

1 **PREMATURE WITHDRAWAL FROM PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP)**
2 **SERVICE: PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS ON THE COMPELLING FORCES**
3 **FOR A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN.**

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6
7 **ABSTRACT:**

8
9 *Police Non-Commissioned Officers (PNCOs) serve as the backbone of the*
10 *Philippine National Police (PNP), performing frontline duties such as law*
11 *enforcement, patrolling, investigation, and community policing. However,*
12 *premature resignation and early withdrawal from service have become growing*
13 *concerns affecting organizational effectiveness, morale, and public service*
14 *delivery. This study aimed to determine the compelling forces that influence*
15 *PNCO personnel to leave the PNP prematurely and to propose a strategic action*
16 *plan to address fast turnover within the organization. Qualitative-*
17 *phenomenological research design was used, and purposive sampling was*
18 *employed to select 10 former PNP personnel who voluntarily left or prematurely*
19 *withdrew from service. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and*
20 *analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method. The majority of*
21 *participants were female, married, and held the rank of Police Corporal with 4 to*
22 *9 years of service experience. Findings revealed eighteen (18) themes grouped*
23 *into four major thematic clusters: Institutional and Organizational Dynamics,*
24 *Occupational Health and Personal Well-being, Economic and Career Growth*
25 *Drivers, and Ethical and Environmental Pressures. The most common factors*
26 *influencing premature withdrawal included administrative cases, stressful*
27 *working conditions, work-life imbalance, lack of organizational support, limited*
28 *career growth, financial instability, political interference, and corruption issues.*
29 *The concern for family welfare and the desire for better opportunities abroad*
30 *were also identified as major reasons for leaving the service. These findings*
31 *highlight the need for stronger organizational support, mental health programs,*
32 *leadership development, transparent policies, and career advancement*
33 *opportunities to improve personnel retention and organizational integrity within*
34 *the PNP.*

35
36 **Keywords:** *Police Non-Commissioned Officers, Philippine National Police,*
37 *premature withdrawal, police retention, work-life balance,*
38 *phenomenological study*

39
40 **INTRODUCTION**

41
42 Police personnel retention has become a growing concern among law enforcement agencies
43 worldwide. In recent years, increasing numbers of police officers have resigned or retired early
44 from service, creating what several organizations describe as a staffing “crisis” in policing (BJA,
45 2023; PERF, 2019). Studies show that officer turnover is influenced by organizational, economic,
46 and personal factors, including stressful working conditions, poor leadership, lack of career

47 advancement opportunities, and socio-political pressures (Adams et al., 2023; Mourtgos et al.,
48 2022; Reynolds, 2024). In the United Kingdom and other parts of Europe, police agencies have
49 also experienced increasing voluntary resignations due to financial constraints, occupational
50 stress, and inadequate professional support systems (Home Office, 2019). These conditions have
51 significantly affected organizational effectiveness, officer morale, and the delivery of public
52 safety services. Among those greatly affected by this issue are Police Non-Commissioned
53 Officers (PNCOs) of the Philippine National Police (PNP). PNCOs, whose ranks range from
54 Patrolman to Police Executive Master Sergeant, are considered the backbone of the PNP because
55 they perform front-line law enforcement duties such as patrolling, investigation, and community
56 policing. However, the nature of police work exposes them to stressful conditions, occupational
57 hazards, administrative pressures, and work-life imbalance, which may influence their decision
58 to leave the service prematurely. Internal organizational issues and external environmental
59 pressures may contribute to fast turnover among police personnel, resulting in reduced
60 organizational stability and efficiency.

61
62 In the Philippines, police retention has also become a significant issue. Reports of
63 resignations, early retirements, and personnel going absent without official leave (AWOL) have
64 increased due to concerns regarding administrative cases, leadership issues, corruption, removal
65 of incentives, pension uncertainties, and political interference (Pamintuan, 2023). These
66 challenges have affected both the morale and trust of police personnel within the organization.
67 Frequent turnover not only increases recruitment and training costs but also weakens institutional
68 knowledge and disrupts teamwork within police agencies (Hilal & Litsey, 2020). High turnover
69 likewise affects the quality of police services delivered to communities and creates additional
70 pressure on remaining personnel (Lewis, 2022). Previous studies have discussed police turnover
71 and occupational stress; however, limited studies have focused on the lived experiences of
72 former PNCO personnel who voluntarily left the PNP service prematurely, particularly within the
73 Laguna Provincial Police Office. Existing literature often emphasizes organizational and
74 administrative factors but provides limited qualitative exploration regarding the personal,
75 occupational, economic, and ethical forces influencing premature withdrawal from police
76 service. Addressing these gaps, this study aims to determine the compelling forces that influence
77 PNCO personnel to leave the PNP prematurely and to develop a Strategic Action Plan that may
78 help improve personnel retention and organizational support within the PNP.

