



AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF IDENTITY FORMATION AND SOCIALIZATION AMONG CHILDREN OF POLICE OFFICERS

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Abstract:

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of children of police officers in Davao City regarding their social lives and identity formation. Employing a phenomenological qualitative approach, the researchers conducted one-on-one interviews with eleven purposively identified children of police officers. The data gathered were then thematically analyzed. The study generated three themes: challenges and lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights and lessons learned. The challenges and lived experiences of police officers' children were experiencing a sense of privilege alongside parental absence, facing pressure from societal expectations and scrutiny, and navigating the pressure to meet high standards. When faced with these challenges, they used four coping strategies: self-determination, personal growth through resilience, seeking emotional release, and relying on emotional support. Participants also learned empathy for their parents' sacrifices, commitment to responsibility and integrity, personal authenticity, and a preference for supportive, pressure-free parental

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relationships. Significant implications include implementing work-life balance measures, enhancing family support programs, developing a culture of open communication, and engaging in community activities.

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1. Introduction

Children of police officers grow up in a distinct sociocultural context, formed by the norms, values, hazards, and discipline inherent in the police profession. While police work is frequently linked with authority, law enforcement, and public service, these connections affect not only officers but also their families, particularly their children. The problem lies in a lack of understanding of how children of police officers develop their personal and social identity, internalize societal norms and values, and navigate interactions in a larger population where attitudes toward the police may differ or even be unfavorable.

Additionally, parenting practices, emotional availability, and the general home environment may be impacted by the hazards, emotional labor, and occupational stress of policing. Despite these complexities, there is a lack of in-depth, phenomenological research that examines how these dynamics influence children's identity formation, how they perceive themselves, their responsibilities, and their place in society, is lacking despite these intricacies.

Policing is arduous and demanding due to increased violence, limited resources, and political pressures (Purba & Demou, 2019). Because of these continuing factors, it contributes to a high level of pressure and stress among police officers that may cause psychological issues (Castro *et al.*, 2019; Costa *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, these job-related pressures can affect family members, especially if one or both parents are police officers. Stein (2023), citing a study conducted at the University of Illinois with 1400 dual-earner families, proved that children of parents who are policemen and are experiencing work-related pressures showed lower socio-emotional competence, as these children find it challenging to adjust to social pressures.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This research aimed to delve deeper into the lived experiences of police officers' children regarding their social lives and identity formation. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the challenges and lived experiences of the children of police officers in socialization and identity formation?
- 2) How do they cope with these experiences and challenges?

3) What insights/lessons can be learned from these experiences?

1.2 Framework of the Study

Applying Existentialism provided insight into the subjective experiences of police officers' children as they form their identities within the shadow of their parents' careers. Existentialism emphasizes people's unique experiences and the role of personal relationships in shaping one's identity, including one's parents' careers. This theory also advocates meaning and the search for a purpose in life, which can shed light on children's challenges and opportunities as they develop their identities and socialize with others.

This research was anchored in Social Identity Theory and supported by Attachment Theory. Social Identity Theory (SIT) can clarify the variables in the study: police officers' work and experiences, and their children's socialization and identity. Coined by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, this framework examines how people develop their identities and social lives. It posits that people do things to attain a positive social identity by engaging with groups they believe can help them and that accept them as they are. In this study, the paradigm can help researchers understand how their parents' professions influence identity formation. Moreover, SIT argues that group membership is affected by pride, challenges, and stereotyping, such as being a son or daughter of a police officer. Using this framework can guide the processes of identity development and socialization of these children (Nickerson, 2024).

The second paradigm is Attachment theory, introduced by Bowlby in 1982. This theory suggests that a child and their caregivers can develop an emotional connection through constant interaction. The mother or father, and the kind of bond they form from a young age, can impact the child's future relationships. This relationship can be a social interaction or an emotional bond with others, like peers. The author expounded that children who experience stable attachments are more likely to have positive social interactions than adults. Because of their strong bond, they trust their friends and communicate their needs effectively.

1.3 Review of Related Literature

Most of the studies have been conducted on the effects of policing on the lives of police officers, their challenges and adjustments (Jaeger, 2023; Fuentes *et al.*, 2023; Carrier, 2020), as well as the experiences of their partners (Soares, 2020; Silva, 2021). However, very few studies have examined the lived experiences of their children. This exploration examines the work-related pressures police officers experience and the day-to-day effects these pressures have on their children. Studies have proven the interconnectedness of parents' work values and the emotional and psychological impact on their family members, especially among adolescents and young adults. Also, parents tend to pass on their stress and problems to their family members, and their caregivers' depression and anxiety influence children's distress and coping abilities.

The problematic issue in this study is the occupational strains associated with being a police officer and their consequences for children's socialization and identity

formation. Respectively, it is speculated that their children may also experience increased stress, anxiety, and psychological distress, as observed in their parents. They may also face challenges in their social and family life, including potential harassment, bullying, or physical harm (Fratesi, 2019). Moreover, the intense public perception and experiences with police officers may be extended to their children, resulting in biased treatment. The researchers would like to know how being a police officer affects their children's social lives and identities, and whether their speculations have a basis.

Studying the connection between parents' work and its effects on their children's socialization and identity is crucial. The researchers believed that socialization and people's identity formation start at home and that parents significantly influence their children's lives. If police officers can pass their work-related stress and problems to their children, it is essential to investigate the effects on their children. When young adults observe the burden felt by their parents due to their work, the notion of possible increased stress, anxiety, and psychological distress that these young adults can follow can have meaningful implications (Susilo, 2020). Additionally, it is notable that the public can have varying perceptions and experiences with police officers. Therefore, exploring how society treats police officers' children can also help clarify this connection.

Addressing these concerns can promote healthy well-being among adolescents and future meaningful interactions among children in police families. Understanding the impact of policing on the lives of police officers' children can result in programs, projects, or support systems for the silent battles of these individuals.

In this exploration, the researcher used the philosophical framework of Existentialism. Coined from the work of Søren Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher of the 1800s, Existentialism is a philosophy that holds that people have the freedom to decide how their lives unfold. It focuses on individual responsibility for creating meaning rather than relying on religion or a higher power. Existentialists believe that each person's existence is unique and is shaped by their relationships with others and the world. They think each person must make choices and commit to a purpose in life. Further, they wrote that individuals must create their own identity to give meaning to their existence (Marschall, 2022).

Additionally, children who experience intimate relationship abuse may suffer emotional neglect from their parents, resulting in insecurities and challenges in forming future relationships, especially with partners (Granholt *et al.*, 2023). These teenagers may have difficulty building trust and intimacy, which could lead to dysfunctional relationships. Likewise, these young adults can also be transferring the cycle of violence in their relationships as they experience it at home and with their parents, who are not positively attached to them because of their work. This scenario can be observed among police officers, who tend to have less time at home with their children due to job requirements.

To dig deeper into the relationship among being a child of a police officer, identity formation, and socialization, the researchers reviewed relevant literature and studies.

