

Systematic Literature Review: Police and Personality Traits

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Abstract

Purpose: To examine what recent output is associated with a study on personality traits in the policing context.

Design/methodology/approach: Employing the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) methodology.

Findings: To be completed

Research limitations/implications: This review only provides the representation of the research landscape concerning the relationship between police and personality traits within the timeframe of 5 years (2018 to 2023), focusing on articles sourced from like Scopus and Web of Science. The exploration was tailored to the intersection of police context and personality traits, meticulously defined through refined search parameters covering psychology, criminal justice/criminal penology, and business and management domains.

Practical implications: The findings of this study have significant implications for future research, shedding light on the impact of personality traits on not only the police profession but also other law enforcement agencies.

Keywords: Personality, Personality Traits, Police, SLR

Introduction

Personality, as defined by Funder (2001, p.198), encompasses an individual's enduring patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Personality traits, as an extension of this definition, represent broad and pervasive characteristics that manifest consistently across various contexts and situations (Young et al., 2017; Funder, 2001; Goldberg, 1993). While an individual's values can certainly influence their behavior in a work setting, personality offers a more direct assessment of their actual conduct.

Numerous experts in the field have underscored the importance of comprehending variations in personality within the workplace (Ababneh, 2022; Smith et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2016; Bip & Demerouti, 2015). Research on personality has revealed that differences in individuals' workplace personalities have a significant impact on various aspects, including job performance (Gridwichai et al., 2020; Binti Rusbadrol et al., 2015), job satisfaction (Indarti et

al., 2017; Therasa et al., 2015), and interpersonal relationships (Lee et al., 2015; Barbaro et al., 2016). Furthermore, a wealth of research findings has established links between personality and health outcomes, encompassing job-related stress, burnout, depression, and anxiety (Kim et al., 2017; Noteboom et al., 2016; Mojsa-Kaja et al., 2015).

Literature Review

Personality Traits

Holland (1985) introduced a personality typology that offers insights into predicting individuals' professional behavior. This typology highlights the significance of specific personality traits in ensuring consistency in individuals' conduct across various situations (Tomsik & Gatial, 2018; Kapova, 2007). A study focusing on personality traits within the teaching profession revealed that key factors for teachers include personal qualities like self-confidence, creativity, emotional stability, determination, and responsibility, along with interpersonal traits such as patience, adaptability, persuasiveness, conscientiousness, optimism, and foresight (Tomsik & Gatial, 2018). Conversely, in the realm of entrepreneurship, a creative personality emerges as the paramount trait for fostering business growth and sustainability (Samasonok & Juskeviciene, 2022). Furthermore, for professionals in the accounting industry, integrity stands out as the most essential personality attribute, promoting transparency and preventing fraudulent behavior (Wijayanti et al., 2023).

Previous research has predominantly concentrated on investigating personality traits and their impact on a wide range of individual and organizational outcomes across various occupations. Nevertheless, a limited number of studies have delved into the realm of personality within the context of policing (TenEyck, 2023). Within the law enforcement profession, certain traits are recognized as converging to shape what is often referred to as a unique "police personality." This distinct personality is characterized as an orientation specifically tailored for law enforcement officers, encompassing a cluster of interconnected personality attributes that include bravery, loyalty, authoritarianism, suspicion, physical courage, self-assertiveness, discretion, conservatism, and detachment (Twersky-Glasner, 2005; Bennet & Greenstein, 1975; Lefkowitz, 1975; Van Maanen, 1973).

The available studies addressing personality traits and workforce outcomes lack a specific focus on individuals employed in law enforcement agencies. While there is a wealth of research exploring personality and various job-related outcomes, there remains a notable gap in research specifically conducted with participants working as police officers. This gap in the literature signifies a critical need to comprehensively investigate the relationship between personality traits and various outputs within the unique context of law enforcement. Consequently, there is a pressing research gap that demands thorough exploration to understand the intricate interplay between personality traits and the work behaviors of individuals employed in law enforcement bodies.

