

Exploring Work-Related Challenges and Development among Women in Badge in Ilocos Norte

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ABSTRACT

The research study explored the experiences of the Women in Badge in Ilocos Norte, focusing on their challenges, coping mechanisms, realizations, and strategies to enhance their performance as women officers in their respective agencies.

This study used a qualitative method with the approach of a phenomenological study and used convenience sampling to choose participants based on their availability, ensuring a thorough understanding of their experiences involving eight participants. Thematic analysis was used to ensure a comprehensive and credible exploration of the lived experiences of women officers.

The themes derived from the participants' challenges related to institutional exclusion, gendered work allocation, and male dominance. The women showed a great deal of perseverance despite these obstacles. They employed various coping mechanisms, such as seeking spiritual guidance, building supportive relationships, and fostering strength through selfless dedication. As a result of overcoming these challenges, they came to realize that faith is a foundation, realizing the importance of mutual respect and trust and strength cultivation. After these realizations, they developed unique approaches to enhance their work performance, such as faith-driven, proactive learning for peak performance and recognizing the limit of individual capacity.

The study emphasizes the invaluable insights that women leaders in the Tri-Bureau of Ilocos Norte provided from the unique challenges they faced and the effective approaches they used to get through their work settings. Their narratives displayed the complex relationship between gender dynamics and institutional constraints that influenced their leadership development.

Keywords: *Women in Badge, Tri-Bureau, Challenges Encountered, Coping Mechanisms, Realizations Facing their Challenges, Strategies to Enhance their Work Performance, Women Officers.*

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

➤ *The Problem and its Setting*

Women officers, known as "Women in Badge," face unique challenges in traditionally male-dominated fields such as law enforcement. This title applies to women officers operating within the Tri-Bureau, which consists of fire officers, police officers, and jail officers. These officers are both authorized and responsible for supervising their subordinates within their respective agencies.

The male-dominated culture in law enforcement often creates a hostile workplace for women officers, leading to discrimination, harassment, and gender stereotypes. Concerns have been raised about women's physical abilities and leadership roles in this profession.

Women have always played a crucial role in society, accounting for half of the world's population. However, their contributions are sometimes underestimated. Despite this, women have consistently demonstrated strength, resilience, and dedication to progress, leading to positive global change (Lappage, 2015). Nevertheless, six female Vancouver police officers have filed a class-action lawsuit against thirteen municipalities, alleging sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and bullying while on duty (Lazaruk, 2023).

Despite progress toward gender equality, women law enforcement officers continue to face various challenges within their organizations, including gender discrimination and harassment.

This study explores the experiences of Women in Badge in Ilocos Norte, focusing on their work-related challenges and professional development. Work-related challenges include issues that affect their performance, productivity, and overall well-being within their agencies, such as a lack of confidence in their leadership abilities or the belief that certain tasks are "not women's work." Work-related development, on the other hand, refers to initiatives that promote professional growth.

➤ *Background of the Study*

Pursuing a career in law enforcement can be challenging, particularly for women officers who must adapt to an organization that has traditionally favored men. Despite efforts to achieve gender equality, women officers continue to face institutional challenges in recruitment, retention, promotion, and workplace culture, all of which impact their experiences and well-being (Diaz & Nuño, 2021). The challenges rooted in conventional gender roles and societal norms often make it difficult for women officers to balance their professional and family responsibilities. However, there has been little research on the advancement opportunities available to them within their organizations. Additionally, the physical demands of the role and their potential effects on the health and performance of women officers remain underexplored, highlighting the urgent need for research and the development of appropriate accommodations to support them.

Despite these ongoing challenges, women officers bring valuable perspectives and diversity to law enforcement, enriching the profession and contributing to safer communities. Historically, women entered policing roles in the late 1800s to provide appropriate care for women and children in custody (Mishkin, 1981; Gossett, 2019). However, the significant gender disparity within police forces is often attributed more to the limited presence of female officers than to the plateau effect, which restricts the number of women interested in police work and capable of navigating a recruitment and training process that has traditionally favored men (Cordner & Cordner, 2011). This underscores the need for more inclusive recruitment and training approaches that address the unique needs and experiences of women in law enforcement.

This research aims to fill a critical gap in the existing literature by examining the experiences of women officers within the Tri-Bureau in Ilocos Norte, Philippines. While previous studies have typically focused on national trends or individual agencies, this research provides a regional perspective, exploring the work-related challenges faced by women officers across various agencies in Ilocos Norte. This regional focus offers valuable insights into the complexities of gender dynamics in Philippine law enforcement and contributes to the development of improvement strategies. By highlighting the unique challenges and coping strategies of Women in Badge in Ilocos Norte, this study can inform the creation of more effective policies, initiatives, and support systems that promote gender equality and enhance the well-being of women in law enforcement.

Moreover, this study holds significant relevance for Criminology and Criminal Justice Education. By examining the specific challenges faced by women officers and their strategies for overcoming them, this research enhances the understanding of gender dynamics in law enforcement and contributes to building a more just and equitable criminal justice system.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

The primary aim of this study was to explore the lived experiences of women officers as leaders in the Tri-Bureau in the province of Ilocos Norte.

Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

- ✓ What challenges do women officers encounter within their respective agencies?
- ✓ What approaches do they use to cope with these challenges?
- ✓ What realizations do they gain from the work-related challenges they experience?
- ✓ What strategies do they implement to enhance their performance in the workplace?

Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework presented and discussed the theory that supported the study of the research problem.

Feminist Theory

According to Wollstonecraft (1792), feminist theory highlights how systemic gender inequality, patriarchal structures, and societal norms create barriers for women officers within their agencies. Liberal feminism advocates for equal opportunities and legal reforms, while radical feminism challenges patriarchal workplace cultures. Intersectional feminism addresses how overlapping identities, like race and gender, intensify discrimination, and socialist feminism critiques the added burden of balancing work and caregiving roles. Together, these perspectives emphasize the need for policy changes and cultural shifts to create inclusive environments where women officers can succeed.

Gender Role Theory

This theory was developed by Talcott Parsons in the 1950s. This theory explains that societal expectations linking leadership and strength to men create barriers for women officers in male-dominated agencies. These stereotypes limit their opportunities for advancement, force them to conform to masculine norms and make it harder to balance work with family responsibilities. This theory highlights how traditional gender roles reinforce discrimination and hinder women officers' success.

Conceptual Framework

The researcher used the Input Process Output Outcome (IPOO) Model. The IPOO Model includes four steps: input, process, output, and outcome and focuses on creative and productive learning (Mező, 2011). The input consisted of four components: the challenges encountered by women officers in their respective agencies, the approaches they used to cope with these challenges, the realizations they gained from their work-related challenges, and the strategies they implemented to enhance their performance in the workplace. The process involved data collection using an interview guide, followed by the interpretation and analysis of the collected data. The study's output is an informative video titled "Honoring Strength: The Journey of Women Officers in Ilocos Norte." This video raises awareness and provides coping mechanisms for women officers facing workplace challenges. Additionally, it highlights appreciation for and honors the dedication and resilience of women officers who serve with courage and integrity, overcoming countless challenges in their profession.

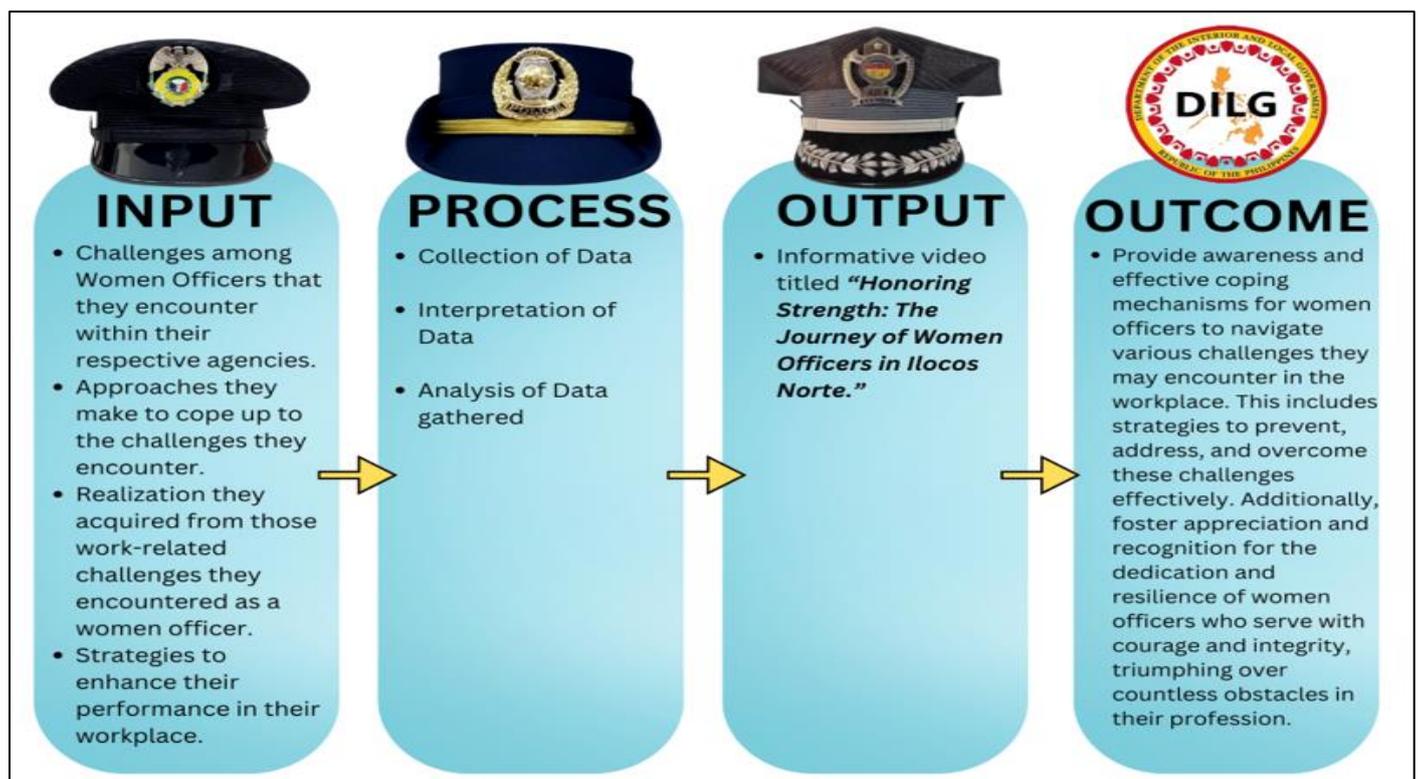


Fig. 1 Paradigm of the Study

➤ *Significance of the Study*

This study will be beneficial to the following:

