

PERSONALITY TRAITS AND STRESS AMONG FOUR FORCES OF PUNJAB POLICE

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ABSTRACT

The study is an attempt to investigate differences among four forces of Punjab police including Elite Force, Traffic Police, Thana police and Punjab Highway Patrolling in terms of organizational police stress, operational police stress and personality traits. Organizational police stress questionnaire (McCreary & Thompson, 2006), Operational Police Stress Questionnaire (McCreary & Thompson, 2006), and International Personality for Item Pool Goldberg (1999) were administered to collect data from police. Sample was drawn from five ranks of police officers including constables, head constables, assistant sub inspectors, sub inspectors and inspectors of four major forces of Punjab. 825 police officers from all 36 districts of Punjab police participated in this study. ANOVA was run through SPSS to analyze mean differences. Results indicated significant major differences among all four forces in terms of their personality traits and stress levels. The study has significant implications for all the forces of the Punjab police.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Organizational Stress, Operational Stress, Punjab Police.

INTRODUCTION

The main responsibility of the Police department is to maintain the law and order and protect the rights of the citizens. Over the years, many advancements have taken place in the Punjab Police and it has been classified into various forces to protect law enforcement in the province, like dolphin squad, elite force, mujahid squad, anti-terrorism force, Punjab rescue force (PRU), traffic police, motorway police, Punjab highway patrolling etc. Punjab Police officials are exposed to stressful working environment and they are duty-bound to perform various orders on a daily basis. Their duties include encounters, death exposure, threats to their lives, human misery, physical harm, armed confrontations, motor vehicle crashes, witnessing violent deaths, bomb blasts, hostage negotiations, snatchings, and confrontations with high-profile criminals and extremists (Eriksen and Kecklund, 2007).

Various western studies have also highlighted that police officers are exposed to a number of stressors while protecting and facilitating the citizens who fall prey to social issues (Prochniak, 2012). Decades ago Bittner (1970) study showed that police officers serve citizens twenty-four hours every day to solve many complicated cases. Various researches have been conducted for the police divisions in numerous nations, and many researchers concluded that police duty is very stressful as they need to solve problems in a very short time and face uncertainty and complexities in the cases of citizens (Brown & Campbell, 1990). However in order to work effectively in risky situations a police officers must have a certain personality traits.

Extensive work has been done on the personality profile of the police officers. The personality of a police officer cannot be matched with other professionals, occupations, or other citizens (Parker & Roth, 1973). Twersky-Glasner (2005) noted that socialization helps police officers to perform better in the department, and the personality of police officers should have specific characteristics, including being less neurotic and less anxious as they have to face stressful daily routine tasks. Police officers' personalities possess some other characteristics like being emotionally stable, authoritarian, cynicism, and aggression (Lefkowitz, 1975). Ozcan and Gultekin (2000) revealed that in Turkish national police

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force political influences are big hurdles in the development of the department. Not only this but all over the world police forces are being influenced by politicians and in developing countries it is effecting vastly. Politicians communicate with high officials who depend on them. Young (2003) describes that bad image among citizens, lack of financial resources, increasing demands, lacking support from general public are sources of stress among police officers.

Personality traits captured the attention of the personality theorists and the researchers many years ago and have been a widely searched area. Kelly (1955) postulates that personality is a broader term which covers areas of thinking, feelings, and behaviours of an individual, and that each person is different from the other in all these aspects. Nicholas (2003) justified that personality features are different for every person in every way. Just like if we consider the example of twins, they will not have the same finger prints, so just like that, our personalities cannot be alike. Costa and McCrae (1992) made a significant contribution in the field of personality psychology by introducing the big five personality traits, commonly known as the five factor model (FFM). This is called the five-factor personality, and it has brought a big revolution. It is assumed that around 50 different cultures have translated this personality measurement tool to assess personality, so it is worldwide applicable and valid for many countries and societies (Costa and Widiger, 1994). The five factors are categorized as follows:

Neuroticism: Edwards (1998) claims that an individual who score high on neuroticism personality trait is more prone to be unstable in expressing their emotions. He may get worry soon over little reasons and become nervous in stressful situations easily.

