



OCCUPATIONAL STRESS, MENTAL HEALTH AND ADJUSTMENT OF POLICE AND FOREST EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the extent of Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment of Police and Forest employees. It was hypothesized that police and forest employees differ significantly on Occupational Stress, Mental health and Adjustment. And the male and female employees of Police and forest department differ significantly on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment. In order to verify the above hypotheses, a sample size of 100 was selected from Police and Forest employees of three taluks from Dharwad district of Karnataka. To measure the variables, the following tools were used: Occupational Stress Index - by A. K. Srivastava and A. P. Singh, Employees Mental Health Inventory - by Dr. Jagadeesh and Global Adjustment form-A – by Sanjay Vohra. The major findings of the study reveal that there is no significant difference between the police and forest employees on occupational stress. But forest employees have significantly higher mental health and adjustment than the police employees. It is also found that male and female employees do not differ on the variables.



KEY WORDS : Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment.

INTRODUCTION

Life is complex and challenging. Though each generation feels the difficulties of life, today's generation is particularly facing lot of stress due to economic instability, rising livelihood costs, loss of jobs and so many other factors. Hence the resulting austerity measures need to increase the technical capability and emotional creativity in order to achieve a satisfactory quality of life which places extraordinary demands on each responsible individual. Psychological disturbance is the outcome of such situations which have become impossible to avoid. Each one of us whether a child, male, female, employed, unemployed, experienced or inexperienced, have biological, psychological and social needs and responsibilities. When these needs are not met, stress comes into existence. It depends largely on background experiences, temperament and environmental conditions. Any situation in which a person's behavior is evaluated by others as unusual can be stressful which may disturb his mental health and adjustment in family, work area and society.

Occupational stress can also come from any situation or thought that makes someone feel frustrated, angry or anxious. It can become a cause for poor mental health as well as adjustment issues. A certain level of stress is unavoidable. In small quantities, stress is good. It can motivate and help an individual be more productive. The latest evidence suggested that some stress is necessary for well-being and a lack of it can be harmful. However, too much stress, or strong response to stress, is considered to be harmful. The term stress refers to an internal state, which results from frustrating or unsatisfying conditions. It is a utility of the demands placed on us and our capability to meet them.

The high demands and expectations from higher authority and public also create occupational stress and influence mental health and adjustment of an employee. This kind of situation is generally found among employees like police, forest, public transportation, banking sector and medical professional etc.

Today, public sector employees are working under high stress and strain. Especially, the police and forest department jobs are characterized as tough, stressful, and risky. These employees are required to work for all 24 hours of the day. They experience high occupational stress, which has detrimental effects on their physical and mental health and adjustment in different areas of life. Police are enforcers of the state with the responsibility of maintaining law and order, and protecting the public from harm. They are given no breaks, no vacations, and no weekends and are to work in all weather conditions to provide the public with all comforts (RituSekhri 2012). Traffic police personnel are facing severe health problems from stress in traffic of modern days. The most serious cases of police misconduct have led to recognizing mental health and illness as the major contributor.

Employment in forestry is also one of the toughest and riskiest occupations in many countries. Although there are clear evidences which indicate that health and safety of the forest workers can be secured and protected, a disappointing rate of accidents, job related illnesses and premature retirement have been reported all over the world. This indicates that health and safety are still a critical issue in forestry occupation. Forest related jobs are known as heavy duty and rather unhealthy which are usually performed under difficult and adverse circumstances. An ideal working condition is a type of environment that is not only harmless from health perspective, but also increases physical and/or mental health status as well as safety of the workers involved (MajidLotfalian, et al.,2012). Hence the present study is conducted with the following objectives:

To assess and compare the extent of Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment of Police and Forest employees.

METHOD

Hypotheses:

- 1) There is a significant difference between Police and Forest employees on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment.
- 2) There is a significant difference between male and female employees of Police and forest employees on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment
- 3) There is a significant difference between male and female employees of Police department on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment
- 4) There is a significant difference between male and female employees of forest department on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment

Sample: The sample includes male and female employees of police and forest department from Dharwad, Karnataka, India. To measure the above hypotheses, a total of 100 subjects were selected. The age group of the subjects is between 25 – 55 years.

Tools:

1. Occupational Stress Scale by A. K. Shrivastav and A. P. Singh (1984) is used to measure occupational stress. This scale consists of 46 items, classified into 12 dimensions. Out of the 46 items, 28 are positive and 18 negative.
2. Employees Mental Health Inventory - by Jagadish used to measure Mental Health. It consists of 24 items and measures the state of mental pleasure, well-being, and lack of psychological complaints.
3. Global Adjustment scale Form A – by Sanjay Vohra is used to measure the adjustment. This scale consists of 120 items and measures the adjustment in six component areas: Family, Health, Social, Emotional Occupational and Sexual Adjustment.

