

Stress Management Among Police Officers in Batangas City, Philippines

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Abstract - *This aimed to determine the stress management of police officers in Batangas City. More specifically, to determine the profile of the police officers in terms of gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, section assignment and rank; to determine the degree of stress as to work-related and non-work related stressors experienced by the respondents; to determine the stress management strategies utilized by the police officers, and to determine the significant difference of stress management strategies when grouped according to profile variables. This study made use of descriptive method with 155 respondents who are in the field. Results showed that majority of the respondents were males, designated in investigation section and has a rank of PO3, being adult which belongs to the age bracket of 31-35 and 46 and above, single and graduated criminology course before they entered the uniformed police profession. The work-related stressors are work-overload, demanding and strict superiors, failure to attain set goals at a given time, mismatch between current position and career aspiration, and poor ventilation. While non-work related stressors are monitoring of performance of their children at school (married), major personal injury or illness (single), difficulty in trusting others, and high cost of education of children. There is no significant difference on stress management such as relaxation techniques and social support received when grouped to their educational attainment.*

Keywords: Stress, Work-related Stressors, Non-work related Stressors, Stress Management, Police Officers

INTRODUCTION

Stress affects everyone, yet few people understand what causes it, how it develops, how it affects their bodies, and how they can be more effective in managing their stress. When stress is unrelenting and out of control, it is a villain that causes unhappiness, sickness, and even death (Blau, 2013). While great progress has been made over the years in the study and treatment of law enforcement stress, this progress has been running equally strong with increased pressures placed on police officers (Loose, 2009).

While police officers will experience various kinds of stress, alike other workers, such as fire fighters, nurses, etc., they are likely to experience a different type of stress called critical incident stress or CIS (Del Rosario, 2009).

It is very important that the resources be both sensitive to the needs of the affected police officers. From an individual's perspective it has been said that stress-related problems can be prevented in basically two ways: a) by eliminating the source(s) of the stress and (2) by learning how to deal with stressful conditions before they lead to problems (Mallucio, 2007).

This present study is designed to examine the nature of work-related and non-work related stressors being experienced by the police officers in Batangas City. This study seek the answer of what specific aspects of daily living are most stressful for Batangas City Police Officers. The question is proposed in the premise that identifying the sources of stress associated with those aspects provides essential information to guide appropriate strategies that can reduce the impact of those stressors. The researchers would like to know the stressors and their stress management strategies for them to have broad knowledge about it so they can apply all of those in practice of their future profession.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This aimed to determine the stress management of police officers in Batangas City. More specifically, to determine the profile of the police officers in terms of gender, age, civil status, educational attainment, section assignment and rank; to determine

the degree of stress as to work-related and non-work related stressors experienced by the respondents; to determine the stress management strategies utilized by the police officers, and to determine the significant difference of stress management strategies when grouped according to profile variables.

METHODS

Research Design

The researchers used the descriptive method of research to determine the stressors and the stress management strategies of the police officers in Batangas City Police Station in relation to their profile variables. This method is suitable to this study because the descriptive method is conducted to determine and illustrate patterns of characteristics of variables in particular instances (Edralin, 2003). It is concerned with relationships or conditions that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing. It is primarily concerned with the present, although it often considers past events and influences as they relate to current conditions (Best & Kahn, 2003).

Participants

Based on the researchers' formal interview with two of the personnel in the administrative section of the Batangas City Police Station, out of 172 total population of the police officers there, 155 (90%) of them are in the field and the remaining 17 (10%) are in the office. The set of respondents of this research were taken from those 155 who are in the field.

The researchers chose the police officers who are in the field regarding the idea that working in the field is more stressful than doing office works because of the fact that the mind and body function simultaneously together with the external factors in the environment where they are that are contributing to more stressors.

Instrument

This study utilized both adapted questionnaire and researcher-made questionnaire to gather data and information

from the respondents. The Parts I and II of the questionnaire were made by the researchers guided by the initial categorization of stressors as to work-related and non-work related by Mc Shane and Von Glinow (2005) to group the stressful situations. They also consulted the world wide web for more reliable sites related to their study. The Parts III and IV with regards to non-work stressors and the stress management strategies, the researchers adopted the items in the Stressful Life Events by Holmes and Rahe (cited by Nahavandi & Malekzadeh, 2003) as situations that bring stress to an individual which emanate outside the work environment and likewise grouped according to the source of stress. The questionnaires of Conturno (2003) and Vallejo (2003) contributed the items enumerated in the stress management techniques.

