
STRESS ON WORK LIFE BALANCE AND COPING STRATEGIES IN POLICE PERSONNEL

Article Particulars

Received: 24.7.2017

Accepted: 26.7.2017

Published: 28.7.2017

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Abstract

Police work is often considered to be a highly stressful profession. Not only are police personnel frequently showing to the most violent, antisocial, and mistrustful elements of society, they are also expected to exercise prudence under critical circumstances. The experience of occupational stress has long been implicated in the development of negative outcome for the individual employee and the employing organization. In spite of the overabundance of literature on the general relationship between police work and job-related stress, there is a scarceness of empirical evidence pertaining to the study of relationship between stress, work-life balance and coping strategies and how stress, work-life balance, coping strategies predict job. The present research aims at investigating whether stress, work-life balance, and coping strategies in police personnel. The data collected with the help of the actions for different variables were subjected to two types of analysis, namely, analysis of variance and stepwise multiple regression analysis. For the purpose of the former type of study, the demographic variables were categorized into groups. Work-Life balance, Operational Stress, and Destructive Coping strategies among police personnel. For the male police personnel Work-Life balance, Operational Stress, and Constructive coping significantly. Organizational Stress significantly predicted Job Satisfaction among female police personnel. Results of ANOVA were insignificant for all the variables except the result of sex on organizational stress and experience category on operational stress. This study has implication for managing stress in police personnel.

Key Words: Work-Life Balance, Stress, Coping Strategies.

Introduction about the Study

Social Image of Police Officers

Before this work, I was like any other standard citizen - a believer that the police officers have a job to do whilst protecting our community, yet at the same time could

come across as being aggressive and unreasonable when dealing with the public. I never stopped to think about how they feel or the toll it must take on them when they must deal with the human negativity day after day. To me, police officers were nameless and faceless people separated from the rest of society, an idea based primarily on the job requirements -- to uphold the laws of the land. They are agents for the government, the enforcers of the laws, and supporters of what our society deems as appropriate behavior -- even if it contradicts what an individual officer believes.

In the media, it seemed that police officers were seldom praised, but rather criticized or harassed for overstepping civil rights boundaries. News reports are quick to accuse police officers for brutality when in fact police departments have in place set policies and procedures to ensure officer safety, even if it means physically restraining an unruly citizen. With such varying degrees of police conduct one day officers are publicized heroes, while on the next, portrayed as racist, brutal, and authoritarian. The lack of consistent public support appears to actually add to the stress of being a police officer because there is a negative and disrespectful image of law.

Stress

The term stress appears regularly in our every day discourse. It is also a leading topic of study in psychology. Stress plays a vital role in everyone lives. Nobody and we can't escape from stress, some stress also good for our success. For example, the physical stress of "working out" improves our cardiovascular system, and feeling pressure that causes us to study harder for an exam can improve our score. Police men and women role is often considered to be a highly stressful in nature. Not only are police officers frequently exposed to the most violent, antisocial and mistrustful elements of society, they are also expected to exercise discretion under critical circumstances(Crank &Caldero,1991; Violanti & Aron,1994). Researchers have long argued that police officers' job performance can be affected deleteriously when officers experience chronic stress (McGreedy,1974; Goodman 1990).

Stressors in Police Work Fall into Four Categories

1. Stresses inherent in police work.
2. Stresses arising internally from police department practices and policies.
3. External stresses stemming from the criminal justice system and the society at large.
4. Internal stresses confronting individual officers.

Sources of stress

1. Stress from the work environment
2. Availability of peer support and trust
3. Bureaucratic characteristics of police organization
4. Social and family influence
5. Accessibility of coping mechanism

Work-Life Balance

As we move in the 21st century, both work and life are changing along multiple dimensions. Today's workforce brings expectations that create a demand for job in which people can succeed in all aspects of their lives. The pressures of work have intensified in recent decades. Factors such as the advance in information technology and information load, the need of speed for response, the importance attached to quality of customer service and its implication for constant availability and pace of change with its resultant upheavals and adjustment, all demand our time and can be sources of pressure. Employees can be adversely affected both physically and emotionally resulting in increased health care cost, higher divorce rates, and employees' burnout.

Conceptualizing 'Work-Life Balance'

Work life balance will provide a review of the main concepts arise in the research attempts at conceptualizing.

The term "work-life balance" is a contested term, with many alternatives suggested, such as "work-life integration", "work- life interface", "work-life mosaic", "work-life reconciliation" or "work-life coordination. (McPherson, 2007). While many argue with the use of the term work-life balance, mainly on the basis that it may be interpreted as work not being a part of life, or that balance is not the aim of some but rather integration, arguing that the two cannot be compartmentalized and separated, others dislike the term integration as they want separation and boundaries between their work life and the rest of their life. While the terminology is debated by academics, work-life balance is the terminology in popular usage in both social and human resource management literature and the popular media.