Statistical Analysis: Keeping in view the purpose and hypotheses of the present research, t-test was carried out for the comparative analysis of the group.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

Table1: Mean, Standard Deviation and ‘t’ values of the Police and Forest employees on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment.

VARIABLE		Police Employees (N=50)	Forest Employees (N=50)	‘t’ Value
OCCUPATIONAL STRESS	Mean	50.39	49.61	0.38
	SD	11.45	8.40	
MENTAL HEALTH	Mean	48.06	51.93	1.96*
	SD	9.44	10.25	
ADJUSTMENT	Mean	44.29	55.71	6.93***
	SD	8.89	7.50	

* P< .05 level.*** P< .001 level.

Table No. 1 shows the mean, standard deviation scores and ‘t’ values of the Police and Forest employees on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment. On Occupational Stress, the obtained mean scores of police and forest employee are 50.39 and 49.61 respectively, standard deviation scores are 11.45 and 8.40 respectively. The ‘t’ value obtained for the mean difference is $t = 0.38$, which is not significant ($P > .05$). This clearly implicates that police and forest employees do not differ significantly on Occupational Stress. Characteristics of the Police and forest jobs are almost similar. They both are considered tough, stressful, and risky jobs. These employees have to work for all 24 hours because of which they might not differ on occupational stress. Employees of both jobs experience high/same occupational stress.

On Mental Health, the forest employees have a higher mean score ($M = 51.93$) than the police employees ($M = 48.06$). Standard deviation scores of forest and police employees are 10.25 and 9.44 respectively. The ‘t’ value obtained for the mean difference is 1.96, which is significant at $P < .05$ level. On total Adjustment, the forest employees have a higher mean score ($M = 55.71$) than the police employees ($M = 44.29$). Standard deviation scores of police and forest employees are 8.89 and 7.50 respectively. The ‘t’ value obtained for the mean difference is 6.93, which is significant at $P < .001$ level. This clearly shows that the forest employees have significantly higher mental health and adjustment than the police employees. Forest employees spend maximum time of their job in the forest. By visiting the forest so often, being active in nature, living amidst greenery, their overall health and well-being improve. These findings are consistent with other findings of Liz O’Brien, (2006) and Ann Dolling et al., (2017) and Liz O’Brien, (2006) who did a research on the contributions of trees, woodlands and green spaces to people’s overall health and well-being. The benefits have been categorized in a range of ways but primarily include physical, psychological and social well-being. Such studies have shown that benefits can be gained not only by being active in nature (e.g. walking or cycling), but also by viewing nature, for example from a window, or being near it in the course of everyday activities. Ann Dolling et al., (2017) did an intervention study on Stress recovery in forest and handicraft environments. The participants’ mood before and after each visit were estimated by a questionnaire. From their research, they found out that the participants’ overall health had improved after the interventions in both the forest and handicraft environments. Also their mental health and mood was improved and they felt more relaxed, alert, happy, harmonious, and peaceful and clearheaded.

Table2: Mean, Standard Deviation and ‘t’ value of the Male and female employees of both departments on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment.

VARIABLE		Male Employees (N=56)	Female Employees (N=44)	‘t’ Value
OCCUPATIONAL STRESS	Mean	51.58	47.97	1.81
	SD	11.52	7.26	
MENTAL HEALTH	Mean	50.38	49.50	0.43
	SD	10.24	9.77	
ADJUSTMENT	Mean	48.53	51.86	1.66
	SD	10.27	9.42	

Table No.2 shows mean, standard deviations scores and ‘t’ values of the male and female employees of both departments on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment. On Occupational Stress, the male employees have a higher mean score (M =51.58) than the female employees (M =47.97). Standard Deviation scores of the male and female employees are 11.52 and 7.26 respectively. The obtained ‘t’ value for the mean difference is 1.81 which is not significant (P> .05). This shows that there is no significant difference between male and female employees on Occupational stress. This result of present study is supported by Triveni S. and V.A Aminabhavi (2002) who observed that male and female professionals and also non-professionals do not differ significantly on occupational stress. The result of present study, however, does not agree with the findings of C. Anbuchelvan (2012) and Sheikh AbulBarkat and AsmaParveen (1999) who observed that men and women employees significantly differed on occupational stress.

On Mental Health, the male employees have a higher mean score (M =50.38) than the female employees (M = 49.50). Standard deviation scores of male and female employees are 10.24 and 9.77 respectively. The obtained ‘t’ value. t = 0.43, is not significant (P>.05). On Adjustment, the female employees have a higher mean score (M = 50.86) than the male employees (M = 44.29). Standard deviation scores of male and female employees are 10.27 and 9.42 respectively. The ‘t’ value is 1.66, which is not significant (P>.05). This shows that there is no significant difference between male and female employees on Mental Health and adjustment. This finding of the present study is supported by the finding of B. Nagaratnamma (1999) who examined the occupational employees and their mental health status on 360 employees from three different organizations. This study found out that men and women employees do not differ significantly in their mental health levels.

