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The Policing Culture: An Exploration of Mental Health of Pakistani Police Officers

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the
degree of Master of Science

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This thesis is dedicated to Allah, the Most Gracious and Merciful, for guiding me through every step of this journey. To my dear father: and to my dear mother, whose love and wisdom continue to inspire me; your memory lives in my heart and fuels my determination...



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Abstract

In the high-stakes world of law enforcement, policing is characterized by intense stress and emotional turmoil. The mental health of police officers is critical but under-researched in Pakistan. The responsibilities of maintaining and enforcing law order, controlling and preventing crime, and facilitating the community that expose officers to challenging and traumatic situations, leading to physical and emotional exhaustion. Such experiences increase their vulnerability to mental health issues, making it essential to understand these challenges and the policing culture. This study explores the impact of various mental health challenges and unique role of policing culture in Islamabad, Pakistan. A qualitative research method was employed through in-depth interviews with 15 police officers (8 males, 7 females) from the department of operational division. This study revealed high levels of stress, traumatic experiences, emotional exhaustion, and poor work-life balance resulting from excessive workloads, inadequate support systems, and societal expectations. Officers perceive mental health as "mental peace" and relaxation, while poor mental health is associated with stress and impaired daily functioning. These findings highlights the complex interplay between policing culture and mental health. Many officers view their well-being as secondary to their professional responsibilities. Despite recognizing the detrimental effects of bureaucratic pressures and long duty hours, whereas some officers are reluctant to disclose their mental health struggles. This study underscores the urgent need for structural reforms, enhanced support systems, and cultural shifts within law enforcement to improve officers' mental health and overall well-being.

Keywords: Police Officer, mental health, policing culture, Islamabad

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Abbreviations

APA	American Psychological Association
BSP	Biopsychosocial
Dept	Department
LEMHWA	Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act
NCWP	National Center for Women Policing
NYPD	New York City Police Department
OP	Operational Division
PERF	Police Executive Research Forum
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
QOL	Quality of Life
SLBs	Street Level Bureaucrats
SLO	Street Level Organization

Chapter 1

Introduction

Police force is one of the few professions in which individuals are often exposed to demanding, risky, unpredictable and challenging situations, where police officers perform various duties as first responders for defense against crime (1). However, the profession of policing is distressing in nature (2), which is associated with the policing culture. This distress is strongly related to the police culture that is profoundly influenced by a highly stressful environment and emotional withdrawal as part of operational norms (3).

Building upon this, the occupational demands of policing extended beyond crime control, crime prevention, crime investigation, maintaining law and order, can lead to fatigue, emotional and physical exhaustion, burnout, and other mental health challenges (4). While pointing towards mental health challenges of police officers the method of dealing and manifestation are different from other occupations (5; 6; 7).

Policing is inherently a demanding job that often involves exposure to violence, various kinds of threats during duty, inadequate help, job demands, and pressure (8). In addition, long duty hours and operational challenges in law enforcement increase the risk of vulnerabilities that contribute to stress, burnout, and mental health issues(9; 10; 11; 12). Beyond the immediate challenges of policing, the broader work dynamics further intensifies stress and burnout (13).

Thus, a heavy workload, irregular and long duty hours, and limited resources characterize the policing work environment, contributing to chronic stress and burnout (3). This high-stress work environment is compounded by exposure to violent crimes, traumatic incidents, and the constant risk of personal safety, which places police officers at a greater risk of developing mental health issues (14). Police officers perform various job responsibilities, including specific job characteristics that are different from other professions, these responsibilities are associated with high social expectations (15).

Performing job responsibilities are highly influenced from values, behaviors, and attitudes of officers, which are identified as policing culture that plays significant role in maintaining mental health of police officers (9). Research conducted by (16) reveals that policing job has profound consequences on the ability of police officer to perform job duties. Given these challenges, understanding mental health within policing is critical.

An individual's feelings, attitudes, behaviors and actions are influenced by emotional, psychological and social wellbeing, these are considered as basic components of mental health (17). Recent research studies have identified policing as hazardous and stressful, where police officers deal with range of mental health issues that significantly impact their well-being (18). These issues include stress, anxiety, depression, PTSD, burnout and interpersonal relationship issues (such as family issues) (19; 20; 21; 22).

Police officers operate in mentally exhausting environment, which highly impacts mental health (23; 24). Police officer face significant stress due to police work, involve constant exposure to risky, traumatic, dangerous and high pressure emergency situations (25). A research study was conducted by reviewing existing literature of six different databases on mental illness among police officers. It reveals that prevalence rate of depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health illness are double among police officers as compared to general population in various countries around the world (19; 26).

Chronic stress due to frequent exposure to stressful situations adversely affects the mental and physical health of police officers (27). Chronic stress can manifest psychologically, physiologically and biologically. Such as sleep disorders, hypertension, and an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases (28).

The stress experienced by police officers could be instigated through specific culture, rule and regulations, situations, and procedures that are integral components of the organizational environment (29). Policing culture can be described as societal values, shared beliefs, on-going practices, and norms that shape attitudes and specific behaviours of police officers within the police force (30).

Policing culture includes formal and informal practices that illustrate roles, perception, relationship with public, and managing various situations (31). The policing culture affects decision making processes (32), stress responses and overall job performance (33). As policing culture influence decision-making and job performance. It also plays a crucial role in how officers experience and manage stress, and thus mental health outcomes. (34; 35).

An increased level of stress leads to different mental health disorders like depression and anxiety(36; 37). Severe stress jeopardizes not only physical and mental wellbeing of police officers but also diminishes organizational outcome, professional efficacy, and public security (38). Such types of stressors stem from frequent exposure to traumatic events, job duties, pressure impacting decision making and organizational growth (39).

The above-mentioned high level of job stressors can lead to stress-related health issue among police officers(40; 10). While addressing mental health issues in law enforcement, it is identified through research evidence that social scientists from the field of psychology and criminal justice are trying to investigate the notable role of stressors and strains in policing (41). Occupational stress can be broken into two as operational stress and organizational stress, operational stress is linked to job responsibilities in the field (such as, physical demands), whereas the organizational stress comes under structural and cultural frameworks (such as, social

demands) (42).

Operational stress expectations from police officers are apparent to remain composed and unruffled in high pressure and demanding situations that might suppress emotional responses leading to internalized stress and mental health challenges (43). Job-related stress increase when the expectations and demands are higher than abilities and resources of employees (44). In order to address this issue stress response should be identified at earlier stage to prevent from transit into state of anxiety and other mental health disorders (45).

Furthermore, organizational stressors such as long shifts, operation duties, paperwork of cases, insufficient resources and need for immediate and quick decisions under pressure can lead to burnout and declined job satisfaction (46). Police officers are unable to make a balance between work and personal lives, which contributes to work-related stress spilling over into private life (47).

Consequently, the collective effect of operational and organizational stress negatively impact overall wellbeing and work performance (48). Thus, mental health concerns are the major cause behind the continued job incapacity and sickness leaves (49). It is crucial to address these stressors by providing mental health support, training for resilience, and systemic organizational changes to improve mental well-being of police officers.

To fully understand how these stressors impact police officers, it is helpful to analyze through the lens of Biopsychosocial model. The Biopsychosocial model posits that the mental health of an individual is affected by three interconnected factors: biological, psychological and social factors (50). Police officers exhibit a range of stress responses under excessive pressure that result in psychological, physiological, and behavioural reactions. Such responses include gastrointestinal issues, nervous tension and irritability (51).

From the lens of biological factors, police officers are more susceptible to develop mental health issues due to their challenging and demanding nature of job, specifically physical demands, hazardous routine and uncertain law and order situations

(21; 52). Psychological factors also play significant role in mental health of police officers such as coping mechanism, emotional health, self-awareness, beliefs and values (53; 54; 55). Lastly, social factors including policing culture, societal expectations, job and social demands can have profound impact on police officers' mental health (56; 57). Furthermore, research revealed that police officers commonly exhibit lack of compassion towards humans (58).

The evidences shows that police officer utilize various strategies to manage their daily life stressors, such as social support (sharing with fellow officer/peers about their experiences and feelings) (39), fitness and mental health programs (59), mindfulness and stress management techniques (60), and healthy work life balance (59). By implementing these strategies, police departments can support their officers in navigating the challenges of their profession while ensuring they remain effective in their critical roles.

Police officers often deal with violent incidents, accidents, and life threatening scenarios, creating a continuous state of alertness (61). Police officer experience high intensity of emotional and psychological stress as compare to physical demands (62). The uncertainty and unpredictability of job could be the cause of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These may also result because of frequently experiencing human distress, handling public scrutiny, and managing high expectations (63; 33).

Few social factors play significant role in shaping mental health outcomes of police officers, such as relationship with peer, level of organizational support, and public attitude towards law enforcement (64). For examples, lack of support from senior officers, fellows and peers can exacerbate feelings of isolation and stress, thereby increasing mental health issues (65). Similarly, the stigma of mental health illness in police force developed a culture that often discourage and hinders in help seeking behaviour, further intensify the psychological distress (66).

Research shows that police officers experience higher rate of mental health disorders than the general population, emphasizing the need to explore this critical issue further (67). Research point out that presence of mental health issues may

commonly result in productivity loss (68). These results advocate the need to address mental health issues and provide care to bring improvement in police department (69).

In a convoluted web of public safety, the police officers play a crucial role in maintaining law and order (70). The mental health of police force is pressing concern around the world, driven by extensive challenges affect numerous dynamics of their lives and specifically and profoundly contribute to development of psychological challenges. The operational and organizational challenges frequently and adversely impact psychological, social and physical aspects of lives.

Research studies conducted on police officers globally indicate that the chronic job stress and its ill effects are shown as result of increased risk of heart disease, sleep disorders, skipping the work, absenteeism, and burnout (71; 72).

Developed nations exhibit significant rates of mental illness, even with their extensive access to human resources, financial and psychological support, which are essential for maintaining mental well-being. Despite that police officers in UK and US handle about 10 to 35 million calls yearly (73; 74), spanning from mental health emergencies, violent crimes, and death of colleagues in the field (75). The cumulative exposure to traumatic events in line of duty is associated with high risk for developing mental health issues and constitutes major public health challenges (76; 77).

As mentioned above the rate of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among police officers are more than double the rate measured in general population (20% compared to 7%-9%) (78; 79). These mental health issues are associated poor quality of life (80), hostility and increased probability of errors (81), deaths due to cardiac diseases (82), substance abuse (83), absenteeism and risks of suicide (84; 85; 86).

A research study conducted by (65) in Scotland revealed the major stressors of police officers were long working hour, workload, supervision, management, culture and organizational changes. In addition to that, another research study conducted

in England and Wales highlighted absences of systematic documentation regarding the impact on vicarious trauma on police officers, as well as lack of data on suicides among police officers (68).

Moreover, the structural and hierarchical nature of policing tends to develop an environment where emotional expression is viewed as a sign of weakness, leading police officer to suppress their feeling (87). Such suppression may result in depression, anxiety, Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal ideation (88). Despite these challenges, there remains a cultural stigma within police forces that discourages officers from seeking mental health support, further exacerbating the problem (89).

Similarly, from the psychological perspective, few stressors are considered as characteristics of police job: such as exposure to violence, critical incidents, and the continuous requirement for vigilance-these can contribute to emotional exhaustion and maladaptive coping mechanisms (90).

The Pakistani police face numerous challenges include widespread corruption, lack of accountability, inadequate training and resources, and poor working conditions. These issues significantly undermine their effectiveness in maintaining law and order (91; 92). Recent evidence indicates that crime rate in Pakistan has been increasing, with a reported crime rate of 3.98 in 2021, reflecting a 6.48% rise from the previous year (93). They also face numerous organizational, social and financial challenges coupled with heavy workload leading mental health issues.

In the context of Pakistani police culture, mental health of police officers is significantly affected due to unique challenges including exposure to traumatic incidents, organizational stressors, societal stigma, which adversely affect their psychological wellbeing (94; 95) . Research studies show that inadequate psychological support and social stigma create barrier in help seeking behavior within law enforcement, which further exacerbate mental health issues (38). Within this context, exploring the mental health of Pakistani police officer is crucial through particular lens of

Biopsychosocial model provide comprehensive understanding to this concern.

A research study has shown that Pakistani police officer are facing increased mental health challenges including high prevalence rate of depression, anxiety, PTSD and other mental health challenges (96). Additionally, physiological issues were also identified as result of prolonged stress which affect biological functioning of police officers, potentially leading to digestive issues, cardiovascular issues, and other health complications (97). By exploring the mental health issues and understanding the role of policing culture in mental health, this study aims to provide a perspective to this global challenge and highlight the significance of mental well-being in this reputable profession that is playing substantial role on a broader canvas impacting lives of police offices and public.

In Pakistan the police force is operating on a landscape, which is dominated by socio-political system characterized by instability, terrorism threats, lack of resources, adding additional layers of stress and trauma to daily life experiences of officers (98). Furthermore, the hierarchical nature of police force in Pakistan, along with concerns related to corruptions and political pressure contributes to mental exhaustion and stress among police officers (99).

Given these contextual factors, understanding the mental health challenges and impact of policing culture on mental health of police officers in Pakistan is crucial. The significant role expand due to its influence on personal and professional life along with various other dynamics. By prioritizing mental health, law enforcement agencies can not only improve officer well-being but also enhance decision-making, strengthen community relationships, and ensure a more effective justice system.

1.1 Rationale

The mental health of police officer is an important concern, which needs to be highlighted (100) . Police officers are regularly exposed to unpredictable, risky and dangerous events (such as murder, violence, robbery and terrorism etc.) due

to the nature of police work (101). Research studies demonstrate that the profession of police force require various job responsibilities and challenges (102). These responsibilities increase the probability of exposure to threatening and unsafe situations, where high levels of stress, violence, trauma, and various pressures impacts mental health of police officers (103). The exposure to different challenging situations may significantly influence overall mental wellbeing, during and after the service (104). These roles highlight the vulnerable position of police officers.

The efforts to address mental health concerns are being raised by emphasizing the need to address these concerns through various platforms, as the existing efforts are inadequate (105). Human Rights Watch's report highlights the organizational constraints, inadequate resources, police abuse, and chronic stress among Pakistani police officers (106). Similarly, organizational culture play a huge role in a way that impacts the operational method of police officers which is strongly linked with mental health challenges (107). It is important to understand and explore the characteristics of policing culture in Pakistan.