The questionnaire is composed of four parts. Part I is designed to know the profile of the respondents, Part II to know the work-related stressors, Part III to know the non-work related stressors, and Part IV to determine stress management strategies.

Procedure

The researchers presented the questionnaire to research adviser for approval. They also prepared a request letter for permission to get the total number of the police officers in the Batangas City Police Station. The researchers distributed the questionnaire individually to each respondent and they were informed regarding the purpose of the study and assured the anonymity of their identity as participants.

Data Analysis

Data gathered from the questionnaire were tallied, computed, discussed and tabulated to attain significant findings. Different statistical tools were used in the study which include frequency distribution, weighted mean and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This was used based from the objectives of the study. This was also supported using SPSS Version 18 to farther analyze the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Table 1.1. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile N=155**

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	142	91.61
Female	13	8.39
Section Assignment		
Bike Patrol	12	7.7
Desk Officers	5	3.2
Intelligence Section	25	16.1
Investigation Section	27	17.4
Operations and Plans Division	6	3.9
Patrol Section	18	11.6
Police - Community Relation Division	4	2.6
Public Assistance Center	18	11.6
Special Anti-Illegal Drugs Task Force	9	5.8
Traffic Section	8	5.2
Warrant / Subpoena Section	7	4.5
Women and Children's Protection Center	5	3.2
Others	10	6.5
No Answer	12	7.7
Rank		
PO1	28	18.1
PO2	24	15.5
PO3	36	23.2
SPO1	11	7.1
SPO2	8	5.2
SPO3	2	1.3
SPO4	20	12.9
P/Insp	7	4.5
P/Sr. Insp	11	7.1
P/C. Insp	1	.6
P/Supt	6	3.9
P/Sr.Supt	28	18.1
P/C.Supt	1	0.60
Age		
21 – 25 years old	26	16.8
26 – 30 years old	31	20
31 – 35 years old	41	26.5
41 – 45 years old	29	18.7
46 and above	41	26.5
Civil Status		
Single	107	69.0
Married	47	30.3
Widowed	1	.6
Educational Attainment		
Criminology Graduate	132	85.2
with Master's units	7	4.5
With units in the doctoral program	1	.6
Non-criminology graduate	15	9.7

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents. In terms of gender, majority of them are male which consist of 142 out of 155 total sample, while female got only 13 or 8.39 percent.

This means that majority of the police workforce are males. Since this job is an active type of job, men tend to work on this job. Most of the females will prefer to work in a more feminine way of work such as office work and caring.

Based on Loose (2009) that police work is often appealing to males than to females the main work of them is to defend the society from crimes and abduct people who commit crime. This is not easily done by females so it is imperative the police work must hire male officers rather than females. However, when it comes to office work, then it must be handled by females who are capable of passive work.

With regards to their section assignment, it shows that majority were designated in investigation section which got the highest frequency of 27 followed by intelligence section with frequency of 25, and patrol section and public assistance center with frequency of 18, bike patrol with 12, special anti-illegal drugs task force with 9, traffic section with 8, warrant / subpoena section with 7, operations and plans division with 6, desk officers, and women and children's protection center with 5 and the least is police - community relation division with 4.

This shows that most of them are designated in investigation section since most of the crimes and events must undergo this division of the police office. There must be an investigation to be done in order to maintain fairness and reduce the risk of biased. There are a lot of process for a crime or any event to be investigated and each division is supported by another division so that no work overload will occur and the police officers will be able to focus on one event at a time.

In terms of their rank, majority of the respondents are PO3 which got the highest frequency of 36 or 23.2 percent while P/C. Insp and P/C.Supt got 1 or 0.60 percent

Most of the police officers in Batangas City are Police officer 3 which implies that they are in a more higher rank and have more complicated jobs.

The Philippine National Police is a project to provide peace and order as they are vested with the authority to enforce the law and keep the country safe and peaceful. One product of a stress laden society is the increased violence and crime. Criminal apprehension and crime prevention is one of the most important task of the PNP organization and their main objective is to apprehend criminals and prevent crime and certain place of occurrence (Del Rosario, 2009)

The age of the respondents' shows that majority of them belong to 31 – 35 years old and 46 and above which got the highest frequency of 41 or 26.5 percent while the least is 21 – 25 years old with frequency of 26 or 16.8 percent.

