

A Study of Relationship between Organisational Role Stress and Coping Strategies among Police Personnel

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Abstract

The present study was conducted on 30 policemen (constables) of urban local of Uttar Pradesh; age range of respondents was 30-50 years with the mean of 40. They were all between the income range of 15000-30000. Organisational Role Stress was measured by Organisational Role Stress Scale (ORSS, Pareek 1981). The scale has ten dimensions namely-Inter Role Distance, Role Stagnation, Role Expectation Conflict, Role Erosion, Role Overload, Role Isolation, Personal Inadequacy, SelfRole Distance, Role Ambiguity, Resource Inadequacy. Coping Strategies was measured by Coping Response Inventory (Rudolph M. Moos 1988,1992). This inventory has 19 items. This study is co-relational in nature. Results reveal that there is negative correlation between Organisational Role Stress and Active Cognitive Coping Strategy, Active Behavioral Coping Strategy. There is positive correlation between Organizational Role Stress and Avoidance Coping Strategy.

Keywords: Organisational Role Stress, Coping Strategies.

Introduction

Stress has become a very common phenomenon of routine life, and an unavoidable consequence of the ways in which society has changed. This change has occurred in terms of science and technology, industrial growth, urbanization, modernization, and automation on one hand; and an expanding population, unemployment, and stress on the other. The term "stress" was first used by Selye (1936) in the literature on life sciences, describing stress as "the force, pressure, or strain exerted upon a material object or person which resist these forces and attempt to maintain its original state." Stress can also be defined as an adverse reaction that people experience when external demands exceed their internal capabilities (Waters & Ussery, 2007).

Review of Literature

Organizations are an important source of stress, and employees' workloads and professional deadlines have increased manifold. These advancements have created stress among employees in the form of occupational stress, which Sauter, Lim, and Murphy (1996) define as the harmful physical and emotional responses that arise when the demands of a job do not match the worker's abilities, resources, or needs. Occupational stress is further defined as a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs, and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning (Beehr & Newman, 1978).

Role refers to the pattern of behavior involving certain rights, obligations and duties which an individual is expected, trained and encouraged to perform within a group or social situation. A person's role is precisely what is expected of him by others and by the person himself. Role is associated with a particular status position within a group on social situation. However the expectations may remain ambiguous on there may be conflict between the expectations and different people. Various types of role stresses or role conflicts may occur like feeling overwhelmed by the expectation, not having important functions to perform, not utilizing one's strength in the role, feeling inadequate or unfit for the role, not having adequate resources for effective role performances etc. stress suggest excessive demands made on men which produce disturbance of social, psychological and physiological systems.

On section of the society which faces growing demands everyday is the law enforcement agency eg. Police.

Some Major Stresses of the Organizational Role –

Pareek (1981) proposed ten role stresses based on intensive research in Indian Managers. In relation to organizational roles, the following ten stresses are worth considering:-

Inter-role distance (IRD)

This indicates the conflict between organizational and non-organizational roles.

Role stagnation (RS)

The feeling of being “stuck” in the same role.

Role expectation conflict (REC)

Conflicting expectations and demands between different role senders (persons having expectations from the role).

Role erosion (RE)

Role Erosion stress occurs when a role occupant feels that the functions that should belong to the respondent's role are being transformed/performed or shared by others.

Role Overload (RO)

The feeling that more is expected from the role than the respondent can cope with.

Role isolation (RI)

Lack of linkages between the respondent's role and that of other roles in the organization.

Personal inadequacy (PI)

Inadequate knowledge, skills, or preparation for a respondent to be effective in a particular role. Role occupants may feel that they are not well prepared to undertake their role effectively.

Self-role distance (SRD)

Conflict between the respondent's values/self-concepts and the requirements of his or her organizational role.

Role ambiguity (RA)

Lack of clarity about others' expectations of the respondent's role, or lack of feedback on how others perceive the respondent's performance.

