

Review Article

Conceptualization and Characterization of Police Culture: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This research explores the understanding and traits of police culture via a methodical literature review adhering to PRISMA standards. Pertinent research was found through Google Scholar (n=110) and Scopus (n=40). A total of 120 studies were evaluated following the elimination of duplicates (n=20) and unrelated records (n=10). After evaluating the title, abstract and full text, 52 studies were incorporated into the final review. Significant research was located through primary academic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar. The results show that police culture is often linked to themes such as unity, structured authority, professional identity, and loyalty among officers. The review additionally emphasizes that police culture is greatly shaped by organizational structure, leadership styles, accountability systems, institutional standards. The research further shows that the majority of studies regarding police culture come from developed nations, particularly the United States, United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. Commonly studied research topics encompass police ethics, responsibility, professionalism, organizational culture, police conduct and community policing. This research enhances the current literature by combining both theoretical and empirical viewpoints on police culture while highlighting significant research deficiencies, particularly the scarce comparative studies in the contexts of developing nations. The results offer perspectives for future studies, policy formulation and institutional changes concerning law enforcement methods and organizational culture.

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1. Introduction

Organizational culture is considered the personality of an organization (Schlesinger, 2017). The concept of organizational culture was introduced into the fields of management and organizational studies in the late 1970s and began to attract significant scholarly attention in the early to mid-1980s. Culture can be defined as a collection of traditions, values, policies, attitudes, and beliefs that constitute a pervasive context for everything people do and think within an organization (Underwood, 1989). Hence, culture encompasses many aspects, including productivity, control mechanisms, external interactions, public perceptions, choices, and decision-making processes. On the other hand, organizational culture is also identified as the shared values and norms of an organization's members (Dictionary, 2006). Different occupations tend to have distinct organizational cultures. Therefore, it is important to identify the culture of different industries because it affects the operations of these professions.

Due to the nature of police work and the degree of authority afforded to officers, policing has a notably distinctive organizational culture. Police work is unique because of the considerable power and authority entrusted to officers (Kurtz et al., 2015). Recruiting and hiring costs also tend to be much higher for police agencies than for many other types of organizations. Police performance has become a prominent issue in many countries and has consequently attracted considerable criticism from scholars and practitioners. Specifically, this study examines previous literature on police culture to identify its unique characteristics. Herbert (1998) stated that widely shared attitudes, values, and norms are the primary areas of focus in traditional police culture. Although these characteristics may promote internal harmony, they may also create problems related to ethical behavior, accountability, and community-focused policing practices. Current research primarily examines separate factors, such as police conduct, ethics, accountability, and work-related stress.

However, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of how these components collectively influence police culture. Moreover, earlier studies have largely focused on developed nations, while comparative data from developing countries remain scarce. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a systematic synthesis of the existing literature to gain a deeper understanding of the nature, dimensions, and unique characteristics of police culture. The main objective of this research is to systematically assess and analyze the current literature on police culture to determine its nature, conceptual foundations, and unique features within law enforcement organizations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Organizational Culture

Organization culture is a key factor in defining how different stakeholders experience the organization. Thus, the culture consists of beliefs, core values, attitudes of the company which are ultimately influencing the employee behavior and performance. When the culture promotes the initiative and freedom it is referred as adhocracy culture. Competitive pricing, market share, market leadership are the determinants of success in the market culture. However, in a clan culture there is a teamwork and participation.

Cultural dynamics perspective includes four factors such as values, artifacts, symbols, assumptions (Hatch, 1993). It identifies that culture as a wheel. Figure 2 shows the dynamics of organizational culture.

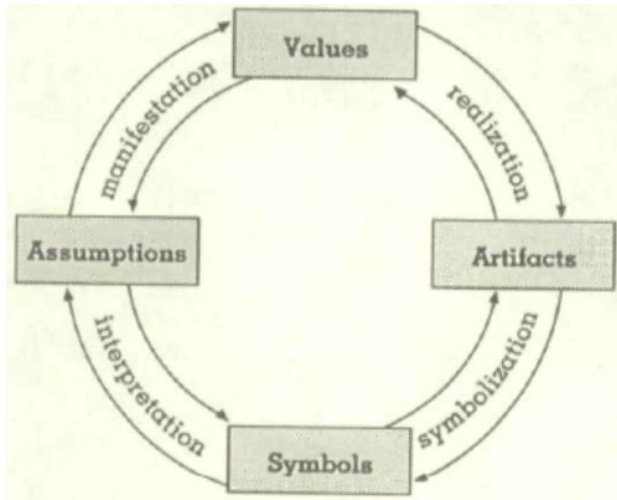


Figure 1. The dynamics of organizational culture (Hatch, 1993).

By continuously benchmarking the performance of the employees' culture is likely to be affected. As indicated in the study of Jyoti & Kour, (2017) creating an excellent place to work cannot be done in a day, this should be done progressively. In every year organization should enhance employee retention and satisfaction. Further company should have a crystal-clear discussion about the outcomes to make developments.

