Work Family Conflict And It's Effect On Occupational Stress Among Police Constables In Patna District

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Abstract- Occupational stress can be characterized as the physiological and emotional responses that transpire when individuals perceive a disparity between their work obligations and their abilities and resources to fulfill these obligations. The police play a crucial role in upholding laws, regulations, and standards within society. In performing these duties, their responsibilities expose them to various mental health challenges, such as stress and anxiety. Data was gathered from 300 police constables (an equal distribution of males and females) aged between 25 to 40 years through a random sampling method. The Occupational Stress Index (Srivastava and Singh, 1981) and the Work-Family Conflict Scale (Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams, 2000) were employed to gather the data. Results were derived using a t-test, which indicated that male and female police constables significantly differ in terms of occupational stress. Female police constables exhibited higher levels of occupational stress compared to their male counterparts, while no significant differences were noted in work-family conflict and its related variables.

Keywords- Occupational Stress, Law Enforcement, Work-Family Conflict

Introduction- The incidence of crime and violence is gradually escalating. The demands placed on law enforcement agencies are also on the rise. Police services are among the law enforcement entities that must confront and address both minor and significant crime-related cases or occurrences. Law enforcement personnel must fulfill diverse roles and responsibilities to maintain law and order within society. Consequently, the nature of their duties subjects them to various mental health challenges, including stress, anxiety, and depression.

The functions of police personnel are critically important; numerous studies have been conducted on this topic. Sehgal et al. (2006) disclosed that women enter the police force due to pressure from women's rights advocates and the judiciary. It was further reported that women's roles in policing are typically confined to matters involving women and children, as well as administrative tasks. Generally, women are allocated responsibilities related to victims of sexual offenses, juvenile and female perpetrators, missing individuals, and abused minors. According to

Muhammad and Shukla (2007), the primary responsibilities carried out by Indian women police consist of: assisting investigative teams in cases involving children and women, interrogating and interviewing child/ juvenile and women suspects, offenders, and witnesses. Moreover, female police personnel aid local law enforcement in locating missing women and children. They also serve as security personnel at airports, train stations, and bus terminals. The aforementioned findings indicate that the roles and duties of police constables are highly diverse and demanding, necessitating a profound level of coping abilities and psychological resilience so that they may operate effectively and contribute positively to society.

Variations in gender roles and responsibilities at the social and familial levels reflect the capability to balance social/family duties with occupational roles and obligations. Gender differences significantly influence task execution within the family and organizational contexts. Additionally, gender disparity plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' coping mechanisms against psychological distress and mental well-being. Based on the preceding analysis, the objectives of the study were articulated, as presented below.

Work-Family Conflict

Work-family conflict is defined as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible to some extent. In other words, engagement in the work (family) role complicates involvement in the family (work) role" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985a). The literature identifies three forms of work-family conflict: (a) Time-based conflict, (b) Strain-based conflict, and (c) Behavior-based conflict. Time-based conflict may arise when the time allocated to one role impedes participation in another role. Strain-based conflict indicates that stress encountered in one role intrudes upon and disrupts engagement in another role. Behavior-based conflict occurs when specific behaviors required in one role conflict with behavioral expectations in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985b). In an empirical study, Parkinson (2010) revealed that workplace stress has escalated into a significant issue in contemporary society. A quarter of employees regard their job as a primary source of stress in their lives. Multiple factors contribute to workplace stress, one of which is extended working hours. She also noted that police officers reported a higher incidence of suicidal ideation compared to the general population. Policing is inherently a high-stress occupation where officers consistently encounter danger, potential mortality, violence, and substantial demands. In alignment with this, Buker and Wiecko (2007) conducted a survey of civilian officers, police officers, and mid-level supervisors (a total of 811 respondents) serving in the Turkish National Police Organization. They discovered that organizational factors posed the most significant stressors among other sources of stress. Additionally, variations in certain stressors were observed based on the size and structure of the department. Furthermore, McCarty, Zhao, and Garland (2007) demonstrated that Stressors associated with police employment are inherent to the field of law enforcement. Stress has been recognized to exert both psychological and physical effects on an individual's health, potentially leading to