Resource inadequacy (RIn)

Non-availability of resources needed for effective role performance. Resources may be information, people, material or financial facilities.

Coping with Stress

In general, increased level of stress threatens a person's well-being and produce automatic, persistent attempts to relieve the tension. In short, stress force a person to do something what is done depends on many influences. Sometimes inner factors such as a person's frame of reference, motives, competencies, or stress tolerance play the dominant role in determining his or her coping strategies. At other times, environmental condition such as social demands and expectations are of primary importance.

In viewing certain general principles of coping with stress, it is helpful to conceptualize three interactional levels –

1. On a biological level, there are immunological defenses and damage-repair mechanisms.

2. On a psychological and interpersonal level, there are learned coping patterns, self defenses and support from family and friends.
3. On a socio cultural level, there are group resources, such as labor unions, religions organization and law enforcement agencies.

In coping with stress, a person is confronted with low challenges:-

1. To meet the requirements of the stressor.
2. To protect oneself from physiological damage and disorganization.

A Task Oriented Coping may involve making changes in one's self, one's surrounding, or both, depending on situation. The action may be overt, as in showing one's spouse more effective, or it may be covert. As in lowering one's level of aspiration. The action may involve retreating from problem, attacking it directly or trying to find a workable compromise.

In Defense Oriented Coping person's feeling of adequacy are seriously threatened by a stressor, a defense oriented response tends to prevail that is behavior directed primarily at protecting the self from hurt and disorganization, rather than at resolving the situation. Typically, the person using defense oriented responses have forsaken more productive task oriented action in favor of an overriding concern for maintaining the integrity of the self, however ill-advised self defeating the efforts may prove to be.

Coping consist of efforts, both action oriented and intrapsychic to manage (that is master, tolerate, reduce, minimize) environmental and internal demands and conflicts among them (Lazarus and Lazarus, 1978). To study the coping process, Lazarus and his colleagues developed ways of coping scale (Folkman and Lazarus 1980), which incorporate two general type of coping:-

1. Problem Focused Coping
2. Emotion Focused Coping

But the recent researchers find that responses to ways of coping scale from several factors rather than just two. Carver and Scheier (1989) developed cope scale which incorporates 14 conceptually distinct scales.

Rudolph M. Moos introduced three type of coping strategies:-

1. Active Cognitive Coping (ACC)
2. Active Behavioral Coping (ABC)
3. Avoidance Coping (AVC)

Some Major Classification of Coping Strategies-

Karen Horney's Classification

The German Freudian Psychoanalyst Karen Horney defined four so-called coping strategies to interpersonal relations, one describing psychologically healthy individuals, the other describing neurotic states.

Moving With

These are the strategies in which psychologically healthy people develop relationships. In order to move with, there must be communication, agreement, disagreement, compromise and decisions.

Moving Towards

This individual moves towards those perceived as a threat to avoid retribution and getting hurt.

- 1. Moving Against-** The individual threatens those perceived as a threat to avoid getting hurt.
- 2. Moving Away-** The individuals distance themselves from anyone perceived as a threat to avoid getting hurt.

Nicholl and Polman's (2006) classification:- In coping with stress, people tend to use one of the three main coping strategies; either

- 1. Appraisal Focused-** These strategies occur when the person modifies the way they think. Eg. Employing denial or distancing oneself from the problem.
- 2. Emotion Focused-** These strategies involve releasing pent up emotions, distracting oneself, managing hostile feelings, meditating, using systematic relaxation procedure etc.
- 3. Problem Focused-** These coping mechanisms may allow an individual greater perceived control over their problem certain individuals feel that Problem Focused Mechanism represent a more effective means of coping.

Methods

Purpose

To find out the relationship between Organizational Role Stress and Coping Strategies.

Objective

To assess the relationship between Organizational Role Stress and Coping Strategies.

