

BEST PRACTICES IN ADDRESSING JOB SATISFACTION, BURNOUT, AND TURNOVER AMONG POLICE CHIEFS: FINDINGS FROM A STUDY OF 731 POLICE CHIEFS

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OUTLINE

- Stress and policing
- Concepts and consequences
- Stressors among police chiefs
- Factors that influence job satisfaction, burnout, and turnover
- Prevention and mitigation

STRESS & POLICING

- Policing can be a stressful occupation with a host of negative stress-related consequences

Officers are at an elevated risk for:

Metabolic syndrome⁷
(e.g., high blood pressure/cholesterol)

Suicidal thoughts and behaviors⁷

Injuries⁷

Family conflict/domestic violence³

Sleep disorders⁵

Compared to the general public, officers report:

Greater levels of depression¹

Less sleep/more fatigue¹

Lower life expectancy⁷

Lower physical activity²

Obesity⁶

Alcohol dependency⁴

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder⁷

¹Harley et al., 2012; ²Kruger & Khol, 2008; ³Kirschman et al., 2014; ⁴Lindsay, 2008; ⁵Rajaratnam et al., 2011; ⁶Ramey et al., 2009;

⁷Violanti et al., 2008; 2011; 2013; 2014)

THE POLICE STRESS ENVIRONMENT

Job content stressors

- Shift work, overtime, court work, exposure to trauma and/or hostile citizens, threats to physical/psychological safety

Job context stressors

- Collegial/supervision/organizational support; poor leadership; bureaucratic red tape
- Greatest source of stress among officers¹

WHY STUDY POLICE CHIEFS?

- The role is extremely demanding¹
- The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing
 - Officer safety and wellness is key
- Turnover is an issue
 - National estimates: 10.8% of officers each year²
 - Average tenure for chiefs: less than five years³
 - Job satisfaction (2nd) and burnout (4th) strongest predictors of turnover among law enforcement⁴

¹Witham & Watson (1983); ²Reaves (2015); ³Peak & Glensor (2002); ⁴Matz et al. (2014)

JOB SATISFACTION

- “A positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”¹
- Most frequently studied variable in organizational behavior research²
 - Extant scholarship on job satisfaction (JS) among police officers is limited³
- Personal and work-related consequences:
 - Work-family conflict (WFC)⁴
 - Inadequate job performance and quality of service provision⁵
 - Absenteeism, organizational commitment, burnout, and turnover⁶⁻⁸
 - Receptivity to change and support for new policing innovations⁹

¹Locke (1976); ²Spector (1997); ³Ercikti et al. (2011); ⁴Singh & Nayak, 2015; ⁵Buzawa et al. 1994; ⁶Cohen & Golan (2007); ⁷Matz et al. (2014); ⁸Zhao et al. (1999); ⁹Pelfrey (2007);

BURNOUT

- Chronic form of psychological strain common among helping professionals



BURNOUT

- Occupational hazard exhibited through:¹
 - Exhaustion
 - Depersonalization/disengagement

Burnout Process²



¹Maslach & Jackson, 1982; ²Cherniss, 1980

WHY PREVENT BURNOUT?

- Burnout can result in a host of negative personal and work-related consequences

Personal Consequences	Work-Related Consequences
Lower moral/psychological well-being ^{1, 3}	Increased aggressiveness/use of force ⁵
Family conflicts ^{1, 2}	Absenteeism ⁶
Physical & mental illnesses ^{1, 4}	Low job satisfaction ⁷
Negative coping mechanisms (e.g., substance abuse) ¹	Turnover intentions & actual turnover ⁸

¹Gershon et al. (2009); ²Maslach & Jackson (1982); ³Cherniss (1980); ⁴Maslach et al. (2001); ⁵Queiros et al. (2013); ⁶Travis et al. (2015);

⁷Burke et al. (1984); ⁸Matz et al. (2014);

TURNOVER INTENTIONS

The process by which an employee contemplates, plans, or has a desire to leave their organization¹

- Why focus on turnover intentions vs. actual turnover?
 - Turnover intentions is a strong predictor of actual turnover^{2, 3}
 - Prevention and awareness⁴

¹Mobley et al. (1979); ²Mor Barak et al. (2011); ³Matz et al. (2014); ⁴Lambert & Hogan (2009)