This shows that the respondents belong to adult age and are old enough to know how to handle situations or incidents that needs stress management and they understand the weight of their work as police officers. It also implies that they have been in this kind of work and was able to encounter different stress experiences.

It also shows that majority of the respondents are single which got the highest frequency of 107 or 69.0 percent followed by married with frequency of 47 or 30.3 percent and only one respondent is widowed.

This simply implies that since most of the respondents are single then they can focus entirely on their job to take care of their community. There are no other obligations such as children and spouse to take care of. However, they still have families and priorities and would still experience stress during work.

Police officers in line of duty especially those who encounter stressful experience often prone to stress related health deficit because they can feel the loss and hardship that other people encountered. Since they also have families, then they could feel the loss, the pain and the hardship that incident brings (Mallucio, 2007).

Their educational attainment shows that majority of the respondents are criminology graduate which got the highest frequency of 132 or 85.2 percent and the least is with units in the doctoral program with frequency of 1 or 0.6 percent.

It implies that the respondents are criminology graduates and underwent a complete four- year degree program to understand the theoretical foundation of crimes and how to handle behavior of people who commit crimes.

The hundreds of young policemen assigned in CALABARZON are products of Lyceum’s Criminology Department; thus the number institution has earned the population of being the number one provider of Law enforcement officers in the Region. Hence, this study would reinforce the instructional efforts of the Criminology Department to transform students to become efficient, effective and model of professionalism in the Law Enforcement service. They must be imbued with the qualities of a “Mamang Pulis” who is dependable, approachable, presentable human and God-fearing, and above all a friend of the people (Bolanos, 2008).

Table 2. Work Related Stressors (N=155)

Indicators	Composite Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Police Related	3.01	Slightly Stressful	3
Interpersonal	2.70	Slightly Stressful	5
Role Related	3.37	Slightly Stressful	1
Organizational	3.03	Slightly Stressful	2
Environment	2.73	Slightly Stressful	4
Grand Mean	2.97	Slightly Stressful	

Table 2 shows the work-related stressors which obtained the grand mean of 2.97 and verbally interpreted as slightly stressful. It also shows that role related stressors got the highest composite mean of 3.37 followed by organizational stressors with composite mean of 3.03 and police-related with composite mean of 3.01 and environmental stressor with composite mean of 2.73 and the least is interpersonal stressor with composite mean of 2.70 and verbally interpreted as slightly stressful.

The role related stressors are the highest because it was hard to determine the roles of police officers based on their rank. Overall, the respondents perceived that their role as police officer is slightly stressful. Stress is the response of people to the

unreasonable/excessive pressure or demands placed on them (Lee, 2009).

Stress is not always negative. It may also bring out the best in individuals at times. It may induce an individual to discover innovative and smarter way of doing things. This positive dimension of stress is called as eustress (Loose, 2009).

Table 3. Non-Work Related Stressors N=155

Indicators	Mean Rank	Rank
Family (Married)	4.89	2
Family (Single)	5.02	4
Social	5.00	3
Finances	3.22	1
Grand Mean	4.53	

Table 3 shows the non-work related stressor which obtained the grand mean rank of 4.53. Among the items, the highest non-work related stressor is the finances which got the mean rank of 3.22 followed by family of married employees with mean rank of 4.89 and social with mean rank of 5.00 and the least is family of single employees with mean rank of 5.02.

It implies that the respondents are encountering stress from financial aspect. Less money in the budget, people who are already under financial stress tend to cut corners in areas like health care to pay for basic necessities like food. Small problems can go unchecked and turn into larger problems. This also leads to more stress. Financial stress relating to children education is a sadly widespread experience. According to Loose (2009) financial stress is linked to health problems like depression and sleep problems.

Table 4. Stress Management (N=155)

Indicators	Composite Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Cognitive Techniques	2.52	Often	1
2. Relaxation Techniques	2.30	Sometimes	3
3. Social Support	2.47	Sometimes	2
Grand Mean	2.43	Sometimes	

Table 4 shows the stress management of the respondents which obtained the grand mean of 2.43 and verbally interpreted as sometimes. It also shows that cognitive techniques is often done by the respondents which got the highest composite mean of 2.52 followed by social support with composite mean of 2.47 and the least is relaxation techniques with composite mean of 2.30.

