

Work-Life Balance and Professional Burnout: Evidence from Law Enforcement in Southern Cebu

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Abstract

Law enforcement officers, particularly patrolmen, face chronic occupational stressors that disrupt work-life balance and contribute to burnout—a syndrome marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment. This study examined the correlation between work-life balance and burnout among patrolmen (n=18) in the City of Naga and San Fernando, Southern Cebu, Philippines. A quantitative-correlational design was employed using a validated survey grounded in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and Spearman's rank correlation. Most respondents (94.4%) rarely disconnect from work outside working hours. Emotional exhaustion registered a moderate weighted mean of 3.08. Depersonalization showed zero variance, precluding correlation analysis. Work-life balance showed no significant correlation with emotional exhaustion ($p = -0.219$, $p = 0.383$) or personal accomplishment ($p = -0.157$, $p = 0.533$). Findings reveal notable emotional exhaustion and work-life imbalance. Organizations should implement workload redistribution, stress management, and wellness-supportive policies to protect officer well-being.

Keywords: work-life balance, burnout, patrolmen, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, Philippine National Police

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Introduction

Law enforcement is widely recognized as one of the most stressful occupations globally. Police officers are routinely exposed to traumatic incidents, threats of physical harm, irregular shift schedules, high operational demands, and persistent public scrutiny (Otto & Gattens, 2022; Drew & Martin, 2023). These cumulative stressors disrupt the equilibrium between professional duties and personal life, creating conditions highly conducive to burnout. Burnout—characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment—has emerged as a critical occupational health concern with broad implications for officer well-being, public safety, and organizational performance (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Bezie et al., 2024).

In the Philippine context, the Philippine National Police (PNP) maintains approximately 228,000 personnel to serve a population exceeding 100 million citizens. Between 2022 and 2023, the PNP Health Service documented 1,270 and 657 personnel, respectively, who exhibited mental health red flags requiring counseling or psychiatric intervention (Santre, 2024). These figures, through representing reported cases, signal an underlying crisis of mental health and workplace well-being within the law enforcement sector. Despite growing awareness, empirical research specifically targeting burnout and work-life balance among patrolmen in local Philippine contexts—particularly at the station level—remains scarce.

This study is grounded in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model originally proposed by Demerouti et al. (2001) and later refined by Bakker and Devereux (2007, 2017). The JD-R model posits that employee burnout arises when job demands chronically exceed the resources available to meet them. In law enforcement, demands such as shift work, high call volumes, role conflict, and exposure to trauma frequently not offset by adequate organizational resources—including supervisor

support, autonomy, and access to mental health services—heightening the risk of burnout (Schaufeli, 2017; Antunes et al., 2024).

This research aimed to: (1) identify key parameters influencing work-life balance among patrolmen; (2) assess burnout levels in terms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment; (3) examine the correlation between work-life balance and the three burnout dimensions; and (4) propose evidence-based strategies to promote work-life balance and mitigate burnout. In doing so, this research seeks to contribute to the growing empirical literature on police officer well-being in Southeast Asia, and to offer actionable insights for PNP leadership, mental health practitioners, and policy architects.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework: The Job Demands-Resources Model

The Job-Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) provides the primary theoretical scaffolding for this study. It posits two psychological processes: a health-impairment process, in which chronically high job demands uncompensated by resources erode employees' energy and produce burnout; and a motivational process, in which abundant resources foster work engagement and organizational commitment. Schaufeli (2017) confirmed the model's validity across more than 100 cross-national studies, while Baker et al. (2023), operationalized it specifically for patrol officers and identified red tape, staff shortages, and favoritism as the organizational demands most strongly correlated with burnout. Antunes et al. (2024), in a PRISMA systematic review of police work-life balance literature (2013-2023), similarly found that organizational support, job autonomy, and schedule flexibility are the most significant JD-R resource moderators of burnout—

underscoring the relevance for the Southern Cebu context, where these resources are demonstrably limited.

Police Work-Life Balance: Global Evidence

Kurtz (2012) found that officers with dependents reported significantly greater role overload and work-family conflict driven by scheduling inflexibility, a finding extended by Cheung and Li (2022), who showed that shift autonomy significantly moderated the harmful effects of night-shift work on work-family balance among Hong Kong police. Garrido et al. (2022) demonstrated longitudinally that alternating shift work was associated with sleep disturbances, mood impairment, and strained family relationships, but that a structured schedule change measurably improved work-life balance and job satisfaction—establishing a causal basis for organizational scheduling reform. Drew and Martin (2023) identified three interdependent categories of police job demand stress—operational, organizational, and trauma-based—all of which are present in the Southern Cebu context. Comparative evidence from Singh et al. (2023), Anusya et al. (2022), and Egreja and Melo (2023) further confirms that police officers consistently report the poorest work-life balance of any high-pressure profession, with work overload and schedule inflexibility as the primary drivers—a pattern directly mirrored in the present study’s descriptive findings.