On the other hand Nápoles-Springer et al., (2005) revealed Companies need to be transparent in their strategic planning and how they treat their employees. When

the company shares more information, the more employees feel like a team and have a shared responsibility over the success of the company. Hence this provides a sense of belonging and wellbeing.

2.2 Police Culture

Police service has set up to promote and preserve public order, facilitate orderly movement of people and vehicles, bring down the opportunities for the commission of crime, maintain a feeling of security in the community, gather intelligence reports relating to matters affecting public peace and national security (Ratnayake et al., 2023). Further police tasks are referred as interviewing the suspects, dealing with traffic accidents, working with delinquents, providing advices to the public, preparing the crime reports, intervening in family crisis (Natarajan, 2014).

Police culture is made up with values, beliefs, attitudes, customs and expectations among the police officers. Generally, police culture is used to refer all the facets of police behaviour (Chan, 2010). Since Chan, (2010) in his research work identified that there is no agreed definition for the police culture, he used cop culture and canteen culture to describe the sub cultures in the Police. On the other hand Shanahan, (2000) concluded that the police officer who deals with both criminals and public as part of their profession is the police culture. Farmer, (1984) underpins that “Cop culture has developed as a patterned set of understandings that help officers cope with and adjust to the pressures and tensions confronting the police”.

Core characteristics of cop culture are, i. Mission ii. Action iii. Pessimism iv. Cynicism v. Suspicion vi. Isolation and police conservatism. Next one is the canteen culture. It explains Story telling is commonly available among the police officers in a police station and as a part of their social process group members are telling what has been going on (Waddington, 1999). Hence it is widely accepted that this particular culture serves police officers to express their anxieties, release the tension and let off reduce their frustrations. However, this culture serves to strengthened the collaboration and commitment to the occupation.

Culture is a social construction and it should look at culturally accepted norms of masculinity and femininity effect on organizational effects. As highlighted by the Butler et al., (2003) policing is a male dominant career across the 21st century. On the other hand, women police officers commenting that identity in the police for the officers is based on the gender and sex.

2.3 Diversity in Police Culture

“Cultural diversity” is the presence of various cultural and ethnic groups within a society. It’s also called “multiculturalism. As globalization continues, increased interaction between different cultures is inevitable for many societies. The more diverse a workplace is, the more ideas and perspectives there are. Organizational culture is influenced by the organization’s history, product, market, technology and

strategy, type of employees, management style and national culture (Schlesinger, 2017).

In performing the regular patrol activities, newly trained academic graduates have assigned in USA (Wylupski & Champion, 2012). After gaining sizeable experience in patrol works through the mixed up with experienced police officers, then new officers are assigned to a specific unit.

The bureaucratic nature of police department is seemed to be universal. Hence to overcome these issues, strategic policies of the New Zealand police introduced flexible employment options that allows the women officers to work part time (Drew & Saunders, 2020). This addresses the challenges women frequently encounter in family commitments. With the principle of being a good employer, the police have introduced equal employment opportunity policy that focuses the discrimination and equal opportunities. This turn toward diversity to meet the needs of all staff in the organization (Drew & Saunders, 2020).

2.4 Values

Paoline et al., (2000) showed that values and attitudes of the police officers created by a working environment through coercive authority, danger, uncertainty. In accordance with the conventional wisdom, the police culture comprises of set of values, attitudes, norms which are broadly shared among the officers who discover within the culture to manage the strains in their working environment. In a report by Dobni et al., (2000) indicated that mix values of the organization primarily affecting the employee commitment and influencing perceptions about workplace behavior.

From the findings of Terrill et al., (2005) stated Indianapolis officers are more likely to apply the traditional police values whereas St. Petersburg police officers are willing to apply the community oriented policing to resolve the matters. Subordinates expect that the Leaders would be able to respond to their voice and opinion and accept their feedback and criticism. Also, it was found good organizational culture trusts what employees are stated. This rule of thumb must cascade from the most senior levels of the organization right down to the company mailroom. The critique provided by the Gutschmidt & Vera, (2022) revealed traditional male culture dominance will barrier for the diversity management in the police.

As cited in Gutschmidt & Vera, (2022) pointed out police officers team work, cohesiveness would improve due to the supportive management, regular feedback and authentic leadership.

2.5 Artifacts

Hogan & Coote, (2014) mentioned artifacts are most explicit and observable characteristic in the organizational culture. Hence artifacts provide a background for employees to understand what is await within the organization (Mahler, 1997). Artifacts include stories, physical architecture, rituals, language. When there are

stories about the heroes of innovation, physical arrangements for innovation will cause to enhance the performance. Detail examination of Sierra-Arévalo, (2019) showed that police is maintained the commemoration of fallen officers in the line of duty. Hence police officers create an organizational memory that reflects the gravity of the danger and potential death in police works.

Values → Norms → Artifacts → Behavior → Performance

Figure 2. Causal chain (Hogan & Coote, 2014).

