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## **Occupational Stress Among Police Officers: The Case of Botswana Police Service\***

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**Abstract:** This tractate is based on the empirical study on the police work stress, symptoms and coping strategies among the police service in Botswana. The data was based on a sample size of (N = 229) of police officers in Gaborone and its surrounding. A total of 10 police stations were sampled for this study. A simple convenient random sampling technique was employed to sample the participants. Data was analysed using a simple descriptive statistics and frequency tables. The finding from this study reveals that the police work stressors are; getting injured while on duty and the use of force when the job demand to do so etc. The coping strategies were identified as exercising, socialising, healthy eating or diets, career planning and employee training. This treatise had its own limitations. Sample size and geographical coverage was only confined to Gaborone and its surroundings. Therefore, there is need to include more regions using larger sample size. The research adopted survey approach using quantitative method only, therefore it is suggested that, the study be replicated using triangulation methods to validate these findings. However, it is hoped that these findings will add to the existing body of knowledge and contribute to the understanding of the nature of police work stress.

**Key words:** Work stressors, law enforcement officers, organisations, coping strategies

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Historically, the work of police is to protect life and property, the role that come with many challenges such as fighting and prevention of crimes. These roles expose police officers to different work situations which require different physical and mental ability (Alkus and Padesky, 1983; Violanti and Aron, 1994; Anshel, 2000; Rollinson, 2005; Morash *et al.*, 2006) to deal with firmly and effectively. Gibbons and Gibbons (2007) and McCarty *et al.* (2007) have carried out extensive research on occupational stress and found out that, stress is associated with how an individual appraises situations and the coping strategies adopted. On the other hand Gibbons and Gibbons (2007), He *et al.* (2002) and Malach-Pines and Keinan (2007) argue that occupational stress involving police officers indicates that, police officers are exposed to various stressful situations which impact negatively on the health and the performance of the individual officer.

Stress can be viewed as a reaction to an external or demand while anything physically or mentally demanding or burdensome can create stressful condition, this does not necessary mean that it occurs; for this to happen the situation must have sufficient impact on the person to attract his or her attention, perhaps because it evokes feelings of disappointment annoyance, anger, or simply because the individual feels the situation should not exist (Rollinson, 2005). On the other hand, Waters and Ussery (2007), Maslach-Pines and Keinan (2007) and McCarty *et al.* (2007) define stress as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them. Occupational stress or workplace stress in this context refers to stress experienced as a direct result of a person's occupation. Previous research indicates that stress results from a negative workplace environment and interactions at work have been recognised as a major problem for police officers

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(Waters and Ussery, 2007; Malach-Pines and Keinan, 2007). While some stress can be a positive motivator, it is generally regarded as destructive and even life threatening (Kwak *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, the police possess a great amount of discretion that requires them to make tough decisions about arresting certain individuals or even using deadly force (McCarty *et al.*, 2007; Malach-Pines and Keinan, 2007). Furthermore, the highest level of associated stress are related to organisational factors such as management style, poor communication, lack of support, inadequate resources and work overload (Kop *et al.*, 1999). The documented symptoms of stress include digestive disorders, cardiovascular diseases, alcoholism, domestic violence, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and suicide. While some police officers start their careers in excellent physical health, some retire early or even die from job related stress disorders as the cumulative impact of stress exacts its toll (Waters and Ussery, 2007). For instance, American Army survey on US soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan indicates that, (27%) of soldiers suffered anxiety, depression, post-combat stress and other problems namely mental health, the further points that in 2007, 121 soldiers committed suicide which shows an increase of (20%) over 2006 in suicide cases reported among serving combatants ([www.yahoo.com/news](http://www.yahoo.com/news), accessed on 10/04/2008). There are various types of stress that can be encountered by police officers in their daily study. Researchers such as McCarty *et al.* (2007), Malach-Pines and Keinan (2007) and Kwak *et al.* (2006) have identified the related research on stress.