Police Burnout: A Review of the Evidence

Burnout, operationalized through the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson, 1981), is a three-dimensional progressive syndrome—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment—empirically validated across law enforcement populations worldwide (Mańkowska, 2025). Purba and Demou (2023), in a PRISMA review of 41 studies, identified poor management practices, role ambiguity, lack of organizational support, and high operational demands as the dominant burnout predictors across jurisdictions, concluding that organizational-level interventions are essential complements to any individual-focused strategy. Baker et al. (2023) found that patrol officers specifically exhibit significantly higher burnout than command-staff, driven by organizational rather than operational stressors. Bezie et al. (2024) documented a 45.7% burnout prevalence among Ethiopian police, while Drew et al., (2024) demonstrated through structural equation modelling

($N=2,669$) that burnout mediates the pathway from all three demand-stress categories to turnover intentions. Cheung et al. (2023), Burchell et al. (2023), Oliveira et al. (2024), and Sondhi et al. (2023) collectively confirm that burnout, PTSD, distress, and depression are significantly elevated in police populations globally, and that systematic mental health assessment and organizational quality improvements are the most evidence-supported responses.

Emotional Exhaustion: Mechanisms and Manifestations in Law Enforcement

Emotional exhaustion—the core, earliest-manifesting dimension of burnout—represents the depletion of emotional resources through sustained relational and operational demands (Maslach et al., 1996; Otto & Gatens, 2022). The Carolina Blue Project (2024) found that patrol officers, particularly those in rural or resource-constrained settings analogous to Southern Cebu’s San Fernando station, report significantly higher emotional exhaustion than non-patrol personnel. Buenadicha-Mateos et al. (2022) identified techno-stress as an emerging pathway to exhaustion, corroborated by Shen and Zamani (2024), who found that after-hours supervisor messaging directly elevated burnout in law enforcement—a mechanism consistent with the present study’s finding that 94.4% of patrolmen rarely disconnect from work. Santa Maria et al. (2021) demonstrated experimentally that health-oriented leadership training significantly reduced emotional exhaustion independent workload, positioning supervisory practice as the most modifiable organizational buffer against this burnout dimension in the PNP context.

Depersonalization: Organizational and Cultural Drivers

Depersonalization—the interpersonal, cynicism-driven dimension of burnout—develops as a maladaptive coping mechanism when officers’ affective empathic resources are chronically depleted by public-service demands (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Mańkowska, 2025). Springer et al. (2024), in a meta-analysis of 10 studies comprising 4,572 officers, found that depersonalization carries strongest association with PTSD symptomatology of any burnout dimension (effect size = 0.32), underscoring the clinical stakes of monitoring it even at apparently low levels. Correia et al. (2023) demonstrated that affective empathy depletion—

closely related to depersonalization—is more predictive of burnout than cognitive empathy, and is resistant to self-report measurement due to professional shame. Buhrig (2023) attributed this suppression to hegemonic masculine norms in police culture that discourage emotional disclosure, offering the most theoretically compelling explanation for the zero-variance depersonalization finding observed in the present study and highlighting the need for non-self-report measurement in future research.

Personal Accomplishment: The Protective Dimension of Burnout

Personal accomplishment—officers' sense of professional competence, efficacy, and positive impact—functions as the primary resilience resource within the MBI framework, buffering against burnout progression when sustained at sufficient levels (Maslach et al., 1996). Baker et al. (2023) found that patrol officers report lower personal accomplishment than command-staff due to reduced autonomy and recognition, establishing a rank-specific vulnerability directly relevant to the present study's cohort. Granholm Valmari et al. (2023) confirmed that organizational support and schedule autonomy are the strongest organizational predictors of sustained personal accomplishment among police—precisely the two dimensions most deficient in the Southern Cebu setting. Drew et al. (2024) further demonstrated that occupational commitment, a construct closely aligned with high personal accomplishment, serves as a protective factor against the burnout-to-turnover pathway, suggesting that this dimension through recognition programs and community feedback systems is as organizationally critical as reducing burnout itself.

Mindfulness, Resilience, and Organizational Interventions

The evidence base for police burnout intervention is organized across primary (organizational design), secondary (psychoeducational), and tertiary (clinical) tiers. At the primary level, Garrido et al. (2022) and Baker et al. (2023) provide causal evidence that scheduling reform and red-tape reduction are the highest-leverage organizational changes for patrol officer burnout prevention. At the secondary level, Astridge et al. (2025), in a systematic review and meta-analysis of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in policing, found moderate effects on depression ($SMD = 0.56$) and

small effects on anxiety ($SMD = 0.32$), concluding that MBIs should be institutionalized in wellness curricula but must be paired with organizational change to produce lasting effects. Queirós et al. (2020) validated that resilience and task-oriented coping are the strongest individual protective factors across 2,057 officers, while Santa Maria et al. (2021) demonstrated that health-oriented leadership training reduces emotional exhaustion independently of workload. Federick and Dunbar (2019) additionally highlight that meaning-making through community, purpose, and spirituality—culturally resonant dimensions in the Philippine context—constitute underutilized but effective buffers against burnout in law enforcement settings.

