

The Effect of Hope on The Psychological Well-Being of Police Officers in Perak

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Abstract

The psychological well-being of police officers is a critical area of research, particularly given the unique challenges and stressors associated with law enforcement work. Police officers are prone to witnessing shocking incidence and exposure to traumatic events which can therefore put them at risk of stress disorders; such include PTSD and other psychological conditions. This will impact police officers individually as well as the organization in its unit interactions with the community. In this regard, it is important to understand the mechanisms through which hope promotes psychological wellbeing. Research shows that encouraging hope can benefit police officers' resilience, mental health, and job satisfaction—all of which are critical for preserving their efficacy and wellbeing in high-stress situations. This study intends to investigate the effect of hope on psychological well-being. 137 police officers from Perak participated in this study. The approach used is quantitative by using online survey questionnaire by utilizing random sampling technique. Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software was used to analyze the collected data. The findings show that police officer in Perak has high level of psychological wellbeing. Hope showed significant relationship with psychological well-being. Future studies should investigate how police forces may optimize hope for varying demographic groups in order to improve psychological well-being in general.

1. Introduction

The psychological well-being of police officers is a critical area of research, particularly given the unique challenges and stressors associated with law enforcement work. In recent times, there has been a surge in interest in the psychological concept of hope, indicating that it could have a noteworthy impact on improving the general well-being of law enforcement officers. Hope can operate as a protective barrier against the psychological anguish that is frequently seen in this line of work. Hope is defined as a positive motivating state that is founded on an interactively acquired sense of successful planning and paths to attain goals. Research shows that encouraging hope can benefit police officers' resilience, mental health, and job satisfaction—all of which are critical for preserving their efficacy and wellbeing in high-stress situations (Burke, 2020; Beckley, 2023; Harnett et al., 2023).

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Police officers are often exposed to shocking incidents and traumatic events, making them vulnerable to stress-related disorders such as PTSD and other psychological conditions (Keaton, 2023; Purba & Demou, 2019; Steel et al., 2021). These pressures have implications not only for the individual officers but also for the functioning of the organization and its relationship with the community. Therefore, understanding the mechanisms through which hope promotes psychological well-being is vital. For example, hope has been found to bolster adaptive coping styles, reduce helplessness, and enhance self-efficacy—factors that are crucial for officers dealing with occupational stress daily (Tehrani, 2022; Harnett et al., 2023).

Despite the growing literature on hope and well-being in general populations, there is a notable research gap regarding empirical studies that specifically examine the effect of hope on psychological well-being among police personnel in the Malaysian context. Studies involving this population remain limited, especially in non-urban or region-specific settings, despite indications that local contexts can significantly influence occupational stress levels and coping dynamics.

This study seeks to address that gap by focusing on police officers in the state of Perak. The selection of Perak as the study location was based on feasibility factors, data accessibility, and strategic cooperation between the researcher and the state police contingent management, which granted permission and facilitated the data collection process. Given its diverse geographical landscape and varied policing challenges, Perak presents an ideal context to explore how hope may function as a psychological resource in promoting police officers' well-being.

In addition, the enhancement of hope as both a psychological tool and an organizational principle offers an opportunity to reshape the mental health framework within police departments. By placing purpose at the center of their duties, police agencies can foster environments conducive to help-seeking behavior and self-care. This approach aligns with research emphasizing the importance of organizational culture and societal support in strengthening police personnel's resilience and overall wellness (Keaton, 2023; Purba & Demou, 2019; Harnett et al., 2023).

In conclusion, it is crucial to further examine the role of hope in mitigating occupational stress and enhancing mental health outcomes. This article aims to explore the relationship between hope and psychological well-being among police officers, with special attention to the regional context of Perak, supported by recent empirical findings and relevant psychological theories.

1.1 Research Objective

The objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the level of psychological well-being of police officer in Perak
2. To determine the effect of hope on the psychological well-being of police officer in Perak.

2. Literature Review

Psychological well-being (PWB) is a multifaceted construct that captures how individuals thrive emotionally, cognitively, and socially. One of the most widely accepted frameworks in positive psychology is the PERMA model introduced by Seligman (2011), which comprises five essential elements of well-being: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Rather than focusing solely on the absence of distress, the PERMA model emphasizes the cultivation of strengths and flourishing across diverse life domains (Hidayati et al., 2021; Tran et al., 2022). This broader conceptualization provides a suitable lens through which the influence of psychological resources like hope can be understood.

