# Relationship between Operational/Organizational Stress and Family Distress in Police Officers from Anti Narcotic Force (ANF) Rawalpindi, Pakistan

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## Abstract

Police is the backbone of law enforcement agencies that is becoming a hub of immense stress and frustration due to the prevailing situationin Pakistan. Thus, this research was carried out to unveil the underlying stressors in the police department and to explore if these stressors are encroaching and invading their family lives and affecting them in any way. A quantitative research was carried out for this purpose. Two questionnaires were used in this research; police stress questionnaire and Index of family relations. 150 police officers recruited in ANF police stations in Rawalpindi were approached for the research purpose. The results of the study showed a strong correlation between operational Stress and family distress in police officers (r=0.33 and p<.001). Simple regression analysis showed that operational stress is a strong indicator of family distress in police officers (beta=-.030, p<0.01). This research indicates the existence of occupational stress in police officials that can lead to high family distress. As police job is dangerous and stressful in nature this aspect cannot be eradicated therefore the need of the hour is to introduce useful interventions for controlling and managing these stressors. This can help identify the elements of occupational stress and family distress and educate the police departments on how to overcome and manage such huge amounts of stress and distress among their employees.

**Key Words***:* Police Stress, Family Distress, Punjab Police Pakistan.

## Introduction and Literature Review

Research in the area of police stress has defined, stress as a state that is forced on a person from outside giving rise to physical and mental distress to some extent (Miller, 2007). A number of occupational stressors have been observed such as work-family conflict, work load, lack of appreciation, apprehension of severe injury or being killed on duty, insufficient tools, shooting someone as a part of duty, conflict with the public, lack of job satisfaction, the work environment, workplace problems and Police hierarchy(Selokar et al, 2001). Same types of stressors including low pay, irregular sleep schedules, shift work, role ambiguity,

role boundary, limited staff and resources, safety hazards, physical strains, bad health and lack of opportunities for growth have been observed in police throughout the world (Matt Nesvisky, 2014; Violanti,2005; Richard Matthews, 2011; Osipow & Spokane, 1998;Roberts & levenson, 2009 & Kop, Euwema, & Schaufeli, 1999).The research idea came from observations from the literature review that police officers who are emotionally burnt out are likely to exhibit anger, experience stress and anxiety after returning from work (Naz and Gavin, 2013, Irshad, 2008). Therefore, this research was carried out to investigate the relationship between police job stress and family relationships. Itexplored the impact of occupational stress on family relations, thus also looking at the factors contributing to family distress and aims at identifying measures to address occupational stress in family context.

The previous findings also suggest that stress affects the police officers as well as their families (Sever and Cinoglu, 2010).Literature in Pakistan also suggests high levels of stress. One study found that 80% of the Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa police officers had high scores on the burnout scale and 55% had scored high on stress scale (Irum, 2008). In addition, Naz and Gavin (2013) highlighted role of operational procedures in police work as major contributors towards stress.

Work-family conflict is found to be one of the major stressorsthat can impact the functioning of family due to work-role stressors, social support at work and work distinctiveness (Michel et al. 2001). Sever and Cinoglu (2010) found that highly stressful officers are 4 times more likely to commit domestic violence.Police stress was a leading cause of the high divorce rate in Police officers (Burgin, 1978) and other problems like violence with family members have been identified as an outcome of this occupational stress.

In Pakistan, at Federal level the police forces include Federal Investigation Agency, National Highways and Motorway Police, Pakistan Railways Police and Anti-Narcotics Force. The regional level forces are Capital Territory Police, Islamabad Capital Territory, Punjab Police, Sindh Police, KP Police and Baluchistan Police (Ellahi,2002). These huge numbers of forces are also indicators of greater occupational stress thus affecting their family relations. Due to the ever changing and volatile social and political conditionsin Pakistan risk and danger for the police is considerably increasing thus giving birth to high stress rate among the officers.

