JOB STRESS AMONG POLICE OFFICERS IN BANGLADESH: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON RANGPUR METROPOLITAN POLICE

Md. Mustafa Arif[1]
Sumona Sharmin[2]
Md. Ishtiaq Ahmed Talukder[3]
Nelufer Yesmen[4]

Abstract: *This study explores the stress experienced by police officers in the Rangpur Metropolitan Police of Bangladesh, with a focus on gender differences. A total of 55 officers took part in the study, including 36 males and 19 females. The study not only sheds light on the prevailing challenges but also suggests practical strategies and interventions to mitigate job stress among Rangpur Metropolitan Police officers. It turned out that male and female officers had different types of stressors. Male officers felt more stressed when dealing with organizational issues, like having to go to court on their day off or after a night shift. On the other hand, female officers reported higher stress levels when facing interpersonal challenges, such as dealing with family conflicts and crisis situations. Interestingly, women officers reported dealing with family conflicts and crisis situations more frequently than men. Women officers encountered inadequate or poor-quality equipment than men. This suggests that gender differences play a role in the kind of stressors experienced in the police force.*

✉   ishtiaq.t@mbstu.ac.bd

1   Department of Criminology and Police Science, Member of School of Life Science, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU), Tangail, Bangladesh
2   Department of Criminology and Police Science, Member of School of Life Science, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU), Tangail, Bangladesh
3   Department of Criminology and Police Science, Member of School of Life Science, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU), Tangail, Bangladesh
4   Department of Criminology and Police Science, Member of School of Life Science, Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU), Tangail, Bangladesh

1. INTRODUCTION

Police officers hold a fundamental role within society, bearing the crucial duty of upholding and preserving lawfulness and harmony. However, this duty often comes at a considerable personal cost, as being a police officer is a demanding job that can have adverse effects on officers' performance, physical and mental health, and interactions with the public (Queirós et al., 2020). Stress does not necessarily affect each police officer the same. Police officers are tasked with upholding the law, ensuring citizens' safety, and preventing crime and civil disorder (Kara et al., 2015). They often face violent and traumatic events, which contribute to stress. Additionally, organizational and workplace stressors, such as discrimination, job dissatisfaction, and shift work, can further impact police officers' well-being (Siegel, 1990).

Stress in the context of police work is a complex concept, and there have been various attempts to define and understand it. Stress refers to both a stimulus (stressor) and the response it elicits, making it a challenging concept to study (Murison, 2016). Police officers' stress has significant consequences, including premature mortality, and can be influenced by factors like a lack of employee commitment, imbalanced shift work, managerial partiality, limited career options, and insufficient recognition for outstanding performance (Malach-Pines & Keinan, 2006). The nature of modern civilizations and the characteristics of police work, such as the threat of terrorist attacks, firearm violence in urban areas, inadequate resources, team dynamics, societal criticism, and lack of support from loved ones, contribute to the highly stressful nature of being a police officer.

The concept of "job stress" among police officers in Bangladesh refers to the psychological and emotional strain experienced by law enforcement personnel due to the demands, pressures, and challenges inherent in their work. Job stress can manifest as a variety of adverse physical and mental health outcomes. It's a critical concern in the context of policing, where officers are exposed to high-stress situations. This study connects with various theoretical frameworks. It may draw from stress theories, such as the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which assesses how individuals perceive and respond to stressors (Folkman, 2013). Additionally, it could link to theories related to occupational stress and burnout, exploring the impact of job-related factors on police officers' well-being (Khalid et al., 2020). The study may also incorporate the Job Demand-Control-Support Model, which examines the effects of job demands, control, and social support on stress levels (Elgmark Andersson et al., 2017).

Discrimination, harassment, and gender bias contribute to higher levels of stress and job dissatisfaction among female officers (Sikder, 2019). Gender roles and expectations further compound stress, as female officers may struggle to balance their work and family obligations. The consequences of stress on female police officers can extend to physical and mental health issues, impacting their overall well-being and performance (Ferson & Siegel, 2008). High-stress levels can also lead to unethical behavior, absenteeism, and turnover, affecting the effectiveness of law enforcement (Regehr et al., 2000). Despite the significant impact of police stress on officers, gender-specific stress is often neglected in Bangladesh. There is a lack of research and policies addressing the unique stressors faced by female police officers. Recognizing and addressing this issue is crucial to supporting the well-being of female officers and optimizing the effectiveness of law enforcement. While several studies have examined stressors among police officers, little attention has been given to gender differences in stress experienced by them. However, research on this topic has gained more attention in recent years (Ermasova et al., 2020). Understanding gender-specific stressors is essential as they can differ between male and female officers.

