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INFLUENCE OF WORK ENGAGEMENT ON COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING OF POLICE OFFICERS AS MODERATED BY THEIR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

Madel G. Baay¹ and Nestor C. Nabe²

¹University of Mindanao, Professional Schools,
Matina, Davao city, Philippines

²University of Mindanao, Professional Schools,
Matina, Davao city, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the influence of work engagement on community-oriented policing of police officers as moderated by their professional identity among Davao del Norte police officers, Philippines. This study utilized a descriptive survey as a quantitative research method that collected quantifiable data which treated with a statistical analysis. The Police Provincial Office provided a quota for the study, which included 315 police officers from Davao del Norte as respondents. Findings revealed that both work engagement and professional identity independently and positively predicted Community-oriented policing (COP). However, the interaction effect between work engagement and professional identity was not significant, indicating that professional identity did not moderate this relationship. These results suggested that while engaged officers and those with strong professional identity both contributed positively to community-oriented policing, the influence of work engagement on policing outcomes remained consistent regardless of officers' level of professional identity.

KEYWORDS: Criminal justice, Work engagement, Community-oriented policing, Professional identity

1. INTRODUCTION

Community-oriented policing (COP) represents a portion of the groundwork in law enforcement. A kind of philosophy focused on building strategic partnerships that promotes a working relationship between the police and the community. At present, this approach emphasizes community engagement to address neighborhood crimes. Regrettably, the implementation of COP various challenges (Blair et al., 2021; Paris, 2023). Constant personnel changes complicate police ability to refine their techniques and even provide adequate training to new recruits in community-based methods.

Aside from organizational difficulties, external community factors substantially affect policing initiative success. Community engagement is always challenged by community reluctance to cooperate

in police investigations, often due to fear from violent organizations (Muchow, 2022). Moreover, other challenges like: Language barriers, technological gaps, and general awareness of policing initiatives create distance between law the community and the police. Overcoming these challenges is urgent, as the goal of COP is to foster mutual understanding and enhance the overall quality of life for residents (PowerDMS, 2023).

Police officers are described to have characteristics that allow them to navigate stressful environment while demonstrating sound judgement. Individually setting a high standard of ethics. Under the lens of organization effectiveness, work engagement directly influences these police officers in performing duties (Wood et al., 2020). Officers who are backed by their organization are likely dedicated in administering effective community service (Piotrowski et al., 2021). High engagement can even also the collective ability of the police force in building public trust and confidence (Cho, 2021; Meares, 2022).

Professional identity also plays a pivotal role in shaping officer interaction with the community. Police officers who demonstrate a strong professional identity significantly influences their efficiency in law enforcement work (Gierszewski, 2023). While existing pressures of policing impact an officer's sense of self, those who discern on their values are better in handling the stresses of the job (Gierszewski et al., 2023). Understanding the relationship of professional identity and engagement is crucial for developing policing models that are both inclusive and transparent.

This study was theoretically anchored on Kahn's Work Engagement Theory, which emphasizes three-pronged components that employees conduct in their work. These being cognitive, emotional, and physical connections (Huang et al., 2022). Normative Sponsorship Theory is also embedded in this study suggesting that COP success depends on community support. Finally, the PERMA model of Well-Being Theory, links professional progress to positive relationships and achievement. Its dimensions work together to form a higher-level construct that can forecast the success of groups, communities, organizations, and nations. First, Positive emotion (P) includes joy, peace, thankfulness, contentment, enjoyment, motivation, curiosity, and affection. Second, engagement (E) fosters interest, concentration, attentiveness, and immersion. This state leads to 'flow', which is linked to optimal performance and alertness. Third, positive relationships (R) are essential for maintaining safety and comfort during challenges and for celebrating happiness in good times. Studies have linked personal and professional progress to these connections, which can be cultivated by building a constructive professional identity with coworkers, regardless of background or experience. Fourth, meaning (M) is a sense of purpose that helps individuals prioritize what matters when facing obstacles or adversity. It may be found in a profession, a social or political movement, a career, or through extracurricular, volunteer, or community activities. Finally, accomplishment (A) involves advancing toward goals, feeling competent in daily tasks, and experiencing fulfillment (Barristers, 2023).