2.6 Symbols

Symbols are particularly crucial for maintaining professionalism, authority and organizational identity in law enforcement institutions. Hence, police uniforms serve as a visual barrier between officers and the general population while also signifying authority and discipline. The evidence presented by Paschal & Nizam, (2016) found symbols have no significant impact on employee performance. Symbols are promoting good employee morale, strengthening the employee relationships and creating sense of unity among the members (Saffold, 1988). Colors, language, animals, plants, marks are some of examples illustrated under the symbols.

Additionally wearing uniforms can have a positive effect on police performance. The study conducted by the Koedijk et al., (2020) revealed wearing a police uniform will more representative the police works and physical fitness. Similarly, to improve ties between the police, that the community policing systems frequently employ symbolic structures. Even though in the year of 1874 Japanese police setup the Kobansho policing system at important locations in Japan, it was changed the name as “Hashutsujo” (Islam, 2019). On the other hand, the officers who have been deployed in the koban system referred as “Chuzaishu”. Finally, the collective of Koban and Chuzaishu became the symbols of Japanese community policing. Detail examination of Taussig-rubbo, (2012) showed that in a policing context, badges represent acts of heroism, community service and outstanding performance of duty.

2.7 Assumptions

The findings of Keleş & Aycan, (2011) suggested managerial values and assumptions were significantly influenced the performance management practices in Turkey business organizations. For this study 214 business organizations were participated. Hence managers who assumed in flexibility used formal performance management practices. When the managers assume employees are goal oriented, then using the hard criteria (objective work outcomes) in evaluating the performance.

Among the police officers there are three assumptions namely, demand of the police works linked to the culture, culture had a negative impact on police practice and

culture is relatively stable over time (Shanahan, 2000). However, there is another citation presented in quoting Moir and Moir (1992) regarding the assumption of Police that explains how does the community should be policed and this pervasive interpretation does not entertain other possible community interpretations.

2.7 Drivers of Police Culture

2.7.1 Police Leadership

Leader of the organization should clearly communicate the cultural principles to its followers. Leader has to play a role model in the organizational culture. When the police leaders too much focused on the managing the police organization than the leadership side in the police, police leaders are likely to be failed (Cohen et al., 2019). In the view point of Ratnayake et al., (2025). It has stated transformational leadership best suitable for a police organization as the police work is extremely dynamic, constant changing. McCarty et al., (2007) further argued that individual officers on commitment may be creating invalidate due to the inclusion of organizational culture and transformational leadership. However leader could play an important role in nurturing, disseminating, shaping the culture (Saffold, 1988).

2.7.2 Communication

When communicating the culture of the organization to the employees, Internal newsletters, business planning processes and company awards all needed to be structured around the principles. The study by Tyagi et al., (2016) found to improve the functioning of the police department and developing healthy relationships between the public and police, the regular meeting with public and public feedback is prominent.

In order to develop the strategies to address the community conflicts in an effective manner there should be a flexible oriented organizational culture (Marcos et al., 2020). The argument bring here was police has to work with different community groups and therefore to everyone police have to fairly treat. Also promoting flexible oriented culture offers broad support for the employees.

2.8 Outcomes of the Police Culture

2.8.1 Transmitting Pressure of the Job

How officers perceive the pressure in terms of top to bottom is significant across different levels in the police culture. In an analysis of de Maillard & Savage, (2018) found that organizational performance targets are transmitted from senior police management to supervisors. The way transmission is happening linked with two

ways. First there is a formulaic definition which numerical targets are push down to frontline employees. Second there is no explicit requirement to meet certain targets, but questioning the officers working on particular crimes when there is an increase in the frequency of the crimes.

2.8.2 Police Performance

Police organization's governance is decided through the level of relationship between state and police has regardless the globalized force of managerialist movement (de Maillard & Savage, 2012). Hence fundamental variations in relationship, culture, constitution will decide the police governance. Governments have progressively focused setting targets to enhance the performance of the police (Karlsen et al., 2007).

Based on the research carried out by Glomseth et al., (2007) concluded that team oriented culture is an influential factor for knowledge sharing and performance in police investigations. Police performance is measured through value shop model. Team culture is stimulating the officers to solve the crimes via detecting together. Hence undoubtedly police officers feel a strong sense of identity towards the unit they worked for. Simultaneously Chermak & Weiss, (2001) proves that the extent police support for the citizens is one of the prominent criteria in measuring the police performance in democratic countries

3. Methodology

Using keyword combinations such as "police culture," "law enforcement values" and "organizational culture in policing," relevant studies were found through systematic searches in scholarly databases including Scopus, Google Scholar. In order to ensure accessibility and relevance, the search was restricted to peer-reviewed English-language publications from 1990 to 2025. Exclusion criteria excluded opinion articles, non-policing organizational studies and publications with no theoretical or empirical foundation.