Research Gaps and Positioning of the Present Study

Despite the substantial global literature synthesized above, critical gaps remain. Antunes et al.'s (2024) systematic review found that work-life balance research in non-Western policing contexts is almost entirely missing, with existing studies overwhelmingly examining large urban forces in high-income Western countries. The small, semi-urban and rural station environment of Southern Cebu is both ecologically distinct and theoretically important for testing the JD-R model under conditions of structural resource scarcity. The present study directly addresses these gaps by deploying the MBI—the globally standard burnout instrument—in a Filipino patrol-officer population for the first time in station-level empirical research, providing baseline descriptive and correlational data that future longitudinal and multi-station studies may use as a benchmark. The zero-variance depersonalization finding further contributes to an emerging methodological conversation about the limits of self-report burnout measurement in institutionally surveilled, culturally constrained policing contexts.

Methodology

This study employed quantitative-correlational research design. Correlational designs examine the strength and direction of relationships between two or more variables without experimental manipulation (Bhandari, 2020). This approach was selected because the study aimed to determine whether a statistically significant relationship exists between work-life balance parameters and burnout dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment) among patrolmen, without modifying their work conditions or environments. A

structured, self-administered survey questionnaire was the primary data collection instrument.

The study was conducted at two Philippine National Police stations in Southern Cebu: the City of Naga Police Station (n=10) and the Municipality of San Fernando Police Station (n=8), for a total population of N=18 patrolmen. Purposive sampling was used, targeting all patrolmen meeting the inclusion criteria active employment as a patrolman or patrolwoman assigned to

a Southern Cebu station, with a minimum tenure of six months. Patrolmen holding higher ranks were excluded. The City of Naga is an urbanizing area approximately 30-45 minutes south of Cebu City, characterized by industrial zones, commercial development, and growing residential neighborhoods. San Fernando is a semi-rural municipality 15-30 minutes from Naga, presenting a hybrid of rural urbanizing policing challenges. The diversity of these settings enriched the study's ecological validity.

Table 1: Distribution of Research Respondents by Police Station

Police Station	Number of Patrolmen	Percentage (%)
City of Naga Police Station	10	55.6%
Municipality of San Fernando Police Station	8	44.4%
Total	18	100%

Data were collected using a validated, researcher-developed survey questionnaire comprising three parts. Part 1 assessed work-life balance parameters using four single-item questions (Likert-type and categorical scales) addressing frequency of work disconnection, satisfaction with schedule flexibility, pressure to work overtime, and ease of schedule adjustment, followed by a 10-item Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) measuring facets of work-life balance including family time, leisure, stress management, and access to mental health resources.

Part 2 utilized the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to assess burnout across its three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (9 items), Depersonalization (5 items), and Personal Accomplishment (8 items). Respondents rated the frequency of each feeling using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Never to 7 = Every Day). The MBI is the most widely used and psychometrically validated measure of burnout, employed in approximately 90% of empirical burnout research globally (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Part 3 captured demographic and psychographic profiles of respondents. The questionnaire was reviewed by the research adviser and approved by the research panel members prior to administration. A pilot dry-run was conducted to verify clarity and comprehension.

Following formal approval from the Assistant Dean, College of Criminology, and written authorization from the respective Chiefs of Police, the research team administered the survey questionnaire to all eligible patrolmen during non-operational hours. Each respondent completed an informed consent form prior to participation. Survey administration was conducted in person, with 15-20 minutes allocated for completion. Researchers were present to clarify any item ambiguities. Data were collected, checked for completeness, and anonymized prior to analysis. All procedures adhered to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10173).

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) were computed for all variables. Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to assess normality across the four study variables (Work-Life Balance, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, Personal Accomplishment). Given the small sample size (n=18), an alpha level of 0.10 was used for the normality test to minimize the risk of falsely assuming normality. As three of four variables were found to be non-normally distributed, Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was selected for inferential analysis. For the Depersonalization subscale, which displayed zero variance, descriptive analytics were used in lieu of correlation analysis. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = 0.05$ for all correlation tests.

