



Psychological, Social Work Environment and Burnout Among Police Officers: The Case of Meteke Zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Favorable Psychosocial work environment is one of the profound elements of work effectiveness and the psychological wellbeing of employees within it. Therefore, this study attempted to investigate the relationship among psychosocial work environment, and burnout among police officers in pawi special woreda of Metekel zone in Benshangul regional state. Adopting a cross sectional survey design, a total of 50 (male=40 and female=10) police officers were taken comprehensively from the woreda police office. The data, analysis were conducted using t-test, one way ANOVA and Multiple Regressions along with descriptive statistical techniques. Results of the study disclosed that quantitative demands have been found to have a statistically significant positive relationship with emotional demands ($r=.255$, $p<0.01$) cognitive demands ($r=.882$, $p<0.01$) and emotional exhaustion ($r=0.48$, $p<0.05$). However, quantitative demands have statistically significant negative association with degree of freedom ($r=-.14$, $p<0.05$) and social support ($r=-.405$, $p<0.05$). Similarly, emotional demands have statistically significant positive relationship with role conflict ($r=.888$, $p<0.01$), cognitive demands ($r=.275$, $p<0.05$), emotional exhaustion ($r=.143$, $p<0.01$) and depersonalization ($r=-.330$, $p<0.05$). Emotional demands have statistically significant negative association with social support ($r=-.178$, $p<0.05$), personal accomplishment ($r=-.476$). Results also disclosed that there is statistically significant difference between men and women police officers in their level of burnout. Results of the current study have also indicated that there are statistically significant differences in the level of burnout across positions and age groups.

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Introduction

The police is one of the institutions that exert efforts mainly on controlling crime through patrol and other crime prevention programs. However, once crime happened, their secondary it is obligatory to give special attention to burnout and psychosocial factors in police officers as its negative consequences affect the service recipients, the organization and the police officers

themselves [1]. Furthermore, burnout and poor job satisfaction play a great role in human service professionals' psychological, social, and occupational life. It does not only just make them unproductive and unmotivated at workplace but it also has substantial influence on their day to day activities [2].



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Burnout has several downsides to the organization that could be manifested through reduced commitment, lower job satisfaction, higher absenteeism and turnover rates, poor performance of activities and productivity among employees [3]. Therefore, examining the relationship among psychosocial work environment, and burnout in the context of police officers of the study area has paramount advantage because these variables have multiple impacts to the overall effectiveness of the police force as indicated by the above empirical literature. Thus, the current researcher believes that if there are positive and enhancing psychosocial work environment, the police could have the level of burnout may be minimum. which made the police personnel busy of taking over four major duties namely, crime prevention, crime control and follow up, and traffic control and management activities. And these activities by their nature are highly related with the day to day lives and functions of the community which demand members of the police to work for long hours. And these could have negative impacts on the police officers by affecting their job satisfaction and leading them to burnout. Therefore, examining the relationship among psychosocial work environment, and burnout of the police officers of the woreda is a viable decision for the current researcher. Moreover, as far as the knowledge of the current researcher is concerned, there are no empirical studies conducted on the relationship among these variables in any profession of the study area.

Statement of the problem

The importance of police in every society is unquestionable because it plays significant role in keeping stability and peace. Members are professionally trained to detect, tackle and fight crimes of different types and level in any time. The involvement of police in crime prevention and ensuring justice ranges from devoting their full time and labor up to self-scarification [4]. Thus, viewed in these respects, the police work environment has significant implication to the social and psychological wellbeing of the professionals.

In the context of police profession, in some of the studies, it is identified that police officers who were subject to high levels of work stress report a high incidence of physical syndrome and psychological problems that affect their work performance and effectiveness [5]. Moreover, many researchers also documented that violence, traumatic events, murder, assault are important factors which affect the police officers and their job and which in turn result to work stress such as burnout [6].

With this intention, the study tried to seek answers to the following basic research questions.

1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between psychosocial work environment and burnout among police officers?
2. Are there statistically significant differences in burnout among police officers due to demographic variables (sex, position, and age)?
3. Which best predict burnout among psychosocial work environment factors (quantitative demands, cognitive demands, emotional demands, degree of freedom, role conflict and social support) and demographic variables (sex, position and age)?

