

Occupational stress and work-family conflict among police constables

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ABSTRACT

Occupational stress can be defined as the physiological and emotional responses that occur when workers perceive an imbalance between their work demands and their capability and resources to meet these demands. Police plays an important role in maintaining laws, rules and regulation in the society. In doing so, their nature of duty put them in different kind of mental health issues like stress and anxiety. The data was collected from 300 police constables (an equal number of male and female) in the age range of 25 to 40 years utilizing random sampling technique. Occupational Stress Index (Srivastava and Singh, 1981) and Work-Family Conflict Scale developed by (Carlson, Kacmar and Williams, 2000) were administered to collect the data. Results were obtained by applying t-test which revealed that male and female police constables are significantly differs on Occupational Stress. Female police constables were found to be high on occupational stress than male police constables whereas no significant difference were observed on Work family conflict and its variables.

Keywords: *Occupational Stress, Police, Work-Family Conflict*

Crime and violence rate are increasing gradually. Burden on law enforcement agencies are also increasing. Police service is one of among the law enforcement agencies which directly or indirectly have to face and tackle minor to major crime related cases or incidence. Police personnel have to perform versatile role and responsibility in order to maintain laws and order in the society. In doing so, their nature of duty put them in different kind of mental health issues like stress, anxiety, depression etc.

The Roles of the Police personnel is very critical in nature, several studies have been conducted in this regard, in a study, Walker and Katz (2000) noted that, the role of police in any particular society is not defined clearly. Police officers are asked to provide a variety of tasks, many of which include crime prevention, order maintenance and law enforcement. There is also the problem of role conflict amongst police officers, politicians and citizens as reported by the author. According to Agolla (2009), the work of police is to protect life and property. In order to do so, they face lot of challenges such as fighting and prevention of crime. These roles and duties exposes police officers to work in different situations that

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require different physical and mental ability to deal with those circumstances firmly and effectively (Rollinson, 2005 and Morash et al., 2006).

Sehgal et al. (2006) revealed that women join the police service due to the pressure from women's rights activist and the courts. It was reported further that, women's work in police is generally restricted to cases involving women and children, and to clerical tasks. Usually, women are assigned work relating to victims of sexual crimes, juvenile and female offenders, missing persons and abused children. According to Muhammad and Shukla (2007), the main duties performed by the Indian women police are: helping investigation team in the cases in which child and women involved, interrogation and interview of child/juvenile and women suspects, offenders and eyewitness. Also, women police assist local police in tracing missing women and children. They work as a security guard at airport, railway station and bus stands.

Above cited findings reveal that, the police constable's roles and responsibilities are so versatile and challenging that require high level of coping skills and mental health so that they can feel comfortable and serve the society in better way.

Differences in gender role and responsibility at social and family level reflect ability to balance between social/family and occupational roles and responsibilities. As the gender differences plays important role in performing one's task in the family and at the services. Gender difference also plays equally important role in determining one's ways of coping skills from psychological distress and mental health. On the basis of the above explanation the aims of the study were formulated which is presented below.

Work-Family Conflict

Work-family conflict has been defined as —a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by the virtue of participation in the family (work) role (Greenhaus&Beutell,1985a).

Three forms of work-family conflict have been identified in the literature: (a) Time-based conflict, (b) Strain-based conflict, and (c) Behavior-based conflict. Time based conflict may occur when time devoted to one role makes it difficult to participate in another role. Strain-based conflict suggests that strain experienced in one role intrudes into and interferes with participation in another role. Behavior based conflict occurs when specific behaviors required in one role are incompatible with behavioral expectation in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985b).

In a scientific study, Parkinson (2010) reported that workplace stress has become a major problem in today's society. A quarter of employees view their job as the major stress in their lives. Several factors contribute to workplace stress, one of them being longer working hours. She also said that police officers reported more suicidal thoughts than the general population. Policing is an inherently stressful job where officers constantly face danger, threat of death, violence and very high demands. On same line, Buker and Wiecko (2007) conducted a survey research on civilian officers, police officers, and mid-level supervisors (a total number of 811 respondents) working for the Turkish National Police Organization. They found that the organizational factors were the most stressful ones among other causes of stress. Moreover, there were differences in some stressors depending on the size and structure of the department. Further, Mc Carty, Zhao and Garland (2007) showed that