- **Women Officers.** This study encourages professional development, gender equality, and self-advocacy by exploring and offering solutions to the challenges faced by women officers in law enforcement.
- **Law Enforcement Agencies.** The findings of this study contribute to the development of improved policies, programs, and support systems in law enforcement agencies, fostering a supportive work environment that values diversity, gender equality, and organizational effectiveness.
- **Policymakers.** The findings of this study will be used to design targeted policies that address gender discrepancies, influencing decisions on recruiting, promotion, training, and workplace culture to foster a fair and inclusive environment.
- **Government Agencies.** This study can help to create a more supportive work environment by recognizing and resolving the issues that women officers experience, enacting anti-discrimination regulations, giving mentorship, offering family-friendly perks, and encouraging diversity and inclusion training.
- **Researchers.** The findings of the study will help researchers in criminology, gender studies, sociology, and organizational behavior better understand gender dynamics in law enforcement.
- **Criminology Students.** This study empowers criminology students by providing insights into the challenges faced by women officers and strategies to overcome them, fostering an understanding of gender dynamics and promoting further study, advocacy, and support for gender equality in law enforcement.
- **Community.** They may gain information from findings to further understand the workplace development and challenges of women officers in law enforcement.
- **Future Researchers.** This study lays a foundation for future research, advancing workplace development, gender equality, and performance enhancement in law enforcement.

➤ *Scope and Delimitation of the Study*

This research covered the experiences of women in badge within Ilocos Norte from the attached agencies of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), including the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and the Bureau of Jail Management in Ilocos Norte. The study focused on identifying the work-related challenges faced by women officers, the approaches and realizations they acquired, and the coping mechanisms they utilized to address struggles associated with their roles.

This study only sought information about the life experiences of two (2) women officers in the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), two (2) women officers in the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and four (4) women officers in the Philippine National Police (PNP) and did not cover any concepts other than those mentioned. The research was conducted during the first semester of SY 2024-2025.

➤ *Definitions of Terms*

The following terms were technically and operationally defined by the researchers in the context in which they were used in this study:

- **Agency.** It refers to any of the various units of the government, including departments, offices, and agencies (Official Gazette, 1987).
- **Challenge.** This refers to a new or difficult task or situation that tested somebody's ability and skill (Oxford Learners, 2023).
- **Firefighter.** It refers to a person who was trained to control and put out fires. Firefighters worked quickly and as a team to keep fires from spreading (Britannica Kids, 2024).
- **Jail Officers.** They are also called a jail correctional officer. They are individuals tasked with providing care and custody at the jail, working directly with inmates, and supervising inmates at all times. Depending on the location of the jail, correctional officers were often referred to as sheriff's deputies (Castle, 2008; Griffin et al., 2010).
- **Police Officers.** They are member of a police force whose duties include maintaining law and order, preventing and investigating crimes, and protecting the public. Police officers had the authority to arrest and detain individuals suspected of criminal activities (Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, 2023).
- **Tri-bureau.** It refers to an agency that consisted of the Philippine National Police, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, and the Bureau of Fire Protection.
- **Women in Badge.** They are women officers in the Tri-bureau who held authority and responsibility in directing and overseeing their subordinates within their respective agencies.
- **Women Officer.** A female member of a particular organization or profession, such as police officers, firefighters, or administrators, who contributed to the goals and objectives of their respective roles.
- **Work-Related Challenges.** These are the obstacles, difficulties, and issues encountered by women in badge that impacted their performance, productivity, and overall well-being within their respective agencies.
- **Work-Related Development.** This refers to the activities and programs aimed at enhancing skills and knowledge to facilitate career growth and organizational contribution (St. Louis Fed, 2010).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

This chapter discussed the different concepts, understandings, ideas, generalizations, conclusions, and developments related to women's place in the law enforcement field. These served as the researchers' guide in developing and strengthening the importance of the present study.

➤ *Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990*

Republic Act No. 6975, also known as the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Act of 1990, reorganized the Department of Local Government and created the DILG, which is tasked with overseeing local government units (LGUs), the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP). This law aimed to strengthen local governance by improving coordination between the national government and LGUs and promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability. It also focused on the professionalization of the PNP, establishing it as a single national police force with the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) acting as the regulatory body for the police service.

Additionally, the Act created the BFP to handle fire safety and prevention services and the BJMP to manage jails and detention facilities, ensuring humane treatment and effective rehabilitation of detainees. It further established the Philippine Public Safety College (PPSC), responsible for providing education and training for personnel in public safety services like police, fire, and jail management. RA 6975 also introduced disciplinary measures for erring personnel and ensured accountability through a clear system for investigations and sanctions. Lastly, it allocated funding and budgetary provisions to support the operational needs of the DILG and its agencies to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness.

➤ *The challenges of being a female firefighter and how to address them*

According to Rescue Intellitech (2023), a news article discussed the experience of a woman in a male-dominated firefighting organization, where less than 10% of firefighters worldwide are women, a situation that is consistent across the globe. It explored the challenges she faced as a woman in this predominantly male profession, ranging from discrimination and harassment to the lack of research on health issues and cancer risks.

The review highlighted the challenges she encountered and how she coped with them. White (2023) stated, "I have faced some pretty ugly challenges when it to the male-dominated side of things. Every time I have been in a bad situation though, it is always been solved by men noticing and doing something about it. In the end, the male colleagues who stepped up and did the right thing are what I will always remember." Moreover, when asked about the biggest challenge she faced in her profession, she mentioned learning to balance work and home life. She explained, "That sounds like a cliché answer, but often when we see horrible things, we take that severe reality and apply it to the rest of our lives. The people at home do not see the same things we see, and we cannot expect their reality to be the same as ours."

The review concluded with her thoughts on the recent normalization of women being strong rather than just skinny. She observed that there are just as many capable women as there are men in some places. "What I think matters the most is why people are signing up for the job: they have to be signing up because they love it and not because it is a job. Compassion and mental resilience will always be factors that benefit the fire service, and I do think women have those strengths in abundance."

➤ *Philippine Police and Customs Officers Challenge Gender Stereotypes*

Gender equality was a significant issue in law enforcement that had gained the attention of the international community. In 2020, UN Women launched an initiative in the Philippines to promote gender-responsive policing and challenge gender stereotypes. This initiative aimed to understand the challenges faced by female officers, including gender inequality, harassment, discrimination, and deeply entrenched stereotypes in both organizational culture and societal perceptions.

This review focused on the experiences shared by Colonel Portia Manalad and Officer Maria Cristina Fuentes in the Philippines, along with the qualitative insights provided by UN Women. It discussed the context of gender stereotypes within law enforcement agencies and the strategies used by female officers to overcome these challenges.

The review highlighted several challenges faced by female officers, such as gender inequality, harassment, discrimination, and stereotypes. It also emphasized the approaches used by women officers to cope with these challenges, including creating support networks and seeking guidance from senior officers. To promote gender equality within their organizations, women officers challenged gender stereotypes, pursued further education, built professional networks, and sought challenging assignments to demonstrate their competence. Additionally, they advocated for fair policies and worked to maintain a work-life balance to ensure their contributions were recognized and valued.

The findings from the UN Women initiative in the Philippines aligned with the research objectives by providing evidence of the challenges women officers faced and the strategies they employed to cope with and enhance their performance. This review

underscored the importance of continuous efforts to address gender inequality and create a supportive and inclusive environment for women in law enforcement. The initiative served as a vital case study for understanding the obstacles faced by female officers and the proactive steps they took to overcome these challenges and improve their standing within their respective agencies. It emphasized the need for systemic changes to foster gender equality and support women's contributions to law enforcement, ultimately leading to more effective policing and safer communities.

➤ *Authenticity as Best-Self: The Experiences of Women in Law Enforcement*

Law enforcement poses a difficult work environment. Employees' well-being is uniquely taxed in coping with daily violent, aggressive, and hostile encounters. These challenges are compounded for women because law enforcement remains a male-dominated occupational context. Yet, many women in law enforcement display resilience and succeed in maintaining a satisfying career. This study explores the experience of being authentic from a best-self perspective for women with successful careers in the South African police and traffic law enforcement services.

This study followed a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, located in Heidegger's hermeneutic ontology and interpretivist epistemology. A qualitative study was conducted on a purposive sample of 12 women, comprising 6 police officers and 6 traffic officers from the Western Cape Province in South Africa. Data were gathered through narrative interviews focusing on experiences of the best self and were analyzed using interpretive phenomenological analysis (Jacobs & Bernard, 2022).

➤ *The Pathway Forward: Uncovering the Barriers Faced by Women Police Chiefs*

In the study of Llamas et al. (2023), women in law enforcement faced gender disparities due to the industry's traditionally male-dominated nature.

The study employed a qualitative research design and a phenomenological approach, which was considered the best method to understand lived experience. The researchers collected data primarily through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted via Zoom, as the majority of participants were located in different states across the United States. Participants were selected using LinkedIn as the primary recruitment tool. The criteria for selection were that participants had to be female police chiefs in the US, with at least 15 years of law enforcement experience and a minimum of four years as a police chief. After contacting over 200 police chiefs, six agreed to participate in the study and signed a consent form.

The results showed that communication, environmental, and psychological aspects of their jobs presented challenges for female police chiefs. While they struggled to build relationships with their peers, female police chiefs were capable of making snap decisions without the input of their colleagues. The study also identified psychological barriers to their leadership, such as multitasking, stress at work, and introversion. On the other hand, the study highlighted strategies for overcoming these difficulties, including strengthening communication and maintaining credibility through regularity and appropriate delegation.