Objectives of the study

General objectives

The general objective of this study was to explore the relationship of the psychosocial work environment, burn out and job satisfaction of police force in Pawi Woreda.

Specific objectives

This study tried to address the following specific objectives

1. To explore whether there is statistically significant the relationship between psychosocial work environment, and burnout among police officers in Pawi Woreda ?
2. To identify whether there is statistically significant differences in burnout among police officers due to demographic variables (sex, position, and age).
4. To determine the predictive value of psychosocial work environment and demographic variables on burnout of police force.

Methods

Research design

The primary objective of this study was examining the relationship between psychosocial work environment, and burnout of police officers. To attain this objective, a descriptive survey study design, specifically cross-sectional survey was employed. This method was chosen because the samples were drawn from a population at one time, and information were gathered from respondents through a questionnaire at a single point in time [7].

Population and sampling techniques

The actual participants of the study were members of the police force found in Pawi woreda. Their total number is 60. Thus, a comprehensive sampling technique was used to make all members as participants of the study.

Variables

In this study, the dependent variables were burnout, which was measured by a 22 item questionnaire of Maslach Burnout Inventory Scale which incorporates three dimensions, namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment The independent variables include six areas of psychosocial work environment (quantitative demands, cognitive demands, emotional/sensorial demands, degree of freedom, role conflict and social support/relations) which were measured by 26 items questionnaire of Copenhagen psychosocial work environment questionnaire and socio-demographic characteristics (sex, age and position)

Below is a specification of dependent and independent variables that were used in the study.

Data collection instruments

Three pre-established standardized self-administered scales were adopted to collect quantitative data; namely Copenhagen psychosocial work environment questionnaire, Maslach Burnout Inventory and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (short form) were adopted to collect the required data. To lessen language barrier, all items in the questionnaire were translated into Amharic.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 for windows.

1. First relevant descriptive statistics (Means and Standard Deviations) were computed for general purpose.
2. T-test was employed to decide whether there exists a statistically significant mean difference on symptoms of the selected psychological variables (burnout) between male and female police officers.
3. One-Way Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to decide whether there exists a statistically mean difference on symptoms of the selected psychological variables (burnout) among independent groups as a function of age and current position.

4. Regression analysis were employed to find out the predictive power of independent variables i.e. psychosocial work environment (quantitative demands, cognitive demands, emotional/sensorial demands, degree of freedom, role conflict and social support/relations) and demographic variables (sex, age, and position) to officers' symptoms of burnout..

Result and discussion

Relationship among psychosocial work environment, and burnout

To know whether there are statistically significant relationships among psychosocial work environment, burnout, Pearson correlation was computed. The result of the correlation analysis is presented in the following table. Pearson correlation was computed for each sub-scale.

Table 1: Pearson correlation among psychosocial work environment, burnout (n=60).

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. QD	1	.255**	.252*	-.405*	.887	.275**	.048*	.105	.187	.142
2. ED	-	1	.354	-.188*	.999**	.375*	.283**	.430*	-.487*	-.114**
3. DF	-	-	1	.035**	-.359*	-.242*	.143	.497	.564**	.339*
4. SS	-	-	-	1	-.192*	.512	-.043*	-.179*	.232**	.279*
5. RC	-	-	-	-	1	.371*	.279*	.430*	-.482**	-.123*
6. CD	-	-	-	-	-	1	.044**	.099*	-.204*	-.164*
7. EE	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	.301*	-.234**	-.182
8. DP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-.554*	-.522
9. PA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	.336**

**p<0.01(2-tailed), *p<0.05(2-tailed), CD: Quantitative Demands; ED: Emotional Demands, DF: Degree of Freedom; SS: Social Support; RC: Role Conflict; CD: Cognitive Demands; EE: Emotional Exhaustion; DP: Depersonalization; PA: Personal Accomplishment; JOBSAT: Job Satisfaction.