Inclusion criteria required that research specifically address the definition of police culture. First, titles and abstracts were reviewed. Next, full-text analysis of possibly suitable articles was conducted and reference management software was used to eliminate duplicates. The selection procedure was documented using a PRISMA flow diagram. A uniform coding sheet was used for data extraction in order to record authorship, country, year of publication, research design, conceptual frameworks and important findings. Following a thematic synthesis of the extracted data, recurrent trends, conceptual differences and contextual variances in the definition and characterization of police culture across the literature were found.

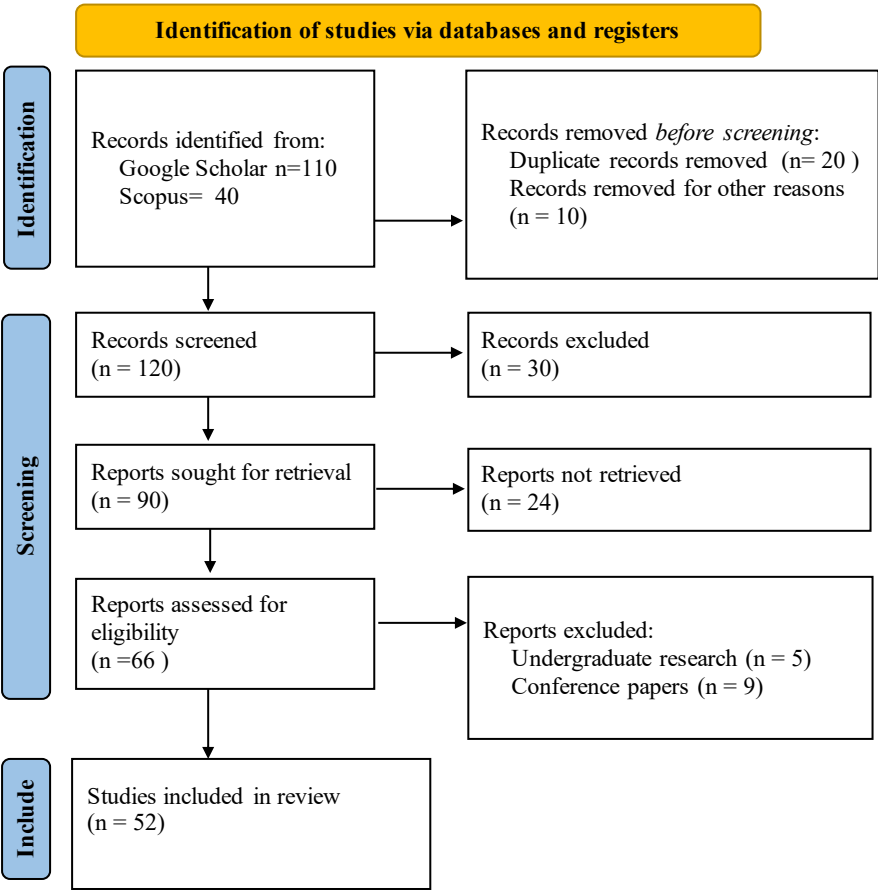


Figure 3. PRISMA diagram.

PRISMA guidelines were followed in the study selection procedure. 40 records from Scopus and 110 records from Google Scholar were among the 150 items found through database searching. 30 records were eliminated before screening, comprising ten records eliminated for other reasons and twenty duplicate records. For the screening stage, 120 records were kept as a consequence. During the screening of titles and abstracts, 30 records were omitted because they were not relevant to the study subject. As a result, 90 reports were requested for access. Nevertheless, 24 reports were unavailable, resulting in 66 reports evaluated for eligibility.

Among these, 14 reports were omitted, consisting of 5 undergraduate research studies and 9 conference papers, since they failed to satisfy the inclusion criteria. Ultimately, a total of 52 studies were incorporated in the systematic review. Boolean operators were utilized to enhance and refine the literature search method to obtain pertinent studies on police culture. The main operators utilized were AND, OR and NOT, enabling the inclusion and exclusion of search terms across databases such as Google Scholar and Scopus. The AND operator helped refine the search by linking key concepts, making certain that the studies obtained covered various facets of the research topic. For instance, search phrases such as “police culture AND organizational behavior” and “police culture AND law enforcement AND values” were utilized to find studies that analyzed these variables concurrently. The OR operator was used to expand the search by incorporating synonyms and associated terms. For example, phrases including “police culture OR police subculture OR law enforcement culture” were employed to encompass differences in terminology across various studies and fields. The NOT operator was used to eliminate unrelated results and enhance search accuracy. For instance, search phrases including “police culture NOT military” were employed when needed to prevent obtaining studies irrelevant to law enforcement environment. Moreover, various combinations of these operators were employed to create more intricate search strings, including (“police culture” OR “police subculture”) AND (behavior OR norms OR values). This method guaranteed a thorough but targeted collection of literature pertaining to the definition and features of police culture.

