

Workplace Stress and Coping Strategies of Security Guards working in Universities

Abeer Saleem, Farhat Jamil, & Ruhi Khalid
Institute of Psychology,
Beaconhouse National University

The present research explored factors causing work-place stress and coping strategies in security guards working in universities. This study used qualitative research design with a sample consisting of 11 guards working in a university. Their ages ranged between 23 and 50 years. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants. A semi-structured interview schedule was developed and administered for the purpose of data collection. Analysis of data was done by using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The results showed that job stressors relating to job role like duty hours and low income were most prevalent among guards. Furthermore, the most prevalent coping mechanisms employed by guards were religious coping and acceptance. Owing to the increased incidents of terrorism in our country, the results of this research hold useful implications for any development needed in this profession and/or providing more benefits for security guards in future to improve their performance and hence, security of the institution.

Keywords: Work-place stress, coping mechanisms, security guards, semi-structured interviews, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Workplace stress is a global issue which is gaining more and more attention of researchers in present time due to its effects on job performance and human health. Selye (1974) defined workplace stress as “deviation from normal state due to unplanned or poorly designed work system or processes resulting into failures” (p. 137). Sauter, Lim, and Murphy (1996) interpreted workplace stress as “harmful tension that arises when employee’s skills, abilities or resources don’t match the pressure and demands of job” (p.249).

Contrary to the general perception of the word “stress” as being something negative and problematic, it has been proven to be beneficial as well. When present in little amounts, it increases arousal level which improves performance by creating a healthy tension. Ideal stress levels produce optimum ability to perform and we can achieve what we set out to do. On the other hand, if these levels increase or the same levels are sustained for a longer time, performance starts to decrease. We start to feel the pressure, our bodies start going under changes and that can cause fatigue, exhaustion, ill health or breakdown (Hicks & McSherry, 2006).

People in every profession experience stress and are affected by variety of stressors. These stressors can be biological, environmental, physiological or social. For example, the general atmosphere of workplace and relationships with colleagues encompass environmental and social factors (Bourne & Yaroush, 2003). One thing that makes the job of a security guard more stressful than every other job is the constant exposure to potential threat. Unfortunately, due to Pakistan’s current situation, no place or institution can be deemed 100% safe and can be on the risk of being a target of terrorism. This puts a huge responsibility on security guards to be alert at all times for the safety of their own selves and everyone inside the institution they’re guarding. After the attack on Army Public School Peshawar in 2014, parents are scared to send their children to schools and colleges. It is of absolute importance that we study this subject in detail to specify

and then eradicate the problems that the security force is facing so that they can perform optimally and every parent and child feels safe.

In last few years, a lot of research has been dedicated to the alarming problem of workplace stress and its effects on physical and mental health. Spector, Zapf, Chen, and Frese (2000) reported that research done from 1991-1997 reveals that there are 2371 entries on workplace stress. According to Jex (1998), in short amount of time a tremendous volume of research has been generated on the topic of workplace stress. Most of the research focused on high stress risk jobs such as executives, air traffic controllers, police, and doctors working in emergency and so on. However, little is done on security guards. And, what little is done focuses on violence against security guards and the sudden increase in employment and industry of guards. Researches related to their working environment and working conditions are almost non-existent. Security guard is one of the most high risk occupations, which involves guiding, monitoring, maintaining, and preventing crimes. Moreover, it includes managing access and movement of people, to provide general inspection, usher services, and report to law enforcement agencies.

Research shows that a stressful environment at work can lead to job dissatisfaction, increased absenteeism, anger, depression and anxiety which may all add up to produce dissatisfactory results at work and health problems for the individual himself. Gershon et al. (2009) conducted a study that explored the effects of perceived work stress in police officers and how their coping affected their stress and health. Results showed significant correlation between variables; work stress increased as the chances of exposure to critical incidents increased and workplace discrimination increased job dissatisfaction. Higher stress levels were also seen in officers who used negative or avoidant coping mechanisms.