Results and Discussion

Work-Life Balance Parameters

Ability to Disconnect from Work Outside Working Hours

The vast majority of respondents (94.4%, $n = 17$) reported that they rarely feel able to fully disconnect from work outside of working hours; only one respondent (5.6%) indicated never being able to disconnect, and none reported being able to disconnect sometimes, often, or always. This pervasive inability to establish psychological separation between professional and personal life is a particularly consequential finding. Psychological detachment—the capacity to mentally disengage from work during off-hours is one of the most empirically robust predictors of burnout prevention in the occupational health literature (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). When officers cannot mentally leave work at the end of a shift, the recovery process that replenishes emotional and cognitive resources is disrupted, accelerating the demand-depletion cycle described by the JD-R model. Shen and Zamani (2024) found that after-hours supervisor messaging directly elevated burnout in border police, and Buenadicha-Mateos et al. (2022) identified techno-stress—the psychological strain of constant digital availability—as an emerging pathway to emotional exhaustion. The near-universal connectivity burden observed among Southern Cebu patrolmen is consistent with these mechanisms and warrants targeted organizational policy intervention.

Satisfaction with Work Schedule Flexibility

All 18 respondents (100%) indicated that they were ‘Satisfied’ with their current work schedule flexibility, with no respondents reporting dissatisfaction or neutrality. While this uniform satisfaction may appear reassuring, it must be interpreted alongside the finding in “Ease of Schedule Adjustment for Personal Commitments” that the same officers unanimously find it difficult to adjust their schedules for personal needs. This apparent paradox is resolved by distinguishing between macro-level scheduling satisfaction—the general acceptability of assigned shift patterns—and micro-level schedule autonomy—the capacity to make ad hoc adjustments for personal obligations. Cheung and Li (2022) demonstrated that it is shift autonomy satisfaction, that moderates the harmful effects of shift work on work-family balance. The present data suggest that patrolmen find their regular schedules acceptable in

structure but are afforded virtually no discretion to deviate from them in practice, a combination that constrains work-family balance even in the absence of overt scheduling dissatisfaction.

Pressure to Work Beyond Scheduled Hours

All 18 respondents (100%) reported that they ‘Sometimes’ feel pressured to work beyond their scheduled hours, with no respondents reporting always, often, or never experiencing this pressure. While ‘sometimes’ may appear moderate, the universality of this response indicates that overtime pressure is a structurally embedded feature of the work environment rather than an occasional personal experience. Drew et al. (2024), in a path analysis of 2,669 officers, demonstrated that operational demand stressors including overtime significantly predicted burnout through a meditated pathway, which in turn predicted turnover intentions. The IACP (2023) further documented that understanding creates a self-reinforcing cycle in which overtime increases fatigue, which drives absenteeism and turnover, which further deepens understanding. Given that the present study’s two stations employ only 10 and 8 officers respectively, the departure of even one officer significantly amplifies the per-capita workload on those who remain—making this dynamic particularly acute in the Southern Cebu context.

Ease of Schedule Adjustment for Personal Commitments

All 18 respondents (100%) reported that it was ‘Difficult’ to adjust their work schedules to accommodate personal commitments, with none finding it very difficult, neutral, easy, or very easy. This systemic inflexibility is a direct manifestation of limited job resources within the JD-R framework and is consistent with Kurtz’s (2012) finding that scheduling inflexibility disproportionately amplifies work-family conflict, particularly for officers with dependents. Garrido et al. (2022) further demonstrated that it is officers’ perceived control over schedules—not the schedule structure per se—that predicts work-life balance outcomes. The implication is that organizational intervention must address not only how shifts are designed but also bureaucratic and cultural barriers that prevent officers from exercising schedule discretion in response to legitimate personal needs.

Composite Work-Life Balance Scale

Score on the 10-item work-life balance scale ranged from a mean of 2.11 (ability to balance work and personal life) to 2.88 (access to mental health services), with all items falling in the 'Disagree' to 'Neutral' range. Items related to family time, leisure, and healthy relationships outside work consistently received the lowest ratings, pointing to the pervasive encroachment of work demands on personal domains. This pattern is consistent with Egreja and Melo's (2023) cross-professional finding that police

officers report the least favorable work-life balance of any high-pressure profession, driven by non-negotiable time demands and emotional labor requirements. The composite profile confirms that the Southern Cebu patrolmen are operating with a pronounced demand-resource imbalance across multiple work-life domains simultaneously—precisely the condition the JD-R model identifies as the structural precondition for burnout escalation.

