

Examining The Relationship Between Cops' Stress Situations And Their Activities

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Abstract

Keywords:

Police organization, İndividual Performance, Self-efficacy, Stress, Organizational behavior The relationship between the stress experienced by police officers working in different police units in the line of duty and their performance was analyzed in terms of a number of variables. Using the descriptive survey method, the target population of the study was the Istanbul Police Headquarters. A total of 378 randomly selected police officers, supervisors and managers participated in the study. Of them, 119 were police managers of different ranks and 259 were police officers. In addition to the personal information questionnaire, the study data were obtained using two measurement instruments: Perceived Stress Scale and Multidimensional Behavioral Personality Scale. SPSS 27.0 program was used to analyze the obtained data. T-tests, Pearson's product-moment correlations, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Tukey's multiple comparisons test, frequency and arithmetic mean data were used to analyze the obtained data. A survey of 139 female police officers and 239 male police officers concluded that female police officers have lower levels of stress perception and coping than male police officers. It was also confirmed that stress perception of police officers working more than 12 hours was higher than that of police officers working 8 hours. The analysis of the relationship between stress level and activity of police officers also showed that the higher the level of stress perception of the police officers who participated in the study, the lower their activity.

Polislerin Stres Durumlari İle Eylemlilikleri Arasindaki İlişkisinin İncelenmesi

Özet

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Emniyet örgütü, Bireysel eylemlilik, Öz yeterlilik, Stres, Örgütsel davranış Emniyet teşkilatında farklı birimlerde çalışan polislerin görevlerinden dolayı maruz kaldıkları stresin eylemlilikleri ile ilişkisi bazı değişkenler açısından incelenmiştir. Betimsel tarama yönteminin kullanıldığı araştırmanın evrenini İstanbul emniyet müdürlüğü oluşturmaktadır. Bu araştırmaya rastgele yöntemle seçilmiş olan memur, amir ve yönetici konumunda olan toplam 378 polis katılmıştır. Katılımcılardan 119 kişi çeşitli rütbelerde polis yöneticisi, 259 kişi ise polis memurudur. Araştırmanın verileri; kişisel bilgi formu dışında, algılanan stres ölçeği ve çok yönlü eylemli kişilik ölçeği olmak üzere iki ölçme aracı kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Elde edilen verilerin analizinde SPSS 25.0 programı kullanılmıştır. Elde

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edilen verilerin çözümlenmesinde T-Testi, Pearson Momentler Çarpımı Korelasyonu, Tek Yönlü Varyans (ANOVA) Analizi, Tukey Çoklu Karşılaştırma Testi, frekans ve aritmetik ortalaması verileri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan 139 kadın ve 239 erkek polis üzerinde yapılan incelemede, kadın polislerin stres algıları ve stresle baş etme düzeyleri erkek polislerden daha düşük olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Çalışma saatleri 12 saat ve üzerinde olan polislerin stres algı düzeylerinin çalışma saatleri 8 saat olan polislere göre daha yüksek olduğu görülmüştür. Ayrıca polislerin stres düzeyleri ile eylemlilikleri arasındaki ilişki durumu incelendiğinde, araştırmaya katılan polislerin stres algı düzeyinin yükselmesi polislerin düşük eylemlilik göstermesine neden olduğu belirlenmiştir

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that police officers, who are mandated by law to deal with criminals, are subjected to much more stress, both at work and at home, than employees in other occupational groups. It is not enough for police organizations to simply carry out the duties assigned to officers. In addition to fulfilling their assigned duties, leaders of police organizations today are looking for employees who are able to research, learn and apply what they have learned.