The current research aims at exploring the occupational stress experienced by the police officers of ANF Rawalpindi and how it is affecting their family ties. The findings can help identify the stressors that may lead to unhealthy family

relations and also bring about some important reforms.The findings of the current study help in unveiling the contribution of work stressors on family relations.

## Research Questions

1.  What is the prevalence of operational/organizational stress and family distress among police officers of ANF?

2.  What is the relationship between operational/organizational stress and family distress?

3.  Is there any difference in experiencing operational/organizational police stress and family distress among police officers of ANF based on their years of service?

4.  Is there any difference in experiencing operational/organizational police stress and family distress among police officers of ANF based on their ranks?

5.  Is there any impact of operational stress on family distress?

### Hypothesis

o   There will be a high level of operational/organizational stress as well as family distress in police officers.

o   There will be a positiverelationship between operational/organizational stress and family relationships.

o   There will be a difference in experiencing operational/organizational stress in terms of years of service in police officers.

o   There will be a difference in experiencing operational/organizational stress in terms of ranks of police officers.

o   There is an impact of operational stress on family distress.

## Method

### Design

This was a correlation study using survey design which looked at the relationship between operational/organizational stress and family relations of the Police officers in ANF, Rawalpindi.

### Sample

A sample of 150 police officers was approached through convenient sampling from the Department of ANF Rawalpindi. Participants ranged in age from 25-40 years. All the participants were male as the female officers were really limited in number and were not included in the present study. All the officers were

selected from two police stations and a general head quarter of ANF located in Rawalpindi. The consent form for this study was provided by the Senior Authority of Anti Narcotics Force. Three gate keepers provided access to all the officers and helped in the collection of data.

## Exclusion Criteria

Following was the exclusion criteria for this study

1.      The Women Police officers were not made a part of this study because of the scarcity of the recruited women police in the ANF department.

2.      This study was just limited to the police officials and the army personals serving the ANF department. Secondly, this study aimed at just exploring the experiences of the police officials only.

3.      Only the officials of ANF Rawalpindi were selected. Islamabad ANF officials were not approached due to huge differences in their experiences.

4.      The officials having less than 5 years of service were not made a part of the study due to their lack of experience in this particular field.

## Instruments

Following instruments were used in this study in addition to consent letter and demographic information sheet:

### 1.    Police Stress Questionnaires

The Police stress Questionnaire comprised of two scales that are The Operational Police Stress Questionnaire (PSQ-Op) and the Organizational Police Stress Questionnaire (PSQ-Org). These two scales together measure the "Occupational stress in Policing". The PSQ-Op and PSQ-Org both contain 20-items each and can be used either independently or collectively. There is no formal scoring method for PSQ, the mean of each scale is considered to be a cut off score and the participants scoring higher than the cutoff score are considered to be experiencing  high level of stress where as those scoring below the cutoff score are considered to be experiencing low level of stress. In this study the mean for PSQ-OP was 95 and for PSQ-ORG it was 96, thus the participants scoring above this mean were considered to be highly stressed.

### Index of Family Relationships

The Index of Family Relations (IFR) was developed by Walter W Hudson in 1993 and published in 1997 who intended to measure the family distress and relationship problems in family and aimed at assessing what an individual felt about his/her family. This scale was used in order to check if there was a relationship between occupational stress and family distress in police officers of ANF. The IFR is a 25-item scale. As per the scoring system of IFR, 70 is taken as a cutoff score and inverse scoring is also done for some items (Hudson, 1997).The participants scoring above the cutoff score 70 are categorized as highly distressed individuals and the ones scoring below the cutoff score are categorized as having no family distress.

## Procedure:

### *Translation of the Scales*

#### 1. Police Stress Scale

No Urdu version of this scale was available thus this scale was translated into Urdu for the convenience of the participants using strategy adopted by Brislin (1970) in which the scales were translated using committee approach. During translation into Urdu language, senior police officers were also included in the committee other than a linguistic expert for purpose of back translation.

#### 2. Index of Family Relations

Urdu version of the scale was used (Shah &Aziz, 1993).

After translation, the scales were subjected to pilot study followed by the main study.

