



## ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG POLICE PERSONNEL

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### **Abstract:**

Occupational stress is common among employees, but its effect often is devastating, particularly for those who have hazardous jobs such as police officers. The connection between organizational justice and occupational stress was the focal point of this study, wherein 313 police officers from the Davao City Police Office assigned in various Police Precincts were taken as respondents of the study. Questionnaires were distributed, and the data were treated using Mean, Pearson  $r$ , and Multiple Regression as the statistical tools. The result discloses the following: The level of organizational justice among police personnel in Davao City is high; the level of occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City is moderate; a significant relationship exists between organizational justice and occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City; and organizational justice significantly influences occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City. The study's implications concern the total concentration and dedication of police officers in fulfilling their duties, which could be hampered by occupational stress. The latter could be treated with the Philippine National Police Administrators employing intervention programs that could lessen occupational stress if not eliminated, such as reorganization and formulating effective policies that would lessen the pressure from the police personnel.

**Keywords:** criminal justice, organizational justice, occupational stress, correlational design, Philippines

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## 1. Introduction

Among life situations, the workplace stands out as a potentially important source of stress purely because of the amount of time that is spent in this setting. In India, particularly in South Tamilnadu, law enforcers experience occupational stress, which causes many problems in both professional and personal life. In fact, these stresses are much more common among employees at lower levels of workplace hierarchies, where they have less control over their work situation. In addition, the primary sources of occupational stress were inadequate pay, inequality at work, too much work, staff shortage, job insecurity and poor recognition and promotion (Balakrishnamurthy *et al.*, 2009; Mosadeghrad, 2014; Plattner & Mberengwa, 2010).

On the other hand, organizational justice is essential to police personnel because when justice is advocated as a core value of an organization's management philosophy and enacted through a set of internally consistent management practices, it can build a culture of justice, a system-wide commitment that is valuable and unique in the eyes of the employees and customers, and may ultimately lead to a competitive advantage (Ambrose *et al.*, 2007). In addition, organizational justice is a vital variable in how to meet these expectations and organizational needs. Research shows that perceptions of justice are strongly related to individuals' attitudes (Van der Bank, Engelbrecht, & Strumpher, 2010).

The concept of organizational justice was introduced about how an employee reacts to the organisation's behaviour. An individual's perceptions of these decisions as fair or unfair can influence the individual's subsequent attitudes and behaviours. Fairness is often of central interest to organizations because the implication of perceptions of injustice can cause occupational stress at work. In Region XI, it has been noted that Police Personnel of the Philippine National Police Agency are experiencing occupational stress due to inequality of opportunities and salary increases to uniformed police, particularly in Police Regional Office XI and some police personnel are assigned to jobs not related to the position (Sharma, 2015). In addition, the employee may be adversarial toward the individual they perceive to be responsible for the unfavourable treatment (Chapin *et al.*, 2009).

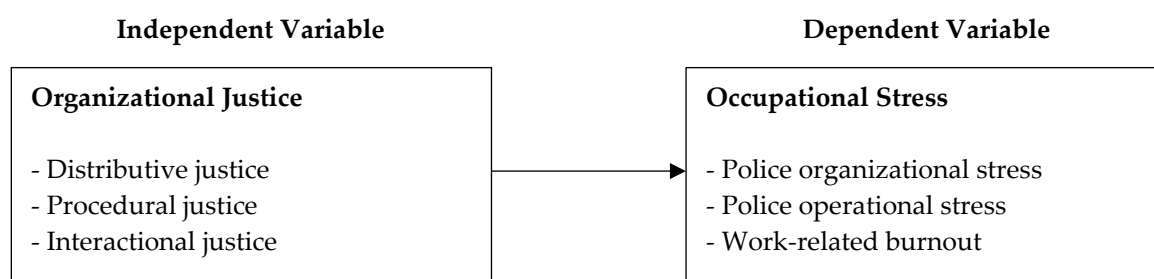
### 1.1 Study Objectives

The main purpose of this study was to find out which domain of organizational justice best influences occupational stress among police personnel. Specifically, this study addressed the following objectives: To assess the level of organizational justice among police personnel in terms of distributed justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. Ascertain occupational stress among police personnel regarding police organizational stress, police operational stress, and work-related burnout. Determine the significant relationship between organizational justice and occupational stress among police personnel. Furthermore, to find out which domain of organizational justice significantly influences occupational stress among police personnel.