Identity formation refers to the development of a unique personality that is seen as a consistent and recognizable aspect of an individual during a specific stage of life (Anwes, 2021). It involves acquiring personal traits and characteristics that distinguish a person and contribute to their recognition by others. From early adolescence onwards, individuals begin to question and explore their identity concerning the person they are, what they want to be, and the roles they want to pursue in adulthood, then form new commitments to identification.

Likewise, socialization refers to how people gain a specific society's values, behaviors, and beliefs (Lu, 2023). Through socialization, individuals understand society's accepted norms, traditions, and social responsibilities. The agents of socialization include parents, teachers, peers, social media, and others, who teach them what society expects of them.

As the child's first socialization agent, the family shapes the child's perception of the world and interactions with others. The members of their family, particularly their parents, teach them how to form relationships with various individuals; thus, the experiences and values they have within the confines of their own homes significantly impact how they interact with others in society.

The study by Susilo (2020) emphasized the importance of family relationships for a child's social connections and identity formation. Accordingly, positive family relationships are linked to higher levels of well-being among family members. However, family relationships can also cause tension and affect the well-being of the family members. This is because the socialization process plays a vital role in transmitting values, social connections, and children's identity.

In addition, the family plays a role in shaping its members' social identity. Children inherit their parents' perceived social status and live with the advantages or obstacles that come with it. Factors such as parents' employment status, like being a police officer, or educational attainment can provide advantages to their children due to the associated social identity (Lumen Learning, 2024).

The identity formation and socialization of children of police officers may be influenced by their family environment, particularly through values such as discipline, responsibility, resilience, and respect for authority. This is related to Deligero and Nabe's (2025) finding that structured guidance and supportive relationships contribute to personal development and social reconnection, suggesting that consistent support from significant authority figures can shape how individuals understand themselves and interact with society.

Police officers are responsible for preventing crime, protecting life and property, and enforcing laws to protect people's rights (Policy Circle, 2022). Carrying out these activities also entails challenges and stress that may affect family time. According to Stein (2023), these stressors can be passed on from parents to their children. This is revealed in a study conducted at the University of Illinois involving 1400 dual-earner families, which proved that children of parents who experienced higher work-related stress also showed

lower socio-emotional competence as indicated by lower positive and higher negative social behavior.

One of the challenges faced by a police officer is the shift and unfixed work during the operation, which causes chronic fatigue syndrome, depression, and mood swings (Fratesi, 2019). Officers can also be exposed to trauma, such as witnessing extreme force, observing another officer or an innocent person being killed, working with victims, and others. The researcher added that these situations led the police officer to succumb to anxiety, depression, and irritability. In fact, according to Violante (2018), an estimated 15% of the police force in the United States experience post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. Fratesi (2019) added that when a police officer experiences this traumatic event, their family can be affected, especially the wife and the children. The worst case is when a police officer is killed; their children become direct victims of trauma.

Studies have proven that exposure to violence can affect children and adolescents. Children exposed to domestic violence due to the stress experienced by their parents may also experience difficulties in their social development. As posited by Saxton *et al.* (2020), children who grow up in violent households also have interpersonal challenges in their social and intimate relationships. Likewise, exposure to police killings, especially of a family member, is associated with elevated physiological stress among adolescents, especially black boys (Browning *et al.*, 2021). Being in the vicinity of a mass shooting can also lead to short-lived negative emotions, and exposure to violent crime is linked to lower educational achievement in young people (Legewie & Fagan, 2019). Further, Williams (1994), as cited in Fratesi (2019), stressed that young adults, when traumatized, may also have problems sleeping, eating, and headaches. They may express emotions through aggressiveness, rebellious behaviors, alcohol use, and substance abuse.

Moreover, children of police officers face unique challenges. They may experience conflicting emotions, pride and loyalty towards their parents' work, and anxiety about potential peer rejection due to negative attitudes towards authority figures. As cited by Helfers *et al.* (2021), youth often hold unfavorable views of the police and distrust them. Children of police officers may face harassment, bullying, or physical harm due to their association with law enforcement. They may also be subjected to increased scrutiny and monitoring of their behavior.

Adolescents' coping mechanisms when confronted with domestic problems can include trying to address the issue, seeking help, or disengaging themselves from the situation (Sharma, 2023). Likewise, for children experiencing fear like that of losing their police officer parent, Leibring *et al.* (2024) pointed out that the standard coping techniques, as revealed in their study, include problem-solving or emotional regulation strategies, withdrawal, and seeking support from families and friends.

Identity formation refers to the development of a unique personality, a consistent and recognizable aspect of an individual during a specific stage of life (Anwes, 2021). In this paper, the process by which children of police officers develop a unique personality that is distinct from, or influenced by, their parents is examined. Socialization is how

people gain a specific society's values, behaviors, and beliefs (Lu, 2023). In this paper, the term "children of police officers" refers to how children of police officers engage socially.

A police officer refers to a male or female member of the police force (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). In the study, they are the law enforcers and the parents of the study participants.

Most research conducted was focused on the personal experiences of police officers, especially the trauma they felt and how they addressed it. Likewise, studies were conducted on their wives' struggles, given that their partners are policemen. These studies were also conducted in foreign countries with different cultural settings. Filipino families are known for their close family ties and values; however, very few studies have focused on their children's experiences. While there may be previous investigations, no recent exploration has been conducted, especially into the personal experiences of these children. In this regard, it is essential to conduct this study, as it delves into the personal lenses of their children as they engage socially. It is also necessary to explore their challenges and coping strategies to inform recommendations for activities that may address these problems.

2. Methods

This section provides the methods used by the researchers to obtain and analyze the data, including the research participants, materials and instruments, and the design and procedure.

2.1 Study Participants

The researcher chose 11 participants through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (a) 18 years old and above, (b) son or daughter of a policeman, and (c) willing to participate in the study. Accordingly, Subedi (2021) noted that participants vary across qualitative research designs.

In this phenomenological research design, purposive sampling was applied, and the participants were the young adult children of policemen. In Subedi's (2021) study, the researcher discussed the importance of small sample sizes in qualitative research.

2.2 Materials and Instruments

This study employed the Interview Guide as the source of information on the lived experiences of the policemen's kin about their social life and identity formation. This Interview Guide was validated by the researcher's thesis adviser and other experts in the field. These interviews were conducted in Cebuano/Visayan, the local dialect, to facilitate the process for participants who were more accustomed to it. Since this is a multi-case study, the In-depth Interview (IDI) research technique should reveal each respondent's varied perspectives and experiences as a child of police officers.

2.3 Design and Procedure

This study explored the lived experiences of children of police officers regarding socialization and identity formation. The researcher employed the phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research aims to understand people's experiences of certain phenomena by listening to and analyzing their accounts (Creswell, 2009). Phenomenology, as defined by Vagle (2014) and mentioned by Barrow (2017), is an introspective and inductive approach. To conduct phenomenological research, one listens to people talk about their prior, real-life experiences. Prejudice and speculation are prevented during the data collection phase. Systematic data collection and analysis lend legitimacy to participants' perspectives and feelings.

