

MINDFULNESS, OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND JOB BURNOUT IN TRAFFIC POLICE OFFICERS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study to examine the relationship between mindfulness, occupational stress and job burnout in traffic police. This study contributes to find out the ways in which mindfulness can help traffic police reduce stress and avoid burnout in this high pressure occupation. A quantitative methodology with correlational research design was used, comprising a sample of 100 traffic police officers using purposive sampling. Statistical analysis includes descriptive statistics, Pearson product moment correlation and regression analyses were used to examine the relationship between the study variables, also independent sample *t*-test was applied to measure the gender difference. The following assessment measures were used: a demographic information sheet, Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, Operational Police Stress Questionnaire, and Maslach Burnout Inventory Scale. The results revealed that job burnout and occupational stress had excellent internal consistency, whereas the measure for mindfulness showed fair internal consistency. The study found a positive correlation between mindfulness and job burnout among traffic police officers, indicating that increased mindfulness is associated with higher level of burnout. On the other hand, occupational stress was positively correlated with job burnout, confirming that more stress leads to more burnout. Both mindfulness and occupational stress emerged as predictors of job burnout. The results also indicate that there were no differences between men and women in terms of work stress and burnout. By adopting mindfulness programs customized for traffic police, we can enhance their coping strategies, lower job-related stress, and decrease burnout. This can ultimately contribute to a more effective and safer traffic management system going forward.

Keywords: Mindfulness, occupational stress, job burnout, traffic police.

1. Introduction

Traffic police are vital for safeguarding road safety and managing traffic movement. They enforce traffic laws, direct traffic at intersections, and address accident situations. The job of a traffic police officer is demanding and often involves long hours of standing or directing traffic in all weather conditions. Traffic police officers are tasked with ensuring public safety on roads, often encountering high pressure situations and demanding work

environments. The nature of their job exposes them to various stressors, which can lead to occupational stress and eventually job burnout if not effectively managed.

1.1 Mindfulness

A condition of attention known as mindfulness involves being consciously aware of a moment without passing judgment (1). When in this condition, a person will concentrate their

consciousness and attention on the internal and exterior stimuli that they are now experiencing, such as their thoughts and feelings on the inside as well as the sights and noises outside, and they will accept these sensations without judging them (2). "A process of openly attending, with awareness, to one's present moment experience" is the definition of mindfulness (3). Although there are several definitions of mindfulness, they all have two things in common: First of all, mindfulness also known as "watchfulness" focuses on an individual's awareness of both internal and exterior present-moment phenomena (such as sounds, bodily sensations, thoughts, and emotional reactions) in the present moment (4). Second, mindfulness calls for having an open mind about what one encounters (5). According to (6), mindfulness can be seen as a dispositional feature. It also refers to the state of mind and the activities that are incorporated into intervention programs to promote it (1).

"The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" is what John Kabat-Zin defines as mindfulness (7). Through practice, one can acquire and hone this skill. It helps people to become nonjudgmentally aware of their thoughts, feelings, and sensations in the moment. (8). According to (9), mindfulness is employed to enhance one's well-being toward others as well as toward oneself (hedonic well-being).

1.2 Occupational stress

The harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker" is the definition of occupational stress (10). According to (11), occupational stress is a condition brought on by shifts that require workers to deviate from their regular roles and is a result of their interactions and relationships with other people.

An organization's workers may experience stress from a variety of sources, including a heavy workload, a lack of time, an excessive amount of control, unequal responsibilities or authorization, a lack of clarity regarding roles, conflicting roles, professional discord, anxiety related to roles,

working conditions, fear of losing one's job, job hazards, and interpersonal relationships (12). Stress arising from these types of factors has two main effects on an individual: on the one hand, it leads to poor physical, psychological, and behavioral results; On the other hand, it leads to diminished performance, absenteeism, late arrivals, an increase in power transfers at work, and workplace accidents (13).

Stress at work is one of the most significant health risks faced by employees globally. The term "stress" refers to the pressure or demands imposed on an individual by higher authorities (14). Occupational stress has been linked to factors such as inadequacy, negative emotional states, and burdens, responses to work-related stressors, psychological conditions, and individual traits (15).

