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A Research on Workload Perception of the Police Officer; The Case Study of Erzurum Police Department in Turkey

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is to investigate the perceived workload level of the police officer who work in TNPO (**Turkish National Police Organization**). This study was conducted by using the survey method in Erzurum Department of TNPO were asked to fill the questionnaire forms used for the study. Two types of data, namely the factual data (categorical data) and the data related to personal workload perception (numerical data) were gathered using the Individual workload perception scale developed by Cox et al. Individual workload perception level 5 levels; below normal (0-30 points), normal (reasonable) (31-60 points), above normal (61-90 points), heavy (91-120 points), and unmanageable (121-150 points).

Study data were analyzed by using PASW 18 for Windows software package. Descriptive statistics was expressed as the number, percentage, and mean. Categorical variables were compared with the Chi-Square test. A "p" value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant. The study included a total of 336 subjects, with 298 (88.7%) subjects being male and 38 (11.3%) being female (Table I). The difference of workload perception between the occupational groups was significant.

Table I

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Man	298	88,7
Woman	38	11,3
Total	336	100,0

The age range of the participants is showed in Table II. It is observed that the mainly young police officers have involved the research. This is an appropriate outcome in recent years politics of human resource. In the study, the number of young and old respondents is similar.

Table II

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent
22-26	36	10,7
27-31	121	36,0
32-36	83	24,7
37-41	39	11,6
42-46	34	10,1
47+	23	6,8
Total	336	100,0

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In Table III we have observed that education level of participants. We can say that the distribution of participants is compatible with staff structure of TNPO.

Table III

Education Level	Frequency	Valid Percent
Primary School	3	,9
High School	50	14,9
Police Academy	64	19,0
Under Graduate	204	60,7
Graduate (Master/PhD)	15	4,5
Total	336	100,0

Conclusion

The results of the present study have demonstrated that the majority of police officers (for all groups) have above normal workload perception (including heavy and unmanageable workload). A substantial part of the policeman and woman has perceived their job as heavy.

The research has revealed that some interesting findings. Accordingly, most of the participants have stated that they are not under the normal workload conditions. According to findings, a small group has normal workload perception.

Keywords: Police officers, workload, perceived workload.

Introduction

Many variables affect an individual's performance, physical and mental health, and the overall quality of his/her existence at work. It should be a norm that workers work without exposing themselves excessive workload, with the best performance determined by themselves. The basic requirement to obtain the best performance as possible from workers is to provide that employees feel peaceful in particular for jobs requiring high-quality human resources (professional occupations) [1]. To achieve this goal the workload level should be kept at reasonable levels to prevent workers from being adversely affected mentally, physically, or emotionally. Although workload roughly appears to be related to working duration/time and working conditions, workload is a much more comprehensive concept referring to "various pressures/factors affecting an individual's job performance and attitude at workplace" [2]. According to Hart and Wickens [3] workload is "a general definition of costs of one's tasks and duties". This cost is usually in the form of attention loss, prolonged reaction time, failure to fulfill tasks, stress, fatigue, and reduced performance. London and Klimoski, in a study on workers, defined 33 work properties linked to physical and mental fatigue [4]. They categorized these properties into 3 main titles as excessive workload, conflict, and supervision of workers. Another study conducted by Ivancevich and Smith determined 29 variables affecting workload of workers into 3 the categories as excessive workload, work requirements, and supervisory factors [1]. Yüksel and Kurt determined 13 factors for work-related issues of workers [5].

There are two different workload concepts in the literature. One of them is the objective workload that is required by a task, and the other is the subjective workload perceived by the person that fulfills a task [6]. Most of previous research has focused on subjective workload. As a matter of fact, scales aimed to measure workload are designed to measure subjective workload [7, 8]. Workload is a comprehensive organizational variable having many consequences on workers. Unfortunately, the workload of police officers is beyond the acceptable limits. Hence, it is assumed that the perceived excessive workload is very common among the policeman and woman working in TNPO. The aim of this

study is to investigate the level of workload perception of police officers working in Erzurum Police Department.

Materials and Method

This study has been approved by the ethic committee of TNPO and conducted by using the survey method in the Erzurum Police Department in Turkey. Police officers have been asked to fill the questionnaire form used for the study. Two types of data have been gathered by using the Individual workload perception scale developed by Cox et al: factual data (categorical data) and data related to personal workload perception (numerical data). Individual workload perception has 5 levels: below normal (0-30 points), normal (reasonable) (31-60 points), above normal (61-90 points), heavy (91-120 points, and unmanageable (121-150 points). Study data have been analyzed using SPSS 13.00 for windows software package. Descriptive statistics has been expressed as number, percentage, and mean. Categorical variables were compared with Chi-Square test. A p value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results

The study included a total of 336 subjects, with 298 (88.7%) subjects being male and 38 (11.3%) being female (Table I).