Table 1 displays the ten most influential authors in police culture, emphasizing their publication volume, citation influence, and institutional connections. Although the bibliometric indicators reflect academic impact, the importance of these authors is mainly rooted in their theoretical and empirical contributions to the comprehension of police culture. Reiner and Skolnick emerge as key figures whose contributions influenced modern understandings of police occupational culture. Skolnick’s significant concept of the “working personality” proposed that the interplay of threat, power and social alienation produces a unique police perspective marked by distrust and unity. This framework became a foundational element for later research investigating police perspectives and actions. Reiner broadened this viewpoint by pinpointing essential cultural components such as mission, cynicism, solidarity, conservatism, and machismo, while also emphasizing the variety and evolving characteristics of police cultures within various organizational and social contexts. The significant number of citations for both researchers demonstrates their lasting impact on the discipline.

Chan’s contributions represented a notable theoretical change by contesting deterministic views of police culture. Utilizing cultural and organizational theory, Chan posited that police culture is neither uniform nor fixed, but is influenced by the dynamics between organizational frameworks and individual actions. Chan’s research prompted scholars to look past simplistic interpretations of police actions and investigate how wider institutional and societal elements shape cultural behaviors.

Table 1. The 10 most published authors in relation to police culture.

Author	TP	University	Country	TC	H-Index	TC/TP	≥100	≥50	≥10	≥1
Reimer R	8	London School of Economics	UK	568	32	71	3	1	2	2
Chan J	7	University of Melbourne	Australia	450	28	64.3	1	2	1	3
Skolnick JH	9	University of California, Berkeley	USA	320	35	35.6	2	3	2	2
Paoline EA	2	University of Central Florida	USA	110	20	55	1	0	1	0
Manning PK	6	Northeastern University	USA	70	24	11.7	2	2	1	1
Loftus B	3	University of London	UK	220	15	73.3	1	1	1	0
Waddington PAJ	4	University of Wolverhampton	UK	290	14	72.5	1	1	1	1
Holdaway S	4	University of Sheffield	UK	295	12	73.75	1	2	1	0
Cockcroft T	5	City, University of London	UK	500	10	100	0	2	2	1
Crank JP	4	University of Nebraska Omaha	USA	85	9	21.2	0	2	1	1

Note. Abbreviations: TP = total papers; TC = total number of citations; H = author h-index database; H* = author h-index.

Table 2. The 15 most published countries in relation to police culture

Country	TP	TC	H Index	TC/TP	≥300	≥200	≥100	≥50	≥20	≥10	≥1
Usa	8	687	48	85.9	1	1	2	1	2	1	0
United Kingdom	6	345	42	57.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Australia	2	234	28	117	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Canada	3	145	26	48.3	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Netherlands	2	112	20	56	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Germany	3	101	19	33.6	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Spain	3	90	17	30	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
Sweden	4	156	16	39	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
Norway	3	175	14	58.3	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Finland	2	100	12	50	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
South Africa	4	234	11	58.5	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
New Zealand	3	278	10	92.6	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
India	3	310	7	103.3	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
China	4	295	6	73.75	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Brazil	2	260	6	130	0	0	0	1	0	1	0

Likewise Manning highlighted the symbolic and structural aspects of policing, considering police culture as a means by which officers interpret the uncertainty and intricacies of their routine tasks. Chan and Manning worked together to enhance the understanding of police culture as something dynamic, negotiated and dependent on context.

Other researchers have thoughtfully enhanced and varied the discipline. Paoline challenged the notion of a uniform police culture and illustrated the presence of diverse cultural orientations among officers, emphasizing differences influenced by organizational roles, experiences, and demographic factors. Loftus expanded on this critique by exploring how modern reforms, accountability systems, and societal changes reshape police identities and professional values. Similarly, Holdaway highlighted concerns regarding race and diversity in policing, revealing how conventional police cultures can overlook minority officers and perpetuate discriminatory behaviors. Waddington contested excessively pessimistic depictions of police culture by differentiating between officers' casual conversations and their real actions, contending that researchers should avoid from considering police narratives as straightforward proof of operational practices.

The table additionally uncovers intriguing trends concerning academic impact. While Skolnick had the maximum number of publications (TP = 9), Reiner attained the highest total citation impact (TC = 568), reflecting the significant impact of his theoretical work. Cockcroft's exceptionally high citation-per-publication ratio (TC/TP = 100) indicates that his research has been very impactful, even with a relatively limited number of publications. The prevalence of researchers linked to institutions in the United Kingdom and the United States indicates the historical evolution of police culture studies within Anglo-American law enforcement environments. This focus has created a robust theoretical framework but has faced criticism for inadequate attention to policing contexts outside the Western sphere. As a result, recent research has more frequently advocated for comparative and international viewpoints to evaluate the relevance of traditional police culture theories in various social, political and organizational contexts.

The top fifteen nations contributing to police culture research are included in the Table 2. With the most publications (TP = 8) and citations (TC = 687), the United States comes in first, demonstrating its significant influence on theoretical and empirical research on police culture. With 6 articles and a high citation impact, the UK comes in second, demonstrating its substantial scholarly contributions, particularly from prominent policing studies experts. Additionally, nations such as Australia and Canada have significant research production and citation influence, demonstrating their active participation in organizational culture studies and policing research. The Netherlands, Germany, Spain and Sweden are among the European nations that make modest contributions to the topic, indicating a growing interest among academics in institutional reforms and comparative policing systems. The table 2 also demonstrates the dominance of Western nations in terms of publication productivity and citation effect. On the other hand, new study contributions from nations including Brazil,

Table 3. Top 20 high-impact journals for research in determinants of police culture.