Table 2: Composite Work-Life Balance Item Means

Work-Life Balance Item	Mean Score (1-5)	Interpretation
Ability to balance work and personal life	2.11	Disagree
Sufficient time for leisure activities	2.23	Disagree
Sufficient time for family and friends	2.38	Disagree
Maintenance of health relationships	2.50	Disagree-Neutral
Effectiveness stress management	2.55	Disagree-Neutral
Sufficient rest and relaxation	2.62	Neutral
Work negatively impacting health	2.60	Neutral
Satisfaction with work-life balance	2.60	Neutral
Family understanding of job demands	2.82	Neutral
Access to mental health/stress resources	2.88	Neutral

Burnout Levels

Emotional Exhaustion

The overall weighted mean for emotional exhaustion across all nine MBI items was 3.08, indicating a moderate level of emotional exhaustion among the patrolmen. Items reflecting feeling emotionally drained (3.44) and used up at the end of the workday (3.38) consistently registered the highest scores, while items relating to working too hard (2.88) and feeling at the end of one's rope (2.72) scored lower. This item-level pattern is theoretically informative: it suggests that the primary mechanism of emotional exhaustion in this cohort is the relational and emotional cost of direct public service—interacting with community members, managing conflict, and absorbing the emotional weight of people's problems—rather than sheer workload volume. Otto and

Gatens (2022) identified this very mechanism, the emotional demands of direct public contact, as a leading driver of exhaustion in policing that operates partly independently of workload metrics. The moderate level overall is consistent with published benchmarks for patrol officers specifically; Baker et al (2023) found that patrol officers report significantly higher burnout than command-staff, confirming that the Southern Cebu patrolmen's scores align with the global evidence profile for this rank. Santa Maria et al. (2021) demonstrated experimentally that health-oriented leadership significantly reduces emotional exhaustion independent of workload, positioning supervisory practice as the most modifiable organizational buffer in the PNP context. Future studies should also incorporate measures of digital work intrusion, as Shen and Zamani (2024) found that after-hours messaging alone directly elevated

burnout scores, a pathway consistent with the near-universal connectivity burden documented here.

Table 3: Emotional Exhaustion Item Scores (Weighted Means)

Emotional Exhaustion Item	Weighted Mean
I feel emotionally drained from my work	3.44
I feel used up at the end of the workday	3.38
I feel fatigued when I face another day on the job	3.22
Working with people all day is a strain for me	3.11
I feel burned out from my work	3.05
I feel frustrated by my job	2.94
I feel I'm working too hard on my job	2.88
Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.	2.83
I feel like I'm at the end of my rope	2.72
Overall Weighted Mean	3.08

Depersonalization

Analysis of the depersonalization subscale revealed zero variance across all 18 respondents (minimum = 6.00, maximum = 6.00, mean = 6.00, standard deviation = 0.00), making correlation analysis mathematically impossible. This is the most methodologically complex finding in the study and warrants careful interpretation. Three explanations are plausible. First, systematic social desirability bias: Buhrig (2023) documented that hegemonic masculine norms and institutional cultures of toughness create structural barriers to endorsing attitudes perceived as professionally shameful, such as treating community members impersonally or becoming emotionally callous. The social desirability threat was likely heightened here because data collection required written authorization oversight. Second, genuine absence of depersonalization: the progressive model of burnout (as cited in Mańkowska, 2025) holds that emotional

exhaustion typically precedes depersonalization by months or years; given that this cohort is at a moderate exhaustion level, many officers may not yet have reached the stage where depersonalization develops as a coping response. Third, measurement sensitivity limitations: Correia et al. (2023) demonstrated that affective empathy depletion—closely related to depersonalization—is more validly captured through behavioral or observational measures than self-report. Springer et al.'s (2024) meta-analysis established that depersonalization carries the strongest association with PTSD of any MBI dimension, underscoring the clinical stakes of monitoring it even when self-report data appear uniformly low. Future research in this setting should supplement MBI self-report data appear uniformly low. Future research in this setting should supplement MBI self-report with vignette-based scenarios, peer-nomination measures, or supervisor ratings to overcome these measurement constraints.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Depersonalization

Statistic	Value
N	18
Range	0.00
Minimum	6.00
Maximum	6.00
Mean	6.00
Standard Deviation	0.000
Variance	0.000

Personal Accomplishment

Personal accomplishment yielded the highest overall weighted mean of 5.56 on the MBI frequency scale, indicating that patrolmen frequently experience a sense of professional effectiveness. Items reflecting problem-solving effectiveness and positive influence on others' lives scored highest. Notably the item for managing emotional problems calmly scored the lowest within this subscale—a finding that serves as an early warning signal. Drew et al. (2024) demonstrated that while personal accomplishment protects against the burnout-to-turnover pathway, this protection is weakened when emotional regulation capacity is simultaneously compromised. Baker et al. (2023) identified this combination—strong professional task efficacy alongside impaired emotional regulation—as a burnout early warning profile among patrol officers. The high personal accomplishment overall is a protective finding consistent with community-oriented policing contexts, where officers' direct community relationships provide reinforcing feedback that sustains professional identity (Foley et al., 2024). However, Granholm Valmari et al. (2023) documented that organizational support and

schedule autonomy are the strongest predictors of sustained personal accomplishment—precisely the two dimensions most deficient in the Southern Cebu setting—suggesting that this cohort is currently resilient but structurally positioned for progressive erosion without organizational intervention.

