



JOB STRESS: ROLE OF JOB HIERARCHY AND JOB TENURE

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Abstract

This study is aimed to investigate the level of work stress in police personnel. A 3x2 factorial design with three levels of job hierarchy (i.e., officers, sub inspectors & constables) and two levels of job tenure (i.e., short job & long job) was used. A total of 200 police personnel were randomly selected from various police stations of Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh. Objective work stress scale and work stress profile (Carry Cooper, 1983) were used to determine the level of stress in employees.

Results showed that the extent of work stress varied significantly in various group of police personnel. Objective work stress was found greater in sub- inspectors than constables and officers respectively. Whereas, feeling of work stress was also found higher in constables than sub inspectors and officers respectively. More specifically, stress caused by interpersonal, physical condition and job interest were found greater in constables as compared to sub inspectors and officers respectively. Job tenure also have impact on stress level of employees. Short job tenure group reported more stress caused by job tenure as compared to long job tenure group. The roles of job hierarchy and job tenure in work stress have been proved on the basis of present results. Findings have been discussed in the light of organizational and personal factors.

Keywords: Job Hierarchy, Organization, Police Personnel, Tenure, Work Stress.

Introduction

High pressure at work place has been identified as challenging to any organization. Worldwide statistics concerning the dynamics of stress at work place and its consequences, revealed that work stress has emerged as one of the most acute problems throughout the world and damaging the health and performance of employees and organization too (Cartwright et al., 1993; Pandey & Srivastava, 2004; Rice, 1987; Singh, 2010; Tiwari, 2006).

The police force is one of the largest organizations in India and the work of police personnel is very challenging and also necessary for preventing crime and providing security to public. In spite of great efforts by the government and the police organization, the crime rates are increasing rapidly day by day. The police has to encounter not only traditional types of crimes but also deal with socio-economic crimes, white collar crimes, blue collar crimes, organized crimes, abuse of drugs and narcotic, trafficking, crimes against women and children, crimes related to slum and so on. Police personnel are also found busy in VIP securities; they also control various religious processions as well as maintain law and order in society.

The day-to-day work and its constant reallocation bring police personnel directly in contact with a number of anti-social activities. Police personnel ranging from officer level to constable level have to work in emergency facing a lot of constraints including long duty hours, political pressure and strain. Such stressors cause high level of work stress in police personnel. The inherent nature of their job is such that they are exposed to high degree of work stress irrespective of the rank they hold, which cause



mental pressure, physical exertion and low level of performance.

During the last few decades, organizational psychologists have shown their interest to identify the causative roots of the problems and their consequences on police personnel and the organization too (Singh, 2010). According to the National Police Commission “police men work for long and arduous hours on the most days of duty, very much in excess of the normal eight hours”. (National Police Commission, 1979). A survey carried out by the national productivity council has revealed that the normal working time put in every day by an average subordinate police officer employed in public order or crime investigation duties is anywhere between 13 to 16 hours on an average. The police job is said to be ‘twenty four hours duty’.

The policemen work over even on gazetted holidays, when others celebrate their festivals. They are sometimes not able to avail their normal entitled leave every year. The upcoming trend of suicides or killing of superior officer on refusal of leave amply testifies the frustration, stress and strain caused by unfavorable work culture prevailing in police force. Even the peons and clerk employed in private and public sectors enjoy better quality of work condition than police personnel serving the country. The prevailing capture and work culture had made the police force the democratic slaves. They are bound to confront with excessive work stress.

Work Stress

Stress is a widely studied area in psychological researches. It is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important.

Beehr and Bhagat (1985) defined, “work stress is a psychological state experienced by an employee when faced with demands, constraints, and/or opportunities that have important but uncertain outcomes”. Job/ work stress has been conceptualized on the basis of numerous theoretical perspectives. Cooper (1989) propounded Workplace Related Model of stress to explain the dynamics of work stress on workplace and its consequences. This model represents three interrelated stages, viz.; source of stress, symptoms of stress and diseases (outcome). First level of this model denotes six major sources of stress. These sources are: Stress intrinsic to the job, role in the organization, relationships at work, career development, relationship with co-workers and boss at work, stress related to career development, stress caused by organizational structure and climate and non-work factors. These stressors cause symptoms at individual and organization levels. Individual related symptoms include raised blood pressure, depressed mood, excessive drinking, irritability and chest pains whereas, organization related symptoms are found in the form of high absenteeism, high labor turnover, industrial related difficulties and poor quality control. Disease is the outcome of the dynamic relationship of stressors and symptoms.

At individual (employee) level, it causes mental illness and coronary heart disease and at organizational level, prolonged strikes, frequent and severe accidents, apathy etc. are found as the outcomes of stress. Cooper et al (1996) identified three types of negative personal outcomes of work stress viz; behavioral symptoms, physical health symptoms and psychological health symptoms.