The development of the modern era and the differentiation of organizational and social requirements have initiated a process of rapid change in a competitive environment. These changes force organizations to have flexible structures that can respond quickly to them (Çerezci, 2019). While police organizations strive to respond to these changes, they also continue to struggle to deter and apprehend the ever-changing criminal behavior. In the current stage, the demands of society in addition to the expectations placed on officers by the organization create a stressful workload for police that is difficult to cope with. This pressure that a person feels on his or her emotions is defined as stress (Yamuç and Türker, 2015). Stress is a factor that negatively affects both individual and organizational success. Stress is defined as a psychological state that creates a negative pressure on an individual's communication with the environment and his or her own behavior, as well as threatens his or her physical and mental health (Aytaç et al., 2016). It is known that the concept of stress, defined by scientists as the cause of many diseases, is based on emotional states such as anxiety, tension, worry, anger and depression. As these definitions suggest, stress is a non-specific physical and mental reaction to events that a person perceives as signs of danger that threaten his or her health and peace of mind (Aytaç, 2017; Bilgen et al., 2018; Urhan, 2019; Guluzade, 2019).

Societal expectations, external political interference in the organization and police organization, as well as exhausting and disproportionate working conditions for police officers working in the organization, hinder the normalization of daily working hours and pave the way for negative effects on personnel. These conditions also negatively affect the subjectivity of police officers. Individual agency can be generally defined as a sense of responsibility. The concept of agency can also be described as an individual's ability to take responsibility for his or her life, to have control over making decisions that may affect his or her life, to have the belief that he or she is responsible for those decisions, to cope with life's challenges, and to have the confidence to continue moving in the direction of his or her chosen life path. Personal agency is a psychological concept that emerges from the integration of four psychological elements. These four psychological elements are self-efficacy, self-efficacy, life purpose, and locus of internal control (Cote, 1997; Cote and Levine, 2002; Schwartz, Cote and Arnett, 2005). According to Weber, understanding the reasons for something is very important and must be understood before action can be taken (Demirel, 2013). Therefore, striving for action consists of processes in which logical aspects such as understanding and thinking come to the fore (Yalçın, Alparslan and Şeker, 2021).

The stressors to which police officers are exposed at different stages of their career can be debilitating over time and can lead to reduced performance. When stress reaches unmanageable levels, the individual mentally and physically withdraws from society and the environment (Acar et al, 2012; Mpanya et al, 2022). Today, in order for police officers to be able to work peacefully, it is necessary to look for preventive measures to

minimize the stress they experience and relieve emotional tension. Being the most serious obstacle in their performance, stress is a problem that needs to be identified and addressed early. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between stress experienced by police officers in their social life and their performance. As a result of the findings, the aim is to reduce the factors that negatively affect the stress of police officers. According to the aim and objective, it is intended to find answers to the following questions.

- a) Do stress and agency levels of police officers differ by gender and length of working day?
- b) What is the relationship between stress and levels of agency among police officers?

METHODOLOGY

The object of this study, which was conducted using a descriptive research model, is police officers working in the Istanbul Police. The sample of this study consisted of 378 people of different ranks, including 119 supervisors and 259 randomly selected police officers.

DATA COLLECTION TOOL

The "questionnaire survey" method was used to collect the data of the study. The data was collected using two measurement tools, except the "personal information form" which was created by the researcher and contains the personal data of the participant.

Perceived Stress Scale: Developed by Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelste in 1983, this scale was adapted into Turkish by Bilge, Öğce, Genç and Oran (2007). The Cronbach Alpha value for this scale was 0.81. The Cronbach Alpha value for this scale, which was again analyzed for reliability in the present study, was found to be 0.788.

The Multidimensional Scale of Activity Personality: MCAS, developed by Cote (1997) and adapted into Turkish by Atak (2010), consists of 15 items: three items measuring self-esteem, four measuring life goals, four measuring locus of internal control and four measuring self-efficacy. consists of four sub-factors. The coefficient (χ 2/sd) calculated by the second level confirmatory factor analysis was 3.87, indicating that the model fit the actual data (Atak, 2010).

