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

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Note: This presentation was made to the Division of State Associations of Chiefs of Police (SACOP) on Thursday, March 15, 2018, at the IACP Division Mid-year meeting in Nashville, TN.
• 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officers are at an elevated risk for:</th>
<th>Compared to the general public, officers report:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metabolic syndrome (e.g., high blood pressure/cholesterol)</td>
<td>Greater levels of depression¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suicidal thoughts and behaviors⁷</td>
<td>Less sleep/more fatigue¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Injuries⁷</td>
<td>Lower life expectancy⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family conflict/domestic violence³</td>
<td>Lower physical activity²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep disorders⁵</td>
<td>Obesity⁶</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Alcohol dependency⁴</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder⁷</td>
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</table>

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 officers\(^1\)

\(^1\)Shane, 2010
WHY STUDY POLICE CHIEFS?

• The role is extremely demanding

• 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 year
  • Average tenure for chiefs: less than five years
  • Job satisfaction (2nd) and burnout (4th) strongest predictors of turnover among law enforcement

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1 Witham & Watson (1983); 2 Reaves (2015); 3 Peak & Glensor (2002); 4 Matz 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 research\(^2\)
  • Extant scholarship on job satisfaction (JS) among police officers is limited\(^3\)

• Personal and work-related consequences:
  • Work-family conflict (WFC)\(^4\)
  • Inadequate job performance and quality of service provision\(^5\)
  • Absenteeism, organizational commitment, burnout, and turnover\(^6-8\)
  • Receptivity to change and support for new policing innovations\(^9\)

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

• Chronic form of psychological strain common among helping professionals
BURNOUT

- Occupational hazard exhibited through:\(^1\)
  - Exhaustion
  - Depersonalization/disengagement

Burnout Process\(^2\)

Expectations vs. Reality
Job Strain
Maladaptive Coping Skills
Burnout

- High job demands
- Few resources

\(^1\)Maslach & Jackson, 1982; \(^2\)Cherniss, 1980
**WHY PREVENT BURNOUT?**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Consequences</th>
<th>Work-Related Consequences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower moral/psychological well-being&lt;sup&gt;1, 3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Increased aggressiveness/use of force&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family conflicts&lt;sup&gt;1, 2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Absenteeism&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical &amp; mental illnesses&lt;sup&gt;1, 4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Low job satisfaction&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative coping mechanisms (e.g., substance abuse)&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Turnover intentions &amp; actual turnover&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<sup>1</sup>Gershon et al. (2009);  <sup>2</sup>Maslach & Jackson (1982);  <sup>3</sup>Cherniss (1980);  <sup>4</sup>Maslach et al. (2001);  <sup>5</sup>Queiros et al. (2013);  <sup>6</sup>Travis et al. (2015);  <sup>7</sup>Burke et al. (1984);  <sup>8</sup>Matz et al. (2014);
TURNOVER INTENTIONS

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

• Why focus on turnover intentions vs. actual turnover?
  • Turnover intentions is a strong predictor of actual turnover
  • Prevention and awareness

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIRECT COSTS²</th>
<th>INDIRECT COSTS³⁻⁵</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separation costs (e.g., separation pay; unemployment taxes)</td>
<td>Lower productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement costs (e.g., recruitment, selection/vetting processes)</td>
<td>Group cohesion deficits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training costs (e.g., preservice &amp; on-the-job training)</td>
<td>Disrupted social networks/community ties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

• Texas Chiefs of Police Panel Project (TCPPPP)
  • 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

The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) (Demerouti & Nachreiner, 1996)
Exhaustion: 8 items
Disengagement: 8 items

• Turnover intentions
KEY MEASURES

• **Job Satisfaction**

• **Burnout:**
  • Exhaustion
  • Disengagement

• **Turnover intentions**

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**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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous military experience</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired outside of department</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of 27.2 years in law enforcement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average of 16.4 years as a supervisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of 8 years as a police chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Size of organization: Range from 0 – 430 full-time</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Average of 33 full-time sworn/non-sworn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal agency (72%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent school district (16%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special district (e.g., university, parks, airport; 12%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Jurisdiction (29%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suburban Jurisdiction (30%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural Jurisdiction (41%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS RELATED TO JOB DISSATISFACTION</th>
<th>FACTORS THAT INCREASE JOB SATISFACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater conflict in the family due to work strain</td>
<td>Greater commitment to the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater conflict in the family due to the amount of time spent doing chief-related duties</td>
<td>Greater collegial support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Greater family support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Being hired outside of the department</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## WHAT INCREASES THE RISK OF BURNOUT AMONG POLICE CHIEFS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS THAT INCREASE BURNOUT: EXHAUSTION</th>
<th>FACTORS THAT DECREASE BURNOUT: EXHAUSTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater conflict in the family due to work strain</td>
<td>Greater levels of job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater job stress from bureaucratic stressors</td>
<td>Greater commitment to the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being married</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Greater levels of job satisfaction, greater commitment to the organization, and being married are factors that decrease the risk of burnout among police chiefs. On the other hand, greater conflict in the family due to work strain and greater job stress from bureaucratic stressors increase the risk of burnout.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT INCREASES THE RISK OF BURNOUT AMONG POLICE CHIEFS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FACTORS THAT INCREASE BURNOUT:</strong> DISENGAGEMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater levels of job satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater commitment to the organization</td>
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</table>
# WHAT INCREASES THE RISK OF TURNOVER AMONG POLICE CHIEFS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS THAT INCREASE INTENTIONS TO LEAVE</th>
<th>FACTORS THAT DECREASE INTENTIONS TO LEAVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job stress from leadership responsibilities</td>
<td>Greater levels of job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job stress from bureaucratic stressors</td>
<td>Greater commitment to the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater levels of Burnout: disengagement</td>
<td>Greater collegial support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Longer chief tenure</td>
<td>Being married</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being a person of color</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working in an urban district</td>
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<tr>
<td>KEY FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE WORK-RELATED ATTITUDES AMONG POLICE CHIEFS</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater organizational commitment</td>
<td>↑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater collegial support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater job satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being married</td>
<td>↑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater job stress from bureaucratic stressors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater strain-based work-family conflict</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
<th>Burnout Exhaustion</th>
<th>Burnout Disengagement</th>
<th>Turnover</th>
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