It shows that cognitive techniques is the highest because it was easy for the part of the police officers to make cognitive stress management since it will only need their psychological aspect.

Relaxation techniques can help cope with everyday stress and with stress related to various health problems, such as cancer and pain. Whether the stress is spiraling out of control or already got it tamed. Relaxation techniques also are often free or low cost, pose little risk, and can be done just about anywhere (Mayo, 2012).

Table 5. Difference of Responses on Stress Management (Cognitive Techniques) When Grouped According to Profile Variables
N=155; $\alpha=0.05$

Profile Variables	F-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Gender	0.197	0.658	Accepted	Not Significant
Section Assignment	0.876	0.573	Accepted	Not Significant
Rank	0.622	0.793	Accepted	Not Significant
Age	0.281	0.890	Accepted	Not Significant
Civil Status	0.065	0.937	Accepted	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	0.757	0.520	Accepted	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Based from the result of Table 5, all computed p-values were all greater than 0.05 alpha level, thus the hypothesis of no significant difference on cognitive techniques used when grouped according to profile is accepted. This means that there is no difference observed and reveals that the respondents have the same cognitive techniques in coping their stress.

The work related situations and stress management experienced by the respondents is not significantly different to their profile variable. They will manage their stress so that they will be able to perform their duties.

The police officers generally carry out their sworn duties and responsibilities with dedication and valor, but some stresses are too much to take, and every officer has his or her breaking point (Miller, 2011).

Table 6. Difference of Responses on Stress Management (Relaxation Techniques) When Grouped According to Profile Variables N=155; $\alpha=0.05$

Profile Variables	F-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Gender	1.866	0.174	Accepted	Not Significant
Section Assignment	0.634	0.810	Accepted	Not Significant
Rank	1.733	0.079	Accepted	Not Significant
Age	0.580	0.677	Accepted	Not Significant
Civil Status	0.345	0.709	Accepted	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	3.888	0.010	Rejected	Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

It can be gleaned from the table that only educational attainment shows significant difference on the relaxation techniques used by the respondents'. This was observed since the obtained p-value of 0.010 is less than 0.05 level of significance, thus a significant difference exists. This indicates only that the respondents' stress management varies to what degree they already earned. For a few, The Job becomes their life, and crowds out other activities and relationships (Blau, 2013).

Table 5.3. Difference of Responses on Stress Management (Social Support) When Grouped According to Profile Variables (N=155; $\alpha=0.05$)

Profile Variables	F-value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Gender	1.076	0.301	Accepted	Not Significant
Section Assignment	0.288	0.990	Accepted	Not Significant
Rank	0.774	0.654	Accepted	Not Significant
Age	0.200	0.938	Accepted	Not Significant
Civil Status	0.298	0.743	Accepted	Not Significant
Educational Attainment	3.643	0.014	Rejected	Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

It can be gleaned from the table that only educational attainment shows significant difference on the social support received by the respondents'. This was observed since the obtained p-value of 0.014 is less than 0.05 level of significance, thus a significant difference exists. This indicates only that the respondents' stress management varies to what degree they already earned.

This means that the respondents are using social support as means of their stress management based on their level of knowledge and understanding of how it can help them cope with stress.

CONCLUSIONS

Majority of the respondents were males, designated in investigation section and has a rank of PO3, being adult which belongs to the age bracket of 31-35 and 46 and above, single and graduated criminology course before they enter the uniformed police profession. The work-related stressors are work-overload, demanding and strict superiors, failure to attain set goals at a given time, mismatch between current position and career aspiration and poor ventilation. While non-work related stressors are monitoring of performance of their children at school (married), major personal injury or illness (single), difficulty in trusting others and high cost of education of children. The respondents have different stress management which is cognitive factor that is often done. The relaxation techniques and social support received is sometimes experienced by the respondents. There is no significant difference on stress management such as relaxation techniques and social support received when grouped to their educational attainment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Police station must conduct stress forum and psychological test for police or law enforcer specially those who experience stress and trauma and should have annual evaluation on how to handle their trauma.

A vacation includes team building with family for strong relationship with family members is recommended. The family

members will also realize the stress and environment of work of police officers.

Results of the study be incorporated in teaching professional subjects such as ethics, and human behaviour. A future study is recommended using other variables.

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