Hope, often conceptualized through Snyder's Hope Theory as a goal-oriented cognitive resource (agency + pathways), aligns closely with multiple components of the PERMA framework. For example, hopeful individuals are more likely to experience positive emotions, maintain strong relationships, engage deeply in meaningful tasks, and pursue accomplishments despite setbacks. In this regard, hope is not only a predictor of emotional well-being but also a catalyst for goal attainment and life satisfaction, which reflect key elements of PERMA (Syahril & Janna, 2023).

Several empirical studies reinforce this theoretical linkage. For instance, Gallagher et al. (2021) found that individuals with higher levels of hope reported lower anxiety and stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating that hope fosters emotional stability and meaning during crises. Similarly, Genc and Arslan (2021) noted that hope, when combined with optimism, enhances subjective well-being and strengthens one's psychological defences. These outcomes map well onto PERMA, particularly in terms of enhancing positive emotions and building resilience through meaningful engagement.

Moreover, Sun et al. (2023) highlighted the mediating role of hope in the relationship between resilience and mental health, showing that cultivating hope can improve emotional well-being and functional capacity. Luorenco et al. (2022) observed similar findings among nursing students, emphasizing hope as a determinant of subjective well-being. In trauma studies, Senger (2024) reported that hope serves as a buffer against psychological distress

and is central to post-trauma growth. These findings collectively support the idea that hope interacts dynamically with the domains of PERMA to sustain psychological well-being.

In conclusion, synthesizing these theoretical and empirical insights suggests that hope plays a foundational role in supporting the domains of psychological well-being as proposed in the PERMA model. By reinforcing emotional positivity, fostering engagement, enhancing relationships, imbuing life with meaning, and driving achievement, hope contributes holistically to one's well-being. These findings reinforce the value of integrating hope-building interventions in efforts to promote sustainable psychological health.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design for this study employs a quantitative research method, utilizing a survey to gather data on the relationship between hope and psychological well-being.

3.2 Participants

This study utilized a random sampling method to obtain feedback from respondents. A total of 137 respondents, consisting of police officers in Perak, participated in this study. The respondents involved came from various departments and positions. Previous studies suggest that a sample size of 100 to 150 respondents is adequate for conducting reliable correlation and regression analyses in social science research using SPSS (Field, 2018; Pallant, 2020). The selection of Perak as the study location was based on feasibility factors, data accessibility, and strategic cooperation between the researcher and the state police contingent management, which granted permission and facilitated the data collection process.

3.3 Instruments

The instrument used to measure hope in this study is adapted from the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) developed by Luthans, Avolio, and Avey (2007), while psychological well-being is assessed using the PERMA-Profiler developed by Butler and Kern (2016). Both instruments have been widely validated and employed in various contexts, demonstrating high reliability and construct validity. The PCQ was selected because it provides a comprehensive operationalization of hope as a core component of psychological capital. This instrument views hope not merely as a general emotional state, but as a cognitive motivational system that includes goal-directed energy (agency) and planning to meet goals (pathways), making it particularly relevant for evaluating individuals in high-demand occupations such as policing. Meanwhile, the PERMA-Profiler is grounded in Seligman's (2011) well-established PERMA model and encompasses five pillars of well-being—Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. The 23-item version used in this study includes additional components such as negative emotion and physical health, providing a holistic measure of psychological well-being suitable for occupational health research.

Both instruments use Likert-type scales that are intuitive and easy for respondents to understand: a 6-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' for the hope instrument, and an 11-point frequency scale from 'never' to 'always' for the PERMA-Profiler. These scales allow for the capture of nuanced variations in psychological states. The high internal consistency of the overall instrument, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.939, indicates excellent reliability for use in this study context. Given their robust psychometric properties and alignment with the study's conceptual framework, these instruments are considered appropriate and effective tools for assessing the constructs of hope and psychological well-being among police officers in Perak.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

A total of 134 respondents were obtained for this study. The questionnaire was distributed online through Google Forms to reach the research objective. The link of the Google Forms was shared from the Training Department of Perak Contingent Police Headquarters to the respective respondent. The respondent was assured that no personal detail leaked or reveal once they answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire should take 15 minutes to be completed by the respondents.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21. The data was first been cleaned to exclude irrelevant answer from the respondent.

4. Finding

The objective of the study is to identify the level of psychological well-being and to determine the effect of hope in psychological well-being of police officer in Perak. Table 1 below consists of the demographic information of the respondent.