Table IV

Work Load Perception	Percent	Valid Percent
Normal	1,8	1,8
Above Normal	18,5	18,5
Heavy	53,3	53,3
Unmanageable	26,5	26,5
Total	100,0	100,0

The results have showed that no occupation group in the TNPO (in Erzurum Department) have a "below normal" perception of workload. Workload perception started from the level of "normal" (% 1.8) and heavily cumulated in the "above normal and heavy" workload categories (% 18, 5 and % 53.3). The most striking finding of this study was that all policeman and policewoman had a workload perception that was "above normal", "heavy" or "unmanageable".

No worker (in TNPO) perceived his/her workload as below normal. Very large groups (% 26.5) policeman and policewoman who working in the TNPO (in Erzurum department) perceived his/her workload as unmanageable" (Table IV).

Table V

Age	Normal	Above Normal	Heavy	Unmanageable
22-26	0,0%	36,1	47,2	16,7
27-31	1,7	22,3	52,1	24,0
32-36	2,4	18,1	59,0	20,5
37-41	5,1	7,7	48,7	38,5
42-46	0,0	8,8	47,1	44,1
47+	0,0	4,3	65,2	30,4
Total	1,8	18,5	53,3	26,5

Table V shows, the data on age between variable "perception of the workload" there is no correlation. Police officers from all age groups in accordance with the general trend of above normal workload (above normal, heavy and unmanageable) as they are detected.

Table VI

Sex	Normal	Above Normal	Heavy	Unmanageable	P
Man	1,3%	17,4%	53,7%	27,5%	,038
Women	5,3%	26,3%	50,0%	18,4%	
Total	1,8%	18,5%	53,3%	26,5%	

Although numerically very significant differences (Table VI) between women police officers (police officers compared to men) workloads heavier (heavy and unmanageable) as they are detected. These differences are statistically significant ($p=0,05>0,038$).

Table VII

Experience in Occupation (year)	Normal	Above Normal	Heavy	Unmanageable	p
1-5	0,0%	32,0%	49,3%	18,7%	,000
6-10	2,0%	19,2%	57,6%	21,2%	
11-15	2,9%	11,8%	50,0%	35,3%	
16-20	3,1%	6,2%	46,9%	43,8%	
21-25	3,0%	9,1%	51,5%	36,4%	
26-30	0,0%	0,0%	66,7%	33,3%	
31+	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	
Total	1,8%	18,5%	53,3%	26,5%	

With regard to experience in the profession (Table VII); According to professional experience "among the workload perceptions" significant differences are observed. There is no linear increase between high level experience and workload perception.

Whereas, there are statistically significant differences were found "these differences were statistically significant ($p=0,05>0,000$)".

Discussion

Work-related behaviors (work activities), working times, environmental (organizational and administrative) factors, and institutional (status) discomfort are significant work-related stress factors that also directly determine workload. Hence, many of these factors considered to affect workload become the determinants of workload under organizational conditions and determine individual's health, performance, and/or physical, emotional, and mental efficiency [9]. Yeh and Wickens [6] suggested an organic relationship between workload and performance. There is also a strong relationship between the perceived workload level and stress level affecting performance [10]. Our data suggest that a great majority of policeman and policewoman working in Erzurum Department of TNPO (in all category) had a workload perception of above normal (including heavy and unmanageable levels). Various categories of police officers as a whole group have perceived that their workload is above acceptable (normal/reasonable) level. A substantial proportion of policeman and policewoman also considered their workload heavy. A substantial proportion of police officers have also thought that their workload is heavy.

This study has demonstrated that a high proportion of police officers perceive their workload as heavy. The number of police officers having "unmanageable" workload perception was quite low in this group. Although the consequences of workload perceptions of the study participants were not in the scope of this study, results of other studies in the literature exploring workload perception both support our results and indicate the possible results of this condition. A

study entitled "working passion; workload, flexible working hours, manager support, and work-family conflict and relations" performed by Turgut in 2011 revealed that adverse effects of the variables such as workload, flexible working hours, administrative support, and work-family conflict augmented the senses of "burnt out" and "alienation" [11]. A study demonstrated by Soysal that organizational factors were directly related to components of perceived (subjective) workload (long working hours, crowded workplace etc) [12]. Szalma et al reported that there was a significant correlation between perceived workload level and performance [10].

Conclusion

The results of the this study have demonstrated that heavy (at least above normal) workload perception is very common among police officers working in Erzurum Police Department. Mainly, the heaviest workload perception is widespread among police officers. The proportion of the others perceiving their work as unmanageable is also quite high. All results of this study should be carefully assessed by the readers.

Limitations

This research is limited to "the answers of participants" and "the questionnaire for measurement of workload perception".

Conflict Interest

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest.

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