The nature of the police work involves patrols, investigations, traffic, accidents attendance, scene of crime and internal disturbance such as riots. Other researchers Malach-Pines and Keinan (2007) and Waters and Ussery (2007) have also identified these as the roles of police officers occurring externally. The nature of the external work environment differs from one place to another in the sense that, different localities may not have similar crime. The first major source of stress identified in police work is associated with the unique work, usually highlighted in most surveys of law enforcement officers and ranked-in order as possible stressors. Not surprisingly, the death of a partner or having to take a life in the line of duty is typical among the top stressors identified by officers. Other elements of stress often mentioned in the literature include making (Geller and Hobfall, 1994; Stigler and Thweatt, 1997) violent arrests and gruesome scenes. Overall, violent and unpredictable incidents involved in police work are commonly considered to be the leading source of both the psychological and physical stress among law enforcement officers (He *et al.*, 2002). Kop *et al.* (1999) for instance support external environment stress in the content of police work as follows, emotionally demanding situation such as informing relatives of a sudden death, dealing with suicide, fatal accidents, criminal or sexual offence with children are some of the stressors. It also include dealing with annoying or dirty people, for example drug addicts or drunkards, the use of violence by officers and the danger associated with the study, such as violence aggression against officers or risks of ( for example HIV).

Police officers work stress reactions are always classified as physiological, emotional and behavioural reactions (Bartol and Bartol, 2004). Physiological reactions may be termed as having higher than normal probability of death from certain illnesses specifically heart attack (Morash *et al.*, 2006) and myriad of health problems such as headaches, high blood pressure and stomach problems (Jaramillo *et al.*, 2005; Perrier, 1984). On the other hand, emotional reactions may include depression and extreme cases of suicide (Loo, 1999; Miller, 2005; Violanti, 1996). Emotion reaction can also be so severe which may be termed as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Carlier *et al.*, 2000; Violanti and Paton, 1999). PTSD is always associated to severe and prolonged after one exposure to a series of traumatic events. This may lead to job dissatisfaction, apathy and cynicism (Morash *et al.*, 2006; Perrier, 1984). Whereas behavioural reactions may entail reduced level of job performance, errors

of judgement, irresponsibility, low morale, absenteeism, tardiness, early retirement and quitting the police service altogether (Jaramillo *et al.*, 2005; Cooper *et al.*, 1994) at the organisational level, however at the individual level they include aggression, violence, isolation, excessive drinking and smoking, alcoholism and drug abuse (Davey *et al.*, 2001; Sigler and Thweatt, 1997).

Work environment is one of the sources of police stress. It can be internally and externally. Internal work environment include factors that are related to organisational structure and climate can be even greater source of stress for the police officers (Cooper *et al.*, 1982; Violanti and Aron, 1994; Kirkcaldy *et al.*, 1995), shift schedules that disrupt normal sleep patterns and social life, authoritarian, management styles, poor interpersonal relationships (Norvell *et al.*, 1993; He *et al.*, 2002) with supervisors, interdepartmental politics, lack of adequate planning and resources, lack of promotion and transfer opportunities, excessive paperwork, lack of autonomy in performing duties and lack of recognition for work accomplishments are among the organisational stressors faced by members of the police force (Jaramillo *et al.*, 2005; Waters and Ussery, 2007; Cooper *et al.*, 1982; Stotland and Pendleton, 1989). Many pressures experienced by the officers are a product of environmental factors alone (Jaramillo *et al.*, 2005; Violanti and Aron, 1994; Kirkcaldy *et al.*, 1995; Waters and Ussery, 2007) or a combination of psychological and environmental variables related to occupational issues (Bartol and Bartol, 2004; Waters and Ussery, 2007). For instance, changing of work shifts leads to serious health problems. Changing sleep patterns, digestive system circadian rhythms and other bodily functions affects both physical and psychological well-being.