This study focuses on investigating the highly rated (Territo & Vetter, 1981) and most frequent stressors (Territo & Vetter, 1981) experienced by police officers, with a specific emphasis on gender differences. The research involved surveying police officers from six different police stations under the jurisdiction of the Rangpur Metropolitan Police. During the survey, officers were asked to rate the severity and frequency of various job-related stressors. The main objectives of this research are twofold. Firstly, this study aims to analyze and compare the stressors encountered by male and female police officers. By understanding potential differences in the types of stressors experienced by officers of different genders, one can gain insights into their unique challenges. Secondly, seeking to identify the specific stressors that are most commonly reported by police officers, regardless of gender. This comprehensive analysis will help develop a deeper understanding of the prevailing stressors in law enforcement.

2. METHODOLOGY

A non-probability convenience sampling method was chosen because it was the most suitable approach for the study, as the participants were readily available. In addition, since the study was focused on a specific population, a non-probability sample was also considered appropriate. The sample size consisted of a total of 55 sworn police officers (19 female and 36 male) who met the study's selection criteria. The research design for this study is a cross-sectional survey design. In this design, data was collected at a single point in time, and the study participants were selected based on their gender and job position. The survey has been conducted using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on a comprehensive review of the literature related to police officers' work-related stressors and was administered to collect socio-demographic characteristics including gender, education level, marital status, family type, religion, rank, age, years of police service, and sleep duration.

In this study, the researchers aimed to investigate potential gender differences in the perceived stressfulness of events among police officers. They employed a 27-item survey that included three distinct subscales: administrative and organizational pressure (comprising 10 items, such as excessive paperwork and negative attitudes toward police officers), physical and psychological threat (consisting of 8 items, including dangerous situations and experiences), and lack of support (comprising 9 items, encompassing factors like political pressures and relationships with supervisors and coworkers). To assess these differences, officers rated the perceived stressfulness of each event on a scale from 0 (means no stress at all) to 10 (maximum stress). Additionally, the study collected data on the frequency of event occurrence over the past month and past year. To analyze the data, statistical methods were employed, including the chi-square test and analysis of variance (ANOVA), to describe and compare the demographic and lifestyle characteristics of the study participants by gender. This approach allowed the exploration of potential disparities in stress perceptions and experiences among police officers based on gender.

The top five police stressors (from the 27-item survey) were identified using two approaches. In the first approach, the stressors were ranked using the mean frequency of occurrence in the past month. This approach yielded the top five most frequently occurring events in the past month. In the second approach, the stressors were ranked using a mean stress rating (0–10), and the top five most stressful events were selected. The two approaches were also used to select the top five stressors for each of the three subscales of the Police Stress Scale – administrative and organizational pressure; physical and psychological threat; and lack of support. To describe whether the top five stressors differed by gender, separate rankings of the events were conducted for men and women officers. The Poisson regression model was used to estimate the prevalence ratio (PR) of significant variables,

comparing the prevalence in women to that in men. The unadjusted prevalence ratios were calculated along with their 95% confidence intervals. The study used the IBM SPSS Statistics system, version 20, and statistical significance was assessed at the 5% level. Additionally, the top five stressors for each of the three subscales of the Police Stress Scale were identified and compared by gender.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-demographic characteristics of study respondents play a crucial role in shaping the overall findings and conclusions of a study. These characteristics provide valuable insights into the composition of the study population and can help researchers understand how various factors may influence their research outcomes.

In this work, the study sample consisted of a total of 55 police officers. Among the individuals, there are more males (65.5%) than females (34.5%). Most of them have higher education qualifications, with a quote of 47.3 nearly half having a master's degree and a slice of 32.7 are completing their honors degree. Only a small proportion (3.6%) have education below secondary school certificate. The largest age groups are 31-35 and 36-40, with a piece of 32.7 and 30.9 individuals respectively. Almost all individuals (98.2%) are married. The majority of individuals with the lion's share of 78.2 follow Islam, while 20 percent belong to the Hindu religion, and the rest follow other religions. When it comes to sleep, the division of 45.5 reported getting 5-6 hours per day, while getting 27.3 points, individuals reported getting 3-4 hours and the final slice of 27.3 reported getting 7-8 hours. Among the individuals, 45.5% are Constables, while 20% each are Inspectors and ASIs, and only 14.5% hold the rank of SI. The majority of individuals (81.8%) have served for more than ten years, while only a few (7.3%) have served for one to five years, and 10.9% have served for five to ten years.

3.1. Comparison of the Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents by Gender

Table 1 provides the results of the chi-square test conducted to describe and compare the demographic and lifestyle characteristics of the study participants by gender. The test compares the observed frequency of characteristics for males and females with the expected frequency assuming no difference between them. The p-value indicates the level of statistical significance. A p-value of less than 0.05 is generally considered statistically significant, meaning that the observed differences between groups are unlikely to have occurred by chance. Based on the results, there are several statistically significant differences between males and females in terms of education level, family type, and rank. These findings suggest that the proportion of males and females with different levels of education, family types, and ranks are not equal, and there are some inherent differences between the groups that influence these characteristics. On the other hand, the results indicate no significant differences between males and females in terms of age, marital status, religion, and years of service. This implies that these characteristics are relatively similar among males and females, and gender may not be a significant factor influencing these variables.

