



OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG POLICE CONSTABLES: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This topic was chosen because in these days of negligible gender inequality, there is need to study the level of Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment, its correlation and also the difference value in both genders. The purpose of the study was to see Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment among police constables through a gender perspective. The sample selected for the study purpose was the lowest level of organizational structure of police department and consist both male and female constables. In view of difference in social life and with a negative perception about police officials the Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment may vary in male and female constables. The inference of the study could help police department in finding ways to work more effectively with commitment and without excessive stress. Results indicate that there is no significant difference nor there is relationship in Organizational Commitment or Occupational Stress of both male and female constables.

Keywords: Occupational stress, Organizational commitment, Police Constables.

Introduction

Indian police faces problems in maintenance of law and order their primary responsibility. In general, the public perception about them is that of being rude, unjust and partial to certain sections of society. The call of duty often keeps them away from family members, even on festive occasions. These factors together with pressure generated by the police subculture, result into frustration which in turn hampers their commitment towards organisation and also causes stress. It is a general perception that the female police officials are much more affected by this.

The specific role assigned to the police officials, job security, promotion levels, harassment, discrimination, biased opinions, hearsay, and other derogatory remarks in police organisation are common sources of stress which adversely impact commitment. Participation rate, collaborative planning, and equally dispersed responsibilities are the tools to reduce stress & enhance commitments.

Occupational stress according to the current World Health Organization's (WHO) definition, "is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope"

According to **Violanti and Marshall (1983)**, four transitory stages of Occupational Stress exist in a police officer's career:

- **Alarm Stage (0–5 years)**- The Officer quickly learns that training received and reports on television do not truly reflect ground reality. Adjustment to new experiences, including death, an authoritarian style of management, and the dangers of policing increases stress level.
- **Disenchantment Stage (6–13 years)**- Officer realizes that neither crimes nor problems they face have easy resolution and thus stress levels continue to increase.
- **Personalization Stage (14–19 years)** – The officer gets used to the job, becomes comfortable and thus stress levels substantially decrease.
- **Introspection Stage (20 years and over)**. - Stress continues to decrease with the thought of retirement and personal issues and that they can retire at any time they wish.

From this study, it is apparent that stress-reduction training should be provided early in a police officer's career.

Organizational commitment is the individual's psychological attachment to the organization in terms of work-related attitudes, such as job satisfaction and a 'sense of oneness' with their organization. **John Meyer and Natalie Allen** developed their Three Component Model of Commitment and published it in the 1991 "**Human Resource Management Review**." The three components are:

- i. **Affection for your job (affective commitment)**
- ii. **Fear of loss (continuance commitment)**
- iii. **Sense of obligation to stay (normative commitment).**



A study conducted by **Sharma (2013)** on “Organizational Climate and Stress Personnel” reveals some major conclusions are that, the total score is higher for lower level police and there is a non-significant difference between lower and middle level police personnel in stress and the second major finding was that the total stress score is higher for female personnel and there is a significant difference between male and female police personnel in stress.

A psychological study of stress, personality and coping in police personnel by **Kaur, V.K.Chodagiri, and Reddi (2013)** found that: On screening, 35.33% of the police were found to be having psychological distress. In India, **Mahajan’s (1982)** study on women police in the state of Punjab revealed that women’s role in policing remains ambiguous and stressful. **Krishnamurti (1995)** demonstrated that women police in Nagpur, Nagpur, India, are prone to experience more stress, tension & conflicts in discharging their role in contrast to their male counterparts. Similarly, **Banu (1995)** found that a majority of women police in Chennai, experienced stress and their life satisfaction & social support were at minimum level.

Rationale of the Study

The first thing that comes to mind when we think of the role of police in any society is the maintenance of law and order. Citizens remain ignorant and are unaware of the problems faces by Indian police, their stress and commitment towards the organization. The image of police in India is not a reputed one and in general people think that police officials violate the law and are not punished. It is a general perception that police exhibit rude behavior, abusive language & indulges in all forms of corruption. Social media has also played an important role in highlighting that police officials are ignorant about human rights, the police are insensitive towards victims of violent crimes. The stress caused by the society, organization & family etc. creates a negative effect on the commitment level of the police officials & it is a general perception that the female police officials are much more affected by this. The social view towards women in India is still conservative and full of irrational thoughts. They have to manage every aspect of their life, let it be social or professional, by their own. In a situation like this, how difficult is to work in police department, is not hard to guess. Apart from all odds, female police officials have to work equally hard as their male counterparts.

On one hand the effects of formal pressure from police organization and pressure generated by the police subculture often lead police to experience a great deal of stress in their occupational, social, and family lives, whereas on the other hand their occupation, demands commitment towards the organization as well as towards society. It is absolutely true that when all sections of the society enjoy festive season, the police officials (both males and females) have to perform their duties resulting into frustration which in turn hampers their commitment towards organization and also causes stress.

This topic is chosen because in the modern era, when the gender difference is almost negligible, there is need to study the level of Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment, its correlation and also the difference value in both genders. Since social life of male and female differs in our society, & also with a negative impression about police officials in the society, there is every possibility that the Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment may vary in male and female constables. The inference of the study could be utilized in many ways, making the police department to work more effectively with commitment towards the organization without having excessive stress.