In policing culture many factors contribute to mental health such as political pressure, public pressure, authoritative influence, workload, long duty hours and extra shifts, continued exposure to violence and trauma, aggression from citizens, lack of trust from society, lack of resources, structural and managerial issues etc. (108; 109). Policing culture is a significant predictor of psychological distress under organizational stress (110), as it demands a high vigilance and responsibility. The job responsibility is to provide service for the public and government.

It is crucial to examine current daily life challenges and the problems of police officers and to explore the constructive coping strategies to maintain mental wellbeing. It will help to increase job effectiveness (111) for present and aspiring police officers.

The identified gap that justifies for further investigation into this topic transpires from constructive roles of police officers. Police officers serve as a function in keeping peace and maintaining law and order in society by fulfilling their job demands (112). Utilization of constructive coping is imperative to deal with numerous

stressors and challenges throughout the job tenure (113). For quality performance police officers struggle to commit fully, while indulging in violent critical and threatening situations. Furthermore, there is a need to destigmatize the mental health issues in the police culture as seeking mental health help is considered as weakness and lack of resilience. Police officers show more reserved attitude towards expressing emotional disturbance and distress comes from various events which is mentally distressing.

According to a research study, there is a significant work stress and poor mental health among Pakistani police officers (114). The significant impact on mental health may exist due to lack of understanding the high risk mental health challenges among police officers (115). There is a high need to understand how these are linked to Policing culture and which organizational aspects are substantial to address (115). A report (116) on “Mental Health Awareness among Police Officers” highlights the importance of recognizing mental health challenges within the police force and the need for supportive policies and practices.

This study is significant because it aims to bridge this gap by exploring influence of policing culture on the mental well-being of officers. It provides a qualitative insight into officers’ experiences, shedding light on organizational challenges and influences, organizational and public expectations, and coping mechanisms. Understanding these factors is essential for improving officers’ mental health, job performance, and overall well-being, ultimately benefiting law enforcement efficiency; maintain peace, and public safety (38).

Previous research studies has explored operational and organizational stressors but has not sufficiently examined how policing culture itself impacts mental health (117). Similarly, other studies measure prevalence and presence of mental health disorders. This distinction is important, as cultural norms, hierarchical power structures, and workplace expectations significantly shape officers’ experiences. Moreover, while research has highlighted mental health stigma in law enforcement, little is known about how this stigma manifests within Pakistani policing, where

cultural and societal norms may further discourage officers from seeking help (114).

In Pakistani policing culture, police officers work in a critical and challenging environment to perform the job duty. Wherein, an assertive and authoritative system has control over law enforcement implications. This requires highly trained and experienced officers to manage all those stresses by their skills and available resources. Thus, there is a necessary gap to study the mental health challenges of police officers leading towards serious mental health issues and to explore the effective coping mechanism and support system in policing culture of Pakistan.

Furthermore, gender specific experiences within police force remain underexplored at national and international level. Numerous research studies on police officers are more focused on male police officer, where the mental health challenges of female police officer are overlooked. Although international research has acknowledged the unique mental health challenges faced by female police officers but the combined effect of policing culture is crucial to understand. Even in Pakistan limited research studies have been found that explored how females are dealing with mental health challenges and how organizational and operational factors influence their personal and professional life.

There is a gap in understanding how Pakistani female officers navigate workplace stress, and work-life balance issues (118). By addressing these gaps, this study provides context-specific findings of Pakistani policing culture and its mental health implications. It provides insights that set basis for policy reforms, structural and hierarchical changes, and the need for sufficient support for police officers to operate effectively.

By addressing an understudied yet crucial issue, this research contributes to mental health of law enforcement officers, institutional reform, and policy development in Pakistan. It highlights the urgent need for structured mental health interventions, leadership support, and dire need for cultural shifts in policing, ensuring a healthier and more effective law enforcement system.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

1.2.1 Biopsychosocial Approach

This Biopsychosocial model is a holistic approach to understand mental health of police officers by contemplating the dynamic relationship of three major dimensions categorized as biological, psychological, and social.

This approach facilitate through a multi-system lens as it will be easier to comprehend the interconnection of biological, psychological and socio-cultural influences and how it leads to psychological disorders. This model was initially developed by Dr. George Engel in the 1970s (119).

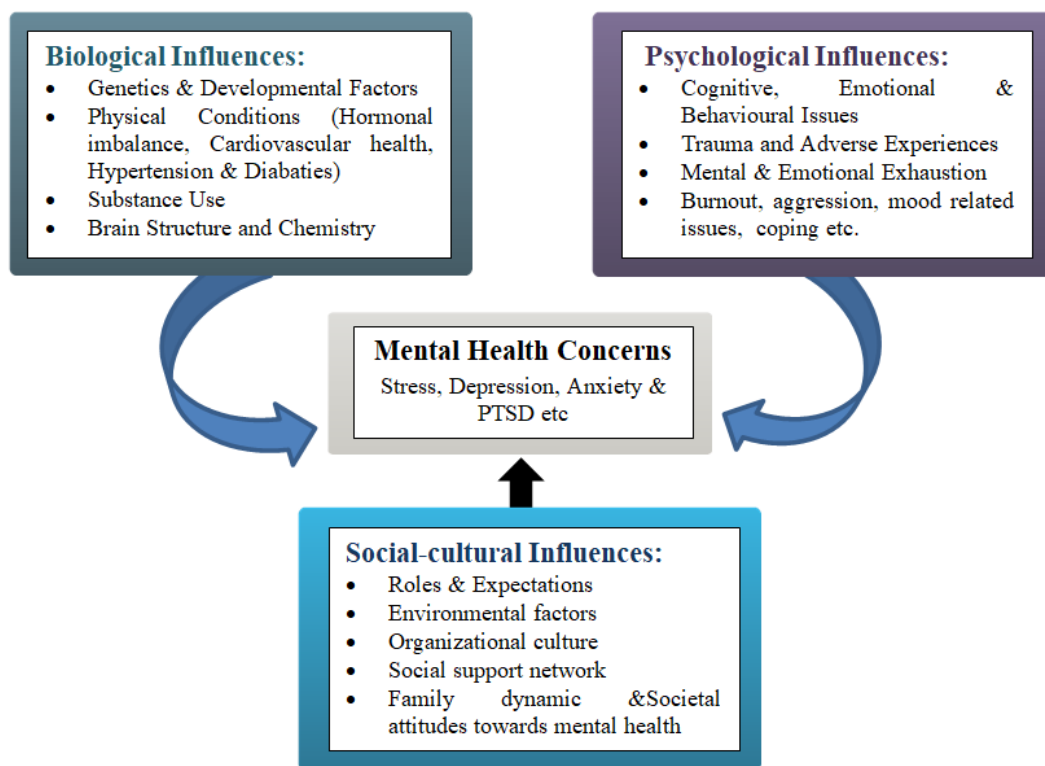


FIGURE 1.1: The Biopsychosocial Model

This theoretical framework is utilized by narrow the focus of biological factors causing illnesses and individual's medical pathologies influencing mental health. While highlighting the mutual role of psychological and socio-cultural factors influencing mental health in the profession of police force. (120).

The relationship of biological factors can be explained through evidence from literature review, the high-stress level experienced by police officers can trigger physiological responses that heightened mental health concerns such as stress, anxiety, depression, and PTSD (121).

Research studies have shown that chronic stress can lead to biological changes such as hormonal imbalance, cardiovascular health, immune functioning, increase cortisol level, which contributes to hypertension, heart diseases, and other stress related issues (122; 95). These biological alterations increase the risk of mental health disorders among public safety officers (123).

Police officers experience chronic stress, physical and emotional strain due to demanding nature of profession. It is evident that long duty hours, irregular sleeping and eating patterns, frequent exposure to violence, traumatic incidents, murder, deaths, contribute to physical exhaustion and fatigue (124; 125). These factors can lead to long term health consequences including hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, increased cortisol levels and compromised immune system (126).

This model helped in explaining the role of psychological influences in the form of chronic stress, traumatic experiences, deaths, emotional exhaustion, and problems related to mood, thoughts, behaviour and use of maladaptive coping have a profound impact on mental well-being (127). While conceptualizing psychological influences in qualitative research study, this model facilitates exploring psychological resilience, coping strategies, and attitude that determine how individuals respond to these stressors and likelihood of developing mental health concerns (128).

It focuses on emotional and cognitive response to stress, trauma, and job-related pressures. Police officers frequently encounter traumatic events, leading to an increased risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and emotional exhaustion (77).

Many officers adopt maladaptive coping strategies such as emotional suppression,

avoidance, or detachment, as policing culture often discourages emotional expression. This study explores how officers understand mental health, whether they recognize the psychological effects of their work, and coping mechanisms they utilize. Thus, socio-cultural influences are considered as major components for understanding the sustained policing culture, its role, job expectations, formal and informal practices and norms, personal and social life and social support. Policing culture accelerates distressing work environment(129).

In this research study, sociocultural influences formulated on the basis of organizational culture within the police department, social support comprising available resources for support system, stigma for help seeking behaviour and mental health that influence wellbeing and performance. Without sufficient resources, inadequate trainings for mental health awareness and perceived barriers to seeking help can increase the challenges experienced by police officers in maintaining mental wellbeing (130).

By adopting the Biopsychosocial model, this study aims to uncover the complexities of policing culture and its impact on the mental health of police officers. Through a comprehensive analysis of psychological and social influences on mental health concerns, it enables to develop a deeper understanding of the unique mental health concerns and challenges faced by police officers.

Furthermore, this approach will help to identify effective strategies to promote mental well-being within the police force. The integration of the Biopsychosocial Model with the research objectives provides a structured approach to understanding mental health challenges within policing culture. This study aims to explore how policing culture affects officers' mental well-being, examine their coping strategies, assess the impact of public perception, and identify institutional barriers to mental health.

The research objectives of this study are mapped to Biopsychosocial Model as given below:

Sr. No	Research Objective	BPS Factors	Key Areas of Exploration
1.	To understand conceptualization and perception of mental health and policing culture among police officers.	Psychological and Social	Understanding of mental health and policing culture
2.	To identify the specific characteristics of policing culture (such as authority dynamics, operational and cultural norms etc.), and role of policing culture in mental health.	All Three (BSP)	Characteristics of policing culture, workload, long duty hours, physical and emotional strains, traumatic events, demands and expectations, various pressures, stigma
3.	To inspect the coping strategies utilized by police officers.	Psychological	Emotional suppression, avoidance, sharing, religious coping
4.	To inspect the availability and utility of support systems for police officers.	All Three (BSP)	Psychological support, mental health training and programs

FIGURE 1.2: Integration of Research Objectives

1.3 Research Objectives

Following are the research Objectives of the study:

- 1.To understand conceptualization and perception of mental health and policing culture among police officers.
- 2.To identify the specific characteristics of policing culture (such as authority dynamics, operational and cultural norms etc.), and role of policing culture in mental health.
- 3.To inspect the coping strategies utilized by police officers.
- 4.To inspect the availability and utility of support systems for police officers.

1.4 Problem Statement

The role of police is demanding with reference to professional responsibilities and nature of the job as they operate under considerable stress due to various factors (frequent exposure to violence, political pressure, socio-political instability, insufficient resources, emergency situations; terrorism, and professional strains etc.). This makes them vulnerable to certain crisis (such as psychological crisis, operational crisis, interpersonal crisis, psychosocial crisis etc.). In addition to that, Pakistani police is known for representing certain attitude that may represent the policing culture. This research study will explore the impact of stated challenges

on mental health of Police officers and policing culture specific in Islamabad police. As there is limited research evidences that provide sufficient knowledge on mental health of Pakistani police officers and policing culture to conceptualize and understand the problem in comprehensive way.

1.5 Research Questions

Following are the research questions of this study:

1. How do police officers conceptualize and perceive mental health within the context of policing culture?
2. What specific characteristics of policing culture, such as authority dynamics and cultural norms, influence the mental health of police officers?
3. How do police officers in Pakistan utilize coping strategies to manage mental health challenges within their profession?
4. What resources and support systems are available to assist police officers in managing their mental health?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter explores existing literature on the nature of policing as a profession, both in global and national context. It examines the role of policing culture in mental health of police officers, emphasizing the high stressing nature of job, work environment, environmental stressors, organizational and operational stressors, and the psychological issues associated with law enforcement.

The literature also delves into the broader consequences of policing, including behavioral reflections, cognitive challenges, and physical strain. Additionally, it highlights the characteristics of policing culture that contribute to mental health concerns and influence officers overall well-being, affecting their performance, decision-making, and quality of life. In order to navigate daily responsibilities, they become resilient and adopt several adaptive and maladaptive coping styles as discussed below.

2.1 Policing as Profession

Law enforcement is highly stressful profession that often places its officers in life or death situations, dealing with most challenging and even worst phase of humans (131). Generally, law enforcement officers are more resilient (132); however the high stressing nature of work can undermine the ability of being resilient with time. The policing job is often unrecognized and come to be less appreciated.

2.2 Police officers as Street-Level Bureaucrats (SLBs)

In numerous research studies, researchers aimed to comprehend the characteristics of complex organizations by analysing the performance of government front line workers (133; 134; 135; 136). According to (136), “Police officers are a typical example of street-level bureaucrats (SLB)” (137). Similarly, the term street-level organization (SLO) is used for police stations (138). This lens provides analytical thought provoking insight to understand dynamic nature of police behaviours and attitudes (139; 140).

Research studies have explored different patterns of behaviours among street-level bureaucrats molded by individual, organizational and systemic factors, focusing on organizational background, organizational characteristics, and professional qualification, social, moral and cultural aspects (141; 142; 143; 144; 145; 136). However, the component of understanding the behaviours and perspectives is overlooked, which developed in consequence of interactive nature of job (146; 147).

The influential authoritative role of SLBs is widely recognized as powerful, despite that the critical role of beliefs and perceptions in SLB behaviours is typically disregarded (133; 148; 134). If beliefs are developed based upon socialization (149), through collection of organizational narratives (150), it is significant to understand SLBs perceptions regarding meaning to their work as it influence their interpretation regarding policies and state of affairs (146; 151; 139).

SLB strive to find a satisfactory balance between job demands and personal needs, while adhering to organizational policies and addressing the needs of citizens. The job requires constant adjustment to routines and practices under certain pressure, as challenges arise daily from complex and repetitive tasks. Employees often find themselves making compromises between their personal needs and the demands of their work (152).