While existing studies have explored the direct relationship between work engagement and organizational performance, there remains a gap on a specific moderating role of professional identity in COP. Most studies focused on Western law enforcement agencies, leaving an urgency for localized data on the Philippine National Police (PNP), particularly in Davao del Norte. Furthermore, while the effects of engagement and identity are studied, only a few studies have been conducted whether a strong professional identity can strengthen or sustain the positive effects of engagement on COP implementation.

The significance of this study rests on its potential to provide a data in improving policing effectiveness. Moreover, the findings offer a reflective opportunity to evaluate how current organizational support systems in the PNP influence officer engagement and productivity. The study even highlights the importance of a positive professional identity as a means of achieving career satisfaction and operational excellence. Finally, the community stands to benefit from a empathetic police force, leading to increased public trust and safer neighborhoods,

This research aimed to investigate the influence of work engagement on police officers' community-oriented policing, with professional identity as moderating variable. Specifically, it sought to address the following objectives: (1) Assess the level of work engagement among police officers in terms of Vigor, Dedication, and Absorption. (2) Evaluate the level of community-oriented policing among police officers in terms of Patrol Activities, Organizational Work, and Community Interaction. (3) Assess the level of professional identity among police officers in terms of Affirmation, Identification with Commitment, and Reconsideration of Commitment. (4) Determine the significant relationship between work engagement and community-oriented policing among police officers. (5) Determine the significant difference between work engagement and community-oriented policing when analyzed according to professional identity.

2. METHOD

The study is quantitative by nature since it will deal numerical data in data gathering and analyzing said data. Moreover, the study employed a descriptive-correlational design which was intended because it was particularly effective for describing the nature of demographic as well as identifying relationships between different variables (Bhat, 2020). In the context of the study the variables are the following: Independent Variable: Work Engagement, Dependent Variable: COP and Moderator Variable: Professional Identity.

The respondents for this study comprised 315 police officers from the Davao del Norte Police Provincial Office which were selected through stratified sampling. The participants represented various police stations comprising the region of Davao Del Norte. This included Tagum City, Panabo City, and several municipal police stations. This ensured a broad geographic representation of law enforcement personnel within the province. In addition, the sample size was justified since statistical standards suggest that a sample of at least 100 can yield significant and reliable results (Akman, 2023).

This was also the case for other studies sharing a similar nature and field (Muico et al., 2025; Besagas and Branzuela, 2023; Meško and Hacin, 2026).

Strict eligibility criteria were applied to ensure quality and relevance of the data. The following requisites were considered in identifying the respondents. First, police officers with at least five years of active service were included in the study. Second, a minimum tenure was established. This was by design because officers with five or more years of experience have undergone varied trainings and witnessed multiple policy shifts, Thus, making them well-positioned to provide informed insights into policing effectiveness. Third, officers with less than five years of service or those who declined to provide informed consent were excluded from the final sample.

Data collection utilized three adapted and validated survey instruments to measure the three variables. Work engagement was measured using a 17-item scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006), while community-oriented policing was evaluated through a 16-item scale (Tondo et al., 2020). The moderator variable, professional identity, was assessed using a 12-item scale (Mancini et al., 2015). All variables were rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Very Low" to "Very High."

The research procedure followed strict ethical standards and administrative protocols. Permission was secured from the Police Provincial Office and the university's research ethics committee which followed a protocol. This was all done prior to the administration of the questionnaires. Data was then collected and analyzed using statistical tools including the mean and standard deviation and Pearson's r to assess the relationships between them. Mean and standard deviation was used to determine variable levels while Pearson's r was used to determine the relationship between work engagement and community-oriented policing and to measure this relationship as moderated by professional identity.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This component presents the results and discussions of the study. The results are presented based on the research objectives. (1) Assess the level of work engagement among police officers in terms of Vigor, Dedication, and Absorption. (2) Evaluate the level of COP among police officers in terms of Patrol Activities, Organizational Work, and Community Interaction. (3) Assess the level of professional identity among police officers in terms of Affirmation, Identification with Commitment, and Reconsideration of Commitment. (4) Determine the significant relationship between work engagement and community-oriented policing among police officers. (5) Determine the significant difference between work engagement and community-oriented policing when analyzed according to professional identity.