Methodology

Objectives

1. To compare male and female constables on Organizational Commitment.
2. To compare male and female constables on Occupational Stress.
3. To study the relationship between Occupational Stress and organizational Commitment.

Hypotheses

1. There is a difference between male and female constables on Occupational Stress.
2. There is a difference between male and female constables on Organizational Commitment.
3. There is negative relationship between Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment.

Sample: Sample of present study consists of total 30 police constables, divided into two groups of 15 each separately for male and female constables of 30 to 40 years age. The data collected was from district Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

Tools:

(I) “Occupational Stress Index” developed by Dr. A.P. Srivastava and Dr. A.P. Singh.

Occupational Stress Index consists of 46 items, each to be rated on five point scale. Out of 46 items, 28 are “true keyed” and rests 18 are “false keyed”. Reversed scoring was done in false keyed items.

Reliability coefficient: By split half scoring method is .935.



Validity: 0.51.

(II) “Organizational Commitment Questionnaire” developed by R.T. Mowday, L.W. Porter and R.M. Steers. Organizational Commitment Questionnaire consists of 15 items, 6 of which are negatively phrased and reversed scored.

Reliability coefficient: By test- retest method is 0.87

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Showing t-test between the “Organizational Commitment” of female constables and male constable.

Sample	Mean	df	t-value
Male	71.06	28	0.55
Female	72.93		

Inference: The table value of 0.55 < 2.76, 2.05 (at 0.01, 0.05 respectively). Thus, there is no significant difference between both the genders.

Table 2: Showing t-test between the “Occupational Stress” of female constables and male constables.

Sample	Mean	df	t-value
Male	151.3	28	0.65
Female	147.2		

Inference: The table value 0.65 < 2.76, 2.05 (at 0.01, 0.05 level respectively). Thus, there is no significant difference between both the genders.

Table 3: Correlation among Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment of constables.

Sample	r-value	Interpretation
Male	-0.41	Negative-moderate
Female	-0.15	Negative-low
Total sample	-0.05	Negative-low

Occupational Stress is the response people may have presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope. **Porter (1976)** described Organizational Commitment an attachment to the organization characterized by an intention with the values and goals of the organization and a willingness to exert extra effort on its behalf.

Table 1 depicts t-testing between the “Organizational Commitment” of male and female constable. At 28df the obtained t-value is 0.55, which is low than the table value at both 0.01 (2.76) level and 0.05 (2.05) level. This indicates that there is “no significant difference” between the “Organizational Commitment” of male constables and female constables. So, the first hypothesis is rejected because both the genders have equal level of commitment towards their organization. A study conducted on police personnel by **Gayre Cristie (1996)** also reveals almost same results, in her study it was concluded that the female recruits and male police did not differ from each other, but together were significantly more oriented toward law and order than were male recruits and female police, who also did not differ from each other.

Table 2 depicts t- testing between the “Occupational Stress” of female and male constables. The obtained t-value is 0.65 which is at 28df, low from the table value. It indicates that it also has “no significant difference” in the occupational stress of female and male constables. It reveals that both male and female constables have equal level of occupational stress and thus second hypothesis is also rejected. A study conducted by **Mccarty, Zhao & Garland (2007)** also matches the results; their findings suggest that male and female officers did not report significantly different levels of Occupational Stress and Burnout.

Table 3 reveals correlation among Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment constables. The obtained r-value for male constables is -0.41. It means that there is a “negative relationship” between both the variables. Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment among female constables is also low because they obtained r-value is -0.15, which indicates



again a “negative relationship” between both the variables. Hence, Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment among female police constables are affecting each other in a negative direction. Correlation among the total/overall scores of Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment of both male constables and female Constables shows that obtained r-value is -0.05, which indicates it has a “negative relationship” between both the variables. Thus Occupational Stress is negatively proportionate to Organizational Commitment, meaning thereby that the higher is Occupational Stress the lower is Organizational Commitment and vice-versa.

Therefore, first two hypotheses are rejected and third hypothesis is accepted. From the inferences of the study it could be concluded that there is no significant difference among Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment of female and male police constables. Both the genders are equally committed towards their department and have same level of stress related to their occupation. There is also not any major correlation between both the variables, which makes the third hypothesis accepted. But all the values of correlations are found to be negative, which means that constables are having stress but it is not only due to their occupation. Other factors are also playing an important role as a cause for the stress found in them, such as social, emotional, family related issues, physical, financial, etc.

Recently, on 7th November, 2014, a female police constable posted in police line, Lucknow committed suicide by jumping in front of train. Long working hours, indifferent attitude of the society & lack of time family and friends were the main reasons for this act under over stressed conditions. The most important suggestions, based on study, are as under:

- The working hours of police constables should be regulated, to enable fulfilment of family and social commitments.
- The training should be in keeping with ground realities and with human values.
- The career progression should be clearly defined and time bound.
- According to Police sources published in **Navbharat Times on 9th November 2014**, the required and existing female police constables are as under:

S. No.	Post	Existing	Required
1.	Female constable	54	70
2.	Head constable	1	6
3.	Sub-Inspector	6	13

Thus, the workforce in number of male and female constables should be increased as per requirement.

- Lastly, there is need for change in mindset of the society including that of police constables.

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