Extraversion: An individual who scores high on extraversion tends to be very social, loves interacting others and sharing with others, active and enthusiastic, talkative and loves to have people around (Costa & Widiger, 1994).

Openness: This personality trait shows how a person takes interests in creative activities and holds an open approach towards nature and novel situations which happen in life (Costa & Widiger, 1994).

Agreeableness: Means that how a person interact with people in social situations (Costa & Widiger, 1994) agreeableness characterizes a person's good nature and his flexible attitude towards others and low score on this personality trait is an indication of rigid and competitive behaviour (Edwards, 1998).

Conscientiousness: Costa & Widiger (1994) claims that an individual high on this domain tend to be punctual, well organized, disciplined, responsible, and not only this he has personality characteristics including being honest, responsible and cautious.

Goldberg and his colleagues extended FFM to explore more about personality (Larsen & Buss, 2005). It is a great contribution in the field of personality psychology. One of the main leading research by Goldberg who developed IPIP (international personality for item pool (1999) on personality factors is inspiring as he studied in depth about personality features. Knafo (2002) explains that 5 personality traits can be assessed through this questionnaire. i) extraversion, ii) agreeableness, iii) conscientiousness, iv) emotional stability-neuroticism and v) openness.

Many researchers have concluded that personality characteristics of police officers are unlike other professionals as police officers need to possess specific personality traits (Skolnick, 1993). Abrahamsen and Strype (2010) also mentioned that police officers have different personality as compared to civilians.

Classic studies and contemporary studies reflected on the personality profile of the police officers for instance Lefkowitz (1975) also mentioned that police officers are on risk for 24 hours and also noted that officers are being considered suspicious even not only by a common man of the area but also by other colleagues and public as well. On the other hands contemporary studies such as Masood, Rafique, Qaiser and Musarrat (2017) conducted a research on police officers and administered NEO-FFI to reveal personality traits of police officers. They concluded that openness in NEO -FFI is utmost important for good job performance in the police department. They concluded that low neuroticism is positively correlated with good job performance among police officers. They also revealed that high scores of extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness have a positive correlation with job performance of police officers. Toch, (2002) revealed that main stressor that police officer experience is administrative issues as poor administrative decision leads to poor leadership and management. Unprofessional behaviour of colleagues and high authorities cause stress. This can also lead to poor job satisfaction (Brough, 2004).

Finn and Tomz (1996)" revealed that job duties of police officers are much stressful. Major

stressors involve lengthy work hours, poor administration, substandard training, favouritism, lack of encouragement, less promotional chances and familial issues.” (p.7). Violanti et al., (2006) conducted a research on police officers who were performing their duties near world trade centre where buildings were destroyed. Police officers reported higher levels of symptoms of not only stress but also of suicidal ideations.

Lindsey (2007) reported that police officers are encouraged by financial benefits, professional appreciation, adventurous job activities, and thrilling activities tend to work for longer hours. Paton et al., (2009) discusses that due to less encouraging environment and slow promotional structure on nepotism and less consideration of merit also a source of stress among police officers.

Previous literature suggests that personality traits impact stress levels on police officers. Personality traits cause work pressure more stressful or least stressful among individuals. Police officers may adapt in stressful situations when different personality features play important role even in high work pressure.

Objectives of the Study

- To compare elite force, thana police, traffic police and PHP in terms of personality traits, organizational police stress and operational police stress.
- **Hypothesis**
 - The Elite Force, Police officers working in police stations (thana), Traffic Police (city traefic police) and PHP (Punjab Highway Patrolling) would differ significantly in terms of their personality traits and stress (Organizational and Operational)

Operational Definitions

Personality Traits

In the present study personality traits are measured by International items pool for personality traits. Five subscales are used to measure emotional stability, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientious by Goldberg (2005). Urdu translation of IPIP is used for this study. Higher scores indicate higher levels of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientious.