In this study, the researchers followed a detailed and structured process to gather comprehensive participant data. The researchers took key roles and steps to ensure the procedure was well-organized. First, the interviewer played a significant role. The interviewer conducted both structured and semi-structured interviews using an interview guide containing predetermined questions. This allowed for follow-up, open-ended questions that delved deeper into participants' initial responses. Interviews, being less rigid and more natural, provide an opportunity for an in-depth understanding of the subject under study (Monday, 2020).

Next, a transcriber was involved. After each interview, the transcriber carefully converted the recorded audio into written form. This process was not only about data collection but also crucial to subsequent analysis. The transcriber manually transcribed each interview, determining how to best represent the spoken words in the text, which played a significant role in understanding the interview content (Illinois University Library, 2023). The third role was that of a translator. After the interviews were transcribed, the text was translated into Standard English, which is widely used in academic publications for broader communication of research findings (Yunus *et al.*, 2022).

The researchers adhered to several trustworthiness criteria to ensure the study's credibility and reliability. Credibility focuses on guaranteeing the research findings accurately reflect the participants' experiences. Triangulation was employed, which involved using multiple sources of information to identify consistent patterns. Dependability and reliability were ensured by fostering confidence in the research process and anticipating peer review to validate the study's methods. Confirmability aims to maintain objectivity and accuracy, ensuring that the study's findings reflect the true nature of the data. Transferability is sought to apply the study's findings to different contexts, enhancing its external validity and generalizability (Stahl & King, 2020).

Regarding purposive sampling, the researchers followed these steps to gather data. The researchers identified potential interviewees and sent them request letters inviting them to one-on-one interviews. Participation was voluntary, and only those who agreed were involved. Upon agreement, participants signed consent forms to formalize their involvement. Once participants consented, the assigned interviewer used a

validated questionnaire to guide the interview, and with the participants' permission, audio recordings were made to ensure every detail was captured.

After the interviews, the responses were transcribed for further analysis. Once all the data were transcribed, the researchers employed thematic analysis to identify and summarize key themes from the responses. This process involved carefully reading and rereading the data to identify recurring patterns and themes, producing trustworthy findings. Thematic analysis is well-suited for complex research questions and qualitative studies. First, the researchers familiarized themselves with the data to uncover emerging themes. Second, initial codes were created by reviewing the transcripts. Third, themes were identified by searching all coded data. Fourth, the identified themes were reviewed and refined to ensure clarity and coherence. Fifth, each theme was defined and named. Finally, a report was written based on the identified themes (Dawadi, 2020).

3. Results and Discussion

This section discusses themes derived from the responses of seven purposively selected young adult children of police officers in Davao City regarding their socialization and identity formation.

3.1 Challenges and Lived Experiences of Police Officers' Children in Socialization and Identity Formation

This portion explores the challenges and lived experiences of the eleven children of police officers in relation to their socialization and identity formation. Transcripts were taken from the one-on-one interviews conducted to capture their unique experiences.

As presented in Table 1, four subthemes are generated, including a sense of privilege and respect, the emotional impact of parental absence, the pressure of expectations and scrutiny, and the pressure of living up to standards.

Table 1: Essential themes on the lived experiences and challenges of police officers' children affecting their social life and identity formation

Themes	Significant Statement
Sense of Privilege and Respect	<i>"Once they found out that my dad is a police officer, they tend to give special treatment; and I, as a person, do not like special treatment."</i> (Deborah)
	<i>One of my experiences as a child of a police officer is that other people tend to see me differently. It's a privilege since, as a child of a police officer, other people do not look down on me easily, and they have great respect for me, all because my father is a police officer."</i> (Ezekiel)
	<i>"I don't have any problems when it comes to socializing with other people. It boosted my confidence and made me become a responsible person."</i> (Ruth)

Emotional Impact of Parental Absence	<i>"As a child of a police officer, the challenge I go through is loneliness inside the family because they will be assigned to remote places for months or years. It takes them months or years to go home."</i> (Job) <i>"It's tough, especially since it takes months to be without our father. Then, for me, the challenge is that even if you want your father to be present on every occasion, especially back in elementary, we were honor students; even if we wanted him to be there during our special days like birthdays, it is not easy for them to come home due to the nature of their job."</i> (Eve) <i>"I think it would be separation anxiety. Whenever I went and worked, I feared being left behind"</i> – (Delilah)
The Pressure of Expectations and Scrutiny	<i>"As for challenges, my dad is very strict, especially regarding romantic relationships. He is very protective, given that he is a guy with a daughter, so it is very challenging for me, especially since I am the only daughter of two siblings."</i> (Deborah) <i>"Probably people who expect you to be like a father more. As a child of a police officer, you're expected to have a good upbringing, and whatever achievements your father has achieved, you should have achieved as well. Also, they expect me to be a police officer once I graduate from college, which sometimes creates pressure on us."</i> (Esther) <i>"As a child of police officers, I already know that there are many expectations in my social life. Once they learn that my father is a police officer, they tend to say that I should also follow in his career, especially since I am a male. It also affects me because they have high expectations of me. When I get to interact with other people, once they get to know that my father is a police officer, for them, it automatically means that I have a comfortable life."</i> (Eve)
The Pressure of Living up to Standards	<i>"Like earlier, since my dad is a police officer, he tends to adopt their training into our house. He is strict, even regarding food, and your actions are controlled."</i> (Ezekiel) <i>"In our household, ever since I was a kid, I was encouraged to follow in my father's footsteps, given that my dad isn't the only officer in our family, but also my grandfather. This is a big thing for me due to the weight of their expectations."</i> (Matthew) <i>"In our household, the challenge is knowing he's a police officer; they expect you to be prim and proper since you are a police officer's child. Discipline is essential in our household; talking back to your parents is a big no-no. Also, whatever is being said by your police parent, you should follow."</i> – (Eve) <i>"Probably inside the room, my father strictly treats me as an applicant. Whatever he says or commands should be obeyed immediately; the same rule applies in our household. It also goes that whatever happens during training or is implemented in the field is also applied to his children."</i> (Esther)

a. Sense of Privilege and Respect

This theme captures the intricate experiences of children of police officers, including the advantages and disadvantages of their unique position stemming from their parents' profession. It also includes the pressures and expectations attached to their social status.

As explained in the theory of Social Identity, individuals may shape their identity and sense of belonging through the group they identify with. Being a child of a police officer may bring pride and a sense of belonging to the organization through interactions with other police officers.

“...isa sa mga naexperience nako bilang anak sa isa ka pulis, is ang ubang tao ang pananaw sa akoo kay naa pud koy privilege pud ba sa uban, kay tungod lagi anak ko sa pulis. Dili ko, ang uban dili ko kaya nga idown down unya ang uban dako pud respeto nako ba kay tungod papa nako pulis. (Ezekiel)

...one of my experiences as a child of a police officer is that other people tend to see me differently. It's a privilege, since as a child of a police officer, other people do not look down on me easily and have great respect for me, all because of my father.