Schaufeli and Peeters (2000) did a literature review of 43 studies from 9 countries regarding occupational stress and burnout in correctional officers. They found out that the most significant stressors in a correctional officer’s job are work overload, role problems and poor social status. A few other studies also found low social status to be a significant stressor for security guards and dissatisfaction among them due to low salaries (Carter-Brown,

2006; Yadav & Kiran, 2015). Leino, Selin, Summala and Virtanen (2011) studied the psychological distress among security guards and police officers and found distress being associated and mediated by personal worry about future violence. A stronger association was found between distress and exposure to threat and assaults with deadly weapons. Begani et al. (2013) explored how shift work affected security guards and found out that health problem like stress, fatigue, sleeping disorders and eating disorders were associated with shift work. They also found social activities of security guards to be disturbed as well. Ahmad and Mazlan (2013) found significant relation between stress and mental health problems in security guards. These health problems were, in turn, related to aggression in guards.

A research study by Yadav and Kiran (2015) investigated the difference in stress levels of female and male guards. They were also interested in studying the amount of stress and burnout the guards may experience. This study showed that occupational stress, the attitude of the workers and their psychological wellbeing were all significantly interrelated. They found dissatisfaction among the guards relating to their low salaries and found higher levels of stress in female guards as opposed to male guards.

Vanheule et al. (2008) examined the association of experiencing a critical incident with burnout scores and whether strong social support can reduce the burnout scores or not. They positively linked burnout with having a critical incident experience on job. Also, a negative relation between social companionship and everyday social support and burnout was found. Career burnout was also found to be negatively related to secure attachment style in another study done by Vanheule and Declercq (2009) on security guards.

Researches show that people adapt to stressful events by using different coping mechanisms. Coping strategies can be defined as behavioral and cognitive efforts employed by an individual to deal, tolerate or reduce stress caused by a source or controlling one's reactions to it or both (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Different people use different coping strategies for dealing with stressful events. For example, some turn towards religion while some start smoking or abusing drugs, alcohol or eating. These may worsen the situation. Some people use constructive actions such as mediation, exercise, relaxation techniques, giving donations or looking for social support. As far as coping with workplace stress is concerned, this involves the effort made by employee to deal with stressors in his job environment or work role. Individual's coping may or may not be effective in controlling preventing or avoiding distress.

Instrumental support and social companionship were seen to have mitigating effects on distress and posttraumatic stress in security guards in a research by Declercq et al. (2007). Another study done by Bulik (2005) on a number of employees of uniformed professions including security guards established that there is a significant role of perceived social support in reducing job stress and it can also prevent negative health outcomes. It was concluded that personal and social resources should be enhanced in preventive programs for reducing workplace stress. Schaufeli and Peeters (2000) concluded from their literature review that organization-oriented approaches were more promising in reducing job stress as compared to individual-oriented approaches.

Coping with Stress

Coping can be defined as the process of managing the pressure that is put on a person when internal and/ or external demands are not met. This process involves resources that a person may use to

solve the problems he is facing. These resources may be comprised of social support, certain behaviors to tackle the problem and/or cognitive structures (Glazer & Liu, 2017). Lazarus and Folkman (1991) described coping as a subset of adaptational activities that might be effortful. Sometimes these interventions are learned skills having cognitive foundations that can prove to be highly important in management of stressors.

Other than individual level, coping can also be incorporated on organizational levels. Some companies may introduce mentoring programs or work groups that aim at addressing work related-stressors (Bhagat, Segovis, & Nelson, 2012). This will not only increase awareness in employees but will also teach them how to manage their emotions and use resources already present around them, like social support and their cognitive abilities.