79
80 This study specifically focuses on former Police Non-Commissioned Officers who resigned,
81 retired early, or left the service without authorization. Through a qualitative-phenomenological
82 approach, the study seeks to understand their lived experiences and identify the internal and
83 external factors influencing their decisions. By examining these experiences, the study hopes to
84 contribute to policy improvement, organizational development, and personnel welfare programs
85 within the Philippine National Police. The researcher himself experienced premature withdrawal
86 from the PNP service, which motivated him to conduct this study. Through this research, the
87 researcher hopes to contribute meaningful insights that may help strengthen organizational
88 integrity, improve leadership practices, and reduce the increasing number of personnel leaving
89 the police service prematurely.

90

91 With this premise, this study aimed to determine the compelling forces influencing Police
92 Non-Commissioned Officers (PNCOs) to leave the Philippine National Police (PNP) service
93 prematurely. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:
94

- 95 1. What is the demographic and professional profile of the participants in terms of: age; sex;
96 civil status; educational attainment; rank; and years in service?
- 97 2. What compelling forces influenced PNCO personnel to leave the PNP service
98 prematurely?
- 99 3. What strategic action plan may be proposed to address the premature withdrawal of
100 PNCO personnel from the PNP service?
101

102 **METHOD**

103
104 The study utilized a qualitative-phenomenological research design to determine the
105 compelling forces influencing Police Non-Commissioned Officers (PNCOs) to leave the
106 Philippine National Police (PNP) service prematurely. This approach focused on understanding
107 the lived experiences and perceptions of former PNP personnel who voluntarily resigned, retired
108 early, or left the service without authorization. According to Creswell and Poth (2018),
109 phenomenological research aims to describe the essence of participants' experiences regarding a
110 particular phenomenon. The study also applied descriptive qualitative research to examine the
111 essential structure of the participants' experiences and reasons for leaving the organization
112 (Morrow, Rodriguez, & King, 2015). The participants consisted of ten (10) former PNCO
113 personnel selected through purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria required participants to be
114 former non-commissioned police personnel who had prematurely withdrawn from the PNP
115 service and possessed relevant work experience and police operational training. Commissioned
116 officers were excluded from the study due to the limited availability of data regarding their
117 premature withdrawal from service.
118

119 The primary instrument used for data gathering was an in-depth interview guide
120 composed of open-ended questions that explored the participants' experiences, perceptions, and
121 reasons for leaving the PNP. Standardized interview procedures and neutral questioning
122 techniques were used to maintain objectivity and consistency during data collection. The
123 interviews focused on the textural "what" and structural "how" aspects of the participants lived
124 experiences. To establish the validity of the research instrument, content validity and face validity
125 were employed through the evaluation of a three-member panel of experts in research and the
126 study topic. Their recommendations were incorporated to improve the clarity and relevance of
127 the interview questions and research manuscript.
128

129 The study used Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method for data analysis.
130 Interview responses were transcribed, organized, and analyzed through coding and thematic
131 analysis to identify significant statements, patterns, and thematic clusters related to the
132 participants lived experiences. The themes were further interpreted and supported by related
133 literature. The study acknowledged certain limitations, including its focus on selected former
134 PNCO personnel and its reliance on self-reported experiences, which may involve personal bias.
135 However, these limitations were minimized through confidentiality, honest participant responses,
136 thematic analysis, and expert validation. Ethical considerations such as informed consent,

137 voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality were strictly observed throughout the
 138 study to protect the participants and maintain the integrity of the research process.

139

140 **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

141

142 Table 1 presents the demographic and professional profile of the ten (10) participants
 143 included in the study. Participants ranged from 29 to 38 years old, with 4 unmarried and 6
 144 married respondents. Their years of service ranged from 5 to 9 years, reflecting experiences from
 145 both early-career and more experienced personnel. Most participants held the rank of Police
 146 Corporal, while one participant was a Patrolman. The findings indicate that the majority of
 147 participants were female and married, which supports the study of Peralta (2023) regarding the
 148 lived experiences of female police officers in the PNP. Peralta emphasized that married female
 149 officers commonly experience work-family conflict, gender-related challenges, and pressures
 150 associated with working in a male-dominated profession. The study also highlights the influence
 151 of family responsibilities, cultural expectations, and societal roles on police personnel. In terms
 152 of educational attainment, the findings support Octavio and Nitafan (2025), who stated that
 153 educational background beyond the required bachelor's degree does not strongly predict job
 154 performance in the PNP. Instead, factors such as training, experience, age, and specific
 155 competencies are more significant predictors of effectiveness in police service.