### Pilot Study

Purpose of pilot study was to examine psychometric properties of scales used in this study. Particular attention was paid to language comprehension and readability of items that were translated into Urdu for present study. A process of back forward translation (Brislin, 1970) led to a refined version of PSQ along with IFR. These two scales along with demographic sheet and consent forms were individually administered to 15 police officers. Overall it took an average of 15 minutes to complete the protocols. Reliability analyses suggested acceptable range of both scales (i.e., alpha being 0.76 for PSQ and 0.81 for IFR). Despite strong alpha values, few items were identified from IFR that the participants experienced difficulty in comprehending. These items were reworded and amended protocol was re administered on 6 police officers suggesting appropriateness in terms of language comprehension and reliability.

**Main study**

Permission for access was obtained through proper channelfromtwo stations of ANF Rawalpindi and general headquarters. A total of 230 officers wereapproached, out of which 150officersconsented to take part in the study. The participants of this study were assured that this study is research based and had nothing to do with their administration and they would not be evaluated in the light of the results of this study and neither would it in any way effect their personal or professional livesadversely. On average it took 15 minutes. All instructions were in compliance with those described in manuals of scales.

**Ethical Considerations**

During this study all the ethical issues were consideredespecially getting a consent letter from the department in return. For getting consent from the participants,a formal consent letterwas signed by them before participating in the study. Confidentiality was also made sure and the participants were told that all their private and provided information shall be kept confidential and would be used nowhere except for the research work. The participants were asked not to state their names as there were a few questions related to the supervisors and administration of their department thus the researcher wanted to save the participants from all kinds of negative and adverse consequences that may occur. Without any pressure and after knowing all the aspects of this study the officersparticipated in the study and were given a choice to quit the research at any time they if felt uncomfortable or unsafe.

## Results

*Demographic Profile of Participants*
**Table 1**
*Demographic characteristics of the research participants (n=150)*

| Variables | Categories | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age (in years) | 25-34 | 50 | 33.3 |
| | 35-39 | 44 | 29.3 |
| | 40 -55 | 56 | 37.3 |
| Education (in years) | Matric | 17 | 11.3 |
| | Intermediate | 26 | 17.3 |
| | Graduation | 59 | 39.3 |
| | Masters | 48 | 30.0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Marital Status | Single | 19 | 12.7 |
| | Married | 131 | 87.3 |
| Family System | Nuclear | 90 | 60.0 |
| | Joint | 60 | 40.0 |
| Children | 0 | 28 | 18.7 |
| | 1-3 | 80 | 53.3 |
| | 4-6 | 42 | 28.0 |
| | | | |
| Service Duration (in years) | 5-10 | 54 | 36.0 |
| | 11-20 | 63 | 42.0 |
| | 20 years above | 33 | 22.0 |
| | | | |
| Ranks | Constable | 30 | 20.0 |
| | Head Constable | 12 | 8.0 |
| | ASI | 13 | 8.7 |
| | SI | 31 | 20.7 |
| | Inspector | 39 | 26.0 |
| | DSP | 19 | 12.7 |
| | SP | 6 | 4.0 |

Note: the missing cases have not been reported; ASI =Assistant Sub Inspector

As suggested in the table above, majority of the participants ranged in age between 25 to 55 years with an average service experience of 10 years (approximately). Demographic distribution across education, marital status and family system reflected that a majority were educated up to graduation and above (i.e., 17-39%) married (87%) and belonged to nuclear family system (60%). According to the distribution across ranks, 20-26% of participants were constables, Senior Inspectors or Inspectors. Quite a few were head constables, assistant sub inspectors, or deputy sub inspectors.

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**Prevalence of Operational/Organizational Stress and Family Distress**

**Table 2**

*Levels of Operational/Organizational Stress and Family Distress in Police Officers*

| Scale | F | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| PSQ-OP | | |
| Low stress | 66 | 43.7 |
| High stress | 84 | 55.6 |
| PSQ-ORG | | |
| Low stress | 61 | 40.4 |
| High stress | 87 | 57.6 |
| IFR | | |
| No distress | 14 | 9.3 |
| High distress | 135 | 89.4 |

Note: PSQ-OP stands for police stress questionnaire operational, PSQ-ORG stands for police stress questionnaire organizational, IFR stands for Index of family relations.