Hypothesis

- The relationship between Organizational Role Stress and Active Cognitive Coping Strategy is negative.
- The relationship between Organizational Role Stress and Active Behavioural Coping Strategy is negative.
- The relationship between Organizational Role Stress and Avoidance Coping Strategy is positive.

Participants

The present study was conducted on 30 policemen (constables) of urban local of Uttar Pradesh, age range of respondents was 30-50 years with the mean of 40. They were all between the income range of 15000-30000.

Procedure

All the respondents who consented to participate in this study were briefed about the purpose of the study. Thereafter they were asked to fill the questionnaires related to organizational role stress and coping strategies.

Nature of the Study

This is a correlational study in nature. Thus a correlational research design is applied for data analysis.

Variables

In the present study following variables were taken into account.

Predictor Variables

Coping Strategies

- Active Cognitive Coping
- Active Behavioral Coping
- Avoidance Coping

Criterion Variables

Organizational Role Stress

- Inter-role distance
- Role stagnation
- Role expectation conflict
- Role erosion
- Role overload
- Role isolation
- Personal inadequacy
- Self-role distance
- Role ambiguity
- Resource inadequacy

Measures

Organizational Role Stress Scale

The Organizational Role Stress (ORS) Scale devised by Pareek (1981) measures these role stresses. The ORS scale contains 5 items for each role stress subscale (a total of 50 statements) and uses a 5 point rating scale (from 0 to 4). This scale having ten dimensions namely Inter-role distance, Role stagnation, Role expectation conflict, Role erosion, Role overload, Role isolation, Personal inadequacy, Self-role distance, Role ambiguity, Resource inadequacy. Retest reliability coefficient were calculated for a group of about 500 employees from three banks (1981). All the coefficient, exception one are significant at 0.001 level. The scale has acceptable reliability. Some evidence about validity is provided by a measure of self-consistency is an instrument. Each item was correlated with the total score on the instrument for about 500 respondents. The result shows high internal consistency of the scale. So scale also has high validity.

Coping Response Inventory

Inventory is developed by Rudolph M. Moos (1988, 1992). There are 19 items in this scale. The responses were taken on a 4 point scale. In this scale items are divided into three groups of coping strategies namely Active Cognitive Coping (item no. 1 to 7), Active Behavioral Coping (item no. 8 to 13), and Avoidance Coping (remaining items). The reliability and validity of this scale are high.

Results

Table No.- 1

Showing the scale range, scale mean, obtained range, obtained mean, weighted mean and SD of organizational role stress and coping strategies :-

Name of Scale and Subscale	No. of Items	Scale Range	Scale Mean	Obtained Range	Obtained Mean	Weighted Mean	SD
1) Organizational Role Stress	50	0-200	100	28-197	97.3	1.95	32.87
I. IRD	5	0-20	10	4-20	13.07	2.61	5.52
II. RS	5	0-20	10	2-19	11.67	2.33	4.69
III. REC	5	0-20	10	2-20	9.17	1.83	4.31
IV. RE	5	0-20	10	0-14	8.27	1.65	3.62
V. RO	5	0-20	10	1-20	12.00	2.40	5.60
VI. RI	5	0-20	10	0-12	7.30	1.46	3.52
VII. PI	5	0-20	10	0-14	7.43	1.49	3.92
VIII. SRD	5	0-20	10	1-20	10.26	2.05	4.85
IX. RA	5	0-20	10	0-14	5.33	1.07	3.03
X. RI	5	0-20	10	3-15	9.80	1.96	3.75
2) Coping Strategies							
I. ACC	7	7-28	17.5	16-27	22.63	3.23	3.45
II. ABC	6	6-24	15	12-22	18.47	3.08	2.34
III. AVC	6	6-24	15	6-11	8.1	1.35	1.52

Table no. I highlight the No. of Items, Scale Range, Scale Mean, Obtained Range, Obtained Mean, Weighted Mean and SD for each variable. The Standard Deviations of ten dimensions of Organizational Role Stress (Inter-role distance, Role stagnation, Role expectation conflict, Role erosion, Role overload, Role isolation, Personal inadequacy,

Self-role distance, Role ambiguity, Resource inadequacy.) were 5.52, 4.69, 4.31, 3.62, 5.60, 3.52, 3.92, 4.85, 3.03, 3.75 and the SD of Organizational Role Stress as a whole is 32.87. The Standard Deviation of Active Cognitive Coping, Active Behavioral Coping, and Avoidance Coping were 3.45, 2.34, 1.52.