2.3 Stressful Nature of Job

Research studies highlight that police duties and work environment are significantly stressful and usually stress surfacing due to trauma over time (1; 153). (154) emphasize that the frequency of stressful events is more influential than its level of severity, which play vital role in affecting mental health of police officers. Apart from that, such experiences may converse into traumatic experiences causing damage to overall wellbeing.

Police officers often encounter consequential operational trauma, which includes exposure to death and both perceived and actual life threats while in line of duty (155; 156; 157). Experiencing such incidents is part of their daily job responsibilities though other various aspects of police work also contribute to ongoing psychological stress. However, operational stress is only one aspect of the challenges faced by police officers; organizational factors further compound these pressures. In addition to operational stressors, the organizational environment within the police force intensifies the level of stress. Factors such as, bureaucratic red tape, ineffective leadership, long working hours, and rotating 24 hour shifts create high demanding work atmosphere (158; 156; 157). These organizational challenges faced by police officers, compound the impact of organizational trauma.

2.4 How a Stressful Work Environment Affects Police officers

Almost all the work places can have substantial organizational stressors. The effects of these stressors in law enforcement are intensified by additional factor, such as operational stress and trauma exposure. The job of policing is often characterized as one of the most stressful and demanding profession (159; 160). Research studies have consistently demonstrated that demands along with stressors adversely affect the physical and mental health of police officers over time (161; 162; 163; 164). Consequently, it affects both physical and mental health, and overall quality of life (165).

While this study focuses solely on qualitative methods to explore police officers

mental health experiences, it is important to acknowledge existing statistics that highlight the prevalence of these psychological illnesses. Such data provides essential context, enriching our qualitative findings and emphasizing the urgency of addressing mental health challenges within law enforcement.

Literature revealed that 19% of police officers experienced PTSD, but the prevalence rate varied due to several factors (166). Similarly, (33) conducted a research study in which they found that 35% exhibit symptoms of PTSD. Other than PTSD, the manifestation of depression and anxiety symptoms is common among police officers (167; 168; 169). (170) found through statistical analysis that 6.2% male officers and 12.5% of female reported experiencing depression, which is higher than estimated 5.2% of general population. Research studies show that high-stressing environment increase the risk of suicide among law enforcement officers (171).

The negative impact of these stressors reflect through consistent pattern of reporting high level of burnout, emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue among police officers (156). The complex nature of stressful policing job establishes the requirement for strategies that address both types of stressors to support mental well-being of police officers effectively.

Job stress also affects relationships. National Center for Women and Policing (NCWP) reported that domestic violence in law enforcement officer's families is twice to four times higher than in general population (172). High-stress environment also lead to alcohol consumption and substance abuse (173; 174; 175). Drinking provides an avoidance or escape as prevalent maladaptive coping strategy in law enforcement culture (176).

The existing literature highlights that high stress is also a cause of medical problems in officers for instance, cardiovascular disease and gastrointestinal issues (177). (178) also found that such vulnerabilities increase due to job demand and stressful environment that leads to lack of control in job duties (179).

The persistent occupational stress along with other factors such as disturbed sleeping patterns, irregular cortisol level, experienced by law enforcement officers, results in biological complications like weight gain, diabetes, increased risk of cardiovascular disease, and early mortality (180; 181). For such reasons, indigenous treatment is required to prevent long term psychological issues including violent behavior, irritation, aggression, depression, poor quality of life, substance abuse, isolation, disturb relationships, job difficulties, suicide and others.

2.5 Policing Culture

Policing culture encompasses the societal values, shared beliefs, ongoing practices, and norms that influence the attitudes and behaviors of police officers within law enforcement agencies(30). These attitudes and behaviors (aggression, hostility, unnecessary use of force etc.) are influenced to cause certain mental health challenges. It consists of both formal and informal practices, shaping officers' roles, perceptions, interactions with the public, and approaches to handling various situations (31). Moreover, (182) describe the idea of policing culture by highlighting its dynamic nature depending on situational, operational and analytical considerations at times, that increase the exceptionality of policing as profession.

2.6 Job Demands and Responsibilities

Police has been widely recognized as hazardous and highly stressful occupation (183; 184; 185). Over the past several decades, research has constantly shown that the nature of work in profession of police force has been associated with increase rate of burnout as compared to other professions (186; 187).The research field has witnessed growing attention towards police officers stress and it is identified that the elevated stress and excessive job demand are interconnected and may leads towards police turnover intention (188; 189). While exploring mental health among police officer the literature reveal that police force experienced high level of stress as compared to other professions (190; 191).

2.7 Job Stressors: Operational and Organizational

Research reveals that police officers who frequently encountered risky and critical situations (e.g., operational duty) are more vulnerable to develop PTSD compared to those in specialized roles (like traffic or administrative duties) (25). It is also evident that police officers with more than 10 years of experience are more likely to develop mental health disorders, such as depression, PTSD and other related mental health concerns (83).

A review of literature reveals stress as inherent characteristic of police work typically revolves around trauma-related issues(192). Police work inherently associated with high risk of exposure to traumatic events. A research study conducted by (193) identified five most significant stressors in police work related to traumatic incidents: (1) death-dealing in line of duty, (2) witnessing the death of colleagues, (3) Being subject to physical violence (4) dealing with cases of child abuse (5) Increased life risk while high speed chasing. These five primary stressors identified in this study are more frequent than other potential traumas that are typically acute and less frequent.

Operational stressors are not only traumatic events but also include daily aspects of the job duties in shift hours, criticism and backlash from public (194; 195). Previous research investigation has suggested the topmost significant operational stressors of police job are (1) fatigue (2) spending time for physical needs and maintenance (3) Long and irregular working hours (4) job-related health concerns (5) having insufficient or no time for friends and family (192; 196).

In addition to that the literature reveals trauma as one of the major mental health concern that requires attention to be addressed due to its adverse effect on overall functioning of police officers. A study highlighted how operational stressors in the form of continuous exposure to trauma and high pressure situations leads to the development of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (197). However, these are not substantial daily stressors but it is crucial to manage the ongoing stressors

that are persistent and mitigate the cumulative impact of stress (198).

While discussing operational stressors, there is significant role of organizational stressors. According to literature organization stressors originate from the system of organization (199), Which include lack of resources, accountability, administrative, problems, interpersonal relationship issues (200). Previous research studies has identified the five topmost significant organizational stressors of police job as (1) bureaucratic obstacles (2) lack of human resources or insufficient staff (3) divergent leadership approaches (4) inequitable standards; selective enforcement of rules and regulations (5) the continuous effort to prove the worth to organization (192). The research evidence suggests that organizational stressors are more influential for police officers than operational stressors (201; 202; 203).

Despite that operational stressors are considered as acute stressors that are uncertain and specific to situations in policing (204) as case in encounters that involve use of force (205), dealing with domestic violence cases (206), killing someone, experiencing death of fellow coworkers (207). The key influential factor of policing job are intensity, frequency, variety, duration, and degree of depth and surface acting required to manage emotional expression.

2.8 Mental Health Consequences

(208) concluded that both organizational stressors and high-risk demands of front-line job result in increased vulnerability of police officer to develop psychological illness. The psychological illnesses stemming from stressful and challenging situations causing depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and burnout (209). The repeated encounter with various potential traumatic incidents is a core component of operational policing (183) and is consider as significant predictor for the onset of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (210; 76), as well as depression, anxiety, and other stress-related illnesses. These concerns adversely affect performance at workplace and act as hindrance in career growth, if left untreated (211).

The impact of stress-related concerns is the cause behind decline in productivity, sickness leaves, individual mortality and morbidity, premature retirement

(212; 213). As the street level criminality increases, the police encounter with unpredictable and risky situations also increases (210). Consequently, the prevalence of stress-related illnesses observed among police officers is higher than general population (158).

First responders including police officers experience mental health stigma with ratio of one to three according to a meta-analytical review of literature conducted by (214). Due to perceived stigma from peers and organization is related to decline in seeking help that leads to increase in mental health risks among police officer (156). Correspondingly, (215) observed that police officers strive to deliver their best performance despite receiving minimal support.

The major cause behind high rates of mental health issues is usually high stress of the profession (216), which comprises both organizational and operational stressors. The organizational and operational stressors are further discussed by many researchers. According to (169) work-related stressors arises from policies and active situation within the organization, such as inequality during procedures or policies, job dissatisfaction, lack of support and coordination at workplace.

Police officers confront several organizational and operational stressors (206; 217), which patently make them more susceptible to psychological illnesses like anger (218; 219) and PTSD (220). A considerable number of personal stressors arise due to occupational disquiets, for instance isolation and longings for family, because of long duty hours and shift work (221; 222) that also contributes to daily stressors. Such constraints in professional life badly influence personal and intimate relationships in private life leading to wrench and failures in relationships or even divorces (223).

The broader dynamics of police work can cause potential negative impact on police officers giving rise to mental health issues among police officer. Deterioration in mental health impacts overall wellbeing that negatively affects functioning of organization and interaction of police officers with public (224). Research shows that unnecessary use of power and poor interaction with public may stem from

maladaptive anger (219). Given these psychological and occupational challenges, it is crucial to explore how these stressors influence officers and reflect through their behaviors.

2.9 Behavioural Reflections in Policing

Research studies demonstrate that maladaptive anger and burnout is strongly linked with supportive attitude that shows acceptance for use of violence while performing duty (225). In the same way, there is high probability that police officers suffers from secondary trauma and compassion fatigue (25) during their service.

Previous research studies suggest that there is a strong connection between compassion fatigue and self-care because police officers practice lack of self-care so that they may not develop compassion fatigue (226; 227; 228). There is lack of evidences on comprehensive studies addressing compassion fatigue as a potential consequence of working in law enforcement (229; 230), that ultimately leads to professional burnout and decrease in professional effectiveness (231).

The consistent distress caused by mental health issues as a result an individual may involve in dire consequences. For instance substance abuse, addiction to gambling, elevated risky behavior, and unnecessary use of power (155; 232). Research literature shows that psychological illnesses are more prevalent in police officers; the major concerns were linked to PTSD highlighted by numerous researchers (233; 234).

Burnout due to stress is strongly linked with aggression, both internal and external aggression, a major socio-political issue. The internal aggression by suppression of feelings and emotion the condition may worse and cause serious consequences that signaled the danger for suicide on ground close by weapons/guns (235; 236). (237) found that “police officers (. . .) are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty”. Whereas, external aggression as result of high stress exhibit as excessive use of force by police officer when situation is interpreted as more risky than actual (238; 239; 240; 241).

2.10 Role of Psycho-Social Factors in Suicide and Poor Quality of Life

A research study conducted in Nigeria found 14% prevalence rate of suicide in police officers. The increased level of risk is correlated with psychological conditions like anxiety and substance abuse (242). Similarly, in countries like Australia the federal government inquiry investigated psychological issues among front line officers(243). The extreme deterioration of mental health concern makes police officer more vulnerable to suicide.

The suicide rate among police officers is increasing (244) owing that law enforcement agencies are notably working to address this concern of suicide within police force (245). The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) and the NYPD (2018), organized a national symposium that spread call at national and international level including United States for police leader and clinical practitioners to formulate recommendation for prevention of suicides among police officers (246).

In the above literature review, it is evident that stressful policing job affect quality of life (QOL) in different aspects that highlights the detrimental effects on overall wellbeing of police officers (117).(247) measure QOL and found that high level of stress is associated with decline QOL, considering various aspects such as physical and psychological health, social relationships, and environmental factors.

Similarly, a research study conducted in Brazil by (248)revealed that 35% police officers experienced elevated stress and 78% needs to improvement at least one domain of QOL (psychological, social, professional and other health-related aspects).

Findings of above research studies suggest that increased stress of policing job severely impact mental health and QOL of police officers. This supports the theoretical model that put emphasis on interplay between psychological and social factors. Whereas, life challenges can be manage through adaptive coping and resilience help to enhance quality of life.

2.11 Coping and Resilience

Considering the nature of police work as hazardous and stressful, it is essential for police officers to develop resilience and adopt effective coping strategies to manage stress, reduce burnout and cope with consequences of traumatic incidents (249). Resilience is an ability to positively cope with stress and positively adapting to major adversities that help during and following critical incidents to recover effectively and grow progressively (250).

Coping involves cognitive and behavioral efforts to deal/cope/manage stress results from significant events, by utilizing either problem focused or emotion focused strategies (55). Resilient individuals often rely more on problem-focused coping strategies instead of opting emotion-focused/avoidance strategies in high-pressure circumstances (251). This suggests that resilient coping involves effectively adapting to stress by employing strategies for life-threatening challenges (252; 253).

Research studies conducted on coping and resilience among police officers found strong association between coping strategies and job related stress (254; 255). Research studies shows that police officers mostly prefer to adapt problem-focused strategies (256; 257; 258). Additionally, police officers are more resilient as their job experiences increases (259). In contrast, avoidance strategies are linked to substance abuse as a mean to cope with high stress (260; 26), while emotion focused are associated with depression, anxiety, mental health problems (161) and burnout (261).

2.12 Global Statistics on Police Officers Mental Health

The following statistics from developed countries indicate high rates of mental illness, despite their access to sufficient human, financial, and psychological support resources, which play a vital role in mental well-being.

Globally, the prevalence rates of suicidal deaths, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse in police officers are relatively high than general public (262). There is an estimated prevalence of 19-35% of post-traumatic

stress disorder (PTSD), which shows higher probability of developing psychological vulnerability among police officers (128; 263). Police staff report indicate that the rates are significantly higher, only 3.9-4.3% symptoms are associated with PTSD, indicative of probable anxiety symptoms, and 9.8% indicate probable depression (264).

Research study conducted by (265) in Australia revealed high prevalence of mental health disorders among police officers relative to other professionals. Similarly, extensively poor mental health evidences has been found in Canada by (128), where 10% officers reported suicidal ideation in the past year and 28% reported in lifetime, 4% reported structured suicide plan in last year and 13% in their whole lifespan, the suicide attempted rate was 0.4% in the last year and 5% in the whole life (266). The deteriorated mental health is a major concern in many countries across the world, highlighting the need of conducting further research.

2.13 Mental Health of Pakistani Police Officers

In underdeveloped countries like Pakistan, police officers face persistent stress, heavy workloads, and high pressure. Rising crime rates further add to the burden on law enforcement. Between 2000 and 2008, cases of murder increased by 35%, while robberies surged by 165% (267). These alarming crime rates also contribute to work stress, emotional and physical exhaustion among Pakistani police officers. Despite the severity of these challenges, research on police mental health in Pakistan remains limited. However, studies indicate that Pakistani police officers experience significant workplace stress, negatively affecting their mental well-being. A study by (114) found that a majority of officers reported substantial workplace stress, leading to diminished mental health.