1.3 Job Burnout

Job burnout is a psychological condition that emerges from prolonged interpersonal stress and job monotony (16). It typically denotes a state of exhaustion affecting one's emotions, cognition, and behavior, triggered by a harsh work environment, lack of adequate resources, and poor interpersonal relations (17). In essence, job burnout is a psychosomatic disorder associated with stress experienced at work (18). It involves mental fatigue coupled with job-related stress and an adverse work atmosphere. This condition often manifests as a delayed response to persistent interpersonal stressors and job-related challenges, particularly in professions that involve high levels of caregiving and counseling. One major outcome of work stress is job burnout (19). The term "job burnout" describes the psychological, emotional, and physical effects that result in stress-related behaviors at work. It is primarily characterized by feelings of depersonalization, diminishing personal accomplishment, and emotional tiredness (20).

Freudenberger (21) defined burnout as "use up of inner sources of individuals due to exhaustion, loss of energy, or demands not met." Burnout is a prolonged stress response experienced by workers across different occupational environments, marked by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a diminished sense of personal achievement (22). Emotional weariness

shows that a person is facing more emotional and physical pressure, which means they're feeling stressed. Depersonalization, along with rude behavior toward clients and a lack of enthusiasm in one's work, is the interpersonal aspect of burnout. Furthermore, a sense of unfulfilled personal potential indicates a person's propensity for negative appraisal [4].

The police profession is considered highly demanding in terms of physical, intellectual, and emotional challenges. Traffic police work has become more strenuous due to the increasing population, the surge in the number of vehicles, and the complex nature of the working environment. The difficulties experienced by traffic police officials in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley are highlighted in this report. The results indicate that in order to lessen the physical and emotional strain that traffic police officers face on a daily basis, improvements to their working environment should be undertaken. Since traffic enforcers' mental health and occupational health and safety (OHS) is a serious public health concern, policymakers, organizational leaders, and stakeholders should be aware of it (23).

Burnout at work has a negative impact on preschool teachers' career development in a number of ways. While some research has looked at the elements that contribute to teachers' burnout, less has looked at specific factors. This study aimed to explore how job burnout relates to mindfulness among preschool teachers, and to assess the moderating roles of emotional intelligence and coping styles. The findings showed that: emotional intelligence and negative coping styles individually influenced the link between mindfulness and job burnout; mindfulness combined with positive coping styles had a chain-mediation effect on this relationship; and

mindfulness was inversely related to job burnout. These findings highlight the significant influence of mindfulness on job burnout in preschool teachers, underscoring its importance for future psychological interventions aimed at this group (17).

Police personnel have been diagnosed with a range of stress-related health issues over the last thirty years. Police work is a stressful job, which puts officers at higher risk for a number of environmental health issues. While there has been extensive research on the relationship between high-stress jobs and environmental health, the impact of job stress on job performance among police officers has not been thoroughly investigated. This correlational study aimed to explore whether physical exercise among police officers could alleviate the negative impact of job stress on their performance, based on Cohen & McKay's stress-buffering hypothesis.

1.4 Hypotheses

- There was a significant relationship between mindfulness and job burnout in traffic police officers.
- Occupational stress was likely to be positively predicted with job burnout in traffic police officers.
- Mindfulness and occupational stress was likely to be predictors of job burnout in traffic police officers.
- There was no difference in job burnout and occupational stress score for male and female.
- There was difference in job burnout and occupational stress score for male and female.

Proposed Hypothetical Model



2. Materials and methods

2.1 Measures and instrument development

In this research study, data was collected mainly via the self-administrated questionnaire. The first section handled demographic data of the participants, encompassing age, education level, gender, and marital status, year of service and duty hours.

Demographic characteristics of sample (N=100).

Characteristic	f	%
Age		
20-35	16	15.8%
35-50	84	83.2%
Gender		
Male	77	76.2%
Female	23	22.8%
Marital Status		
Married	82	81.2%
Unmarried	18	17.8%
Educational Level		
Less than metric	4	4.0%
Less than Intermediate	15	14.9%
More than intermediate	37	36.6%
More than bachelor	44	43.6%
Year of Service		
Less than 10 year	36	35.5%
More than 10 year	64	63.4%
Duty Hours		
Less than 6 hour	6	5.9%

Less than 8 hour	7	6.9%
Less than 10 hour	71	70.3%
More than 10 hour	16	15.8%

Note: *f*= Frequency, %= Percentage, *M*= Mean, *SD*= Standard deviation.

2.2 Measurement of Mindfulness

The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, created by Krik W. Brown and Richard Ryan (2003), is a 15-item tool used to assess mindfulness in traffic police officers. The items are rated on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 'almost always' (1) to 'almost never' (6). The alpha reliability of this scale is 0.76.

