

Assessment of Work Stress among Police in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Police work stress has never been in sharper attention. Since police work is extremely stressful as they are constantly facing threat. The purpose of this empirical study was to assess the level of work load, work environment, and personal conflict in relationship with work stress among police force. This study was conducted in Punjab province of Pakistan at police department of district Vehari. An analysis was done on 120 police employees using Self-selection sampling technique. Robbins stress model was used as underpinning theory to support the relationships. It was found that 97% employees reported high stress in their police job. The result also showed that work load was the most significant factor to impact work stress. Therefore, to reduce work stress among police different dynamics of three factors should be considered.

KEY WORDS: Work load, Work environment, Personal conflict, Police department, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Like in many countries, the Government of Pakistan has spent large amount of money in order to function the police department [29]. Police are more responsive to change, more answerable to the people and more responsive to criticism than almost any incident in the Pakistan. The idea of policing in peace keeping of a country empowers the operations of police exceptionally demanding and fundamental for the advancement of any country [12]. Pakistan is a country that is distinguished by extremely stressful work situation owing to restricted resources and unnecessary work overload [5]. For last many years, police are being affected by stressful job negatively. Because police force have a great responsibility in this country so their satisfaction is essential for social development. Stress is quite a new trend at workplace of daily life and has become necessary effect on the society [2].

Society has been shifting rapidly but not the police. Sharp and psychologically charged behaviour is not desirable in today's society. Job stress is a regular problem in every employments and it affects on work performance [23]. In most situation cost related to stress affect both the employee and the organization [35-10]. Strict organizational formation, shift job, too much overtime, lack of career advancement, workplace favoritism, pressure to solve issue, and conflicts among colleague can also cause severe police stress [9]. Although different levels of stress are found in more or less all professions, police work has long been termed as a high stress, and critical profession [1-6].

Problem statement

Many issues experienced every day by police. Police work is an exceptionally unsafe activity in which officers can experience rough lawbreakers or need to utilize lethal power over the duration of their work. Besides, the bureaucratic mind of the police departments is an origin of stress and disappointment among officers. It is exceptionally challenging to work as police employees in the province of Punjab where they may expose the higher level of stress. In light of police records, there were many employees whom had dared to commit suicide or asked for transfers to other cities. This study intended to identify the factors that help to cope with work stress in the Punjab police force. By specifying these variables, the researcher trusts that it may enable the police department to recognize the issues with the police that significant counteractive might be made to overcome these difficulties. Hence, this study will try to cover the gap on issues that discussed above, and will look into the police stress at work place taking its work load, work environment and personal conflict consequences into account that have not so far been studied, within perspective of police department employees in Vehari.

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Justification of Research

Government of Pakistan has been taking serious actions to update the police services in Punjab [29]. While doing review, researcher noticed that in many studies police work stress has been integrated into research design with less theoretical justification. These facts provided a further justification to recognize the problems so that pertinent corrective actions may be taken to overwhelm these challenges. Keeping in perspective of the above truth researcher has distinguished that there is gap in Police department of Vehari i.e. the greater part of the employees are over stressed to work in an efficient way.

Significance of the study

The importance of this research is to underline the present situation in regard to the reason for stress among police officials at work that influences their day by day lives. The results ideally have the capacity to shed a few impacts with the stressors among police particularly in Vehari district. Therefore this study contributes knowledge about work stress and helps to develop a model. Thus this study is also significant to many other fields including healthcare and academicians.

LITERATURE

Police Work Stress

Stress among police is a phenomenon that happens when police work excessively over time and experience much worry because of absence of rest. This may cause great health and safety problems in police force such as unnecessary shift works, unhealthy food choice, and lack of exercise. Stress usually shows the feeling when one is stuck with a problem that is incapable to tackle. Therefore, employee starts feeling pressured by that problem. The word stress was first defined by Selye is the force or pressure exerts upon a material object or individual which oppose and attempt to maintain its original state [32]. So stress is a threat or challenge to one's wellbeing [11]. Stress not just influences the physical, mental and monetary balance of an employee yet in addition bosses too. Desired outcomes can't be come out from employees who are fatigued or stress, as they lose their stamina and mind full thinking. Police work stress may also come from the routine activities engaged at work, lack of inter-personal relationships, and daily living circumstances [12]. These experiences compel some of police officers to involve in certain practices that are symptoms of stress for example high consumption of alcoholic drinks, intentional self killing, and marital divorce [33]. Another study reveals that police officers reflected severe depression, anxiety, and stress, while female police officers are greater in number than their counterparts [14]. Broadly, the job of a police officer is very stressful [28].