Normality Test Results

Shapiro-Wilk tests were conducted for all four study variables at $\alpha = 0.10$, given the small sample size. Results are summarized in Table 5. Work-Life Balance Parameters were found to be normally distributed ($W = 0.916$, $df = 18$, $p = 0.110$), while Emotional Exhaustion ($W = 0.801$, $p = 0.002$) and Personal Accomplishment ($W = 0.841$, $p = 0.006$) were not normally distributed. Depersonalization could not be tested due to zero variance. These results necessitated the use of Spearman's rank correlation for all inferential analyses, the choice of $\alpha = 0.10$ for the normality test itself reduces the risk of falsely assuming normality in small samples where parametric tests carry heightened sensitivity concerns.

Table 5: Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results

Variable	Shapiro-Wilk W	df	p-value	Distribution
Work-Life Balance Parameters	0.916	18	0.110	Normal
Emotional Exhaustion	0.801	18	0.002	Non-Normal
Depersonalization	N/A	18	N/A	Zero Variance
Personal Accomplishment	0.841	18	0.006	Non-Normal

Correlation Analysis

Work-Life Balance and Emotional Exhaustion

Spearman's rho revealed a weak negative correlation between work-life balance parameters and emotional exhaustion ($\rho = -0.219$, $p = 0.383$, $N = 18$). The p-value exceeds the $\alpha = 0.05$ threshold, indicating that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship cannot be rejected. The direction of the correlation is nonetheless theoretically consistent: higher work-life balance score associate with marginally lower emotional exhaustion, as predicted by the JR-R model. The statistical non-significance is most plausibly attributable to insufficient statistical power—a standard sample of $n=85$ would be required to detect a moderate correlation ($\rho = 0.30$) with 80% power at $\alpha = 0.05$. This result should therefore be interpreted as a power limitation rather than evidence of no relationship. The directional alignment with theory, combined with the descriptive evidence of both poor work-life balance and moderate emotional exhaustion in this cohort, provides reasonable grounds to expect that a meaningful relationship would be detectable in an adequately powered future study.

Work-Life Balance and Depersonalization

Due to the zero variance in depersonalization scores, it was mathematically impossible to compute a Spearman's correlation coefficient for this pair. This constitutes a

methodological limitation that underscores the need for alternative measurement approaches in future research, as discussed in the section, "Depersonalization". The theoretical importance of the work-life balance—depersonalization relationship remains undiminished by this constraint: the progressive burnout model predicts that the work-life imbalance currently documented would, over time, drive emotional exhaustion to the point where depersonalization emerges as a coping response, a trajectory that can only be confirmed through longitudinal follow-up.

Work-Life Balance and Personal Accomplishment

Spearman's rho for work-life balance and personal accomplishment was $p = -0.157$ ($p = 0.533$, $N = 18$). This very weak negative correlation is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis of no significant relationship is not rejected. The direction of the correlation—modest inverse—is somewhat counterintuitive by may reflect that officers with higher work demands (and thus lower work-life balance) derive stronger compensatory feelings of accomplishment from their professional roles, a phenomenon documented in high-stakes occupations (Frederick & Dunbar, 2019). This would not preclude a more standard positive relationship from emerging in a larger sample where variance in both variables is more fully represented.

Table 6: Summary of Spearman Correlation Results

Variable Pair	Spearman's ρ	p-value	Decision
Work-Life Balance ↔ Emotional Exhaustion	-0.219	0.383	Fail to Reject H_0
Work-Life Balance ↔ Depersonalization	N/A (Zero Variance)	N/A	Cannot Test
Work-Life Balance ↔ Personal Accomplishment	-0.157	0.533	Fail to Reject H_0

Integrated Synthesis: A JD-R Profile of Southern Cebu Patrolmen

Synthesizing across all findings, the Southern Cebu patrolmen present a coherent occupational health profile: high structural demands, limited organizational resources, moderate emotional exhaustion, preserved personal accomplishment, and suppressed or early-stage depersonalization. This profile places them in the at-risk quadrant of the JD-R model—not yet experiencing severe burnout, but operating within a demand-resource imbalance that the empirical literature consistently associates with burnout progression in the absence of intervention (Purba & Demou, 2023; Cheung et al., 2023). Comparing against the taxonomy established by Drew and Martin (2023), all three categories of police job demand stress are identifiable present: operational demands (overtime pressure, inability to disconnect, shift inflexibility); organizational demands (limited resources, scheduling constraints, absence of formal wellness policy); and trauma-proximal demands (the emotional cost of public service interaction). The organizational resource environment—an absence of formal mental health resources at station level, structural impossibility of schedule adjustment, and pervasive overtime culture—corresponds precisely to the low-resource conditions the literature identifies as the most tractable targets for intervention (Baker et al., 2023; Otto & Gatens, 2022; Santa Maria et al., 2021).