CONSEQUENCES OF TURNOVER

- Strongest predictors of turnover among:¹
 - **Law enforcement:** Job satisfaction, psychological distress, & emotional exhaustion
 - **Institutional corrections:** Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, & job satisfaction

DIRECT COSTS ²	INDIRECT COSTS ³⁻⁵
Separation costs (e.g., separation pay; unemployment taxes)	Lower productivity
Replacement costs (e.g., recruitment, selection/vetting processes)	Group cohesion deficits
Training costs (e.g., preservice & on-the-job training)	Disrupted social networks/community ties
	Low officer morale & Turnover contagion

¹Matz et al., 2014; ²Mor Barak et al., 2001; ³Hom & Griffeth, 1995; ⁴Griffeth et al., 2000; ⁵Orrick, 2002; ⁶Wareham et al., 2015

CURRENT STUDY

RESEARCH GAPS

- Research is primarily limited to front-line officers and mid-level supervisors
- Police chiefs are difficult to study

RESEARCH QUESTIONS


1. What produces the most stress among police chiefs?
2. To what extent do police chiefs enjoy their job, feel burned out, or have intentions to leave?
3. What are the personal and work-related factors associated with job satisfaction, burnout, and turnover among police chiefs

DATA & METHODS

- **Texas Police Chief Leadership series (TPCLS) program**
 - Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMITE)

- **Texas Chiefs of Police Panel Project (TCPPP)**
 - Third wave
 - Surveys administered during 12 TPCLS sessions between 9/1/2015 – 7/29/2017
 - 1,044 TPCLS participants; 786 completed surveys (75.3% response rate)
 - Final sample: 731 usable surveys

KEY MEASURES

- **Job Satisfaction** 
- **Burnout:**
 - **Exhaustion**
 - **Disengagement**
- **Turnover intentions**

Hopkins (1983)

- Five items
 - “I find work stimulating and challenging”
 - “I like the kind of work I do very much”
 - “I find a sense of worthwhile accomplishment in my work”
- Five point Likert-type scale
 - 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
- Higher scores indicated greater job satisfaction

KEY MEASURES

- **Job Satisfaction**

- **Burnout:** ➤

- **Exhaustion**

- **Disengagement**


- **Turnover intentions**

The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI)
(Demerouti & Nachreiner, 1996)

Exhaustion: 8 items

Disengagement 8 items


KEY MEASURES

- **Job Satisfaction**
- **Burnout:**
 - **Exhaustion** 
 - **Disengagement**
- **Turnover intentions**

Defined as a consequence of intensive physical, affective, and cognitive strain (i.e., a long-term consequence of prolonged exposure to certain job demands)

- Example items:
 - “When I work, I usually feel energized”
 - “After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities”
- Four point Likert-type scale
 - 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree
- Higher scores indicated greater exhaustion


KEY MEASURES

- **Job Satisfaction**
- **Burnout:**
 - **Exhaustion**
 - **Disengagement** 
- **Turnover intentions**

Defined as the degree to which police chiefs distance themselves from their work and experiencing negative attitudes toward the work, people who do the work, and/or the industry as a whole

- Example items
 - “I always find new and interesting aspects in my work”
 - “I feel more and more engaged in my work”
- Five point Likert-type scale
 - 1 = strongly agree to 4 = strongly disagree
- Higher scores indicated greater disengagement

KEY MEASURES

- **Job Satisfaction**
- **Burnout:**
 - **Exhaustion**
 - **Disengagement**
- **Turnover intentions** 

Defined as the degree to which police chiefs have thought about leaving their position voluntarily

- Example items
 - “How likely are you to leave your job in the next six months for another chief’s job?”
 - “How frequently have you seriously considered leaving your job in the past six months”
- Five point Likert-type scale
 - 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree
- Higher scores indicated greater intentions to leave

OTHER MEASURES

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS	OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS
Race (0 = Non-White; 1 = White)	Family-work conflict (Lambert et al., 2010)	Organizational commitment (Mowday et al., 1982)
Education (0 = < Bachelor's; 1 = ≥ Bachelor's)	Work-family conflict (Lambert et al., 2010)	Collegial support (Haines et al., 1991)
Marital status (0 = Not married; 1 = Married)	Strain-based WFC	Organizational size (continuous)
Prior military experience (0 = No; 1 = Yes)	Time-based WFC	Agency Type (1 = Municipal; 2 = ISD; 3 = Special District)
Age (continuous)	Organizational Police Stress Questionnaire	Jurisdiction (1=Urban; 2 = Suburban; 3 = Rural)
Family support (continuous; $\alpha = .774$)	Job Stress – Leadership/Accountability	
Hiring origin (0=Inside department; 1=outside)	Job Stress – Insufficient resources	
Law enforcement tenure (in years)	Job Stress – Bureaucratic stressors	
Supervisor tenure (in years)		
Tenure in current department (in years)		
Total chief tenure (in years)		

WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY?