Work Load and Police Work Stress

A large portion of the policemen remain overworked and have to live away from their families on daily basis. It regularly prompts rude behavior on duty employees. Therefore, workload can be defined as the physical or additional mental requirement related with an assignment to complete it. As organizations have become an important source of stress, and workloads and work related deadlines have increased variously [2]. Therefore, every organization is struggling to achieve its goals according to day to day shifting needs of new information technology world, such as, recruiting efficient employees, making new policies to increase the effectiveness and productivity [18]. Further, police stations are always over loaded with different tasks that increase stress and carry striking change in health system and work role. A study proved that work stress experienced by employees at work in which an individual is troubled with an excessive workload [25]. Workloads are some of the policing stress issues that increase the turnover rates among the police employees [16], and would be reasoning factor of their performance. Thus police stressors within organization can be characterized as undue workload [9], inherent and accepted by police force a result of stress. Based on the above discussion the first hypothesis is:

H₁: Workload has positive relationship with police work stress.

Work Environment and Police Work Stress

Work environment refers to the complex working conditions of a worker that relate to stress [12]. The stressful conditions include for example low lighting, air quality, cleanliness, pollution, acoustic, equipment, working hours, shift work, office politics, motivation, information, productivity, unfavorable or hostile environment, law and order environment, and torture environment fit each worker [31-29]. Workers with this pressure environment conceive stress, nervous tension [24-8]. Some studies have proved that rapidly changing environment caused employees to face physical and mental hazards which may affect of stress [3]. Most of the Police staff has to face very negative work environments. As police officers reported that physical environment is a great source of stress. Therefore, the

work environment has direct impact on their capability to work on assignments that they are asked to do so, and it affects on the health, productivity, and well being of employees [17]. The second hypothesis has been proposed below:

H₂: Inadequate work environment has positive relationship with police work stress.

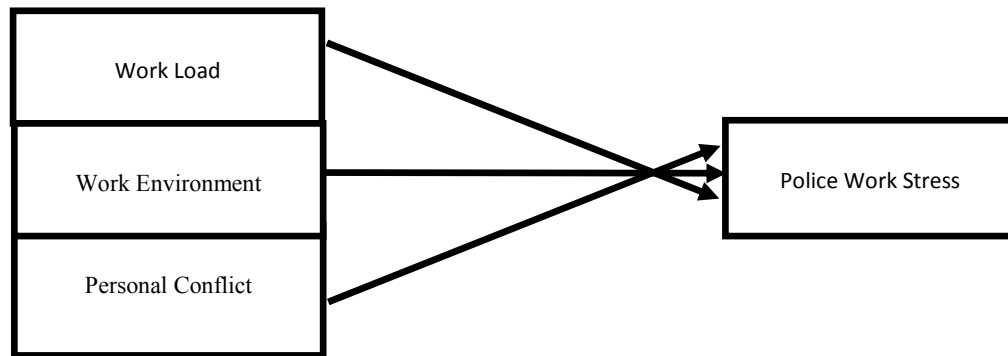
Personal Conflict and Police Work Stress

It is noted that Police officers who are psychologically exhausted tend to cause tensions by their job and react to issues at home or office with anger or anxiety. It has been noted also that seniors habitually treat their assistants in a ragged and abusive style. These outside stressful incidents can crash the quality, performance and overall satisfaction of relationships. In this way they spend less time with each other which is supposed to live with their counterparts. In a study revealed that supervisors have conflicting intention and generally autocratic mind are less considers their workers' wellbeing thus proved less results from subordinates [4]. Many studies have examined that conflicts over role caused a serious police stress [9-26]. They work in conflict situations, face hostile members of the society and deal with the certain political demands of public life [34]. Further, a police officer without support of friend or family is more susceptible to police stressors [19]. From above discussion third hypothesis derived:

H₃: Personal conflict has positive relationship with police work stress.

Robbins (2003) studied that when stress factors (environmental, organizational, and individual) act on specific individuals eventually it leads to different stress results [27]. Therefore underpinning theory of Robbins stress model has been used in this study to support the relationship.

Research Framework



METHODOLOGY

A quantitative technique was applied. Descriptive analysis was used to determine the level of stress among police force. Pearson correlation analysis was used to check the relationship among variables. Multi regression analysis was tested to find the most leading factor affecting work stress among police. Prior permission was taken from higher authority to collect the data. After getting permission a survey technique was used to collect the primary data on 5 point Likert scale with 1 = No Stress, 2 = Low Stress, 3 = Moderate Stress, 4 = High Stress, 5 = Very High Stress. SPSS-22 was used to test the hypothesis. The target population consisted of all police force working in city district Vehari, Punjab. Total 150 questionnaires were distributed and after carefully checking 30 incomplete questionnaires eliminated from the study. Therefore, a sample of 120 police employees was engaged in this study through Self-selection sampling technique. A self-administered questionnaire was used to examine the hypotheses.