3.1 The level of work engagement among police officers

As shown in Table 1, the level of work engagement among police officers in Davao del Norte revealed an overall "Very High" (Mean = 4.41, SD = 0.48) level. This shows that the respondents are generally energetic, resilient, and deeply involved in their professional roles. From the three indicators, Vigor

and Dedication both garnered the highest mean scores of 4.44, while Absorption followed close with 4.35. The results suggest that officers find their work meaningful and possess a strong psychological connection to their duties (Kahn et al., 2021). The result is also consistent with Cho (2021) and Wood et al. (2020), who highlighted that high work engagement promotes motivation, focus, and commitment, leading to better organizational outcomes.

Table 1. Level of Work Engagement among police officers

Work Engagement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Vigor	4.44	0.77	Very High
Dedication	4.44	0.47	Very High
Absorption	4.35	0.47	Very High
Overall Mean	4.41	0.48	Very High

3.2 The level of COP among police officers

Table 2 shows the level of COP among police officers in which a High overall level (Mean = 4.19, SD = 0.66) was garnered. Community Interaction was the highest-rated indicator at 4.25, suggesting a very strong emphasis on building partnerships and dialogue with the community. Patrol Activities also garnered very high 4.22 rating, whereas Organizational Work received the lowest mean score of 4.08 but still at a high rating. This suggests that while external community engagement is robust, internal administrative and inter-agency coordination functions are slightly less emphasized.

Table 2. Level of COP among police officers

COP	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Patrol Activities	4.22	0.70	Very High
Organizational Work	4.08	0.84	High
Community Interaction	4.25	0.64	Very High
Overall Mean	4.19	0.66	High

3.3 The level of professional identity among police officers

Table 3 presents the level of professional identity, which was garnered to be "Very High" (Mean = 4.53, SD = 0.42). The indicator for "Affirmation" received the highest mean score 4.63, followed by "Identification with Commitment" 4.54 and "Reconsideration of Commitment" 4.42. The results suggest that police officers in Davao del Norte have a very strong professional self-concept and a firm commitment to their roles wherein their membership in the police force forms part of their core identity.

Table 3. Level of professional identity among police officers

Professional identity	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Affirmation	4.63	0.45	Very High
Identification With Commitment	4.54	0.45	Very High
Reconsideration Of Commitment	4.42	0.54	Very High
Overall Mean	4.53	0.42	Very High

3.4 The Correlation between COP and Work Engagement

The correlation between work engagement and COP is shown in Table 4, showing a significant and moderately strong positive relationship ($r = 0.535$, $p < .001$). The data reveals that all dimensions of work engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption) are significantly linked to the effectiveness of policing strategies. Notably, "Community Interaction" demonstrated the strongest overall correlation with work engagement ($r = 0.585$), suggesting that more engaged officers are significantly more effective at building partnerships with the community.

Table 4. The Correlation between COP and Work Engagement

	VIGOR	DEDICATION	ABSORPTION	Overall
Patrol Activities	0.311	0.436	0.45	0.45
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Organizational Work	0.302	0.42	0.469	0.447
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Community Interaction	0.402	0.577	0.578	0.585
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001
Overall	0.366	0.516	0.542	0.535
	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001

These findings are consistent with previous studies which showed that work engagement directly influences task performance and the ability of employees to exceed basic job requirements (Cho, 2021). When officers find their work inspiring, they are more likely to expend added efforts to build lasting community partnerships (Keaton et al., 2023). This stresses that psychological health and

motivation of the police force are inseparable from its operational effectiveness in the field. The strong link between engagement and community interaction highlights that personal investment is integral in overcoming external barriers to community cooperation.