Folkman, and Moskowitz (2004) mentioned two main types of coping strategies used by people:

Problem-focused coping: This is the type where finding the exact problem that is causing the stress, is important. After analyzing the situation, a plan is devised to change the stressor. It can either be done by aggressively confronting the problem and removing it using risky efforts or by devising a plan with all possible solutions and then implementing the best one.

Emotion-focused or avoidant coping: This is directed at reducing the emotional distress that the stressor is causing. It is called avoidant coping because usually the main problem is avoided and all of the focus is on shifting your attention away from the stressor. It can be done by seeking social support, distancing yourself from the stressor and minimizing the emotional impact it is having on you or by denying the existence of the stressor overall.

Rationale

This study focused on investigating the stressors of security guards working in a University in Lahore. Security guards generally have higher chances of being exposed to violence during job as compared to other workforce and in particular considering the current situation of Pakistan where terrorist attacks are becoming more and more common. Especially after the attack on Army Public School Peshawar in 2014, threat to educational systems has increased and so is the security alert. The work and duties of security guards have greatly increased. More responsibility has now fallen upon them and they have to be more focused and alert on their job. This will surely have an effect on their work stress levels and this study aims at investigating that effect. Being employed as a security guard exposes the person to continuous potential threat. This can be very stressful and can affect the person mentally as well as physically. There are a lot of workplace stressors in the literature of occupational stress that are widely studied but when it comes to security guards, the constant aversive stimulus acts as the main stressor and can have drastic effects on their work and health. Individuals use a number of coping styles to get through the stress that is caused by their work including facing the problem right away, thinking of a possible solution or ignoring the problem for as long as one can and hope for the stress to go away itself (which is obviously not a healthy approach).

Objectives:

This study was conducted to investigate and examine the job stressors security guards face and coping strategies used to

overcome that stress. Considering the current situation of our country where no place is safe from terrorist attacks, every institution has increased its security and hence, security guards now have more duties and responsibilities.

Research Question

- i. What are the sources of workplace stress experienced by security guards?
- ii. What are the coping strategies used by guards to deal with this stress

Methodology

The present study used qualitative research design in which Interpretive Phenomenological Approach (IPA) (Smith, 2015) was employed to analyse the data.

Sample and Sampling Strategies

For this research, non-probability purposive sampling strategy was used to select the sample. Participants were selected from the security guard force of a private university. The university had hired these guards through a mediator security company. Data consisted of a total of 11 security guards within the age range of 23-50, and their job experience ranged from 1 to 5 years (Table 1).

Table 1

Demographic Characteristic of Sample (N=11)

Sr. No	Age	Education	Marital status	No. of children	Duration of job	Living condition	Salary
1	25	matric	married	0	2 years	With family	13,000
2	49	middle	married	7	4 years	With family	30,000
3	27	middle	unmarried	0	1 year	With family	12,000
4	31	matric	unmarried	0	1 year	Without family	13,000
5	24	matric	married	0	2 years	With family	12,000
6	29	middle	unmarried	0	3 years	Without family	12,000
7	33	middle	unmarried	0	3 years	Without family	13,000
8	23	intermediate	unmarried	0	2 years	Without family	12,000
9	37	primary	unmarried	0	3 years	Without family	12,000
10	43	matric	married	5	6 years	Without family	24,000
11	48	b.com	married	6	2 years	Without family	12,000

Procedure

Formal permission for interviews was sought from Vice Chancellor and security head of the university. All the participants were briefed about the aims and objectives of the research and the importance of their roles in the study. Any doubts present were clarified and they were given the option to not participate or even withdraw their data afterwards if they do not feel comfortable. Confidentiality was ensured to each participant. After their agreement, a consent form and a demographic form was given to read and respond. Open-ended questions related to workplace stress were asked from security guards so that they share their perceptions and experiences in their own words. All interviews took place at their duty places or some in a separate room where participants were easily available. Detailed interviews were conducted; each interview lasted for approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Interviews were audio recorded with permission of participants. Confidentiality was maintained and names or any other

Inclusion criteria: Security guards working in universities only.