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stressors of police job were common to the work of policing. Stress has been known to have both psychological and physical effects on a person's health. This may result in depersonalization and withdrawals where an individual leads a solitude lifestyle. Policing job is vital to the society and the well-being of the police officers should be of great concern to the society at large. Another study, Saha, Sahu, Paul and Ghosh (2014) conducted a study to evaluate the psycho-physiological characteristics and occupational stress of 50 police officers who had been teaching in police and a huge experience of stress in police stations. It was found that high ratings were found for stressors which were listed as contact with criminals, lack of a modern system, boring daily duty, lack of resources etc. Study also revealed that many stressors were correlated to each other. Results also showed that lack of modern system and negative criticisms to police were responsible for heavy work load and stress. Police work not only affects officers; it also affects families, loved ones and friends. Studies of stress in the immediate families of male police officers reveal that between 10 to 20 percent male police wives are dissatisfied with their husband's jobs and would like to see their husband leave the police departments. In addition, rotation shift work interferences with planning and celebrating holidays and important family events such as birthdays and anniversaries (Dempsey, 2005). The American Psychological Association identified a number of job-related issues that contribute to family dysfunction in police families: Family disruption due to rotating shifts, Unpredictable work environment, Job related personal change and family relations, Community expectations and demands, Intrusion in the family life (Nagarajamurthy, 2008). In a study, Kaur and Gupta (2016) conducted a study on police personnel in Punjab, India. The study included all the police personnel working within the police stations of Doaba region, Punjab. Data collected from the survey of 653 police personnel including males and females of Non-Gazetted Officers (NGOs) (Inspectors, Sub Inspectors and Asstt. Sub. Inspectors and Other Ranks (ORs) (Head Constables and Constables), out of which 79.4% were the married respondents with 80.2% of them had children in the survey. The total score from each respondent was calculated and used as an indicator of family support, rather than a precise measurement tool. Socio-demographic information like age, sex, working hours, marital status, type of family and education was collected. The outcome variable assessed was the family support among police personnel. Recent study by, Qureshi et al., (2019) found that Policing is a stressful occupation that may give rise to work-family conflict (WFC). WFC arises when the work domain encroaches into the family domain, or vice versa, causing officers to become less attached to their job and the police organization. Using survey data collected from a sample of police officers in India, they examined the relationship between four dimensions of WFC (time-based, strain-based, behavior-based, and family-based WFC) and two dimensions of organizational commitment (continuance and affective). Family-based WFC was found to reduce continuance commitment, while strain-based WFC reduced affective commitment. Time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based WFC increased continuance commitment. An et al., (2020) also examined the effects of work-family conflict, job stress, and job satisfaction on seafarer performance. Data were collected from merchant ship seafarers in the Yangshan Port, Shanghai, China ($n = 337$). After using hierarchical regression analysis results revealed that work-family conflict and job stress negatively affect seafarer self-reported performance, while job satisfaction positively influences seafarer job performance. Findings also show that job satisfaction plays a moderating role in the relationships between work-family conflict, job stress and seafarer performance. Overall results show that work-family conflict, job stress and job satisfaction manifested are significant predictors for seafarer performance.

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The inconsistencies in the research findings have been observed which suggest that there is significant gender difference in occupational stress. Mix findings have also been reported in the existing literature. Therefore, the present study was formulated to understand gender difference in occupational stress and work family conflict in police constables of Union Capital territory Chandigarh. Aim of the study is to understand how male and female police constables of Union Capital Territory Chandigarh different from each other in terms of Occupational Stress and Work Family Conflict. Keeping this aim in mind the following mentioned objective was framed.

Objective

- To study gender differences in Occupational Stress and Work Family Conflict among police constables.

Hypothesis

1. Female police constables were expected higher on Occupational Stress and its dimensions than male police Constables.
2. Male police Constables were expected higher on Work Family Conflict than Female police Constables.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is designed to explore gender difference in Occupational Stress and Work Family Conflict among Chandigarh police constable. Therefore, the data is collected keeping in mind the objective of the study. In the subsequent section's necessary information about sample, tools used and the procedure employed for obtaining the relevant information has been presented.