## 1.2 Framework of the Study

The study is anchored to organizational justice theory developed by Greenberg (1987). Later on, it was vividly defined as the individual's and the group's perception of the fairness of treatment received from an organization and their behavioural reaction to such perceptions (McCardle, 2007). Traditionally, there are three broad categories of organizational justice theory procedural, distributive, and interactional justice. If the employees are maltreated, then there is injustice in the organization, which often results in occupational stress for the employees.

This study is also anchored on the fairness heuristic theory of Van den Bos, Lind, and Wilke (2001) that procedural and interpersonal justices were the primary drivers of justice effects, as only they had unique effects on stress perceptions. The strong effects for procedural justice are consistent with theories that link the variable with uncertainty and control (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos *et al.*, 2001).



**Figure 1:** The conceptual framework of the study

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. The independent variable is organizational justice (Al-Zu' bi, 2010) with the following indicators namely: *distributive justice* refers to employees' perceptions of what constitutes a fair distribution of resources; *procedural justice* refers to how outcomes are allocated, but no specifically to the outcomes; and *interactional justice* refers to the quality of interaction that an individual receives during the enactment of organizational procedures and concerns. The dependent variable is the occupational stress (Kula, 2011) among police personnel indicated by *police organizational stress*, which refers to the stress that emanates within the organization, particularly within the hierarchical system of the organization; *police operational stress*, which refers to the stressors affecting the officers deriving from their operation in the line of duty; and work-related burnout, that refers to exhaustion and the desire to quit the job. It also determined the significant relationship between organizational justice and occupational stress among police personnel.

## 2. Literature Review

Decades of organizational justice research show that fairness perceptions can substantially contribute to various attitudinal, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural outcomes among organizational members. Justice refers to an action or decision that is morally and ethically right. Justice can be linked to religion, ethics, equity, and law. Justice or fairness in organizations may include issues associated with perceptions of

fairness in pay, equal opportunities for promotion, and employee selection processes (Tabibnia *et al.*, 2008).

Organizational justice is vital to employees' work lives for various reasons. Specifically, three models explicitly outline why fair or unfair treatment can influence employees' work attitudes, emotions, and behaviours. For the past 30 years, organizational justice has been a topical issue in occupational and organizational psychology. Organizational justice has traditionally been described as a set of shared perceptions regarding fairness treatment in the workplace, which Greenberg first coined. Organizational justice may be generally categorized into three sub-dimensions: Distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Jieguomccardle, 2007).

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In addition, distributive justice focuses on how much rewards and punishments are related to job performance. Approaches to distributive justice are primarily related to structural determinants. Thus, when employees are treated fairly, they are more willing to subordinate their own short-term individual interests to the interests of a group or organization. The logic of distributive justice is straightforward: Participant satisfaction is increased when one believes the dispute resolution is fair and favourable. Distributive justice improves organizational effectiveness (Elanain, 2010; McCain *et al.*, 2010).

Procedural justice is a new dimension of organizational justice. As previously noted, the initial research in organizational justice was only concerned with notions of distributive justice. In the early 1970s, however, researchers began to claim that an individual's evaluations of allocation decisions are affected by the rewards and how they are made. Procedural justice refers to how outcomes are allocated, not specifically to the outcomes (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2007; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Moreover, it concerns one's perception of the process that determines fair pay. It relates to the fairness of the formal procedures required by the organization and its policy on the method of decision-making (Jafari *et al.*, 2011; Till & Karren, 2011). Thus, research has shown that procedural justice can substantially impact various attitudinal and behavioural outcomes independent of distributive justice. Evidence shows that unfair decision-making processes can lead to negative consequences such as lower performance, higher turnover intentions, theft, and low organizational commitment (Folger & Skarlicki, 1998; Materson *et al.*, 2000).

