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An examination of social support, personality, and psychological wellbeing in police employees

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Introduction

- Psychological wellbeing is a fundamental aspiration of wider society (Steptoe et al., 2015).
- Workplaces are one of the most important influences on psychological wellbeing (Harnois & Gabriel, 2000).




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Psychological Wellbeing in Policing

- Policing is a stressful occupation (Russell, 2014) and can be detrimental to psychological wellbeing (Juniper et al., 2010).
- Police officers have reported lower than average scores on psychological wellbeing relative to other occupations (Johnson et al., 2005).



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Social Support

- Low levels of work-related social support linked to poorer general mental health in police officers (Hansson et al., 2017).
- Divided into two functional components (e.g., Barrera, 2000): (1) perceived support; and (2) received support.



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Personality

- Extraversion and neuroticism significantly related to perceived support (Tong et al., 2004) and were strong predictors of wellbeing (e.g., Hart et al., 1995) in police officers.
- Research has yet to examine relations between psychological wellbeing and the big-five personality traits, perceived support, and received support in police employees.

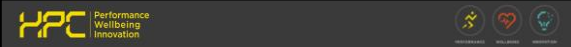
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Aim and Hypotheses


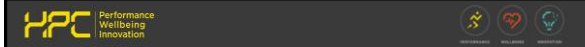
- **Aim:** Examine the relationship between psychological wellbeing, perceived and received support from work colleagues, and personality in police employees.
- It was hypothesised that:
 1. Perceived support would be positively related to and significantly predict psychological wellbeing;
 2. Perceptions of received support would be positively related to and significantly predict psychological wellbeing; and
 3. Extraversion and emotional stability would be positively related to, and significantly predict, psychological wellbeing.

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Procedures and Participants

- Ethical approval obtained from a school ethics committee at a British university.
- Online questionnaire made available to all employees in a police force in the midlands region of England over a four-week period via the organisation's intranet site.
- A total of 381 employees (M age = 42.49 years, SD = 9.85) took part.
- Sample primarily consisted of police officers (n = 208) and police staff (n = 101).



Measures

- Social Provisions Scale (Cutrona & Russell, 1987).
- Shortened Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviours (Barrera & Baca, 1990).
- Ten-Item Personality Inventory (Gosling et al., 2003).
- Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (Tennant et al., 2007).



Data Analysis

- SPSS 22.
- Data were not normally distributed.
- Spearman's rank order correlation
- Multiple logistical regression analysis (MLRA)

Results - Spearman's Correlation



- Moderate-to-strong associations found between psychological wellbeing and: perceived support ($r = .47, p < .05$); emotional stability ($r = .47, p < .05$); received support ($r = .40, p < .05$); and extraversion ($r = .35, p < .05$).
- Small-to-moderate correlations found between psychological wellbeing and: agreeableness ($r = .19, p < .05$) and openness to experience ($r = .19, p < .05$).

Results - MLRA


Table 1: Results of multiple logistic regression analysis

Variable	Odds Ratio	95% CI
Received support	3.05	[1.86, 5.02]
Emotional stability	1.67	[1.40, 1.99]
Extraversion	1.45	[1.22, 1.73]
Perceived support	1.05	[1.02, 1.08]

Discussion

- Findings extend current understanding of social support in police organisations by highlighting the importance of receiving and perceiving available support from colleagues for psychological wellbeing.
- Consistent with previous research, emotional stability and extraversion were strong predictors of psychological wellbeing.



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Applied Implications


- Interventions should seek to increase perceptions of available and received support in police employees.
 - Provide and harness opportunities to highlight the supports that are available.
 - Ensure that sufficient time is available for structured support to be accessed.
- Educate employees on the types of support that are beneficial for colleagues in police work.

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Conclusion

- Police employees face work-related challenges that can be detrimental to psychological wellbeing.
- Perceived support, received support, extraversion, and emotional stability were significantly related to and predicted psychological wellbeing.




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Thank You

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