depersonalization and withdrawal, wherein a person adopts a solitary lifestyle. The role of policing is crucial to society, and the welfare of police officers should be a matter of substantial concern for the community at large. In another investigation, Saha, Sahu, Paul, and Ghosh (2014) performed a study to assess the psycho-physiological attributes and occupational stress of 50 police officers who had extensive experience in law enforcement. High levels of stressors were identified, including interactions with offenders, the absence of a modern system, monotonous daily tasks, and insufficient resources, among others. The study also indicated that multiple stressors were interrelated. Results suggested that the lack of modern systems and negative perceptions of the police contributed to excessive workloads and stress. Police work impacts not only the officers themselves but also their families, close companions, and friends. Research regarding stress in the immediate families of male police officers indicates that between 10 to 20 percent of the wives of male officers express dissatisfaction with their spouses' jobs and desire them to exit the police force. Furthermore, rotating shift work interferes with planning and celebrating holidays and significant family occasions, such as birthdays and anniversaries (Dempsey, 2005). The American Psychological Association has identified several job-related factors that contribute to family dysfunction within police families, including family disruptions due to rotating shifts, unpredictable work environments, job-related personal changes, familial relationships, community expectations and demands, and disruptions in family life (Nagarajamurthy, 2008). In a study, Kaur and Gupta (2016) researched police personnel in Punjab, India, which encompassed all officers operating within the police stations of the Doaba region. Data were gathered from a survey of 653 police personnel, consisting of both male and female Non-Gazetted Officers (NGOs), including Inspectors, Sub Inspectors, Assistant Sub Inspectors, and Other Ranks (ORs), such as Head Constables and Constables. Of these respondents, 79. 4% were married, and 80. 2% had children. The cumulative score from each respondent was computed and utilized as an indicator of family support, rather than a definitive measurement tool. Socio-demographic data, including age, gender, working hours, marital status, family type, and education, were also collected. The outcome variable assessed was family support among police personnel. A recent study by Qureshi et al. (2019) established that policing is a stressful profession that can lead to work–family conflict (WFC). WFC occurs when the work environment encroaches upon the family sphere or vice versa, leading officers to become less connected to their jobs and the police organization. Utilizing survey data from a sample of police officers in India, the research explored the relationship between four dimensions of WFC (time-based, strain-based, behavior-based, and family-based WFC) and two types of organizational commitment (continuance and affective). Family-based WFC was shown to diminish continuance commitment, while strain-based WFC impaired affective commitment. Conversely, time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based WFC augmented continuance commitment. The disparities in the research results have been noted, indicating that there is a notable difference in occupational stress between genders. Mixed results have also been documented in the current literature. Consequently, the present study was designed to comprehend

the gender differences in occupational stress and work-family conflict among police constables of Patna district. The objective of the study is to analyze the distinctions between male and female police constables of Patna district concerning occupational stress and work-family conflict. With this goal in focus, the following outlined objective was established.

Objective

- To investigate gender disparities in Occupational Stress and Work-Family Conflict among police constables.

Hypothesis

1. Female police constables were anticipated to exhibit higher levels of Occupational Stress and its dimensions compared to male police constables.

2. Male police constables were expected to show greater levels of Work-Family Conflict than female police constables.

METHODOLOGY

The current study is intended to examine gender distinctions in Occupational Stress and Work-Family Conflict among Patna district police constables. Hence, the data was collected with the objective of the study in mind. The following sections present essential information regarding the sample, instruments utilized, and the procedures employed to acquire relevant data.

Sample

Data was collected from 300 police constables (equal representation of both genders) employed in various police departments of Patna district including police stations, traffic units, and the Police Control Room department, within the age range of 25 to 40 years, using a random sampling technique. Only married constables were included, and only those who had been serving for a minimum of three years were selected. Educational qualifications of the participants were restricted to a minimum of 10th grade to graduation.