This response illustrates the different feelings of privilege and the respect that come with being the child of a police officer. Ezekiel mentioned that although people don't look down on him, others may view him differently and treat him well because of his dad's position.

It is important to note that these young people have unique personalities and experiences influenced by the people they often associate with. In Garcia *et al.* (2019), the researchers found that millennials take pride in belonging to their organization, which leads to job satisfaction. The researchers added that when this new generation can participate in specific decision-making, it gives them a sense of intrinsic importance. In this study, children of police officers take pride in and gain respect for their parents' profession; however, other factors also contribute to their identity formation, such as being given the chance to prove themselves.

There are also times when they feel the social challenge of the difficulty of genuine connection and pressure to live up to the expectations attached to their status. In Clark's (2021) article, higher expectations influence children's intellectual and social development. It is therefore recommended that they develop self-esteem not only through their parents' given status but also through being helped to form their own. In this paper, tolerance of the difficulties encountered is also helpful in developing oneself. Their self-esteem rose because they saw themselves as capable of functioning fully in a given situation.

b. Emotional Impact of Parental Absence

The demanding job of being a police officer requires long hours, including night shifts and even time away from home. While this scenario is commendable for maintaining peace and order and dedication to work, it has an overlooked effect on the emotional well-being of their children left behind. This sub-theme delves into the challenges faced by children of police enforcers due to their frequent and prolonged absences. It presents

the emotional results of this separation, including loneliness, anxiety, and difficulties in forming parental bonds.

"...so being a child of a police officer, it's tough, especially since it will take months pa before makauban ang along papa and then, for the challenges is ka nang gusto on man nimo na dapat naa among papa, every, Katong elementary pa mi is an honor student man mi. Gustohon man namo naa sila during our special days, of course, sa birthdays, is dili day maka uli uli sila. (Eve)

"...so being a child of a police officer, it's tough, especially since it takes months before we can be with our father. Then, for me, the challenge is that even if you want your father to be present on every occasion, especially back in elementary, we were honor students; even if we wanted him to be there during our special days like birthdays, it is not easy for them to come home due to the nature of their job."

This response highlights the effect of their parents' absence on their emotions as they grow up. This claim is supported by Eve's statement that when the children felt empty during special occasions and school programs, their parents were unable to join. These experiences show the consistent lack of parental presence, resulting in insecurity and yearning for the comfort they need from their parents. This implies addressing the effect, as if left unaddressed, it can lead to long-term emotional difficulties in building trust and attachment and in forming healthy relationships.

As explained in John Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1982), attachment in childhood shapes emotional and social development. A secure attachment, characterized by the consistent availability of parents at an early age, fosters healthy emotional regulation and strong social skills. However, when police officers are frequently absent due to their demanding work schedules, it may disrupt the formation of a secure attachment bond with their children. This absence can lead to a feeling of insecurity, anxiety, and a sense of being abandoned, which can impact their future relationship. This result is also evident in Mao *et al.*'s (2020) investigation of the effects of parental absence on children's development in China. It was disclosed that their absence affects their mental status and their efforts in class.

Furthermore, Culanag *et al.* (2025) found that exposure to stressful environments significantly affects individuals' psychological well-being, which, in turn, is a key factor in how they adapt to challenging circumstances. Their findings suggest that prolonged exposure to stress can impair emotional functioning, whereas positive psychological well-being enhances one's ability to cope with environmental demands. In the context of children of police officers, parental absence due to occupational responsibilities may constitute a significant source of stress, potentially affecting their emotional well-being and social adjustment

c. The Pressure of Expectations and Scrutiny

This sub-theme discusses the challenges children face in living up to the perceived image associated with their parents' profession. These expectations and their influence on their social interactions, academic pursuits, and overall sense of self were also discussed.

"...probably, people who expect you to be like your, um, father more. Like gina expect nila nga ikaw as a children of police officer, dapat parehas ka sa imong Papa nga gwapo og tinubuan, kung unsay naabot niya dapat maoy maabot pod nimo. Dapat ma police officer ka after nimo mo graduate sa college, which sometimes it creates pressure jud sa atoa. As a college student noh kay tag-as na silag expectation sa imoha ba na wala paka ning graduate, then daghan pa kag process bag-o ka makahuman, or like, bag-o ka makakuha ani na degree before ka mo apply og police or other, ano, particulum. (Esther)

"...probably people who expect you to be like your father more. Like a child of a police officer, they expect you to have a good upbringing and to achieve whatever your dad has achieved. Also, they expect me to be a police officer once I graduate college, which sometimes creates pressure on us."

This statement displays the different pressures faced by children of police officers. They experience the pressure to conform to certain expectations, follow in their parent's footsteps, and maintain a specific image. Esther emphasized the expectation to follow in her father's footsteps and pursue the same profession. This pressure can create a sense of obligation and restrict the child's freedom to explore their preferred career.

As explained by the Social Learning Theory, these participants observe their parents' work and witness the challenges and expectations associated with it. Then they model their parents' actions, internalizing the importance of maintaining a specific image and the pressure to live up to the expectations associated with this profession. With this, children experience positive and negative social consequences, including the pressure of expectation and scrutiny.

Pressure can be both a positive and negative motivator (Sheng *et al.*, 2022). It can lead to dedication but can also cause exhaustion and depersonalization. This study mirrors the experiences of the children of police officers who might feel motivated to excel and uphold a positive image but also experience stress, anxiety, and scrutiny that can affect their well-being.

d. The Pressure of Living up to Standards

Expectations often create pressure to conform and maintain a specific image (Helfers *et al.*, 2021); youth usually hold unfavorable views of the police and distrust them. Thus, when these parents or relatives are accused of crimes, these children also experience the consequences. They may face harassment, bullying, or physical harm due to their association with law enforcement. They may also be subjected to increased scrutiny and monitoring of their behavior.

This sub-theme centers on the challenges faced by the participants raised in an environment characterized by strict discipline and high expectations. The discussion includes how these demanding standards mirror the rigorous structure of law enforcement and its effect on children's emotional.

"...inside your room, probably is that your father will, ano kanang gina treat ka niya as an applicant mismo. Kanang dapat unsay sugo niya kay dapat matuman dayun, dapat strikto pud siya sa amoa as a father pud, or kanang gina implement niya kung unsay ginabuhay niya sa training noh or kanang ana gud sa mga training field sa mga applicant gina apply niya sa iyang mga anak. Then in the community, katong mga expectations."
(Esther)

"...probably inside the room, my father strictly treats me as an applicant. Whatever he says or commands should be obeyed by the media; the same rule also applies in our household. It also goes that whatever happens during training or is implemented in the field applies to his children."

This statement pointed out the pressure-cooker environment in which some children of police officers are raised. The emphasis on strict discipline, high standards, and adherence to rules can create significant challenges for personal development and the pursuit of individual aspirations. Esther describes a home environment with strict regulations and high expectations for conduct and performance. This scenario also describes strict discipline, a sense of constraint, and less individual expression.