The above table portrays the relationship between psychosocial work environment (quantitative demands, cognitive demands, emotional demands, degree of freedom, role conflict and social supports), burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment) According to the result, Results of the study disclosed that quantitative demands have been found to have a statistically significant positive relationship with emotional demands (r=.255, p<0.01) cognitive demands (r=.882, p<0.01) and emotional exhaustion (r=0.48, p<0.05). However, quantitative demands have statistically significant negative association with degree of freedom (r=-.14, p<0.05) and social support (r=-.405, p<0.05). Similarly, emotional demands have statistically significant positive relationship with role conflict (r=.888, p<0.01), cognitive demands(r=.275, p<0.05), emotional exhaustion (r=.143, p<0.01) and depersonalization (r=-.330, p<0.05). Emotional demands have statistically significant negative association with social support (r=-.178, p<0.05), personal accomplishment (r=-.476). The table also indicates that emotional exhaustion statistically significant positive association with depersonalization(r=.301,p<0.05) and negative association with personal accomplishment(r=-.234,

p<0.05).Depersonalization has statistically significant negative association with personal accomplishment(r=-.554, p<0.05) .

Gender-based comparisons of respondents on the level of burnout

At the second objective, this study tried to see the difference in the level of burnout of the police officers across gender (male and female). The following table illustrates results of the analysis of independent samples t-test.

Table 2: Independent samples t-test for burnout and job satisfaction by sex (N=45).

No.	Dependent variables	Female(n=18)		Male(n=27)		t-value	df
		M	SD	M	SD		
1.	Burnout	2.00	3.09	95.11	31.43	1.813*	60

*p<0.05 Leven's test for equality of variance assumed, M: Mean; SD: Standard Deviation; DF: Degree Of Freedom; CI: Confidence Interval.

Results of the analysis of independent samples t-test for burnout have been presented in table 2. According to the results, there is statistically significant difference ($t(60) = 1.813, p < 0.01$) in the reported levels of burnout between male and female police officers. In addition, when compared by mean scores of burnout, male and female participants do differ significantly. More specifically, males' mean scores of burnout ($M = 95.11, SD = 31.43$) is higher than that of females' mean scores of burnout ($M = 2.00, SD = 4.09$).

Comparisons of respondents on the level of burnout across ages

In an attempt to understand whether there are statistically significant mean differences in the levels of burnout across ages, analysis of one way ANOVA was done. The following table illustrates results as follows.

Results of the analysis of one way ANOVA as shown in table 8 reveals that there are statistically significant mean difference ($f(2, 60) = 17.54, p < 0.05$), and ($f(2, 60) = 1.78, p < 0.05$) in the levels of burnout. This indicates that as result of difference in age there exists different level of burnout among age groups. And this led to post hoc analysis to test significant difference between means. Thus, Bonferroni method of pair wise comparison, (see appendix g) indicates that participants in first age (21-30 years) do not statistically significantly differ from participants in the second age group (31-40 years) with respect to the level of burnout. On the other hand, participants in the first (21-30 years) and second (31-40 years) do have statistically significant difference from that of the third age group (41-50 years).

Comparisons of respondents in the levels of burnout across positions

Respondents' levels of burnout were compared across jobs (positions). Participants were categorized under crime prevention process, traffic control, crime investigation/follow-up and human resource process.

Table 3: Means, Standard deviations and one way ANOVA on burnout and job satisfaction across ages (N=60).

No	Dependent variables	21-30 years (n=15)		31-40 years (n=16)		41-50 years (n=14)		F	CI
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
1.	Burnout	66.4	16.4	95.7	45.6	123.9	62.2	19.64*	-88.98-88.98

* $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed), $df = 2, 42$, Leven's test for equality of variance assumed, M: Mean; SD: Standard Deviation; CI: Confidence Interval.

Table 4: Means, Standard deviations and one way ANOVA on burnout and job satisfaction across positions (N=60).

No	Dependent variables	CP(n=10)		CI(n=12)		TC(n=13)		HR(n=10)		F	CI
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
1	Burnout	142.1	12.4	123.6	18.6	70.6	25.3	99.5	38.8	22.2*	-82.97-82.97

Df: 3, 41, Leven's test for equality of variance assumed, * $p < 0.05$, M: Mean; SD: Standard Deviation; CI: Confidence Interval; CP: Crime Prevention; CI: Crime Investigation; TC: Traffic Control; HR: Human Resources.