In Pakistan, police officers face unique challenges regarding work environment, which can contribute to mental health concerns. A study by (268) titled "Stress and performance: Investigating relationship between occupational stress, career satisfaction, and job performance of police employees" delves into the specific stressors experienced by Pakistani police officers and their impact on job performance and wellbeing. Despite available support services for wellness, individuals

in law enforcement continue to face high rates of mental health challenges compared to the general population (190; 269).

Additionally, the internal culture of police organizations significantly influences officers' mental health. (98) explores the ethical dimensions of policing culture in Pakistan, highlighting how rigid hierarchies and inadequate support systems contribute to elevated stress and mental health issues among officers. Understanding this cultural context is essential for addressing the psychological challenges faced by police personnel.

(270) examined the relationship between occupational stress and attitudes towards misconduct in law enforcement. The findings suggest that a toxic policing culture can lead to maladaptive coping mechanisms, which may further deteriorate mental health outcomes. This underscores the importance of addressing cultural factors in mental health initiatives. Secondly, research focusing on female police officers is limited, particularly regarding their unique experiences and mental health needs (92). Lastly, there is a need for studies that evaluate the effectiveness of mental health interventions tailored specifically for police officers in Pakistan.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews as primary data collection approach. Qualitative research method was more suitable for studying policing culture and mental health of police officer, because it allowed for in-depth exploration of subjective perception, believes attitudes, experiences, and motivations of police officers. It helped to capture the complex nuance of human behaviour, feelings, thoughts and particularly effective in investigating sensitive topics such as mental health. Semi-structured interviews were opted to ensure balance between structure and flexibility of data. This approach enabled to explore predetermined themes while integrating new insights emerging during the conversations.

3.2 Participants

The participants for this study were selected from 5 different police stations of Islamabad. The police stations of zone-V include, Police Station Hummak, Sihala, Lohi Bher, Koral and Kirpa. A convenient sampling technique was used to select participants who were accessible and present in the police station upon visit. The proposed sample size was N=15 police officers from Islamabad police. The demographic sheet and informed consent were obtained from a total of 19 participants;

however, 2 police officers were unable to participate in interviews due to emergency calls. A total of 17 interviews were conducted, but 2 of these interviews were discarded due to excessive interruptions and the short duration of the interview sessions. The minimum duration of discarded interview was 11 minutes. The data from 15 participant were analysed that comprised of both male (N=8) and females (N=7). Islamabad police officers of different ranks in operational division were part of the study.

3.2.1 Inclusion Criteria

- Police officers having experience of at least 7 years and above were recruited as participant.
- Police officers who were currently served in operational division of Islamabad police were included.
- There was no age limit for participants to be part of this study.
- Police officers who are currently serving or working were included.
- Police officers of different ranks were part of the study.

3.2.2 Exclusion Criteria

- Participants with physical and psychological disability that hindered their participation in the study were excluded from the study.

3.3 Data Collection

Data was collected by conducting 15 in-depth interviews from police officers of Islamabad police force. The study protocol was developed; consist of information sheet, consent form, basic demographic information and interview guide. The interview guide contains open-ended questions formulated to obtain rich information from the participants regarding research problem. Multiple visits of field were made to collect the data. The maximum length of interview was 55 minutes. Before ending the data collection process it was ensured that the data reached its saturation level, where no new information emerged.

3.4 Ethical Consideration

Ethical standards were maintained throughout the study in accordance with the APA Ethics Code. Ethics approval for this study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Faculty of Management and Social Sciences. Similarly, administrative approval was obtained from the Department of Psychology, after which a support letter was provided for data collection. Participants were invited to take part in the study by giving interviews. Before collecting the data, Information Sheet was provided to the participants to inform them about their rights and responsibilities as well as what they needed to do. Written and oral informed consent was obtained from each participant to ensure their voluntary participation. Confidentiality was ensured.

3.5 Measuring Tools

3.5.1 Demographic Sheet

Demographic sheet containing basic information of participants was prepared for the study. It included questions related to age, gender, educational background, years of service, rank/position, current department, serious physical condition, any previous mental health illness and any training or support related to mental health from the department.

3.5.2 Interview Guide

A semi structured interview guide was prepared to collect data from police officers. It provided flexibility and adaptability while collecting in-depth information. Researcher could alter the research questions during the interview as needed, while maintaining the direction of the study to enhance robustness of the results, due to flexibility and adaptability of the interview guide. Code-switching was used to develop the interview guide. This approach increased transparency and clarity. The interview guide was prepared in Urdu language and the questions of the interview guide were based on major objectives of research study. For instance,

the first objective is conceptualization and perceptions of mental health of police officers, the questions were emerged from this objective. Similarly, more questions were prepared by keeping direction of objectives (271).

Recent research studies were reviewed for developing interview guide. Furthermore, sub questions were designed to address major objectives. In order to acquire information related to subjective experiences of police officers open ended questions were asked to identify common themes in findings. The interview guide comprised of following main topics:

1. Conceptualization of mental health
2. Perception of mental health
3. Mental health challenges
4. Exploration of policing culture
5. Characteristics of policing culture
6. Coping strategies
7. Support system for mental health

Furthermore, main topics were divided into subtopics and questions were developed to explore those topic and subtopics that helped participants to provide the full context and accuracy of the information. While using open ended questions, probing and prompt responses (such as “Ummm”, “oh”, “Hmm”, or Uh-Uh”) were incorporated to made participants comfortable and give a non-judgmental attitude to maintain the follow of the interview.

3.5.2.1 Interview Structure

Interviews were conducted by using in Urdu language. To build rapport a few routine questions (Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your background? Or “How are you feeling today?”, “How is your day going on?) were asked before starting the interview. After establishing rapport, the purpose of the study was explained to the participant and was requested for the approval to audio record the interview. The recordings of all the interviews are kept confidential and data is analysed anonymously.

In addition to that, a personal journal was maintained by identifying observations, feelings and personal experiences of researcher during the interview.

3.6 Reflexivity

As a researcher and a child of police officer, I approached this study with a preconceived notion, professional and personal experiences. It is essential to acknowledge that my perspective may influence the interpretation of the data throughout research process. Growing up as a family member of a first responder sparks my interest in the field of police force. Moreover, my recent research work with police officer accumulated my interest to investigate in this field. It provides me foundational understanding of various dynamic associated with vulnerability to develop mental health issues in the profession of police.

I observed and witnessed my father struggle with work related stressors, disturbed eating and sleeping patterns (238; 97; 272), behavioural issues (such as anger, get irritated easily) (249) and few other psychological symptoms. Even his premature retirement due to workload, mental and physical exhaustion, is evident from literature review of the research studies conducted on police officers (273).

Therefore, I opted to study police officers with the expectations that police officer might face similar challenges linked with their mental health and well-being. During the data collection and analysis phases, I continually reflected on the possible influence of previous experiences and connections to law enforcement. Engaging in self-reflexivity facilitated the collaborative construction of meaning with the police officers involved in this study (274).

To enhance the rigour of this study and minimize the influence of my personal assumptions and beliefs regarding policing, particularly shaped by my previous knowledge and experience. I employed a reflexivity method to address my previous assumptions and beliefs about policing. To mitigate potential biases and errors that could affect the interpretation of the data, I engaged in discussions with my colleagues and fellow researchers. This approach allowed me to gain insights and perspectives that helped reduce the likelihood of biases or errors that could impact interpretation of data. By utilizing this approach, I systematically organized my thoughts and reflections, ensuring that my personal experiences did not overshadow the findings of this study. This method was essential in maintaining the integrity of the research and fostering a balanced dialogue throughout the

process.

As a researcher, it was essential to strike a balance between establishing rapport with police officers and ensuring that my personal narrative did not dominate the conversation, particularly given the sensitive nature of the topic. Reflecting on my prior experience of interviewing police officers and insights from literature on police culture, I recognized the importance of being transparent about objectives of the study and my personal connection to law enforcement. I initiated each conversation with a brief overview of my study and experiences as an officer's daughter, highlighting specific observations through my previous work with police officers that inspired my research.

This approach not only fostered a comfortable environment but also helped build trust, as participants expressed that my background provided a level of credibility and reliability. Most of the participants were relating and stating points by using such lines "*aap police officer ki beti hain.. aap ko tu pta hoga*", "*beta aap ny tu dekha ho ga*", "*aap ko tu pta ha subah jab molvi utha hai tu baba jatya hain..*"

Memoing of my self-reflexive thoughts was essential to prevent my personal standpoint from unduly influencing voices of police officers.

3.7 Procedure

The data collection was initiated once the study was ethically approved from the Department of Psychology, Capital University of Science and Technology. The participants were invited by visiting field (police stations). Interviews were conducted with available police officers in the police station.

The interviews were taken at participants' convenient time and location. The process of data collection was initiated by explaining the purpose of the study, providing information sheet, and written informed consent was obtained. The interviews were taken in conversational style. All the interviews were conducted within the premises of police stations; however one female participant was out of station and prefer virtual interview. The interview guide was used to conduct the interviews; the interview guide helped to stay directed to research objectives and allowed flexibility in probing the relevant information. During the interviews,

participants were encouraged to share their opinion and experiences freely. The interviews were audio recorded with the consent of participants to ensure data accuracy. Furthermore, data was secured and undergoes various steps for further analysis.

3.8 Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis was performed in two phases. In the initial phase, the recorded interviews were transcribed. Subsequently, themes were developed from transcribed data.

3.8.1 *Phase-I*

3.8.1.1 Transcription:

Firstly, all the recorded interviews were transcribed in the same language as recorded. The recordings of interviews were played several times for data accuracy and originality. Observations of participants and reflection of the interviewer were noted.

3.8.2 *Phase-II*

3.8.2.1 Identification and Development of Themes:

Inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data gathered from interviews. The categories and concepts were identified from the transcriptions of the interviews by linking codes and patterns to develop themes. The collected data was analysed manually.

For developing themes the following steps was taken. Whereas, the steps given below in a sequential order. The process of analysis was cyclic in nature such that the researcher was operating by moving to and fro in different steps. For data familiarization audio recording of each interview was listened and transcriptions were read several times.

1. In this step initial coding of transcribed data was done to break down data into small segments using sentence by sentence coding. Codes of each interview were listed.
2. The second phase of coding involves providing explanatory codes to larger data segments. Where the data was managed by making categories and subcategories on the basis of initial codes.
3. In the last stage, the detailed extraction of coding was done and data was managed in axial coding. By building structure based on categories and subcategories, themes and subthemes.
4. The participants' comments were added along with related codes, categories and themes.
5. During data collection and analyses, the researcher was maintaining reflective journal to record personal feelings and observations to reduce researcher bias.
6. The validity of interpreted data was ensured by reading transcripts several times to understand the relationship of descriptions and themes. The comments and quotes were analysed to understand the relatedness of themes.
7. The above steps were independently used for analysis of each interview.
8. At the final stage, after independently analysing each interview, the themes were organized by fixing connections and comparatively analysing data segments.

Chapter 4

Results

Following are the major themes, subthemes and categories emerged from the interviews with police officers on mental health and role of policing culture. There were total 15 participants: 8 were males and 7 were females. There was no criterion for age of police officers. The data was collected from five different police stations of Islamabad. The participants were randomly selected, based on their availability, having different ranks, which provided border perspective to the research problem.

The demographic information of each police officer is given below in Table 1. Pseudonyms have been assigned to the participants to maintain confidentiality. Five police officers reported experiencing physical illnesses (such as diabetes and cardiac issues), and only two of them are receiving treatment out of the 15 participants. In contrast, 9 participants reported having no physical illnesses. Additionally, 9 out of 15 participants indicated that they have experienced psychological issues but have not received any psychological treatment. Furthermore, 5 out of 15 participants reported that they have received training on mental health.

The list of themes, subthemes, and categories is presented in Table 2. Below is a detailed description of the themes that emerged from the data collected from participants. The relevant quotations in Roman Urdu are included to support the themes. All participants openly shared their experiences and opinions on the topic. While they showed interest, a few participants struggled to reflect on their

TABLE 4.1: *Demographic Information of Police Officers*

Sr.No	Participant	Gender	Age	Experience	Rank	Education	Dept
1	MN	M	50yr	31yr	ASI	Matric	OP
2	MA	M	59yr	40yr	I	Matric	OP
3	MH	M	51yr	32yr	SI	F.A	OP
4	TA	M	40yr	20yr	HC	B.A	OP
5	TR	M	45yr	25yr	ASI	B.A	OP-IW
6	MM	M	50yr	31yr	ASI	F.A	OP
7	AM	M	38yr	18yr	HC	B.A	OP
8	JIK	M	42yr	20yr	HC	M.A	OP
9	PG	F	-	7yr	SP	CSS	OP
10	PF	F	40yr	20yr	HC	M.A	OP-PSW
11	SA	F	38yr	13yr	C	B.A	OP-PSW
12	FB	F	43yr	25yr	ASI	B.A	OP-PSW
13	R	F	38yr	13yr	C	B.A	OP-ATS
14	AJ	F	28yr	7yr	C	B.A	OP
15	NM	F	34yr	12yr	C	F.A	OP

Note: Male= M, Female =F, yr=Year, C=Constable, HC= Head Constable, SI= Sub-Inspector, I=Inspector

I= Inspector, OD= Operational Division, IW= Investigation Wing, PSW= Police Station Women

ATS= Anti-Terrorist Squad.

mental health and psychological difficulties. Particularly, when asked about policing culture and their understanding of policing culture.

The Table 2 represents the major themes, sub-themes and categories extracted from the qualitative interviews of the officers.