Most of the times it is difficult for some male police to seek professional help from their friends when they experience work-family conflict and negative coping among themselves because they think they will be viewed as weak (Graf, 1986). This denial to seek help could be as a result of the perception of the officer feeling that such help will only reveal to their colleagues (Weisheit, 1987) their weaknesses to withstand challenges that go with their jobs, hence the officers easily fall a victim of stress. Co-workers and family (Potts, 1983) support from the organisation may include officers to ensure their lives and safety. Consequently, officers may feel that the only people capable of understanding the strain and stress of police work may be their fellow officers, for this reason, strong levels of perceived peer support and trust among officers should help them better the amount of stress experienced.

Researchers such as Waters and Ussery (2007), McCarty *et al.* (2007), Malach-Pines and Keinan (2007) and Kwak *et al.* (2006) argue that in order to design functional prevention programmes and treat officers at risk, it is important to understand the predisposing factors, the nature of the stressful life events experienced by officers and both the transient and long term responses to these events (Fig. 1). Predisposing factors basically begin with biological status of the individual. Although police officers are given pre-service physical tests to determine their health status prior to employment, still there is evidence suggesting that the officers after joining the service develop stress disorders. The second biological factor, current state of health, refers to the influence that being a working officer has on one's health. Waters and Ussery (2007) posit that, the longer the officer has been on the force, the more his resistance has been worn away. However, this could leave one wonder, since the expectations is that the longer the officers have been in service, the more resilient the officers would be. This could mean that new recruits are more likely to suffer from stress more. Psychological traits, states and self expectations all influence officer's ability to solve the problems and address job related challenges and family issues.

Police officers are always on duty. Waters and Ussery (2007) point out that the officers are perpetually on vigilance, even when off duty, also takes its toll on the officer's level of resilience. From the examination of the relevant literatures on the police stress, the following research questions arises;

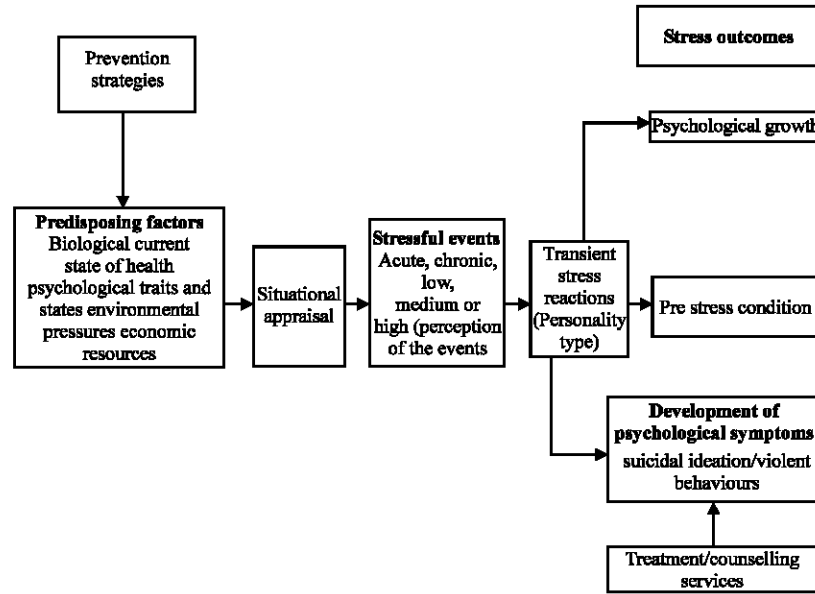


Fig. 1: Police stress model

to what extent do police officers experience occupational stress and what coping mechanism do they adopt? What are the major sources of police occupational stress? What are the coping mechanism used by the officers? And how do police officers react to occupational stress.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted with the permission from the Commissioner of Police, Botswana police service in conjunction with the station commanders of the 10 police stations around Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana. The study was conducted from April-to-June, 2008. The study covered different units of the police departments such as Special Support Group (SSG), Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Traffic. Police officers (N = 229) participated in the study, of these male (N = 163) and female officers (N = 66). Questionnaire was developed from the one earlier used by McCarty *et al.* (2007). It was divided into 5 parts; demographic, external work environment, internal work environment, coping mechanism and symptoms. Demographic examined (age, rank, length of service, gender and department); external environment consisted of 15 items measured on 5 point likert scale ranging from 5 (highly agreed) to 1 (highly disagreed); Internal work environment consisted of 20 items; coping mechanism consisted of 6 items all measured on 5 point Likert scale. Symptoms consisted of 14 items, scored as (Often, Sometimes and Never).