Operational and organizational Stress

In present study operational and organizational stress on police officers will be measured through 40 items scales of McCrery and Thompson (2013). Ranging from point 1: no stress at all to 4 moderate stress to 7 severe stress. The questionnaires were translated in Urdu through back translation for police officers of Punjab.

METHOD

The research is based on cross sectional survey method. Neuman (2014) suggests that the only survey methods are convenient in explaining the characteristics of a huge population. Police officers were divided across all over Punjab covering 36 districts and 67 cities of Punjab. Data were collected from four major forces including Elite police force (EPF), Punjab Highway Patrolling (PHP), City Traffic Police (CTP), District Police (Thana police) police officers of five ranks including Constables, Head Constables, Assistant Sub Inspectors, Sub Inspectors and Inspectors.

Sample

A purposive sample consisting of 825 police officers was drawn from four forces Elite police force (EPF) , Punjab Highway Patrolling (PHP), City Traffic Police (CTP), District Police(Thana police) conveniently . The data was collected from all 36 districts of Punjab including 67 cities in total. Police officers with an age range of 19 years to 60 years participated in the study.

Table No. 1 Sociodemographic characteristics of Police Officers

Characteristics	n	%
Family System		
Nuclear	275	33.3
Joint	549	66.5
Religion		
Muslim	824	99.9
Christian	1	.1
Types of Forces		

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	Elite Force	205	24.8
	Punjab Highway Patrolling	200	24.2
	Thana Police	240	29.1
	Traffic Police	180	21.8
Rank of officer			
	Constable	241	29.2
	Head Constable	189	22.9
	Assistant Sub Insp	145	17.6
	Sub Insp	190	23.0
	Inspectors	60	7.3
Education			
	Matric	141	17.1
	Intermediate	171	20.7
	Bachlars	340	41.2
	Masters	133	16.1
	M. Phil	39	4.7
	Phd	1	.1
Marital Status			
	Single	117	14.2
	Married	708	85.8
Age Group			
	19-30	136	16.5
	31-40	418	50.7
	41-50	171	20.7
	51-60	100	12.1
Experience Group			
	1-5 years	126	15.3
	6-10 years	50	6.1
	11-15 years	226	27.4
	16-20 years	235	28.5
	21-25 years	60	7.3
	26-30 years	44	5.3
	Above 30 years	84	10.2
Income Group			
	25000-50000Rs.	426	51.6
	51000-100000Rs.	395	47.9
	101000-150000Rs.	3	.4
	151000-200000Rs.	1	.1

Instruments

Demographic Information

The basic information asked was name, age, gender, education, marital status, siblings, rank, experience, monthly income, religion, city, district and family system. All the information later entered in SPSS except names due to the confidentiality of the participants.

International Personality Item Pool (IPIP): IPIP was developed by Goldberg (1999) and was administered on police officers of Punjab. It consists of five subscales: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience. A Short version of 50 items was

used. It took only 15 minutes for the completion. The rating on the scale was measured on five point rating scale. Respondents were asked to select one number from 1 to 5 according their perception of their personality. Number 5 was an indication of 'very accurate' while number 1 depicted very inaccurate of all the statements. Items with reverse scoring were 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 44, 46, 49. 1 point is given if officer circled 5, 2 points if officer circled 4, 3 points if officer circled 3, 4 points if an officer circled 2, and 5 points if officer circled 1. Psychometric properties involve Cronbach's alpha coefficients as 0.78 (openness), 0.81 (Emotional stability), 0.79 (Consciousness) 0.85 (Extraversion), and .084 (Agreeableness).