Tools

Occupational Stress Index (OSI) (Srivastava & Singh, 1981): In the present research, the Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava and Singh (1984) was utilized. This scale comprises 46 items, of which 28 are true-keyed and the remaining 18 are false-keyed. Participants were tasked with evaluating each item on a five-point scale regarding the extent to which a particular feature or characteristic was present in their job situation. Based on participants' responses to the various subscales of the Occupational Stress Index, individual values were computed. The overall score, derived from different scoring patterns for true and false keyed items, yielded the total stress score. The reliability index, determined through the split-half (odd-even) method and Cronbach's alpha, was found to be . 93 and . 90, respectively. The reliability indices of the 12 subscales ranged from 0. 45 to 0. 84 (Srivastava & Singh, 1984). The scale has been successfully employed in India by numerous researchers including Bhatia (1993), Savneet (2012), and Thakur (2015).

Work-Family Conflict Scale (Carlson, Kacmar & Williams, 2000): Work-family conflict is defined as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Three forms of work-family conflict have been identified in the literature:

 a. Time-based conflict,

 b. Strain-based conflict, and

 c. Behavior-based conflict.

Time-based conflict may arise when time allocated to one role hinders participation in another role, strain-based conflict indicates that strain experienced in one role encroaches upon and disrupts engagement in another role, and behavior-based conflict occurs when specific behaviors required in one role are inconsistent with behavioral expectations in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). In 1991, Gutek, Searle, and Klepa asserted that each of these three forms of work-family conflict has two directions: (a) Conflict arising from work interfering with family (WIF) and (b) Conflict arising from family interfering with work (FIW). When these three forms and two directions are combined, they yield six dimensions of work-family conflict: (1) Time-based Work interference with Family, (2) Time-based Family interference with Work, (3) Strain-based Work interference with Family, (4) Strain-based Family interference with Work, (5) Behavior-based Work interference with Family, and (6) Behavior-based Family interference with Work.

The Work-Family Conflict scale is an 18-item instrument developed by Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000) comprising 3 items that assess each of the 6 dimensions. Responses are to be provided on a 5-point Likert scale, which ranges from (1) Strongly disagree to (5) Strongly agree. The internal consistency of each of the six dimensions was evaluated using coefficient alpha. The reliability scores surpassed the standard threshold of acceptance of . 70.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The t-test was employed to examine gender differences concerning Occupational Stress and Work-Family Conflict among police constables in Patna district. The findings derived from the t-test conducted on data gathered from male and female police constables regarding the variables of Occupational Stress and Work-Family Conflict are presented below in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Mean, SD, on the variable of Occupational Stress & Work Family Conflict

Sr. No.	Variables	Male Police Constables (n=150)		Female Police Constables (n=150)		t–ratios
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Variables of Occupational Stress						
1.	Role Over load	13.90	2.84	25.25	2.45	37.01**
2.	Role Ambiguity	10.53	2.10	17.01	1.40	31.47**
3.	Role Conflict	11.43	2.48	21.44	1.57	41.79**
4.	Unreasonable group and Political Pressure	9.91	1.93	16.47	1.69	31.30**
5.	Responsibility for Persons	8.43	1.95	13.15	1.24	24.99**
6.	Under participation	8.75	2.09	16.11	2.01	31.44**
7.	Powerlessness	8.77	2.50	13.58	9.00	6.30**
Sr. No.	Variables	Male Police Constables (n=150)		Female Police Constables (n=150)		t–ratios
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
8.	Poor Peer Relations	9.55	1.91	17.35	12.31	7.67**
10.	Low Status	8.16	2.05	12.44	1.33	21.46**
12.	Unprofitability	5.83	1.52	7.50	1.33	10.10**