### Procedure

The participants were solicited through their station commanders. The participants were addressed in a hall where the purpose of the research was explained and that their cooperation was paramount to the success of this exercise. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires. For the purpose of data collection, a 5-point likert scale was developed from the one used earlier by McCarty *et al.* (2007). This was modified to suit the purpose of this study. The questionnaires were left with the officers so that they could complete them at appropriate time. This was later collected at agreed date prior to filling them. This type of data collection was more appropriate for this type of

study; since police officers' job involves a lot of movement in and out of the offices, hence quantitative method was the only appropriate in this case. The researcher administered the questionnaires during the general duty meeting (call off duty) between 2-4 pm.

**Sampling Method**

This study adopted stratified random sampling techniques in order to carry out this survey. The samples were taken from the station commanders, sub inspectors, sergeants and general staff (constables). The study sample target initially was 500 police officers. But duly completed and returned questionnaires were 229, giving a response rate of 46% of the respondents who participated in this study. This response rate was considered good for this type of study (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

**Data Analysis**

The data was analysed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 15.0 for windows. The total 32 variables were loaded into SPSS V 15.0 for the analysis using descriptive statistics and frequency tables. The results are shown in the subsequent tables.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 represents the police officers ratings of the degree of the stress experienced by 14 stress symptoms ranked from the highest to the lowest.

The purpose of this study was to find out the general level of stress symptoms among the police officers, reaction to stressors and sources of police stress in the work place. The study demonstrates the experience of Botswana police service officers in the context of their daily routine duties. The finding reveals that the job of policing is highly stressful. The findings from this research reveal that the level of police stress is high. The highest rated symptoms were: feeling lack of energy (M = 4.66; SD = 4.05); loss of personal enjoyment (M = 3.88; SD = 4.02); increase in appetite (M = 3.77; SD = 4.00); feeling depressed (M = 3.74; SD = 4.74); trouble in concentrating (M = 3.71; SD = 4.74); feeling restlessness (M = 3.65; SD = 4.75); people at home make feel anxious (M = 3.33; SD = 3.05); feeling tense, experience pain at my neck or back (M = 3.26; SD = 3.07); feeling tension, anxiety, nervous and indigestion (M = 2.82; SD = 3.07). These findings are consistent with other findings (Waters and Ussery, 2007; Malach-Pines and Keinan, 2007). Waters and Ussery (2007) posit that, police culture leads officers to believe that they are a special population that has superhuman abilities and no weaknesses when actually they are particularly vulnerable due to their need for constant vigilance. Not does the individual officer deny his risk factors, but departments also ignore the problem.

Table 1: Symptoms of stress in the work of police officers (N = 229)

Symptoms	Mean±SD
Lack of energy	4.66±4.05
Over the counter medication	4.35±4.08
Experience high blood pressure	4.31±4.10
Lack of confidence	4.13±4.21
Loss of enjoyment	3.88±4.02
Increase in appetite	3.77±4.00
Depressed	3.74±4.74
Trouble in concentrating	3.71±4.74
Restlessness	3.65±4.75
Eat, drink and smoke	3.45±3.50
People at home make me feel anxious	3.33±3.05
Tense experience pain	3.26±3.07
Tension anxiety and nervous indigestion	2.82±3.06
Concerns at night	2.78±3.07