Exclusion criteria: Security guards of any institution other than a university or for security of only one individual.

Measures

For workplace stress, semi-structured interview was designed to assess possible stressors, job demands and responsibilities of security guards, and coping strategy they utilize to overcome it. The interview was recorded for analysis. A demographic scale and consent form was also used.

1) *Demographic Information Form*: It included information on demographic variables such as age, income, education, work experience, marital status and number of children

2) *Semi-structured Interviews*: Semi-structured interviews in Urdu were conducted. Open-ended questions were asked to analyse the workplace stressors and coping strategies employed by security guards. Questions related to income, work environment, attitude of seniors and colleagues, training and weapons were included in interview. In addition, questions related to positive coping strategies (repetitive prayers, mediation, problem solving) and negative coping strategies (denial or rumination) were also included.

identity markers of the participants were not revealed. Participation in the study was voluntary. Results were accurately reported.

Analysis

Analysis and extraction of themes was done by using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Smith, 2015). This approach was selected because, being consistent with the research aims, it helps to explore major life events of people and how they make sense of it. IPA was helpful in exploring the work-related stressors and how they affected every participant's life. Moreover, IPA is idiographic in nature; it acknowledges the individuality of every participant and focuses on exploring the personal experiences in their own context. The increase in job pressures on the guards ever since Pakistani educational institutions (including the one participants were working in) are facing threat, calls for investigation of personal experiences of security guards who are responsible to protect thousands of lives. IPA helped by being concerned with personal experiences and consideration of context.

Hence, experience of each individual was studied in great detail and interviews were conducted with a flexible state of mind and open-ended inquiry, adopting a curious and facilitative stance so that participants can provide rich, in-depth data in a comfortable environment.

The recordings were first transcribed and read thoroughly. Then the emergent themes were identified and analyzed.

Results

Since the objective of this study was to identify stressors and coping, the major themes that emerged for workplace stressors were job related stressors, interpersonal relationships and financial issues (fig 2). Positive and negative coping were identified as two major themes in coping strategies (fig 3)

Table 2

Workplace Stressors Faced By Security Guards

Master Themes	Superordinate Themes	Verbatim
1. Job Related Stress	High Stress Job.	"The shifts are so long, that's the only stressful thing about this job."
	Long duty hours.	"It gets hard when you have to stand for consecutively 12 hours and there's no day off."
	Difficult to be alert all the time.	"I was not given any formal training for this job. I'm from a tribal area so I knew how to handle weapons before I got the job. But a lot of people here have never seen guns in their lives before and they receive no training on how to use one if they ever have to."
	Lack of training.	"The weapons provided are not up to the mark. As you can see (shows gun) this gun is so old and some don't even work properly. We can't defend ourselves and the kids with this ammunition if, God forbids, something happens."
	Quality ammunition not provided.	"Some students don't follow the rules and ask us to let them go. We can't do that because we have to answer to our supervisors. Students don't understand this and they fight and use foul language."
2. Interpersonal Relationships	Students' Behavior	"There's no one to keep a check on administration. Guards are provided with no resources at all. I have requested for uniform since 2 months but no new uniform is issued. The uniform I'm wearing is worn by 10 guards before me."
	Administration	"The job is very demanding and the salary very less. You cannot support your family single handedly with this salary."
3. Financial Issues	Less Salary	"The salary comes very late, almost in the middle of the month. I have to ask for money from others till then. It's a very big issue."

Table 3

Coping with Stressors

Master Themes	Superordinate Themes	Verbatim
1. Positive coping	Acceptance	"It is our daily work; we know that we have to do this duty. It becomes easy."
	Religious Coping	"When we come in the morning, first there is recitation of Quran then we pray that Allah keep us safe from these perilous people."
	Seeking social support	"I talk to other guards here if I have any problem. We all have the same issues so it helps and they understand. It's good when we all sit together."
	Active Coping	"To deal with stress of student's behavior, I use tolerance and being alert helps in reducing fear of terrorism."
2. Negative Coping	Denial	"There is no stress in this job. It's very easy job. No tension. I'm very happy. No financial issues."
	Mental disengagement	"I stop thinking about the problem and it stops bothering me. I distract myself with other things around."