Difficulties in Life and the Way of Working

The topic of work-life balance is based on a concern about the negative impact, symbolized by long working hours, of the workload on life.

Work/Life Theories

1. Work/life border theory (Clark, 2000; Singh, 2002)
2. Work/life expansion theory (Barnett, 2001)
3. Theory of work-family enrichment (Greenhaus, 2006)
4. Balanced work/life: a matter of balance (Limoges, 2003).

Coping Strategies

Behavioral and cognitive coping strategies represent the efforts; people spend in order to deal with stressful encounters (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping has been conceived in different ways (Livneh, Antonak & Gerhardt, 2000):

1. Both as personality trait and situation ally determined response;
2. A dynamic process and a static construct;
3. A strategy, that is mature, adaptive and flexible, but also a reaction, that is neurotic, maladaptive and rigid;

4. A global, generally dichotomous concept, but also an intricate, hierarchically structured, multilevel concept.

Categories of Coping Strategies

- a) Individual coping strategies
- b) Departmental strategies

Need and Significance of the Study

The need and significance for research studies on various aspects related to aging and the aged are clear from the above picture of and facts about the elderly. So, the present investigation is undertaken to explore into the different problems confronted by the elderly, particularly those residing in old age homes, and various factors affecting their adjustment status, feelings of alienation and spiritualistic orientation. It is hoped that the results of the study may provide empirical evidence regarding the same that may help all those who are concerned with the problems of the aged and seek ways to enhance their well-being – psychologists, sociologists, social workers and other professionals as well as governments and policy makers of our nation.

Review of Literature

Stress

Al-Aameri AS. (2003) mentioned in the study that one of the six factors of occupational stress forming from workload. Alexandros-Stamatios G.A. et al. (2003) also argued that “factors intrinsic to the job” means explore workload, variety of tasks and rates of pay. Fast changing global prospect is increasing the workforce to perform efficient output and enhance competitiveness. Indeed, to perform better to their job, there is a requirement for workers to perform multiple tasks in the workplace to keep abreast of changing technologies (Cascio, 1995; Quick, 1997).

The ultimate results of this pressure have been found to one of the important factors influencing job stress in their work (Cahn et al., 2000). A study in UK indicated that the majority of the workers were unhappy with the current culture where they were required to work extended hours and cope with large workloads while simultaneously meeting production targets and deadlines (Townley, 2000).

Work-Life Balance

The literature of work–life balance is full of discussion about the lack of effective policies, under utilization of work–life balance programs, job satisfaction, performance management, organizational commitment, productivity and other related concepts.

Professionals viewed flexible workplace schedules as a key to employee retention and placed this working condition at the top in order to control employee attrition Burke & Collinson (2004). These are some causes for work-life imbalance. Employees seem to be more effective when they are engaged and encouraged to participate and given an opportunity to speak hoping their work-life balance concerns can be expressed and hopefully addressed Pyman, Cooper, Teicher & Holland, (2006).

Officers who support and encourage employees' attempts to coordinate work and family demands reported several positive outcomes. Such employees felt less work/family conflict and at the same time reported less turnover, burnout, absenteeism and increased organizational commitment. Ray & Miller (1994), and Thomas & Ganster (1995).

Coping Strategies

Individuals who are affluent, healthy, capable, and optimistic are seen as resourceful and, thus, are less vulnerable toward the stress of life. To handle the stressful situation is most competent. The real competence is not a sufficient to manage the critical situation which is raised by stress. If the individual underestimates his potential for action, no adaptive strategies will be developed. Therefore, perceived competence is crucial. This has been labelled 'perceived self-efficacy' or 'optimistic self-beliefs' by Bandura (1992, 1995).

Behavioral change is facilitated by a personal sense of control. If people believe that they can take action to solve a problem instrumentally, they become more inclined to do so and feel more committed to this decision (Bandura, 1992; Maddux, 1995; Wallston, 1994). A person who believes in being able to cause an event can conduct a more active and self-determined life course. This "can do"-cognition mirrors logic of control over everybody's background. It reflects the hope of being able to massive challenging burden by means of adaptive deed. It can also be regard as a bright view of everybody's capacity to work with stress.