Operational police Stress Questionnaire (Op-PSQ): Developed by McCreary and Thompson (2013) it consists of 20 items. Participants rate each item on the scale according to the level of stress using a 7-point scale that ranges from 'no stress at all' to 'a lot of stress'. Ranging from point 1: no stress at all to 4 moderate stress to 7 severe stress. It takes 10 minutes to complete. After calculating raw score mean score was calculated. Operational stressors asked in the questionnaire ere regarding hardy situations like police encounters, bomb blasts, road accidents, kidnappings are all incidents of violations and dangerous situations. The Cronbach's alpha for the PSQ-Op was .90

Organizational Police stress Questionnaire (Org-PSQ): Developed by McCreary and Thompson (2006) It consists of 20 items. Like OP- PSQ police officers were asked to rate each item on the scale according to the level of stress regarding statements. A 7-point Likert scale that ranges from 'no stress at all' to 'a lot of stress', Ranging from point 1: no stress at all to 4 moderate stress to 7 severe stress. The Organizational Police Stress Questionnaire (McCreary & Thompson, 2006) was developed to measure the stressors associated with policing. The mean score indicated the level of stress among police officers. Questions regarding bureaucratic red tape, staff, and leadership etc were asked in the survey. The Cronbach's alpha for the PSQ-Org was .89

Translation

Authorized permission from authors through email was obtained before translation and administration of tools. In order to facilitate police officers, all questionnaires were used in Urdu translated version to make them easy to understand and comprehend by all the police officers. Translation procedure for the administration of the scales 6 qualified police officers and 6 language experts (3 English and 3 Urdu) contributed their input in different stages of the translations. After the forward and backward translation process the final version of Urdu scales were derived. A pilot study on 30 police officers at police training school farooqabad was also done to see if any other changes or modification were required.

Procedure

The advanced studies and research board (ASRB) of Govt College University approved the research synopsis and formal permissions from Punjab police department were obtained for data collection. High official Add. IGP ordered and assigned this task to four focal persons of four forces for the assistance in data collection of Punjab police including elite force, traffic police, Thana police and Punjab highway patrolling. All 36 districts were included for the purpose of data collection. Separate permission letters were issued to various districts for the availability of police officers including Punjab high way patrolling, City Traffic police, and Elite force and Thana police. All ethical considerations were strictly followed in this study. First of all the participants were briefed regarding research purposes as per directions of APA (American Psychological Association). All ethical considerations of APA were followed. All police officers were briefed about the purpose of the research and informed consent was taken. After compilation of the data, data entry, scoring procedures and analyses done through IBM SPSS version 23.00.

RESULTS

Data collected for the present study was analysed using SPSS. To fulfil the objectives of the study, and to test the hypothesis, data was analysed using appropriate statistical analyses. Reliability coefficients of the scales were determined and ANOVA was used to determine the significant mean difference among four police forces in terms of personality traits and stress.

Table No. 2 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients of International IPIP, Org PSQ-Op, OP- PSQ with Subscales, for (N=825)

Scales	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	Range
IPIP	195.48	20.60	.86	50
Extraversion	31.35	5.24	.54	9-45
Agreeableness	38.86	4.52	.63	9-45
Consciousness	34.21	4.68	.66	8-40
Emotional Stability	34.94	6.30	.73	9-45
Openness	35.40	4.84	.55	10-50
Org-PSQ	57.03	22.13	.91	20-140
Op-PSQ	53.82	23.51	.93	20-140

Note: *M*= Mean; *SD*= Standard Deviation, α = Reliability Coefficient, IPIP=International Personality for Item Pool, Org-PSQ=Organizational Police Stress Questionnaire; OP-PSQ= Operational Police Stress Questionnaire.

Results indicate that Cronbach’s Alpha of Personality Scale is .86. Results indicated that Cronbach’s Alpha of Subscale Extraversion is .54 which shows that this sub-scale is reliable. Cronbach’s Alpha value of Emotional Stability sub-scales is .73 which shows that this sub-scale is highly reliable scale. Cronbach’s Alpha value of Consciousness and Agreeableness sub-scales are .66 and .63, respectively. This showed that both of these sub-scales have good reliability.. The sub-scale Openness has Cronbach’s Alpha values of .55 which indicated that this sub-scale is reliable. So, we use these subscales in our study.