Table 1. The chi-square test of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Value	df	P-value
Education	10.454	4	0.033
Family Type	4.850	1	0.028
Rank	8.620	3	0.035

Source: Own research

3.2. Finding the Top Five Most Frequent Stressors

Table 2 presents the mean frequency and standard deviation of the top five most frequently occurring stressors by gender, categorized into three types: type one stressor (administrative/professional), type two stressor (lack of support), and type three stressor (psychological/physical). The p-value indicates the level of statistical significance of the mean difference between men and women for each stressor. For type one stressors, the top five most frequent stressors were excessive paperwork, public criticism of the police, frequent changes from boring to demanding activities, distorted or negative press accounts of police, and court appearances on the day off or following night shift. The stressors with the most significant mean difference between men and women were court appearances on day off or following night shift (3.06 ± 1.09 vs 1.84 ± 0.9, p=0.009), with men reporting a higher frequency than women. The second one is inadequate or poor-quality equipment (2.89 ± 1.45 vs 1.84 ± 0.9, p=0.013), where men again reported a higher frequency than women.

Table 2. The mean frequency of occurrence for the top five most frequently occurring stressor

Stressor description	All (n=55)	SD	Men (n=36)	SD	Women (n=19)	SD	P-value
Type One Stressor: Administrative/Professional (10 stressors)							
Excessive paperwork	4.62	2.57	4.42	2.38	5	2.93	0.522
Public criticism of police	3.91	1.65	4.00	1.81	3.74	1.33	0.284
Frequent changes from boring to demanding activities	2.95	1.51	2.94	1.43	2.95	1.68	0.348
Distorted or negative press accounts of police	2.73	1.39	2.69	1.45	2.79	1.32	0.914
Court appearances on the day off or following the night shift	2.64	1.18	3.06	1.09	1.84	0.9	**0.009**
Fellow officers not doing their job	2.56	1.64	2.78	1.85	2.16	1.07	0.586
Inadequate or poor-quality equipment	2.36	1.45	2.89	1.45	1.37	0.76	**0.013**
Inadequate support by the department	2.13	1.22	2.22	1.33	1.95	0.97	0.682
Ineffectiveness of the judicial system	1.65	1.4	2.03	1.48	0.95	0.91	0.115
Unfavorable Work Condition	1.58	0.99	1.67	1.01	1.42	0.96	0.925
Type Two Stressor: Lack of support (08 stressors)							
Low Pay	3.47	2.28	3.19	2.07	4.00	2.6	0.225
Political pressure from within the department	3.31	2.8	4.03	3.01	1.95	1.68	0.359
Insufficient manpower to adequately handle a job	3.22	2	3.17	2.22	3.32	1.53	0.750
Court leniency with criminals	2.58	2.12	3.31	2.14	1.21	1.27	0.080
Inadequate support by the supervisor	2.13	1.36	1.94	1.39	2.47	1.26	0.586
Promotion Delayed or Being Stuck	1.67	1.48	1.97	1.58	1.11	1.1	0.563
Lack of Precise Recognition	1.65	1.47	1.72	1.49	1.53	1.47	0.410
Assignment of incompatible partner	1.67	1.19	1.58	0.99	1.84	1.50	0.250
Type Three Stressor: Psychological/Physical (09 stressors)							
Experiencing negative attitudes toward police officers	3.93	3.05	4.67	3.36	2.53	1.68	0.154
Responding to a felony in progress	3.85	2.74	4.83	2.83	2	1.16	**0.036**
Situations requiring the use of force	3.13	3.05	4.01	3.43	1.47	0.77	0.349
Making critical on-the-spot decisions	3	2.05	3.36	2.31	2.32	1.2	0.629
Dealing with family disputes and crisis situations	2.64	1.21	2.17	0.92	3.53	1.12	**0.006**
Fellow officer killed in the line of duty	2.13	2.62	2.81	2.99	0.84	0.67	0.47
Physical attack on one's person	2.07	1.96	2.67	2.17	0.95	0.62	**0.026**
Bullied by co-worker	1.55	0.77	1.31	0.67	2	0.75	**0.012**