2.3 Measurement of occupational stress

The Operational Police Stress Questionnaire (PSQ-Op), developed by McCreary and Thompson (2004), is a 20-item scale used to measure stressors among traffic police officers. The items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 'not stressful at all' (1-3) to 'extremely stressful' (7). The alpha reliability of this scale is 0.90.

2.4 Measurement of Burnout

The Maslach Burnout Inventory, created by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson (1981), is a 22-item scale used to assess burnout risk. It includes nine items related to emotional exhaustion, eight items related to a lack of personal accomplishment, and five items related to depersonalization. Responses are rated on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 'never' (0) to 'every day' (6). The alpha reliability of this scale is emotional exhaustion (0.90), depersonalization (0.76) and personal achievement (0.76).

3. Sampling and Data Collecting

A quantitative methodology with correlational research design was used, comprising a sample of 100 traffic police officers using purposive sampling. Firstly, the permission from authorities was taken. The respective authority was informed about nature and purpose of the research. Traffic Police officers were incorporated in current study. The informed consent, a demographic information sheet and the related questionnaires were handed over to the participants. After taking consent the participants were asked to fill the questionnaires along with providing their demographic information. Male and female traffic police officer was taken in this study. More than 50 year old traffic police officers were not taken in the study.

3.1 Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected data was done with the help of SPSS v. 27. Various analysis techniques were employed to investigate the relationship between mindfulness, occupational stress, and job burnout in traffic police. Descriptive statistics was utilized to assess the means, standard deviations, and frequencies of the variables. Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to determine the relationship between mindfulness, occupational stress, and job burnout. Independent sample t-test was employed to measure the gender difference.

1. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table.1

Psychometric Properties of this Study Scales (N=100)

Variables	M	SD	Range	α
JB	50.43	27.21	0-11	.93
OS	71.35	24.57	20-14	.91
M	47.98	13.21	8-79	.79

Note: M=Mean, SD= Standard deviation, α = Coefficient alpha, JB= Job Burnout, OS= occupational stress, M= Mindfulness.

Table 1 show that the Cronbach alpha α value for job burnout was .93 which indicated excellent internal consistency. The Cronbach alpha value for occupational stress was .91 which indicated

excellent internal consistency. The Cronbach alpha for mindfulness was .79 which indicated fair internal consistency

Table .2

Pearson Product Moment Correlation of demographics, job burnout, occupational stress, and mindfulness. (N=100).

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	-								
Gender	-.15	-							
YOS	.41**	-.28**	-						
Marital status	-.08	.24*	-.14	-					
Duty hours	.26**	.09	.09	-.17	-				
EL	.14	-.02	.39*	-.02	.20*	-			
Job burnout	.08	-.01	.29**	.17	-.01	.17	-		
OS	.06	-.09	.19	-.07	.05	.31**	.46**	-	
Mindfulness	.06	-.09	.14	-.02	-.05	.12	.25*	.40*	-

Note: YOS= year of service EL= educational level ,OS= occupational stress.

Note: * $<.05$, ** $<.01$, *** $p<.001$

The table 2 shown that the year of service has a highly positive significant relationship with age. Highly negative significant relationship was found between year of service and gender. Marital status has a positive significant relationship with gender. Duty hour has a highly negative significant relationship with age. Education level has positive significant relationship with year of service. Job burnout has highly positive significant relationship

with Year of service. Occupational stress has highly positive significant relationship with year of service. Occupational stress has highly positive significant relationship with education level. Occupational stress has highly positive significant relationship with job burnout. Mindfulness has highly positive significant relationship with occupational stress.

Table. 3

Hierarchal Regression analysis of job burnout (N=100).							
Variables	B	95%CI		S EB	β	R2	$\Delta R2$
		LL	UL				
Step 1						.20**	.20**
Constant	14.41*	-.48	29.31	7.51			
Occupational Stress	.50**	.30	.70	.10	.45**		
Step 2						.21	.19
Constant	9.11	-10.70	28.92	9.9			
Occupational Stress	.46**	.25	.68	.10	.42**		
Mindfulness	.16	-.23	.56	.20	.08		

Note: CI =confidence interval, LL= lower limit, UL= upper limit.

Table 3 show that the impact of mindfulness and occupational stress on job burnout. In step 1, R² value of .20 revealed that the occupational stress explained 20% variance with F (1, 98) = 25.71 p<.001. The finding revealed that the occupational

stress positively predictor ($\beta = .41, p < .001$). In step 2, the R² value of .21 revealed that the occupational stress and mindfulness explained 21% variance in the job burnout with F (1, 97) = .65, p>.001.