FINDIGS

Tablo 1. Stress Perception Level according to demographic characteristics t-Test Analyses;

	Cinsiyet	N	X	SD	t	p
Perceived Stress	<u>Female</u>	<u>139</u>	2,29	<u>.684</u>	,207	,005*
	Male	239	2,08	,687		
Coping with Stress	<u>Female</u>	<u>139</u>	3,49	<u>.781</u>	4,261	,011*
	Male	239	3,53	,525		

^{*}p<.05.

Analyzing the above table, it can be concluded that the obtained t-test value for gender variable in mean scores of stress perception was .207 (p>.05.) and t=4.2 (p<.05.) in levels of coping with stress. Significant

differences were found in the levels of stress perception and stress coping among the police officers in the study according to their gender status. Female police officers had lower levels of stress perception and stress coping than male police officers.

Tablo 2. Stress levels according to Daily Working Hours F (Anova) test results

		Sum of Squares	sd	Within Groups	F	p
	Between Groups	3,265	3	1,088	2,302	,047*
Perceived Stress	Within Groups	176,834	374	,473		
	Total	180,099	377			
	Between Groups	5,525	3	1,842	4,728	,003*
Coping with Stress	Within Groups	145,662	374	,389		
	Total	151,187	377			

^{*}p<.05.

The anova value for measuring perceived stress as a function of participants' workday length was calculated as F=2.302, p<.05. The level of perceived stress of police officers who participated in the study as a function of workday length showed significant differences.

Tablo 3. Perceived Stress Score Averages according to Daily Working Hours

Descriptives					95% Confid	ence Interval
			Std.	Std.	for I	<u>Mean</u>
	N		Deviation	Error	Lower	Upper
Perceived Stress		Mean			Bound	Bound
8 hours	22	2,1873	,68326	,14567	2,2243	2,8302
10 hours	47	2,1957	,68460	,09986	1,9947	2,3968
12 hours	209	2,5222	,73223	,05065	2,0523	2,2520
No Time Limit	100	2,1100	,58560	,05856	1,9938	2,2262
Total	378	2,1683	,69117	,03555	2,0984	2,2382

After analyzing the post hoc data for group differences, it was concluded that the level of perceived stress of police officers working more than 12 hours is higher than other groups. The F (anova) value for cognitive level of coping stress was calculated as F=2.302, p<.05. The results indicate that there are significant differences in the level of coping stress among police officers depending on their length of service.

Tablo 4. Average Stress Coping Scores according to Daily Working Hours

Descriptives					95% Confidence Interval			
			Std.	Std.	for I	Mean		
Working Hours	N	Mean	Deviation	Error	Lower	Upper		
					Bound	Bound		
8 hours	22	3,8636	,77432	,16508	3,5203	4,2069		
10 hours	47	3,7305	,50427	,07356	3,5824	3,8786		
12 hours	209	3,4545	,66681	,04612	3,3636	3,5455		
No Time Limit	100	3,5333	,54019	,05402	3,4261	3,6405		
Total	378	3,5335	,63327	,03257	3,4695	3,5976		

Subsequent analysis of the data revealed differences between the groups, and it appeared that police officers who were on duty for eight hours had higher levels of stress coping.

Tablo 5. Activity Level t-Test Analysis according to demographic characteristics;

	Gender	N	X	SD	t	p
Activity	Female	139	3,38	,440	1,226	,143
(General)	Male	239	3,44	,393		,
Self-Respect	Female	139	3,45	,490	1,977	,236
	Male	239	3,51	,450	<u> </u>	,
Purpose of Life	Female	139	2,28	,507	1,077	,026*
	Male	239	2,40	,487		,
Internal Audit Focus	Female	139	3,38	,584	,250	,684
	Male	239	3,35	,594		,
Self-Efficacy	Female	139	3,46	,673	,870	,018*
J	Male	239	3,62	,614		•
			1124			

*p<.05.