156

157 **Table 1.** *Demographic and Professional Profile of the Participants*

158

Responder Code	Sex	Age	Civil Status	Educational Attainment	Rank	Years In Service
P1	Female	31	Single	Master's Degree	Police Corporal	8 yrs & 7/12 mos.
P2	Female	35	Married	BS Degree	Police Corporal	9 yrs & 6 mos.
P3	Female	37	Single	BS Degree	Police Corporal	9 yrs
P4	Male	32	Married	BS Degree	Police Corporal	6 yrs
P5	Female	33	Single	BS Degree	Police Corporal	7 yrs
P6	Male	32	Married	BS Degree	Police Corporal	9 yrs
P7	Male	31	Married	BS Degree	Police Corporal	7 yrs
P8	Female	33	Single	BS Degree	Police Corporal	9 yrs
P9	Male	38	Married	BS Nursing	Patrolman	4 yrs
P10	Female	31	Married	Master's Degree	Police Corporal	8 yrs

159

160 **Compelling Forces of Premature Withdrawal**

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162 The analysis of the participants lived experiences regarding internal and external
 163 conditions resulted in the emergence of 18 culled themes. These themes represent the diverse yet
 164 interconnected forces that prompted premature withdrawal from the service.

165

166 **Table 2.** *Thematic Mapping Matrix*

167

Theme Cluster	Included Culled Themes
Institutional & Organizational Dynamics	Administrative cases, Inconsistent institutional policies, Lack of feedback mechanism, Lack of organizational support, non-recognition of accomplishment.

Occupational Health & Personal Well-being	Mental health issues, Stressful work conditions, Risky work, occupational hazards, Work-life balance, and extended working time.
Economic & Career Growth Drivers	Lack of professional development, High cost of living, Pension uncertainties, Work or study abroad.
Ethical & Environmental Pressures	Political interference, Corruption issues.

168
169 The four thematic clusters identified in the matrix above represent the fundamental
170 structure of the participants' experiences. To provide a deep understanding of these compelling
171 forces, each cluster is discussed in detail below, supported by verbatim accounts from the
172 participants and validated by existing academic literature.

173 174 **CLUSTER 1: Institutional and Organizational Dynamics**

175
176 The first thematic cluster focuses on the internal structural forces of the Philippine
177 National Police (PNP) that influence the decision to leave. These factors represent the
178 "organizational climate" that participant navigated before their withdrawal. Five major themes
179 emerged within this cluster: *Administrative cases, Inconsistent institutional policies, Lack of*
180 *feedback mechanism, Lack of organizational support, and non-recognition of accomplishment.*

- 181
- 182 • **The Weight of Administrative Cases and Policy Inconsistency.** Administrative Cases
183 (Theme 1) and Inconsistent Institutional Policies (Theme 5) emerge as primary drivers of
184 attrition. Rather than corrective tools, administrative litigation is perceived as a "career-
185 ender," fostering a paralyzing environment. This is compounded by shifting policies, which
186 participants characterize as "organizational betrayal." Sudden changes in rules or promotion
187 criteria lead to deep frustration and a loss of belonging; for instance, one participant cited a
188 "neglect of duty" charge as the turning point that made her feel betrayed, ultimately making
189 continued service in the PNP feel impossible.
 - 190 • **Feedback Mechanisms and Organizational Support.** The analysis further identified a
191 critical gap in Lack of Feedback Mechanisms (Theme 6) and Lack of Organizational
192 Support (Theme 8). In a high-stakes environment like the PNP, the absence of a "bottom-up"
193 feedback loop means that the grievances of lower-ranking personnel often go unheard.
194 When officers feel they have no voice and no "backstop" (support) from the higher office
195 during crises, the motivation to remain in service evaporates. As one former officer noted:
196 *"When you are in the field, you need to know the organization has your back. But when*
197 *things get political or difficult, you feel like an island. No one checks in, and no one listens*
198 *to the rank-and-file".*
 - 199 • **The Erosion of Morale through Non-Recognition.** The Non-recognition of
200 Accomplishments (Theme 10) acts as a silent catalyst for PNP withdrawal. In a culture that
201 prioritizes penalizing mistakes (Theme 1), the absence of rewards for successes creates
202 "emotional labor" that violates the psychological contract, severely diminishing officer well-
203 being. These findings highlight a critical failure in Organizational Justice; as Peralta (2023)
204 notes, perceived unfairness is the primary driver of turnover. This breakdown is further
205 explained by Leadership-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, which identifies consistent
206 policy and formal recognition as essential for retention in paramilitary structures (Octavio
207 & Nitafan, 2025). The severity of inconsistent policy is evidenced by over 9,000 dismissals
208 recorded by NAPOLCOM (2025), leading to career stagnation and the erosion of an