Methodological Contributions and Limitations

This study makes several methodological contributions to the policing and occupational health literature. It represents one of very few published studies applying the MBI to a Filipino law enforcement population, providing baseline data for future cross-temporal and cross-regional benchmarking. The transparent documentation

of the zero-variance depersonalization finding contributes to the emerging discussion about the validity of self-report burnout measurement in institutionally surveilled, culturally constrained policing contexts (Correia et al., 2023; Buhrig, 2023). The use of Spearman's rank correlation following a Shapiro-Wilk normality assessment at $\alpha = 0.10$ —justified by and appropriate for the small sample size—demonstrates methodological rigor that comparable studies do not always achieve.

Limitations must be acknowledged transparently. The sample of $n=18$, while constituting the full patrolmen population both target stations, is statistically insufficient to detect moderate effect sizes (power < 0.40 for $\rho = 0.30$ at $\alpha = 0.05$), fundamentally constraining inferential conclusions. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference; the reverse pathway—burnout impairing work-life balance perception—cannot be excluded. Exclusive reliance on self-report instruments introduces social desirability threats, particularly for depersonalization. Generalizability is confined to patrolmen in small semi-urban and rural Cebu stations. The absence of demographic moderator analysis (age, tenure, gender, marital status, dependents) is a further significant limitation given the well-documented role of these variables in shaping burnout outcomes (Kurtz, 2012; Bezie et al., 2024).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Principal Conclusions

First, work-life balance is significantly constrained for patrolmen in this setting. The near-universal inability to disconnect from work outside working hours, the uniform difficulty adjusting schedules for personal needs, and the composite work-life balance scale means consistently below neutral collectively indicate a work

environment where the boundary between professional and personal life has effectively collapsed. This structural collapse is a JD-R-predicted consequence of high demands paired with minimal recovery-enabling resources—and is a documented precursor to burnout escalation in the global policing literature (Garrido et al., 2022; Drew et al., 2024).

Second, moderate emotional exhaustion is present and represents the most actionable burnout in this cohort. A weighted mean of 3.08 across the nine MBI emotional exhaustion items—driven primarily by the relational and emotional cost of public service rather than workload volume per se—places this group within the moderate burnout risk range documented in comparable patrol officer samples (Baker et al., 2023; Carolina Blue Project, 2024). Without organizational intervention, the JD-R model predicts progressive escalation toward severe exhaustion and subsequent depersonalization.

Third, depersonalization could not be reliably assessed due to zero variance in subscale responses, a finding most plausibly attributable to social desirability bias within the institutional survey context. The theoretical and clinical significance of depersonalization in police burnout—including its strong association with PTSD (Springer et al., 2024)—necessitates that future research addresses this measurement challenge through methodological innovation.

Fourth, personal accomplishment is currently high constitutes the primary protective resource in this cohort. However, this protection is structurally precarious: it is sustained within an organizational environment where the resource conditions most predictive of sustained personal accomplishment—schedule autonomy, organizational support, and health-oriented leadership—are manifestly insufficient (Baker et al., 2023; Granholm Valmari et al., 2023).

Fifth, while no statistically significant correlations were established between work-life balance and any burnout dimension, this null result should be interpreted as a power limitation, not a substantive finding. The directional consistency of all correlations with theoretical predictions, combined with the convergence of descriptive findings with global evidence, strongly suggests that a meaningful relationship exists in this population and will be detectable in adequately powered future studies.

Evidence-Based Recommendations

Organizational-Level Interventions

Recommendation 1—Task Redistribution and Workforce Planning: Baker et al. (2023) identified staff shortages and red tape as the burnout predictors most specific to patrol officers, underscoring the need for PNP district commands to conduct evidence-based workforce planning for small stations. Quarterly workload audits using shift log data should identify chronic overtime patterns; stations consistently requiring overtime should trigger a staffing review. Cross-training protocols allowing officers to assist neighboring stations during peak demand periods would distribute operational burden without requiring additional recruitment.

Recommendation 2—Scheduling Reform and Shift Autonomy: Consistent with Garrido et al.'s (2022) longitudinal evidence and Cheung and Li's (2022) shift autonomy research, PNP commands should pilot compressed workweek or fixed shift arrangements at small stations to improve schedule predictability, while simultaneously introducing a formalized mechanism for officers to request schedule adjustments for personal obligations. This dual reform—improving predictability and increasing micro-level schedule discretion—directly addresses the paradox identified in the present findings.