Variables of Occupational Stress						
8.	Poor Peer Relations	9.55	1.91	17.35	12.31	7.67**
9.	Intrinsic Impoverishment	9.65	1.94	17.04	12.32	7.26**
10.	Low Status	8.16	2.05	12.44	1.33	21.46**
11.	StrenuousWorking Conditions	8.47	2.53	16.51	1.58	32.95**
12.	Unprofitability	5.83	1.52	7.50	1.33	10.10**
	Total Occupational Stress	133.35	12.08	190.36	10.60	58.68**
Variables of Work Family Conflict						
1.	Time-based Work Interference with Family	12.85	1.08	12.73	1.13	0.94
2.	Time-based Family interference with Work	13.43	1.08	13.38	1.13	0.42
3.	Strain-based Work Interference with Family	13.09	1.09	13.05	1.10	0.31
4.	Strain-based Family Interference with Work	13.34	1.38	13.34	1.42	0.21
5.	Behaviour- based Work Interference with Family	13.20	1.30	13.17	1.34	0.22
6.	Behaviour- based Family interference with Work	13.53	1.13	13.48	1.16	0.35

t-value significant at 0. 05 level = 1. 97t-value significant at 0. 01 level = 2. 60

All the variables related to Occupational Stress are determined to be significant. These variables are: Female Police Constables exhibited higher scores than Male Police Constables on Role Overload t = 37. 01, (p < . 01); Role Ambiguity t = 31. 47, (p < . 01); Role Conflict t = 41. 79, (p < . 01); Unreasonable group and Political Pressure t = 31. 30, (p < . 01); Responsibility for Persons t = 24. 99, (p < . 01); Under participation t = 31. 44, (p < . 01); Powerlessness t = 6. 30, (p < . 01); Poor Peer Relations t = 7. 67, (p < . 01); Intrinsic Impoverishment t = 7. 26, (p < . 01); Low Status t = 21. 46, (p < . 01); Strenuous Working Conditions t = 32. 95, (p < . 01); Unprofitability t = 10. 10, (p < . 01); and Total Occupational Stress t = 58. 68, (p < . 01).

A review of the t-ratios in Table-1 comparing Male and Female Police Constables indicates that Female Police Constables scored higher than their Male counterparts on Total Occupational Stress and its dimensions, namely Role Overload, Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, Unreasonable group and Political Pressure, Responsibility for Persons, Under participation, Powerlessness, Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low Status, Strenuous Working Conditions, and Unprofitability. An examination of the t-ratios comparing Male and Female Police Constables indicated that no significant gender disparity exists regarding Work Family Conflict and its dimensions. Accordingly, hypothesis 1, which posited that Female Police Constables would demonstrate higher levels of Occupational Stress and its dimensions than Male Police Constables, is validated here. A review of previous studies also highlighted similar patterns concerning occupational stress. According to Lipp (2009), a higher proportion of females than males reported experiencing stress. Brown and Fielding (1993) noted that female uniformed officers reported elevated levels of self-perceived stress compared to their male counterparts. However, contradictory findings have also emerged, suggesting that females encounter crime-related stressors with less intensity and frequency than males. Thus, hypothesis 2, which suggested that Male Police Constables would exhibit higher levels of Work Family Conflict than Female Police Constables, is upheld here. The findings of the current study align with prior research; Bazana and Dodd (2013) investigated the correlation between work family conflict and stress among police

officers within the South African police service station in Alice, based on a sample of 101 officers. They reported a positive correlation between work family conflict and work stress. Similarly, Armstrong, Atkin-Plunk, and Wells (2015) conducted a study to assess work-family conflict in relation to job stress and job satisfaction involving a sample of 441 correctional officers in southern states. It was established that strain and behavior-based work-family conflict were significantly related to both job stress and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Female Police Constables scored higher than Male Police Constables across all variables of Occupational Stress and its dimensions. This outcome indicates that Male Police Constables experience lower levels of occupational stress compared to Female Police Constables, and it was also found that Male Police Constables attained lower scores on all twelve variables of occupational stress than Female Police Constables. Overall, the findings of the study suggest that Male Police Constables possess superior stress management capabilities relative to Female Police Constables. This study will particularly benefit professionals serving within police departments for the purposes of training and counseling police personnel.

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