Source: Own research

For type two stressors, the top five most frequent stressors were low pay, political pressure from within the department, insufficient manpower to adequately handle a job, court leniency with criminals, and inadequate support by supervisors. None of the stressors showed a statistically significant mean difference between men and women. Lastly, for type three stressors, the top five most frequent stressors were experiencing negative attitudes toward police officers, responding to a felony in progress, situations requiring the use of force, making critical on-the-spot decisions, and dealing with family disputes and crisis situations. The mean frequency of occurrence in the past month differed significantly by gender for the following stressors: Responding to a felony in progress (4.83 ± 2.83 vs 2 ± 1.16, p=0.036), women reported a higher recurrence than men Dealing with family disputes and crisis situations (2.17 ± 0.92 vs 3.53 ± 1.12, p=0.006), Physical attack on one's person is more frequent for men than women (2.67 ± 2.17 vs 0.95 ± 0.62, p=0.026). On the other hand, bullied by co-workers is significantly higher for female officers as the mean frequency of this occurrence is shown in Table 2 (1.31 ± 0.67 vs 2 ± 0.75, p=0.012). It is important to note that these results are based on self-reported data from a specific sample of police officers (n=55), and the findings may not be representative of all police officers. Additionally, the data only provides information on the frequency of occurrence in the past month and does not account for the duration or severity of the stressor events.

3.3.   Finding the Top Five Highly Rated Stressors

Table 3 presents the mean stress rating for the top five most stressful events by gender, categorized into three types of stressors from a total of 27 stressors. Type one stressors are related to administrative/professional factors including 10 stressors. The most stressful event for all participants was "Court appearances on day off or following night shift" (mean = 7.04), with men reporting higher stress ratings than women (mean = 7.53 vs. 6.11, p = 0.007). "Distorted or negative press accounts of police" was rated significantly higher by women than men (mean = 7.26 vs. 5.31, p = 0.003). Type two stressors (08 stressors) are related to a lack of support factors. "Assignment of incompatible partner" was the most stressful event for all participants (mean = 6.00), with men reporting similar stress ratings as women. However, the p-value for this event was significant (p = 0.010), indicating that the stress ratings for men and women were significantly different. Type three stressors (09 stressors) are related to psychological/physical factors. "Dealing with family disputes and crisis situations" was rated as the most stressful event for all participants (mean = 6.47), but the difference in stress ratings between men and women was not statistically significant (p = 0.070). "Bullied by a co-worker" was rated significantly higher by women than men (mean = 7.00 vs. 5.00, p = 0.010). Overall, the data suggest that certain stressors may affect men and women differently, with some stressors rated significantly higher by one gender than the other. The significant p-values indicate that the differences in stress ratings between men and women for certain stressors are not likely due to chance.

From Table 3 which represents the frequency of the occurrences and Table 5 where the rating of stressfulness was reported for both man and women police officers, among the total 27 stressors divided into three categories, 11 cases show statistical significance of the mean difference between men and women, where the p-value is less than 0.05. As for Table 4, which shows the mean frequency of occurrence for the top five most frequently occurring stressors, there are 6 cases where the significance occurred between gender and 2 of those represent the type one stressor (Administrative/Professional), and the rest 4 occurred in type three (Psychological/Physical). Table 3 (The mean stress rating for the top five most stressful events) also shows 5 cases of statistical significance where gender differences among those stressors were evident. To determine how those stressors actually and to which extent vary between gender a passion regression analysis is needed.

Table 3. The mean stress rating for the top five most stressful events

Stressor description	All (n=55)	SD	Men (n=36)	SD	Women (n=19)	SD	P-value
Type One Stressor: Administrative/Professional (10 stressors)							
Court appearances on the day off or following the night shift	7.04	1.74	7.53	1.36	6.11	2.025	**0.007**
Frequent changes from boring to demanding activities	6.55	2.36	6.78	2.32	6.12	2.42	0.453
Public criticism of police	6.29	2.34	6.86	2.045	5.21	2.53	0.191
Fellow officers not doing their job	6.11	2.28	6.61	2.33	5.16	1.89	0.111
Distorted or negative press accounts of police	5.98	1.85	5.31	1.74	7.26	1.33	**0.003**
Inadequate or poor-quality equipment	5.67	2.33	6.47	2.16	4.16	1.86	**0.006**
Inadequate support by the department	5.62	2.38	5.56	2.36	5.74	2.47	0.506
Excessive paperwork	5.49	2.35	6	2.28	4.53	2.22	0.316
Unfavorable Work Condition	5.2	2.09	5.75	2.1	4.16	1.64	0.199
Ineffectiveness of the judicial system	4.25	3.1	5.25	3.05	2.37	2.24	0.075
Type Two Stressor: Lack of support (08 stressors)							
Low Pay	6.73	2.75	6.83	2.72	6.53	2.79	0.323
Insufficient manpower to adequately handle a job	6.29	2.86	5.89	3.08	7.05	2.27	0.925
Assignment of incompatible partner	5.93	2.97	5.89	2.55	6.00	3.72	0.077
Inadequate support by the supervisor	5.42	2.81	5.17	2.8	5.89	2.85	0.179
Promotion Delayed or Being Stuck	5.02	3.53	5.44	3.38	4.21	3.75	0.717
Political pressure from within the department	4.58	3.07	5	2.99	3.79	3.12	0.163
Court leniency with criminals	4.42	2.84	5.31	2.46	2.74	2.81	**0.017**
Lack of Precise Recognition	4.35	2.99	4.69	2.85	3.68	3.23	0.745
Type Three Stressor: Psychological/Physical (09 stressors)							
Dealing with family disputes and crisis situations	6.47	1.88	5.83	1.89	7.68	1.16	0.070
Situations requiring the use of force	6.42	2.92	6.72	2.88	5.84	3.01	0.465
Fellow officer killed in the line of duty	5.98	3.51	6.17	3.36	5.63	3.83	0.799
Bullied By Co-worker	5.69	1.98	5	1.91	7	1.37	**0.010**
Experiencing negative attitudes toward police officers	5.65	2.45	5.58	2.42	5.79	2.57	0.933
Responding to a felony in progress	5.58	2.81	5.69	2.69	5.37	3.08	0.832
Physical attack on one's person	5.44	2.53	6	2.35	4.37	2.57	0.217
Making critical on-the-spot decisions	5.38	2.54	5.58	2.55	5	2.54	0.167