TABLE 4.2: *Major themes, subthemes and categories emerged from fifteen qualitative interviews*

Sr.No	Major Themes	Sub-Themes and Categories
1	Understanding of Mental Health	1.1. Stress/tension 1.2. Emotional Management in High-Stressful Situations
2	Impact of Policing Job on Mental Health	2.1. Policing: Effects and Behavioural Reflection 2.2. Post-Mortems Distress
3	Operational and Organizational Stressors	3.1. Workload and Long Working Hours 3.2. Traumatic and Challenging Incidents 3.3. Police Officers as First Responders 3.3.1. Decision Making 3.4. Job Demands and Responsibilities 3.4.1. Challenges in Law and Order Duty 3.5. Administrative Burden and Accountability
4	Understanding and Characteristics of Policing Culture	4.1 Policing and Public Dealing 4.1.1. Public Demands 4.1.2. Public Response 4.1.3. Public Perception or Image of Police Officers 4.2.4. Lack of Awareness in Public 4.2. Relationship with Fellow Officers 4.3. Impact of Policing Culture on Mental Health 4.3.1. Hierarchical and Authoritative Dynamics 4.3.2. Lack of Appreciation and Support from Department

5	Balancing Personal and Professional Life	5.1 Neglect of Family Responsibilities
		5.2 Social Isolation
6	Coping Mechanisms and Resilience	6.1. Problem-focused coping
		6.2. Emotion-focused Coping
		6.2.1. Sharing
		6.3. Avoidant Coping
		6.3.1. Absenteeism
		6.4. Peer Support
		6.4. Religious Coping
7	Lack of Resources	7.1. Lack of Human Resources
8	Insufficient Mental Health Support and Lack of Awareness	8.1. Psychological support
		8.2. Need for Practical Psychological Interventions
		8.3. Stigma around Mental Health in Policing
9	Recommendations for Improvement	9.1. Revision of Duty Hours
		9.2. Public Awareness and Education
		9.3. Technology Integration for Effective Policing
		9.4. Physical and Mental Wellbeing Activities
		9.5. Discipline and Structural Improvements
		9.6. Psychological Assessment-Based Duty Assignments

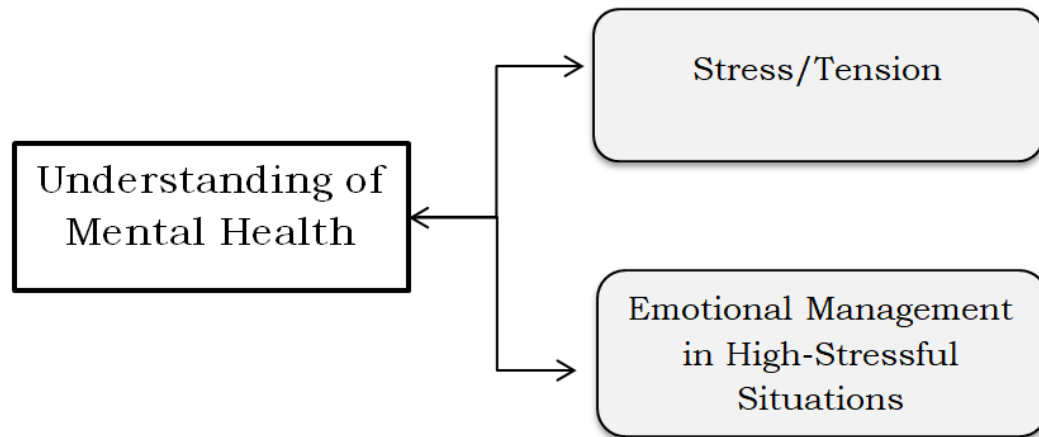


FIGURE 4.1: Theme 1

4.1 Understanding of Mental health

Police officers expressed varied understandings of mental health, often describing it as “*mental peace*”, “*relaxation of the mind*” or “*peace in personal, professional, and social life*”. Some defined mental health as the absence of tension, where an individual remains fresh and mentally stable. Mental illness, on the other hand, was described as a state where individuals feel overwhelmed by situations, conditions, or worries, often taking on the burdens of others, such as the public’s concerns.

This overwhelming state was seen as leading to mental disturbance. Others associated mental health with being free from burdens, feeling energized, and being able to perform tasks effectively. Disturbance was frequently linked to feelings of burden. Participants emphasized the importance of mental health, noting that poor mental health hinders proper cognitive functioning. A police officer stated,

“*Zehni sehat. . . yehi sehat hai ky banday ka zehan tandrust ho ya nah ho*”. (“*Mental health... it means whether a person’s mind is healthy or not.*”)

A participant highlighted that maintaining an active lifestyle and engaging in work and other responsibilities, rather than simply eating and sleeping, contributes to

good mental health. Physical health was also emphasized as a key component of overall well-being. One police officer explained mental health by associating it with absence of social issues, such as family problems, and observed that depression can lead to distress, negatively affecting both the individual and their surroundings. A peaceful and refreshing environment at work and home was seen as essential for good mental health. Another officer described mental health as,

“Zehni sehat sy murad yehi hai keh aap ka ... aap basically tu insan ky andar ka mahool hai sara ... agr aap ky andar sy sb kuch theek hai ... khushi hai tu bahir ka mahool aap ky liye matter nahi krta...”

(“Mental health means the internal state of a person... basically, it’s all about what’s inside. If everything is fine within you... if you are happy... then the external environment does not matter to you.”)

The inner happiness and contentment are more important than external circumstances. Happiness was consistently linked to a healthy mind, and participants stressed the importance of stress management to prevent mental health disturbances. They also noted that mental health issues are deteriorating due to a lack of prevention and treatment interventions.

4.1.1 Stress/Tension

Stress was described facing obstacles any phase of completing a task. Participants identified stress and tension as inherent aspects of the policing profession. These challenges of balancing family issues with professional responsibilities during law and order duties generate stressful situation. The high-pressure nature of policing was noted to disrupt mental stability when absorbed deeply. Participants emphasized that the people often overlooks the existence of mental health concerns and its impact on individuals that may result in distress. One officer shared,

“Humara public interaction bhoot zayada hai.. rodoon pr.. hum hr jaga logon ko dekhty hain .. logon ko hum muskurahat main nahi dekhty ..hum logon ko

hamesha pain main dekhty hain .. tu us ko stress tu hoga,” (“Our public interactions are very frequent... We see people everywhere, but we don’t see them smiling; we always see them in pain. So, that will definitely cause stress.”)

It illustrates how constant exposure to public pain and suffering contributes to stress. In the same way, public/complainants visiting police stations often demand priority for their issues, adding to stress/pressure. They stressed the importance of identifying the root causes of tension. Police officers are required to handle pressures because pressures are integral part of policing job. Overthinking during long duty hours was also identified as a significant stressor by female police officers. The overthinking is mostly associated with family and other responsibilities.

4.1.2 Emotional Management in High-Stressful Situations

Participants shared different perspectives and methods for managing high stress during their job. One officer explained,

“Jo dekhtay hain us ko pee jatay hain ... kaam kr rahay hain... bachoon ki rozi lagi hoi hai”, (“We suppress what we see... we keep working because our children’s livelihood depends on it.”). He further added, *“Bazahir tu mehsos nahi hota. Baki kahein na kahien ... rehta tu zaror hai”, (“It may not be apparent on the surface, like, but somewhere deep down... it’s always there.)*, means suppressing or internalizing emotions often leading to emotional distress.

Officers reported that while they witness people in pain, they conserve their energy by focusing on finding solutions/remedies rather than carrying on the emotional pain. They emphasized the importance of instilling hope and maintaining emotional stability to effectively support others. Handling situations with tranquility was highlighted as a critical skill for police officers. The findings suggest that mental health is influenced by an individual’s mind-set, where positive thinking leads to positive outcomes, and negative thinking results in adverse consequences. Deep breathing was identified as a helpful technique for managing stressful situations.

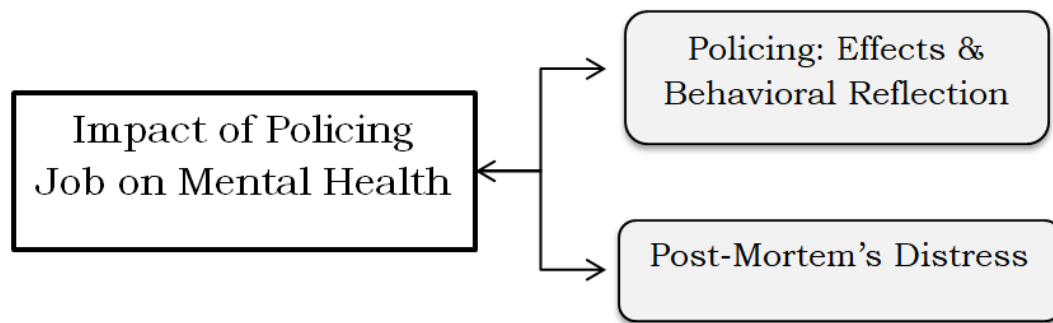


FIGURE 4.2: Theme2

4.2 Impact of Policing Job on Mental Health

A respondent emphasized that mental health is strongly linked to an individual's success, observing that those experiencing mental health issues are less likely to achieve success. Mental health is imperative for effective performance. Participants reported that the policing profession exposes officers to numerous health-related challenges, including biological, psychological, and social issues. For instance, one respondent shared that he had suffered three to four heart attacks due to excessive workload and job-related stress. He explained,

“Raat ko sota hi nahi tha... jis tarah psycho adami nahi ho jata ...keh agr main so gya tu hosakta hai kay main subah tk uthoon hi na.”, (“I couldn’t sleep at night... just like a person becomes psycho (paranoid), thinking that if I fall asleep, I might not wake up by morning.”).

He described the fear and anxiety that prevented him from sleeping. Listening to complainants was also identified as a source of disturbance, as one officer reported,

“Ek khatoon hai ya ek mard hai tu is ky kuch aysy issues hain jo hum sun rahay hain ... haan... aur who aap ko tang bhi kr rahy hain.” (“Whether it’s a woman or a man, they have certain issues that we listen to... yes, and those issues can also be bothering you.”) Additionally, respondents mentioned that some police officers have committed suicide due to the stress associated with their job.

One officer stated,

“Kafi saray dost, aysy log hain jo stress ki wajah sy... humaray logon nay khud-kushyian ki hain... pagal howy hain ... yeh duty ky burden ki wajah say” (“Many friends, many people... have taken their own lives [Suicide] due to stress... some have gone insane... because of the burden of duty.”), highlighting the severe mental health consequences of the policing profession.

A respondent shared about recent incident of a fellow officer died of a heart attack caused by overburden and lack of rest, emphasizing that there is often no time for recovery in the policing profession. The deaths and losses in the line of duty were reported to lead to adverse psychological outcomes. The respondent narrated,

“Udhr ek jawan shaheed ho gya tha... tu dosra hum ny us ko ...us carlifter ko bhi mar diya tha”, (“A young officer was martyred there... so we also killed that car lifter”) and added, *“Mushkil marhala... mushkil marhala tha ... aur ... kyun ky humaray jawan ka nuqsan ho gya tha”,* (“It was a difficult phase... a tough moment ... because we had lost one of our young officers”), describing the emotional distress of losing a colleague.

He further stated,

“Tu woh aysy lamhaat hain jo kabhi nahi bhoolty... zehni toor pr bhi”, (“Those are moments that are never forgotten... even mentally”), highlighting the lasting mental impact of such moments.

Sensitive individuals were observed to suffer more in traumatic, stressful, and critical situations compared to those who are emotionally strong, as they struggle to cope and remain affected for longer periods, impacting their mental health and well-being. One officer remarked, *“Ab hum log use to ho gaye hain”,* (Now, we have become [accustomed] used to it).

They indicated a level of desensitization over time. A police officer also reported

experiencing depression when unable to manage stress, describing symptoms such as sleeplessness, poor appetite, forgetfulness, restlessness, brain fog, and dissociation, which she attributed to the burden of family responsibilities.

One of the respondents reported that serious or critical situations don't impact on him. Similarly, he denied that the nature of job doesn't impact his mental health.

4.2.1 Policing: Effects and Behavioural Reflections

The policing job has both positive and negative impacts on behavior. While analyzing situations, the negative aspects often receive more attention than the positive ones. Both perspectives were extracted from the data. Some respondents believed that there is no direct connection between a police officer's behavior and their profession, suggesting that behavior is shaped by an individual's social background and educational experiences. However, they acknowledged the possibility of irritation or anger arising from increased workload and long working hours.

In conclusion, overburden and extended duty hours were found to impact the behavior and attitude of police officers, with these changes also affecting personal relationships, such as those with family. One respondent noted,

"Hum log gussa krna shuru ho jaty hain", (*"we start getting angry"*), highlighting the emotional toll start reflecting in behavior. On the positive side, the policing job was reported to bring significant improvements, such as providing clarity of mind, broadening perspectives, and fostering courage in individuals.

Effective management and care are essential for police officers to perform their duties efficiently. Police officers' interactions with the public are influenced by their well-being; good well-being enables them to handle situations more effectively. However, bad, irritated, or aggressive behavior from police officers may stem from a lack of understanding or cooperation from the public. Respondents highlighted that the initial period of their service was generally more positive.

It was also identified that physical health directly impacts behavior. A respondent

explained,

“Jab meri jismani sehat theek nahi hogi, main khud theek nahi hoon ga ... tu mera aap kay sath rowyia theek nahi hoga”, (“When my physical health is not good, I won’t be okay myself... so my behavior towards you won’t be right”).

He emphasized that poor physical health leads to irritability and agitation on duty. Field duties, such as traffic management at intersections and crossroads, require frequent public interaction. In such situations, behavioral responses are often reciprocal; unfair treatment by the public can provoke similar reactions from officers. One respondent reported,

“Adami tang parh jata hai naa... aap kitni dafa bardashat krin gy... [ky] jee main ignore kroun ga”, (“A person gets fed up, right? How many times will you tolerate it ... yes, I will try to ignore), it illustrate the challenges of maintaining self-control in the face of repeated provocation.

A respondent highlighted the challenges of managing stress during long working hours, stating,

“Sham tk das partiyen sunon ga tu main bhi... phir banda hyper ho jata hai ... aur banda apna khana chai bhi nahi kr sakta... is liye agr thora time diya jaye na tu ikhlaq kafi behtr hai ... Islamabad police ka.”

(“By the evening, after listening to ten parties, I also... a person becomes hyper and can’t even have their tea or meal in peace. That’s why, if given a little time, the behavior of Islamabad police is actually quite good”).

The respondent emphasized that providing officers with adequate breaks could significantly improve their behavior and efficiency. Over the past few years, the recruitment of educated police personnel has brought noticeable improvements in the force. One officer noticed,

“Bhoot change aa gya hai ... bhoot zayda ... abhi aap ko kahein naky pr rokty hain, unka behaviour dekh lyn ... unky baat krny ka tareeqa kar dekh lyn”, (“There

has been a huge change... a significant one. Now, if they stop you at a checkpoint, just observe their behavior... look at how they talk”).