➤ *Exploring the Challenges Encountered by Women Working in Law Enforcement Agency*

The study examined the obstacles experienced by female police officers and investigated preventive policy guidelines based on the research findings of

A semi-structured interview corresponding to the usage of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) was conducted to gather information about the obstacles encountered by women working as police officers. A total of 24 in-depth interviews were collected from both senior and junior officers because they all faced challenges; however, lower-ranking female police officers experienced greater challenges than senior officers. Therefore, the researcher selected lower-ranking police officers for the study. A thematic analytical approach was utilized for data analysis to identify patterns, generate insights, and interpret data systematically and flexibly.

The findings revealed that women police officers were subjected to gender harassment, gender bias, and a lack of proper training, which hindered their professional development and effectiveness in their roles. Limited support for work-life balance led to difficulties for women police officers, as they struggled to balance their careers and family responsibilities. They often faced a lack of understanding and support from their families. The study results showed that women police officers dealt with a range of general and specific obstacles that impaired their progress and overall well-being. Addressing these problems required extensive actions to promote a more inclusive and equitable atmosphere, allowing female officers to succeed and make significant contributions to their field and expertise.

For future research, the study suggested addressing these concerns through the development of training programs tailored to gender-specific needs, allocating resources to create customized materials and programs, and ensuring equal access to the resources and equipment needed by women officers. The adoption of family-supportive policies was also recommended (PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology (2023)).

➤ *Effect of Psychological Capital to Work-Life Balance for Married Female Police Officers*

Bakri et al., (2022) highlighted that balancing work and personal life was crucial, especially for women with multiple roles and responsibilities. Government policies promoting education had led to increased self-actualization among women, but imbalance negatively impacted families. About 90% of women chose to work after marriage due to new ideas, technological advancements, and the desire for achievement and recognition. Female police officers faced difficulties in balancing their home life with their careers, often experiencing job-related stress. Work-life balance involved a positive distribution of resources and commitments for dual roles, with internal factors such as flexibility, support, autonomy, and a sense of security contributing to it. Psychological capital, such as self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, helped individuals overcome challenges and maintain mental health. By enhancing these resources, individuals maintained positive perceptions about work-life balance and avoided future conflicts.

The study used a quantitative method. A sample of 200 people was selected using simple random sampling, and data were collected through questionnaires using work-life balance and psychological capital scales. The respondents had an average employment length of 6-10 years, and the highest level of education was SMA (56.7%), S1 (39.4%), or S2 (3.9%).

The study found a significant positive correlation between psychological capital and work-life balance in married female police officers, with a contribution value of 0.00 (<0.05). This suggested that higher levels of psychological capital were associated with better work-life balance. Psychological capital helps individuals manage their emotions and resources, such as social support, personal characteristics, and time and energy, as explained by the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. However, the contribution of psychological capital to work-life balance was relatively low, with only 10%. The other 90% came from other factors, which were not studied in this research. Strategies for improving work-life balance included alternating communication methods, outsourcing tasks, using technology, and simplifying commitments. The study also found that psychological capital aspects of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism were significantly related to work-life balance. Optimism was the interpretation of positive events as a result of oneself, while negativity was interpreted as temporary.

➤ *An Examination of Perceptual Challenges Faced by Female Police Officers*

The study of Brinsen (2016) examined the culture of female police officers by evaluating perceptual challenges associated with their role. It provides a better understanding of the dynamics of female police officers in a traditional male occupation. The study used a mixed-methods analysis which includes both qualitative and quantitative research. Data were gathered through online surveys and telephone questionnaires among female police officers who are employed in the state of Texas. Interviews are completed with 15 female police officers. Additionally, the quantitative analysis compiled responses of 110 female police officers who completed online surveys. The gathered data establish whether current gender-related issues have remained stable or transformed over time.

The findings of the study revealed that challenges do exist for female police officers that are gender-driven. The study shows that the main challenges of a women police officers were physical limitations, family, policing is a “man’s job”, approval from male police officers, the lack of acceptance by society, intra-gender relationships, promotion process, and administration. The two variables, physical limitations and intra-gender relationships, received increased recognition, whereas sexual harassment and tokenism had a decrease in emphasis.

Additionally, the challenges faced by females in policing have improved but not to a level of equality. The results show that sexual harassment and tokenism are not as common as once previously noted and serve as a benchmark indicating that conditions have improved. The blatant challenges are easier to recognize and address by administration. Furthermore, the study specifies that subtler and inadvertent issues still exist, and the challenges remain subliminal or unintentional, which become problematic and perplexing to identify and dismiss.

➤ *Women Police Chiefs: A Self-perception of Women Officers in Law Enforcement*

This study focused on the perception of six women police officers—specifically, women police chiefs towards women who already assumed leadership positions, overcame challenges entering law enforcement and advancing into leadership positions, and collected their input on organizational decisions, policy, and recruitment of women officers.

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological methodology and interviews six women police chiefs in depth.

Findings suggest that from the perspective of women police chiefs, the role of women in law enforcement leadership positions is associated with special soft skills, positions or titles that women can hold, and a gender discrepancy in terms of access to leadership roles in law enforcement. Interviewees generally shared the sentiment that the male-dominated culture in policing is gradually changing as women enter the field. Interviewees indicate that this change, in conjunction with soft skills that women possess and contribute to the profession, is an advantage for women in policing leadership positions. On the other hand, interviewees also shared the disadvantages and obstacles that women leaders must still overcome, including a lack of support for women who are child-rearing at some point during their careers, a persisting masculinity culture, and a lack of guidance from senior officers.

Findings from this study align with interventions and strategies that support women in leadership roles; therefore, to overcome the various challenges reported by our interviewees, we recommend policy changes at the organizational or county level that allow women the flexibility to attend to child-rearing needs, such as flexible work schedules that align with school schedules and day care; changes to attract more women to law enforcement, such as increased salary and training and fitness tests customized for women; and additional support for women through coaching and mentorship programs (Herrington & Colvin, 2015).

➤ *The Motivation in Becoming and Remaining in the Police Service and Gender – Related Problems of Policewomen in Western Batangas*

The study of Aquino (2024) looked at the reasons and gender-associated issues facing policewomen in particular municipalities in the Philippines' Western Batangas region. In particular, the research aimed to characterize the respondents' characteristics, including age, marital status, highest tenure of service, level of education, and police standing. Additionally, it gathered and scrutinized the reasons for wanting to be police officers among respondents. The research also collected their justifications for staying in the service of the Philippine National Police.

The study used the descriptive survey method. The respondents were 14 policewomen from Balayan, Calatagan, Lian, Nasugbu, and Tuy. Data was collected through a researcher-made questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire consisted of four parts: a profile survey, a survey of motivations for becoming officers, a survey of reasons for remaining in the service, and a survey of gender-related problems faced by the respondents in their duties and responsibilities.

The findings showed that the majority of the surveyed participants were in their late twenties, specifically within the 26 to 30 age range. Most were married, held a bachelor's degree, and had served as Police Officer 1 for one to five years. The primary motivation for joining the police force stemmed from their admiration for the authority and appeal of police gear, as well as their desire to serve and assist fellow citizens. Similarly, their reasons for remaining in the service aligned with these motivations.

➤ *Women in Highway Patrol Group in Ilocos Norte*

The law enforcement profession is dominated by gender-prescribed norms and is often seen as violent and dangerous, making it a male-dominated field. Women often face disadvantages in entering the profession due to these cultural expectations. Despite this, women in law enforcement still make significant contributions to various aspects of the profession, including highway patrols and enforcing the law. Despite the small percentage of women in law enforcement, their contributions are significant.

The method used is qualitative research, the descriptive case study where personal and online interviews were conducted with three (3) participants working at the Philippine Highway Patrol Team of Laoag City, Abra and Ilocos Sur. Purposive sampling method was used in choosing the participants of the study.

The study revealed that women in the PNP Highway Patrol Group faced numerous challenges, including financial inadequacy, doubt in competence, discouragement, burnout, destruction of family connection, self-growth, coping through faith, and mind over body. These challenges affected their job performance and life, both positively and negatively. The participants resorted to practices of spirituality through faith, such as praying, to deal with anxiety, stress, and exhaustion. They also focused on thoughts of mind rather than the body to cope with challenges and help them achieve more than they were capable of. The findings highlight the importance of addressing these challenges to improve job performance and overall well-being (Andres et al., 2023).

➤ *The Psychological Well-Being, Lived Experiences, and Challenges Faced by Female Police Officers*

This study of Blanco et al., (2023) intends to address the absence of information concerning the experiences and challenges specific to female officers in the Philippine milieu. It aims to provide insights into their psychological well-being, spotlight their life experiences and struggles, and investigate their coping mechanisms. The results of this research could aid in developing strategies and interventions that aim to enhance the mental health and well-being of female police officers.

The focus of this research was to investigate the experiences of 15 female police officers hailing from Bulacan, Philippines. Heideggerian phenomenology was employed as the research approach. A semi-structured interview guide consisting of 21 questions was utilized to collect data, which underwent content validation to ensure reliability. Participants provided primary data through interviews, which were recorded for transcription purposes. The study's context was supported by secondary sources, including research articles and literature on the well-being of police officers, especially female officers.

The findings of the study indicate that female police officers consider themselves to be brave, flexible and selfless, and that they display courage, effective stress management techniques and the ability to adapt to different situations. They derive motivation from assisting others and receiving support from their families. However, they face challenges such as gender discrimination, disrespect and the absence of a work-life balance which can negatively impact their wellbeing. Additionally, while performing their duties, they encounter life-threatening situations which can trigger anxiety and fear. These discoveries highlight the significance of establishing support systems and interventions to address these challenges and safeguard the wellbeing of female police officers. It is critical to create a supportive workplace, eliminate gender bias, and promote a work-life balance. Providing resources, training programs and interventions to improve coping mechanisms and emotional support can contribute to overall

wellbeing. The study emphasizes the dedication and determination of female police officers and underscores the value of recognizing their contributions to law enforcement. Enhancing their job satisfaction and wellbeing can lead to more effective law enforcement and a safer community.