Analyzing the above table, it can be concluded that the t-test value for the mean score of the level of agency on gender variable was 1.226, p>.05. This result indicates that there is no significant difference in the levels of agency according to gender. When examining the sub-dimensions of agency, the t-test value for self-esteem was t=1.977, p>.05, and the t-test value for the internal control field was 1.250, p>.05, indicating that there were no significant differences by gender for both dimensions. Due to the gender of the participants, the t-test value for life purpose was 1.077, p [0].05, and it was determined that the differences by gender were not significant. The t-test value for perceived level of self-efficacy was 1.870, p<.05, and was determined to be significantly different. Thus, it was concluded that male police officers have higher level of self-efficacy than female police officers.

Tablo 6. Activity and its sub-dimensions according to Daily Working Hours F (ANOVA) test

		Sum of Squares	SD	Within Groups	F	p
	Between	6,927	3	2,309	15,162	,001*
Activity	Groups					
(General)	Within Groups	56,959	374	,152		
	Total	63,886	377			
	Between	1,965	3	,655	3,068	,028*
Self-Respect	Groups					
	Within Groups	79,850	374	,214		
	Total	81,815	377			
	Between	4,480	3	1,493	6,443	,001*
	Groups					
Purpose of Life	Within Groups	86,689	374	,232		
	Total	91,169	377			
	Between	9,350	3	3,117	9,564	,001*
Internal Audit	Groups					
Focus	Within Groups	121,878	374	,326		
	Total	131,228	377			
	Between	22,334	3	7,445	21,025	,001*
	Groups					
Self-Efficacy	Within Groups	132,433	374	,354		
	Between 6,927 3 2,309 15,1					

^{*}p<.05.

Analyzing the above table, the F value for the proactivity level of the participants calculated as a function of working hours was (F=15.162 p<.05.). The level of proactivity of police officers as a function of working hours showed a significant difference. Analyzing the data of Table 7, we can conclude that the level of proactivity of police officers whose working time is not limited is higher than that of other groups of police officers.

F-value of self-esteem (F=3.068 p<.05.), F-value of purpose in life (F=6.443 p<.05.), F-value of locus of internal control (F=6.443 p<.05.) and F-value of self-efficacy (F=21.025 p<.05.) were calculated for daily working hours of police officers participating in the study. Analysis of the mean data in Table 7 shows that the perceived levels of self-esteem, purpose in life, locus of internal control and self-efficacy are higher in police officers who work 8 hours per day. It was also found that the levels of self-esteem, life purpose, locus of internal control and self-efficacy are lower in police officers who work more than 12 hours a day.

Tablo 7. Average Scores of Activity and sub-dimensions according to Daily Working Hours

95% Confidence	Interval	for Mean				
			Std.	Std.	Lower	Upper
Activity	N	Mean	Deviation	Error	Bound	Bound
8 hours	22	3,1364	,19132	,04079	3,0515	3,2212
10 hours	47	3,1418	,56254	,08205	2,9767	3,3070
12 hours	209	3,4772	,34511	,02387	3,4301	3,5243
No Time Limit						
	100	3,5120	,41269	,04127	3,4301	3,5939
Self-Respect						
8 hours	22	3,5550	,39397	,02725	3,5013	3,6087
10 hours	47	3,4091	,45926	,09791	3,2055	3,6127
12 hours	209	3,3688	,72975	,10644	3,1545	3,5831
No Time Limit	100	3,4400	,43392	,04339	3,3539	3,5261
Purpose of Life						
8 hours	22	2,4067	,48564	,03359	2,3405	2,4729
10 hours	47	2,2979	,49902	,07279	2,1514	2,4444
12 hours	209	1,9432	,26650	,05682	1,8250	2,0613
No Time Limit	100	2,3750	,49937	,04994	2,2759	2,4741