Analysis

Table1 Respondents' Profile

| Demographic | Classification | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Sex | Male | 105 | 87.5 |
| | Female | 15 | 12.5 |
| Age | Less than 24 | 22 | 18.34 |
| | 25-45 | 77 | 64.16 |
| | 46 and above | 21 | 17.5 |
| Ranks | SHO | 7 | 5.83 |
| | SI | 16 | 13.33 |
| | ASI | 48 | 40.00 |
| | HC | 32 | 26.67 |
| | Constable | 17 | 14.17 |
| Working Experience | Less than 5 years | 22 | 18.33 |
| | 6 – 21 years | 83 | 69.17 |
| | 22 years and above | 15 | 12.5 |

Table 2 Level of Stress, Descriptive statistics, Reliabilities and Pearson Correlation of Variables

| Variable | Low Stressor | Moderate Stressor | High Stressor | Mean | Standard Deviation | α | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|------|--------------------|----------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| 1. Work Stress | 1 | 3 | 116 | 3.61 | .363 | .810 | 1 | | | |
| 2. Work Load | 1 | 12 | 107 | 3.82 | .422 | .868 | .860** | 1 | | |
| 3. Inadequate Work Environment | 5 | 88 | 27 | 3.69 | .438 | .831 | .679** | .542** | 1 | |
| 4. Personal Conflict | 6 | 71 | 43 | 3.40 | .451 | .879 | .435** | .699** | .795** | 1 |

** Significant Correlation at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

* Significant Correlation at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table 3 Test of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

| Variables | Beta | Sig. |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|
| Work Load | .349 | .000 |
| Inadequate Work Environment | .310 | .003 |
| Personal Conflict | .283 | .000 |
| R ² | .712 | |
| Adjusted R ² | .705 | |
| F value | 3.610 | |
| P value | .000 | |

*p<.05, **p<.01

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 of police personal profiles showed that despite their work engagement they were very responsive to and cooperated in this survey. The male participants were greater 105(87.5%) than female participants 15(12.5%). Further, police age group 25-45 participated a lot with 77(64.16%) because their strength is greater in number. All the police rank officers participated in this study but ASI ratio was highest and total 48(40%) participated followed by HC whose participation ratio was 32 (26.67%). Similarly working experience group between 6-21 years was 83 (69.17%) which is highest in this study. Table 2 shows that 116 (97%) respondents agreed that they are facing high stress and exhausted. Next, work load is the highest source of stressor for respondents 107 (89%). Then, inadequate work environment show the moderate result 88 (73.33%) that police is feeling as compare to other institutions. After that, 71 (59%) police respondents believe that personal conflict has become high for example health, financial, and marriage life issues. Further table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of variables where mean score is highest for work load (3.82) and S.D (.422). Similarly, the lowest mean is (3.40) for personal conflict and S.D (.451). Table 2 shows that reliability (α) of all the variables is more than 0.8 means scales were reliable to measure. The correlation test shows that work load is the high positive correlation stress ($r = .860$, $p < .01$) with work to enhance the stress among police force. The inadequate work environment also has the medium positive correlation ($r = .679$, $p < .01$) with work stress. This means ugly environment like regularly changes in policies, staff shortage, lack of leadership, dishonesty, 24 hrs duty and no job description, and leave restrictions are moderately source to raise the stress level. While, personal conflict also has medium positive correlation ($r = .435$, $p < .01$) with work stress. It becomes difficult to handle conflict in police department if an officer behaves negatively. Due to this they have also

momentous high rate of health issues. Table 3 shows R^2 value .712 shows that 71.2% of variation in work stress among police is explained by all the studied independent variables. It means that there is need of 28.8% more factors to explain work stress among police force. Further table 3 shows the regression values of all the variables are positive. The first regression value of work load ($\beta = .349$) has the strongest contribution to narrate the police stress. The second regression tested that inadequate work environment has ($\beta = .310$) which is the second highest contributor. The third and final regression examined that ($\beta = .283$) has low but significant contributor in work stress. The results show that work load has most of all contribution as it has the highest Beta value. All the variables are significant factors among police force. Thus, all the hypotheses (H_1 , H_2 , and H_3) are significant and accepted in this study.

The results are significant with positive correlation with work stress. The current study examined the work load in an attempt to find their opinion on causes of stress. The significant result is aligned with previous studies of [21-13]. Similarly inadequate work environment is commonly reported by police staff on daily basis and a study concluded these environmental issues lead to work dissatisfaction [20]. There is a serious need to avoid irritating environment since it affects employees' ability and so distress productivity levels[22]. Conflict during job starts when employee desires to get success, and has contrary demands competing against each other. Same is the case in police department where roles conflict among serve to society, law enforcing, buildup morale and meet individual responsibilities act like stressors. The findings show that personal conflict is high among police. The result also has support from previous research where it has significant correlation between conflict and stress [7]. In addition to financial matter also force employees to work extra for family welfare, but also cause of stress and tiredness to them [15].

Recommendation for future research

This research can be stretched out to wide scope on state level. It would likewise be intriguing to think about the variables that impact stress in urban versus provincial territories. Consequently more study should incorporate other organizations and individual factors

Conclusion

The present study addressed an important issue on police work stress and exposed the complexity of the situation. The study of 120 police employees was conducted in district Vehari of Punjab province of Pakistan. Majorities confirmed that workload had high impact on their daily life stress. In addition to working with coworkers, shortages of staff and lack of police rest are the most critical factors that contribute stress in working environment. As training alone cannot transform the behavior so there is need to change the police culture such as employee and boss relationships should be constructive. Therefore, proper stress management, training, reward and promotion opportunities can also contribute significantly to become an ideal workplace for police.

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