While on the question regarding worries, the officers' concerns at night was rated high (M = 2.78; SD = 3.07). However, the officers disagreed with the statements as follows; taking over the counter medication (M = 4.35; SD = 4.08) disagreed, experience high blood pressure (M = 4.31; SD = 4.10) disagreed, feeling lack of confidence (M = 4.13; SD = 4.21) disagreed and eat, drink alcohol, or smoke (M = 3.45; SD = 4.75) disagreed. Although the officers indicated that they have never experienced high blood pressure, still this cannot be proved easily since it requires taking of blood pressure test before one come to authoritative conclusion. Therefore, it would be appropriate to carrying out blood pressure test in order to know how many officers are victims of the condition. Paton and Flin (1999) states that, psychological fitness is also a relevant mediating factor and officer who is suffering from occupational stress or a personal worry may be more vulnerable when faced with acute stress situation. While such factors affect fitness for duty, in reality most emergency officers are unlikely to declare that they are unfit. Since this will be seen as weaknesses on the part of such an officer.

The above symptoms indicate clearly that, the officers are experiencing high stressful work environments which require urgent response and counter measures from the management. These findings are consistent with finding of earlier researchers as Waters and Ussery (2007), Malach-Pines and Keinan (2007), Paton and Flin (1999) and Dua (1994) who conducted similar studies on the policing work.

The results show collated responses of the participants as indicated in the Table 2. Lack of superior interest on subordinate job was rated 61% of the officers. This was supported by the findings of researchers as Brown and Campbell (1994), Cooper *et al.* (1982) and Stotland and Pendleton (1989). While, the participants disagreed with the statement that sexual harassment is a source of stress. This was indicated by 53% of the respondents who responded. Temptation of taking bribes was rated

**Table 2: The frequency of the stressors as rated by the police officers (N = 229)**

Stressors	SD+D = (%)	Neutral = (%)	SA+A = (%)
Lack superior interest	15	24	61
Sexual harassment	53	14	31
Temptation of taking bribes	23	16	61
Use force when job demands	8	8	84
Un fair treatment by superiors	12	21	67
Irregular work hours	16	16	68
Problem at home	16	24	60
Negative public image of police	12	18	70
Work overload	7	10	83
Inadequate resources	6	11	83
Unpleasant duties	20	22	56
Competition with co-workers	18	21	61
Dealing with suicide scenes	4	16	80
Dealing with fatal accidents	7	15	78
Low salary	6	14	80
Boring routine tasks	36	25	39
Makefast decisions	13	12	75
Contact with criminals	15	12	73
Uncertainty about promotion	1	20	79
Injured while on duty	6	4	90
Insufficient personnel	17	18	65
Contact with body fluids/faeces	9	13	78
Receiving citizens complaint	26	29	45
Family conflict	19	30	48
High responsibility	10	10	80
Reporting death of next kin to relatives	14	14	72
Deal with crisis	12	21	65
Dying while on duty	15	18	64
Large riots	12	21	64
Violence	10	11	79
Honrible sights	7	13	80
Rigid authoritarian system	18	31	51
Making critical decisions	11	20	69
Excessive supervision, criticisms by supervisor	20	22	56

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree and Neutral

by 61% of the officers. However, the use of force by the officers was rated by 84% who perceived as stressful to do, this is supported by McCarty *et al.* (2007), while unfair treatment by superiors was rated 67%. Irregular work hours was rated 68% of the respondents who agreed with the statement that irregular work hours is a stressor. On problem at home, 60% of the officers agreed that it is stress, while 70% of the agreed that negative public of the police service is stress. On the other hand 83% of the officers agreed with statement that, work overload is highly stressful. These findings are in consistent with earlier studies (Gibbons and Gibbons, 2007; He *et al.*, 2002; Malach-Pines and Keinan, 2007) who investigated the stress among police and other law enforcement officers.