3.5 Significant Relationship between COP and Work Engagement

The regression analysis of work engagement on COP was statistically significant ($F = 51.637$, $p < .001$), explaining 33.2% of the variance in COP implementation ($R^2 = 0.332$). Among the individual predictors, Dedication ($\beta = 0.249$, $p < .001$) and Absorption ($\beta = 0.343$, $p < .001$) were found to be significant predictors of policing success. Vigor, however, did not emerge as a significant independent predictor in this model ($\beta = 0.388$). This suggests that the cognitive and emotional immersion in work is more critical for COP outcomes than physical energy alone.

Table 5. Test of Significant Relationship between COP and Work Engagement

	B	SE	β	t	p
(Intercept)	0.357	0.312		1.146	0.253
Vigor	0.043	0.049	0.049	0.864	0.388
Dedication	0.35	0.096	0.249	3.646	< .001
Absorption	0.478	0.092	0.343	5.209	< .001

The result is supported by theories highlighting that dedication to one's role leads to a sense of significance and challenge, of which are essential to the nature of community policing (Kahn, 1990). Organizations that encourage a sense of meaning and professional absorption are likely to have better results in their community initiatives (Cho, 2021). The lack of predictive power for vigor suggests that lack of emotional commitment and physical effort does not translate effectively into the rapport-building required for successful COP.

3.6 Analysis of Work Engagement and COP as Moderated by Professional identity

The moderation analysis results indicate that while work engagement (Estimate = 0.611, $p < .001$) and professional identity (Estimate = 0.366, $p < .001$) are both strong independent predictors of COP, the interaction term (Work Engagement * Professional Identity) was not significant ($p = 0.232$). This indicates that professional identity does not significantly change the strength or direction of the relationship between work engagement and community-oriented policing. In other words, high engagement drives policing effectiveness regardless of whether an officer's level of professional identity is high or low.

Table 6. Analysis of Work Engagement and COP as Moderated by Professional identity

	Estimate	SE	95% CI		Z	p
			Lower	Upper		
Work Engagement	0.611	0.0627	0.488	0.734	9.74	<.001
Professional Identity	0.366	0.0728	0.223	0.508	5.02	<.001
Work Engagement * Professional Identity	-0.162	0.1356	-0.428	0.104	-1.19	0.232

The result aligns with previous studies that suggest organizational factors are the primary controls to improve officer engagement (Piotrowski et al., 2021). While professional identity is a significant direct predictor of performance, it does not increase the effect of engagement, this suggests that highly engaged officers will perform well regardless of their individual level of professional identification (Indonesia et al., 2023). Therefore, police administrators should prioritize organizational justice and leadership commitment to sustain high levels of community service, as these are the most direct routes to improving operational success.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of the study revealed that work engagement and professional identity are integral drivers of COP success among police officers of Davao del Norte. The Very High levels of Work Engagement and Professional Identity among officers suggest that police are deeply committed to their mission and take pride in their professional role. However, the absence of a moderator variable effect suggests that work engagement is the primary reason for policing effectiveness. When officers are dedicated and absorbed in their work, they are expected to overcome organizational barriers and build the community trust.

Based on the results, the following recommendations were drawn.

1) Implement Welfare Programs. The Philippine National Police should implement welfare programs as well as balance duty schedules to prevent burnout and maintain the high engagement levels of police officers.

2) Modernize Training Modules. Training modules should be revisited and checked for modernization. This will ensure the sustained focus on interpersonal skills and rapport-building. Eventually working towards a reinforced Community Interaction of COP.

3) Transparent Organizational Justice. Police administrators should ensure transparent organizational justice and support systems to sustain officer dedication.

4) Promote qualified personnel. Increasing promotion opportunities for qualified personnel can further bolster the strong professional identity of the force, ensuring long-term commitment to the principles of peace and justice.

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