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Stress and obligativity of police officers

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Abstract. In the present study, I examined the differences between criminal police officers and border police officers. The study shows if there are any significant differences of stress and mentality for the two types of policemen. 2 tests were applied on 60 participants, 30 of each category. One test was for measuring stress and the other one for observing the mentality of the employees. The study has 2 hypotheses: the presumption that there are significant differences of stress between the two types of officers and the presumption that there are significant differences between levels of obligativity for the two types of officers. The hypotheses were confirmed.

Keywords. policeman, stress, obligativity, mentality, criminalist

1. Introduction

The word stress is rarely clearly understood. There is no single definition of the term, so it means different things to different people. Indeed, almost anything anyone can think of unpleasant, has been described as a source of stress, such as getting married, being redundant, getting older, getting a job, too much or too little work, solitary confinement or exposure to excessive noise. (Jeremy Stranks, 2005: 1)

The first definition suggests that stress results from pressure. "The greater the pressure the more likely that the recipient, whether a person or a load-bearing beam, will succumb. When the (external) stimulus becomes too great, (internal) collapse becomes inevitable" (G. Butler, 1993: 1) This is a definition that focuses on the external sources of stress and represents its cumulative nature. In the Oxford English Dictionary: "to subject (a material thing, a bodily organ, a mental faculty) to stress or strain, to overwork fatigue".

The second definition focuses on stress as a response to noxious or aversive stimuli. This is the aspect of stress emphasized by Selye (1956), who measured stress in terms of physiological response, such as those represented by sympathetic adrenal-medullary activity or by pituitary-adrenal-cortical activity. Selye observed what he called the general adaptation syndrome (GAS) during which the physiological response to stress progresses through three stages. (G. Butler, 1993: 2)

We notice that first of all the human body reacts to the surrounding stimuli and triggers a series of reactions. The body is prepared for the fight against stressors and thus an autonomous activity is triggered. There are also cases in which the human body is not prepared to deal with stress and thus imbalances occur, the system is damaged and may eventually collapse. This stage is classified by specialists as the exhaustion stage.



ly depending on the theoretical context. The different definitions of stress have evolved according to research at the time. Cannon 1929 was one of the first studies used to describe stress in a physiological context stating that stress is an unnatural response of the body in an attempt to restore balance. Other researchers have defined stress as a stimulus-response system rooted in physiology and have identified stress as a process that requires the assessment of stressors and available resources to meet the requirements of the stress factor. (Lazarus 1966). (Angela R. Wendorf, Amanda M. Brower, 2018).

Stress becomes a problem when it goes on for a long time. Both our mind and our body can be harmed by stress in this case. It is very important to deal with stress as soon as we recognise it. Long-lasting (or chronic) stress can make us feel exhausted, making us vulnerable to viruses and harming our health.

Stress at work is generated by the idea of becoming the perfect employee. We form an ideal, a pattern and we want to prove that we can be as we set out. That pattern becomes a generator of stress.

Human performance is directly affected by the environment in which people work and sound levels of working environment promote optimum levels of performance. Human system is influenced by many factors, resulting in performance degradation as a result of the large palette of stressors, in some cases resulting even with system breaks down.

Degradation of performance is particularly associated with: diurnal rhythm, fatigue, lack of motivation, lack of stimulation and stress.

Scientists have identified a series of different factors that can influence how badly we are affected by stress. Age and sex can make a difference to the way we cope, but a big factor is our personality type. (Rozina Breen, 2005). Also, our mentality can affect our relationship with stress.

A mindset is a belief that orients the way we handle situations — the way we sort out what is going on and what we should do. Our mindsets help us spot opportunities but they can trap us in self-defeating cycles. The Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck (2006) popularized the idea of mindset by contrasting different beliefs about where our abilities come from. If we have negative thinking, low self-esteem then failure can be unsettling because it makes us doubt how good we are. Instead, if we have positive thinking and trust in our own strengths, then we find resources to improve our ability - and going through a failure will show us what else we need to work on. People with fixed thinking when challenged become very defensive, especially when someone suggests that they made a mistake - it is very difficult for them to accept the opinion of other people. Growing-minded people often show perseverance and resilience when they make mistakes - they become more motivated to work harder. (Gary Klein, 2016)

Gary Klein has found, through his research, that people who focus only on ways to reduce problems and mistakes behave much differently from those who, in addition to worrying about errors, are also interested in the chances of making discoveries and gain experience.

To be successful at work we must be open to ourselves, to accept challenges and to model ourselves according to the context in order to reduce stress and to make fewer mistakes in daily tasks. Mindfulness is to pay attention to the present moment and not to judge your innate talent or intelligence, but to be open to new possibilities.

When you adopt a growth mindset at work, you do not mind getting negative feedback as you view it as a chance to discover something new. You do not mind taking on new responsibilities because you are curious about how you will cope. (Shamash Alidina, Juliet Adams, 2014).

2. Objectives and hypotheses

The objectives of the present study are to find out if stress affects more the criminal officers or the border officers. Also, the second purpose is to find if criminal officers have a different mentality than border officers. For that, 2 hypotheses were presumed:



ative difference between stress grade and the specialisation of the policemen

- b) It is assumed that it is a semnificative difference between the level of obligation in performance of the task at criminal police officers than at border police officers.

3. Participants

Participants are 60 policemen from Braila, where 30 are criminal police officers and 30 border police officers. 26 of them are under the age of 40 and 34 of them are above the age of 41. 28 of them have experience under 15 years and 32 of them have experience more than 15 years. Most of them are men.