Research Questions

This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by investigating the prevailing trends and patterns in research pertaining to personality within the realm of the police profession. The following research questions have been developed to assist the researcher in this study:

1. How many related literature studies on police and personality traits have been published in online databases from the years 2018-2023?

2. What specific research areas are addressed within the study of police and personality?
3. What is the future study direction?

Method

In this study, a systematic literature review methodology is employed, adhering to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) guidelines, which ensure a structured and rigorous approach. Systematic reviews are designed to thoroughly evaluate, identify, and analyze all pertinent prior research related to a specific topic or research query. They offer a balanced and comprehensive overview of the existing body of research findings (Perry & Hammond, 2002). The systematic literature review in this study encompasses several essential steps, including keyword identification, article screening, assessment of article eligibility, evaluation of article quality, data extraction and analysis, and the synthesis of findings.

Identification of keywords

The first step systematic literature review started with the identification of keywords that are related to the topic chosen. The authors used keywords of personality, personality traits, police and policing to search the relevant articles. Scopus and Web of Science are the two online databases used to locate articles on personality and ethical behaviour. The justification for choosing these two databases is due to their large number of journal articles (more than 35,000 articles) from different subjects and publishers. Thus, this database can provide an extensive scientific research perspective from all over the globe and is presently considered a major relevant information source in the research community (Mansour et al., 2021). Below are the keywords used in this study:

Table 1.0: The Search Strings

Database	Search Strings
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY ((*personality* OR *personality trait*) AND *police* OR *policing*))
Web of Science	(TS=(personality OR personality trait*) AND TS=(police OR policing))

Screening

The initial phase in the screening article is identifying and excluding redundancy. The selected criteria are based on the research objectives of this study. Research objectives can be guided in determining the inclusion and exclusion criteria for screening (Kitchenham & Charters (2007). Thus, the piloted criteria accurately interpreted and classified the study with reliability. The first screening phase has identified 105 papers that are related to the keywords, with a total of 66 papers published in Scopus and 39 papers from the Web of Science.

Eligibility

The next step is to determine the eligibility of the articles. The authors have listed the selection of the article during the reviewing phase. The eligibility was conducted by database exclusion by selecting a paper timeline that was published between 2018-2023. Out of 105 papers, only 11 articles from Scopus and 13 articles from Web of Science match the criteria. Several criteria

were applied to pinpoint the articles for review. Specifically, articles within the realms of criminal justice, psychology, and business and management were chosen for inclusion. In the second phase of the eligibility assessment, a manual inspection of each article's abstract, keywords, and content was carried out, following the methodology employed by Shaffril et al. (2019). Ultimately, only thirteen articles met the eligibility criteria for review, with any articles unrelated to the subject matter or field area being excluded.