209 officer's Social Identity (Vinney, 2019). To mitigate this, the PNP promotes accountability
 210 through NAPOLCOM Memorandum Circular No. 95-03 and "citizen power" reforms
 211 (Caliwan, 2024). Ultimately, internal reforms and community participation are vital to
 212 preventing the attrition of officers alienated by institutional failures and systemic injustice.
 213

214 **CLUSTER 2:Occupational Health & Personal Well-being**

215
 216 The second cluster focuses on occupational health and personal well-living of PNP personnel
 217 that influence the decision to leave prematurely. These factors caused degradation to health and
 218 anxiety on the danger they have faced while performing their tasks as member of the PNP. Six
 219 major themes emerged within this cluster namely, *mental health issues, Stressful work*
 220 *conditions, Risky work, occupational hazards, Work-life balance, and extended working time.*

- 221 • **Mental health issues.** Under this cluster are the issues connected with personnel's health. In
 222 fact, weakening health condition almost always is contributory to the failure to perform well
 223 in the organization and reduced professional efficiency. Some of these issues are due to
 224 stress which cause burnout which commonly associated with unmanaged workplace stress,
 225 mental detachment. A participant said: *"My high exposure to stressful experience in the*
 226 *workplace, proved to me that this is too much; hence I've decided to leave."*
- 227 • **Stressful work conditions.** Leaving the profession by reason of retirement, forced
 228 resignation or even voluntary effects physical and mental health of the individuals,
 229 associated with reduced income, and changed social roles and entitlements afforded by the
 230 previous professional or work practices. Stress contributes to emotional exhaustion and
 231 prolonged exposure to stressful work conditions further contribute to feeling of
 232 depersonalization and eventually loss of self-identity. One participant said: *"I was forced to*
 233 *resign because of the conditions I am exposed to, very stressful."*
- 234 • **Risky work and Occupational Hazed.** Risky occupation is not just a personal issue but a
 235 response to organizational factors and can negatively impact both individual well-being and
 236 organizational outcomes. Organization, itself is a contributing factor for personnel leaving
 237 their work, not for other reasons but contributed only by the structure. Workplace risks
 238 are potential sources of harm, injury, or illness, including physical, chemical, biological,
 239 ergonomic, and psychosocial hazards and stress. That is why effective management control
 240 and prevention intervention involves identifying risk conditions and provision of
 241 intervention to ensure as much as possible that personnel could be assured that they are
 242 protected. This could be in the form of regularly reviewing safety procedures to prevent
 243 incidents involving law enforcement personnel. *"There is also an imbalance between the*
 244 *occupational hazards inherent in law enforcement and the economic rewards provided. In*
 245 *the Philippine context, police work involves high physical risk and legal vulnerability."*
- 246 • **Work-life balance.** Majority of the research participants expressed that they want balance
 247 in their life that they feel are not being afforded to them by the Organization. Work-life
 248 balance is the equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life, allowing
 249 individuals to manage work while maintaining health, family, and leisure. It means not
 250 overworking, reducing burnout, and fostering productivity through flexible hours, remote
 251 work, or setting boundaries. An inclusive workplace environment can be defined as one in
 252 which employees feel a sense of belonging and a level of comfort at work, as opposed to
 253 feeling uncomfortable in the workplace due to the ways they are treated in that space. As

254 expressed by a participant: *“I longed to have balance in my life and this I am not getting*
 255 *here, walanaakongpanahonsasarili ko at sapamilya ko.”*

256 • **Extended working time.** Workweek schedules significantly affect employee well-being, as
 257 extended hours increase job demands, limit recovery, and disrupt work-life balance for
 258 employees. Overtime, prolonged workweeks often disrupt personal routines, increase stress,
 259 and diminish overall satisfaction. One participant expressed the following: *“Irregular*
 260 *working time makes my life unbearable, walanaakongpanahon para*
 261 *saakingsarililalunasaakingpamilya”*. A Female and single participants said: *“One of the*
 262 *most compelling factors was the persistent imbalance between work demands and personal*
 263 *well-being. Extended duty hours, frequent last-minute deployments, and limited*
 264 *opportunities for rest and recovery gradually led to physical and mental exhaustion.”*