Table3: Mean, Standard Deviation and ‘t’ value of the Male and female employees of Police department on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment.

VARIABLE		Male Employees of Police (N=30)	Female Employees of Police (N=20)	‘t’ Value
OCCUPATIONAL STRESS	Mean	51.27	49.05	0.66
	SD	13.00	8.76	
MENTAL HEALTH	Mean	48.63	47.00	0.59
	SD	10.88	6.93	
ADJUSTMENT	Mean	43.23	45.90	0.03
	SD	7.98	10.15	

Table No.3 shows mean, standard deviations scores and ‘t’ values of the Male and female employees of Police departments on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment. On occupational stress, the male employees of the police department have a higher mean score (M = 51.27) than the female employees

of the police department (M =49.05). Standard Deviation scores of male and female employees are 13.00 and 8.76 respectively. The obtained ‘t’ value is 0.66, which is not significant (P> .05). This shows that the male and female employees of police do not differ significantly on occupational stress. The result of present study is supported by Vijayalaxmi and Triveni (2000), Kirkcaldy and Martin (2000) and Triveni and Vijayalaxmi (2002) who observed no gender effect on occupational stress.

On the variable Mental Health, male employees have a higher mean score (M = 48.63) than the female employees (M =47.00) of police department. Standard deviation scores of male and female employees are 10.88 and 6.93 respectively. The ‘t’ value is 0.59, which is not significant (P> .05). On total Adjustment, the female employees have a higher mean score (M = 45.90) than the male employees of police department (M=43.23). Standard deviation scores of female and male employees are 10.15 and 7.98 respectively. The obtained ‘t’ value for the mean score is 0.03 which is not at significant level. This shows that the male and female employees of police department do not differ significantly on mental health and adjustment. This Finding of the present study is supported by the findings of B. Nagartanamma (1999), O’rourke(1986) and Srivastav. al (1987) who observed that, there was no significant Gender difference on mental health.

Table4: Mean, Standard Deviation and ‘t’ value of the Male and female employees of Forest department on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment.

VARIABLE		Male Employees of Forest (N=26)	Female Employees of Forest (N=24)	‘t’ Value
OCCUPATIONAL STRESS	Mean	51.81	47.29	1.96*
	SD	9.71	5.93	
MENTAL HEALTH	Mean	52.19	51.50	0.23
	SD	9.40	11.46	
ADJUSTMENT	Mean	54.73	56.92	1.04
	SD	9.30	4.54	

*p<.05 level

Table No.4 shows mean, standard deviations scores and ‘t’ values of the Male and female employees of forest department on Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Adjustment. On Occupational Stress, the male employees of the police department have a higher mean score (M = 51.81) than the female employees of the police department (M =47.29). Standard Deviation scores of male and female employees are 9.71 and 5.93 respectively. The ‘t’ value is 1.96, which is significant at p>.05 level. This shows that there is significant difference between male and female employees of forest department on occupational stress. The finding of the present study is supported by the findings of C. Anbuchelvan (2012) and Sheikh AbulBarkat and AsmaParveen (1999). The finding of their study shows that male employees have higher occupational stress than their female colleagues.

On Mental Health, the male employees have a higher mean score (M = 52.19) than the female employees (M =51.50) of police department. Standard deviation scores of male and female employees are 9.40 and 11.46 respectively. The ‘t’ value is 0.23, which is not at significant level. On Adjustment, the female employees have a higher mean score (M = 56.92) than the male employees of police department (M=54.73). Standard deviation scores of female and male employees are 4.54 and 9.30 respectively. The obtained ‘t’ value is 1.04 which is not significant (p<.05). This shows there is no significant difference between male and female employees of forest departments on Mental Health and Adjustment. The finding of the present study is supported by Won Sop Shin (2007). He investigated the influence of forest View on job satisfaction and job stress. The results showed that existence of forest views, gender, age and job category had no influence.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The police and forest employees do not differ significantly on occupational stress.
2. The forest employees have significantly high level of mental health than police employees.
3. The forest employees have significantly very high level of adjustment than police employees.
4. Male and female employees do not differ significantly on occupational stress, mental health and adjustment.
5. Male and female employees of police department do not differ significantly on occupational stress, mental health and adjustment.
6. Male employees of forest department have significantly more occupational stress than the female employees of forest department.
7. Male and female employees of forest departments do not differ significantly on mental health and adjustment.

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