The above observations reflect the positive changes in communication and behavior among new recruits while public dealing. However, the stressful nature of the job continues to contribute to behavioral issues among officers.

4.2.2 Post-Mortem’s Distress

In cases of suspicious deaths and murders, police officers are required to be present during post-mortem examinations. This experience is particularly traumatic, especially for those new to the profession. Many respondents, especially female officers reported experiencing sleepless nights; extreme disturbance and distress last for few days after witnessing their first post-mortem.

One officer described the experience:

“Post-mortem krwaya jata hai, post-mortem ...hr adami udhr khara nahi ho sakta... udhr unhon ny na ... woh jis tarah janwar ko zibha krny wali churyain hoti hain na ... aalaat hotay hain.. is tarah ka system hota hai... udhr hum pass kharay hoty hain, humaray samnay kaatay hain. Cheezein andr say nikalty hain ... haan tu hr adami nahi kr sakta na ... pehly pehly takleef hoti hai ... phir jab adami aadi ho jata hai naa ... tu phir us kay liye koi matter nahi krta.”

(“A post-mortem is conducted, a post-mortem... not everyone can stand there. Over there, they have tools like the knives used for slaughtering animals... that’s the kind of setup it is. We stand close by and watch as they cut open the body and remove internal organs. Not everyone can handle it. In the beginning, it feels disturbing, but once a person gets used to it, it doesn’t matter anymore”).

Similarly, another officer shared his experience,

“Ek dead body ko cheerna pharna ...wo normally banda nahi dekh sakta... us ko ... woh humein phir bardashat krna parta hai”. (“Dissecting a dead body... a normal person cannot watch that. But we have to endure it”).

Officers emphasized that such experiences have a severe psychological impact, affecting both mental and physical well-being. These distressing incidents contribute to long-term stress and highlight the emotional distress of policing.

4.3 Operational and Organizational Stressors

In operational division duty, the investigation work is relatively difficult. There is no timetable, routine and rest (both mental and physical rest) in operational duties. Apart from this, blind cases or cold cases are always difficult to deal. Particularly, blind murder cases are complex to handle, where neither the heir knows nor does anyone know who is killer.

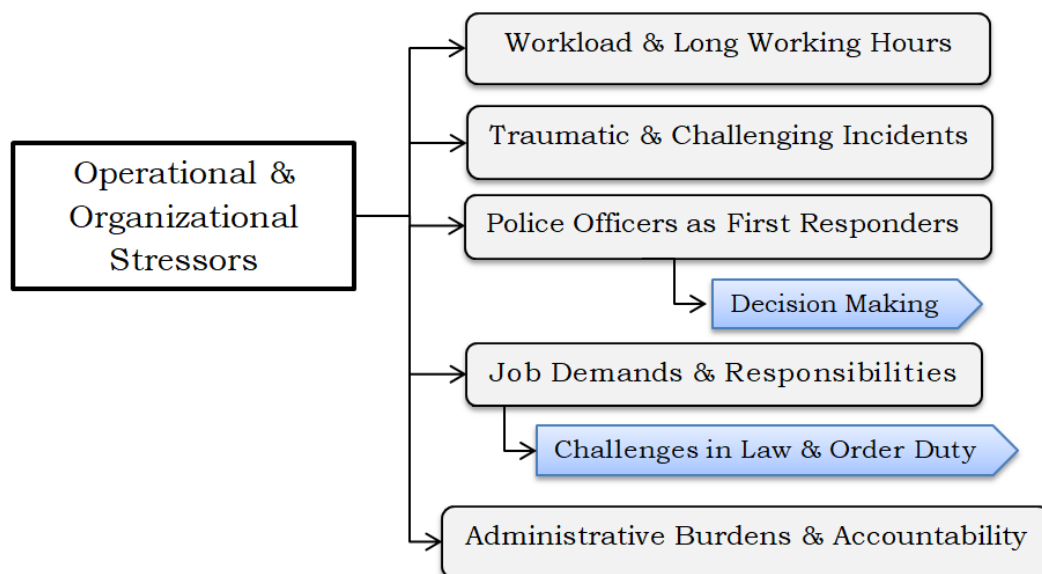


FIGURE 4.3: Theme 3

4.3.1 Workload and Long Working Hours

Respondents reported experiencing excessive workload, which they find overwhelming and stressful. The time for rest is less than the workload, in order to manage workload they have to spend more time at workplace. Given the increasing workload, they emphasized the need to revise duty hours to ensure better work-life balance.

The respondents stated that, there is no other talk/discussion than work, no one appreciate on performing well instead of asking,

“yeh kaam kyun nahi kiya?” (“Why wasn’t this work done?”).

The long and unpredictable duty hours are particularly distressing. Officers shared that after completing a 12-hour shift, they often receive calls to return to duty, disrupting their personal time and mental well-being. One officer expressed frustration:

“Teen char jaghoon se kaam aa jata hai... ke yeh bhi kar do... [lykin] time bohot short hota hai.” (“Work comes in from three or four places at once, asking to do this as well... but time is very limited”).

In the police force, there is no fixed duty schedule, and officers are expected to be available 24/7. They emphasized the urgent need for at least one day off per week for rest. The prolonged working hours significantly impact their consistency, performance, work quality, and overall efficiency.

Another officer described the exhaustion caused by unpredictable calls:

“Banda ghar pohncha hota hai na... raat 1 baje... woh kehte hain phir aa jao”, (“A person reaches home, right... at 1 AM... and then they say, ‘Come back again”).

Despite the workload, officers recognize the importance of prioritizing and organizing tasks to manage their responsibilities efficiently. Many reported feeling a sense of relief after successfully completing their tasks, despite the demanding nature of their job.

4.3.2 Traumatic and Challenging Incidents

Unknown cases are often the most complex and challenging to resolve. Many participants reported handling unsolved murder cases. One respondent recalled

an incident from 1997, where three decapitated corpses were discovered—two in Junejo Colony and one near Hummak. The investigation revealed post-murder decapitation, with head buried in home and lower body parts found in sacks by the roadside.

Describing the emotional and psychological distress of investigation officer, he said,

“Dekhein, jo tafteeshi afsar kay jo... khayalaat ya jazbaat... jazbaat tu tafteeshi afsar kay honay hi nahi chahyien. Hum nay tu mtlb ayh... yeh ek apnay aap ko maintain rakhtay howy kaam krna hota hai, tu agr yeh jazbaat main doctor ya police afsar beh jaye tu phir who apna kaam nahi kr sakta.”

(“Look, an investigating officer’s thoughts or emotions... an investigating officer shouldn’t have emotions at all. We have to carry out our work while maintaining control over ourselves. If a doctor or a police officer lets emotions take over, they won’t be able to do their job properly.”)

Almost all participants acknowledged that traumatic cases are distressing at first, but over time, officers become desensitized as they focus on their responsibilities. Experience eventually makes them more professional and resilient.

Beyond murder cases, another respondent discussed the challenges of investigating kidnapping for ransom (365A) cases, where tracing unknown suspects was particularly difficult.

Police officers perceive high-profile cases as learning experiences, which help build courage and expertise. They emphasized that job-related stress is often temporary, resolving once a case is closed or situation is ended. A senior female officer noted that every policing incident leaves an impact—either directly or indirectly. Witnessing human suffering, such as torture, has lasting psychological effects.

While recounting traumatic incidents, one officer shared the devastating experience of losing a fellow colleague in the line of duty:

“Unhon nay itni bydardi sy shaheed kiya hai, keh aap us ki dead body dekh bhi nahi saktay”, (“They martyred him so brutally that you can’t even look at his dead body.”)

Murder cases remain the most distressing for officers. Many reported dealing with long-decomposed bodies, where the putrid smell significantly adds to the trauma. Another case involved the death of an elderly woman found in her Bahria Town flat. She lived alone, with no heirs to claim her body. A police officer mentioned that they call ladies through security of Bahria town and covered the dead body with bedsheets. Because, no heir was present police was responsible for arrangements of funeral and burial. He was saying that,

“yeh ek farishton wala kaam hai... warna normal koi banda badboo ky nazdeek jata hi nahi hai”. (“This is work of angels... otherwise, a normal person wouldn’t even go near such a stench.”)

A senior lady officer recounted a particularly traumatic case,

“I saw a body last night... jis main aysa tha ky budha adami kuch dinon sy gaib tha ... aur phir humein wo body mili aur wo body jo thi ... kuttoon ny noch li thi ... tu wo us ka pura face kha chuky thy”. (“I saw a body last night... it was of an old man who had been missing for a few days. When we found him, dogs had mauled the body... they had eaten his entire face.”)

She was so disturbed by witnessing the dead body that she couldn’t sleep for whole night. This statement highlights the psychological impact of policing, particularly for officers who deal with distressing scenes involving death and decomposition. Witnessing such horrific incidents, especially cases where bodies are mutilated or severely decomposed, can lead to emotional desensitization, anxiety, hypervigilance, sleep disturbances and impact mental well-being. Such incidents also contribute to burnout, emotional exhaustion and depression.

Without proper mental health support, officers risk long-term psychological distress, which can affect their decision-making, emotional well-being, and relationships. Since police officers frequently encounter cases of murder, armed robbery, deaths, and rape, along with the loss of fellow colleagues, all of these factors significantly contribute to the psychological burden.

4.3.3 Police Officers as First Responders

Police officers serve as first responders in the event of accidents or incidents, with their primary responsibility, to manage and control the situation. Their immediate task is to rescue any injured individual/s and ensure they are relocated for treatment. One officer articulated this duty, stating,

“Ab gr who zakhmi dekh kr, wahan ronay beth jaon ya deegar apny aap ko abnormal kr lun tu zyhaza main apni na... sirf duty say peechay hat jaoun ga”, (“Now, if I start crying after seeing the injured or make myself emotionally unstable, then I won’t just lose control over myself... I will also step back from my duty”), emphasizes the importance of maintaining composure in challenging and distressing circumstances.

The necessity for emotional control was a recurring theme in the interviews. Officers highlighted that their first priority is to shift the injured person to safety, and they must manage their emotions effectively during traumatic incidents. A lack of emotional regulation can hinder their ability to respond appropriately in critical situations. As one participant stated,

“aap ny dekha hai ky..aksar majmay main log pathrao krtay hain.. hum bardashat krtay hain... Jab humara bas chalta hai tu hum bhi apnay dill ka ghubar nikal lytay hain”, (“You have seen how... people often throw stones in crowds... we tolerate it... when we have the power, we also let out the frustration from our hearts”), illustrating the pressure they face to suppress their feelings while maintaining order. This highlights the emotional burden, coping mechanisms, and potential risks associated with policing. Without proper mental health support and coping strategies, prolonged exposure to hostility may lead to burnout, aggression, and impaired judgment.

Training plays a crucial role in preparing police officers to handle emergencies effectively. They are equipped with skills to navigate high-stress situations efficiently, ensuring that they can fulfil their duties while also managing the emotional distress that such experiences can exert. Overall, the findings underscore the dual

challenge faced by police officers: the need to respond decisively to emergencies while simultaneously controlling their emotional responses.

4.3.3.1 Decision Making

In situations involving immediate calls or multiple incidents occurring simultaneously, police officers employ a strategy known as "*prioritization*" in their decision-making process. This approach is recognized as a crucial and effective method that assists officers in assessing the situation, understanding the conditions, and determining the severity of each case to make informed decisions accordingly.

While the types of crimes may remain consistent, the nature of each case can vary significantly. Consequently, the decision-making process is influenced by a range of factors unique to each situation. One respondent emphasized the importance of taking a moment to reflect, stating that "thinking for 5 minutes before taking a decision is beneficial."

This highlights the tension between the need for immediate action and the value of thoughtful consideration in high-pressure situations. A female officer reported that during a shootout encounter male fellow officers were saying, "*Madam aap pechay ho jaien. . . aap side pr ho jaein*". This reflects the particular culture within police department, where role of socio-cultural factors are manifesting in different perspective. Like, it might be due to dominating of male gender in our society, protection, and safety. But, this interaction also underscores the complexities of gender relations in policing, particularly in high-stress scenarios where quick decisions and actions are vital.

Ultimately, police officers are often required to make swift decisions, and the ability to prioritize effectively is essential for navigating the complexities of their roles in law enforcement.

4.3.4 Job Demands and Responsibilities

Police officers identify themselves as "service providers" and perceive policing job as rewarding job. Respondents also emphasized that if individuals take interest in

their work and enjoy their tasks, they do not perceive their responsibilities as a burden. One officer stated that police work should be performed with a sense of duty and responsibility, rather than as an imposed obligation.

However, some job demands were described as unrealistic and overwhelming. Officers reported instances where they were expected to be in multiple places simultaneously, which is logistically impossible. One participant stated:

“Jab demands mix ho jaein, tu burden barh jata hai”, (“When demands get mixed, the burden increases”).

This statement highlights how overlapping responsibilities increase psychological burden, leading to stress, burnout, and reduced efficiency. Officers also highlighted that clarity in job responsibilities plays a crucial role in job satisfaction. When they understand their duties well, they find the work engaging and intellectually stimulating. Passion for the job helps minimize the stressful nature of policing.

“Humara kartab jo hai naa... hum nay crime ko deal krna hota hai”, (our duty is to deal with crime), It shows responsibility, duty and strong commitment.

Female officers outlined their daily responsibilities, which include: conducting police raids, arresting female suspects, interrogating women, overseeing their transfer to jail, arranging medical check-ups, and managing court summons—all as part of a repetitive daily routine. They identified themselves as service providers; they also feel stressing for arriving on time, especially in the morning.

There are number of job responsibilities and duties named by police officers in interviews

1. Maintaining Law and Order
2. Crime Prevention
3. Investigation of Crimes
4. Public Assistance or Public Dealing
5. Administrative Duties
6. Security Duties

7. Visits, Meetings and Coordination with other Stakeholder (e.g. being called to IG office or courts)
8. Emergency Response/Calls
9. VIPs Movements and crossroad duty
10. Training and Development

4.3.4.1 Challenges in Law and Order Duty

Law and order duties are particularly challenging, as officers must engage directly with the public, maintain peace, and handle unpredictable situations. These duties often come with unlimited working hours and struggles to meet basic needs while on duty.