265
 266 Research indicates that high-stress work environments significantly contribute to
 267 employee attrition by fostering emotional conflict and reduced social status (Kaplan & Berkman,
 268 2021). Central to this phenomenon is Maslach’s Burnout Theory, which identifies a triad of
 269 emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment
 270 resulting from chronic workplace stress. These factors compel personnel to leave their
 271 organizations prematurely to escape the psychological toll of their roles. Furthermore,
 272 organizational culture and structure play critical roles in employee retention. Disparities in
 273 "belonging" often stem from discrimination related to identity—such as race, gender, and social
 274 class, which negatively impacts an individual's comfort level. Conversely, an inclusive
 275 environment provides measurable benefits for both the individual and the organization (Lovell et
 276 al., 2024). The Structural Theory further explains that the physical and systemic organization of
 277 job sites is inherently stress-producing. Factors such as rigid weekly work schedules significantly
 278 influence how employees perceive their roles and maintain their well-being (Valsania et al.,
 279 2020; Kent et al., 2025). When workplace structures create unsatisfactory conditions, they force
 280 employees to employ various coping strategies. Ultimately, employers must prioritize a balance
 281 between personal and professional life to mitigate the risk of burnout syndrome and ensure a
 282 resilient, inclusive workforce (Gomez et al., 2022). Likewise, as mentioned by Falcatan,
 283 Sanchez, Magtaan, Dausan, & Dalugdog (2022), organization’s personnel is one efficient and
 284 effective way of improving the quality of the products or services it offers.

285

286 **CLUSTER 3: Economic & Career Growth Drivers**

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288 The third cluster is about the economic and career drivers. These factors directly affect their
 289 professional development goals which directly contribute to the feeling of lack in their financial
 290 capacity to sustain the needs of their family most importantly of their children. Four major
 291 themes emerged within this cluster such as: *Lack of professional development, High cost of*
 292 *living, Pension uncertainties, and Work or study abroad.* A female participant had expressed
 293 concern about her children: *“The most triggering factor that made me decide to leave my work at*
 294 *PNP is my children wala mag-aalagasakanila”*. Another said: *“I want to secure my marriage and*
 295 *help my husband for additional income because my present income does not suffice out needs”*

296

297 • **Lack of Professional Development.** Several of the participants have pointed to the need for
 298 police to possess skills in implementation of guidelines. The common themes culled from
 299 their statements was the role of training and education. This means that due to their

300 seemingly lack of skills and knowledge contributed by their training and education, some
 301 police officers were pushed to leave police practice. Other themes that emerged are lack of
 302 leadership training, transparency processes, and focus on personal wellness. A 34-year-old
 303 female participant said: *“Based on my personal experience, one of the main disadvantages of*
 304 *being a non-commissioned officer was the limited opportunity for career advancement and*
 305 *slower promotion compared to commissioned officers. Despite fulfilling my duties and*
 306 *gaining experience, there were constraints in terms of professional growth, authority, and*
 307 *access to leadership roles.”*

- 308 • **High Cost of Living and Concern for Family’s Welfare.** The lack of preparation in facing
 309 transition from being gainfully employed to being separated from the service is dependent on
 310 the condition by which one leaves his or her workplace; either as mandated due to reaching
 311 retirement age or was driven by unforeseen events, for example, poor health condition that
 312 inhibits further working or work dissatisfaction. More so, separation from service effects
 313 physical and mental health of the retirees, associated with reduced income, and changed
 314 social roles and entitlements afforded by the previous professional or work practices. *“My*
 315 *personal experiences as a police officer suggest that internal conditions, specifically the lag*
 316 *between salary and the rising cost of living, significantly influenced my decision.”*
- 317 • **Work or Study Abroad.** They key motivators on why some Filipino works abroad are
 318 mostly for seeking higher income, better career opportunities, and improved quality of life.
 319 The same prompted some participants to leave their post under the PNP. It could be noted
 320 that more than half of the participants opted to work or migrate to other countries. They said
 321 that doing so, has elevated the family’s financial status, and provided them peace of mind
 322 because of the assurance that their family, especially their children have opportunity to grow
 323 well and healthy in a much conducive environment. *“The changes and uncertainties it*
 324 *brought regarding retirement benefits and long-term financial security caused me significant*
 325 *concern, especially as a family man. Over time, this made me reflect deeply on my future in*
 326 *the service, and I realized that continuing under these conditions no longer aligned with my*
 327 *personal responsibilities and long-term plans.”*

