

THIN BLUE LINE:

Risk Taking Personality Traits in Police Officers, Psychological Capital and Engagement

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HIGH RISK & DANGEROUS

UK police officers are 12 times more likely to encounter physical assault, compared to all other occupations. Police face internal pressures, physical threat and exposure to disturbing events - physical and mental health related problems heavily impact police officer well-being. Policing is considered globally to be one of the more stressful, higher risk and dangerous occupations.

Drawing from the **Job Demand-Resources model**, this study explored the relationships between risk dispositions, PsyCap and engagement.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) is a person's positive psychological state of development, characterised by their **degree of efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience**. PsyCap is an aspect of personality that is considered moderately stable, and is therefore **malleable through experience or training**.

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement - considered to be the positive antithesis of burnout and is positively related to PsyCap - is characterised by a sense of **energetic, effective affiliation with work**. It is a belief that individuals are able to handle demands of their job and it is a useful representation of **well-being**.

RISK TYPE COMPASS (RTC)

The RTC psychometric assessment draws from **FFM risk-related personality** themes. It captures differences in the way individuals make decisions and perceive, react to and manage risk.

Risk dispositions vary dramatically from person to person and can be measured by the RTC. The RTC consists of 18 risk-related 'subthemes' that are encompassed by two scales: the 'Emotional:Calm' (Neuroticism) and 'Daring:Measured' (Extraversion, Openness, Conscientiousness) scales. The RTC places people into 'Risk Types' based on their scores on these two scales.

Analysis of over 13,000 administrations indicates a remarkably even spread of Risk Types across the general population.

SAMPLE

In this study, a sample of 83 active UK Police Officers (7:3 male:female ratio), most of whom were Constables, completed 3 online assessments that aimed to measure their risk personality and well-being (PsyCap and engagement).

FINDINGS

Figure 2 shows the distribution of Risk Type in police officers compared to the General Population sample of over 13,000 people. Police officers are more likely to fall at the 'emotional' end of the RTC Emotional:Calm scale.

20.5% of the police sample were Wary Risk Types (Figure 1), combining a high 'emotional' score with a high 'measured' score on RTC scales.

PsyCap, Engagement and the Emotional:Calm scale from the RTC were positively related.

PsyCap and Engagement increased when individuals scored higher on the Emotional side of the RTC scale.

The RTC Risk Tolerance Index (RTi) suggests That as police officers become more risk tolerant, their PsyCap and Engagement increase.

The RTC Emotional:Calm and PsyCap scales **explain 45% of the variation in Engagement**.

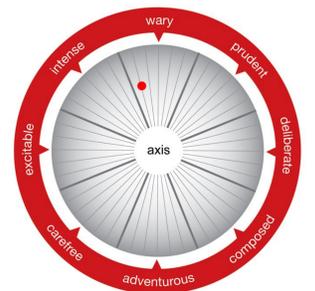


Figure 1: Most prevalent wary Risk Type in Police sample

Risk Types of Police

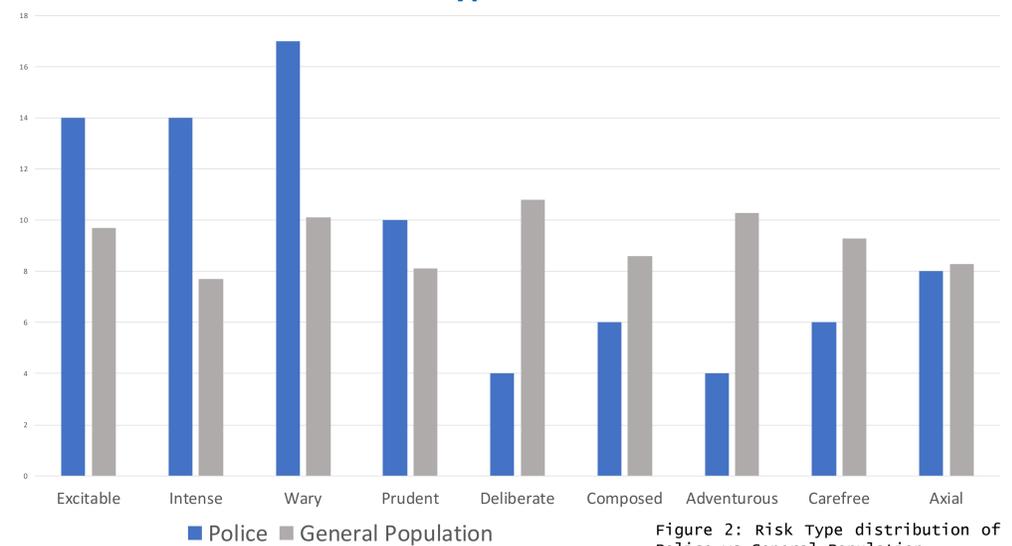


Figure 2: Risk type distribution of Police vs General Population

IMPLICATIONS

These exceptionally strong results reveal the relationship between risk dispositions and police officer well-being.

RTC can be used to address the efficacy, optimism, hope, resilience and engagement in police officers (and others in high stress occupations).

The findings pinpoint the aspects of personality and well-being factors to target when **designing interventions and training** for police officers.

READ MORE ON RTC AND
PSYCAP:
SCAN BELOW



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compass

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