Stress and mentality at work were the 2 tests applied on the police officers. These were meant to reveal if semnificative differences are present between stress grade and the specialisation of the policeman and between the leve of obligation in performance of the task at criminal police officers than at border police officers.

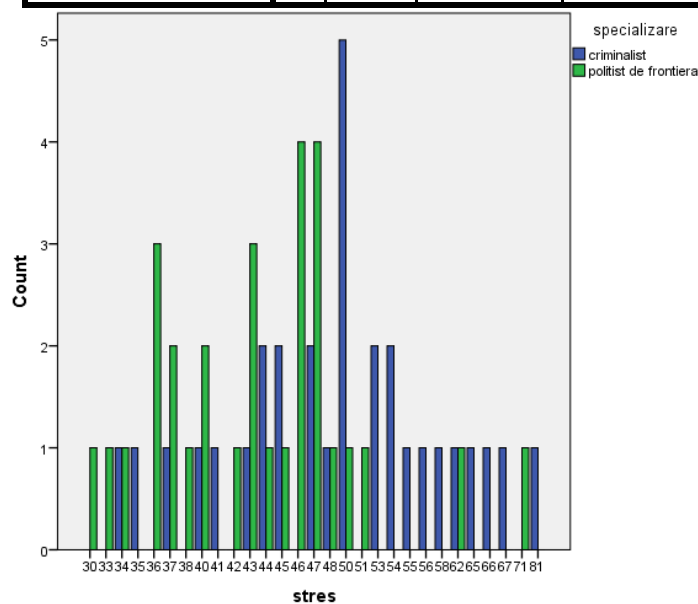
4. Results

- a) It is assumed that it is a semnificative difference between stress grade and the specialisation of the policemen.

A stress test with 30 items was applied on the subjects. The results from the present study confirm the ipotese. There really is a semnificative difference between stress grade and the specialisation of the policemen. It shows that criminal police officers are clearly more stressed than border police officers. It can be due to the tasks more demanding that criminal officers receive and the busy schedule that they have.

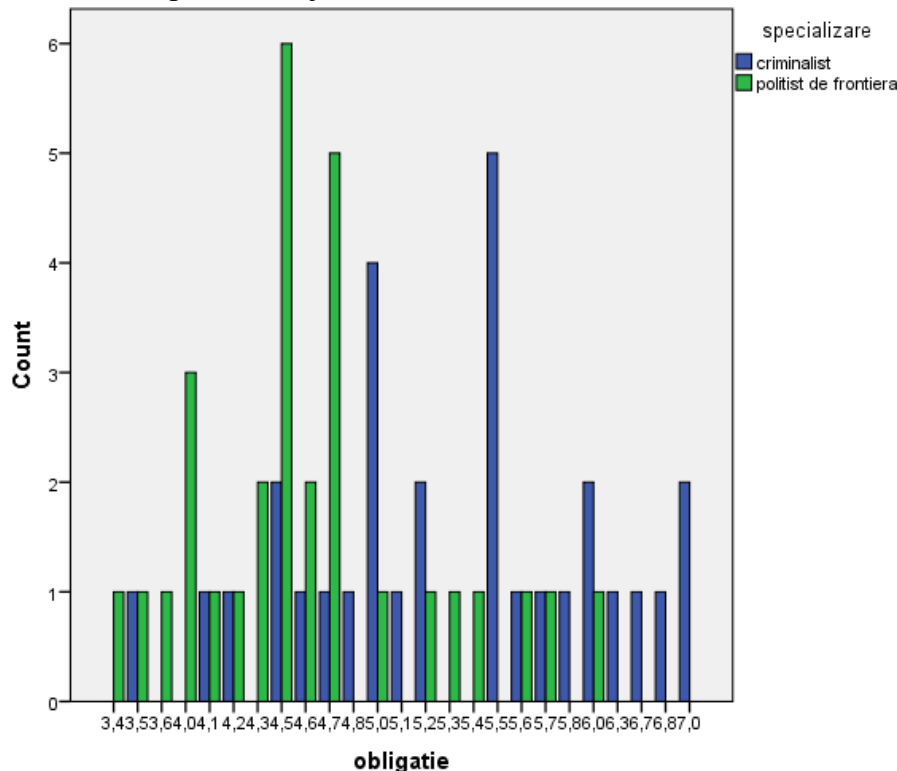
Group Statistics

specializare	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
criminalist	30	50,80	10,263	1,874
stres politist de frontiera	30	43,70	8,276	1,511



- b) It is assumed that it is a semnificative difference between the level of obligation in performance of the task at criminal police officers than at border police officers.

After applying a test that discovers the employee`s mentality, i observed that there is a semnificative difference between the level of obligation in performance of the task at criminal police officers than at border police officers. The final results show us that criminal police officers feel more obligativity to do their job than border police officers do. That is due to many factors that influences criminal police officers to feel obligated to do their job, like small earnings, lots of time spent at the job and haotic schedule.



Group Statistics

	specializare	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
obligation	Criminal police officers	30	5,360	,8561	,1563
	border police officers	30	4,577	,6224	,1136

Conclusion

The two hypotheses were confirmed. There really are semnificative differences between criminalist police officers and border police officers. Criminalist officers are more stressed than border officers. This can be due to their complicated assignments and the huge responsibility that they carry. The second hypothese presumed that obligativity is another critirion of differences. The study revealed that criminal police officers are feeling more obligativity than border officers, that might be influenced by unsatisfying salary.

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