A third aspect of justice, interactional justice, was identified, which concerns the quality of interpersonal treatment received by others during the enactment of workplace procedures. *Interactional justice* is defined as the quality of interaction an individual receives while enacting organizational procedures and concerns the human aspect of organizational practices. Moreover, it refers to perceptions concerning the way

authorities treat their subordinates and how these subordinates respond to these perceptions (Jafari *et al.*, 2011; Yilmaz & Asdan, 2006).

Stress refers to an individual's reaction to a disturbing environmental factor. It is an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological, and behavioural deviations for organizational participants. In addition, work stress appears widespread, and several new triggers are emerging in modern work arrangements. Costs, although challenging to determine, appear considerable at an individual level (psychological and physical well-being of the individual), at an organizational level, and at a societal level because of potential damage to community functioning, not merely in terms of workers' compensation statistics (Dollard *et al.*, 2003; Kavitha, 2009).

Authoritative stressors are those that emerge from inside the organization and stem from interpersonal connections inside the various levelled and semi-military nature of the police association. Hierarchical stressors may incorporate weight from administrators, insufficient regulatory bolster, absence of limited time opportunities, self-assertive and conflicting disciplinary strategies, and assignment bias. Various studies have demonstrated that authoritative components have a more grounded general effect on officer stress than the innate perils of the occupation. Cops have high rates of posttraumatic anxiety issues (Fox *et al.*, 2012; Violanti, 2011).

Operational stress involves anxiety coming about because of the requests and obligations of the occupation. These may incorporate movement work, additional time, inordinate printed material, presentation to work-related viciousness, and basic occurrences. Essential episode stress has been depicted as any circumstance confronted by crisis administration staff that causes them to encounter abnormally compelling enthusiastic responses that have the probability of meddling with their capacity at the scene or later producing curiously solid emotions in the crisis administration laborer. Essential episodes may incorporate officer-included shootings, reactions to numerous passing occurrences, participation at frightful wrongdoing scenes, or the traumatic demise of a kid. While primary occurrences are uncommon, they are viewed as intense stressors that can overpower an individual's capacity to adapt. A few specialists find that the accentuation of word-related stressors, especially essential episodes, has decreased the attention on a more steady and ever-show zone of police anxiety (O'Hara *et al.*, 2013; Waters & Ussery, 2009).

Business-related anxiety or work-related stress (burnout) and its fluctuating sways at the individual, authoritative, and, above all, group levels require careful thought since law authorization officers are working in a human administration occupation where they are presented with numerous distressing occasions. Studies on law implementation stress show that business-related elements cause stress for the law requirement workforce, and stretch is straightforwardly identified with their mental, enthusiastic, and physiological prosperity. In police stress writing, authoritative parts of police associations are observed to be more annoying than intrinsic work stressors (Brough & Williams, 2007).

In connection with the above statement, occupational or work stress occurs when there is a difference between the demands of the working environment and that of an individual. The main reasons for the stress are insufficient personal time, meeting

deadlines, working overtime, dealing with media, and shift work. Apart from the above reason, stress may occur due to some poor organizational functions like lack of advancement, inadequate supervision, and conflicts with other departments, and can cause many problems in both the professional and personal lives of the police constables (Malach-Pines & Kienan, 2007; McCarthy *et al.*, 2007; Tsutsumi *et al.*, 2009).

### **3. Material and Methods**

This section presents the research respondents, materials and instruments, design, and procedure of this study.

#### **3.1 Study Participants**

The study's respondents were police personnel from the Davao City Police Office, and their substation was situated in Davao City. The non-uniformed personnel, Police Stations 7, 11, and 12, as per advice by the Davao City Police Office, are excluded from this study. The population is considered to be identical. The researcher used a stratified random sampling technique to determine the exact number of respondents who answered the survey questionnaires to collect the information required for the study (Nickolas, 2019). In subject inclusion, all the PNP personnel assigned to the Davao City Police Office were qualified respondents to the study. However, only 313 out of 1,557 were selected as study respondents, while in subject exclusion, the PNP personnel over the 313 respondents were excluded. Regarding withdrawal criteria, the respondents who initially accepted the role of becoming respondents but later declined to participate in the study are part of the withdrawing respondents.