Thus, work stress is opined as a perceived dynamic state involving uncertainty about something important. The dynamic state can be associated with opportunities, constraints or demands. The state of opportunity is perceived by the individual to offer the potential fulfillment of important needs and values. State of constraints is perceived to be blocking or preventing current fulfillment of important



needs and values. State of demands are those of the physical environment of the work place such as noise, heat and toxic chemicals which influence important needs and values both perceptually as well as objectively.

A study was carried out on police personnel and found that non gazetted officers were carrying more organizational role stress than gazetted officers (Singhvi & Mathur, 1997). Pillai (1987) studied stress in constables and found that the extent of stress is greater in short job tenure employees as compared to long job tenure group. Deb et al.(2006) carried out a study on the traffic constables and officers of Kolkata city. It was found that traffic constables were more stressed than traffic police officers. Singh (2007) also pointed out that the levels of stress vary among different group of police employees. Ramachandran (1989) evinced that type and intensity of problems related to stress varied across different age groups of constables. Saxena (2000) revealed that constables have high degree of derivational stress and organizational role stress than sub inspectors. A sizeable number of researchers have identified the influence of job category duration, coping, control and personality factors on work stress (Mishra & Srivastva, 1997; Pandey & Srivastava, 2004; Tiwari, 2006; Tiwari & Mishra, 2008; Singh, 2010).

Objective

The present study was carried out to investigate the influence of job hierarchy and job tenure on the work stress in police personnel.

Hypotheses: On the basis of above objective, following hypotheses were formulated. It was hypothesized that-

1. The work stress would vary among three job hierarchy groups. More specifically, the level of stress would be found greater in Constables than Sub-inspectors and Officers respectively.
2. The extent of work stress would also differ in two job tenure groups .More specifically, Stress would be found higher in short job tenure as compared to long job tenure groups.

Method

Design

This study is based on a 3x2 factorial design with three level of job hierarchy i.e. officers, sub inspectors and constables and two level of job tenure i.e. short job tenure (below 10 yrs) and long job tenure (above 10 yrs).

Sample: A total of 200 male police personnel participated as respondents in this study. Stratified random sampling technique was used. The sample was selected from various police stations of Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh.

Measuring Tools

Work Stress Measure: In order to assess the objective as well as feeling of work stress, two measures were used.

(i) Objective Work Stress Scale

This scale was used to assess the actual position of stressors at work place. This scale contains eight items to determine the level of objective work stress. Responses given by participants on each items of objective work stress scale were scored following 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 order. In scoring pattern. Total summated scores obtained on each item were considered the level of actual work stress in participants.



(ii) Work Stress Profile

The feeling of work stress was measured by using Work Stress Profile (Cooper, 1983). This profile includes three sub-scales and consists of 57 items. The first sub-scale is intended to assess stress due to problems in interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, as the case may be. The second sub-scale measures the physical demands of work that wear on the person daily. The third sub-scale measures job interest and involvement. Items pertaining to these areas were rated on five point scale.

Scoring: In this profile 14 items are positive and remaining 43 items are negative. In the first sub-scale i.e. interpersonal, 8 items are positive and remaining 18 items are negative. In the second subscale i.e. physical condition, all the 22 items are negative. Furthermore, in the third subscale, i.e., job interest, 6 items are positive and 3 items are negative. Positive items are scored in terms of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 whereas, negative items were scored following 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 order. Total summated scores obtained on each sub-scale were considered the level of stress related to particular dimension. Higher scores denoted more stress and lower scores indicated low stress level in participants. On the basis of obtained scores on each subscale, the stress caused by interpersonal, physical condition and job interest, were determined.

Procedure

Respondents were contacted at their workplaces. They were introduced about the problem of the study. Each participant was promised that his personal views and information would not be disclosed at any cost. After receiving the initial willingness of the respondents to participate in the study, their background information's were collected on the basis of Personal Data Sheet (P.D.S). Then, they were requested to respond on objective work stress scale and as they completed their responses on this scale, again they were requested to respond on work stress profile. As soon as, they completed their responses on above said measures, data were collected and respondents were thanked for participation. Obtained data were scored according to defined rules as given in manuals.

Results

Obtained scores were treated statistically in terms of Means, S.Ds and ANOVA analyses. Results includes the comparative analysis of the studied variable i.e.; work stress, in different groups of police personnel. Results are displayed in tables.

Table 1 displays means and SDs of work stress, responded by participants belonging to different groups.