Table 2.0: The Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

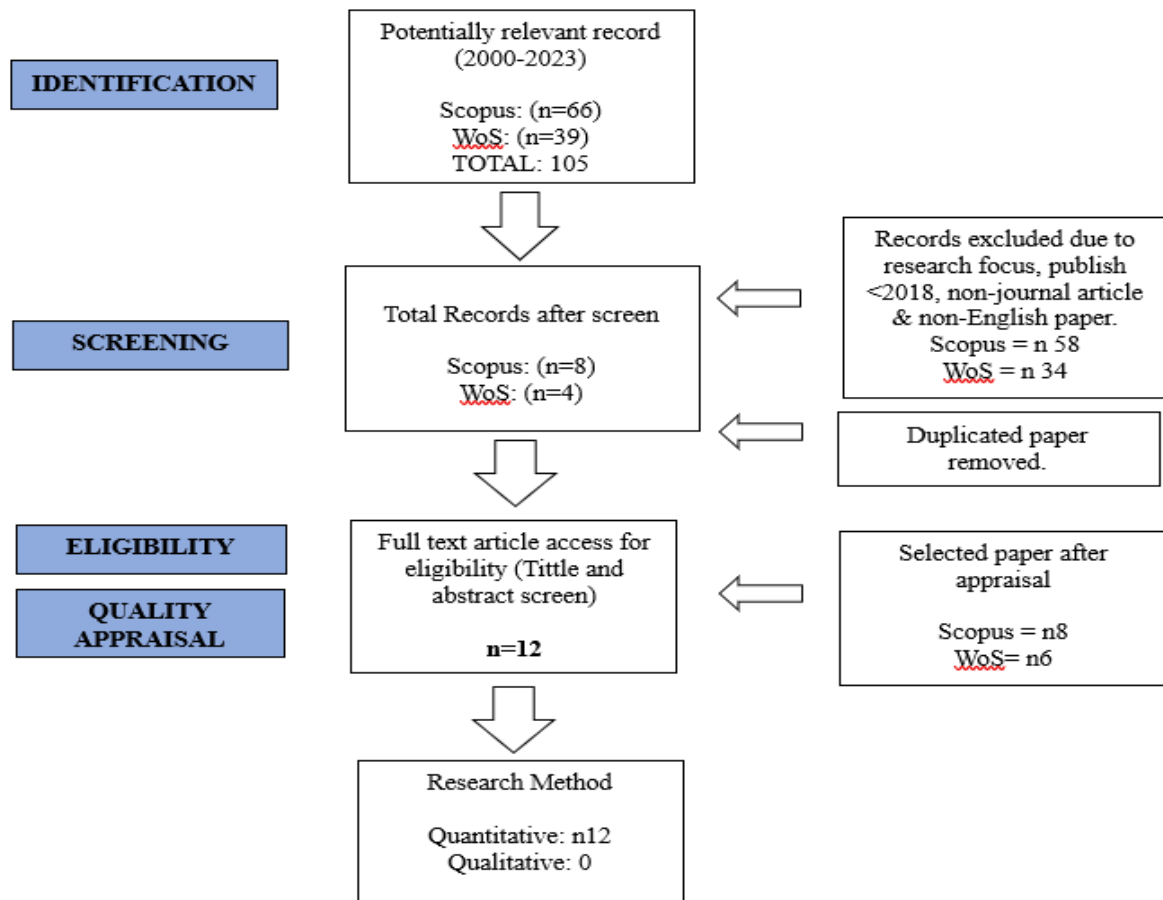
Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Language	English	Non-English
Timeline	2018-2023	<2018
Subject Area	Social Sciences, Criminal Justice, Psychology Business, and management (Scopus) Psychology, Criminal Penology, Social Sciences (WoS)	Other than social sciences, criminal justice, and psychology.
Literature Type	Journal Article	Journals (systematic review, meta-analysis, book series, book, chapter in a book, conference proceedings)

Quality Appraisal

Systematic Literature Review (SLR) continues to grapple with the challenge of assessing quality, especially in terms of research methodology and the credibility of findings, as highlighted by Yang et al. (2021). To comprehensively evaluate the quality of the research, the investigators employed six quality assessment (QA) criteria, as outlined by Kitchenham and Charters:

- QA1: Is the study's purpose explicitly articulated?
- QA2: Is the significance and utility of the research effectively communicated?
- QA3: Is the research methodology clearly outlined and explained?
- QA4: Is the conceptual approach unambiguously defined?
- QA5: Is the research compared and benchmarked against other similar studies?
- QA6: Are the limitations of the research transparently acknowledged?

The two authors of this paper conducted a quality assessment of the listed papers. Each paper was assessed using a scoring system where "Yes" received a score of 1, "Partially" received a score of 0.5, and "No" received a score of 0. The final selection was determined by combining these scores. Notably, all 13 selected papers had a minimum score of 0.5, and none of them received a score of 0.