#### **3.2 Materials and Instruments**

The research instrument used in this study was a survey questionnaire adapted from the studies of Al-Zu'bi (2010) for the independent variable and Kula (2011) for the dependent variable. For the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was presented to the adviser, the ethics review committee, and the panel of experts for further comments, suggestions, and recommendations.

Likewise, the instrument was tested for reliability and testing Cronbach Alpha .983. Modifications were made to suit the study's needs, and the experts validated the questionnaires.

#### **3.3 Design and Statistical Tools**

The study employed the quantitative non-experimental descriptive-correlation research design as the most accurate design to measure organizational justice and occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City. Descriptive designs accurately portray the characteristics of a particular individual, situation, or group (Kothari, 2004). In the correlation design, investigators use correlational statistics to describe and measure the degree of association or relationship between two or more variables or sets of scores (Creswell, 2014). This method helped prove the value of facts and focused attention on

the more important things to be reported. It is appropriate to determine the relationship between the variables of the study.

The following statistical tools were employed to treat the data: Mean. This was used to determine the level of organizational justice and occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City; Pearson r. This was applied to determine the significant relationship between organizational justice and occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City; Regression and Analysis. This was employed to determine the domain of organizational justice that significantly influences occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The results of the study are depicted in this section. Presentations of topics are arranged according to the following subheadings: Organizational Justice among Police Personnel in Davao City; Occupational Stress among Police Personnel in Davao City; Significant Relationship between Organizational Justice and Occupational Stress among Police Personnel in Davao City; and Significance of Influence of Organizational Justice towards the Occupational Stress among Police Personnel in Davao City.

##### 4.1 Organizational Justice among Police Personnel

Table 1 displays the level of organizational justice among police personnel in Davao City. The overall mean score is 3.97, labelled as high, with a standard deviation of 1.221. This indicates inconsistency of responses among respondents, considering it exceeds the threshold of 1.0.

**Table 1:** Organizational Justice among Police Personnel

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Level
Distributive justice	4.23	.656	Very high
Interactional justice	3.98	.609	High
Procedural justice	3.69	.559	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>1.221</b>	<b>High</b>

Regarding distributive justice, a standard deviation of .656, indicating consistency of responses, and a mean score of 4.23, described as a very high level, are manifested. In terms of interactional justice, the standard deviation is .609, indicating consistency of responses, while the mean score is 3.98, described as a high level; and, in terms of procedural justice, the standard deviation is .559, disclosing consistency of responses accompanied by the mean score of 3.69 declared as high level.

Their high mean scores indicate they are highly aware of organizational justice in distributive justice. This means that the police personnel believed in equal rights and privileges among police personnel except as mandated by their rank. The finding is congruent with the idea of Elanain (2010) that high distributive justice provides clarity to employees about the outcomes they are likely to get and reduces the worry and uncertainty associated with exploitation and waste of effort. Moreover, the finding

coincides with the concept of Nabatchi *et al.* (2007), who elaborated that in interactional justice, explanations provide the information needed to evaluate the structural aspects of the process and how it is enacted; however, for explanations to be perceived as fair, they must be recognized as sincere and communicated without ulterior motives, based on sound reasoning with logically relevant information, and determined by legitimate rather than arbitrary factors.

#### 4.2 Occupational Stress among Police Personnel

Shown in Table 2 is the level of occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City with an overall mean score of 2.88 labelled as *moderate* with a standard deviation of .956 showing consistency of responses from the respondents. Arranged from highest to lowest mean scores, the indicators are presented as follows: In terms of *police organizational stress*, the standard deviation is 1.103, indicating inconsistency of responses for exceeding 1.0, while the mean score is 3.12, described as *moderate* level; In terms of *work-related burnout*, the standard deviation manifested 1.026 showing the inconsistency of responses and the accompanying mean score is 2.91 labelled as *moderate* level; and, in terms of *police operational stress*, the standard deviation is .665 indicating consistency of responses while the mean score is 2.60 described as *moderate* level.