Source: Own research

3.4. Calculating the Prevalence Ratio (PR) for statistically significant variables.

Table 4 displays the outcomes of a Poisson regression analysis for the significant stressor variables identified in Table 3, which presented the mean stress ratings of different stressors. The table shows the prevalence ratios and confidence intervals for each variable, comparing the prevalence of the event in women to that in men. The findings indicate that women experience certain stressors at different rates than men in the police force, with the prevalence ratios varying depending on the nature of the stressor. Specifically, women experienced court appearances on day off or following night shift has a prevalence ratio of 0.81 (0.65-1.01), indicating that women experienced this stressor at a slightly lower rate than men. and inadequate or poor-quality equipment with a prevalence ratio of 0.64 (0.50-0.83) indicate that women police officers experience this stressor at 36% lower rate than men while experiencing distorted or negative press accounts of police (PR=1.37, 1.10-1.70) and bullying by co-workers (PR=1.40, 1.12-1.75) at higher rates than

men respectively 37% and 40% higher prevalence ratios. Additionally, women experience court leniency with criminals (PR=0.52, 0.38-0.70) at a lower rate than men, with a 48% higher prevalence ratio for men.

Table 4. Poisson regression analysis for the significant variables
(from Table 5: mean stress rating)

Stressor description	All (n=55)	SD	Men (n=36)	SD	Women (n=19)	SD	P-value	Prevalence ratio (PR) and 95 % CI
Court appearances on the day off or following the night shift	7.04	1.74	7.53	1.36	6.11	2.025	0.007	0.81 (0.65-1.01)
Distorted or negative press accounts of police	5.98	1.85	5.31	1.74	7.26	1.33	0.003	1.37 (1.10-1.70)
Bullied By Co-worker	5.69	1.98	5	1.91	7	1.37	0.01	1.40 (1.12-1.75)
Inadequate or poor-quality equipment	5.67	2.33	6.47	2.16	4.16	1.86	0.006	0.64 (0.50-0.83)
Court leniency with criminals	4.42	2.84	5.31	2.46	2.74	2.81	0.017	0.52 (0.38-0.70)

Note: Prevalence ratios compare the prevalence of the event in women relative to men.

Source: Own research

Table 5 presents the results of a Poisson regression analysis for the significant variables from Table 4, which reported the mean frequency of stressors experienced by police officers. The table shows the prevalence ratios (PR) and 95% confidence intervals (CI) for each variable, comparing the prevalence of the event in women to that in men.

The findings suggest that women and men experience some stressors at different rates in the police force. Specifically, women reported responding to a felony in progress (PR=0.41, 0.29-0.59) and inadequate or poor-quality equipment (PR=0.47, 0.31-0.73) at a lower rate than men, indicating a 59% and 53% lower prevalence of these stressors for women, respectively. In contrast, women reported dealing with family disputes and crisis situations (PR=1.63, 1.17-2.26) and being bullied by co-workers (PR=1.53, 0.99-2.35) at a higher rate than men, indicating a 63% and 53% higher prevalence of these stressors for women police officers. Additionally, physical attack on one's person was reported less frequently by women (PR=0.36, 0.22-0.88), and court appearances on day off or following night shift (PR=0.60, 0.41-0.88) were also less frequent for women with 64% and 40% less frequency compared to man.

Table 5. Poisson regression analysis for the significant variables
(from Table 4: mean frequency of stressors).