Sample

The data was collected from 300 police constables (an equal number of male and female) serving in different police departments of Chandigarh such as Police stations, traffic departments and Police Control room department, in the age range of 25 to 40 years utilizing random sampling technique. Only married constables were selected. And also, only those constables were selected who had been working from at least last 3 years. Educational qualification of the individuals participated in the study was restricted to minimum 10th to graduation.

Tools

Occupational Stress Index (OSI) (Srivastava & Singh, 1981): In the present study, the Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava and Singh (1984) has been used. This scale consists of 46 items out of these 28 are true keyed and rest of 18 are false keyed. The subject's task was to assess on a five-point scale for each item, the extent to which a particular feature/characteristic was present in his/her job situation. Based on the response of the subject on different type of items in the various sub scales of Occupational Stress Index, their values were found. The total value using different patterns of scoring for true and false keyed items yielded the total stress score. The reliability index ascertained by split-half (odd-even) method and Cronbach's alpha was found to be .93 and .90 respectively. The reliability indices of the 12 sub scales were computed by the (split half) method which varies from 0.45 to 0.84 (Srivastava & Singh, 1984). The scale has been successfully used in India by many researches viz Bhatia (1993), Savneet (2012) and Thakur (2015).

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Work-Family Conflict Scale (Carlson, Kacmar & Williams, 2000): Work–family conflict has been defined as “a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Three forms of work–family conflict have been identified in the literature: (a) Time-based conflict, (b) Strain-based conflict and (c) Behavior-based conflict. Time-based conflict may occur when time devoted to one role makes it difficult to participate in another role, strain- based conflict suggests that strain experienced in one role intrudes into and interferes with participation in another role and behavior-based conflict occurs when specific behaviours required in one role are incompatible with behavioral expectation in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). In 1991, Gutek, Searle and Klepa (1991) argued that each of these three forms of work–family conflict has two directions: (a) Conflict due to work interfering with family (WIF) and (b) Conflict due to family interfering with work (FIW). When these three forms and two directions are combined six dimensions of work–family conflict result: (1) Time-based Work interference with Family, (2) Time-based Family interference with Work, (3) Strain-based Work interference with Family, (4) Strain-based Family interference with Work, (5) Behavior-based Work interference with Family and (6) Behavior-based Family interference with Work.

Work- Family Conflict scale is an 18-item scale developed by Carlson, Kacmar and Williams (2000) with 3 items measuring each of the 6 dimensions. The responses are to be given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly disagree to (5) Strongly agree. The internal consistency of each of the six dimensions was estimated with coefficient alpha. The reliabilities exceeded the conventional level of acceptance of .70. The values were as follows: Time-based WIF (.87); Time-based FIW (.79); Strain-based WIF (.85); Strain-based FIW (.87); Behavior-based WIF (.78); Behavior-based FIW (.85) (Carlson, Kacmar & Williams, 2000). This scale has been used in India by Rajadhyaksha and Velgach (2009), Ramasundaram and Ramasundaram (2011) and Thakur (2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The t-test was applied to study the gender differences on Occupational Stress and Work Family Conflict among police constables of Union Capital Territory Chandigarh. The results obtained by applying t-test on the data collected from male and female police constables on the variables of Occupational Stress and Work Family Conflict is presented below in the Table-1.

Table-1 Mean, SD, on the variable of Occupational Stress & Work Family Conflict

Sr. No.	Variables	Male Police Constables (n=150)		Female Police Constables (n=150)		t-ratios
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Variables of Occupational Stress						
1.	Role Overload	13.90	2.84	25.25	2.45	37.01**
2.	Role Ambiguity	10.53	2.10	17.01	1.40	31.47**
3.	Role Conflict	11.43	2.48	21.44	1.57	41.79**
4.	Unreasonable group and Political Pressure	9.91	1.93	16.47	1.69	31.30**
5.	Responsibility for Persons	8.43	1.95	13.15	1.24	24.99**
6.	Under participation	8.75	2.09	16.11	2.01	31.44**
7.	Powerlessness	8.77	2.50	13.58	9.00	6.30**