Table 1 Demographic information (n=137)

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	69	50.4
Female	68	49.6
Ethnicity		
Malay	117	85.4
Chinese	3	2.2
Indian	5	3.6
Bumiputera Sabah	2	1.5
Bumiputera Sarawak	7	5.1
Others	3	2.2
Age		
20-30 years	29	21.2
31-40 years	66	48.2
41-50 years	29	21.2
51-60 years	13	9.5
Marital Status		
Single	14	10.2
Married	118	86.1
Divorced	4	2.9
Single Parents	1	0.7
Highest Education Level		
SPM	81	59.1
STPM	11	8.0
Diploma	25	18.2
Degree	12	8.8
Master	6	4.4
PhD	-	-
Others	2	1.5
Year of Service as Police Officer		
Less than 5 years	17	12.4
6-10 years	33	24.1
11-15 years	15	10.9
16 years and above	72	52.6

A total of 137 respondents were involved in this study consisting of 69 men (50.4%) and 68 women (49.6%). The division of respondents according to ethnicity showed that the majority of respondents, 117 people representing 85.4%, were Malays. In terms of age, respondents in the age range of 31-40 years are the majority with a total of 66 respondents (48.2%). More than half of the respondents were married including 118 respondents (86.1%). While the SPM qualification is the qualification of most respondents which are 81 people (59.1%). 72 respondents (52.6%) have served as policemen for more than 16 years.

Table 2 *The level of psychological well-being of police officer*

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Low</i>	4	2.9
<i>Moderate</i>	49	35.8
<i>High</i>	84	61.3

Table 2 above shows the level of psychological well-being of police officer in Perak. The finding shows that only 4 respondents (2.9%) have low psychological well-being, while 49 respondents (35.8%) have moderate level and 84 respondents (61.3%) with high level of psychological wellbeing. Even though half of the respondents are with high level of psychological well-being, but the amount of respondent with moderate level of psychological well-being is quite high.

Table 3 *Correlation between hope and psychological well-being of police officer in Perak*

Correlations		Hope	Psychological Well-being
Hope	Pearson Correlation	1	.669**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	137	137
Psychological Well-being	Pearson Correlation	.669**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	137	137

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows a statistically significant positive correlation between hope and psychological well-being among 137 police officers in Perak ($r = 0.669$, $p < 0.001$). According to Cohen's (1988) guidelines, this value reflects a strong effect size, suggesting that higher levels of hope are associated with greater psychological well-being. The p-value indicates that the relationship is highly significant, with less than a 1% likelihood of the result occurring by chance.

This finding aligns with the PERMA model of psychological well-being (Seligman, 2011), which identifies positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment as key elements of well-being. Hope contributes directly to the "positive emotion" and "meaning" components of PERMA, indicating that individuals with higher hope are more likely to maintain purpose and optimism, which in turn enhances their overall psychological well-being.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the level of psychological well-being among police officers in Perak and to examine how hope influences their well-being. The findings indicate that police officers in Perak demonstrate a high level of psychological well-being, and a strong, statistically significant positive correlation exists between hope and psychological well-being. This clearly affirms the study's objective and provides empirical support for the role of hope as a critical psychological asset in enhancing well-being among law enforcement personnel. These findings are further supported when viewed through the lens of the PERMA model (Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment) introduced by Seligman (2011). Hope, as a forward-looking and goal-driven construct, contributes directly to several domains of PERMA—particularly Positive emotions (optimism about future outcomes), Meaning (a sense of purpose in challenging work), and Accomplishment (goal-setting and motivation). The presence of hope may thus enhance officers' ability to find meaning in their roles, maintain resilience under stress, and experience satisfaction and achievement despite occupational challenges. By situating the findings within the PERMA framework, this study not only confirms the impact of hope on psychological well-being but also offers a theoretical foundation for designing practical interventions. Efforts to cultivate hope—through structured training, peer support, or leadership development—may enhance the broader elements of well-being within police organizations. In conclusion, this study contributes valuable empirical insight to the understanding of mental health in policing, particularly in the Malaysian context. It highlights the importance of nurturing psychological resources like hope as part of a comprehensive approach to strengthening

psychological well-being. Future research may explore targeted hope-based interventions and examine their effects on specific PERMA dimensions across various police demographics and regions.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: Introduction: Adibah Abdul Kadir; data collection: Adibah Abdul Kadir, Fatimatuazzahro Amin; analysis and interpretation of results: Fadillah Ismail; draft manuscript preparation: Adibah Abdul Kadir, Eta Wahab and Istimaroh. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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