As it has been described earlier, police stress questionnaire was used to determine levels of operational and organizational stress in police officers. Alongside, family relations were determined in context of presence of family distress as measured by index of family relations scale (IFR). Table 3 presents descriptive analysis of scores obtained on the three scales on basis of medians as cutoff points. Findings suggested that comparatively high percentage of police officers reported presence of operational (56%) and occupational (57%) stress. The percentage of participants reporting family distress was quite high (i.e., 89%).

**Relationship between operational/organizational stress and family distress**

**Table 3**
*Pearson product moments correlations (r) between PSQ-OP, PSQ-ORG and IFR*

| Scale | PSQ-OP | PSQ-ORG | IFR |
|---|---|---|---|
| PSQ-OP (S) | -- | .387** | .333** |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PSQ-ORG (S) | -- | -- | *.085* |
| | | | |
| IFR | -- | -- | -- |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Note: PSQ stands for Police stress Questionnaire, PSQ-OP stands for police stress questionnaire operational, PSQ-ORG stands for police stress questionnaire organizational, IFR stands for Index of family relations

Table 3 suggests a significant positive relationship between operational stress and family distress (r=0.33 and p<.001) where as no significant relationshipemerged between organizational stress and family distress (r=.08 and p>.001). These findings reflect that operational rather than organizational factors of stress may play influential role in family distress.

***Service wise differences in terms of operational/organizational stress and family distress***
**Table 4**

*Using ANOVA to compare years of service with PSQ-OP, PSQ-ORG and IFR*

| *Scales* | *SS* | *df* | *Mean Square* | *f* | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PSQ –OP | | | | | |
| Between groups | 4140.282 | 2 | 2070.141 | 3.161 | 0.045 |
| Within groups | 96284.711 | 147 | 654.998 | | |
| Total | 100424.993 | | | | |
| PSQ – ORG | | | | | |
| Between groups | 1369.281 | 2 | 684.640 | 1.138 | 0.323 |
| Within groups | 87838.129 | 146 | 601.631 | | |
| Total | 89719.173 | | | | |

| IFR | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 106.708 | 2 | 53.354 | .711 | 0.493 |
| Within groups | 11034.465 | 147 | 75.064 | | |
| Total | 11141.173 | | | | |

Note: PSQ stands for Police stress Questionnaire, PSQ-OP stands for police stress questionnaire operational, PSQ ORG stands for police stress questionnaire organizational, IFR stands for Index of family relations

Table 4 shows that years of service have a significant relationship with operational stress the significance level is 0.04 which is <0.05 thus there is a significant difference in years of service related to experiencing operational stress. Whereas no significant relationship between the years of service and PSQ-ORG and IFR were found as in both the cases p>0.05 showing that years of service is not a significant factor in organizational stress and neither it has any relationship with family distress and does not affect the family relations.

**Rank wise differences in terms of operational/organizational stress and family distress**

**Table 5**

*Using ANOVA to compare ranks with PSQ-OP, PSQ-ORG and IFR*

| Scales | SS | df | Mean Sq | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PSQ-OP | | | | | |
| Between Groups | 4544.113 | 6 | 757.352 | 1.130 | 0.34 |
| Within Groups | 95880.880 | 143 | 670.496 | | |
| Total | 100424.993 | 149 | | | |
| PSQ-ORG | | | | | |
| Between Groups | 5943.034 | 6 | 990.506 | 1.691 | 0.12 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Within Groups | 83776.139 | 143 | 585.847 | | |
| Total | 89719.173 | 149 | | | |
| **IFR** | | | | | |
| Between Groups | 870.827 | 6 | 145.138 | 2.021 | 0.06 |
| Within Groups | 10270.346 | 143 | 71.821 | | |
| Total | 11141.173 | 149 | | | |

