

Factors Affecting Police Stress: A Study of Maharashtra Pol,²Dr. Surya Rashmi Rawat, ice

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Abstract: Purpose:

Police officers are vulnerable to experience work stress, whatever the field or function they perform. Stress is police is complex given the multitude of factors that can result in stress for the police personnel. Literature has identified several different stressors for the police. The purpose of this study is to determine the factors that influence work stress on police officers.

Methodology:

It is a quantitative study wherein sing a sample for 402 police personnel from the Ahmednagar and Jalnadistrict of Maharashtra, the key stressors for the police personnel were examined. Respondents were given the modified Police Stress Survey (PSS). Stressors for police were identified by doing factor analysis. These factors and their explanations are then delved into to appreciate the context of the work.

Findings:

After a factor analysis was done it was found that four key categories of stressors that are relevant for the sample are Factor1 with 9 items were measuring organisational Characteristics with variance of 26.49%, Factor 2 with 8 items measuring nature of work in police department with variance of 18.39%, Factor 3 with 3 items measuring public dealing of police while on job with variance of 8.32% and Factor 4 with 3 items measuring personal characteristics of police with variance of 7.82%.

Research Limitations:

The factor analysis is done using Police Stress Survey, if any other stress scale is used, finds may differ and other factors may uncover.

Originality/ Value:

There is dearth of studies on Police. Since this study is on stress with specific reference to Police, it has added to limited literature/ research that is available on Indian Police.

Keywords:Stress; Occupational Stress; Police; Maharashtra Police; Factor Analysis

Introduction:

Stress can be understood as a state that result after an assessment of the perceived difference between the demands placed by the job that a person is involved with and the persons ability to meet the demands of the job (Bakker et al., 2004). Work stress is an unpleasant state of mind and interferes with task performance as well as individual performance specially in conditions where the demands of the job are constant , changes frequent and where job responsibilities are high (Shimazu& Schaufeli, 2009).

Research has established that the police profession is extremely stress prone (Ranta, 2009). Police experience stress that comes from physical, psychological, social, economicand political sources (Ashifa, 2019). Apart from the work-related stresses like inadequate salary, lack of adequate facilities , excessive workload, top work environment, danger to life while on duty, work schedule among many others(Ellison, 2004). So, the police experience stress weather in the field or off the field on account of their function in society. Police stress may be triggered by several different factors some of which may be work related, task related, family related or also financial factors(Violanti et al., 2017). The job of the police is unique and policepersonal often work up to 24 hours which is more than the standard 8 working hours in other professions (frank et al., 2017). Researchers have also shown that individuals who work the night shift have a tendency to experience higher work stress then those who work the day shift(Violanti et al., 2017). The same is applicable to police officers also. From the family perspective police personnel are judged harshly on account of their lack of timefor the family (Kumar 2017). Family members often believe that police personnel are not able to find the time for family activities.

Also in terms of salary, that is debate on the adequacy of coolie salary given the risk involved in their job and the threat to their mental and physical health(Wijayanti&Fauzi, 2020).

Financial stress experienced by police personnel can often result in violation of the police code of ethics (Vicente et al., 2020). The other consequences of the stress experienced by police personnel includes alcoholism, health issues, higher suicide rate than average, etc. Apart from this in a profession like police which is critical to the functioning of society, stress among the personnel can have repercussions not just for the police organization but also for the society at large (Gershon et al., 2009). Stressed personnel may resort to excessive use of force when dealing with the public and thus not adequately fulfil their duty of protecting the public. Given the importance of the police work and the nature of the work it is important for researchers to identify the sources of stress for the police. It is expected that the sources of stress for police in different locations what differ on account of minor differences in the nature of the work, individual differences among the police personnel, current law and order situation in the jurisdiction from where the sample is collected (Anshel, 2020).

The present study is an attempt to understand the sources of stress among police personnel in the Ahmednagar & Jalna district and to identify the difference results for these personnel. Based on this some recommendations are made on what can be done to better help the police personnel manage their stress.