Journal name	Publisher	Article count	Citations in Scopus
Policing: An International Journal	Emerald	3	310
Police Quarterly	SAGE Publications	2	110
Policing and Society	Taylor & Francis	3	120
Criminology	Wiley	3	100
Journal of Criminal Justice	Elsevier	3	200
The British Journal of Criminology	Oxford University Press	4	100
Crime & Delinquency	SAGE Publications	3	110
Criminal Justice and Behavior	SAGE Publications	4	350
Justice Quarterly	Taylor & Francis	2	110
Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice	SAGE Publications	2	130
European Journal of Criminology	SAGE Publications	2	140
International Journal of Police Science & Management	SAGE Publications	2	210
Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice	Oxford University Press	2	140
Criminal Justice Review	SAGE Publications	2	70
Deviant Behavior	Taylor & Francis	3	50
Crime, Law and Social Change	Springer	2	40
Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency	SAGE Publications	2	50
American Journal of Criminal Justice	Springer	2	70
Criminal Justice Studies	Taylor & Francis	3	140
Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology	Springer	3	60

China and India are still relatively small, but they show that police culture research is gradually spreading into a variety of geographic contexts.

Table 3 included the top 20 journals that have made major contributions to the scholarly discourse on police culture. According to the analysis, the majority of the research on police culture is found in publications that focus on criminology, criminal justice and policing studies. First, the sector is dominated by journals related to policing. The best resources are journals such as Policing and International Journal, Police Quarterly and Policing and Society. Research on police organizational behavior, occupational norms and cultural dynamics within law enforcement organizations can be conducted on these platforms. Second, the advancement of theoretical and empirical discussion on police culture is widely published by criminology and criminal justice publications.

High citation impact is demonstrated by prestigious journals such as Criminology, Journal of Criminal Justice and The British Journal of Criminology, suggesting that research on police culture is incorporated into more general criminological discussions about legitimacy, procedural justice and institutional accountability. Third, SAGE Publications, Emerald, Taylor & Francis and Springer are the publishers making the major contributions. SAGE Publications, which

Table 4. Top 20 highly cited articles on police culture.

Theme	Publisher
Police Culture	Sage Publications
The Police Culture: Themes and Concepts	Oxford University Press
Police Occupational Culture: New Debates and Directions	Elsevier
The “Blue Code of Silence” and Police Culture	Taylor & Francis
Police Subculture and Organizational Change	Wiley
Police Culture and Police Accountability	Emerald
The Role of Police Culture in Police Misconduct	Sage Publications
Police Culture, Solidarity and the Code of Silence	Springer
Re-thinking Police Culture: Officers’ Occupational Attitudes	Taylor & Francis
Police Culture and Organizational Reform in Policing	Elsevier
Police Culture and the Use of Discretion	Sage Publications
Police Culture, Legitimacy and Public Trust	Wiley
Gender and Police Culture: Barriers and Opportunities	Taylor & Francis
Understanding Police Culture and Ethical Decision-Making	Emerald
Police Culture and Community Policing Implementation	Elsevier
Diversity and Change in Police Organizational Culture	Springer
Police Culture and Resistance to Organizational Reform	Sage Publications
Police Culture and Professional Identity	Wiley
Police Culture, Power and Authority in Law Enforcement	Taylor & Francis

publishes a number of prestigious journals in criminology and police research, seems to be particularly significant among these. This concentration implies that the intellectual diffusion of policing scholarship is still influenced by major academic publishers. Fourth, the citation patterns demonstrate some journals' intellectual importance. Because of their strong reputation and interdisciplinary readership, certain journals have a greater citation effect than others, even though some publish more articles. For instance, because of their wider intellectual reach, journals such as *Criminology* and *The British Journal of Criminology* tend to publish fewer articles that are specifically related to police, but they also receive more citations.

Table 4 provides a thematic summary of extensively referenced literature on police culture, emphasizing important research domains, publishers. The results reveal that key texts such as “Police Culture” and “Police Occupational Culture. Hence themes such as the “blue code of silence,” police accountability, organizational change and community policing indicate increasing academic focus on ethical issues, institutional reform and public confidence in law enforcement. On the other hand, lower yet steady citation trends in themes including organizational justice, professional identity and resistance to reform suggest developing or specialized subfields within police culture studies. The prevalence of major academic publishers such as Sage, Elsevier, Wiley, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Emerald and Oxford University Press reinforces that the literature is based on trustworthy peer-reviewed sources. The table illustrates that research on police culture is theoretically robust and thematically varied, exhibiting a solid equilibrium between foundational ideas and current applied issues.