Stressors

Shift/duty hours: The most common workplace stressor that emerged in around 80% of the interviews was long duty hours with having to stand all the time in scorching heat and being fully alert. Most of the guards complained about 12-hour long shifts, all 7 days

a week and without any paid leaves. The number of working hours is very long as compared to the salary and benefits they get, they said.

"The shifts are so long, that's the only stressful thing about this job."

"It gets hard when you have to stand for consecutively 12 hours and there's no day off."

"Duty hours are tough. It's a 12 hour shift every day, from Monday to Sunday. If I had any other job to choose from, I'd choose that over this."

"This job is tough, not easy at all. The duty hours are so long, 12 hours every day."

Financial Issues: The second most common stressor was the salary. All the guards were from a low socio-economic class and most of them were supporting their families. They expressed that it gets very hard to manage in such low budget and to even provide for the family's basic needs. 5 out of 11 guards were married, only 3 had kids and they complained more about the salary whereas the other 6 were young and unmarried and were living in this city without families so they did not have many issues. A few guards did not even have to send money back home and they got to keep it all for themselves which was satisfying.

"The job is very demanding and the salary very less. You cannot support your family single handedly with this salary."

"This pay is not enough. Sometimes I have to ask for loans from people to manage."

"Salary is not enough to meet all expenses. I can barely provide for my family's basic necessities."

Weapons and Training: Majority of guards showed concern over having no formal training and were not satisfied with ammunition given to them. The guards were not allowed to use guns unless they absolutely had to, in cases of extreme emergency. Guards inside the buildings were not given any ammunition at all.

"I was not given any formal training for this job. I'm from a tribal area so I knew how to handle weapons before I got the job. But a lot of people here have never seen guns in their lives before and they receive no training on how to use one if they ever have to."

"There's no formal training for guards as they are not permitted to use weapons unless if they absolutely have to."

"The weapons provided are not up to the mark. As you can see (shows gun) this gun is so old and some don't even work properly. We can't defend ourselves and the kids with this ammunition if, God forbids, something happens."

Problems with administration: 6 out of the 11 guards complained that they already have such low monthly income and that too was deducted as the mediator company's share from their pay. They also had serious issues with the mismanagement of the timing of salary as it was always late and some of the guards had to ask for debts from others for the first few days of month.

"The salary comes very late, almost in the middle of the month. I have to ask for money from others till then. It's a very big issue."

"We have to send money back home. They wait for our pays and they have to face problems when we send money so late."

"There's no one to keep a check on administration. Guards are provided with no resources at all. I have requested for uniform since 2 months but no new uniform is issued. The uniform I'm wearing is worn by 10 guards before me."

Student behavior: Guards who had duty on entrance gates expressed that a lot of students were getting angry very often these

days because of the high security check. Every day, they had to deal with students who did not display their ID cards, created issues and argued with guards. The guards shared that they felt apprehensive sometimes because it was not their fault; they just have to follow the orders they get.

"Card checking is difficult. Students ask us to remember their faces but we can't do that, there are so many of them!"

"A lot of students get annoyed in the morning and misbehave. We try to tell them that it's not our fault, we're just following our orders but they don't listen. Even girls misbehave."

"Some students don't follow the rules and ask us to let them go. We can't do that because we have to answer to our supervisors. Students don't understand this and they fight and use foul language."

Family problems: Majority of guards were living in residence provided by university near the area, away from their families. The ones who lived with families expressed that they got bothered by family issues sometimes even during working hours.

"My mother is very concerned about me. She is not in favor of me doing this job."