Literature Review:

There are several reasons why an individual may experience stress on account of his/her job. One of the reasons for stress could be when the pressures and responsibilities of the job are not aligned with the knowledge skills or expectations of an individual thereby creating a situation where there is an inability to cope with the job demands. Chronic exposure to stress can lead to several negative outcomes like burnout, increased accidents add the workplace, absenteeism, increased cost for the organization. Arshadi and Damiri (2013) reported a positive relationship between increase stress and turnover intention. Apart from the impact on the organization continuous exposure to stress also has a negative impact on the individual's health and also leads to medical conditions like increase blood pressure, insomnia, severe headaches, heart palpitations and in extreme cases also heart attacks (Abdollahi, 2002). The work of the police personnel is challenging, hard and complex. This is one of the reasons why the police work is rife with stress(Violanti, 2004).

The police personnel deal with several consequences of the stress that results from their work. The National Crime Records Bureau (2016) reported an increase in the suicidal cases among police personnel in India for numerous known and unknown reasons. Police personnel also report more cases of there was, substance abuse, job dissatisfaction , lower moral, stomach disorders, heart and blood pressure related diseases, cynicism, burnout, suicide as compared to other professions (Selokar et al., 2011). This data is not surprising given the inherent dangers involved in police work and the challenges faced by police personnel in the course of their work (Schaible&Gecas, 2010).In the course of their work it is very common for police personnel to witness violence, death of a fellow officer in the line of duty, death of victims and criminals, dealing with dead bodies from accidents, witnessing community and domestic violence, dealing with cases of child violence and abuse.given the incidence that police deals with stress can be seen as a by-product of police work (Morash, Haarr, &Kwak, 2006).A cross sectional study among police personnel in Gadchiroli city, Maharashtra reported that a large number of police personnel deal with physical and mental ailments as well as substance abuse on account of work related stress (Lanjewar et al., 2018).

In general, the police is responsible for maintaining law and order India jurisdiction and they are also interested with the responsibility of protecting the civil rights of the citizen and upholding the dignity of all the citizens Of India (Ragesh et al., 2017). The police is also responsible for implementation of general and special laws that fall within its purview. The police also deal with issues like public nuisance, gambling, among others to ensure decent conduct of all the members of society. apart from this the police also have a social responsibility to take care of all the citizens and help them when needed. There is no other machinery available with the government that has similar powers, infrastructure, and potential as the police force. The Indian Penal Code and the prevention of corruption act also make the police responsible for keeping a watchful eye on public servants to ensure that they discharge their duties well (Bayley, 1983) . The police force has heavy responsibility on their shoulders. and failure of the police force to discharge any of their responsibilities can have severe consequences for society at large (Saya, & Venkata, 2014). Thus, the job demands and the role of the police force are unique and a stressed police force can have severe consequences for the society (Frank et al., 2017). So, despite current research in the area there is need for more research that examines the factors that cause stress for the police personnel.

Research on police stress has shown that understanding stress for law enforcement is extremely complex because there are a number of factors that cause stress and therefore this track is difficult to measure. Given that

police stress results from several different factors numerous researchers have categorised the factors causing police stress to better understand police stress. One of the first researchers to recognize that police stress can be categorised in 2 different types was Symonds (1970). He categorised the stressors into 2 categories (i) occupation stressors - the stress due to the nature of the work done by the police and (ii) organizational stressors - stress that results from the organization of the police force.

In early studies on police stress Spielberger et al. (1981) found that apart from the stressors of physical and psychological danger associated with the work police officers also reported stress to arrive from administrative and professional pressure as well as a lack of support. It was also noted by Storch and Panzarella (1996) that police officers do not usually mention danger associated with the work, exposure to violence in the course of work as a factor that causes stress unless they are specifically asked about these things and the stress that results from it. They explain that the reason for it could be that not all police officers have similar exposure to the physical dangers of police work or the violence. It had also been noted by Cullen et al., (1985) that sometimes police officers tend to describe their job in more dangerous terms than the reality.