Findings

Table 3.0: Summary of Paper Review

Classification	Subcategory	N	Reference Index
Year of publication	2023	1	TenEyck, 2023
	2022	3	Koropanovski et al., 2022; Sorengaard et al., 2022; Dirzyte et al., 2022
	2021	2	Huhta et al., 2021; Tedeholm et al., 2021
	2020	2	Melinder et al., 2020; Alessandri et al., 2020
	2019	2	Papazoglou et al., 2019; Jenkins et al., 2019
	2018	2	Madamet et al., 2018; Talavera-Velasco et al., 2018
Country Conducted	Norway	2	Melinder et al., 2020; Sorengaard et al., 2022
	Finland	2	Huhta et al., 2021; Papazoglou et al., 2019
	Serbia	1	Koropanovski et al., 2022
	Paris	1	Madamet et al., 2018
	Spain	1	Talavera-Velasco et al., 2018

	Lithuania	1	Dirzyte et al., 2022
	America	2	TenEyck, 2023; Jenkins et al., 2019
	Sweeden	1	Tedeholm et al., 2021
	California	1	Alessandri et al., 2020
Method	Quantitative	12	Madamet et al., 2018; Talavera-Velasco et al., 2018; Alessandri et al., 2020; Dirzyte et al., 2022; Jenkins et al., 2019; Huhta et al., 2021; Koropanovski et al., 2022; Sorengaard et al., 2022; Papazoglou et al., 2019; Melinder et al., 2020; TenEyck, 2023; Tedeholm et al., 2021
	Qualitative	0	None

Discussion

Research Question 1: How many related literature studies on police and personality traits have been published in online databases from the years 2018-2023?

In the year 2022, three articles were published, while in the years 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021, two articles each were published. As for 2023, only one article meeting the criteria has been published. The review highlights that most of these articles delve into research concerning the interplay between police and personality traits, particularly concerning various health-related issues. Notably, these health issues encompass post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as explored by Madamet et al. in 2018, insomnia as investigated by Sorengaard et al. in 2022, mental health, as discussed by Talavera-Velasco et al. in 2018, and depressive symptoms, as analyzed by Jenkins et al. in 2019. The majority of published articles in this field predominantly stem from research conducted in Western countries, including the United States (TenEyck, 2023; Jenkins et al., 2019), Norway (Melinder et al., 2020; Sorengaard et al., 2022), Finland (Huhta et al., 2021; Papazoglou et al., 2019), Serbia (Koropanovski et al., 2022), Paris (Madamet et al., 2018), Lithuania (Dirzyte et al., 2022), Sweden (Tedeholm et al., 2021), and California (Alessandri et al., 2020). Notably, there is an absence of papers on this topic originating from Eastern contexts. In addition, all articles in this review employed quantitative research methods.

Research Question 2: What specific research areas are addressed within the study of police and personality?

Table 4.0: Research Focus

Source	Research Focus
TenEyck, 2023	Personality traits and police personality
Dirzyte et al., 2022	Personality Traits and Emotion Recognition
Koropanovski et al., 2022	Personality Traits, Physical Fitness, and Intellectual Potential
Sorengaard et al., 2022	Personality Traits and Insomnia Symptoms
Huhta et al., 2021	Personality and Police Behaviour during Critical Incidents
Papazoglou et al., 2021	Personality Traits and Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue
Tedeholm et al., 2021	Personality Traits and General Population

Melinder et al., 2020	Personality Traits, Confirmation Bias, and Interview Performance
Alessandri et al., 2020	Personality Traits and Organization Socialization and Identification
Jenkins et al., 2019	Personality Traits and Depressive Symptoms
Talavera-Velasco et al., 2018	Personality Traits and Mental Health
Madamet et al., 2018	Personality traits and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Referring to Table 4.0 above, recent research on police and personality delves into the realm of personality traits and the concept of police personality. Conducted by TenEyck in 2023, this study aims to identify the specific traits constituting the police personality and determine whether these traits can be universally applied to all police officers. The study addresses this question due to the scarcity of available data. By employing the Big Five personality traits, temperamental characteristics, and empirically derived covariates, the research investigates the relationship between these traits and individuals serving as police officers.