328
 329 In order for an organization to sustain its progress and development, continuous training
 330 is important (Kleygrewe, Oudejas, Koejk and Hutter, 2022; Shipton, 2019); police personnel
 331 must have competencies along, legal knowledge, law enforcement awareness, oral
 332 communication and skills at negotiating are important scopes in police are lacking (Magtaan,
 333 Remotin&Dalugdog, 2022; Agunos, 2019); and these competencies must start from the training
 334 curricula and should align with the current development in the field of policing(Koerner &
 335 Staller, 2021; Staller et al., 2021); competencies.The issues on jurisdiction and Organized Crime
 336 Groups were also included (Visser, Markus and Weggeman, 2023; Campana, 2024; Ojo,
 337 Olaidejo, Afolabi, et al., 2023).More so, these individuals in turn may experience sadness or
 338 emotional conflict due decrease social interaction and social status; they have persistent thoughts
 339 of resignation from their work. (Kaplan, D. and Berkman, B. (2021; Salama et al. 2022).
 340 However, despite work spilling over to family life there is currently little research on police
 341 officers’ role-balancing; while many contemplate to seek other job opportunities (Valmari,
 342 Nggren, Ghazinour and Glenstam, K., 2023; Kinnard, 2019; and Tufano, S. ,2018).

343 344 **CLUSTER 4: Ethical & Environmental Pressures**

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346 The fourth cluster is about ethical and environmental pressures that significantly pushed then
 347 to leave the PNP. These factors choked the participants directly affect their professional
 348 development goals which directly contribute to the feeling of lack in their financial capacity to
 349 sustain the needs of their family most importantly of their children. Two major themes emerged
 350 within this cluster such as: *Political interference and Corruption issues.*

- 351
- 352 • **Political Interference.** Political interference is repeatedly said by the participants as one of
 353 the reasons why they leave the serve in the PNP prematurely. What is this? Political
 354 interference is the deliberate intrusions of politicians in the independent operations of the
 355 PNP police operatives. These politicians want to gain personal advantages through their
 356 intrusions. *“Based on my personal experience, there were numerous instances where
 357 decisions that should have been guided strictly by law, standard operating procedures, and
 358 professional judgment were instead heavily influenced by politicians.”*
 - 359 • **Corruption issues.** The Philippine National Police as an organization has long faced
 360 allegations to systemic corruption, frequently ranking among the most corrupt institution in
 361 the country. Corruption within the PNP is generally categorized into petty extortion and
 362 systemic mismanagement. *“Some PNP officers abuse their position and especially in matters
 363 involving political allies, local power holders, or sensitive cases. This created ethical
 364 dilemmas for police officers who were committed to professionalism and the rule of law. The
 365 constant conflict between following lawful procedures and accommodating political
 366 demands resulted in frustration, moral stress, and declining morale.”* Another participant
 367 said: *“In my personal experiences as a police officer, that prompted me to leave the PNP
 368 service prematurely are the PNP system itself and corruption.”*

369

370 There are manifested issues concerning the leadership of the PNP and political
 371 interference namely, contribution of centralized policing system (Chester and Maizland, 2021);
 372 crime prevention and control through collaborated system (Tupas, 2021); regular patrolling,
 373 routine checkpoints and crime prevention seminars are most effective, however challenged by
 374 lack of police personnel, inadequate crime prevention equipment and instances of unreported
 375 cases (Vicente, Ammayao et al, 2020); however few empirical studies deal with the correlation
 376 of crime and justice policy transfer (Brainbridge, 2021). It would appear to suggest challenging
 377 times for policing services, requiring the knowledge and expertise of experienced staff (Home
 378 Office, 2019; Channan, S. and Bennet, S, 2021)

379

380 **Proposed Strategic Action Plan to Prevent Premature Withdrawal of Personnel from the** 381 **PNP**

382 Having established the four major thematic clusters of compelling forces that drive
 383 premature withdrawal from the PNP service, it becomes imperative to address these issues
 384 through a structured organizational intervention through a strategic action plan. The Strategic
 385 plan is the plan "synthesis of the lived experiences" of 10 Police Non-Commissioned personnel
 386 who prematurely withdraw from working at the PNP. Based from the in-depth interview
 387 conducted, applying the thematic analysis approach, 18 themes emerged which constitute the
 388 focus of this plan of action. These themes were arranged into 4 clusters; described in the strategic
 389 action plan matrix below:

390

391 **Table 3.** *Strategic Action Plan Matrix*

392

Thematic Cluster (The Problem)	Strategic Goal	Proposed Action/Program	Key Performance Indicator (Success)
Institutional Dynamics	To enhance organizational justice and policy transparency.	Establishment of a "Grievance and Policy Feedback Portal" and review of administrative case timelines.	Reduction in perceived policy inconsistency.
Occupational Health	To mitigate burnout and address mental health stressors.	Implementation of a "Mandatory Mental Health Recharge" program and flexible scheduling for high-risk units.	Improved mental health baseline scores.
Economic/Career Growth	To provide clear professional trajectories and financial security.	Enhanced career counselling for NCOs and localized cost-of-living allowance adjustments.	Increased intent-to-stay among mid-career officers.
Ethical/External Forces	To shield personnel from external political pressures.	Strengthening of the Internal Affairs Service (IAS) autonomy and "Whistleblower Protection" protocols.	Decrease in reports of political interference.