Key challenges include:

- o Lack of public cooperation and understanding
- o Misconduct and hostility from civilians
- o Excessive and unpredictable duty hours
- o Limited access to food and washroom facilities

Female officers specifically mentioned the difficulty of finding washrooms in public areas during duty. While most of male officers disclosed the law and order duties are continuous for days without a break or Off. One officer recalled:

“Law and order ka ek ... 2014 main law and order ka tha... us waqt yeh jo hai naa... aath din uniform nahi utara tha... aath din uniform nahi utara tha.”
(*“There was a law and order situation... in 2014, there was a law and order issue. At that time, I didn’t take off my uniform for eight days... eight days straight.”*)

The aforementioned long law and order duties or extreme working conditions may lead to fatigue, burnout, poor mental health due to physical and emotional exhaustion, it also effect quality of services and performance. Police officers also reported being attacked with stones while performing their duties. Another major concern is the physical strain of standing for extended hours. Officers described situations where they had to remain standing for 16 hours straight. If they sat down for even 10 minutes, and something happened during that time, they would

be held responsible. However, it is humanly impossible to endure such long hours without breaks for food, rest, or basic needs.

4.3.5 Administrative Burdens and Accountability

One participant expressed frustration with the system, stating:

“yeh jo humara mulk hai na... yeh doghali policy pr kaam krta hai.” (“Our country operates on a dual policy [two-faced policy].”)

The above statement reflects frustration with perceived inconsistency in policies and governance. It also creates complexities in governance and social dynamics. Similarly, the word “*doghali*” represents the system try to enforce double standard, possibly treating different groups unfairly or failing to maintain consistency in law enforcement. This can lead to moral injury, resulting in stress, frustration, and emotional exhaustion.

Police officers often face multiple simultaneous responsibilities, with three to four tasks assigned at once, all requiring immediate action. This overwhelming workload creates stress and mental strain, as it is physically impossible for one officer to be in multiple places at the same time. One officer described the challenge:

“ek shahks ko mukhtalif atraaf sy khencha taani ho rahi hai. Jab ek shahks mukhtalif logon ko jawab dy hota hai aagy... zehni tanao tu... wo tu natural hai.”

(“A person is being pulled from different sides. When someone has to answer to multiple people, the mental stress... that is natural.”)

It reflects psychological strain caused by conflicting demand and responsibilities. In these situations officers experience role conflict and cognitive overload leading to stress, frustration, emotional exhaustion, burnout and mental fatigue. If left unmanaged, such chronic stress can lead to anxiety, irritability, and decreased job performance.

4.4 Understanding and Characteristics of Policing Culture

Most respondents were unfamiliar with the term "policing culture." Some associated it with general policing or community policing, emphasizing collaboration with the public to enhance effectiveness. Others conceptualized it as helping people, solving their problems, and providing relief. However, some police officers denied the existence of policing culture within the force

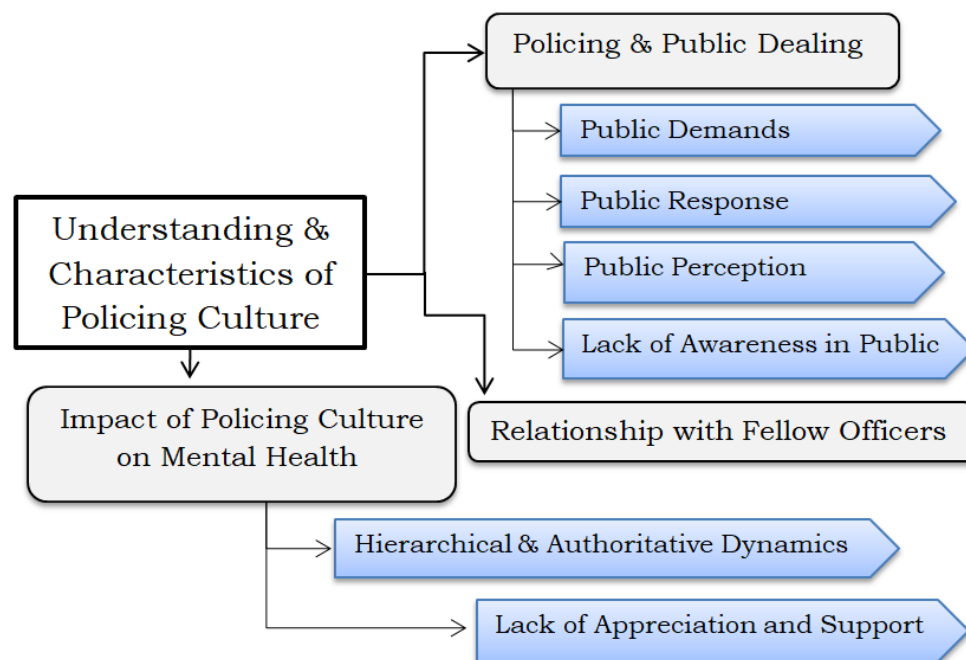


FIGURE 4.4: Theme 4

A senior female police officer described organizational culture as a set of protocols, SOPs, and ongoing patterns within the police force. A police officer highlighted the changing narratives of complainants, accused individuals, and criminals, stating that internal politics within policing needs to be addressed.

“Na police kharab hai, na koi department kharab yeh apny maqsad ky liye [kuch]aur . . . kisi aur ky maqsad ky liye [kuch]aur hain” (“Neither the police are bad, nor is any department bad... they are just serving their own purpose [in some ways]... and for someone else’s purpose [in other ways]”).

This statement conveys, police officers' actions often driven by specific goals or agendas, which may not align with the public's expectations or needs. Their actions are shaped on the basis of internal or external influences that could be form of pressure.

Another officer identified behavior as a core characteristic of policing culture, emphasizing the importance of how police officers interact with the public. One participant pointed out:

“yeh beta jee... yeh police culture ki wajah say hi... log hum say nafrat kr-tay hain”. (“Ooh dear! People hate us, because of this policing culture”).

This statement reflects recognition of the negative perceptions and feelings that the public holds towards the police, attributing it to the prevailing culture within law enforcement. It suggests that the internal dynamics, practices, and attitudes that characterize police culture contribute significantly to public perception and image of police force.

However, one participant noted that newly recruited police officers do not adhere to the traditional policing culture. The new intake of young, educated officers are bringing positive change into policing culture. A police officer noted that creating a positive impression in society earns respect, but some officers' unprofessional communication styles contribute to a negative image of the police. On the other hand a police officer describe example to relate it with policing culture as stated, (*“Because... there are benefits to be gained... for example, when there's a line for any work... if you're there to submit a bill, and there's a line, I would consider it an insult to stand in that line. Sometimes, the person sitting at the front says, 'Hey, this Sub-Inspector has come from the police station... let him go first... [I'll go tomorrow].' And he tells me, 'Sir, you can come forward'.” This should make him understand that work should be done on time.*).

This statement illustrates how status and hierarchy influence behavior and expectations within law enforcement.

Furthermore a police officer mentioned

"کہ... benefit لڑی ملنے نے ... مثال دے طور تے لائن لگی اے کس وی کام تے... تسن bill جمع کرار اے اے اٹھے لائن لگی اے میں اٹھے لائن اچ لگنا اپنی توہین سمجھاں گا... بعض دفعہ آگے جیٹرا بندہ بیٹھا اے او کہندا اے کے بار اے Sub-Inspector آیا اے تھانے تو... پہلے آکے... کل نو میں جاں گا یا... تے او مینو کہے گا سر جی ٹسی آگے آ جاؤ.. اے تاں او نو سمجھنا چاہی دا اے کہ وقت تے کام کرنا چاہی دا اے.."

FIGURE 4.5: Punjabi Text

"hakomatein police ko use krti hain.. apny maqsad ky liye", ("Governments use the police for their own purposes.")

This statement suggests that police forces are often utilized by governmental authorities to achieve specific political or administrative objectives, rather than only serving the public interest. The quote also reflects a belief or perception that governments exploit law enforcement agencies for their own political or personal agendas, rather than allowing them to function independently or in the public's best interest. This suggests a critique of systemic misuse of power and political influence, which also highlights concerns about the lack of autonomy in law enforcement.

While informing about police work environment many police officers shared almost same line that,

"mahool, insan ky apny opar hai", ("The environment is dependent on the individual.")

It illustrate that the work atmosphere or culture is shaped by the individuals within the system, emphasizing personal accountability and collective responsibility in shaping the workplace dynamics. Similarly, another police officer conveyed,

"woh mahool tu aap ny khud bana hota hai naa.." ("That environment is something you create yourself... isn't it")

Moreover, the finding revealed that the operating style of police force is different from other organizations. It suggests that respect and positive interactions are often mutual. When individuals show respect, they are more likely to receive it in return.

More than half of the participants reported a lack of awareness regarding policing culture, where few completely denied its existence. When prompted to describe the characteristics of policing culture, one officer identified police behavior as a fundamental aspect, regardless of whether it is perceived as fair or rough. Additionally, other participants highlighted traits such as independence, courage, and confidence as integral to policing culture. Some officers also mentioned power, authority, public service, and confidence as defining characteristics.

Interestingly, many officers struggled to articulate a clear definition of policing culture, indicating a potential gap in understanding. However, when asked more specific questions about public interactions, the police environment, and relationships with peers, they were able to provide more detailed responses.

Furthermore, existing research literature emphasizes that operational and organizational stressors are significant characteristics of policing. These stressors, which have been discussed in detail above, play a crucial role in shaping the experiences and behaviors of police officers. Overall, the findings suggest a complex interplay between individual experiences, organizational dynamics, and the broader cultural context of policing.

Following are the major characteristics identified from the data of the study.

4.4.1 Policing and Public Dealing

A police officer was explaining the relationship of police and public by resembling with parent child relationship. When children engage in mischievous behaviour,

parents try to correct them-sometimes politely with kindness and other times with stern reprimands. He elaborated:

“Pyar sy keh diya tu samahj jao ...tu theek hai, na tu ... thora sakhti bhi kr kay... ab maqsad kiya hota hai?...ab maqsad yeh hai ky is ko sudharna hai .. aman qaim krna hai aur humein bardasht krni parti hai”.

(“If they understand with kindness, that’s good; otherwise, a little firmness is needed. Now, what is the purpose? The purpose is to correct them... to maintain peace... and we have to tolerate a lot.”)

Police officer reported they prefer kindness and dealing politely, but sometimes firmness and authority become necessary to maintain peace and order. The public’s limited understanding of police work also adds to the challenge. A respondent noted that there are 26 to 27 departments within the police force, yet the public is familiar with only 4 to 5. As a result, people often bring complaints that fall outside their department’s jurisdiction or not relevant to them.

Dealing with emotionally charged situations is another significant challenge. When people come to report the murder or sudden death of a loved one, such as a husband or father, their distress can lead to arguments or confrontations with police officers.

Despite these challenges, police officers emphasized their commitment to treating the public with respect and ensuring their safety. However, they also highlighted the need for mutual respect, as constant verbal abuse and disrespect can have a lasting impact on their mental health.

“humein logon ki ghalat baat ko bhi bardasht krna parta hai” (“We have to tolerate people’s wrong behavior as well.”)

This mean emotional restraint and patience required in policing. Since self-respect is fundamental to every individual, both police and the public should be mindful of treating each other with dignity, as it can deeply affect a person’s mental well-being.

4.4.1.1 Public demands

The high expectations of the public from the police significantly impact the mental health of police officers, often leading to stress and emotional strain. Nowadays, public demands have increased, as everyone calls the police for their issues. A few decades back, people used to resolve their issues on their own. A respondent mentioned that

"hr shahks ko police sy nafrat bhi hai, aur hr shahks chahta hai... meray sath police bhi ho."

("Everyone hates the police, yet everyone wants the police to be there for them.")

There is a lack of awareness among the public regarding laws, rules, regulations, and their rights. Public demands become more stressful when they want their work to be done immediately, often without understanding whether it is legally possible. Public should have enough knowledge to understand and cooperate with police officers. Most of the time, police officers try to communicate with the public, but they fail to understand. In such conditions, when police reject these kinds of requests, the public starts to question the credibility of police officers.

The public often brings unjustifiable expectations from the police, causing distress and reflecting irritability. A respondent stated,

"Police humari baat manay... woh jaaiz hai ya najaaiz... lykin police humari baat manay ... bs inki yehi hoti hai."

("People want the police to listen to them—whether it's right or wrong. That's all they care about.")

Public often demand favourable treatment regardless of legality, leading to ethical dilemmas and pressure on officers.

Commonly, the public tries to misuse police services for their other affairs that are not legal issues. According to a police officer,

"Ek banday ka civil nooiyat ka kaam hai, who humein zayada use krty hain ky"

yaar usko thora sa daba do .. tu woh misuse krty hain . police is tarah ka humara ek culture ban gay hai naa.. us hisab sy yeh humein misude krty hain ky yaar thora kharcha laga lo ... ya kisi sy phone krwa liya ..aur kiya kehty hain ..apna mtlb aap is ko dabdaba laga jaien gy. Ky mera yeh falan ..phone krwa ky ..Illegal.” (“Someone has a civil matter, and they use us more for it... as they say, ‘Just put a little pressure on him.’ They misuse it. This has become a culture within the police, where they say, ‘Just spend a little money’ or ‘Make a call to someone.’ And what do they say? ‘You can exert your influence on this.’ They think, ‘I can get this done by making a call,’ which is illegal.”)

The statement reflects how police authority is often manipulated through informal channels, leading to misuse of power and corruption, creating a cycle where illegal practices become normalized within the system. He added,

”Adalatein slow kaam krti hain ..aapko das barah saal main insaf nahi milta.. tu log kehty hain ky idhr zara fast ho jaye ga.” (“Courts work slowly... you don’t get justice even in ten to twelve years. So people think things will move faster here.”)

Many police officers have reported receiving illogical and illegal demands from the public. Additionally, they often deal with humorous complaints, such as reporting a missing cat or calling the police because a husband is not picking up his wife’s call. He said,

”humein log tang krty hain.” (“People bother us”).

4.4.1.2 Public Response

According to police officers, the public often shows a lack of cooperation, understanding, and support towards them. Nowadays, even in road accidents, people tend to gather and start making videos or taking pictures instead of helping the injured. One officer expressed frustration over the public’s behaviour during critical incidents, stating that people make exclamation like,

“Ohoo bhoot shadeed accident hai... Ohoo.. ouper say yeh bhi keh dyta hai... yeh banda tu nahi bachy ga.” (“Oh no, it’s a severe accident... Oh no... and on top of that, they even say, ‘This person won’t survive.’”)