➤ *Lived Experiences of Women Police Officers: A Qualitative Study*

Detalla et al. (2024) investigated the lived experiences of women police officers. The method used is a phenomenological approach and was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the different experiences, accomplishments, and difficulties encountered by women who work in uniform, especially in the police force. It is a type of qualitative research that focuses on the experiential and lived aspects of human life (Fuster Guillen, 2019). The participants of this study were women police officers, and the data arrived at saturation in 10 participants. A face-to-face interview was used to gather data.

The research identified five themes that emerged from the responses of the participants; these were Navigating Gender Dynamics in Law Enforcement, Balancing Personal and Professional Life, Seeking Recognition and Career Advancement, Nurturing Inclusive Work Environments, and Advocating for Gender Equality and Representation. The study emphasizes the importance of mentorship programs, gender-sensitive policies, and organizational support in fostering an inclusive work environment and programs to foster a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

The study revealed the complexities women police officers face in navigating gender dynamics within law enforcement. Challenges included cultural differences and perceptions of female officers' capabilities. Achieving work-life balance was identified as a significant issue, impacting their ability to manage both personal and professional responsibilities. Recognition and career advancement were also noted as areas where women faced challenges, yet acknowledging their achievements significantly boosted morale and contributed to a more inclusive work environment. This underscores the importance of creating organizational cultures that value and recognize the contributions of women in law enforcement. Participants demonstrated high levels of personal resilience, relying on problem-solving skills, empathy, and effective communication with the community to overcome obstacles. Strategies to balance work and personal life were essential for maintaining well-being and professional performance.

➤ *Crime Opportunity Reducing Techniques of Female Police Officers*

The study of Angihan et al. (2022) investigated the crime opportunity reduction techniques among female officers in Santiago City, Region 2, Philippines. The research questions include demographic profiling, identification of crime opportunity reduction techniques, and examination of challenges faced by female officers in implementing these techniques.

The researchers employed a descriptive survey design to explore the practices and implementation of crime opportunity-reducing techniques among female police officers stationed in Santiago City. This design facilitated a comprehensive summary of the existing state of affairs, enabling a thorough depiction of the current situation (Surveyplanet.com, 2022). The study focused on female members of the City Mobile Force Company (CMFC) stationed at three distinct checkpoints and the 116 Headquarters in Santiago City, Region 2. All 33 female members of the CMFC were included as participants and recruitment procedures relied on volunteerism and informed consent principles. The researchers utilized two primary data-gathering tools: a survey questionnaire and unstructured interviews to corroborate and validate responses obtained from the survey.

Most of the participants are 27 years old (18%) and are assigned to 116 Headquarters (60.6%). Among the strategies employed by female officers, police visibility emerges as the most prevalent and widely utilized approach in preventing crime across their respective assignments. Surprisingly, the utilization of place managers appears less common, with only 5 out of the 33 female officers implementing this particular strategy. This data indicates a significant discrepancy in the adoption rates of various crime prevention strategies among the surveyed officers.

The study revealed that female police officers are utilizing various crime opportunity prevention techniques, including police visibility, extending guardianship, formal surveillance, natural surveillance assistance, reduction of anonymity, and place management. However, the use of place managers is the exception. Challenges include personnel, civilian population cooperation, facilities, equipment, and limited mobility. Patrolling, a key crime prevention strategy, is crucial for deterring criminal activity and identifying crime-prone areas. However, inefficiencies in patrolling due to inadequacies in personnel, equipment, and vehicles hinder its successful execution. Addressing resource shortages and community engagement are essential for optimizing crime prevention efforts. Community engagement is also crucial for successful crime prevention but requires substantial efforts from law enforcement. Establishing trust and building rapport with the community is time-consuming and requires consistent maintenance. Local government units, particularly at the barangay level, are needed to foster community engagement. Engaging place managers, such as barangay "tanods," is another strategy that faces limited implementation due to logistical and financial constraints.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, the sources of data, which include the locale of the study and the population and sampling, instrumentation and data collection procedure, and the tools for the data analysis.

➤ *Research Method and Design*

This study employed a qualitative method using a phenomenological study design. The qualitative approach allowed researchers to explore the challenges and work-related aspects of women enforcers under the Tri-Bureau, providing a deeper understanding of the meaning women officers ascribe to their experiences. Qualitative research is a subjective approach that aims to describe and interpret life experiences. It is an inquiry process used to examine social or human problems. Rooted in philosophy, it seeks to uncover the essence of human experiences (Trymata, 2023).

The phenomenological study specifically examined individuals' lived experiences, focusing on their direct encounters with the phenomenon. According to Creswell (2007), a phenomenological study "describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon.

➤ *Population and Locale of the Study*

The participants of this study were women officers in the Tri-Bureau who held leadership roles and were responsible for managing their subordinates in Ilocos Norte. A total of eight women officers participated, representing various ranks and years of service.

The participants included a Senior Fire Inspector with 25 years of service at the Laoag City Fire Station, a Police Major with 10 years of service at the Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office, and a Fire Senior Inspector from the Bacarra Municipal Fire Station. Other participants were a Police Captain from the Carasi Municipal Police Station, two Jail Inspectors with 27 years of service each at the Laoag City and Batac City Jail Management, and two Police Captains, one with 27 years of service and the other with 23 years, at the Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office and Paoay Municipal Police Station, respectively.

The researchers used convenience sampling to choose participants based on their availability, ensuring a thorough understanding of their experiences. As stated by Etikan et al. (2016), convenience sampling refers to the process of selecting participants based on how easily they can be accessed.

➤ *Data Gathering Tool*

This study used a data gathering tool that included an interview guide, a voice recorder, and in-person interviews. The interview guide contained questions about the challenges faced by women officers, their approaches to coping with these challenges, realizations acquired from those work-related challenges, and strategies to enhance their performance. Voice recordings were used in the study in order to assure that the responses were properly transcribed. The validation method was established to ensure that the study maintained integrity by following ethical principles and establishing research objectives. To ensure simple and successful interviews, researchers obtained participants' consent and prior approval from their instructor.

➤ *Data Gathering Procedure*

The researchers proceeded with gathering the necessary data for the study. Initially, a letter requesting permission to conduct interviews and administer questionnaires to the Women in Badge was prepared and presented to the participants. Once approval was granted, the researchers conducted face-to-face interviews in English, allowing participants to respond in a comfortable mix of Iloko, Filipino and English, while audio recording the conversations. After collecting the required information, the researchers thanked the participants for their full cooperation. Finally, the data gathered were transcribed, analyzed, and verified to ensure accuracy and reliability.

➤ *Treatment of Data*

To analyze and interpret data, the researchers utilized a thematic analysis and ethical considerations to ensure a comprehensive and credible exploration of the lived experiences of women officers. The term thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis method that involves reading through a data set and identifying patterns in meaning across the data to derive themes (Fabyio Villegas, 2019).

The coded data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data. The researcher involved several steps. The first was to familiarize themselves with the data by reading and re-reading the transcript of data encoded from the responses of the participants. Next, initial codes were generated by systematically coding interesting features across the entire data set. After that, potential themes were collated, and all data relevant to each theme was gathered. Then, the themes were reviewed by checking if they worked concerning the coded extracts in the entire data set. Lastly, each theme was clearly defined, and a detailed analysis for each was developed.

➤ *Ethical Considerations*

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were prioritized. This included ensuring informed consent from all participants, wherein the participants received a detailed briefing and key information about the purpose of the study, maintaining confidentiality, and safeguarding participants' rights to withdraw from the study. They were authorized and allowed to decline or respond to any questions at any time during the interview. By hiding their identities from the study's transcripts, the researchers employed another anonymization technique.

Respecting these ethical guidelines fosters a safe and trusting study atmosphere that motivates participants to be open and honest about their experiences within their respective organizations.

The researchers have not caused any physical, emotional, or psychological harm to the participants and ensured that the questions were formulated in a non-intrusive and non-offensive manner.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents the data gathered from the participants, highlighting the codes and themes that emerged from their responses. It also includes the interpretation and analysis of the collected data.

➤ *Work-Related Challenges Faced by Women in Badge in Their Agencies*

The woman leaders experienced multiple challenges as part of their duties and responsibilities. Based on the data gathered, the following themes were established:

➤ *Institutional Exclusion*

Institutional exclusion refers to the systematic practices, policies, or structures within an institution that prevent certain groups or individuals from accessing equal opportunities, resources, or participation. This exclusion often occurs along lines of race, gender, class, or other social identities and is embedded within institutional norms or procedures. Such exclusion reinforces social inequality and perpetuates disadvantage for marginalized groups (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Apple, 2004)

Institutional exclusion refers to policies, rules, or subjective practices that deny or limit opportunities and participation within an institution, led by the Local Chief Executive of their respective city or municipality, due to an individual being a woman leader. The participants claimed that they often encountered doubts about their leadership abilities and were often questioned by colleagues and officials simply because of their gender.

This is supported by the statement of Participant Number 1, a Senior Fire Inspector at Laoag Fire Station with 25 years of service, who stated:

“May naencounter ako na politico na “oh babae!” “Kaya mo ba yan” na parang feeling ko wala silang believe sa babae”

(I have encountered a politician saying, 'Oh, she's a girl. Can you do that?' It feels like they don't believe in women.)

In addition, Participant number 2, a Police Major at the Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 10 years of service, stated:

“Nakakarinig ako ng sabi sabi ng mga nakapaligid saakin, that from a government offices, where they are doubting my capabilities to lead the station because you know mostly sa mga hepe ay lalake.”

(I have heard murmurs from people around me, particularly in government offices, doubting my capabilities to lead the station because most of the chiefs are men.)

Lastly, Participant number 7, a Police Captain at the Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 27 years of service, stated:

“Pag nag COP ka kasi, mag co-courtesy call ka sa LGU sa mayor diba? Or kahit na hindi pa ako officer nun pero pag narere-assign ako sa different units or stations. Mag co courtesy ka sa LGU. Pagka courtesy mo kasi ganun, sabi ng isang LCE na executive “hindi kita kailangan dito, hindi ikaw ang kailangan ko kasi magulo ang munisipyo ko”

(When you become a COP, you need to visit the LGU (Local Government Unit) and the mayor for a courtesy call, right? Even though I'm not yet an officer, whenever I'm reassigned to different units or stations, I still make a courtesy call to the LGU. During one of these courtesy calls, an LCE (Local Chief Executive) told me, 'I don't need you here. You're not the one I need because my municipality is chaotic.)'