Table No. 2

Showing the rank ordering of different sources of ORS and Coping Strategies:-

S. No.	Subscale	Mean	Rank
Organizational Role Stress			
1	Inter-Role Distance	13.07	1
2	Role Overload	12.00	2
3	Role Stagnation	11.67	3
4	Self-Role Distance	10.26	4
5	Resource Inadequacy	09.80	5
6	Role Expectation Conflict	09.17	6
7	Role Erosion	08.27	7
8	Personal Inadequacy	07.43	8
9	Role Isolation	07.30	9
10	Role Ambiguity	05.33	10
Coping Strategies			
1	Active Cognitive Coping	22.63	1
2	Active Behavioral Coping	18.47	2
3	Avoidance Coping	08.10	3

Table II highlights the mean of different variables and ranks given to ten dimensions of Organizational Role Stress and three coping strategies on the basis of obtained mean. The highest mean was found to be 13.07 for the dimension of "Inter Role Distance" and the lowest mean was 5.33 for "Role Ambiguity". Other dimension of Organizational Role Stress- Role overload, Role stagnation, Self-role distance, Resource inadequacy,

Role expectation conflict, Role erosion, Personal inadequacy, Role isolation rank second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth respectively. The highest mean was found to be 22.63 for the "Active Cognitive Coping" and the lowest mean was 8.10 for "Avoidance Coping". In coping strategies Active Cognitive Coping, Active Behavioral Coping and Avoidance Coping rank first, second and third respectively.

Table No. 3
Showing correlation coefficient of Organizational Role Stress with Active Cognitive Coping, Active Behavioral Coping and Avoidance Coping

	Active Cognitive Coping	Active Behavioral Coping	Avoidance Coping
Organizational Role Stress	-0.38	-0.48	0.56

Co-relational Analysis

Table III depicts the correlation coefficients of the Organizational Role Stress with Active Cognitive Coping, Active Behavioral Coping and Avoidance Coping. The correlation between Organizational Role Stress and Active Cognitive Coping is found to be negative (*i.e.*-0.38) which is significant at 0.05 level. Organizational Role Stress was found significantly negatively correlated with Active Behavioral Coping (*i.e.*-0.48). Organizational Role Stress was found significantly positively correlated with Avoidance Coping (*i.e.* 0.56).

Discussion

In Organizational Role Stress Inter Role Distance has 1st Rank and mean is 13.07 which is representative of the conflict between the different roles of the policemen as a professional law enforcer and as a family man. Role Overload has 2nd rank and mean is 12, which is related to the role occupant's feeling that the expectations from other significant in his role set are too many. Role Stagnation takes 3rd rank and mean is 11.37 and this could mean that policemen do not get enough opportunities for growth. Self Role Distance takes 4th rank among 10 dimensions of ORS, mean of scores is 10.26. This stress arises due to the conflict between self concept and the expectation from the role as perceived by the role occupants. Resource Inadequacy reserve 5th rank among 10 dimensions and the mean is 9.8, it shows that the resources required by the role occupant for performing the role effectively are not available. Role Expectation Conflict has 6th rank and mean 9.17, which is representative of stress generated by conflicting expectations by different role senders. Role Erosion reserve 7th rank and mean of scores is 8.27. This stress occurs when a role occupant feels that the function which should belong to his role are being shared by other roles. Personal Inadequacy places on 8th position and the mean is 7.43. The lower rank of Personal Inadequacy shows that policemen are well prepared to undertake their role effectively and feel they have sufficient knowledge, skill, training, and orientation to perform their assigned role. Role Isolation has 9th rank and mean is 7.3. The lower rank of Role Isolation depicts that policemen may frequently and easily interact with other role occupants in an organization. In last Role Ambiguity has 10th rank among all 10 dimensions of ORS. Mean is 5.33, which depicts that policemen have adequate information about his work role, there is sufficient clarity about the work objectives associated with the role.