Analysis of one way ANOVA as shown in revealed that there are statistically significant mean differences ($f(3,41) = 22.2, p < 0.05$) and ($f(3,41) = 2.60, p < 0.05$) in the levels of burnout among groups of participants in different positions. In testing the significant mean difference, the Bonferroni method of pair wise comparisons, (see appendix g) indicates that participants who work in crime prevention process have shown statistically significant mean difference and higher level of burnout than those groups of participants working in traffic control and human resources departments. Similarly, participants who are working in crime investigation department have shown statistically significant mean difference and higher level of burnout as compared to participants who are working in traffic control and human resource processes. Similarly, participants who are working in traffic control process have shown higher level of burnout as compared to those participants who are working in human resource departments.

Prediction of Burnout from psychosocial work environment factors and demographic variables

In an attempt to know the effects of independent variables, the combined effects of all independent variables and the predictive power of each independent variable to the level of job.

The proportion of variance in Burnout accounted for by psychosocial work environment factors

This section presents how much of the variance in burnout is explained and accounted by psychosocial work environment factors (quantitative demand, cognitive demand, emotional demand, degree of freedom, role conflict and social support).

Table 5: Summary of Results of Linear Regression Analysis (Dependent variable=Burnout).

Sources of variations	Sum of squares	Df	Mean squares	F	R ²
Regression	47076.722	6	7846.120	471.702*	.587
Residual	632.078	38	16.634		
Total	47708.800	44			

* $p < 0.05$ $df =$ degree of freedom adjusted $R^2 = 0.255$ Std Error of the Estimate = 11.13129

As indicated by, about 58% of the variation in burnout is explained by all the independent variables (quantitative demands, cognitive demands, emotional demands, degree of freedom, role conflict and social support). The F-test also revealed that this proportion of variance is statistically significant ($F(6, 38) = 471.702, p < 0.05$).

Table 6: The Independent Contribution of the Predictor Variables as Determined by Standardized Regression Coefficient on burnout.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value
Constant	8.288	4.067	-	2.038
QD(x ₁)	.011	.052	.416	.214*
CD(x ₂)	-.081	.024	.070	-3.364*
ED(x ₃)	.915	.042	.915	21.880*
DF(x ₄)	.080	.048	-.077	1.671*
RC(x ₅)	-.011	.013	.011	-.458*
SS(x ₆)	.041	.055	-.023	.735*

*p<0.05, QD: Quantitative Demands; CD: Cognitive Demands; ED: Emotional Demands; DF: Degree Of Freedom; RC: Role Conflict; SS: Social Support.

The above table shows that both quantitative demands (Beta=.416, t=0.832, p<0.05), cognitive demands (Beta=.070, t=.001, p<0.05), emotional demands (Beta=.915, t=.022, p<0.05), degree of freedom (Beta=-.077, t=.103, p<0.01), role conflict (Beta=-.011, t=-.650, p<0.05) and social support (Beta=-.013, t=.467, p<0.05), significantly predict burnout. However, the beta values above indicated that quantitative demands and emotional demands have greater effect than cognitive demands, degree of freedom, role conflict and social supports on the burnout level of police officers.

Discussion

Relationship between psychosocial work environment, and burnout among police officers in Pawi Woreda.

The associations indicate that as there is high job demand (quantitative demands) in the work environment, there are adjacent increments in emotional and cognitive demands, and emotional exhaustion. Thus, equivalently speaking, police officers who have been exposed to quantitative demands are more likely to exhibit high emotional manifestations, cognitive agitation accompanied by emotional worn-out.

Results also revealed that quantitative demands have statistically significant negative association with degree of freedom and social support which imply that the more freedom and social supports workers have in their work place (police officers in this case), the better they will be stable in their cognitive thinking. Thus, adequate degree of freedom and social support are vital inputs to police officers' work effectiveness and psychological wellbeing such as low level of burnout. Similarly, results indicate that emotional demands have statistically significant positive relationship with role conflict, cognitive demands, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. These associations clearly indicate that negative work environment factors experienced by workers support each other to negatively affect the social and psychological wellbeing of workers (police officers) such as intensifying their burnout level and job dissatisfaction.