Stressor description	All (n=55)	SD	Men (n=36)	SD	Women (n=19)	SD	P-value	Prevalence ratio (PR) and 95 % CI
Responding to a felony in progress	3.85	2.74	4.83	2.83	2	1.16	0.036	0.41 (0.29-0.59)
Dealing with family disputes and crisis situations	2.64	1.21	2.17	0.92	3.53	1.12	0.006	1.63 (1.17-2.26)
Court appearances on the day off or following the night shift	2.64	1.18	3.06	1.09	1.84	0.9	0.009	0.60 (0.41-0.88)
Inadequate or poor-quality equipment	2.36	1.45	2.89	1.45	1.37	0.76	0.013	0.47 (0.31-0.73)
Physical attack on one's person	2.07	1.96	2.67	2.17	0.95	0.62	0.026	0.36 (0.22-0.88)
Bullied By Co-worker	1.55	0.77	1.31	0.67	2	0.75	0.012	1.53 (0.99-2.35)

Note: Prevalence ratios compare the prevalence of the event in women relative to men.

Source: Own research

Table 6 shows the results for the top five highly rated stressors (selected from the 27 items taken to analysis by their mean), analyzed separately for males and females. For the top stressor, which is court appearances on a day off or following a night shift, the between-groups sum of squares was 13.822 for males and 11.344 for females. The within-group sum of squares was 54.464 for males and 84.298 for females. The F-value was 2.633 for males and 3.450 for females, and the p-value was .119 for males and .071 for females. These results suggest that this stressor is not significantly different between genders.

For the second highly-rated stressor (low pay), the between-groups sum of squares was .529 for males and .643 for females. The within-group sum of squares was 216.920 for males and 188.817 for females. The F-value was .021 for males and .034 for females, and the p-value was .886 for males and .854 for females. These results suggest that low pay is not significantly different between genders.

Frequent changes from boring to demanding activities are the 3rd highly rated stressor where the between-groups sum of squares was 2.929 for males and 2.696 for females. The within-group sum of squares was 134.104 for males and 159.907 for females. The F-value was .022 for males and .017 for females, and the p-value was .883 for males and .897 for females. These results suggest that this stressor is not significantly different between genders.

For the next stressor (dealing with family disputes and crisis situations) showed in Table 6, the between-groups sum of squares was 23.220 for males and 19.384 for females. The within-group sum of squares was 83.155 for males and 65.794 for females. The F-value was 3.524 for males and 4.238 for females, and the p-value was .066 for males and .047 for females. These results suggest that this stressor may be significantly different between genders, with females reporting higher stress levels.

Table 6. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the top five highly rated stressors by gender.

The Top 5 Highly Rated Stressors		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Court appearances on day off or following night shift: Stress Rating	Between Groups	25.166	1	25.166 2.618	9.612	.003
	Within Groups	138.762	53			
	Total	163.927	54			
Dealing with family disputes and crisis situations: Stress Rating	Between Groups	42.604	1	42.604 2.813	15.144	.000
	Within Groups	149.105	53			
	Total	191.709	54			

Source: Own research

For the final one (situations requiring the use of force), the between-groups sum of squares was 3.115 for males and 6.518 for females. The within-group sum of squares was 228.938 for males and 223.811 for females. The F-value was .060 for males and .169 for females, and the p-value was .808 for males and .684 for females. These results suggest that this stressor is not significantly different between genders. The results suggest that there may be some gender differences in the stress levels related to dealing with family disputes and crisis situations. However, for the other stressors, there were no significant differences between genders.

Table 7 presents the results of an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the top five most frequent stressors (selected from the 27 items taken for interpretation by their mean) experienced by police officers, separated by gender. For each stressor, the table shows the Sum of Squares, degrees of freedom (df), Mean Square, F-statistic, and p-value. The "Between Groups" column shows the variation between the groups (male and female officers) and the "Within Groups" column shows the variation within each group. The "Total" row shows the total variation for each stressor.

Table 7. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the top five most frequent stressors by gender

Top 5 Most Frequent Stressors		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Experiencing negative attitudes toward police officers	Between Groups	56.972	1	56.972 8.429	6.759	.012
	Within Groups	446.737	53			
	Total	503.709	54			
Responding to a felony in progress	Between Groups	99.836	1	99.836 5.755	17.349	.000
	Within Groups	305.000	53			
	Total	404.836	54			

Source: Own research

The results suggest that experiencing negative attitudes towards police officers and responding to a felony in progress were both significant stressors for police officers, with p-values of .012 and .000, respectively. These stressors had the highest F-values (6.759 and 17.349, respectively) and the largest between-group variation (56.972 and 99.836, respectively) compared to the other stressors.

Excessive paperwork and low pay did not show significant differences between male and female officers, as evidenced by their non-significant p-values of .429 and .215, respectively. Public criticism of the police was also not a significant stressor, with a p-value of .578. Overall, these results suggest that experiencing negative attitudes towards police officers and responding to a felony in progress are particularly significant sources of stress for police officers, regardless of gender, while excessive paperwork, low pay, and public criticism of police do not have a significant gender-related effect on stress levels.