The statements from the Local Chief Executives (LCE) reflect institutional exclusion by undermining the credibility and authority of a woman in a leadership position, assuming they lack the capability to handle complex situations based on gender stereotypes. This dismissal perpetuates a biased view that only men, particularly in leadership roles, are suited for managing critical challenges. Such comments and actions reinforce systemic barriers that hinder women's full participation and recognition in public service roles. Similarly, their experience with the LCE, who dismissed the participant, further illustrates the systemic disregard for women in leadership, where their contributions are marginalized or dismissed, regardless of their qualifications. Such experiences reveal a pervasive pattern of exclusion, where women's leadership is continuously questioned, undermined, or ignored, limiting their career progression and perpetuating gender inequality in professional and political environments.

This pattern can be understood through Feminist Theory, which critiques the patriarchal structures that perpetuate gender inequalities in leadership. Feminist Theory emphasizes how societal norms and institutional practices systematically disadvantage women, particularly in leadership roles, reinforcing the idea that leadership qualities are inherently male. This theory helps explain how such biases and systemic exclusion are not just individual obstacles but part of a broader social and organizational structure that limits women's advancement and recognition in leadership (Tong, 2009).

➤ *Gendered Work Allocation*

Gendered work allocation is the distribution of tasks and responsibilities in the workplace based on gender, often assigning roles according to traditional gender norms. This leads to the reinforcement of stereotypical roles, with women frequently assigned lower-status or caregiving duties, while men occupy leadership or higher-paying roles. Such divisions perpetuate gender inequality and limit opportunities for women in the workforce (Kane, 2018; Raby & Mifsud, 2019).

Gendered Work Allocation refers to the assignment of tasks and responsibilities based on gender, where rigid expectations and stationary duties limit individuals, particularly women, to specific duties, often hindering their opportunities for advancement or diverse participation in the workplace. Participants highlighted that gendered expectations and stereotypes were prominent in their work environments.

This is supported by the statement of Participant 2, a Police Major at the Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 10 years of service, who stated:

“Mas gusto nila yung mga lalake na gumagawa ng mga ganung trabaho, where as yung mga female usually naiiwan sa office for admin works.

(They prefer men for operational jobs, whereas women are usually assigned to office-based administrative tasks.)

Further, Participant number 3, a Fire Senior Inspector at Bacarra Municipal Fire Station, states that:

“Female usually left at the station to do paper work, being you know the stigma. Babae ang gagawa ng mga office work”

(Females are usually left at the station to do paperwork due to the stigma that 'women are for office work.)

Lastly, Participant number 4, a Police Captain at Carasi Municipal Police Station, revealed:

“When it comes to tasking, maraming responsibilities na nakaassigned saakin ay administrative or "behind-the-scenes" tasks, kung saan napaka unfair dahil mga lalake are more often chosen for fieldwork, leadership roles, or high-visibility assignments kaya na o over shadow kaming mga babae.”

(When it comes to tasking, many of the responsibilities assigned to me are administrative, behind-the-scenes tasks, which is unfair because men are more often chosen for fieldwork, leadership roles, or high-visibility assignments. As a result, we women are often overshadowed.)

The women leaders face unfair treatment because of their gender. The participants claimed that women are often stuck doing office paperwork, while men are given more active and challenging jobs such as operations. People believe that women cannot do certain types of work, which means they are left behind in important tasks and not given chances to prove themselves. The participants in our research consistently highlighted the gender disparity in the distribution of work within organizations, with a significant emphasis on the perception that women are often confined to administrative and office-related tasks, while men are assigned more active, dynamic, and challenging roles, such as operations and management. The underlying assumption is that women are inherently less capable of performing tasks that require high levels of responsibility, physical effort, or problem-solving, which are often associated with roles in operations or leadership. As a result, women are frequently excluded from opportunities that would allow them to prove their skills, showcase their leadership potential, or take on more challenging and rewarding tasks.

This problem shows how workplaces can treat women differently just because they are women. The Theory of Structural Constraints by Kanter (1977) helps explain this, wherein organizations create rules and opportunities that make it hard for women to move forward. These hidden rules make people think women are only good for certain jobs, like typing or filing papers, instead of letting them show what they can really do in more exciting and important roles.

➤ *Male Dominance*

Male dominance refers to the societal or organizational power structures where men hold primary authority, control, and influence, often marginalizing women and reinforcing gender inequality. This dominance is often institutionalized through social norms, policies, and practices that favor men in leadership, decision-making, and resource allocation. It perpetuates gender disparities in various spheres, including the workplace, politics, and family life (Connell, 2005; Kimmel, 2017).

Male dominance is deeply embedded in the organization of the Tri-Bureau, where the vast majority of personnel are men. This imbalance likely results in a work culture where male norms, perspectives, and leadership styles dominate decision-making, policies, and daily operations. Consequently, it creates barriers for women, limiting their opportunities for advancement, voice, and visibility within the organization. Participants revealed that being in a male-dominated environment presents significant challenges for them.

Participant number 5, a Jail Inspector at Laoag City with 27 years of service, stated:

“I was chosen by the regional director among the senior officers. I was the one who was challenge to lead Laoag City Jail ti immuna nga napanunot ko of course to handle a greater number of men wherein hindi ako sanay maki mingle sa mga lalake”

(I was chosen by the regional director over senior officers and was given the challenge of leading Laoag City Jail. The first thing that came to my mind was that I would be managing a larger number of men, which was unfamiliar to me since I am not used to socializing, especially with men.)

Further, Participant number 6, a Jail Inspector at Batac City Jail Management with 27 years of service, stated:

“Being a woman, it is challenging kase we are mingling with most of most of our clients are males, especially we are dealing with violent PDL and at the same time may mga matitigas din na ulo na not only PDL but also personnel as well since now I am at the supervision na”

(As a woman, it is truly challenging because we interact with clients who are mostly male. This is especially difficult when dealing with violent and hard-headed PDLs, as well as personnel, since I am in a supervisory role.)

Lastly, Participant number 8, a Police Captain at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 23 years of service, emphasized:

“The challenges I encountered as a woman for me is adjustment, because our organization is male dominated organization”

(The challenge I encountered as a woman is adjusting, as our organization is male-dominated.)

The result highlights the challenges of male dominance in a traditionally male-dominated organization. The participants struggled with adjusting to a leadership role where their clients and colleagues are mostly men. They faces difficulties in socializing, managing resistant male subordinates, and asserting authority in an environment where men predominantly hold power. Additionally, they feel the pressure to prove themselves while navigating the gendered power structure, emphasizing the barriers women face in leadership within male-dominated institutions.

The result of the study is synonymous with the findings of Eagly and Carli (2003) that women significantly face challenges in leadership roles, particularly in male-dominated environments. Women often encounter resistance from male subordinates and are subjected to gender biases that undermine their authority, especially in traditionally male fields. Additionally, women in leadership positions should navigate gendered expectations and continuously prove their competence in contexts where men predominantly hold positions of power and influence.

➤ *Approaches of Women in Badge to Cope with Challenges they Encountered*

The women officers in the Tri-Bureau often encountered unique challenges that stemmed from both the nature of their work and the gender-specific obstacles within their respective agencies. As a result, they developed coping strategies that enabled them to work and thrive as women officers. Some of these strategies served the purpose of improving the workplace environment, supporting mental health, and ensuring career longevity, while others were aimed at ultimately enhancing both individual and organizational resilience.

➤ *Spiritual Guidance*

Spiritual guidance refers to the process of seeking direction, wisdom, and support from a higher power, inner wisdom, or spiritual practices to navigate life's challenges and personal growth. It involves drawing upon spiritual resources to gain clarity, resilience, and strength, particularly in times of adversity or decision-making (Warren, 2007).

Spiritual guidance serves as a vital coping mechanism for women leaders facing institutional exclusion and other challenges within their respective agencies. By seeking inner strength, resilience, and clarity through their spiritual beliefs and practices, they navigate adversity with a sense of purpose, connection, and empowerment. This guidance provides comfort, grounding, and direction, helping them overcome systemic barriers while maintaining their integrity and vision. Participants expressed that one way they cope with these challenges is by seeking divine guidance.

Participant number 1, a Fire Inspector at Laoag City Fire Station with 27 years of service, stated:

“yung guidance ni God importante parin yun then one thing more proper coordination with higher authorities higher than me”

(The guidance of the Lord is important; aside from that, proper coordination with higher authorities is also essential.)

Participant, number 2 who is a Police Major at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office and 10 years in service stated:

“Well to cope up, I ask God for his guidance at hindi magpadalus-dalus sa aking mga desisyon at magawa ko ang tungkulin ko ng maayos kase everything na gagawin natin ay dapat nag seseek tayo ng Guidance kay God”

(To cope, I ask God for His guidance, ensuring that I do not act hastily in my decisions and that I perform my duties efficiently. In everything we do, we should seek the Lord's guidance.)

Lastly, Participant number 7, a Police Captain at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 27 years of service, emphasized:

First is God, kasi I am a God-Fearing person, kung si God ang nasa center in everything na ginagawako kinukonsult ko siya para kumuha ng lakas, syempre pag makakapagdasal ka is medyo lumalakas ka, at yung guidance niya para makapag perform ng tama kasi yun ang reflection mo.

(God comes first because I am a God-fearing person. He is at the center of everything I do, and I seek His guidance to gain strength. When you pray, you feel stronger, and His guidance helps you perform well, reflecting your character and values.)