Officers also rated inadequate resources as stressful. This was indicated by 83% of the officers who supported this statement when asked to state whether they will consider inadequate resources stressful. This is consistent with finding of Awino and Agolla (2008) that identified lack of resources as a major constraint, while unpleasant duty was moderately agreed with as evidenced by 56% of the participants. Sixty one percent of the officers agreed that competition with co-workers causes them stress, while dealing with suicide scenes and fatal accidents were rated 80% and 78% by the respondents respectively. Low salary was rated 80 by the respondents, who agreed with the statement it is causing stress. The officers were divided on the statement that boring routine tasks was the source of their work stress. Thirty six percent of the officers disagreed and 39% of the officers agreed, respectively. Making fast decisions was rated 75% by the officers, contact with criminals was rated 79% by the officers and uncertainty about promotion was rated 73% by the officers. These findings are consistent with the earlier studies on stress (He *et al.*, 2002; Gibbons and Gibbons, 2007; Malach-Pines and Keinan, 2007). The officers also rated highly getting injured while on duty as their source stress when performing their policing. This was rated 90% by the officers. This is consistent with findings of scholars (Malach-Pines and Keinan, 2007).

Insufficient personnel was rated 65% by the officers, contact with body fluids / faeces was rated 78% by the officers and while receiving complaint from citizens was rated low (45%) officers agreed that it is a source of stress. The officers also perceived their jobs as having high responsibility. Eight percent of the officers confirmed this, while reporting the death of the next kin of their relatives was rated 72% by the officers as stressful. Assignments such as dealing with crisis situation was rated 65% by the officers, dying while on duty was rated 64% by the officers and dealing with riots was rated 64% by the officers as stressful. These findings have been corroborated by the findings of He *et al.* (2002). The officers' responses were affirmative on the issues such as dealing with violence was rated 79% by the officers dealing with horrible sights was rated 80% by the officers and making critical decisions was rated 69% by the officers respectively. These findings have been found to be consistent with earlier study of McCarty *et al.* (2007). On the other hand the officers rated rigid authoritarian system and excessive supervision, criticisms by their supervisor 51 and 56% by the officers, respectively. This supports the finding of researchers Violanti and Aron (1994), Anshel (2000) and Waters and Ussery (2007).

The result presented in Table 3 shows the result of reaction to stress by the officers. This clearly shows that officers are following the right coping strategies to reduce the negative effects of work stressors. Whereas one would expect that, when officers are confronted with stressful events they are likely to resort to drinking or smoking as coping strategy, surprisingly that was not the case with this finding. The coping strategies adopted by the police officers were found to be consistent to the coping mechanisms in general stress.

Table 3: Coping mechanisms in the work police officers (N = 229)

Coping strategies	Mean±SD
Career life planning	4.50±3.59
Healthy eating	3.18±3.54
Exercising	3.90±4.43
Socialising	3.48±5.28
Employee training programs	3.24±2.30



## **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

The perceived police stress symptoms identified were feeling restlessness, trouble in concentrating, worries and thinking of concerns at night and weekend, feeling tensed and anxiety, feeling of depressed, increase in appetite, loss of personal enjoyment and feeling of lack of energy. However, the finding also revealed that the officers disagreed with the following stress symptoms statement such as taking over the counter medication, high blood pressure, feeling lack of confidence and engaging in smoking or drinking alcohol. The research findings revealed that the policing job is highly stressful. The study identified the police stressors rated from the highest as getting injured while on duty; use of force when the job demand to do so; inadequate resources and work overload; low salary; dealing with suicide scenes; high responsibility; and dealing with horrible sights. Beside these stressors, the study also identified other stressors which were rated high by the officers as contact with the body fluids, dealing violence, dealing with fatal accidents and uncertainty about promotion. In this study 35 stressors were explored and the result of the findings revealed high rating for the 32 stressors by the participants as indicated in frequency distribution (Table 2). However, the 3 stressors namely sexual harassment, receiving complaint from citizen and boring routine work were relatively rated not perceived as stressors. Sexual harassment was rated negatively. This was indicated by 53% of the participants who rated it negatively. This means that the job of policing is not characterised by sexual harassment as the participants disagreed with the statement.