3.5. Gender Differences in Highly rated and most Frequent Stressors

As shown in Figure 1, the most frequent stressor for all participants was "excessive paperwork" with a mean score of 4.62, followed by "experiencing negative attitude towards police" with a mean score of 3.93 and "public criticism of police" with a mean score of 3.91. However, when comparing the sexes, men rated "responding to a felony in progress" as the third most frequent stressor with a mean score of 4.83, whereas, for women, this stressor was rated much lower with a mean score of 2. In contrast, women rated "excessive paperwork" as the most frequent stressor with a mean score of 5, compared to a mean score of 4.42 for men. Similarly, women rated "low pay" as a more frequent stressor with a mean score of 4, compared to a mean score of 3.19 for men. Basically, the data suggests that while "excessive paperwork" and "experiencing a negative attitude towards police" are frequent stressors for both men and women, there are differences in the most frequent stressors between the sexes. Specifically, men are more affected by responding to felonies, while women are more affected by excessive paperwork and low pay.

In conclusion, the data clearly shows gender differences in the types of stressors experienced by male and female police officers. The top 5 highly rated and most frequent stressors are not the same for male and female officers. While excessive paperwork is a common stressor for both sexes, men are more affected by responding to felonies, whereas women are more affected by excessive paperwork and low pay. Overall, the findings suggest that gender differences in stressors need to be taken into account when designing interventions to support the mental health and well-being of police officers.
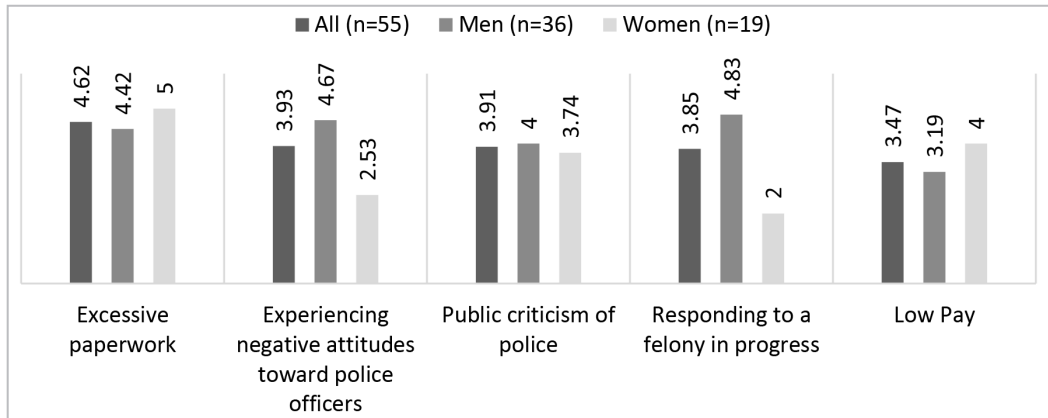
Figure 1. Top five most frequent stressors
Source: Own research

The data presented in Figure 2 shows that the top five highly rated stressors (based on mean frequency) for all participants were not necessarily the same for men and women. For all participants, the highest-rated stressor was "Court appearances on day off or following night shift" with a mean frequency of 7.04, followed by "Low Pay" with a mean frequency of 6.73 and "Frequent changes from boring to demanding activities" with a mean frequency of 6.55. However, when comparing the sexes, men reported a higher mean frequency for "Court appearances on day off or following night shift" (7.53) compared to women (6.11), while women reported a higher mean frequency for "Dealing with family disputes and crisis situations" (7.68) compared to men (5.83). Furthermore, while "Situations requiring use of force" was ranked fifth in the overall list, it was not in the top five stressors for women, with a mean frequency of 5.84. In contrast, men rated this stressor higher with a mean frequency of 6.72, making it the fourth most highly rated stressor for them.
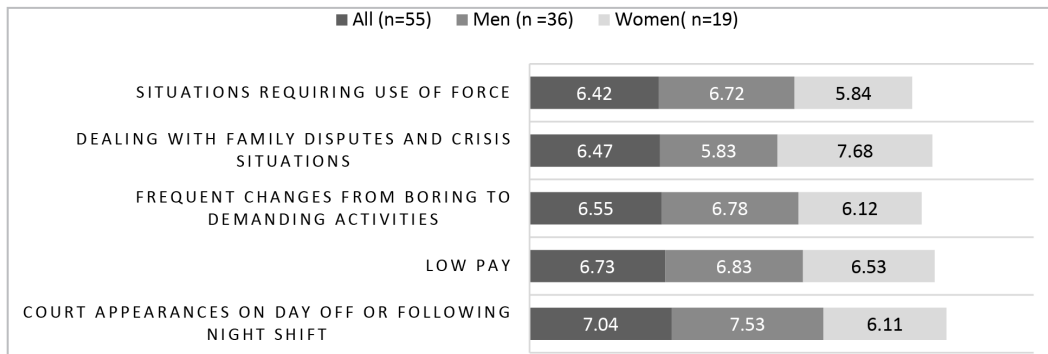

Figure 2. Top five most frequent stressors
Source: Own research

Therefore, the data suggests that although some stressors are highly rated by all participants, there are differences between men and women in their perceptions of stress and the specific stressors that are most highly rated by each group.