Table 1: Means and SDs of work stress as a function of job hierarchy and job tenure

Variable	Officers		Sub Inspectors		Constables	
	S.J.T.	L.J.T.	S.J.T.	L.J.T.	S.J.T.	L.J.T.
Objective work stress	Mean	21.75	23.40	26.14	26.91	23.64
	S.D.	4.66	8.07	6.49	8.23	5.49

N = 200, S.J.T. = Short Job Tenure, L.J.T. = Long Job Tenure

Results (Table 2) display means and SDs of feeling of work stress, responded by participants belonging to different groups. Results show that the level of work stress varied across different groups of police personnel.



Table 2: Means and SDs of feeling of work stress as a function of job Hierarchy and job tenure

Dimensions of Feeling of work stress		Officers		Sub Inspectors		Constables	
		S.J.T.	L.J.T.	S.J.T.	L.J.T.	S.J.T.	L.J.T.
Job interest	Mean	21.25	16.67	23.82	22.71	24.62	22.33
	S.D.	4.94	6.17	5.29	6.4	5.21	5.67
Physical condition	Mean	53.26	49.57	61.38	65.37	65.09	62.91
	S.D.	15.54	16.78	19.72	17.0	17.58	15.16
Interpersonal	Mean	56.00	57.94	69.44	70.73	72.34	67.94
	S.D.	17.58	18.78	19.88	17.76	14.65	20.36
Work stress as a whole	Mean	130.51	124.18	154.64	158.8	162.04	153.18
	S.D.	38.06	41.73	44.89	33.61	29.35	35.74

N = 200, S.J.T. = Short Job Tenure, L.J.T. = Long Job Tenure

A 3 x 2 ANOVA (three job hierarchy x two job tenure) was done to determine the significant differences among groups. Obtained results are presented in tables.

Table 3: Summary of 3 x 2 ANOVA (three job hierarchy x two job tenure) of objective work stress

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between A (job hierarchy)	884.203	2	442.102	11.45**
Between B (job tenure)	68.949	1	68.949	1.79
A x B	35.913	2	17.96	.47
Within	9035.34	234	38.61	

N = 200, ** = P < .01, * = P < .05

ANOVA results (Table 3) indicate that respondents differed significantly on objective work stress. The main effect for job hierarchy was found to be significant [F (2, 234) = 11.45, P < .01], which revealed that objective work stress was found greater in sub-inspectors (M=26.34) than constables (M=23.91) and officers (M=21.62) respectively. Furthermore, A 3 x 2 ANOVA analysis was done for each domains of feeling of work stress. Results are shown in Tables 4, 5, 6 & 7 respectively.

Table 4: Summary of 3x2 ANOVA (three job hierarchy x two job tenure) of work stress related to interpersonal

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between A (job hierarchy)	10412.22	2	5206.11	16.84**
Between B (job tenure)	12.74	1	12.74	.04
A x B	706.09	2	353.05	1.14
Within	72325.57	234	309.08	

N = 200, ** = P < .01, * = P < .0

ANOVA results (Table 4) revealed that on feeling of interpersonal work stress, main effect for job hierarchy [F = (2, 234) = 16.84, P < .01] was found to be significant, which revealed that constables



reported more stress (M=70.14) than sub-inspectors (M=69.56) and officers (M= 55.75) respectively. Table 5: Summary of 3 x 2 ANOVA (three job hierarchy x two job tenure) of work stress related to physical condition

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between A (job hierarchy)	9900.92	2	4950.46	17.1**
Between B (job tenure)	4.65	1	4.65	.016
A x B	555.79	2	277.89	.96
Within	67756.49	234	289.56	

N = 200, ** = P< .01, * = P< .05

Results (Table 5) evinced that physical condition, main effect for job hierarchy [F (2,234) = 17.1, P< .01) was found significant, which evinced that constables reported high stress (M=64.0) than sub-inspectors (M=63.35) and officers (M=49.92) respectively.

Table 6: Summary of 3 x 2 ANOVA (three job hierarchy x two job tenure) of work stress related to job interest

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between A (job hierarchy)	1081.84	2	540.92	18.16**
Between B (job tenure)	274.77	1	274.77	9.22**
A x B	156.23	2	78.11	2.62
Within	6971.74	234	29.79	

N = 200, ** = P< .01, * = P< .05

ANOVA result in Table 6 showed that work stress caused by job interest was also significantly influenced by job hierarchy and job tenure. Significant main effect for job hierarchy [F (2, 234) = 18.16, P< .01] indicate that constables reported more stress (M=23.48) than sub-inspectors (M= 22.77) and officers (M=18.61) subsequently. Similarly, significant main effect for job tenure [F (1, 234)=9.22, P< .01) evinced that employees of short job tenure group (M=22.7) reported more stress than those of long job tenure group (M=20.54).