In the Indian context there have been number of studies that have examined the causes of stress among police personnel. Mathur (1995) in his study reported that The Indian police experienced stress on account of who are working conditions, inadequate equipment to deal with criminals, involvement in a number of anti terrorist operations, fear of severe injury or being killed in the line of duty, fear of having to shoot someone in the line of duty, dealing with an irate public, lack of recognition and job satisfaction and issues arising from police hierarchy (as cited in Shaikh & Kapadi, 2014). Ragesh et al. (2017) in a cross sectional survey among police personnel in the city of Calicut reported that operational stress was more significant among the younger officers and the lower ranked officials as well as among female police personnel as compared to their male counterparts. They explain that societal pressure experienced by women to take on multiple roles India personal as well as professional life could be the reason why operational stress was more in female police personnel. Suresh et al., (2013) in their study reported that organizational stressors were the main cause of stress for the police. This included not being able to take time off work, inability to spend time with family, political pressure from outsiders, inadequate salary, and facilities, etc. And these often resulted in the personal feeling symptoms of anxiety, burnout and also depression (as cited in Acquadro Maran et al., 2018).

Given the differences in the results over the years and the differences that arise from the regional and cultural context of the police work. There is need for research to examine the differences in the sources of police stress to account for the difference in exposure to different stressors.

Research Methodology:

In this study the respondents were 402 police personnel from the Ahmednagar & Jalna district of Maharashtra. These included police officers at the police station level. Once the respondents gave their consent they were given the modified Police Stress Survey (PSS). The abridged version of the questionnaire with 28 questions was used in this study. In this survey the questions/statements measure the intensity and the frequency of occurrence of specific stressors.

Results and Discussion:

To know the types of stress affecting on police force a Principal Component analysis with varimax rotation was used to check the component of stress or factors existing in police organisation. Twenty-eight stress questions were asked from police employee to know the types of stress existing in system. Table-1 indicate that the Bartlett test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure sample adequacy, the KMO value is 0.878, which is higher than expected value 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974) and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($P < 0.05$) suggesting that sample size is adequate to administrate the exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

According to Hair, Anderson, Black and Babin (2006) a factor should have minimum of two items and each item's factor loading should be equal or greater than 0.5 for significance study. Any item that failed to load on a single factor at 0.5 or less or cross loaded with other factors are dropped from the study.

Table-1

| KMO and Bartlett's Test | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .878 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 3369.694 |
| | df | 276 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

The result of factors analysis test is given Table-2. Varimax rotation was used to know the items grouped in different factors. All factors were identified based on eigen value. If eigen value of group items is greater than or equal to one are considered as one factor (Hair et al 1998). As per table all items were grouped into four factors except the items are:

Stress7 (Job over loaded), stress 16(Put-downs and mistreatment of officers in court) were less than the Hair suggested value (0.5).

Stress 13,14 and 15 were explaining something different factors it was expected to belong Organisation Characteristics.

| Rotated Component Matrix ^a | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|-------------|---------------------|
| | Component | | | | Eigen Value | Cronbach's α |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | | |
| Stress20 | .870 | | | | 6.39 | 0.925 |
| Stress18 | .864 | | | | | |
| Stress19 | .839 | | | | | |
| Stress17 | .831 | | | | | |
| Stress21 | .826 | | | | | |
| Stress22 | .801 | | | | | |
| Stress23 | .732 | | | | | |
| Stress24 | .698 | | | | | |
| Stress25 | .675 | | | | | |
| Stress4 | | .791 | | | 4.73 | 0.879 |
| Stress2 | | .777 | | | | |
| Stress3 | | .765 | | | | |
| Stress5 | | .754 | | | | |
| Stress1 | | .724 | | | | |
| Stress6 | | .714 | | | | |
| Stress8 | | .673 | | | | |
| Stress9 | | .638 | | | | |
| Stress26 | | | .847 | | 1.912 | 0.749 |
| Stress28 | | | .834 | | | |
| Stress27 | | | .774 | | | |
| Stress11 | | | | .845 | 1.615 | 0.77 |
| Stress10 | | | | .776 | | |
| Stress12 | | | | .738 | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Factor 1 Contained 9 items were measuring **organisational Characteristics** with variance of 26.49%.

Factor 2 had 8 items measuring **nature of work in police department** with variance of 18.39%.

Factor 3 had 3 items measuring **public dealing** of police while on job with variance of 8.32%

Factor 4 had 3 items measuring **personal characteristics** of police with variance of 7.82%.