Internal Audit Fo	cus					
8 hours	22	3,5925	,46690	,04669	3,4999	3,6851
10 hours	47	3,1596	,67047	,09780	2,9627	3,3564
12 hours	209	3,0682	,51859	,11056	2,8383	3,2981
No Time Limit	100	3,3301	,59634	,04125	3,2488	3,4115
Self-Efficacy						
8 hours	22	3,7850	,63764	,06376	3,6585	3,9115
10 hours	47	3,1364	,29608	,06312	3,0051	3,2676
12 hours	209	3,0479	,83347	,12157	2,8032	3,2926
No Time Limit	100	3,6304	,52981	,03665	3,5581	3,7026

Tablo 8. The relationship between the perception levels of Stress (Perceived Stress, Coping with Stress), Burnout (Emotional exhaustion, Decensitization, Lack of Personal Achievement), correlation results

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pearson						
Correlation						
Sig. (2-tailed)						
Pearson	-					
Correlation	,190**					
Sig. (2-tailed)	,000					
Pearson	-	,009				
Correlation	,138**					
Sig. (2-tailed)	,007	,857				
Pearson	-,036	,411**	,143**			
Correlation						
Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,005			
Pearson	-	,126*	,022	,091		
Correlation						
	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson	Pearson - Correlation ,138** Sig. (2-tailed) ,007 Pearson -,036 Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) ,000 Pearson -	Pearson - ,009 Correlation - ,138** Sig. (2-tailed) ,007 ,857 Pearson -,036 ,411** Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) ,000 ,000 Pearson - ,126*	Pearson - ,009 Correlation - ,009 Sig. (2-tailed) ,007 ,857 Pearson -,036 ,411** ,143** Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) ,000 ,000 ,005 Pearson - ,126* ,022 Correlation	Pearson - ,009 Correlation - ,138** Sig. (2-tailed) ,007 ,857 Pearson -,036 ,411** ,143** Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) ,000 ,000 ,005 Pearson - ,126* ,022 ,091 Correlation	Pearson - ,009 Correlation - ,138** Sig. (2-tailed) ,007 ,857 Pearson -,036 ,411** ,143** Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) ,000 ,000 ,005 Pearson - ,126* ,022 ,091 Correlation

Focus		,315**						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,014	,673	,077			
6	Pearson	-	-	,282**	,226**	,336**		
Self-Efficacy	Correlation	,381**	,180**					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000		

^{**.} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Analyzing the above table and looking at the results of the correlations between perceived stress and subdimensions of agency for the police officers who participated in the study, no relationship was found between coping stress and self-efficacy (r .009 p<.857) or between self-efficacy and internal place of control (r.022 p<.673).

Table 8 shows that the results of correlation analysis are negatively significant;

In the dimension of perceived stress, perceived stress and coping stress (r-,190 p<.000), perceived stress and (agency) self-esteem (r-,138 p<.007), perceived stress and (agency) life purpose (r-,036 p<.491), perceived stress and (agency) internal position of control (r-,315 p<.000), as the level of perceived stress decreased in the negative and significant direction, the level of perceived (agency) internal position of control increased. Internal control position (r-,315 p<.000), as participants' perceived stress level decreased in a negative and meaningful direction, the level of perceived internal control (agency) position increased. Perceived stress (agency) and self-efficacy (r-,381 p<.000) Perceived self-efficacy levels (agency) increased as perceived stress levels decreased in the negative significant direction.

Table 8 shows that the results of correlation analysis are positive and significant;

Coping with stress (activity) with the purpose of life (r.411 p<.000), internal control focus with coping with stress (r.126 p<.014), coping with stress (activity) and self-efficacy (r.180 p<.000), the purpose of life with self-respect (r.143 p>005), self-esteem and self-efficacy (r.282 p>005), the focus of internal control with the purpose of life (r.091 p>.077), the focus of internal control with the purpose of life (r.226 p>.000), self-efficacy with an internal audit focus (R.336 p>.there is a positive correlation between Dec. 000 and dec.000.000).