Table 7: Summary of 3 x 2 ANOVA (three job hierarchy x two job tenure) of work stress as a whole

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between A (job hierarchy)	54894.82	2	27447.41	24.46**
Between B (job tenure)	229.96	1	229.96	.205
A x B	2292.95	2	1146.47	1.022
Within	262546.15	234	1121.99	

N = 200, ** = P< .01, * = P< .05



Work stress (as a whole) was also significantly influenced by job hierarchy (Table 7). Significant main effect of job hierarchy [$F(2, 234) = 24.46, P < .01$] revealed that constables reported more stress ($M=157.61$) than sub-inspectors ($M=155.7$) and officers ($M=124.27$) respectively.

Discussion

Results showed that the level of work stress varied across different group of employees in accordance with their job hierarchy and job tenure. The feeling of work stress was found higher in constables than sub inspectors and officers. More specifically, the objective work stress was reported at high level by sub inspectors than constables and officers. But feeling of interpersonal work stress was found greater in constables than sub inspectors and officers. Constables reported high work stress related to physical condition than sub inspectors and officers. Likewise, job interest related stress was also found more in constables than sub inspectors and officers respectively.

Furthermore, employees of short job tenure expressed more stress than long job tenure. The presence of social support from other co-workers, management, family and friends tends to relieve stress and strain. This result is consistent with many research findings (Ahmed & Mishra, 2002; Cobb's, 1970; Khan & Mishra, 2002; Khanna, 2000; Mehra & Mishra, 2003; Mishra & Shyam, 2005; Pandey & Srivastava, 2000, 2004; Srivastava, 1999; Vashistha & Mishra, 2004; Vashistha & Mishra, 1999; Yogrecha & Misra, 1990).

Another findings as well as present study evinced that work stress related to job interest also varied across short and long job tenure group of police employees. Present study revealed that employees of short job tenure group were found in high stress than long job tenure group. This finding is in close consonance of other research findings (Pandey & Srivastava, 2004; Srivastava, 2002; Tiwari, 2006). Powell (1992) indicated the sources of stress in police employees which may produce job dissatisfaction are : Poor task environment and lack of definition of objectives; e.g., more emphasis on routine tasks, poor problem solving environment; e.g., with reference to investigate of sensational and controversial cases; poor development environment, e.g., lack of further training, acquisition of newer technology; poor communication, non-supportive culture. In the decision latitude/ control source i.e., low participation in decision making, lack of control, over work; e.g., inability to redress the genuine grievances of sub-ordinates, little decision making in work; lack of scope for free expression. In the work load source i.e., lack of control over pacing over load. In the work schedule source, long and inflexible work schedule: wearing of uniform for long hours; shift working: no fixed sleeping hours, unpredictable work hours: due to unforeseen developments every day.

Since, young employees face the inevitable conflict between organizational and family demands during the early development of their careers. Under normal circumstances, individuals find home as a refuge from the competitive and demanding environment at work, a place where they get support and comfort. But when there is a career crisis, tension of the job do not left behind and soon affect the family and home environment in ways that may imperil this last "sanctuary". As a result employees of short job tenure are found stressed and worried about their career, economic, educational and social status of the family. Apart from this, Short job tenure employees may feel availing an unusual number of sick leave, excessive use of force, and resentment against any advice, feeling of depression and too much subordination, lack of interest in work, poor reflexes, grandiose behavior, complaining against everything, distorted and manipulated relations with the public and fellow officers. Pillai (1987) showed that stress was found to affect 82.53% of constables within less than five years of service and 74.56% of constables with 6 to 10 years of service. The findings of present study have ample empirical supports.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings revealed that objective work stress was found greater in sub-inspectors than constables and officers respectively, whereas feeling of work stress were found greater in sub –inspectors and officers. Furthermore, Work stress was found more in short job tenure group of employees as compared to long job tenure police personnel.

On the basis of findings of the present study certain recommendations have been made:

1. Authorities of the police organization should pay attention to create a healthy work environment by maximizing better opportunity of interpersonal relationship with co- workers and subordinates.
2. By improving the quality of work place and providing innovations and stimulation in job and better opportunities of personal growth/promotion, Police organization actively can minimize the high feeling of work stress in police employees.
3. Job demands and work culture in police organization are very much challenging and risky therefore, high feeling of work stress is very natural. It is essential to provide a platform for the police employees of all levels to share their problems with the higher authorities frankly and openly which will be one of the outlets of releasing work related stress.
4. On the basis of these results, it is suggested to police employees and higher authorities of police organization to develop and exercise active and adaptive coping strategies like active coping, planning, and suppression of competing activities, positive reframing, use of instrumental support and use of emotional support, which are more adaptive to confront with stressful episodes.
5. Perceived control as a cognitive construct has been identified to buffer against stress (Pandey & Srivastava,2004).Therefore, it is suggested to educate high risk group of police personnel to develop cognitive and behavioral control to confront with stressful situations.

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