Cronbach’s Alpha of Stress Operational Police Stress Questionnaire Scale is .93. These results show that both scales are highly reliable

Table No. 3 Comparing Four Forces of Punjab Police (N=825)on Personality Traits

Variables	Elite Force		PHP		Thana Police		Traffic police		<i>F</i> (3,821)	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Extraversion	35.02	5.64	37.06	5.20	35.73	5.86	34.32	5.98	8.14***	.02
Agreeableness	41.52	4.63	43.40	4.63	42.29	5.21	41.06	4.97	8.04***	.02
Conscientiousness	42.82	5.37	43.87	5.44	43.90	5.79	42.24	5.84	4.21**	.01
Emotional Stability	39.25	6.43	41.08	6.38	38.97	6.75	37.06	6.78	12.09***	.04
Openness	34.58	4.96	36.26	5.12	35.59	5.39	35.12	5.57	3.68**	.01

* $p < .001$

Table shows mean, standard deviation and *F*-values for Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Openness across Elite Force, PHP, Than Police and Traffic Police. Results revealed that PHP exhibited higher levels of Extraversion as compared to Thana, elite force and Traffic police respectively. The results indicated significant differences in all personality traits among all four forces of Punjab. Agreeableness is more prominent in PHP in comparison with other three forces $F(3, 821) = 8.04$, $p < .001$. Mean differences indicate that conscientiousness level is lower in Traffic and elite force as compared to PHP and Thana Police. PHP is more emotionally stable amongst all other forces with small effect size value $.04 < (<.05)$. Mean differences also indicate that openness personality trait is higher in PHP then Thana police and traffic police is higher in openness as compared to Elite force.

Table No. 4 One Way Analysis Of Variance In Stress Among Four Forces Of Punjab Police (N=825)

Variables	Elite Force		PHP		Thana Police		Traffic police		<i>F</i> (3,821)	η^2
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Organizational Police Stress	54.81	21.46	52.03	21.52	59.38	22.41		21.88	8.18***	.02
							61.97			

Operational Police Stress	52.92	23.59	47.67	21.77	55.39	24.19	59.57	22.86	8.85***	.03
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*P<.001

Table shows that organizational police stress appear to be more experienced by Traffic police in comparison to thana police, elite force and PHP respectively. Whereas operational police stress is higher in Traffic police followed by thana police, elite force and PHP respectively.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed significant differences among four forces of Punjab police including Elite Force, Thana Police, Traffic Police and PHP impersonality traits and organizational and operational police stress levels. It is evident from the literature that police officers require certain personality characteristics to manage stress and solve problems. They need to possess strong mental and physical stamina in order to perform their tough and sturdy tasks (Evans, Coman, and Stanley, 1992).

Five personality traits were examined in this study and the results show that the extraversion personality trait is more prominent in Punjab highway patrolling. They are more social as they interact with citizens all the day on the roads and facilitate the. Extraversion personality trait revealed by items like feeling comfortable around people, starting conversations and joyful attitude in parties and social gatherings. After PHP officers extraversion was also found to be high among Thana police as police officers working in police stations have interactions with citizens all day. The reason could be good training in police training institutes. Model police stations are also established in Lahore and the big cities of Punjab with qualified and well trained staff. Subsequently, elite force scored on extraversion which shows that elite force is basically performing VVIP security and facilitating Thana police officers. Lastly traffic police officers score on extraversion was less in comparison to other three police forces. The reason could be their very hectic routine, no certain duty hours and no appreciation from the department. It is evident from the results that traffic police officers are less sociable. The findings support that introvert police officers perform poorly at work and face additional difficulties because they are shy and do not readily take initiatives (Judge et. al., 1999).