**Table 2:** Occupational Stress among Police Personnel

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Level
Police organizational stress	3.12	1.103	Moderate
Work-related burnout	2.91	1.026	Moderate
Police operational stress	2.60	.665	Moderate
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>.956</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

The moderate level of occupational stress among police personnel indicated that police officers are relaxed and comfortable with their job as police officers. This means they do their duty efficiently and perform without struggle or difficulty. The finding is congruent with the concept of Burke and Mikkelsen (2006), elucidating that bureaucratic procedures saw the absence of backing from the group and pioneers and the absence of advancement opportunities in the association accentuated as hierarchical stressors. The findings support the statement of Morash, Haar, & Kwak (2006), emphasizing that the working environment conditions for law authorization officers are viewed as onerous, activating sentiments of scepticism and prompting burnout and a decrease in their general execution. Specialists in an exceptionally upsetting occupation are in more danger of poor physical and mental well-being.

#### 4.3 Significance on the Relationship between Organizational Justice and Occupational Stress among Police Personnel

The overall computation displayed an r-value of .765 and a p-value of .000, which is lesser than the significance level of 0.05, indicating a significant relationship and the rejection of the null hypothesis. This means a significant relationship exists between organizational justice and occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City.



The relationship between the indicators of the independent variable, organizational justice, and the indicators of the independent variable, occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City, are presented as follows: The indicator distributive justice of the independent variable is correlated with all the indicators of the dependent variable such as police organizational stress (p-value=.023<0.05), police operational stress (p-value=.011<0.05), work-related burnout (p-value=.000<0.05); The indicator procedural justice of the independent variable is also correlated with all the indicators of the dependent variable such as police organizational stress (p-value=.000<0.05), police operational stress (p-value=.035<0.05), work-related burnout (p-value=.000<0.05); the indicator interactional justice of the independent variable is correlated with two of the indicators of the dependent variable namely, police organizational stress (p-value=.000<0.05), police operational stress (p-value=.010<0.05). At the same time, no significant relationship existed between interactional justice and work-related burnout (p-value=.437>0.05).

**Table 3:** Significance on the Relationship between Organizational Justice and Occupational Stress among Police Personnel

Indicators	Police Organizational Stress	Police Operational Stress	Work-Related Burnout	Occupational Stress
Distributive justice	-.129*	-.457*	-.222**	-.219**
	.023	.011	.000	.000
Procedural justice	.259**	-.386*	.207**	.252**
	.000	.035	.000	.000
Interactional justice	.210**	-.463**	-.044	.096
	.000	.010	.437	.090
Organizational justice	.560**	.547**	.626**	.765**
	.000	.002	.000	.000

The dependent variable, occupational stress, showed a significant relationship with distributive justice (p-value=.000<0.05) and Procedural Justice (p-value=.000<0.05); however, no significant relationship existed between occupational stress and interactional justice (p-value=.090>0.05). The independent variable, organizational justice, disclosed a significant relationship with all the indicators of the dependent variable as follows: police organizational stress (p-value=.000<0.05), police operational stress (p-value=.002<0.05), and work-related burnout (p-value=.000<0.05).

A police officer's job is to chase criminals in the streets, contributing to the stress level in the line of duty. Although most of them are fairly treated within the organization, the nature of their job invites stressors that could affect or motivate them since they declared they are moderately stressed. The findings confirmed the study conducted by Kaygusuz and Beduk (2015), wherein their research consists of an application to measuring burnout between organizational justice and burnout in work life. Findings show that burnout, also called occupational exhaustion, affects the health and productivity of employees. It is emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and a sense of low personal success. Burnout experienced by employees affected the opinion of

organizational justice. The opinion of organizational justice is one factor affecting employees' attitudes and behaviours towards their work and environment.