This parenting style is often associated with authoritative parenting (Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022). This style is characterized by one-way communication, in which strict rules are imposed on children with little or no room for explanation, often resulting in high expectations and punishment for mistakes. However, when parents use their authority to nurture relationships, they can set clear expectations and guidelines and explain the reasons behind disciplinary actions. This may result in healthier outcomes and improved emotional well-being by balancing discipline with support and guidance.

3.2 Coping Mechanisms of Police Officers' Children

This section delves into the coping strategies employed by the participants in handling the challenges they experienced as a child of a police officer. Four sub-themes were identified: self-determination and independence; personal growth through resilience; seeking personal freedom and emotional release; and relying on emotional support and guidance.

Table 3: Essential themes on the coping mechanism of Police Officers' Children

Themes	Significant Statement
Self-determination and Independence	<i>"I just mind my own business. I don't dwell on what others say about me or what I do. I just think it's life, and they shouldn't meddle with it."</i> (Deborah) <i>"I just ignore them since I also have my abilities. Just because this is my father's profession doesn't mean I must also be like that. We are all different, and I tell myself I also have something unique."</i> (This participant asserts their individuality and disregards expectations based on their father's profession.)" (Ezekiel) <i>"I cope by focusing on what I do in life. I do not focus on other people's expectations; I will do well in what I do now."</i> (P4) <i>"Just like I said, focus on yourself and disregard bothersome things about you. This is for you to build your identity, and I will not live in my father's name there but as the person I am right now."</i> (Esther) <i>"Again, as I've grown, I've already realized and accepted that those things came with my dad's job. It was the nature of his job, and I couldn't do anything about it."</i> (Miriam) <i>"Hmm, I just don't mind them at all. I won't get rich with all their talk anyway."</i> (Martha)
Personal Growth through Resilience	<i>"Of course, when you feel pressure, there is also a good side to that. This makes you feel inspired and motivates you to do well." This highlights how they transform negative pressure into a source of inspiration and motivation for personal achievement."</i> (Matthew) <i>"My coping strategies with those challenges I've had are to accept them and turn them into motivation." This emphasizes the importance of accepting difficulties and actively using them as motivation to push forward."</i> (Ruth) <i>Could still have or seek their guidance and support whenever I felt difficulties." This underscores the value of open communication with parents, which helps them navigate challenges and fosters resilience."</i> (Luke) <i>"I just tell myself and my friends not to mind the negativity since I'll gain nothing from it." This demonstrates a powerful strategy for resilience by filtering out negativity and concentrating on personal growth and well-being."</i> (Miriam)
Seeking Personal Freedom and Emotional Release	<i>"Right now, I join many different activities under the SK so I can escape my father's watch sometimes."</i> (Deborah) <i>"My specific strategies are that I also make sure to have fun. Aside from the fact that we are not perfect and have family problems besides financial matters, I just carry it well. I control myself so I won't get carried away with my emotions, so it won't become big and won't be as heavy to carry."</i> (Job) <i>"I just play. Volleyball. Ignore the haters."</i> (Martha) <i>"Right now, what's effective is to go on a trip outside the city. Distance myself a bit from my family because I set up boundaries between me and my family."</i> (Delilah)

Relying on Emotional Support and Guidance	<i>Yes, I seek help from my mom because my parents are separated, so I make sure to bond with her. Since our setup with my brother is to stay back and forth between my parents' place, sometimes I stay with my dad and sometimes with my mom. I tend to bond more with my mom because sometimes I have problems with my dad, and I just run to her to seek advice and comfort since she has more experience and knows more than I do, so I ask her for guidance." (Deborah)</i> <i>"Sometimes I seek advice from them on what I should do because there are those expectations from my parents that I should be like this and that. Sometimes I ask my friends for their opinions." (Ezekiel)</i> <i>"For me, it is hard to ask for support from my family because, of course, as a child of a police officer, it is hard to tell them that they have high expectations of me. I ask for support from my friends by talking with them about my feelings. I let my emotions about them without the expectation that they'd solve my problem for me. I just ask for support by having someone listen to my feelings." (Matthew)</i> <i>"So basically, I have always been open towards my friends and family because, uhh, they are my support system in everything I do." (Luke)</i>
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a. Self-Determination and Independence

In this sub-theme, the researchers presented how the participants cope with the pressures and expectations by cultivating self-reliance and autonomy. More than half of the participants showed strong self-awareness and abilities.

"...dili ra, ginabalewala ra nako kay naa man pud koy akoang sariling kakayahan pud. Dili porket ing.ani ilang profession dapat ing.ana pud ka. So, lahi lahi man ang tao, mao pud na akong gina ano sa akoang sarili kay naisip nako naa pud koy akoang sarili pud. (Ezekiel)

"...actually, I ignore them since I also have my abilities. Just because this is my father's profession doesn't mean I must also be like that, well. We are all different, and that's what I tell myself. I also have something unique on my own." (This participant asserts their individuality and disregards expectations based on their father's profession.)

This response shows a strong sense of self-determination and independence among children of police officers. This expresses a clear strategy for coping with external pressures and expectations. It also shows that they are not affected by the social pressures attached to them.

Minding their own business demonstrates their self-reliance, meaning they refuse to allow others' opinions on their choices and decisions. It focuses on personal goals and achievement rather than what others expect. This self-focus is like Ezekiel, who states their intention to respect their identity, free from the pressure attached to their family name.

In summary, it can be gleaned that these participants are empowered and aware of their identities and self-choices. Despite external scrutiny and pressures, they strongly committed to cultivating their identities. This result can be explained by the findings of Rattanasuk and Khuwatsamrit (2021). In their paper, they evaluated the factors that may affect psychological empowerment in persons with spinal cord injury. Using 260 individuals, the results revealed that self-esteem directly affects psychological empowerment. In the study, children of police officers cope with the pressure they experience because they have self-esteem, as they are aware of themselves aside from the social status assigned to them. Orth and Robins (2022) added that self-esteem is crucial across ages, genders, and ethnicities. It is an adaptive trait that greatly influences healthy adjustments and adaptations. Regarding the study, the self-esteem typical of these participants is self-initiated, resulting from their experiences both inside and outside the home.

b. Personal Growth through Resilience

This sub-theme underscores how resilience can lead to personal development. It reveals the transformative effect of the challenges encountered by children of police officers. These children showed strength and adaptability by overcoming these challenges with resilience, fostering personal growth. Instead of being drowned by the adverse effects, they cultivated a deeper understanding of their identities.

"...kanang ma pressure ka syempre, naa man sad nay good side. Kanang ma inspire sad ka ba na mag tarong. Sa akua sa pag cope nako, syempre naga focus lang ko sa akoang dagan sa kinabuhì. Wala ko naga focus sa ilahang mga expectation. Ang akua lang is mag tarong ko sa unsa akoang ginabuhat karon. Kita naa man ta sa criminology, naa man ko sa criminology na department naga skwela, ang akua lang magtarong ko sa akoang pagskwela karon, dili ko magpaapekto sa ilahang ginaingon na expectations." (Matthew)

"Of course, when you feel pressure, there is also a good side to that. This makes you feel inspired and motivates you to do well." This highlights how they transform negative pressure into a source of inspiration and motivation for personal achievement."