"Everyone has problems in their family. You can't just forget about them so easily. Sometimes, you are working but family problems are pinching at the back of your mind."

Environmental problems: Environment related issues are any aversive physical conditions at work environment such as noise, pollution and ergonomic problems. The educational institutes are at high risk of terrorist attack. Security guards being at front line are stressed about being attacked and not able to protect students.

"The increasing terrorism in our country causes a lot of tension in this job. We have to be alert in every second of our duty and we cannot afford any mistakes."

"We have to guard the whole university. So many young lives depend on us. It gets a little overwhelming sometimes to realize such a big responsibility on our shoulders but we do our best."

"The current situation of country and constant risk of terrorist attack is very stressful."

"Of course we cannot deny the probability of an attack here and the risk we are under but we try to not be so stressed about it. But it stays at the back of our mind."

Coping Strategies

Acceptance: The most prevalent strategy, noted in 10 out of 11 security guards was acceptance. Most of the guards reported that they have accepted that the occupational stress of this job is inevitable and they cannot do anything about it. They had come to terms with the long duty hours and every other thing that bothered them about their job.

"It is our daily work; we know that we have to do this duty. It becomes easy."

"It becomes part of routine when you do same duty daily. Then, it doesn't remain that difficult."

Religious coping: The second most common coping strategy seen in guards was turning towards religion, seen in 6 guards. They expressed being upset due to terrorism but they said they had faith in Allah and whatever He has written for them will happen no

matter what. They prayed when they were upset and said that praying calms them down. Also, every morning, an audio tape of Talawat-e-Quran is played and that also has soothing effects on guards.

*"When we come in the morning, first there is recitation of Quran then we pray that Allah keep us safe from these perilous people."
"Allah is always there in time of need."*

Seeking social support: A few guards (3) said that they like to talk about their problems and it helps them so whenever they are in a problem they talk to their friends (other guards at work) or anyone in family.

"I talk to other guards here if I have any problem. We all have the same issues so it helps and they understand. It's good when we all sit together."

Active coping: This is a type of coping strategy in which the individual takes active steps to either reduce the problem or circumvent the stressor. Some security guards (2) used this coping strategy and took positive steps to reduce work-place stress.

*"To deal with stress of student's behavior, I use tolerance and being alert helps in reducing fear of terrorism."
"If some issue arises, I discuss it with my supervisor."*

Denial: Three of the guards failed to even acknowledge their problems. They said they were fully satisfied with their jobs and nothing bothered them. They did not want to think about the problems, it seemed. They used denial as coping. It is a negative coping strategy where one completely ignores the problem and it hinders growth and dealing with the problem.

"There is no stress in this job. It's very easy job. No tension. I'm very happy. No financial issues."

Mental disengagement: Two security guards acknowledged their problems and accepted that they felt stressed but they distracted themselves at such times and did not think about the problem.

"I stop thinking about the problem and it stops bothering me. I distract myself with other things"

Discussion

In the present study, occupational stressors and coping strategies of security guards working in educational institutes were identified. The results showed that the most prevalent category of occupational stressors among security guards of educational institutes in Lahore was stressors related to work environment. These included duty hours, salary, issues with administration, student behavior, weapons and training provided. Within these, the most prevalent theme of occupational stressor identified through content analysis of the semi structured interviews was stressors related to job characteristics like duty hours and problems with administration like late salary.

The results are supported by previous literature which states that physical characteristics of workplace can be significant source of stress for employees (Follman, 1978; Luthans, 2002; Sutherland & Cooper, 2000). The nature of job and working conditions also greatly affect stress levels of employees in different sectors (Yadav & Kiran, 2015). The results also showed that long shift from Monday to Sunday without any holiday and long working hours from 7am to 7 pm was very stressful for security guards. Standing

under the sun for consecutive 12 hours also caused physical health and wellbeing problems. According to Berry, Bowen and Kjellstrom (2010) exposure to extreme heat may lead to heat exhaustion and other associated mental health problems. The guards' biggest stressor was the long duty hours. They had 12 hour long shifts which made it almost impossible to be vigilant at all times of their duty.