In the stress sub-dimension, when the perceived level of coping with stress increases, the perceived level of life purpose, locus of internal control, and self-efficacy increase positively in the direction of the subjectivity sub-dimension. In the behavioral sub-dimension, as the perceived level of self-efficacy increases, the perceived level of life purpose and self-efficacy increase in the positive and significant direction to the same extent. In addition, as the perceived level of locus of internal control in the subjectivity dimension increases, the perceived level of self-efficacy also increases.

As a result, the perceived level of stress decreased in a negative and meaningful direction and the perceived level of agency increased in the police officers who participated in the study. In other words, an increase in perceived stress level leads to a decrease in the level of agency in police officers.

^{*.} Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Studies have concluded that female police officers have higher stress perception than male police officers (Martin 2005; Sökmen 2005; Özkan and Özdevecioğlu, 2013), emphasize that stress perception among police officers varies by gender. The reasons for these differences in favor of women are gender roles and the fact that most female police officers are assigned to administrative services. The heavy working conditions inherent in the police profession are also seen as another reason. These findings are consistent with the survey results.

There are significant differences in the dimension of coping with stress. When the arithmetic mean of the data was examined, it was concluded that the perception of coping with stress of female police officers was lower than that of male police officers. Eraslan (2015) examined the personality traits and stress coping styles of university students studying in sports faculties according to various variables. It was determined that students' coping styles with stress differed significantly according to gender and the findings showed that male students exhibited more submissive behaviors in coping with stress than female students. This result is consistent with the research findings.

Regarding working hours, it was concluded that the perceived stress level of police officers working more than 12 hours was higher than other groups. It was evaluated that police officers who work eight hours a day are advantageous in coping with stress. Ilgen (2017), in his study titled "The Effect of Police Motivation on Police-Public Relations: Malatya-Doğanyol Case", the most common complaint of police officers is that their working hours are irregular, additional duties are usually permanent and the 12 hours/12 hours working regime sometimes lasts for several months. All these irregularities have been shown to increase the stress levels of police officers and reduce their motivation and willingness to work Buker and Wiecko, 2007; Sever and Cinoğlu, 2010; Gül, 2011; Kula, 2011 concluded that people who work about 12 hours a day have worse health conditions and their perceptions of stress and depression increase dangerously.

No significant difference was found in the perceived autonomy, self-esteem and internal locus of control levels among the police officers participating in the study according to gender. It was concluded that the perceived life purpose levels of female police officers were higher than male police officers. In the self-efficacy dimension, male police officers were found to be higher than female police officers. Similarly, the ego resilience findings of Mpanya et al. (2022) revealed that men's resilience skills were higher than women's; Pişkin (2005) examined 'self-esteem' in his study and concluded that there was no gender difference in students' home and family self-esteem and academic self-esteem levels. These findings are in line with our study.

When the working hours of police officers were evaluated in terms of their perceived levels of independence, it was observed that those who worked eight hours a day had higher levels of self-esteem, life purpose, internal locus of control and self-efficacy. Police officers who worked more than 12 hours a day had lower levels of self-esteem, life purpose, internal locus of control and self-efficacy. In addition, it was concluded that police officers working outside of working hours had higher perceptions of the organization.

When the data obtained were analyzed in terms of stress and perceived level of agency, it was concluded that the level of stress perceived by the police officers participating in the study showed a negative and significant decrease, while the level of agency showed a positive increase. This negative and significant relationship between stress level and agency perception level increases the agency perception level positively. In other words, an increase in the level of stress perception results in a lower level of agency among police officers.

Considering the findings that the working environment of the police, especially the working hours, deteriorates the psychological health of the personnel, it is necessary to improve the working conditions and working hours. First of all, the peace of mind of individual police officers is a prerequisite for ensuring the peace and security of the public. It is a fact that more serious organizational measures to provide psychological support for police officers to overcome the problems they face and overcome in their profession would have a positive impact.

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