Matthew's response revealed his positive perspective despite the challenges he felt as a child of a police officer. Instead of feeling down, the participant sees it as a motivator that brings a positive drive for personal growth and achievement. This approach serves as a protective strategy that helps maintain focus through resiliency.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from challenges (American Psychological Association, 2022). It is not just surviving but thriving after experiencing hardship. Resilient people are flexible and adaptive, both mentally and emotionally, in the face of whatever problems they face. It is also a skill that can be learned and practiced. In the study by de la Fuente *et al.* (2021), which examined resilience, positivity, and coping strategies as predictors of engagement and burnout among 1,126 undergraduate

students, the authors found significant associations between resilience, coping strategies, and levels of engagement and burnout. Specifically, resilience was positively associated with engagement and negatively associated with burnout. The study further explained that resilience has both proactive and reactive dimensions. Proactively, resilience reflects an individual's self-efficacy, adaptability, and capacity to seek support and remain optimistic when facing challenges. Reactively, resilience enables individuals to cope with uncertainty, recover from setbacks, maintain emotional stability, and manage stressful situations effectively. These findings highlight resilience as an essential protective factor that promotes psychological well-being and adaptive functioning among young adults.

b. Seeking Personal Freedom and Emotional Release

In this coping strategy, the participants described how they maintained a sense of personal autonomy and well-being within a demanding family structure. Creating space for themselves, managing stress, and finding an outlet for self-expression are also discussed in this sub-theme.

Participants mentioned this strategy as their way of coping with the problems they encountered. They revealed the importance of finding healthy outlets for stress and managing their emotions.

"...so ang specific strategies nako ana kay ginalingaw nalang pud nako akoang sarili, ginalingaw, ginadala nako sa kalingaw akong sarili. Aside sa, syempre dili man ta tanan perpekto nga tao, naa jud tay problema sa pamilya, aside sa tawag ani sa uhm tawag ani sa kwarta ug unsa ba na, naa tay lahi lahi na problema. Ginadala lang jud nako bai, gina control nako akoang sarili na dili magpadala sa tanang emosyon kay para ma cover pud siya, or dili mu dako or dili mu bug-at akong ginadala na problema sa pamilya." (Job)

"...my specific strategies are to make sure to have fun. Aside from the fact that we are not perfect and have family problems besides financial matters, I just carry it well. I control myself so I won't get carried away with my emotions, so it won't become big and won't be as heavy to carry."

The children of police officers have different methods of establishing personal liberty. Job acknowledged that their family is imperfect, so they control themselves and prefer fun activities. Other participants join community activities and/or go on trips, which limits their time at home and helps them escape the strict supervision of their parents.

Notably, these participants recognized their individual needs and sought different ways to create personal space to release their emotions. It was revealed that these participants are mature enough to solve their problems in peaceful and productive ways. According to Weininger (2021), addressing long-standing, recurrent hurt rooted in early experiences is crucial, especially during times that trigger old wounds in participants' lives. The author emphasizes that recognizing and understanding these patterns can

transform them into opportunities for healing and wisdom. People need to look for various practices that can help them mitigate their painful experiences and regain self-compassion, leading to freedom.

In addition, a nurturing environment that values and respects their coping styles can help them navigate their challenges and develop themselves productively. It is like fertile soil that enables seeds to sprout and flourish (Sewanarain, 2024). This kind of environment is essential for a child's emotional well-being, success, and social development. It encourages active learning and cultivates social skills through love and positive interaction with people who value and respect each other's strengths and weaknesses.

c. Relying on Emotional Support and Guidance

This coping mechanism involves participants seeking emotional support and guidance from trusted people. This portion discusses how this support contributes to their resilience and well-being and alleviates the challenges they experience as children of police officers.

"...ako personally, lisod jud mangayog support kung sa family kay syempre as anak sa pulis lisod muiingon ba na taas sila ug expectation. Ako naga pangayo ko ug support sa akong mga anong mga friends kana, dili, support lang gud na maminaw sila sa akong gibati. Pagawas lang ko sa akong gibati sa ilaha, dili necessary na sulbaron nila akong problema. Kana support nana sa akong mga friends sila. (Matthew)

"...for me personally, it is hard to ask for support from my family because, of course, as a child of a police officer, it is hard to tell them how they have high expectations from me. Personally, I ask my friends for support by talking with them about my feelings. I let my emotions go with them without expecting them to solve my problem for me. I just ask for support through having someone to listen to my feelings."

These statements showed that the participants shared their problems and sought support from others when confronted with problems at home. This contradicts Stein's claim (2023), which showed that among the 1400 respondents, children of parents who are policemen have lower socio-emotional competence because they find it difficult to adjust to social pressures. This is because sharing their experiences showed that these participants found solutions to address this gap by forming their own social support.

Matthew and the rest of the participants turned to their friends for help. It can also be observed that the high expectations at home led them to seek help outside rather than discuss it at home. Asking friends for help implies seeking validation and a sense of belonging. It also indicates that this generation seeks diverse support networks. They may not always feel comfortable or rely solely on their family, so friends play a crucial role in providing emotional support and perspective. It is, therefore, essential to

acknowledge that these people sometimes do not need advice; they just need someone to listen, and parents or friends need to provide both.

The result is supported by the Social Identity Theory of Tajfel and Turner (1970), which explains that people do things to attain a positive identity by engaging with groups such as their friends and immediate family members they trust, who they believe can be helpful to them. In this study's findings, the relationship within the family helps with the child's identity formation. According to Susilo (2020), positive family relationships are linked to higher levels of well-being among family members. However, family relationships can also cause tension and affect the well-being of the family members. Thus, it is recommended that a positive family bond, even with parents who are police officers, be developed to support the positive identity formation of their children.

3.3 Insights and Lessons Learned from Experiences

This section examines the insights and lessons learned by individuals growing up as children of police officers, shedding light on how these experiences shape their understanding of life and personal growth. Four key themes emerged: empathy and understanding of parental sacrifices; upholding responsibility and integrity; personal authenticity and independence; and encouraging parental support without pressure. These themes reflect how the unique experiences of being a police officer's child shape core values, emotional intelligence, and personal perspective.