The second most prevalent category of occupational stressor was issues with administration. This category included items such as salary, weapons provided and training given to guards for this job. Almost all the guards expressed their worry over the weapons they were given. They said they were old and most of them could not even work properly. They were worried about defending themselves and the students in case of a crisis situation. The dissatisfaction with pay and management, late and under-payment was also very stressful for the guards. As almost all of them belonged to lower socio-economic class and had to send money back to their families, so getting late pay or salary deduction was very disturbing for them. These findings were in line with research done by Carter-Brown (2006) that money is the biggest concern for the participants and with dominance of this stressor participants may not identify strongly with other stressors of their life, especially, when they are burdened with providing basic needs to their dependent families.

The long shift hours, low income and relationship with seniors can be a significant source of workplace stress (Du Toit, 2000). Hence the result of present study also identifies these as prevalent themes.

However, the least prevalent category of stressor as reported by security guards was terrorism. All the workplace stressors outweighed the tension caused by terrorism. Guards were found to be more worried about their pays and working conditions than the current threat to the institute.

The most prevalent coping strategy used by security guards to manage the stress caused by workplace stressors was religious coping. Pargament (1997) state the accessibility of religion within one's orienting method. Those who regularly use religious orienting method have additional religious coping resources accessible to them. Those who resort to most deeply rooted religious practices in them can more conveniently explore ways to handle their life problems and stressors. A lot of guards showed strong faith in religion and they said they turn to prayers whenever they are upset. It calms them down and they have strong faith that praying will help them get over the problem.

The second most used coping strategy was acceptance. The guards had accepted the harsh environment and duty and said that once one gets used to the routine, they stop complaining and it all becomes part of the job. All the guards were from low socio-economic status and they needed this job to provide for their families hence they could not afford to complain

A few guards expressed actively working to solve any problem as talking to their supervisors and seeking social support from friends and colleagues.

Conclusion

Security guards in educational institutes face a variety of occupational stressors. The most prevalent are the ones related to work environment; for example, duty hours followed closely by stressors related to job characteristics like low monthly income. 12 hour long shifts made it almost impossible for the guards to be vigilant at all times of their duty and hence it proved to be a

hindrance in providing good quality of service. The absence of training of weapon use or self-defense also acted as a stressor as they felt that the safety of all the students and faculty of university was their responsibility. Moreover, low income and no benefits provided by the mediator company or the institute leads to decreased motivation and low job satisfaction in guards.

The two most commonly adopted coping strategies are religious coping and acceptance. Most of the guards had problems providing for their family in such low income but they said they had faith in God and that He will help them in every problem. They also showed faith in destiny when it came to face the dangers of violence in their job. To cope with harsh working conditions like long shifts, they just accepted that it's part of their job and there's no running away from it now.

Limitations

The main limitation of this study was the small sample size and that it was taken from only one university of Lahore. Besides the limitations of sample, the guards were a little shy to disclose information and it acted as a hindrance in data collection. In future researches, sample size can be increased for rich data.

Recommendations

This research is only a small step to explore the immense problems faced by this working class who protects the citizens by risking their own lives. They face harsh working environment with no benefits whatsoever. The amount of salary they get compared to the work they are required of leads to sub-standard quality of service. Not a lot of young men apply for this job because of the salary. This leads to compromised quality of services they provide. The sample can be increased to verify the stressors before generalizing them.