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Sr. No.	Variables	Male Police Constables (n=150)		Female Police Constables (n=150)		t-ratios
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Variables of Occupational Stress						
8.	Poor Peer Relations	9.55	1.91	17.35	12.31	7.67**
9.	Intrinsic Impoverishment	9.65	1.94	17.04	12.32	7.26**
10.	Low Status	8.16	2.05	12.44	1.33	21.46**
11.	Strenuous Working Conditions	8.47	2.53	16.51	1.58	32.95**
12.	Unprofitability	5.83	1.52	7.50	1.33	10.10**
	Total Occupational Stress	133.35	12.08	190.36	10.60	58.68**
Variables of Work Family Conflict						
1.	Time- based Work Interference with Family	12.85	1.08	12.73	1.13	0.94
2.	Time- based Family interference with Work	13.43	1.08	13.38	1.13	0.42
3.	Strain- based Work Interference with Family	13.09	1.09	13.05	1.10	0.31
4.	Strain- based Family interference with Work	13.34	1.38	13.34	1.42	0.21
5.	Behaviour- based Work Interference with Family	13.20	1.30	13.17	1.34	0.22
6.	Behaviour- based Family interference with Work	13.53	1.13	13.48	1.16	0.35
	Total Work Family conflict	79.46	3.82	79.14	6.97	0.71

*t-value significant at 0.05 level=1.97 **t-value significant at 0.01 level=2.60

All the variables of Occupational Stress come out to be significant. Those variables are: Female Police Constables scored higher than Male Police Constables on Role Overload $t=37.01$, ($p<.01$); Role Ambiguity $t= 31.47$, ($p<.01$); Role Conflict $t= 41.79$, ($p<.01$); Unreasonable group and Political Pressure $t=31.30$, ($p<.01$); Responsibility for Persons $t= 24.99$, ($p<.01$); Under participation $t= 31.44$, ($p<.01$); Powerlessness $t= 6.30$, ($p<.01$); Poor Peer Relations $t=7.67$, ($p<.01$); Intrinsic Impoverishment $t= 7.26$, ($p<.01$); Low Status $t=21.46$, ($p<.01$); Strenuous working Conditions $t=32.95$, ($p<.01$); Unprofitability $t=10.10$, ($p<.01$) and Total Occupational Stress $t=58.68$, ($p<.01$).

A glance at t-ratios Table-1 comparing Male and Female Police Constables revealed that Female Police Constables scored higher than Male Police Constables on Total Occupational Stress and its Dimensions Viz., Role Overload, Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, Unreasonable group and Political Pressure, Responsibility for Persons, Under participation, Powerlessness, Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low Status, Strenuous, Working Conditions and Unprofitability.

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A glance at t-ratios Table comparing Male and Female Police Constables revealed that there emerged no significant gender difference on Work Family Conflict and its dimensions. Hence, hypothesis 1 related to the Female police constables were expected higher on Occupational Stress and its dimensions than male police Constables is accepted here. Review of earlier studies also revealed that similar trends regarding occupational stress. According to Lipp (2009), greater proportion of females than males reported to have stress. Brown and Fielding (1993) reported that women uniformed officers reported higher levels of associated self-perceived stress than their male counterparts. However, the opposite findings have also been reported which reveals that females experienced crime related stressors less intensively and frequently than their male counterparts.

Hence hypothesis 2 regarding the Male police Constables were expected higher on Work Family Conflict than Female police Constables is accepted here. Finding of the current Study match with the earlier finding, Bazana and Dodd (2013) examined the relationship between work family conflict and stress among police officers. The study was undertaken at the South African police service station in Alice and was based on a sample size of 101 police officers. They reported a positive relationship between work family conflict and work stress. Similarly, Armstrong, Atkin-Plunk and Wells (2015) conducted a study to evaluate work-family conflict in relation to job stress and job satisfaction on a sample size of 441 correctional officers in southern state. It was found that strain and behavior-based work-family conflict were significantly related to job stress and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Female police constables scored higher than Male police constables on all the variables of Occupational Stress and its dimensions viz... This result reveals that male police constables face less occupational stress as compare to female police constables and also, male police constables were found to have lower scores on all the twelve variables of occupational stress than female police constable. Over all, the finding of the study reveals that male police constables have better stress management than female police constables.

This study specifically will be helpful for the professional serving with police department for the purpose of police personnel's training and counseling.

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Conflict of Interest

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