Secondly, Punjab highway patrolling scored high on agreeableness, which shows the flexibility of police officers the findings of the study support Piedemont and Chae (1997) which suggests that extraversion, agreeableness and openness are positively related to job performance. Subsequently, Thana police officers also scored high in this domain which shows that police officers while interacting with the public show less rigidity and are more flexible towards other ideas and suggestions. Then comes the elite force, as their duty is related to security and they don't have much interaction with others. They are well trained in competitions and are not flexible toward others. Traffic police scored less in this domain and may have a tendency to be rigid and aggressive towards public. Moreover the findings of the study are consistent with Piedemont and Chae, (1997) which indicated that police officers with agreeable personality traits tend to show good productivity, innovation, and are relatively associated with higher performance scores.

Thirdly the findings indicated that conscientiousness is high in police officers working in police stations as they are bound to be punctual and well organized. Subsequently, PHP scored high on this domain as well, which shows that they are very dutiful. Elite force comes afterwards in this domain, which is an indication of their hard work and self-control while weapon handling. Subsequently, traffic force scored in this domain, which shows that they are less satisfied with their duties and show less performance in their job duties. Traffic police officers are not always prepared for orders and may not be able to deal with haphazard situations.

Fourthly, Punjab high way patrolling police scored high on emotional stability domain followed by elite force and Thana police which is an indication of better stress management among police officers. According to subscales of this personality trait Officers in PHP don't get upset easily and express their emotion accordingly. The study supports Spector et al., (2000) revealed that less emotional stability among police officers produce unprofessional behaviour whether social skills improve the quality of mental and physical health. Traffic police followed by thana police sored high on neuroticism which shows that they are less able to manage their stress. They may show less effective communication with the public when they are on duty. Berg et al, (2006) revealed that higher levels of neuroticism are positively correlated with high levels of stress and improper resilience styles and it is negatively

correlated with wellbeing of police officers.

Fifthly, Openness was found to be high among PHP police officers followed by police officers working in police station, Traffic police officers and elite police force. As elite police force has less public interaction limited work duties, they scored less as compared to other forces. Police officers who scored high in this domain means that they are full of ideas and they have good imagination skills.

Sixthly, Results indicated that organizational police stress and operational police stress are high among traffic police officers as compared to other forces. Stress is part of the life of a police officer, and work-related stress among police officers increases high levels of neuroticism (Tok, 2011). The findings revealed that traffic police are under more organizational and operational stress. Reason could be long duty hours and hectic public interaction. Traffic police officers have limited time for family and personal needs. They also face severe seasonal changes while standing on the roads in long duty hours. Mean scores of Punjab highway patrolling, on the other hand, have shown a lower level of stress on both operational police stress and organisational police stress because they have fixed and specific duty hours and can balance family time with their duty hours. They can manage family time with their duty hours as well. Their educational qualifications are also high. The findings of the study is consistent with Kumar and Mohan (2009) study which also reported that traffic police officers have high stress levels due to their hectic routine while Hammad et al., (2012) revealed that traffic police officers have stress but it is moderated by various coping methods.

Moreover the findings of our study revealed that police officers working in police stations and elite police force respectively scored high on stress as compared to PHP. They have multiple tasks at work and uncertain duty hours make them more stressful. They have more emergency situations as compared to PHP. Police officers working in police stations have hectic work pressures and uncertainty in job hours. The findings support Summerlin et al., (2010) who reported that 68% of American police officers considered too much paper work and dealing with public is really very stressful and 16 % of American police officers considered the reason for high stress levels is to be on duty on off days and their family life is affected.

Findings of the study indicate that traffic police officers are very stressful that is elicited by their duties. Stressful situations and dealing with them is very much relatable to personality traits. Organizational and personal factors need to be assessed for better performance and guide the officials to develop professional skills (Demerouti et al., 2012).

CONCLUSION

Results of the study indicated that traffic police officers scored high on both organizational and operational police stress whereas Punjab highway patrolling scored higher on extraversion, agreeableness and emotional stability.

Implications of the Study

High officials of the police department may benefit from this study for stress management of police officials. Improving quality of life of police officers by increasing medical benefits, providing counselling and social support by engaging them in social activities can improve their quality of life and this in turn will lower their organizational and operational police stress.

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