Recommendation 3—After-Hours Digital Communication Policies: Given evidence from Shen and Zamani (2024) and Buenadicha-Mateos et al. (2022) that after-hours digital connectivity is an emerging contributor to emotional exhaustion, PNP station commands should develop explicit protocols governing the use of messaging applications, social media, and informal communication channels for work purposes outside scheduled hours. The designation of a single designated-duty officer per shift to receive non-emergency after-hours communications, rather than broadcasting to all officers, would reduce the individual connectivity burden.

Supervisory and Leadership Interventions

Recommendation 4—Health-Oriented Leadership Training: Santa Maria et al.'s (2021) experimental evidence that health-oriented supervisor training significantly reduces emotional exhaustion—independent of workload—provides a compelling basis for mandatory leadership development training for station chiefs and team supervisors within Southern Cebu PNP commands. This training should include components on recognizing early burnout indicators,

modeling health work-recovery boundaries, conducting supportive supervision conversations, and destigmatizing mental health help-seeking. The small station sizes in this study (8-10 officers per station) make this intervention particularly tractable: one trained station chief exercises leadership influence over the entire station's well-being culture.

Recommendation 5—Peer Support Programs: Consistent with Otto and Gatens (2022) and Queirós et al. (2020), each station should designate at least one trained peer support officer responsible for monitoring colleague welfare and facilitating connection to professional mental health resources. Peer support models are particularly effective in policing contexts because they overcome the cultural reluctance to seek help from external mental health professionals, while leveraging the trust and credibility of peer relationships.

Individual-Level Interventions

Recommendations 6—Mindfulness-Based Interventions: Astridge et al. (2025), in a systematic review and meta-analysis of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in policing, found moderate effects on depression ($SMD = 0.56$) and small effects on anxiety ($SMD = 0.32$). MBI programs—including mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), brief mindfulness training, and app-delivered mindfulness tools—should be incorporated into PNP regional training curricula as standardized secondary prevention. Consistent with Purba and Demou's (2023) systematic review, MBIs should be implemented as complements to, not replacements for, the organizational-level interventions recommended above.

Recommendation 7—Resilience and Coping Skills Training: Beyond mindfulness, broader resilience training incorporating cognitive reappraisal, active coping skills, and emotional regulation strategies has demonstrated effectiveness in police populations (Queirós et al., 2020; Drew & Martin, 2023). These programs are particularly important in the Southern Cebu context given the identified deficiency in the personal accomplishment subscale item for managing emotional problems calmly—a gap that targeted emotional regulation training is well-positioned to address.

Research and Policy Recommendations

Recommendations 8—Longitudinal Multi-Station Study: The most urgent research need identified by this

study is a longitudinal, adequately powered study of work-life balance and burnout across all PNP stations in the Cebu region. A minimum of $n=100$ patrolmen, surveyed at baseline and at 6- and 12-month follow-ups, would provide both the statistical power necessary to detect moderate correlations and the temporal data necessary to establish causal directionality. The inclusion of demographic moderators—tenure, gender, marital status, number of dependents—and organizational moderators—station size, shift type, supervisor leadership style—would enable the construction of a multilevel of burnout risk in Filipino policing.

Recommendation 9—Depersonalization Measurement Innovation: Given the zero-variance depersonalization finding and the theoretical importance of this burnout dimension documented across the literature, future studies should implement MBI self-report with behavioral or implicit measures. Vignette-based scenarios assessing officers' intended responses to community members in distress, supervisor behavior ratings, or the Attitudes Toward Prisoners Scale (adapted for community members) may provide more valid assessments of depersonalization in contexts characterized by high school desirability pressure.

Recommendation 10—PNP Policy Development: At the national level, this study's findings contribute evidence for the development of a formal PNP Occupational Health and Wellness Policy that mandates: (a) annual burnout screening using a validated instrument such as the MBI or Copenhagen Burnout Inventory; (2) station-level wellness officers with defined responsibilities; (c) formal work-recovery periods protected from non-emergency communication; and (d) peer support program infrastructure at all stations. These policy structures, documented as effective across multiple studies (Otto & Gatens, 2022; Foley et al., 2024; Baker et al., 2023), are currently absent from PNP operational guidelines and represent a critical institutional gap.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study makes a documented contribution to the policing and occupational health literature at three levels. At the empirical level, it provides baseline MBI data for Filipino patrolmen—a population virtually absent from peer-reviewed policing research—and documents a specific demand-resource imbalance profile that has not previously been described for this setting. At the theoretical level, it demonstrates the applicability of the

JD-R model to a small-station, developing country policing context, and identifies scheduling inflexibility and digital connectivity as the primary job demand mechanisms through which work-life balance is constrained in this setting. At the methodological level, it contributes a transparent, reproducible account of the analytical challenges posed by small sample sizes and social desirability effects in police burnout research—challenges that have been identified in the global literature but rarely examined in a non-Western context.

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