4. CONCLUSION

Studies conducted over the last 40 years have identified various factors that contribute to police job stress, including demographic characteristics, the inherent risks associated with police work, the work environment and support from colleagues, work-family conflicts, and administrative practices within organizations. However, some studies indicate that the work environment and individual behavior traits may have a greater impact on police job stress compared to personal characteristics. Law enforcement work takes a toll on the physical and mental well-being of police officers, as they are constantly exposed to various stressors in their daily job duties, which include ensuring the safety and protection of the community, building positive relationships with the community, and upholding law and order. Police officers are required to work for extended periods under stressful conditions (Harger, 2020).

In conclusion, police stress is a significant issue for both male and female officers in Bangladesh. However, by examining police stress from a gender perspective, it becomes clear that female officers face unique challenges that contribute to higher levels of stress and job dissatisfaction. Research has shown that male and female police officers encounter various stressful situations in their line of duty. However, in this study, the most frequent and highly rated stressors differed between male and female officers. While male officers reported more stress related to operational and administrative duties, female officers rated interpersonal and organizational stressors, such as dealing with family disputes and balancing work-family responsibilities, as the most challenging. Furthermore, the study revealed that the frequency of a particular stressor was not necessarily responsible for generating the highest level of stress. For instance, although female officers did not encounter family-related stressors as frequently as male officers faced operational and administrative stressors, family-related stressors generated higher levels of stress for female officers than any other stressor.

Given these findings, the study suggests the need for gender-sensitive programs to address the unique stressors faced by male and female officers in law enforcement. This could include training on coping strategies, mental health resources, and organizational policies and practices that support work-family balance (Brown & Campbell, 1994). By implementing programs and creating a culture that prioritizes the well-being of police officers, law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh can help reduce the negative effects of stress on officers and improve the effectiveness of law enforcement.

References

Brown, J. M., & Campbell, E. A. (1994). *Stress and policing: Sources and strategies*. John Wiley & Sons.

Elgmark Andersson, E., Larsen, L. B., & Ramstrand, N. (2017). A modified job demand, control, support model for active duty police. *Work*, *58*(3), 361-370. https://doi.org/10.3233/wor-172621

Ermasova, N., Cross, A. D., & Ermasova, E. (2020). Perceived stress and coping among law enforcement officers: An empirical analysis of patrol versus non-patrol officers in Illinois, USA. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, *35*(1), 48-63. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11896-019-09356-z

Ferson, W. E., & Siegel, A. F. (2008). Testing portfolio efficiency with conditioning information. *The Review of Financial Studies*, *22*(7), 2735-2758. https://doi.org/10.1093/rfs/hhn112

Folkman, S. (2013). Stress: Appraisal and Coping. Encyclopedia of Behavioral Medicine, 1913-1915. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-1005-9_215

Harger, A. L. (2020). *Law Enforcement Stress, Gender, and Work Performance* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).

Kara, H. B., Sunger, E., & Kapti, A. (2015). Police stress factors among law enforcement agencies: A comparison study of US and Turkish police. In *European Scientific Journal* (Vol. 11, Issue 4).

Khalid, A., Pan, F., Li, P., Wang, W., & Ghaffari, A. S. (2020). The impact of occupational stress on job burnout among bank employees in Pakistan, with psychological capital as a mediator. *Frontiers in public health*, *7*, 410. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2019.00410

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping.* Springer publishing company.

Malach-Pines, A., & Keinan, G. (2006). Stress and burnout in Israeli border police. *International journal of stress management*, *13*(4), 519-540. https://doi.org/10.1037/1072-5245.13.4.519

Murison, R. (2016). The Neurobiology of Stress. *Neuroscience of Pain, Stress, and Emotion*, 29-49. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-800538-5.00002-9

Queirós, C., Passos, F., Bártolo, A., Marques, A. J., da Silva, C. F., & Pereira, A. (2020). Burnout and Stress Measurement in Police Officers: Literature Review and a Study With the Operational Police Stress Questionnaire. Frontiers in Psychology, 11. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00587

Regehr, C., Hill, J., & Glancy, G. (2000). Individual predictors of traumatic reactions in firefighters. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 188(6), 333-339. https://doi.org/10.1097/00005053-200006000-00001

Siegel, J. M. (1990). Stressful life events and use of physician services among the elderly: The moderating role of pet ownership. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58*(6), 1081-1086. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.58.6.1081

Sikder, S. (2019). Women in police: A study on police women in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 14(1), 81-94.

Territo, L., & Vetter, H. J. (1981). *Stress and police personnel.* Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon.