



Comparative study on Occupational Self Efficacy among Police officers

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Abstract

In the last few years, India has witnessed a drastic and positive change in the role of women in the society. The industrial revolution along with Liberalization and Globalization has altered the status of women from a traditional homemaker to that of a professional. Indian women are now actively participating in all economic activities and simultaneously managing their family and work life. However, on the other hand gender discrimination against women still exists particularly in the Police force. Even though all the posting and ranks in the police are common to both men and women, the acceptability and assimilation as equal partners to men within the professional core has left much to be desired. Women are still under-represented and are not assigned to field missions to the same extent as men. Policing is considered as one of the most male dominated professions in the world. Women are generally regarded as the soft gender, the weaker sex, the one needing protection. It is believed that the characteristics of women are not suited to fit the requirements of such a profession. Women's capabilities or occupational efficacy, to recruit and to perform police work has been questioned.

Hence the present study attempted to explore the level of Occupational Self Efficacy among police officers and whether there is a difference by gender with the capabilities necessary for policing? However, a purposive sample of 100 male and female police officers was selected for the study from Mysore city. Occupational Self Efficacy Scale by Sanjyot Pethe, Sushma Chaudhari and Upinder Dhar was used for the assessment purpose. The data has been analyzed through appropriate statistical tool. The findings suggest that there is very little difference in Occupational Self Efficacy among male and female police officers signifying that women are as capable as men in policing thus necessity to empower women in policing.

Introduction:

Inequalities between men and women and discrimination against women have also been age-old issues all over the world. Thus, women's quest for equality with man is a universal phenomenon. What exists for men is demanded by women. They have demanded equality with men in all matters and Women want to have for themselves the same strategies of change which men folk have had over the centuries. Their quest for equality has given birth to the formation of many women's associations and launching of movements.

The subject of empowerment of women has becoming a burning issue all over the world including India since last few decades. Many agencies of United Nations in their reports have



emphasized that gender issue is to be given utmost priority. It is held that women now cannot be asked to wait for any more for equality. Women play a crucial role in the development of the country hence involving women in every area of occupation is essential. Today, there is no field that has been left untouched by the graceful Efficiency of women, be it from home maker to Astronaut. But ever since the founding of Police Departments, Policing has been viewed by most people as a traditionally male occupation. Men still are the overwhelming majority of police officers, however in Policing, gender integration and the opportunity for women to participate in forming Police policy have been strongly resisted. The research literature also reveals that in entering Police work women have encountered enormous difficulties, primarily as a result of the negative attitudes of the men. Male officers anticipate Women failing Brooke, J. (1996), they doubt Women can equal men in most job skills (Bloch, P. & Anderson, D., 1974) They don't see Women officers as doing 'Yea!' police work Melchionne, T. (1976) and they perpetuate myths about Women's lack of physical as well as mental and emotional fitness (Bell, DJ., 1982). and doubt the capabilities and occupational Efficacy of women to perform police work. In any study of Women and Policing, the question of discrimination is central. It is believed that if, Occupational Self Efficacy among women police officers is low, and then this could reflect why more women are not entering law enforcement or policing.

Self-efficacy is commonly defined as the belief in one's capabilities to achieve a goal or an outcome. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior and social environment. Self-efficacy is the measure of one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals (Ormrod, J.E., 2006). Bandura defines self-efficacy as "belief in one's ability to perform a task or more specifically to execute a specified behavior successfully"(Bandura, A. 1977). or as "judgments of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations."(Bandura, A. 1982).

Occupational Self Efficacy builds on this definition but is narrower in focus. In contrast to task-specific self-efficacy, however it "is broader in scope, so that a wider range of people working in different professions can be compared" (Schyns, B. & Collani, G. V., 2002). Thus, Occupational Self Efficacy can be used to "assess"Self-efficacy over different jobs, organizations, levels etc." Self-efficacy is very relevant in the organizational context as it is related to performance,(Stajkovic. A. D. & Luthans, F., 1998). The reason for this seems to be that people with a higher sense of self-efficacy persist longer in the face of obstacles and set themselves more challenging goals. So far, occupational self-efficacy has been used as a predictor for work-related variables such as commitment and performance(Rigotti, t., Schyns, B. & Mohr, G., 2008)., showing the value that Occupational Self-Efficacy can have in organizations. This makes occupational self-efficacy not only relevant for existing staff but also for the selection of staff.

Self-efficacy theory was first applied to occupational choice behavior in an attempt to explain the continued underrepresentation of females in traditionally male dominated occupations and the underutilization of their abilities in their career development. In the literature of



Organizational Psychology, there is an increasing interest in gender difference in Occupational Self Efficacy. Most studies on gender difference in occupational behavior have focused on leadership or management profession, but not many has examined the issues with reference to the male dominated professions of law enforcement.

Policing has traditionally been regarded as "men's work" because it is associated with crime, danger and coercion, yet people frequently fail to question the logical shifts in the statement that "coercion requires force which implies physique and hence policing by men"(Heidensohn, F. 1992). Few occupations have been as fully defined as "masculine" or resistant to the integration of women as policing. Despite changes in both the nature of policing and the status of women, many men officers continue to believe that women cannot handle the job physically and emotionally and therefore, should not be allowed to exercise the moral authority of the state or be integrated into policing. This hostile attitude has been characterized as "a huge if shadowy presence which hangs like a miasma" over women officers (Heidensohn, F., 1992).

Research has shown that women in policing are not easily accepted by their male peers, their supervisors, or their own police department. Women are viewed with skeptic or worse by their male counterparts in spite of the fact that women have been doing police work for over hundred years. A study in Atlanta concluded flatly that male officers did not accept women as police officers(Remington, P., 1981). Home, P. (1980), has pointed out that the biggest challenge facing women officers is the resistance displayed by male officers in their attitudes toward women in policing.Hunt, J. (1990), Concluded that women police were harassed and resisted by the male officers because they feared that women would violate departmental secrets about police corruption and violence. At an international conference on women and policing held in Amsterdam and sponsored by the European Network of Policewomen a workshop was convened on the role of femininity on police work. Women police from over twenty countries around the world shared information on the discriminatory treatment that they suffered at the hands of their male counterparts.

As noted in College of Police and Security Studies, research quotes the references on women police has focused on the capabilities of women to perform police work; virtually all conclude that women, indeed, do have such ability. This capacity includes physical as well as mental and emotional fitness. Studies demonstrating women's capabilities have covered the areas of patrol work,(Seligson, T. 1985), response to hazardous situationsElias, M. (1984), academy academic performance, physical capability (Townsey, R. 1982),physical training receptivity(Moldon, J., 1985), and the handling of violent confrontations, (Moldon, J. 1987),(Grennan, S.A., 1987).

Nevertheless, women remain underrepresented in policing and there are still serious obstacles to overcome if policewomen are to move beyond their statistically marginal status. The percentage of policewomen is still relatively small and the rate on increase of policewomen has grown at a snail's pace since 1971. According to home ministry statistics, the country has just 5.33% women in police forces despite growing demands for more representation in law enforcement



agencies. According to the National Crime Bureau report by Rashi Aditi Ghosh & Ajay Vaishnav, (2012), the hiring of women police personnel has recorded a 32% hike across India.

From the above studies it is understood that, it would be very easy for someone to be pessimistic about the future of women in policing, thus it was felt worth to study the gender difference in policing with Occupational Self Efficacy and Empowerment of women in policing.

Significance of the study:

India being a democratic country is sadly still struggling with the physical presence of women in policing. Ours is a tradition bound society and gender-based stereotypes are not going to vanish in a day. Policing is one profession which is neither encouraged nor taken up by interest, especially in the case of women. The sensitizing and restructuring of the Indian police will require a multi-faceted approach. The first step in this direction should be to give more representation to women in the force. The International Association of Chiefs of Police, has gone on record stating that it is essential to strengthen the position of women in policing - their number, their professional development, their positions to leadership and their contribution to public service and safety, (The professional voice of law enforcement, March 2013). Unfortunately, as the National Centre for Women and Policing, (Los Angeles: Spring 2003), points out, court-ordered plans still remain necessary to get some police agencies to implement policies to recruit, promote and retain women. According to home ministry statistics, out of 15,85,117 personnel working in state police forces, only 84,479 or just 5.33% are women. Besides, there are just 499 all-women police stations in the country out of a total 15,000 stations. The demand for more women in police forces has been growing since the gang rape of a 23-year-old girl in Delhi on December 16. There were also 2,28,650 incidents of crimes against women reported in 2011, of which 24,206 were of rape. So, it is very essential to voice for women reservation in Police recruitment.

On the basis of theoretical analysis and relevant reviews of literature it was hypothesized that:

1. There will be a significant difference in Occupational self-efficacy among men and women Police Officers.
2. Occupational self-efficacy will be low among Women police officers.

Method

Sample:

The sample of the study comprised of 50 male and 50 female police officers, in the age group of 28 to 34 years from Mysore city using purposive sampling technique.



Tools:

Occupational Self Efficacy Scale: - Occupational Self Efficacy Scale by Sanjyot Pethe, Sushma Chaudhari and Upinder Dhar (1971) was used to measure Occupational self-efficacy; it consisted of six factors to measure occupational self-efficacy. They are Confidence, Command, Adaptability, Personal Effectiveness, Positive Attitude and Individuality.

Confidence: confidence is having a belief in oneself, and having faith in one's talents, abilities and personal strength.

Command: command is an authoritative direction or instruction to do something.

Adaptability: means being flexible when things change. An adaptable person is one who is open to new ideas and concepts, and to carry out multiple tasks.

Personal Effectiveness: Personal effectiveness means making use of all the personal resources at your disposal - talents, skills, energy and time to enable one to achieve both work and life goal.

Positive Attitude: Positive Attitude is being optimistic about work, having positive attitude helps individual to be more successful.

Individuality: Individuality is something one prides on oneself, which gives much comfort in knowing one is able to achieve something.



Results and discussion

Table- Mean, SD of Occupational Self Efficacy and its domains for Male and female police along with't' tests results.

Source	Gender	Mean	SD	t	P
Command	Male	14.24	1.379	15.191	.000*
	Female	8.64	1.638		
Adaptability	Male	12.76	1.802	-8.273	.000*
	Female	15.20	1.050		
Personal Effectiveness	Male	17.38	2.221	-19.156	.000*
	Female	20.22	1.200		
Positive Attitude	Male	10.70	1.359	-13.752	.000*
	Female	10.78	1.489		
Individuality	Male	14.76	1.636	20.580	.000*
	Female	9.06	1.077		
OSE Total	Male	69.84	1.058	20.042	.005*
	Female	63.09	3.778		

*P<0.000

The analysis of the obtained data by the application of descriptive and t-test revealed a highly significant difference between male and female police officers on the domains of Occupational Self Efficacy at 0.000 levels and little significant difference on overall scores on Occupational Self Efficacy at 0.005 levels. It is true that there is a significant difference in occupational self-efficacy between male and female police officers but very little because when total scores for occupational self-efficacy is considered the mean total score for male is 69.84 i.e., 70 which as per the norms is high self-efficacy and mean total score for female is 63.09 which means average self-efficacy but not low efficacy. Mean scores for Adaptability, personal effectiveness and Positive Attitude women police scores reveal that women police have better efficacy than male police officers. There are quite a few reviews on self-efficacy but not in accordance with the present findings. K Love, M Singer, (1998) in his research on Self-Efficacy, Psychological Well-Being, Job-satisfaction and Job Involvement: A Comparison of Male and Female Police Officers found that compared to their male counterparts, female police officers had a lower self-efficacy rating in police duties dealing with violent offenders and riot situations.



Conclusion:

The focus of the present study was to study whether there is significant difference in Occupational self-efficacy among male and female police officers. It was found that there was very little difference in the level of Occupational Self Efficacy. Male police officers have high level of occupational self-efficacy and female police officers have average level of occupational self-efficacy but not low, in fact much better efficacy in specific areas of occupational self-efficacy.

The role of the police is critical in any society. In our society a policeman is seen as a symbol of state power, coercion and retribution and not as a friend or protector. Maintaining public order and peace with such an image can be a daunting task. Under such circumstances, women can prove to be an asset to the force. Research and history have disproved the notion that women are not suited for policing. Women are known to employ a different style of conflict resolution i.e. communication before physical confrontation.

While women are typically seen as compassionate, emotional and nonviolent, the very same traits can enhance the quality and efficiency of a department as they are quick to response to crimes against women and children. Men and women have different personality traits and behavior patterns. If these differences are managed with proper understanding, they can be helpful in creating an excellent work environment within the police organization.

Thus, instead of doubting the capabilities, viewing with skepticisms, questioning job performance, strongly resisting, discriminating and anticipating failure of women in policing it is important to integrate women into policing.

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