Similar to the research carried out by Tedeholm et al. in 2021, this study compares personality traits between police officers and the general population. Utilizing the Big Five Personality traits dimension, the research reveals distinct personality variations among Swedish police officers compared to the general Swedish populace. Notably, police officers exhibit lower levels of neuroticism and higher levels of extraversion and conscientiousness.

Since most studies on personality in the context of policing primarily concentrate on health-related concerns, it is evident that the police profession faces significant challenges related to deteriorating health conditions. In a paper released by Sorengaard et al. in 2022, personality traits and symptoms of insomnia are explored. Given the irregular working hours of police officers, this study investigates the connection between sleep patterns and police personality. Quality sleep is crucial in policing due to its significant influence on cognitive and emotional functioning. In addition, Papazoglou et al.'s 2021 study examines the realm of personality traits, compassion satisfaction, and compassion fatigue. Considering the scarcity of research focusing on compassion fatigue or satisfaction, this study delves deeper into how negative personality traits like Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy might impact compassion fatigue and satisfaction levels among police officers.

Furthermore, scholars' attention to the correlation between personality traits and mental health intensified in 2018 and 2019. In 2019, an article was published examining the relationship between personality traits and depressive symptoms (Jenkins et al., 2019). Talavera-Velasco et al. conducted a comprehensive study on personality traits and mental health in 2018. Additionally, in the same year, Madamet et al. 2018 conducted a specific study on personality traits and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This indicates a growing awareness regarding the intersection of police work and mental health concerns, a topic that has become increasingly prominent in contemporary discussions, and further exploration of this issue is warranted.

Meanwhile, the investigation of personality traits and their impact on job performance has gained significant attention. Three studies focusing on various aspects related to job performance have been identified (Koropanovski et al., 2022; Melinder et al., 2020; Alessandri et al., 2020). Recently, Koropanovski et al. (2022) conducted a study examining the physical

demands of police work and their connection to personality traits. This research explores the correlation between personality traits, physical fitness, and intellectual capabilities in predicting the academic success of new police recruits. The intriguing findings of this study could serve as a valuable starting point for future researchers interested in studying personality traits and performance disparities among male and female police officers.

Additionally, Melinder et al. (2020) emphasize the significance of personality traits and confirmation biases, exploring the link between these characteristics and forensic interviewing. Their research provides evidence of a systematic connection between examiner-evaluated interviewing performance in relation to personality traits and selection task scores conducted by police officers, shedding light on biases during interviews.

During the same year, Alessandri et al. (2020) conducted a study examining the performance of police officers in relation to their personalities. Their research delved into the intricate relationship between personality changes, organizational socialization, and identification processes, providing valuable insights into the complexities of work-related dynamics. This study significantly contributes to our understanding of the essential role that traits play in the workplace.

In their 2022 study, Dirzyte and colleagues investigate how personality traits and basic psychological needs impact law enforcement officers' ability to recognize emotions. The results indicate that agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and neuroticism significantly influence the fulfillment and dissatisfaction of relatedness needs, which are closely linked to emotion recognition. Future research could delve deeper into the potential heightened risk posed by specific personality traits and the satisfaction or frustration of psychological needs in emotion recognition, considering factors such as stress overload.

Finally, Huhta et al. (2021) concentrate on the connection between personality traits and police conduct during critical incidents. Recognizing the pivotal role police officers play in upholding societal safety and welfare, this research scrutinizes how personality traits influence operational police behavior. In essence, this study establishes an evidence-based link, offering valuable insights to enhance learning, encourage self-reflection, and ultimately improve the effectiveness of policing and occupational safety practices.

Research Question 3: What is the future study direction?

The limitations and suggested areas for further research are derived from the author's insights gathered from a review of twelve selected papers. While the focus of these papers varies, they all revolve around the theme of police and personality. Several valuable points emerge that could guide future investigations aimed at advancing understanding in this field. In summary, the author's recommendations for future research directions are summarized in Table 4.0 below.