Among three coping strategies Active Cognitive Coping has 1st rank and mean is 22.63. policemen use most of the time Active Cognitive Coping Strategies to cope with stress. Active Behavioral Coping reserve 2nd rank among 3

strategies and mean 18.47 which indicates that policemen use this strategy at moderate way. Avoidance Coping has 3rd rank which is last and mean is 8.1 it is rarely by policemen to cope with Organizational Role Stress.

The correlation between Organizational Role Stress and Active Cognitive Coping is found to be – 0.38 which is significant at 0.05 level. Thus the hypothesis no. 1 “ There will be negative correlation between organization role stress and active cognitive coping strategy.” is proved, which mean that if policemen have more organizational role stress, they have low active cognitive coping. In other words high use of active cognitive coping strategy might be related to lower level of organizational role stress.

The correlation between Organizational Role Stress and Active Behavior Coping Strategy is found to be – 0.48 which is significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis no. 2 “There will be negative correlation between organization role stress and Active Behavior Coping Strategy.” is accepted. This means that if Policemen use more Active Behavior Coping Strategy have lower Organizational Role Stress.

The correlation between Organizational Role Stress and Avoidance Coping Strategy is found to be 0.56 which is significant at 0.01 level means that both variables are positively correlated. It means that the Hypothesis no.3 “There will be positive correlation between organization role stress and Avoidance Coping Strategy.”

Pareek Pestonjee's studies on Organizational Role Stress and Coping support our results. Police work tends to be regarded as inherently stressful because of the personal risk of exposure to confrontation and violence and the day to day involvement in a variety of traumatic incidents. Bacharach et.al. (1986) suggest that stress is a resultant application of many organizational components as opposed to the physiological differences of the individuals. This creates organizational dysfunctions, among those elements considered 'dominant' job stressor are: Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity etc. (Martin, 1984). Jacobus Pienaa, Sebastiaan Rothmann, Fons J.R. Van De Vijver did a study on police officers and concluded that low score on Approach Coping and high score on Avoidance Coping are associated with more social ideation because of occupational stress. Hurrell, Joseph J., Jr. Publisher: John Wiley and sons published a journal of organizational behavior. In which organizational stress and coping strategies among policemen are studied. Beehr, Terry A., Johnson, Leonor B., Nieva, Ronie also conducted a survey to investigate stress and coping related activities among police officers.

Conclusion

The present study yielded evidence that the two coping strategies *i.e.* Active Cognitive Coping and Active Behavioral Coping are negatively correlated with Organizational Role Stress. And Avoidance Coping was positive correlates of Organizational Role Stress. Pareek Pestonjee's studies on Organizational Role Stress and Coping support present study. Jacobus Piena, Sebastiaan Rothmann, Fons J. R. Van de Vijver did a study on police officers and concluded that low score on Approach Coping and high score on Avoidance Coping are associated with more suicide ideation because of occupation stress. The present study was conducted only on constable. Further studies can be conducted on policemen of different cadre and find out differences among them. In this study only global ORS score was correlated with coping strategies. We could also study the relationship of dimensions of ORS with Coping Strategies separately. Indian Policemen are always subject to call, "overworked, overburdened and overused, it's a hard day's life for policemen who is just not seen as the friendly neighborhood cop by the common man." Thus Organizational Role Stress associated with Policemen can be managed only by following the Active Cognitive Coping and Active Behavioral Coping Strategies, and avoiding to following the Avoidance Coping Strategies. By following this Policemen can provide a quality service to the country.

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