- Chiefs in the current study (N = 731):

White (78%)

Bachelor's degree or higher (45%)

Married (85%)

Previous military experience (25%)

Hired outside of department (56%)

Average of 27.2 years in law enforcement

- Average of 16.4 years as a supervisor
- Average of 8 years as a police chief

Size of organization: Range from 0 – 430 full-time

- Average of 33 full-time sworn/non-sworn

Municipal agency (72%)

Independent school district (16%)

Special district (e.g., university, parks, airport; 12%)

Urban Jurisdiction (29%)

Suburban Jurisdiction (30%)

Rural Jurisdiction (41%)

TOP FIVE STRESSORS FOR POLICE CHIEFS

1. Staff shortages ($M = 4.2$; $SD = 1.8$)
2. Lack of resources ($M = 3.9$; $SD = 1.8$)
3. Dealing with coworkers ($M = 3.8$; $SD = 1.4$)
4. Bureaucratic red tape ($M = 3.8$; $SD = 1.4$)
5. Excessive administrative duties ($M = 3.7$; $SD = 1.6$)

WORK-RELATED ATTITUDES AMONG CHIEFS

Overall, chiefs exhibited:

- **High levels of job satisfaction**
 - Range: 13 - 25; Midpoint on scale: 20.0; Average score: 21.0
- **Moderate levels of burnout**
 - Exhaustion: Range: 1 – 3.5; Midpoint on scale: 2.1; Average score: 2.2
 - Disengagement: Range: 1 – 3.4; Midpoint on scale: 2.1; Average score: 2.1
- **Slightly elevated intentions to leave**
 - Range: 4 - 17; Midpoint on scale: 7.0; Average score: 7.3

FACTORS RELATED TO JOB SATISFACTION AMONG POLICE CHIEFS

FACTORS RELATED TO JOB DISSATISFACTION	FACTORS THAT INCREASE JOB SATISFACTION
Greater conflict in the family due to work strain	Greater commitment to the organization
Greater conflict in the family due to the amount of time spent doing chief-related duties	Greater collegial support
	Greater family support
	Being hired outside of the department

WHAT INCREASES THE RISK OF BURNOUT AMONG POLICE CHIEFS

FACTORS THAT INCREASE BURNOUT: EXHAUSTION

Greater conflict in the family
due to work strain

Greater job stress from
bureaucratic stressors

Being married

FACTORS THAT DECREASE BURNOUT: EXHAUSTION

Greater levels of job
satisfaction

Greater commitment to the
organization

WHAT INCREASES THE RISK OF BURNOUT AMONG POLICE CHIEFS

FACTORS THAT INCREASE BURNOUT: DISENGAGEMENT

Greater conflict in the family due to work strain

Greater job stress from bureaucratic stressors

FACTORS THAT DECREASE BURNOUT: DISENGAGEMENT

Greater levels of job satisfaction

Greater commitment to the organization

WHAT INCREASES THE RISK OF TURNOVER AMONG POLICE CHIEFS

FACTORS THAT INCREASE INTENTIONS TO LEAVE	FACTORS THAT DECREASE INTENTIONS TO LEAVE
Job stress from leadership responsibilities	Greater levels of job satisfaction
Job stress from bureaucratic stressors	Greater commitment to the organization
Greater levels of Burnout: disengagement	Greater collegial support
Longer chief tenure	Being married
Being a person of color	
Working in an urban district	

KEY FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE WORK-RELATED ATTITUDES AMONG POLICE CHIEFS

	Job Satisfaction	Burnout Exhaustion	Burnout Disengagement	Turnover
Greater organizational commitment	↑	↓	↓	↓
Greater collegial support	↑			↓
Greater job satisfaction		↓	↓	↓
Being married		↑		↓
Greater job stress from bureaucratic stressors		↑	↑	↑
Greater strain-based work-family conflict	↓	↑	↑	

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