However, results also indicated that emotional demands have statistically significant negative association with social sup-

port, personal accomplishment. These have implications that increasing the level of social support and lessening emotional demands of police officers would help them to have better personal accomplishments. However, degree of freedom has been found to have statistically significant negative association with role conflict and cognitive demands. Social support has also been found to have statistically significant positive relationship with personal accomplishment. In addition, social support has significant negative association with role conflict emotional exhaustion and depersonalization,

Results also indicates that emotional exhaustion statistically significant positive association with depersonalization and negative association with personal accomplishment. Depersonalization has statistically significant negative association with personal accomplishment. Generally, the above findings are supported and go in line with the findings of Bogaert, Clarke, Willems & Mondelaers (2013) [8] that favorable work environments have been found to be related to work engagement in human services professions and reducing the risk of burnout. In the contrary, a poor work environment has been found to create stress and burnout [9].

The role of sex, age and position and felling of burnout

This study also tried to investigate whether there is significant difference in the level of burnout among police officers across sex (male and female), position (crime investigation, crime prevention/follow-up, traffic control and human resources) and age. As we can infer from the results the independent sample t-test, there is statistically significant difference in the reported levels of burnout between male and female police officers. More specifically, males' mean scores of burnout is higher than that of females' mean scores of burnout. The men were more likely to change police departments, while the women were more likely to accept a job offer different from policing. Similarly, results of analysis of one way ANOVA in the current study reveals that there is statistically significant mean difference in the levels of burnout. This indicates that as result of difference in age there exists different level of burnout among age groups. And the post hoc analysis also indicated that participants in first age (21-30 years) do not statistically significantly differ from participants in the second age group (31-40 years) with respect to the level of burnout. On the other hand, participants in the first (21-30 years) and second (31-40 years) do have statistically significant difference from that of the third age group (41-50 years). In specific terms, the third age group has reported higher feelings burnout as compared to the first two groups.

In addition, Analysis of one way ANOVA revealed that there are statistically significant mean differences in the levels of burnout among groups of participants in different positions. Participants who work in crime prevention process have shown statistically significant mean difference and higher level of burnout than those groups of participants working in traffic control and human resources departments. Similarly, participants who are working in crime investigation department have shown statistically significant mean difference and higher level of burnout as compared to participants who are working in traffic control and human resource processes. Similarly, participants who are working in traffic control process have shown higher level of burnout as compared to those participants who are working in human resource departments.

Prediction of burnout among psychosocial work environment (quantitative demands, cognitive demands, emotional demands, degree of freedom, role conflict and social support) and demographic variables (sex, position and age)

Summary of regression analysis have shown that the linear combination of psychosocial work environment factors and demographic variables for the prediction of officers' level of burnout have shown a statistically significant relationship. Moreover, the combined effects of psychosocial work environment (quantitative demand, cognitive demand, emotional demand, degree of freedom, role conflict and social support) as predictor variables for variation in burnout level of police officers account for 95%. On the other hand, analysis of beta values indicated that quantitative demands and emotional demands have better predictive power to burnout level of the police officers.

Similarly, the combined effects of all predictor variables for variation in burnout symptoms of police officers account for 42%. The remaining 58% variation in the level of burnout is explained by other factors. On the other hand, analysis of standardized beta values also disclosed that sex has better predictive value for symptoms of burnout.

Conclusion

To make a conclusion, this study has indicated the existence of significant relationship among variables of psychosocial work environment, burnout in the police work environment. In specific terms, the study disclosed that quantitative demands have been found to have a statistically significant positive relationship with emotional demands, cognitive demands and emotional exhaustion. However, quantitative demands have statistically significant negative association with degree of freedom and social support. Similarly, emotional demands have statistically significant positive relationship with role conflict, cognitive demands, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Emotional demands have statistically significant negative association with social support, personal accomplishment. Results also disclosed that there is statistically significant difference between men and women police officers in their level of burnout. Whereas, quantitative demands and emotional demands have better predictive power to burnout level of the police officers. On the other hand, sex has better predictive value for symptoms of burnout.

Declarations

Ethics

Ethical clearance was secured from ethical review board of Injibara University University College of Education and behavioral sciences. Appropriate & full detailed information were taken according to the respondent's willingness after getting a written and verbal consent from respondents. The confidentiality of the respondents would not be exposed & any information that they would give would only be used for the study purpose.

Consent for publication

Consent was obtained for publication.

competing interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

Authors' contribution

MA- participate in all phase of the study process. DT - participated in developing manuscript. All authors approved the final manuscript for publication

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