#### 4.4 Latent Roots Criterion of the Extracted Factors

Presented in Table 4 is the overall computation showing the organizational justice that influences the occupational stress of police personnel in Davao City. The three indicators of organizational justice are related to the occupational stress of police personnel in Davao City, which indicates that it is possible to determine the significant influence of organizational justice towards the occupational stress of police personnel in Davao City. Regression analysis was used to determine which indicators of organizational justice best influence the occupational stress of police personnel. The regression analysis disclosed the influence of organizational justice towards the occupational stress of police personnel. The regression model with determinant organizational justice yielded an R<sup>2</sup> of .175, F of 21.845 and p-value of .000, which is lesser than the level of significance of 0.05, manifesting that organizational justice influences the occupational stress of police personnel. This means that organizational justice significantly influences the occupational stress of police personnel.

All three domains of organizational justice, namely distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice, influence the occupational stress of police personnel. The indicator distributive justice showed significant influence towards the occupational stress of police personnel with a probability level of .000, which is lesser than 0.05 level of significance; also, the indicator procedural justice showed significant influence towards the occupational stress of police personnel with the probability level of .000 which is lesser than 0.05 level of significance; the same with the indicator interactional justice manifesting significant influence towards the occupational stress of police personnel with the probability level of .031 which is lesser than 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 4:** Significance on the Influence of the Domain of Organizational Justice on the Occupational Stress among Police Personnel

Organizational Justice among Police Personnel					
Indicators		B	β	t	Sig.
Distributive justice		-.631	-.404	-6.320	.000
Procedural justice		.479	.280	4.330	.000
Interactional justice		.258	.164	2.170	.031
R	.418				
R <sup>2</sup>	.175				
F	21.845				
Q	.000				
Dependent Variable: Occupational Stress among Police Personnel					

Furthermore, the B-value of -.631 and -.404 indicated significant influence of the domain distributive justice; the B-value of .479 and .280 disclosed significant influence of the domain procedural justice; and the B-value of .258 and .164 showed significant influence of the domain interactional justice. This means that the domains of distributive justice,

procedural justice, and interactional justice significantly influence the occupational stress of police personnel. However, among the three, distributive justice is the domain that influences the occupational stress of police personnel, as indicated by higher beta.

Indeed, the domains of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice significantly influence the occupational stress of police personnel. Therefore, organizational justice significantly affects occupational stress among police personnel. The result justifies the study conducted by Carlan and Nored (2008), who found out that among the government organizations, police organizations, regardless of policy and fairness within, are the most stressful because of the nature of the job. The hazardous job and the criticism from the higher officials and the public led most of them to succumb to stress. Still, the government anticipated their situation and prepared stress treatment and services for them.

## **5. Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the recommendations offered by the researcher for DCPO management give priority to improving procedural and interactional justice inside the agency based on the study's findings. Subordinates' viewpoints should be included during decision-making, involving consultations to balance the advantages and disadvantages before reaching a final choice. By emphasizing procedural fairness, the DCPO can raise the morale of the PNP by offering rewards, recognition, and suitable acknowledgement. For organizational justice to be upheld, police personnel must be kept safe during operations. As a result, giving them better gear, such as bulletproof vests, powerful weapons, convoys, and cutting-edge communication systems, can lessen the risks associated with their work.

In addition, the PNP administration ought to institute a monthly relaxation day to alleviate law enforcement officers' stress. On this day, all employees and their families have a fellowship party to decompress and unwind. Thanks to this proactive approach to employee well-being, police officers will regularly have opportunities for rest and socialization, improving their mental health and job happiness. Providing police officers with regular breaks like this promotes a better work-life balance and gives them something to look forward to each month.

## **6. Conclusion**

The study has provided valuable insight into organizational justice and occupational stress among police personnel. The level of organizational justice among police personnel in Davao City is high; the level of occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City is moderate; a significant relationship exists between organizational justice and occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City; and organizational justice significantly influences occupational stress among police personnel in Davao City. The result proved the veracity of the fairness heuristic theory of Van den Bos (2001), which states that procedural and interpersonal justice are the primary drivers of justice effects,

as they only have unique effects on stress perceptions. This proves that justice within the organization still causes stress among police officers because of the nature of their jobs and the decisions made by their officers; thus, occupational stress will always be a part of organizational justice.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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