Table .4

<i>An independent sample t- test between gender and burnout, occupational stress.</i>									
	Male		Female		95% of CI				
Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
Job burnout	50.6	29.09	49.9	20.17	.112	.91	-12.16	13.62	.027
Occupational stress	72.51	26.30	67.43	17.50	.807	.38	-12.16	13.62	.027

The table 4 showed that there was no significant difference in scores for males (M= 50.59, SD= 29.09) and females (M= 49.86, SD=20.17) ;(t =.112, p=.911) in terms of burnout. The table also showed that there was no significant difference in scores for males (M= 72.51, SD= 26.50) and females (M= 67.43, SD= 17.50); (t=.807, P=.38) in terms of work stress. In both conditions p value is greater than .05 so null hypothesis is accepted. First, assumption of normality and leven's test were checked. Both the assumptions are met.

4. Discussion

This study was carried out to explore how mindfulness and occupational stress are connected to Job burnout in traffic police officers. The role of demographic factors was also investigated in the present study. Reliability analysis of the measuring variables used in the research was calculated first. Following inferential statistics including Pearson Product Moment Correlation was run to see the relationship between the variables. Regression was run to examine how mindfulness and occupational stress predict job burnout in traffic police. Independent sample t-test was run to measure the gender difference between job burnout and occupational stress. The results of this study are discussed in relation to existing research. We analyzed data from 100 traffic police officers, all of whom were participants from Chief Traffic Office Lahore.

The study proposed that there is a significant relationship between mindfulness and job burnout in traffic police officers. This hypothesis is

consistent as previous literature which posits that more mindful the individual is more they have to focus on their task, followed by exhaustion and burn out. However the mindfulness is positively related to depersonalization. (24). As the research study found a negative correlation between mindfulness and job burnout. According to earlier research, mindfulness and job burnout are positively correlated. For example, people who practice mindfulness less tend to solve difficulties at work and have stronger interpersonal relationships and mental flexibility (6).

The study hypothesized that Occupational stress was likely to be positively predicted with job burnout in traffic police officers. The hypothesis is consistent as the previous literature has revealed notable findings regarding the relationship between occupational stress and job burnout. These studies indicate that occupational stress can intensify feelings of burnout, highlighting a strong correlation between stress and organizational burnout among faculty members and staff at higher education institutions in Pakistan (25). The research study show a significant correlation between occupational stress and job burnout among female industrial workers, suggesting that increased work stress and excessive dedication may contribute significantly to the development of burnout (26).

The study hypothesized that mindfulness and occupational stress was likely to be predictors of job burnout in traffic police officers. Previous studies highlighted the role of mindfulness in reducing perceived stress and improving emotional regulation, which can mitigate the adverse effects

of occupational stress on job burnout (27), In professions with high emotional demands, such as policing, mindfulness has been found to enhance psychological resilience and reduce the likelihood of burnout by promoting better coping strategies and emotional stability (6).

The study also hypothesized that there were no differences in job burnout and occupational stress scores between males and females. Previous research has indicated that gender does not significantly affect by work stress and burnout (7). Our study's results confirm this, as the significance value was above .05, indicating no significant difference in burnout and stress scores between genders. Hence, the fourth hypothesis (null hypothesis) was accepted.

5.1 Conclusion

The study explored how mindfulness and occupational stress relate to job burnout in traffic police officers. The study found a positive correlation between mindfulness and job burnout among traffic police officers, indicating that increased mindfulness is associated with higher level of burnout. On the other hand, occupational stress was positively correlated with job burnout, confirming that more stress leads to more burnout. Both mindfulness and occupational stress emerged as predictors of job burnout. The results also indicate that there were no differences between men and women in terms of work stress and burnout.

5.2 Suggestion and Limitations

- Research should introduce both qualitative and quantitative analyses.

- Use the study's results to design workplace policies that manage stress and promote mindfulness in employee wellness programs.
- There are fewer women in this study, so it would be good to do more research specifically with women.
- The findings are specific to traffic police officers and may not apply to other professions. Future research should explore different types of jobs to broaden the results.
- The study did not consider potential confounding factors, like personal stressors or specific job conditions, which might influence the results. Future research should include these variables for more accurate findings.
- Furthermore research should be done on the concerned topic.

5.3 Implications

- Integrate mindfulness practices into training to help traffic police reduce burnout and manage stress effectively
- Develop and deploy stress management strategies to address occupational stress, which is a key predictor of burnout.

The study highlights the need for additional research to explore other potential factors influencing job burnout and stress among traffic police officers. Future studies could examine the long-term effects of mindfulness interventions and their impact on job performance and overall well-being.

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