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A. Policy of Raising Institution Integrity

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This first component of the Strategic Action Plan is a direct response to the findings in **Cluster 1 (Institutional and Organizational Dynamics)**. The goal is to repair the "Systemic Friction" those participants identified as a primary reason for their premature departure.

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Rationale: The Thematic analysis of SOP 1 revealed a sense of fear due to administrative case, with inconsistent institutional policies to address them, and lack of support coupled with lack of feedback mechanism; and failure of the organization to recognize accomplishment, created a sense of mistrust in the Organization to protect its personnel. In these conditions, change in policies is necessary to raise the integrity of the PNP.

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Key Strategic Activities

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1. Policy on handling Personnel with Administrative Cases- PNP and the NAPOLCOM must recognize that all personnel deserve due process; thus, preventing arbitrary government action.
2. Policy Guidelines on awards and recognition- wherein personnel are recognizing for their achievement based from their competence
3. Policy on Transparency and Accountability- PNP should institutionalize a digital "Transparency Hub." This is not just a repository of memos, but a platform where every new directive is accompanied by an "Impact Analysis" and a "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)" section. This ensures that every officer, regardless of rank or location, has the same interpretation of the rules, eliminating the confusion caused by inconsistent policies.
4. Formal Feedback Policy which establishes a structured transparent process for giving, receiving and acting on feedback to promote continuous improvement, trust and employee's growth.

421 **Implementation Strategy:** This component shall be spearheaded by the Directorate for
 422 Personnel and Records Management (DPRM) in coordination with the Internal Affairs Service
 423 (IAS). Implementation begins with a 6-month "Policy Audit" to identify and harmonize
 424 conflicting directives, followed by the rollout of the digital transparency portal.

425
 426 **Expected Outcome:** By addressing these institutional gaps, the PNP can expect a significant
 427 increase in Organizational Commitment. When an officer perceives that the system is fair,
 428 consistent, and supportive, the internal pressure to leave is mitigated, allowing them to focus on
 429 their mission rather than their administrative survival.

430

431 **B. Occupational Health & Personal Well-being Programs**

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433 This second component of this strategic planning is a direct response to the themes culled
 434 in SOP 1 lumped under Occupational Health & Personal Well-being. These themes are mental
 435 health issues, Stressful work conditions, Risky work, occupational hazards, Work-life balance,
 436 and extended working time.

437

438 **Rationale:** Police officers face high level of stress, anxiety, depression and burnout due to the
 439 nature of their work which often than not pose danger as they are expose to hazardous and risky
 440 work environment. Many of these police officers struggle with balancing intense, long duration
 441 duties and even lack of sleep, their frequent exposure to high-pressure situations affects their
 442 physical, mental and psychological stability.

443

444 **Key Strategic Activities**

- 445 1. Mental Health Support Program- the PNP should strengthened the mental health programs
 446 including increasing counselling sessions for officers suffering from burnout
- 447 2. Employee Support Program should target the improvement of work life balance and
 448 providing counselling for personnel and family issues as advocacy measures to improve the
 449 overall quality of life for the officers.

450

451 **Implementation Strategy:** This component shall be spearheaded by the Philippine National
 452 Police (PNP) Health Service which is primarily responsible for providing health service
 453 functions to police personnel and their dependents.

454

455 **Expected Outcome:** By addressing the health needs and concern of the personnel could provide
 456 quality healthcare to personnel and their dependents; in order to create a well performing police
 457 force.

458

459 **C. Economic Growth and Professional Development Program**

460

461 The third component of this strategic plan is a direct response to the themes culled in SOP 1
 462 lumped under Economic and Career Growth. These themes are Lack of professional
 463 development, High cost of living, Pension uncertainties, Work or study abroad.

464

465 **Rationale:** Financial concern is true to majority of employees who may suffer from instability of
 466 source of income. Insufficiency of income are felt by most of the participants who attribute this

467 condition to the high cost of living; that could barely suffice the need of the family. Thus, their
 468 desire to have increase income which could only be attain if they seek professional development
 469 in their present post or work abroad.