Note: PSQ stands for Police stress Questionnaire, PSQ-OP stands for police stress questionnaire operational, PSQ ORG stands for police stress questionnaire organizational, IFR stands for Index of family relations

Table 5 shows that ranks have no significant relationship with operational stress. The significance level is 0.34 which is more than 0.05. There is no significant relationship between the ranks PSQ-ORG and IFR as well where significance level of PSQ-ORG is 0.12 and that for IFR is 0.06 , in all three cases p>0.05 showing that rank is not a significant factor in operational and organizational, neither does it have any relationship with family distress as *p* should be <0.5.

### *Operational Stress as Predictor of Family Distress*

**Table 6**

*Summary of Linear Regression Analysis for determining prediction effect of Operational Stress on family distress (N =150)*

| **Variables** | **b** | **B** | **95% C.I** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **LL** | **UL** |
| **PSQ-OPR** | -.030 | -.090 | 60.738 | 71.170 |
| **R²** | .19 | | | |
| **F** | 17.774 | | | |
| **Δ R²** | .195 | | | |
| ***p*** | <0.05 | | | |

Note:, PSQ-OP stands for police stress questionnaire operational, IFR stands for Index of family relations

F =17.774, p<0.05, controlled for service duration, family system, and ranks

Since there was a strong correlation between operational stress and family distress, simple linear regression analysis was computed to find out predictive power of operational stress after controlling for service duration, family system, and ranks. Results suggested that almost 20% of the variation in scores of family distress can be attributed to operational stress ($\Delta R^2 = .195$, $p<0.05$).

**Discussion**

Aim of the present research was to look at the relationship between police stress and family distress. Consistent with the hypothesis, police stress (particularly operational stress) had a statistically strong correlation with family distress suggesting that high levels of stress at work can influence family relations and cause distress. In addition to this, high levels of stress were prevalent in the sample of present study. These findings are consistent with what is reported across literature worldwide. The levels of police stress, whether operational or organizational, was quite high (table 2).Other studies have reported consistently high rates of stress in Pakistani police (Naz and Gavin, 2013; Hussain, 2012; Irshad, 2008).

Moreover, mean differences suggested that there was significant difference across number of years of service and ranks (Table 3-4), in terms of police operational stress and family distress. Post Hoc analysis revealed that officers from lower ranks (ranks up to ASI and below) reported high stress than officers from senior ranks (i.e., ASI and above). Similar pattern was observed for number of years of service. Deahl and colleagues (2010) had reported the similar results whichsuggest that due to operational nature of work as required of officers in different ranks may contribute to mounting levels of stress. In addition, initial years of service may be stressful on its own, because of lack of experience, unfamiliarity with police culture (Hussain, 2012) and adjustment.

Regression analysis (Table6)endorsed the predictive power of operational stress on family distress suggesting that there could be a strong role of taking work pressure home which could be a leading cause of disturbed family relationships. Literature on police-family distress across the globe corroborates with these findings and has demonstrated that police stress limits quality of family life (Patterson, 2003; He, Zhao, & Archbold, 2002; Jackson, & Maslach, 1982). Some of the reasons could be that the police officers have limited time for social gatherings or family time and quite often take work pressure to theirhome; their spouses are also concerned for their safety and wellbeing which eventually distresses home environment.

Findings of the present study contribute significantly in terms of providing empirical evidence against role of police stress in family distress. With respect to

the future research it is recommended to carry out further research into how police officers can manage work home environments. The current research suggests looking into further variables such as the problems/ challenges faced by the families of these officers or the impact of this stress on their social life and a number of other aspects.  It is extremely important to gather research evidence related to these issues at national level as well. The current circumstances of the country are adding up greatly to the stressors for the law enforcement agencies thus the need of the hour is to explore these stressors and their impact and to come up with valuable strategies to help these people. Thus in addition to the current study other researches and surveys should be conducted on other police departments in relation to other aspects of life and strategies should be put forth to identify and resolve the issues and problems if any.

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