References

- Ahmad, A., & Mazlan, N. H. (2013). The kind of mental health problems and its association with aggressiveness: A study on security guards. *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(3), 130-137.
- Begani, R. K., Begani, A. Z., So'ou, V., & Pokasui, K. (2013). Impact of shift work amongst security guards in madang. *Contemporary PNG Studies*, 18, 98.
- Berry, H., Bowen, K., & Kjellstrom, T. (2010). Climate change and mental health: A causal pathways framework. *International Journal of Public Health* 55(2), 123-132.
- Bhagat, R. S., Segovis, J. C., & Nelson, T. A. (2012). *Work stress and coping in the era of globalization*. New York: Routledge.
- Bourne Jr, L. E., & Yaroush, R. A., (2003). *Stress and Cognition: A Cognitive Psychological Perspective*. Springfield, VA: National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Retrieved from <https://ntrs.nasa.gov/>
- Bulik, N. (2005). The role of personal and social resources in preventing adverse health outcomes in employees of uniform professions. *International Journal of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health*, 18(3), 233-240.
- Carter-Brown, S. A. (2005). *Investigating stress in security guards on the University of Witwatersrand campus* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation). University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Retrieved from <http://wiredspace.wits.ac>
- Declercq, F., Vanheule, S., Markey, S., & Willemsen, J. (2007). Posttraumatic distress in security guards and the various effects of social support. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 63(12), 1239-1246.
- Du-Toit, A. (2000). Critic and citizen: The intellectual, transformation and academic freedom. *Pretexts: Literary And Cultural Studies*, 9(1), 91-104.
- Follman, J. F. (1978). *Helping the troubled employee*. New York: Amacom.
- Folkman, S., & Moskowitz, J.T. (2004). Coping: Pitfalls and promise. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, 745-774.
- Gershon, R. R., Barocas, B., Canton, A. N., Li, X., & Vlahov, D. (2009). Mental, physical, and behavioral outcomes associated with perceived work stress in police officers. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 36(3), 275-289.
- Glazer, S., & Liu, C. (2017). Work, stress, coping, and stress management. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology*. doi: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.013.30
- Hicks, T., & McSherry, C. (2006). *A guide to managing workplace stress*. Boca Raton; Universal Publishers.
- Jex, S. M. (1998). *Stress and job performance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. New York: Springer
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1991). *The concept of coping*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Leino, T. M., Selin, R., Summala, H., & Virtanen, M. (2011). Violence and psychological distress among police officers and security guards. *Occupational Medicine*, 61 (6), 400-406.
- Luthans, F. (2002). The need for and meaning of positive organizational behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23(6), 695-706.
- Pargament, K. I. (1997). *The psychology of religion and coping: Theory, research, and practice*. Guilford Press: New York.
- Sauter, S. L., Lim, S. Y., & Murphy, L. R. (1996) Organizational health: A new paradigm for occupational stress research at NIOSH. *Japanese Journal of Occupational Mental Health*, 4(4), 248-254.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Peeters, M. C. (2000). Job stress and burnout among correctional officers: A literature review. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 7 (1), 19-48.
- Selye, H. (1974). *Stress without distress*. Philadelphia; New York : J.B. Lippincott.
- Smith, J. A. (Ed.). (2015). *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. London: Sage Publications.
- Spector, P. E., Zapf, D., Chen, P. Y., & Frese, M. (2000), Why negative affectivity should not be controlled in job stress research: Don't throw out the baby with the bath water. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 21, 79-95.
- Sutherland, V. J., & Cooper, C. L. (2000). *Strategic stress management: An organizational approach*. London: Macmillan Business.
- Vanheule, S., Declercq, F., Meganck, R., & Desmet, M. (2008). Burnout, critical incidents and social support in security guards. *Stress and Health* 24 (2), 137-141.
- Vanheule, S., & Declercq, F. (2009). Burnout, adult attachment and critical incidents: A study of security guards. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 46 (3), 374-376.

Yadav, N., & Kiran, U. V. (2015). Occupational Stress among security guards. *Journal for Studies in Management and Planning*, 1(7), 21-31.

Received: 13th September, 2017
Revisions Received: 30th December, 2017