Table 5 illustrates how several factors affect how police culture develops and manifests in various geographical areas and policing contexts. The literature is dominated by studies carried out in industrialized nations including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, which reflects better research infrastructure and easier access to policing data. But developing nations such as Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, India and others are becoming more and more involved in the discussion, particularly in the context of institutional legitimacy and police reform. The determinants found in the research can be broadly classified as institutional, behavioral and organizational. Training, accountability systems, hierarchy and leadership style are examples of organizational factors. Officer solidarity, workplace stress and professional identity are behavioral components. Public trust, community policing strategies and reform projects are examples of institutional variables. Police culture has been demonstrated to have an impact on public trust, officer decision-making, ethical behavior and organizational performance. The literature suggests that police culture greatly affects essential outcomes such as public trust, ethical decision-making, officer behavior and organizational efficiency. It also has a significant influence on the way police organizations react to initiatives for diversity, reforms in accountability, and technological advancements in contemporary policing environment.

The conceptual structure and prevailing themes in the literature on the conceptualization and description of police culture are revealed by the keyword co-occurrence analysis. It is feasible to determine the most influential topics and the connections between them in scholarly discussions by looking at the frequency of keyword occurrences. First, with the greatest occurrences, Police Culture is the most prevalent keyword. This suggests that the literature's main focus is the idea of police culture. Discussions concerning policing practices, values and norms are intricately embedded with larger organizational and behavioral frameworks, as seen by its significant link strength, which indicates that it is highly associated with multiple other themes. Police culture is frequently researched as a particular type of organizational culture, which is reflected in the high occurrence and connection strength of organizational culture. The ways that internal norms, hierarchy and institutional values influence officers' attitudes, choices and professional behavior are regularly examined by researchers. This link shows how police culture is inextricably linked to the larger administrative and structural context in which police organizations operate.

One of the most common keywords is "Police Ethics," which is another important theme. This implies that ethical issues are a significant focus of the literature. Integrity, corruption, accountability and ethical decision-making among police officers are among the topics that are frequently studied. The high correlation between police ethics and other keywords suggests that professional standards and organizational culture within policing institutions are strongly linked to ethical behavior. The existence of Police Behavior and Police Accountability emphasizes even more how important it is to assess police officers' conduct and duties. These terms imply that scholars are becoming more interested in the ways that police organizations'

Table 5. Top 30 most-cited articles by police context.

Determinants	Performance measure	Country	Country classification (developed/emerging)	Policing context
Police subculture norms	Officer solidarity, decision-making	USA	Developed	Urban policing
Organizational hierarchy	Accountability & supervision	UK	Developed	Metropolitan police
Blue code of silence	Misconduct reporting	USA	Developed	Law enforcement agencies
Leadership style	Ethical policing practices	Canada	Developed	Community policing
Occupational stress	Use of force decisions	USA	Developed	Patrol policing
Training and professionalization	Procedural justice	Australia	Developed	Police training institutions
Police solidarity	Internal trust among officers	Netherlands	Developed	National Police
Organizational justice	Job satisfaction & performance	UK	Developed	Police organizations
Gender diversity	Inclusive workplace culture	Sweden	Developed	Gender integration in policing
Community policing orientation	Public trust and legitimacy	USA	Developed	Community policing programs
Cultural resistance to reform	Organizational change	South Africa	Developing	Police reform initiatives
Accountability mechanisms	Transparency	Germany	Developed	Federal police
Ethical climate	Corruption prevention	India	Developing	State police
Institutional legitimacy	Public cooperation	Brazil	Developing	Urban policing
Performance management systems	Police effectiveness	Singapore	Developed	National police
Diversity and inclusion policies	Workplace equality	Norway	Developed	National police
Professional identity	Officer commitment	USA	Developed	Police departments
Technology adoption	Data-driven policing	Japan	Developed	Smart policing
Organizational transparency	Citizen trust	New Zealand	Developed	Community policing
Institutional reform policies	Cultural transformation	Mexico	Developing	Police reform programs

Table 6. Co-occurrence of the top 10 author keywords.

Keyword	Occurrences
Police Culture	210
Organizational Culture	165
Police Ethics	130
Police Behavior	102
Police Accountability	86
Professionalism	75
Use of Force	60
Police Subculture	54
Community Policing	48
Gender in Policing	39

cultural norms affect officers' behavior, discretion and reactions to public expectations. Therefore, accountability mechanisms such as oversight and transparency are frequently mentioned as strategies for changing or controlling police culture. Terms such as "community policing" and "professionalism" are examples of recent changes meant to strengthen ties between the police and the community.

According to the literature, traditional police subcultures that may be marked by solidarity, secrecy and resistance to outside scrutiny can be transformed by promoting professionalism and community participation. These topics draw attention to a change in research that aims to enhance public-law enforcement collaboration and confidence. Additionally, the appearance of Police Subculture underlines the long-standing academic debate concerning the informal norms and values that evolve among police officers. These subcultural traits such as allegiance to other officers, mistrust of outsiders and dependence on unofficial rules are sometimes regarded as defining traits of police culture.

