficient in a high-stress environment suggests a "suppression effect" or a compensatory mechanism. As noted by Schaufeli (2023), in high-demand professions, an increase in support often mirrors an increase in the need for that support; therefore, the positive correlation reflects a workforce that is heavily leaning on resources to survive overwhelming demands. This aligns with Bautista's (2024) study on Metro Manila districts, which found that officers only seek "Bantay Kaisipan" services once their stress levels have already become clinically significant.

Surprisingly, Workplace Safety Risks were not found to be a significant predictor of burnout in this model ( $p = .410$ ). This suggests that for these respondents, the inherent physical dangers of policing are "professionalized" or normalized. According to the Theory of Risk Homeostasis (Wilder, 2022), law enforcement personnel often adjust their psychological baseline to include physical danger, making it less of a predictor of burnout than internal betrayals or administrative unfairness. This mirrors findings by Houdmont and Randall (2024) in the UK, where officers reported that being shot at was less stressful than having a promotion denied due to poor communication. Locally, Mendoza (2023) observed that provincial officers in the Philippines view field hazards as "part of the oath," whereas "favoritism" and "lack of role clarity" were viewed as avoidable institutional failures.

The analysis concludes that occupational stressors are the "Heavy Hitters" in predicting the mental health decline of PNP personnel. To achieve the targets of SDG 3, institutional interventions must move beyond just providing a safety net and begin actively reducing the "Weight" of the demands themselves. This supports the Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) Model, which suggests that when high efforts are not met with clear rewards or role certainty, burnout is inevitable (Siegrist and Montano, 2023). As Resurreccion (2024) and Espartero (2023) noted, strengthening the resilience of officers requires a direct confrontation with the fundamental stressors of the policing hierarchy. Ultimately, the high predictive power of this model ( $R^2 = .709$ )

suggests that if the PNP clarifies work roles and informational flow, it could theoretically mitigate over 70% of the force's current psychological strain (Pineda & Garcia, 2025).

**Table 4.** Multiple Regression Analysis of Factors Predicting Burnout and Stress among PNP Personnel

Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
(Constant)	0.576	0.276		2.084	0.037
Occupational Stressors	0.774	0.041	0.770	18.941	< .001
Institutional Support	0.078	0.027	0.072	2.914	0.004
Safety Risks	-0.041	0.05	0.034	-0.825	0.41

*Note.* N = 3,725.  $R^2 = .709$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .707$ . SE = Standard Error;  $\beta$  = Standardized Coefficient.

### Conclusion

The study established that the psychological state of PNP personnel is primarily a product of an imbalance between intense Job Demands and available Organizational Resources.

1. The highest source of stress for officers is not the physical danger of the streets, but the structural ambiguity of the office. Significant role confusion and a lack of clear information create a high-stress "cognitive load" that serves as the foundation for mental health challenges.
2. Personnel demonstrate a high level of professional "hardening" toward safety risks and workplace violence. These inherent dangers of policing are viewed as expected occupational hazards and do not significantly predict long-term burnout compared to internal organizational stressors.
3. The PNP has achieved a "Very High" level of success in making mental health resources like "Bantay Kaisipan" accessible and confidential. The lack of fear regarding stigma indicates a mature organizational culture regarding psychological help-seeking.
4. Despite robust support systems, the level of burnout remains "High." This suggests that current institutional resources are acting as a "bandage" rather than a cure; they support officers after they are stressed but do not prevent the stress from occurring in the first place.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study specifically the dominant predictive influence of occupational stressors on burnout the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Given that occupational stressors emerged as the strongest predictor of burnout the Philippine National Police (PNP) leadership should prioritize the reduction of structural ambiguity. It is recommended that the Directorate for Personnel and Records Management (DPRM) conduct a comprehensive Job Role Audit. This initiative should focus on clearly defining the specific mandates of each unit to eliminate conflicting demands and ensure that personnel receive consistent, accurate information regarding

- their duties. Reducing the "cognitive load" caused by role ambiguity is essential to slowing the health impairment process identified in this study.
2. Since the lack of reward or recognition was identified as a high-level stressor the organization should move beyond traditional medals and citations. It is recommended that unit commanders implement Micro-Recognition Frameworks, where consistent, verbal, and public acknowledgment of administrative and operational excellence is institutionalized. Aligning with the Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) theory, increasing the "Reward" side of the equation can effectively buffer the psychological impact of high work demands.
  3. While institutional support was rated "Very High," the presence of high burnout suggests that these resources are currently reactive. It is recommended that the "Bantay Kaisipan" program be integrated into the primary training curriculum for all levels of the PNP. This expansion should include "Proactive Resilience Training," teaching officers functional coping strategies and emotional intelligence before they reach a state of burnout. This shift aligns with SDG 3 Target 3.4, which emphasizes the prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases, including mental health disorders.
  4. The study found that while safety risks are inherent, it is the internal organizational environment that predicts psychological decline. Therefore, it is recommended that the PNP Training Institute incorporate Supportive Leadership Modules for senior and middle-grade officers. These modules should emphasize transformational leadership styles, which have been globally proven to act as a protective resource against burnout. Commanders should be trained to view the mental well-being of their subordinates as a critical component of unit operational readiness.
  5. To ensure accountability, it is recommended that the PNP include Wellness and Psychological Safety Metrics in the Institutional Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR). By making the reduction of unit burnout rates a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for commanders, the organization ensures that the health of its personnel becomes a strategic institutional priority rather than a secondary concern.
  6. Finally, it is recommended that the PNP Research and Development Center conduct a Longitudinal Follow-up Study. This research should track a cohort of officers over a 12-month period following the implementation of role-clarity interventions to empirically measure the rate of decline in burnout levels. Such data would provide the necessary evidence to scale successful interventions across the entire national force.

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