Table 4: Essential themes on the insights and lessons learned from experiences

Themes	Significant Statement
Empathy and Understanding of Parental Sacrifices	<i>"My advice is that even if you get hurt because your parent is a law enforcer, especially during special events or occasions, you should just think that they need to do this to support your family and to provide for your needs, especially financial support. If you find it hard or if you're hurt in this situation, we must think of your parents who are in this situation. It's harder and hurts more for those who have to work away from their family to provide for their wants and needs." (Eve)</i>
	<i>"Right now, when it comes to my father being far away, my view is that I really admire them a lot because they really do their job well for the nation, even though they are far away from their family. So, I really respect the police profession when it comes to my experience of being a child of a police officer." (Ruth)</i>
	<i>"It already was a given that spending time with each other was always limited. I guess I just show up at the events that matter to the children. For example, birthday parties or graduation ceremonies. Unfortunately, I did not have the luxury of having my dad present at my own important events since it would always coincide with his work. Already knew for a fact that I couldn't do anything about it because work was work. As much as possible, parents should spend time with their families because it is honestly important, and it makes a difference in how the children are raised. It creates a solid connection." (Miriam)</i>
Upholding Responsibility and Integrity	<i>"You really need to be careful with your actions. Especially when it comes to government-to-government because, as I mentioned, I am currently working under the government as well, so you really need to be careful because there will really be</i>

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	<i>times when the child's issue will be brought up to the parents, and this tends to create a domino effect, especially since we share the same surnames, and it's tough to cover up the issue, so it also affects them."</i> (Deborah) <i>"My advice to other children of police officers is that we shouldn't take advantage of our parents' situations. Let us not be boastful to other people. For example, if you get in trouble and you bring up how you are the child of a certain officer, you shouldn't do that. The police have a motto to serve the law above anyone else; we should respect the nature of our parents' job. We must learn to love, care, and respect."</i> (Job) <i>"Strive to be a better person, I guess, if I become a police officer or even right now, as a child of a police officer, do my best to uphold the law."</i> (Delilah)
Personal Authenticity and Independence	<i>"Just be yourself. It also doesn't mean that your parents are police officers; you are automatically supposed to be a police officer because we each have our own career, goals, and passion."</i> (Deborah) <i>"All I can say to others who are going through a similar experience is to just focus on yourself. It's not always a bad thing to feel pressured because maybe you also really want to become a police officer. Sometimes, the pressure serves as your inspiration. However, if you really do not want to become a police officer, you also really need to build what you want, build your goals, and not mind what others have to say. You build your own expectations and goals in life."</i> (Matthew) <i>"Probably, the main point of this, as a police officer's child, is to really not mind and put to heart the negative things people say. And not to live up to their expectations. Create your own expectations since you'll be the one working hard for your expectations."</i> (Esther)
Encouraging Parental Support without Pressure	<i>"I think be open-minded. They should learn how to listen to their children's problems so they can guide them well."</i> (Deborah) <i>"All I can say to other parents, especially those who work as law enforcers, is not to set high expectations on their children because they really cannot force their kids to follow in their footsteps. They should just accept that it is what it is."</i> (Ezekiel) <i>"To the parents, especially those who are police officers, we really cannot control what our children want. If they want to pursue another career, let them be. They are given the freedom to build what they want because it's not good to control what they want, and eventually, they realize that this is not what they want. Let us give this profession to those who are passionate about taking this path. It's not right if they're only influenced and controlled. My overall point is that let us control them but inspire the kids."</i> (Matthew) <i>"So, the only thing I can say to parents is that despite the profession that they have today, they must always remember that they also have a profession other than being a police officer, and that is being a parent. They must always, uh, not prioritize one over the other, but they must always balance it out. So that they can provide for both ends."</i> (Luke)

a. Empathy and Understanding of Parental Sacrifices

This sub-theme explains the participants' realization of their parents' sacrifices for their well-being and the nature of their parents' profession. It also acknowledges the challenges twinned with the sacrifices of their parents, being police officers. It underscores that the police officers' children have a deep appreciation for their parents' dedication and commitment, even when it means being away from them most of the time.

"...my advice is that maski pag sakit sa but na wala permit among parents who are law enforcers, especially kanang mga special events or tawag nito occasions, imoha nalang jud huna human is that they need this to support your family and to provide for your needs, for the financial support. Kay ug naglisod ka or nasakit ka ana nga situation, how much more katong papa mismo or mama na layo perminti para lang mahatag ang mga kailangan ninyo." (Eve)

"...my advice is that even if you get hurt because your parent is a law enforcer, especially during special events or occasions, you should just think that they need to do this to support your family and to provide for your needs, especially financial support. If you find it hard or if you're hurt in this situation, we must think of your parents who are in this situation. It's harder and hurts more for them who have to work away from their family to provide for their wants and needs."

The narrative of Eve highlights the emotional pain experienced by participants when their parents miss school events. However, they outgrow this feeling and instead view these sacrifices through an empathetic lens, realizing they are for the good of the family. This understanding implies compassion for their parents' role and acknowledgment of their love for their family, recognizing that it is also difficult for their parents to be away.

The insights also suggest that it is essential to cultivate empathy and understanding within these families by discussing with their children the reasons behind their parents' sacrifices. In return, parents need to manage their time and plan to be with their children during critical events. Efforts to balance work commitments with family obligations can strengthen the bond and provide children with a sense of security and support. When parents can prioritize attending important milestones, they reinforce their commitment to their family and can help close the gap despite their demanding jobs.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. It serves as a foundation for strong relationships. Empathetic people tend to be happier and build better connections with others. It also begets compassion, tolerance, and a greater sense of responsibility toward others and the environment (Zaki, 2019). This is supported by Chung *et al.* (2021), who investigated the connection between empathy, volunteering, and mental health. Among 301 full-time employees in South Korea who participated in voluntary work, the findings revealed that volunteering mediated the relationships

between cognitive and affective empathy and mental health. It was found that higher levels of empathy can increase engagement and enhance mental health.

b. Upholding Responsibility and Integrity

The participants in this sub-theme recognized the importance of being cautious in their actions, especially in government-related matters, and strove to be better people by upholding the law and avoiding taking advantage of their parents' position.

"...so akong ma ambag ra nako sa mga anak pud ug pulis, dili nato itake advantage ang sitwasyon sa atoang mga ginikanan, which is pulis. Dili nato pwede ipahambog na sa daghan tao. Halimbawa isa ka na anak nga murag bugoy bugoy, mu ingon ka in case of trouble or unsa man na nga anak kag ing.ani, ing.ana dili na siya ano kay motto sa pulis, dili pud ko pulis pero naay motto ang mga pulis na walang kinikilingan kumbaga. Dili nato na siya kailangan, ang atoa lang respetohon nato kung unsa'y kinaiya ug trabaho sa atoang ginikanan ug mao ra na love and care, respect jud." (Job)

"...my advice to other children of police officers is that we shouldn't take advantage of our parents' situations. Let us not be boastful toward others. For example, if you get in trouble and bring up that you are the child of a certain officer, we shouldn't do that. The police have a motto to serve the law above anyone else, and we should respect the nature of our parents' job. We must learn to love, care, and respect."

Job's response emphasized the importance of not exploiting the parents' position for personal gain. It points to the need for them to understand and uphold the values of fairness and equality, even when they think they are more advantaged than children from ordinary families. In relation, it suggests that parents discuss with their children the importance of earning respect through their own achievements and not on their parents' position. This action encourages them to view their parents' profession as an inspiration and basis for their ethical behavior.