The participant expresses a deep reliance on God's guidance in both personal and professional matters, recognizing that the ability to make appropriate decisions comes from aligning with divine wisdom. They highlight the importance of not acting impulsively, especially when dealing with higher authorities, and instead take time to consult God through prayer. This practice of seeking divine counsel provides them with inner strength and confidence, which is essential for fulfilling their responsibilities effectively. For the participant, God is the central foundation of their actions, and they believe that through prayer and seeking His direction, they can navigate challenges, perform their duties with integrity, and maintain alignment with their values. The participant's reliance on God also reflects a broader belief that spiritual guidance enhances their ability to carry out their roles and make decisions that are in line with their faith and purpose.

A study by Seybold and Hill (2001) explores the impact of religious beliefs and practices, such as prayer, on mental and physical health. They emphasize that seeking divine guidance through practices like prayer can provide individuals with strength, helping them make informed decisions and cope with life's challenges. This aligns with the participant's perspective, where they rely on God's guidance to navigate their responsibilities and avoid acting hastily.

➤ *Relational Support Network*

A relational support network refers to the social relationships that provide emotional, instrumental, and informational support to an individual. This network encompasses family members, friends, colleagues, and other significant figures who play a vital role in an individual's coping and well-being (Lin, N. 2001).

Relational Support Network is a system of interpersonal relationships that provides emotional, social, and practical support to women officers, particularly in times of work challenges. For women leaders within their respective organizations, this network can consist of colleagues, mentors, friends, and family members who offer guidance, encouragement, and resources. It helps women leaders cope with the pressures and demands of their roles by providing a safe space for discussing challenges, sharing advice, and receiving emotional reinforcement, thereby fostering resilience and well-being in their leadership journey.

The participants claimed that to cope with the challenges, they rely on their Relational Support Network, which includes consulting with colleagues, seeking advice from family, friends, and mentors, and finding comfort from their loved ones.

Participant number 5, a Jail Inspector at Laoag City with 27 years of service, stated:

“Uray man dominatedak ti lallaki ket detuy trabahok talagang para lallaki but the support and help of my staff and my family, friend etc. kin nu sino dagiyay mabalin nga pangalan supporta”

(Even though I work in a male-dominated organization, I receive support from my staff, family, friends, and others whom I can rely on.)

Participant number 6, a Jail Inspector at Batac City Jail Management with 27 years of service, added:

“Communication talaga ang talagang real weapon mo kasi kung wala kang communication diba wala, masisira ang samahan . Halimbawa yung mga just for you our PDL may mga arogante na nagwawala hindi mo rin makukuha yan sa mainit na usapan. So communication is the best kung maganda yung communication skills mo mamamaintain mo parin yung good working environment.”

(Communication is the real weapon because, without proper communication, relationships can be ruined. For example, some PDLs may be arrogant or act violently, and without effective communication, it would be difficult to calm them down. Therefore, communication is essential—having strong communication skills helps maintain a positive and productive working environment.)

Lastly, Participant number 8, a Police Captain at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 23 years of service, emphasized:

“In order to maintain the nice environment, working environment kailangan mo ring minsan makisama sa kanila, para maganda ang communication ng bawat isa”

(In order to maintain a good working environment, you need to get along or blend in with them so that communication remains open and effective.)

Despite working in a male-dominated environment, women leaders find strength through their support systems, including family, friends, and colleagues. Having people they can rely on helps them navigate workplace challenges, making them feel valued and empowered. Additionally, they emphasize that proper communication is key to maintaining harmony, resolving conflicts, and effectively managing difficult situations.

The study of Gruber (2007) emphasized that women police officers manage the challenges they face in a male-dominated workplace, with a focus on the role of social support in coping with gender-based discrimination and institutional exclusion. The study finds that women officers frequently turn to family, friends, and mentors for emotional and practical support. This support helps them navigate the emotional and professional obstacles they encounter, such as feeling marginalized or excluded from key decision-making processes.

➤ *Resilience through Selfless Dedication*

Resilience through selfless dedication refers to the ability to persevere and remain committed to one's responsibilities and goals despite challenges or adversity, driven by a sense of duty and service to others. This form of resilience is characterized by enduring hardships while putting the needs of others first, demonstrating unwavering dedication and emotional strength (Coutu, 2002).

Resilience through selfless dedication is not just about enduring difficulty; it is adapting the challenges while remaining deeply committed to a larger purpose, staying effective and aligned with a mission and vision of their respective agency and ensuring that even in adversity, progress is made, and the cause is upheld. Participants claimed that they employ resilience through selfless dedication as a way of coping with the challenges,

Participant 2, a Police Major at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 10 years of service, stated:

“Ako naman naka adapt na ako kasi ilang years naman na ako sa service, so alam ko na yung nga dapat at hindi gawin”

(As for me, I have already adapted because I have been in the service for a long time. I now know what to do and what not to do..)

Further, Participant number 3, a Fire Senior Inspector at Bacarra Municipal Fire Station, stated:

“I think it's better to use the word we adjust. Kase being a woman is not a reason for us to be left out in this kind of field, especially in operations. But we are going to adjust...in order for us to cope up with the kailangan ng trabaho na ano, is we adjust ourselves”

(I think it's better to use the word 'adjust' because being a woman is not a reason for us to be left out in this field, especially in operations. Instead, we must adjust in order to cope with the demands of the job and adapt ourselves accordingly.)

Lastly, Participant number 4, a Police Captain at Carasi Municipal Police Station, revealed:

“You have to adjust yourself to physical exercises, training, and, of course, to working with men, as you need to adapt to various personalities. At the same time, you must also learn to voice out your thoughts and assert yourself.”

Women officers in a male-dominated organization have learned to adapt to the challenges of their work environment. Through years of experience, they have developed resilience, adjusting to the physical demands of training, field operations, and the dynamics of working alongside male colleagues.

One participant highlights the importance of adaptability, explaining how years of experience have allowed them to know what needs to be done. Another emphasized the need to adjust to the demands of the job, asserting that being a woman should not limit their role, especially in operations. By staying dedicated to their responsibilities, these women officers navigate personal and

professional obstacles, demonstrating their commitment to breaking through traditional gender expectations and contributing meaningfully to their team. Their ability to continue adjusting their approaches ensures progress within their organizations, even in the face of adversity.

Resilient individuals overcome constraints—whether structural, societal, or personal—by staying dedicated to their goals. This process helps them navigate obstacles, strengthen their resolve, and challenge traditional norms while upholding their core values (Hernandez, 2016; Fletcher & Major, 2004).

➤ *Realizations of the Women in Badge from the Challenges Encountered*

The women officers encounter unique work-related challenges that lead to significant realizations about their roles, abilities, and the obstacles they must overcome within their respective agencies. Based on the gathered data, the following themes were revealed as their realizations acquired from these challenges faced by them.

➤ *Faith as Foundation*

Faith as foundation refers to the belief and trust in a higher power, particularly God, as the core source of strength and guidance in one's life. It serves as the bedrock upon which individuals build resilience, navigate challenges, and find purpose. This spiritual foundation provides a sense of direction and inner peace, especially in times of adversity (Lewis, 2008).

Faith as a foundation is one of the realizations of women officers, which pertains to a deep trust in God, especially when facing challenges in their careers. In moments of adversity, their faith in God's guidance and strength becomes a source of resilience, helping them navigate difficult situations with grace and determination. This spiritual foundation often empowers them to persevere, knowing they are supported by a higher purpose and divine strength in their journey. Participants claimed that one of the realizations they had was to have faith in God whenever they faced adversity and challenges.

Participant number 1, a Fire Inspector at Laoag City Fire Station with 27 years of service, stated:

“Ang support system ko ang pinakauna sa lahat ay si God, second ang family, so whenever I am challenged with hindi nawawala yan may mga problema I pray for His guidance na malagpasan”

(My first support system is God, followed by my family. Whenever I face challenges, I pray for His guidance to help me overcome them.)

In addition, Participant number 2, a Police Major at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 10 years of service, stated:

“Realization ko is everything that I do is dapat mag pray before and after the doing the task or making any decision”

(My realization is that in everything I do, I should never forget to pray—both before and after completing a task or making any decisions.)

Lastly, Participant number 7, a Police Captain at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 27 years of service, state:

“Prayer , prayer that is number one. Prayer kase God is Good he will always make everything possible always”

(Prayer—prayer is number one. Prayer is essential because God is good, and He will always make everything possible.)

The participant's realization centers on the critical role of prayer in their life, particularly during challenging times. They have come to understand that seeking God's guidance before and after making decisions or facing tasks is essential for overcoming obstacles. Through this realization, they acknowledge that prayer is a powerful tool for staying connected to their faith and trusting in God's ability to make things possible. This deep reliance on prayer reflects their belief in God's constant support and goodness.

A study by Koenig et al. (2001) highlights the positive impact of prayer and spiritual practices on coping with stress and overcoming challenges. The researchers found that individuals who engage in regular prayer report greater resilience and a stronger sense of purpose in difficult situations, as they feel supported by a higher power.

➤ *Realizing the Importance of Mutual Respect and Trust*

The realization of the importance of mutual respect and trust involves acknowledging that these values are crucial for fostering positive, productive, and sustainable relationships in all areas of life. This understanding often emerges through personal experience, reflection, or the challenges that reveal the critical role respect and trust play in maintaining harmony, cooperation, and growth (Baker & MacDonald, 2012).

Women officers recognize that mutual respect and trust are essential in building positive, productive, and lasting relationships, both personally and professionally. These values create a collaborative and supportive environment where individuals can work together effectively, overcome challenges, and achieve shared goals.

Participants have realized that strong relationships founded on respect and trust not only enhance teamwork but also contribute to their success and resilience in their respective roles

Participant number 5, a Jail Inspector at Laoag City with 27 years of service, stated:

“Having a peaceful community, BJMP community, is my greatest accomplishment because I have instilled in my personnel and to all the PDL the words in their minds in their hearts the words are easy which is the respeto, disciplina and cooperation”

(Having a peaceful BJMP community. Perhaps my greatest accomplishment here is instilling in the minds and hearts of both personnel and PDLs the values of respect, discipline, and cooperation.)

In addition, Participant number 6, a Jail Inspector at Batac City Jail Management with 27 years of service, stated:

“It has led me to develop an open-minded spirit, allowing me to cope with the tasks and responsibilities assigned to me.”