470

471 **Key Strategic Activities**

- 472 1. Financial Wellness Program which are employee sponsored initiatives designed to improve
 473 employees' financial health through professional advancement, and other financial support
 474 or non -monetary incentives that could benefit employees and their dependent such as
 475 emergency assistance, early wage access that could allow personnel to access wages before
 476 payday, and student loan assistance.
- 477 2. Professional Development Program is a structured actionable roadmap designed to achieved
 478 career goals, improve skills and foster continuous growth through skills enhancement,
 479 leadership development and increase efficiency in the performing daily task.

480

481 **Implementation Strategy:** This component shall be spearheaded by the Philippine National
 482 Police (PNP) Finance Service; this unit of the PNP shall conduct financial literary seminars and
 483 initiatives aimed at improving the financial stability and well-being of personnel such as
 484 promoting responsible budgeting, savings and debt management. On the other hand, for career
 485 development of personnel, PNP Directorate for Human Resource and Doctrine Development will
 486 be responsible for formulating training programs, career development policies and overseeing the
 487 education of PNP uniformed and non-uniformed personnel; whereas, the PNP training service
 488 acts as the implementing arm for in-service.

489

490 **Expected Outcome:** By addressing the financial wellness as well as uplifting career
 491 development of personnel could help address premature leaving of personnel particularly the
 492 non- uniformed personnel of the PNP.

493

494 **D. Ethical/External Forces**

495

496 The fourth component of this strategic plan is a direct response to the themes culled in SOP 1
 497 lumped under Ethical and External Forces These themes are *Political Interference and*
 498 *Corruption issues.*

499

500 **Rationale:** Political interference destroys the rule of law, fostering corruption and enabling
 501 impunity of officials. It commonly involves manipulating appointments, threats and bribery. If
 502 these practices of those elected officials and those of whom they ruled over, it will create feeling
 503 of helplessness to those who oppose the power; hence the desire to leave prematurely.

504

505 **Key Strategic Activities**

- 506 1. Revitalized Internal Cleansing Policy which will establish the Integrity Monitoring and
 507 Enforcement Group who will investigate police officers who act as private armies or carry
 508 out illegal orders from politicians, and swiftly dismissed erring officers who allow personal
 509 ties to compromise their duty.
- 510 2. Merit Based Promotion and Assignment in order to prevent patronage politics with
 511 implementation of a panel-based selected processes for key positions rather than through
 512 lobbying or recommendations by politicians.

513
514 **Implementation Strategy:** This component shall be spearheaded by The Internal Affairs Service
515 who have independence authority under RA 8551 to conduct *motu-proprio* (on its own initiative)
516 investigations.

517
518 **Expected Outcome:** Through AIS the PNP is enhancing merit-based recognition system and in
519 turn address problems of fast turnover of personnel.

520 521 **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

522
523 This study revealed the compelling forces influencing Police Non-Commissioned
524 Officers (PNCOs) to leave the Philippine National Police (PNP) service prematurely. Through
525 thematic analysis, the findings showed that administrative cases, lack of professional growth
526 opportunities, inconsistent organizational policies, stressful working conditions, insufficient
527 salary, corruption, and unhealthy work environments significantly contributed to premature
528 withdrawal from service. The most common reasons identified by the participants were concern
529 for family welfare, work-related risks, low morale, leadership issues, and the desire for better
530 career and training opportunities. Many participants emphasized that concern for their children
531 and the aspiration for improved financial stability motivated them to seek employment abroad or
532 pursue alternative careers. Despite the challenges they encountered after leaving the PNP, such as
533 adjusting to new work environments and applying previous skills to different professions, most
534 participants expressed that they did not regret their decision to leave the service. The findings
535 also highlighted the importance of resiliency, work-life balance, capability building, and sound
536 leadership in improving personnel retention and well-being within the organization.

537
538 The results of the study imply the need for policy innovations and organizational reforms
539 within the PNP. Recommended measures include strengthening policies on handling
540 administrative cases, implementing fair awards and recognition systems, improving transparency
541 and accountability mechanisms, and establishing formal feedback systems for personnel. In
542 addition, the study emphasizes the importance of occupational health and mental wellness
543 programs to address stress, burnout, and work-life imbalance among police personnel.
544 Leadership development programs, professional growth opportunities, and family-centered
545 support initiatives should also be strengthened to improve morale and organizational
546 commitment among PNCOs. These interventions may help reduce premature withdrawal and
547 enhance the overall welfare of police personnel.

548
549 Future studies should further examine the experiences of other PNP personnel using
550 broader samples and evaluation research approaches. Researchers may also explore additional
551 organizational, psychological, and socio-economic factors influencing police retention and
552 turnover. By addressing these concerns, the PNP may strengthen institutional integrity, improve
553 personnel welfare, and enhance the effectiveness and stability of police service in the
554 Philippines.

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