Malach-Pines and Keinan (2007), Norvell *et al.* (1993) and McCarty *et al.* (2007) have identified these police work stressors as common to the work of policing. Stress is known to have both psychological and physical effects on a person health. This may result in depersonalization and withdrawals where an individual lead solitude lifestyle. Policing job is vital to the society and the well being of the police officers should be of great concern to the society at large. Effort should be made to have psychologically and physically fit police officers to carry out their duties effectively. Police work involves dealing closely with the civilians who comprised of both good citizens and criminal thugs. Therefore, this calls for the police officers to be of sound mental capability beyond reproach. Whereas the job of police cannot be without stress, a conventional police service should conduct stress reduction sessions regularly to help the officers cope with the demand of their duties. From this study, the findings reveals high rating for stressors such as getting injured while on duty, using force when the job demand to do so, work overload, inadequate resources, dealing with fatal accidents and dealing with horrible sights. Indeed these stressors faced by the officers require urgent attention by the management to put into place proper coping strategies to deal with their effects.

The management should know that one size fits all cannot be applicable with regards to coping strategies. This is because stress is appraised differently by different individuals based on their backgrounds, past and current experiences. Junior officers may experience high stress levels when dealing with horrible sights, fear of getting injured while on duty, work over load and for the first time in their work assignment, whereas old and experienced officers may find such work normal and routine in their nature. This calls for different stress reduction sessions for different group of officers. Failure to put interventions into place is likely to cause the officers their psychological and physical health. For the junior officers the assignment should though be challenging, but moderate and not excessive physical and psychological pressure on the officers. The study also suggests training for station commanders on career and counselling in order to help junior officers cope with the demand of their duties, since they are the one who are in charge of the stations. Officers should be encouraged to share their work experiences with their colleagues or seek the support of the social workers. Regular medical check up should be considered to monitor the officers pulse rates and other vital bodily clues for the possible symptoms of stress.

Career and training has been cited by the officers as strategies that the officers adopt when confronted with the stressful events in their daily work assignments. These will help the officers to choose career options available within the service. Again this will help them know how to handle some tasks which may seem complex in their daily work life.

In order to improve the police officers coping skills, attention should be paid to convergent factors that lead to police officer stress. A police stress management program should be established to fit the specific needs of a police department. It should assess the officer's physical and psychological stress, monitor police officer's adaptive coping skills and make use of peer counselling (He *et al.*, 2002). Police officers are action oriented problem solvers who are in control of their own feelings and emotions. They are suppose to be strong, resilient and must remain unaffected by the violent and vicious behaviours that they encounter every day, so the police officers should go for screening, training, ongoing prevention programs and early interventions (Waters and Ussery, 2007). It can be argued that, police officers differ on their perceptions and experiences of occupational stress, due to different assignment that individual officers may be required to attend to, for example, officers on night duty are more likely to perceive and experience high level stress compared to officers on daytime duty or doing clerical work in the office. These differences in perceptions and experiences are likely to be high when the task assignment boils down to individual level.

#### **Limitations and Future Research Direction**

This study on stress among police officers in a developing country has some limitations, which may provide for an opportunity for further research to scholars and as well practicing managers in the area of policing. The study sample size was only confined to Gaborone and its surrounding areas. This in terms of geographical coverage was limited. This sample limitation extend to other regions since it only studied police officers in Botswana, therefore its application to other parts of the world may not be possible without conducting a similar study to validate these findings. The study was a survey type and the researchers suggests that future study should consider the use of mixed method to gain more insight into the nature of the police stress. However, this study may provide an opportunity for more comprehensive studies involving many police organisations to help identify the police sources of police stressors and coping strategies. The job of policing are strenuous and there is greater need to conduct more research on police stressors since the rate and the nature of police work changes so fast compared to other formal jobs. Hence, the researchers suggest specific future study be conducted on the differences in stress perceptions of work stress between male and female police officers.

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