Researchers regularly look at topics such as how these factors affect organizational behavior and decision-making. The fact that use of force is included suggests that conversations concerning operational procedures and the control of police authority are intimately related to studies of police culture. Researchers frequently examine how police organizations' cultural values impact officers' sense of legitimacy, authority and threat while using force. Lastly, Gender in Policing draws attention to a new field of study that examines inclusivity and diversity in police organizations. This theme represents the increasing interest among academics in comprehending how gender dynamics affect interactions inside policing organizations, leadership opportunities and workplace culture.

Table 7 demonstrates the progression of publications in the top journals from 2014 to 2024. The findings show that research output was focused in a limited selection of journals, with Policing and Society becoming the most productive outlet, releasing eight articles during the study period. This was followed by the International Journal of Police Science & Management with six publications, while Police Quarterly, Policing: An International Journal, Criminal Justice and Behavior, Police

Table 7. Evolution of publications per journal during the 2014–2024 period.

Journal	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Policing and Society	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	1	8
Police Quarterly												
Policing: An International Journal	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	5
International Journal of Police Science & Management	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	6
Criminal Justice and Behavior	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	5
Police Practice and Research	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	5
Journal of Criminal Justice	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	5
Crime & Delinquency	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	5
Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	4
Criminology & Public Policy	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4

Practice and Research, Journal of Criminal Justice and Crime & Delinquency each contributed five articles. Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology and Criminology & Public Policy published four articles each. The time distribution shows that publishing activity was quite restricted and irregular in the early years (2014–2018), as most journals released no more than one article each year. From 2019 onward, research output became steadier, and a significant rise was observed during the 2020–2024 timeframe. Particularly, almost every journal documented publications in the last three years of the review, showing increasing academic interest and continuous focus on the subject. The prominence of journals centered on policing among top publication venues indicates that the field is mainly based in policing studies, while input from criminology, criminal justice, and psychology journals highlights its interdisciplinary significance. The results indicate a gradual development of the research field, marked by a rise in publication rates and the emergence of a core set of journals that have significantly contributed to the advancement of academic knowledge on the topic.

4. Implications

In addition to enhancing their physical and technological resources, police institutions should concentrate on creating professional ideals, flexible organizational cultures and continuous training programs that promote community-oriented behaviors. This study emphasizes how crucial leadership development, mentorship and performance reviews are to police organizations. Improved professional development and operational efficacy will result from regular feedback mechanisms, performance evaluations, and tighter cooperation between probationary and senior officers.

5. Conclusion

This study discusses the multifaceted role of police services, which include maintaining public order, ensuring safety, preventing crime, and addressing various societal issues such as traffic accidents and family crises. It highlights the concept of police culture, encompassing values, beliefs, and behaviors among officers. While there is no universally agreed-upon definition, it is often described through terms like "cop culture" and "canteen culture." Cop culture involves mission-oriented, action-driven, and often cynical attitudes among officers, while canteen culture involves storytelling and social bonding within police stations. We also touched on the gender dynamics within policing, noting its traditionally male-dominated nature and the impact of gender norms on organizational dynamics. Performance of individual police officer is continuously affected by the cultural aspects such as artifacts, values, assumptions. Natarajan, (2014) explained that police organizations in developing countries are slow in adopting community-oriented police models. Police culture always includes risk and uncertainty while values and attitudes can shape their working environment. Police officers have a common set of attitudes that help them

in coping with stressors. Furthermore, the stories about the past police heroes, it boosts employee morale and there is a high room for police performance improvements.

Furthermore, the bibliometric patterns show that there is a geographical imbalance in the literature since most studies on police culture come from developed nations. This shows that more research on police culture in emerging and transitional policing regimes is necessary. All facts considered, the study offers a thorough grasp of the theoretical and empirical aspects of police culture and highlights its significance in influencing policing strategies and public confidence in law enforcement organizations.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Expand Research in Developing Countries

The study found that while developing and transitional societies have received less attention, the majority of current research on police culture is focused on developed nations. Future studies should therefore look at police culture in various settings, where institutional frameworks, resource constraints and policing difficulties will vary greatly. These investigations would advance knowledge of the connection between police culture and organizational efficacy in a variety of environments.

6.2 Strengthen Accountability

Future studies should examine how police culture affects public perceptions of professionalism, ethical behavior and legitimacy because community collaboration and public trust are essential components of community-oriented policing. In order to improve police-community relations, empirical research that focuses on community viewpoints would be beneficial.

6.3 Promote Professional Training

According to the research positive police culture is shaped by professionalism, moral behavior and organizational values. In order to enhance officer behavior, community involvement and professional accountability, ethics-based training programs and continuous professional development should be reinforced.

6.4 Develop Performance Monitoring Systems

The results highlight the significance of expert assistance and direction in law enforcement institutions. In order to foster professional development and organizational success, police institutions should establish regular performance monitoring mechanisms and promote mentorship between senior and probationary officers.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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