Lastly, Participant number 8, a Police Captain at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 23 years of service, emphasized:

“Hindi lahat ng bagay is kaya mong mag isa, so you have to seek refuge doon sa family mo, to those person you trust the most, your classmate, mentors, advisers and other person na sa tingin mo ay makakatulong sayo. Kasi you have to consider alos na hindi lahat ng bagay ay alam mo and as you go along sa career mo meron kang napupulot na aral meron kang iniwan na hindi dapat dalhin pa sa career or dapat mayroong lesson learned na dapat iniwan.”

(You cannot do everything on your own. You need to seek help from your family, trusted individuals, classmates, advisers, mentors, and those who can genuinely support you. It’s important to acknowledge that there are things you do not know, and as you progress in your career, you will continue to learn valuable lessons. Along the way, there will be things you must leave behind and not carry with you as you move forward.)

Women officers recognize that mutual respect and trust are fundamental in building strong relationships within their work environment. They understand that fostering a culture of respect among personnel and PDLs contributes to a more peaceful and cooperative community. Through their experiences, they have realized that success is not achieved alone—it requires collaboration, seeking guidance from trusted mentors, family, and colleagues. By embracing open-mindedness and valuing teamwork, they learn to navigate challenges more effectively. Ultimately, respect and trust not only enhance teamwork but also empower them to grow, lead, and adapt as they move forward in their careers

Morash, et al. (2006) emphasized that women officers often rely on strong support systems, both within their agencies and the broader community, to overcome the challenges they face in a traditionally male-dominated field. It highlights how women in law enforcement tend to focus on building positive relationships with colleagues, mentors, and local communities, which improves cooperation and leads to better outcomes in terms of safety and public trust.

➤ *Strength Cultivation*

Strength in cultivation refers to the process of developing resilience and inner strength through continuous effort, personal growth, and the ability to adapt to challenges. It emphasizes that strength is not an inherent trait but a quality that is nurtured over time through experience, learning, and reflection. This concept aligns with the idea that individuals can cultivate mental and emotional fortitude through intentional practices such as perseverance, self-awareness, and support from others (Ryff & Singer, 2003)

Strength in cultivation as a realization by women officers refers to the understanding that personal and professional resilience is developed over time through intentional effort, growth, and learning. It involves cultivating inner strength through experience, self-discipline, faith, and continuous adaptation to challenges. This realization emphasizes that strength is not innate but a skill that can be nurtured through perseverance, reflection, and support. Participants claimed that one of their realizations is strength in cultivation.

Participant number 2, a Police Major at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 10 years of service, stated:

“Everyday is may new knowledge kang mage-gain for self-improvement and ang tingin ko magagamit din mga natutunan ko everyday for this coming years hanggang sa magretire ako sa PNP.”

(Every day presents an opportunity to gain new knowledge for self-improvement. I know that the lessons I learn daily will be valuable in the coming years and will continue to guide me until I retire from the PNP.)

Further, Participant number 3, a Fire Senior Inspector at Bacarra Municipal Fire Station, stated:

“Always crave self-improvement and don’t be stagnant. That’s why, every now and then, when there’s a training or seminar, we highly encourage our colleagues to join. Personally, for our own growth, there’s always a way to improve—improve as a person.”

Lastly, Participant number 4, a Police Captain at Carasi Municipal Police Station, revealed:

“You have to work good with yourself mentally, spiritually, emotionally, physically kasi, when you are at the top, if you are a high-ranking leader and you are a woman dapat hindi mahina”

(You have to work well on yourself mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically because when you are at the top—as a high-ranking leader and a woman—you should not be weak.)

The participants reveal a strength cultivation mindset focused on continuous learning and personal growth within their workplace. They view each day as an opportunity to gain new knowledge, emphasizing the importance of actively seeking opportunities like training and seminars to enhance their professional capabilities. Their perspectives demonstrate a proactive approach to personal development, recognizing that consistent learning helps them adapt to multi-tasking responsibilities and become more resilient in challenging work environments.

The findings align with Dweck's (2006) research on growth mindset, which suggests that individuals who believe in their ability to develop skills through dedication and hard work are more likely to embrace challenges and persist in the face of setbacks.

➤ *Strategies Implemented by the Women in Badge to Enhance their Performance in the Workplace*

The women in badge delve into the strategies employed to optimize their performance. Specifically, it examines the various methods and approaches women use to assert themselves as effective leaders while balancing the expectations and biases often associated with their gender.

➤ *Faith Driven*

Faith-driven refers to making decisions and approaching life’s challenges through the guidance of one’s religious or spiritual beliefs, relying on faith in God to provide strength, direction, and purpose. This approach fosters resilience, ethical decision-making, and a sense of inner peace, especially during adversity, by trusting in divine guidance (Gartner, 2021).

A faith-driven approach enhances the performance of women officers by providing them with resilience, purpose, and guidance in their work. Relying on their belief in God helps them stay grounded, make ethical decisions, and maintain a positive attitude, even in challenging situations. This faith not only strengthens their personal well-being but also inspires confidence and trust in their leadership, improving workplace dynamics.

Participants find *faith-driven* as way of enhancing their work performance.

This is supported by Participant 1, a Fire Inspector at Laoag City Fire Station with 27 years of service, who stated:

“Dapat I-incorporate yung spiritual practices gaya ng pagdarasal at reflection sa routine ko dahil nakakatulong makapag focus magkaroon ng clarity in the workplace”

(I have to incorporate spiritual practices like prayer and reflection into my daily routines because they help me stay focused and achieve clarity in the workplace.)

In addition, Participant 2, a Police Major at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 10 years of service, stated:

“I embrace or I apply God’s teaching, kase it helps me promote empathy and kindness toward others para may positive work environment kung saan yung collaboration, cooperation, and support ket ma encourage ko suda which is mang lead to higher productivity and harmony”

(I embrace or apply God’s teachings because they help me promote empathy and kindness toward others, creating a positive work environment where collaboration, cooperation, and support are encouraged, leading to higher productivity and harmony.)

Lastly, Participant 7, a Police Captain at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 27 years of service, emphasized:

“As a leader dapat i apply natin yung spiritual principles, para I can lead with compassion and a servant's heart. With a spiritual mindset, I aim to uplift and empower my subordinates para mas maging productive sa loob ng organization”

(As a leader, I should apply spiritual principles to lead with compassion and a servant's heart. With a spiritual mindset, I aim to uplift and empower my subordinates, helping them become more productive within the organization.)

The participant emphasizes the importance of incorporating spiritual practices, such as prayer and reflection, into their routine to enhance focus and clarity in the workplace. By embracing and applying God's teachings, they foster empathy, kindness, and collaboration, creating a positive and supportive work environment. As a leader, they believe that applying spiritual principles allows them to lead with compassion, empowering their subordinates to be more productive. This faith-driven approach aims to promote harmony, teamwork, and overall organizational success.

A study by Benefiel (2005) highlights that spiritual practices such as prayer and reflection can enhance workplace performance by promoting clarity, focus, and emotional well-being. The research also suggests that leaders who apply spiritual principles, such as empathy and servant leadership, foster positive work environments that encourage collaboration.

➤ ***Proactive Learning for Peak Performance***

Proactive learning correlates with peak performance by equipping them with essential skills to navigate complex environments effectively, leading to improved job satisfaction and task performance (Kraimer et al., 2018).

Proactive learning for peak performance involves women officers actively seeking opportunities for growth, skill development, and continuous improvement in their roles. By staying ahead of challenges through ongoing education, training, and reflection, they enhance their ability to perform at their best. This approach improves their professional capabilities and boosts confidence, enabling them to handle complex situations more effectively. Embracing proactive learning helps women officers adapt to changing circumstances, leading to greater success and higher performance in the workplace. The participants claimed that one of the strategies to enhance their performance is academic enhancement, wherein continuous training and seminars and seeking advice from others help them to improve their skills and to enhance their performance.

This is supported by Participant 2, a Police Major at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 10 years of service, who stated:

“Undergo pa rin ng mga trainings, seminars at yun naman talaga yung mag enhance ng knowledge natin”

(We still have to undergo training and seminars as they truly enhance our knowledge.)

In addition, Participant 3, a Fire Senior Inspector at Bacarra Municipal Fire Station, stated:

“..magkaroon ka Lang ng self-awareness kasi pag may self-awareness ka everything follows. Like if you are aware that you needed to improve then you find a way na mag improve.”

(Just have self-awareness because if you have it, everything will follow. For example, if you are aware that you need to improve, you will find a way to do so.)

Lastly, Participant Number 4, a Police Captain at Carasi Municipal Police Station, revealed:

“Just keep yourself adaptable in those areas and involve yourself in seminars and training so you can stay well-informed about the organization. Of course, it's also important to consider the knowledge and expertise of those working in these areas.”

Women officers enhance their work performance through continuous learning, seeking mentorship, and building strong community relationships. They invest in further education and attend trainings and seminars to stay updated in a changing field. Seeking guidance from experienced colleagues helps them navigate challenges and build confidence, especially in a male-dominated environment. Their commitment to self-improvement and community engagement allows them to overcome obstacles and contribute meaningfully to their roles.

A study by Morash et al. (2006) supports this approach, highlighting that women in law enforcement often emphasize community collaboration and mentorship, which help them overcome challenges and improve their performance in the profession.

➤ ***Recognizing the Limit of Individual Capacity***

Recognizing the limit of individual capacity involves being aware of one's personal boundaries, understanding when tasks exceed one's capabilities, and seeking support or collaboration to maintain efficiency and well-being. This self-awareness promotes healthier work practices, prevents burnout, and ensures tasks are completed effectively through teamwork (Lee, J. & Lee K. 2021).

Recognizing the limit of individual capacity allows women officers to enhance their performance by understanding when to seek help, collaborate, or delegate tasks. Acknowledging their own boundaries fosters a healthy work-life balance, reduces burnout, and ensures that they can focus on their strengths. By accepting that they cannot do everything alone, they create space for teamwork and support, leading to more efficient and effective outcomes in the workplace. This mindset helps women officers perform at their highest potential while maintaining their well-being.