Statement of the Problem

The present research aims at investigating whether stress, work-life balance, and coping strategies predict job satisfaction in police personnel. Police work is often considered to be a highly stressful occupation. Not only are police personnel frequently exposed to the most violent, antisocial, and mistrustful elements of society, they are also expected to exercise discretion under critical circumstances. It is plethora of literature on the broad relationship between police work and environmental stress, there is a scarcity of empirical evidence of study relationship between stress, work-life balance, coping strategies and job satisfaction and how stress, work-life balance, coping strategies predict job satisfaction.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the stress on work life balance and coping strategies among police personnel.
2. To examine the major problems confronted by the aged persons as evidenced in the areas of health, home, social, marital, emotional, and financial adjustment, as well as their overall adjustment.
3. To identify the relationship between demographical factors and work life balance.

Research Methodology

The research methodology and the process of data collection and its analysis to empirically test the proposed conceptual model discussed in the previous chapter. The study is proposed to explore the association between stress, work-life balance, and coping strategies among Police Personnel.

Research Design

The aim of a research design is to provide an intended and prepared way of achieving the research objectives and to augment validity and reliability of the variables used

Analysis of Data

A Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyze the questionnaire data. This included processing, scoring, coding, tabulation and analysis of the collected data. The analysis was done in the following steps.

1. Demographic Analysis
2. Descriptive Analysis
3. Inferential Analysis
4. Regression Analysis

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected with the help of the measures for different variables were subjected to two types of analysis, namely, analysis of variance and stepwise multiple regression analysis. For the purpose of the former type of analysis, the demographic variables were categorized into groups. As such gender had the categories male and female, designation was categorized into constable, head constable, sub Inspector and officer, age had four categories 20-30, 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60, background had two categories rural and urban and experience had three categories 1-15, 16-30 and above 30 .Analysis of variance was performed to determine the main and interaction effects of demographic variables on job satisfaction, stress(operational and organizational stress), work-life balance, and coping strategies(constructive and destructive).

Summary of Analysis of Variance for Work-Life Balance with Demographic Variables

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	31.616	1	31.616	.198	.657
Designation	446.317	3	148.772	.930	.426
AGCAT	978.589	3	326.196	2.040	.108
Gender* Designation	765.075	3	255.025	1.595	.190
Gender * AGCAT	42.154	2	21.077	.132	.877
Designation * AGCAT	1180.094	7	168.585	1.054	.393
Gender * Designation * AGCAT	857.007	1	857.007	5.359	.021
Error	52609.439	329	159.907		
Total	1338553.000	350			
Corrected Total	57223.489	349			

An inspection of Table reveals that the main effects of all the three demographic variables sex, designation and age are insignificant. The values of F for these variables are .198, .930 and 2.040 respectively. This means that differences in sex, designation and age do not lead to differences in Work-Life balance. This fact is evident from mean Work-Life balance scores of different groups given in Table 4.3.

With reference to the effects of interactions among demographic variables on Work-Life balance, all the three interactions has been found insignificant ($F= 1.595$, $p=.190$), ($F=.132$, $p=.877$) and ($F=1.054$, $p=.393$). The three way interaction among sex, designation and age appears to be significant ($F=5.359$, $p=.021$)

Summary of Analysis of Variance for Constructive Coping with Demographic variables

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender		1	8.832	1.609	.206
Designation	9.776	3	3.259	.594	.620
AGCAT	7.074	3	2.358	.430	.732
Gender *	2.306	3	.769	.140	.936
Designation					
AGCAT					
Designation * AGCAT	46.549	7	6.650	1.211	.296
Gender *	7.914	1	7.914	1.442	.231
Designation *					
AGCAT					
Error	1806.006	329	5.489		
Total	108726.000	350			
Corrected Total	1923.154	349			
a R Squared = .061 (Adjusted R Squared = .004)					

An inspection reveals that the main effects of all the three demographic variables sex, designation and age are insignificant. The values of F for these variables are 1.609, .594 and .430 respectively. This means that differences in sex, designation and age do not lead to differences in Constructive Coping.

Findings and Conclusions

The present research aims at investigating whether Stress, Work-Life Balance, and Coping Strategies predict job Satisfaction in police personnel. In this context demographic variables were gender, designation, age, background and experience. The data collected with the help of the measures for different variables were subjected to two types of analysis, namely, analysis of variance and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

To find out the relative contribution of work-life balance, stress (operational and organizational stress), and coping strategies (constructive and destructive) to the variance in the Job Satisfaction, stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted.

Demographic Variables and Work-Life Balance

Result shows that the main effects of all the three demographic variables sex, designation and age are insignificant. The values of F for these variables are .198, .930 and 2.040 respectively. This means that differences in sex, designation and age do not lead to differences in work-life balance.

Demographic Variables and Organizational Stress

Result shows that the main effect of sex is significant. While the main effects of designation and age are insignificant. The values of F for these variables are 6.464, .546 and .055 respectively. This means that differences in sex lead to differences in organizational stress while the differences in designation and age do not lead to differences in organizational stress.

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