Table 4.0: Future Research Direction

Source	Future Research Direction
Koropanovski et al., 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personality qualities should be further researched because they may have a moderating impact on achievement and how people perceive their workload and working conditions.

Melinder et al., 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The strategy of regulating favourable impressions should be evaluated to determine whether it is a viable solution for separating problem police officers from those without problems.• Future research may seek to study the utilization of clinical interview data of police officers, particularly regarding psychological measurements and demographic characteristics.
Sorengaard et al., 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The relationships between job demands, job resources, and sleep should be researched further.• When examining determinants of insomnia, using an integrated approach may be more advantageous and have greater explanatory power than investigating personality and psychosocial work components separately.
Huhta et al., 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physiological stress responses also increase dependence on implicit skills while decreasing brain activity associated with more intentional, effortful decision-making. Hence, future research that investigates how intrinsic personality factors influence these automatic, implicit behaviours in critical police contacts is critical and informs the current study design.
TenEyck, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future studies should consider a broader context of hiring police officers to ensure a diverse pool of candidates in terms of personality and political ideology – with a strong emphasis on the recruitment of females and individuals from the civilian population.
Dirzyte et al., 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The added value or risks of personality traits and psychological needs satisfaction/frustration for emotion recognition requires further investigation, preferably including the stress overload factor.• Due to the relatively small sample size, the issues of validity/reliability of some instruments, and other limitations, the results of this study should preferably be regarded with concern.
Tedeholm et al., 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future studies could utilize a larger sample size.• How and what degree of personality is affected when working in a unit that involves a high-pressure mission and where it is imperative to effectively cope with stress should be further explored.
Alessandri et al., 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future research could explore more on the changes in personality traits that always changing but demanding and highly structured life experiences.• Personality traits as workplace adjustment and functional consequences should be explored more.
Papazoglou et al., 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future research should explore similar research questions among police officers from different geographical areas.• Future studies may employ a culturally diverse sample of police officers to examine whether the present study's outcome differs among officers from different cultural groups.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future research could explore how the severity of exposure to critical incidents and the resultant degree of experienced suffering affects compassion fatigue and satisfaction among police officers.
Jenkins et al., 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future studies should conduct more research on psychosocial factors and depression in the high-stress occupation of policing.• Longitudinal, studies on this research focus are lacking.
Madamet et al., 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The sample size should be recommended to change to existing police officers instead of training police officers.• Research work should be replicated with a larger sample to clearly understand the issues.
Talavera-Velasco et al., 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sample size should be increased to perform the analysis.• Skill or strategies to increase psychological capital should be developed.• Further research on law enforcement professionals is recommended on work-related stress.

Conclusion

This review provides comprehensive visual representation of the research landscape concerning the relationship between police and personality traits within the timeframe of 2018 to 2023, focusing on articles sourced from esteemed databases like Scopus and Web of Science. This review concentrated on a five-year span to spotlight recent publications directly relevant to the paper's specific scope. The exploration was tailored to the intersection of police context and personality traits, meticulously defined through refined search parameters covering psychology, criminal justice/criminal penology, and business and management domains. The analysis of these articles revealed intriguing patterns. Throughout the period, there was a consistent output of research, with three articles published in 2022, and two articles each in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021. The most recent data from 2023 indicated only one article that met the specified criteria.

However, it is noteworthy that the bulk of these studies originated from Western countries. This geographical concentration highlighted a gap in the representation of Eastern contexts within the available literature on this topic. Additionally, a common methodological thread united all the articles under review—they exclusively employed quantitative research methods. This consistent approach emphasized the analytical rigor applied across these diverse studies. In essence, this review underscores the ongoing scholarly interest in the intersection of police work and personality traits, particularly within the realm of health-related issues. However, it also points to the need for more comprehensive international representation, especially from Eastern contexts, and encourages the diversification of research methodologies to enrich the depth of understanding in this crucial area of study.

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