This is supported by Participant 5, a Jail Inspector at Laoag City with 27 years of service, who stated:

“Support system, family, personnel, we cannot do it alone haan ka maka function a siksika isuda ti backbone mo and isuda ti pannaka agapay mo tay kunak haan mo nga magun od ti mesa a banag accomplishment.”

(A strong support system—whether from family, colleagues, or personnel—is essential because we cannot do it alone. They are considered the backbone and a source of guidance. As I have mentioned, you cannot accomplish something alone.)

In addition, Participant 6, a Jail Inspector at Batac City Jail Management with 27 years of service, stated:

“kailangan mo ring makinig sa mga nasa subordinates mo. At the same time, you communicate with them effectively para yung working relationship mo with every individual mamaintain”

(You also have to listen to your subordinates. At the same time, you must communicate with them effectively to maintain a good working relationship with every individual.)

Lastly, Participant 8, a Police Captain at Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office with 23 years of service, emphasized:

“Lead by example through good behaviour and attitude also be a good follower and learn things along the way. If you will follow along the way marami ka ring matutunan also be respectful to everybody whether someone in authority or not. Always be kind and humble for every achievement and above all siyempre trust the lord”

(Lead by example through good behavior and attitude. Also, be a good follower and learn along the way. If you follow, you will gain valuable knowledge and experience. Additionally, be respectful to everyone, whether they are in authority or not. Be kind and humble in every achievement, and above all, trust the Lord.)

The strategies shared by the participants for enhancing their performance in the workplace revolve around strong support systems, and leading by example. One participant emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, noting that recognizing areas for improvement is the first step toward growth. By being mindful of their strengths and weaknesses, women officers can actively seek ways to enhance their skills and performance. This self-reflection helps them continuously adapt and improve, making them more effective in their roles. Additionally, the value of a strong support system comprising family, colleagues, and mentors was highlighted as essential for success. A solid network offers emotional and practical support, which allows women officers to persevere through challenges and celebrate their achievements, ensuring they remain motivated and focused on their goals. Moreover, leading by example, humility, and respect in the workplace are crucial strategies that women officers employ to foster positive work environments. Officers are encouraged to model good behavior, treat everyone with respect, and remain humble despite their accomplishments.

A study by Van der Vleuten et al. (2013) found that women in male-dominated fields like law enforcement tend to excel when they embrace a collaborative approach, foster inclusive leadership, and lead by example, ultimately improving both their personal performance and team dynamics.

- *“Honoring Strength: The Journey of Women Officers in Ilocos Norte.” (An informative video)*

➤ *Rationale*

In the Philippines women officers in law enforcement face significant challenges as they strive for advancement in their careers. As more women join the ranks of the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), many encounter obstacles that limit their potential and hinder their professional growth.

These challenges stem from a deeply ingrained culture of male dominance within these organizations, which manifests in systematic exclusion, gender-based job assignments, and a noticeable lack of equitable opportunities for career progression. Women in leadership positions often face skepticism about their abilities, leading to their assignment to administrative or support roles rather than operational or decision-making positions. This limits their ability to establish authority in predominantly male environments, resulting in their contributions being overlooked.

The consequences of these circumstances are profound, leading to feelings of isolation, reduced morale, and an overall less effective and inclusive law enforcement system. Addressing these issues is essential for fostering a more equitable workplace where women officers can thrive and fully contribute to public safety and justice.

This research initiative seeks to shed light on the lived experiences of women officers in Ilocos Norte. By exploring these challenges, we aim to advocate for meaningful changes that promote gender equality, empower women in law enforcement, and create a more just and inclusive policing system.

➤ *Objectives*

The primary goal is to raise awareness of the distinct obstacles encountered by women officers in law enforcement. Achieving this requires a comprehensive examination of gender bias, systemic exclusion, and the prevailing male-dominated culture within these institutions. Highlighting these challenges aims to foster support across all levels, drive meaningful workplace reforms, and provide practical strategies and resources that empower women officers to navigate these difficulties with confidence.

Beyond addressing these challenges, this initiative also seeks to express deep appreciation and respect for the women officers who dedicate themselves to serving and protecting the public. Their unwavering commitment, sacrifices, and perseverance in the face of adversity deserve recognition. By honoring their resilience and dedication to justice and community safety, this effort aspires to instill a greater sense of pride and acknowledgment both within law enforcement organizations and in society as a whole.

➤ *Strategies*

To effectively achieve these objectives, the project will feature a comprehensive video presentation as its primary medium. This video will serve multiple purposes:

- **Providing Practical Guidance** – A wealth of actionable tips and strategies will be shared to help women officers navigate workplace challenges. Topics will include addressing gender bias, confronting discrimination, and maintaining a healthy balance between professional responsibilities and personal life.
- **Promoting Resilience and Well-being** – A significant portion of the video will focus on building resilience, managing stress, and prioritizing mental health. Effective self-care techniques will be introduced, along with access to resources that support emotional and psychological well-being.
- **Educating on Rights and Policies** – The video will inform women officers about existing laws and organizational policies that promote gender equality and fair treatment in the workplace. Additionally, it will encourage advocacy for necessary reforms that foster a more inclusive and equitable work environment.
- **Fostering a Positive Organizational Culture** – By emphasizing respect and camaraderie, the video will reinforce the importance of a supportive work environment. It will seek to empower women officers by reaffirming their value and contributions to law enforcement, inspiring them to serve with confidence. To maximize reach and impact, the project will incorporate additional initiatives that enhance engagement and accessibility. Collaboration with the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) will play a crucial role in ensuring direct access to women officers. By featuring their authentic voices and personal stories, the video will gain credibility and relatability, allowing for a more profound understanding of their experiences. Additionally, a strategic digital distribution plan will be implemented to extend the video's reach across various social media platforms. This approach will connect with a broad audience, including women officers, their colleagues, and the general public, spreading awareness, inspiring support, and fostering a culture of respect and gender equality in the workplace.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents a brief overview of the research results, makes conclusions based on the collected data, and proposes suggestions for future actions derived from the exploration into the lived experiences of female officers, known as “Women in Badge”, within the Tri-Bureau in Ilocos Norte.

➤ *Summary of the findings*

The study aimed to explore the lived experiences of female officers within the Tri- Bureau, which comprises the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP). The researchers carried out in-depth interviews with eight female officers to unveil the challenges they encountered in their careers, the coping mechanisms and strategies they employed, and the methods they used to enhance their effectiveness in their respective agencies.

The results indicated that female officers in the Tri-Bureau in Ilocos Norte faced significant challenges related to **institutional exclusion, gendered work allocation, and male dominance**. Despite these challenges, the women demonstrated considerable resilience. They employed various coping mechanisms, such as seeking **spiritual guidance, building supportive relationships, and fostering strength through selfless dedication**. As a result of overcoming these challenges, they came to realize that **faith is a foundation, realizing the importance of mutual respect and trust and strength cultivation**. After these realizations, they developed unique approaches to enhance their work performance through **faith-driven, proactive learning for peak performance and recognizing the limit of individual capacity**.

➤ *Conclusion*

The experiences of women leaders within the Tri-Bureau of Ilocos Norte offered valuable insights into the unique challenges they encountered and the effective strategies they employed to navigate their professional landscapes. Their stories revealed a complex interplay of institutional barriers and gender dynamics that shaped their leadership journeys. Importantly, these women exemplified resilience, leveraged support from their peers, and demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement, enabling them to overcome obstacles and lay the groundwork for future generations of female leaders.

➤ *Recommendations*

From the above-mentioned findings and conclusions, the following are hereby recommended:

- To address institutional exclusion faced by women officers in the tri-bureau —PNP, BFP, and BJMP— they may be encouraged to assertively communicate their achievements, advocate for themselves, and engage in constructive dialogue with leadership. Establishing support networks within the organization can provide solidarity, while seeking mentorship from senior leaders offers guidance on navigating challenges. Women should also document instances of discrimination and report them through formal channels to ensure accountability. Leadership training focused on building resilience and confidence can help them tackle bias, and advocating for the implementation of clear anti-discrimination policies and diversity training for all officers can create a more inclusive work environment. These strategies will empower women to overcome exclusion and foster a supportive culture within the bureaus.
- The Tri- Bureau may assign the women officers based on their individual skills and competencies rather than gender stereotypes in addressing gendered work task allocation. This can be achieved by developing clear and standardized criteria for task allocation, including performance evaluations, skill assessments, and regular training programs for all officers. Additionally, regular gender sensitivity and unconscious bias training may be conducted to foster awareness and challenge stereotypes that influence task distribution. Gender sensitivity policies may also be strengthened by implementing mentorship programs and leadership development initiatives aimed at supporting women officers, ensuring they have equal opportunities to advance into leadership roles. Transparent and merit-based criteria for promotion should be established, prioritizing skill, experience, and leadership potential. Moreover, a monitoring system may be set up to track task assignments and promotions across gender lines, allowing for regular reviews to ensure women are not underrepresented in key roles. Lastly, a confidential feedback mechanism should be implemented, providing women officers with a platform to voice concerns about task allocation and gender bias, ensuring continuous improvement of policies and practices.
- Women officers in the tri-bureau —PNP, BFP, and BJMP might ask revision of existing laws, memorandums, and regulations to ensure gender fairness in hiring, promotions, and leadership selection. Furthermore, ensure strict implementation of the Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710) within the Tri-Bureau, providing clear mechanisms for reporting and addressing gender discrimination.
- The Tri-Bureau may address the issue of male dominance that women officers dealt with, by promoting gender sensitivity training for both male and female officers. This would involve organizing workshops that educate officers about gender equality, communication styles, and biases that may affect interactions in the workplace. Such training can be reinforced periodically, helping to create a more inclusive and respectful environment. Additionally, establishing mentorship programs and support networks for women officers can provide them with role models and a safe space to share experiences and strategies for handling difficult situations with male counterparts. This support system can be further strengthened through the creation of women’s groups that focus on collaboration and empowerment.

- In collaboration with the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), the researcher will present the video, ensuring direct engagement with women officers and their respective organizations. This partnership will allow for the inclusion of authentic voices and personal narratives, adding depth and credibility to the presentation while fostering a more profound understanding of the challenges women officers face.

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