To check the reliability of each factor, Cronbach's alpha was used. It is often used to measure the reliability and internal consistency in a Likert type scale. According to Hair (2006), the value of Cronbach's alpha 0.70 and above is sufficient. As table-2, indicates that all the factors have an alpha value 0.749 and above, which indicate that their reliability is satisfactory.

Organizational characteristics:

For the police personnel the organizational structure is defined in terms of its hierarchy decision making (Bano&Talib, 2017). Several police personnel feel stress on account of the rigid hierarchy of the police force. Other organizational characteristics like frequent transfers, inability to take me when required unequal distribution of work, insufficient employees, slow promotions as well as fear of suspension are some of the factors that cause stress to police personnel.

On account of the nature of the police work the institutional is very hierarchical, bureaucratic and frequently also has an impersonation culture which can be termed as autocratic (Singh, 2017). Having to deal with the criminal justice system and its technicalities can cause extreme frustration and helplessness in the police specially in the case when judiciary is perceived as being lenient and if the delay in justice is avoidable.

Nature of work:

One of the characteristics police work is the inherit danger in the job. Given the nature of the work it is common for police personnel to encounter violent situations in the field or sometimes even in the police station (Rajeswari, &Chalam, 2018). There is a constant concern about the perceived threat and the safety of the police. Another aspect is the authoritarian nature of their work. On account of the nature of the work the police are required to deal with situations with authority. Especially when dealing with the public they need to look and act like figures of authority and they are therefore also equipped with weapons, devices for communication, hand cuffs and uniform. The police are also often empowered and trained to deal with conflicts or disputed situations using their discretion by giving the appropriate orders, bringing the situation under control, handling the rights of the citizens in question, carrying out searches and conducting arrest if necessary. Sometimes the responsibilities associated with the work and the discretionary powers the police are expected to use can be a source of stress for the police. the nature of the work requires a policeman to frequently interact with people in the community, these people often carry a different set of expectations and failing to meet these expectations the policeman are often termed as unempathetic (Roz&Raval, 2017). This is also a source of stress for the police. On account of the nature of the work the police also need to work in shifts and are often unable to take days off for personal reasons. Does work has an impact on the personal life of the policeman and they are often unable to spend enough time with their families. All this causes considerable stress to the police personnel.

Public dealing:

people often have a negative impression about the police personnel particularly when the police iron uniform. This causes considerable stress to the police personnel as they are required to deal with the public very frequently. In case of conflicts and disputes the public often results police intervention and therefore does not cooperate with the police sometimes open the showing contempt for police action and even acting violently. So, the police can sometimes feel isolation from the public and therefore expect more support from their family and colleagues. Similar results have also been reported by Kumar and Kamalanathan(2019) who found that a key source of stress for the police is their relationship with society which is inclusive of the public as well as the media. Criticism and lack of support from the media and the public often creates disturbances in the relationship between the police and the community.

Personal Characteristics:

Personal characteristics like the temperaments of the police personnel, their dispositions as well as their personality traits can influence the extent to which they experience stress. Type a personality police personnel and personal with less self efficacy can experience significantly more stress than their counterparts (Kumar, 2020; Onkari and Itagi, 2018). Also police officers who have a negative affect are more likely to experience more stress.

Conclusion:

It is difficult to measure the stress experienced why police personal since it cannot be attributed to a single factor. In a sense police stress with complex in its structure and there are a number of different factors that contribute differentially to the stress experienced by police personnel. Most often the stressors can be categorised into intrapersonal, interpersonal, job related, family related. stress when neglected can lead to a number of physical and mental health challenges for the police personnel . In some cases it can also adversely affect their relationship with their family. A number of interventions can help the police personnel manage the stress. The police can be encouraged to have a positive attitude and to use meditation to cope with the stress of the work. Interventions like mindfulness-based stress management training, increasing self-awareness , motivational programs, public outreach programs can all help the police personnel to better manage their stress. based on the findings from this study it can be inferred that there are certain factors like organizational and personal characteristics, nature of the work and public dealing that caused stress to the police personnel. These findings can be useful in identifying the key stressors that are relevant for police personnel in Maharashtra state. Interventions can be planned by the organization to help reduce and manage the stress so that the police can more efficiently perform their duty toward society.

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