In summary, the transcript suggests upholding integrity and responsibility. Being a child of a police officer means living a life that fits the expected norms. This result is supported by Social Role Theory, which led participants to be cautious about their behavior because they knew it might affect their parents. The theory explains that the behavior is influenced by their being children of police officers. They are aware of their parents' positions of authority and the potential for their actions to reflect poorly on their families. By striving to be better people and avoiding actions that could harm their family, the participants are fulfilling the social role of responsible citizens and living up to the expectations associated with their family's position.

Likewise, parents need to guide their children in developing their own sense of respect and justice, inspiring them to build their identities on ethical principles. According to the International Association of Chiefs of Police (2024), it is important to constantly communicate with one's children. Parents are encouraged to have open

communication with their children about various topics, including their views on policing. They can also discuss healthy conflict-resolution ways that their children can use when interacting with peers.

c. Personal Authenticity and Independence

This insight addresses the need for the children of police enforcers to pursue their aspirations, free from the pressure to conform to expectations tied to their parents' profession. The participants' comments reflect the importance of personal authenticity and the rejection of expectations in favor of self-determined decisions.

"...siguro probably umm.. ano noh as a police officer's child umm.. probably ang pinakamain point jud ani is like dili lang kaayo dibdibon kung unsa tong mga gina ingon sa ilaha. Like, don't live with their expectations. Create your own expectations kay ikaw man moy motarbaho ana, dili man sila so mao ra to." (Esther)

"...probably, the main point of this, as a police officer's child, is to really not mind and put to heart the negative things people say. And not to live with their expectations. Create your own expectations since you'll be the one working hard for your expectations."

The insights center on the importance of self-determination and independence for children of police officers like them, and participants realized that they should define their own paths rather than conform to others' expectations. They disagree that their career should automatically mirror their parents' occupation and therefore advocate for individual choice and the pursuit of personal ambitions. It can also be gleaned that they are aware of what they need and are determined to pursue it.

Esther is more concise and direct in asserting their right to individual choice. This implies parental influence on their children's careers. They advised creating one's expectations and disregarding negative external pressure.

Individuals who were not pressured by their parents into a particular career are satisfied with their jobs. The survey conducted by DirecTV Insider (2020) reveals that four in every 10 respondents who have the liberty to pursue their passion are happier. Likewise, between mother and father pressure, fatherly pressure tends to have mostly adverse effects on their children's satisfaction with their job. Dahal (2022) added that having the freedom to choose not only made students aware of their abilities and their strengths but also developed their self-confidence. It will lead to a brighter and more fruitful future career because the child's passion will enable them to address their weaknesses and leverage their potential.

d. Encouraging Parental Support without Pressure

Another realization among the participants is the need to ask their parents to support their dreams and aspirations. This sub-theme delves into their suggestions: not imposing

a one-size-fits-all approach, not setting excessive expectations for them, and not controlling their career choices, instead inspiring them to follow their own paths.

"...sa mga parents, especially sa mga pulis, dili man nato controllado ang ano ang gusto sa mga bata. Kung gusto nila mag-pursue ug laing career, pasagdaan lang nato sila. Tagaan nato sila ug freedom ba nga magbuo ug unsa jud ang ilang ano, kay lain man gud kung i-control nato ang bata. Kalaunan ana, dili diay niya gusto magpulis. Ihatag nato ang pagpamulis sa mga gusto jud mag pulis, sa mga desidido jud. Lain baya kung gi influence lang, gi control lang. Siguro ang punto ani kay iinspire lang, dili mag ano, dili controllon, iinspire lang siya. (Matthew)

"...to the parents, especially those who are police officers, we really cannot control what our children want. If they want to pursue another career, let them be. Giving them the freedom to build what they want because it's not good to control what they want. Eventually, they realize that this is not what they want. Let us give this profession to those who are passionate about taking this path. It's not right if they're only influenced and controlled. My overall point is that let us control them but inspire the kids."

Matthew suggests that parents foster inspiration over control. It emphasizes that, rather than forcing their children into a specific career path, they should inspire and support them. This response implies a nurturing environment where parents encourage and guide the child's talents and passions. It also highlights the importance of maintaining a strong parent-child bond, in which communication and emotional support are crucial.

It is supported by Valmari *et al.* (2023), who pointed out the difficulty police officers face in balancing their roles. Police officers are torn between their professional and private roles; thus, it was recommended to practice a balance of commitment. Further, work and life should not be treated as two separate domains but rather as domains that create a balance (Perreault & Power, 2023). Effective time management allows police officers to balance their demanding work schedules with family responsibilities. When done correctly, it can prevent stress and fatigue. Scheduling, prioritizing tasks, and open communication can help build stronger family bonds.

Moreover, Espejon *et al.* (2024) emphasized that the family is a primary agent of socialization, influencing children's behavior, values, and adjustment through guidance and emotional support. Their findings suggest that a supportive family environment promotes positive development, whereas excessive expectations or weakened family relationships may hinder healthy psychosocial outcomes. In the context of children of police officers, this underscores the importance of providing parental support and guidance without placing undue pressure on children to conform to expectations associated with the police profession.

4. Implications and Concluding Remarks

The study's findings revealed significant implications for how being children of police officers influences their identity formation and social integration.

Because of the pervasive pressures experienced by children of police officers, work-life balance, such as flexible scheduling options, improved shift patterns, and increased access to leave in the workforce, can be implemented. This would allow officers to be more present for their families during special occasions.

Another implication is the need to enhance the department's family support programs. This program can mitigate the effects of parental absence through parental workshops, counseling services, and family days or sports activities where parents and children can bond. Gatherings and activities for children of police officers can also be organized to build friendships and support among these individuals who share similar sentiments.

The police department can also promote a culture of open communication and understanding, ensuring that officers feel comfortable seeking help for themselves and their families without fear of judgment. Police officers may be reminded of simple ways to foster communication within their families so their children can open up and express their preferences. The creation of support groups for them and their families also proves beneficial.

Collaboration between the police department and community organizations can also be facilitated, promoting positive relationships to mitigate social judgment. It can be done through outreach programs and civic activities where children from the community can play and form friendships.

This study can serve as a reference for future research in key areas. First, the small population can be replicated in a larger, more diverse population, including the children of low-ranking police enforcers. This can enhance the generalization of the findings. A larger sample involving children at different levels can enable a robust analysis of the relationships among challenges, coping styles, and insights.

A longitudinal study may also be recommended to analyze the long-term effects of these childhood experiences on their well-being, mental health, and careers. A longer period of study can provide insights into the persistence of challenges, the effectiveness of their coping techniques, and their effects in adulthood.

A mixed study can be explored, including focus group discussions on peer relationships, academic performance, and socialization. Quantitative objectives can be incorporated to find the connection between the socio-profile and mitigating factors. Combining quantitative and qualitative designs can explain complex situations more comprehensively.

The impact of family support programs or existing police programs can be evaluated. This evaluation would provide evidence to support evidence-based decision-making in policy formulation to enhance the work-life balance of police officers while mitigating problems faced by their children. Therefore, by continuing to explore these

areas, we can work towards creating a supportive environment for both police officers and their families, ultimately improving their overall well-being and social integration.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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