Officers also face pressure from the public to file fake cases. One respondent mentioned,

“muje bhoot gussa ata hai keh jo jhoothi FIR ky liye apny jism ko kaat lyty hain... kahein koi aysa waqoah bna lytay hain.. yani jhooth sy nafrat hai.”
(“I get very angry at those who cut themselves just to file a false FIR... or create a fake incident. I truly hate lies.”)

This sentiment reflects a growing concern among police officers regarding the behavior of the majority of the public, which they feel is often critical. While not everyone speaks negatively about the police, one officer noted that *“40 out of 60 people criticize police officers.”*

He also pointed out that some police officers exhibit a typical communication style that can come off as rough and guff:

“unka bolny ka style bara ajeeb hota hai ... thora rough tough bolty hain .. karakht bolty hain.”
(“Their way of speaking is quite strange... a bit rough and tough, very harsh.”)

At times, the police must adopt strict behavior to enforce rules and regulations, as it was necessary during the implementation of SOPs during COVID. The officer explained, *“off the record baat hai ..keh .. chunkay humari awam aysi hai ... deal krny ky liye aysa krna parta hai.”*, (*“Off the record, the thing is... since our people are like this, we have to deal with them this way.”*)

The public’s response and attitude toward police officers, often shown as criticism, unrealistic expectations, and lack of support, contribute to significant mental strain. Continuous exposure to public judgment, negative perceptions, and high-pressure situations not only affects officers’ psychological well-being that leads to stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion.

4.4.1.3 Public Perception or Image of Police Officers

When the public's demands are not met by the police, they often route to blaming and speaking negatively about police officers. One officer highlighted a common perception among the public: that getting work done requires a reference or connection. However, he noted that Islamabad police operate independently of such dependencies.

Police officers notified that media is portraying negative image of police officer. Such as in stage shows they also make fun of this reputable profession, creates a negative image of the profession. They pointed out that stage shows and comedic dramas frequently make fun of police officers, contributing to a poor public perception. One officer remarked,

“Mazaq uratay hain... tu yeh jo hai ... is tarah nahi hona chahyie.”, (“They make fun... but it shouldn't be this way.”)

This highlights frustration with public disrespect toward law enforcement, which can contribute to low morale, emotional exhaustion, and strained police-community relationships. These characteristics represent specific culture and its influence on both police and public. Furthermore, during investigations, police officers must engage with both parties involved in a case. However, they sometimes face accusations from complainants, who suspect police officers of taking bribes when they see them speaking with the opposing party. As one officer noted,

“agr hum applicant ky sath kharay howy hain tu who kahein gy kh zaror is ky sath paisay ka lyn dyn chal raha hai.” (“If we stand with the applicant, people will say there's definitely some money involved.”)

This reflects cultural influence that create an environment of distrust toward law enforcement, where assumptions of bribery and corruption can undermine police credibility, discourage fair investigations, and increase occupational stress for honest officers.

4.4.1.4 Lack of Awareness in Public

There is a significant lack of awareness among the public regarding their rights and the legal procedures in place. This gap in understanding often leads to unrealistic, illogical, and illegal demands directed at police officers.

4.4.2 Relationship with Fellow Officers

In general, police officers reported having positive relationships with their colleagues. They emphasize that the significant amount of time spent together in the workplace is crucial for maintaining these relationships. While they acknowledge that strained or negative relationships can make the work environment more challenging, most male officers express that they have good relationships with their peers.

Female officers, while also maintaining generally positive relationships, note that individual differences can affect compatibility in the workplace. They highlight the presence of both supportive and challenging individuals in their environment, but the majority report positive interactions with their colleagues.

One male officer described their company, stating,

“... ek hi ghar ki maanind hota hai.. humara system tu ..” Another added humorously, *“Bhoot achay hotay hain... aap nay kabhi dekha nahi hai ... hum aapas main itna free hoty hain ky aap souch bhi nahi sakti ... hahahahaha ... aysay shugal lagaty hain ... bs kiya bataon..”*

(“...it’s like one big family... our system is like that...” , “We are really great... tou have never seen us ... we are so free with each other that you can’t even imagine... hahahaha... we have so much fun together... what more can I say...”)

The workplace environment is characterized as open and friendly, where officers share jokes and laughter during gatherings. In the same way, they are emotionally available for each other, providing care and support during difficult times. Approximately 70% of officers report having good relationships with their peers. As one female officer quoted, *“Bs aap ko pata hai ky panchoon ungliyan barabr nahi hotin.”*, *(“You know that not all five fingers are the same.”)*

In conclusion most fellow officer/peers maintain good relationships, differences in personalities and attitudes naturally lead to varying interactions. This reflects the complexity of workplace dynamics, females face more difficult in manage as compare to males.

4.4.3 Impact of Policing Culture on Mental Health

The qualitative finding through interviews revealed that policing culture impact mental health of police officers.

4.4.3.1 Hierarchical and Authoritative Dynamics

The hierarchical and authoritative dynamics of policing culture often create immense pressure on officers to conform, leading to feelings of isolation, frustration and stress. Senior officers are perceived by subordinates' as holding the chain of command with high expectations and little flexibility in outcomes.

“Zehni ikhtalaf hota hai magr kaam sab yehi krty hain.” (“There are differences in [approach/perspectives], but everyone does the same work.”)

While the routines of senior officers may vary, the basic rules, regulations, procedures, and SOPs remain unchanged. However, minor administrative changes can sometimes disrupt individuals or entire teams, which abuse of power in policing. Conversely, some officers conveyed that every new senior officer brings different rules and management styles, causing instability within the force. Frequent postings and transfers create distress, as officers struggle to re-adapt to new environments. Someone who has adjusted to their role is suddenly transferred elsewhere, disrupting their work and life.

Officers emphasized that coordination and harmony among team members lead to positive outcomes in policing.

One officer shared:

Jab bhi bytuka, koi bhi hukam aata hai... tu woh zehni sehat pr asr andaz hota hai... ab aap dekhein na aap bhi mashAllah samjhdar hain... aap kay zimy ek aysa kaam laga diya jaye ... aap kay khayal ky mutabiq kaam hi theek nahi hai, tu banday ko ...”

(“Whenever an irrational order comes, it affects mental health. Now, just think... you’re quite understanding, MashAllah... if you are assigned a task ...that... in your opinion, is not appropriate, then a person...”)

When order from senior rank police officer conflict with their judgment and understanding, that conflict under abuse of power can lead to emotional strain, cognitive dissonance, demoralization, and decreased job satisfaction. Some might agree to proceed, while others may express reluctance by stating, *“I don’t want to do it.”*. As a result of refusing to comply, they could potentially face transfer/Posting. Those who remain honest in their duties often face more challenges in the system due to these kinds of demands.

Officers mentioned that they seek guidance from senior officers whenever needed. They referred to those officers who are working in police stations as IO/SI/I/SHO. On the other hand there is a marked difference in duties and responsibilities of most senior ranks, a police officer declared that:

“Officer rank ki nokri tu badshahi hai..”, “un ko noori makhlooq keh ty hain naa, ...unhon ny order pass krny hoty hain... koi burden[nahi] unka...”

(“An officer’s job is like royalty... they are referred to as ‘noori makhlooq’ (divine beings) — they have to pass orders... they have no burden.”)

The responsibility, tough field duties and hardship are concentrated at the bottom, while the top enjoys a life of ease. Even the upper ranks (DSP and above) are exempt from courts, while lower-ranked officers (ASI, Sub-Inspector) handle court proceedings, investigations, and fieldwork.

“opar waly tu enjoy krty hain.. nechy waly in cheezon ko bardashat kr rahy hoty hain .. pehly sy ly kr akhir tk...”

(“Those at the top enjoy, while those at the bottom endure these things... from start to end.”)

The pressure from senior officers, continuous monitoring, and strict check and balance have a direct impact on the mental well-being of police officers. The hierarchical structure leaves no room or any flexibility for disagreement, forcing officers to obey, even when orders seem unjust, illogical and illegal.

“yes sir... hum no sir nahi bol sakti..afsaraan ky agy..agr wo ghalat hain tab bhi yes sir..”, “mind jonsa hai gawahi nahi dy raha hota..lykin zaban aur baqi cheezein jo hain wo gawahi dy rahi hoti hain ... na chahty howy bhi humein krna parta hai ..bolna parta hai ..afsaraan ky haq main baat krni parti hai. Agr hum afsaran ky khilaf baat krin tu wo humaien bahir kr dyty hain”.

(“Yes sir... we can never say ‘no sir’ to officers. Even if they are wrong, it’s always ‘yes sir.’”, “The mind may not be giving testimony, but the tongue and other things are providing testimony... even when we don’t want to, we have to do it... we have to speak in favour of the officers. If we speak against the officers, they can throw us out.”)

This statement reflects the internal conflict individuals may experience in situations where they feel compelled to support authority figures, even if they personally disagree or do not believe in what they are saying.

This highlights the challenges of navigating power dynamics within organizations, where loyalty to authority can sometimes override personal principles. Officers suggested that senior officers should support and guide their subordinates, rather than solely enforcing authority. A police officer complained by saying,

“afsaran humari madad krin.. hum un ki madad krin..mtlab ky afsaran ko bhi chahyie ky apny matehtoon ko apny sath ly kr chalein”. (“Officers should help us, and we should help them... meaning officers should also take their subordinates along with them.”)

This emphasizes the need for mutual support and teamwork in law enforcement.

4.4.3.2 Lack of Appreciation and Support from Department/Senior Officers

Many police officers expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of appreciation and support from their senior-ranked officers. They believe that good performance should be acknowledged, but often, it goes overlooked.

One officer stated:

“koi pershani banti hai na... humaray tu backup pr afsaran han naa.. wo madad nahi krtay”. (“When a problem arises, our officers are supposed to be our backup... but they don’t help.”)

This reflects frustration over a lack of leadership support, where subordinates feel abandoned in difficult situations, leading to stress, decreased morale, and a weakened internal bond within the organization.

Officers compared this lack of support to other forces, particularly the military, where higher-ranking officials actively stand by their subordinates,

“un ka ek constable...kisi sipahi ka masla banta hai naa... tu aa jata hai ... un ka karnal(colonel) sharnal ... humara agr accident ho jaye kisi ka ..bari wafaat ho jati hai .. tu woh is main mtlb woh ..ek tu banda disheart ho jata hai ..”

(“If a constable or soldier from their side faces an issue, their colonel and senior officers immediately step in. But if one of ours gets into an accident or even if there’s a major casualty, no one steps forward... it’s disheartening.”)

Some officers reported that in challenging or dangerous situations, they receive little to no assistance from their superiors and must handle everything on their own.

4.5 Balancing Personal and Professional Life

The policing job significantly disrupts various aspects of a police officer’s personal life. When they do find free time, officers often prioritize sleep and rest. They face unrealistic expectations from both their department and the public, impacting their overall well-being. As a result, their sleeping and eating patterns are disturbed, with no time to have proper meals and often experiencing large gaps

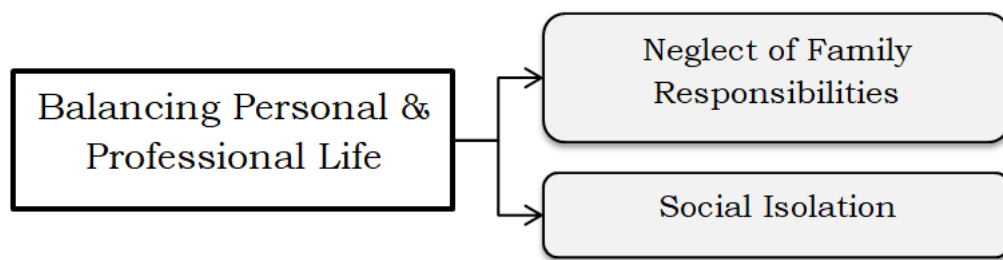


FIGURE 4.6: Theme 5

between eating. One officer expressed this struggle:

“aap eight hours ki sleep ko skip kr rhy hain aur zahir hai there is no even eight hours sleep tu phir aap khaaye jaa rahy hain. Because we take too much workload aur dosra humari energy bht consume hoti hai .. tu we take sugar and all food..tu is sy naa..”

(“You are skipping eight hours of sleep, and obviously, there isn’t even proper eight-hour sleep. So then you just keep eating. Because we take on too much workload, and our energy is consumed a lot, we end up consuming sugar and all kinds of food... so this leads to...”)

This highlights the impact of sleep deprivation and excessive workload on eating habits, where officers rely on high-calorie, sugary foods as coping mechanisms, potentially leading to health issues such as obesity, stress eating, and metabolic imbalances over time.

Female police officers face unique challenges in balancing their personal and professional lives. Married officers, in particular, struggle more than their unmarried counterparts, as they must manage responsibilities as homemakers, wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law. They often feel overwhelmed by the demands placed on them, stating:

“phir duty zayda hai... zehni dabao...tension... pershani.”,(“Then there’s excessive duty... mental pressure... stress... worry.”)

This reflects the cumulative impact of excessive workload on mental health, where prolonged stress and high-pressure duties contribute to psychological strain, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion among officers. Officers declared that policing is not merely a job but a lifestyle; they have to spend their day and nights. A lady officer emphasizing the constant nature of their responsibilities:

“jesy ab ghar late jaongi , mera bacha mera intezar kr raha hoga , main usko time nahi dunggi tu muje tension hogi.” (“Like now, if I reach home late, my child will be waiting for me. If I don’t give him time, I will feel stressed.”)

The above statement indicates, long working hours and professional responsibilities create emotional distress, guilt, and difficulties in balancing personal and family life. They also reported that the difficulties in their personal lives often arise from the demands of their job: *“Police force [ki waja sy], zayda mushkilein humari personal life main hoti hain.”*, (“Because of the police force, we face more difficulties in our personal lives.”)

This highlights how the demands of policing negatively affect personal life, leading to stress, emotional strain, and difficulties in maintaining healthy relationships due to long hours, unpredictable duties, and job-related pressures. The pressure of balancing marriage, children, and home management leads to heightened tension:

“abhi zimadariyan zayda hain.. shadi hai.. bachy hain .. ghar hai ... hr chez ko manage krna hai.. ghar ko manage krna.. office ko manage krna atu tension zayda hoti hai.”, (“Now there are more responsibilities... marriage, children, a home... everything has to be managed. Managing the household and the office increases stress.”)

The above quote shows that professional duties and family responsibilities lead to increased stress and mental overload.

The findings reveal that positive experiences can improve an individual’s personality, while negativity can damage it, leading to a need for maintaining a positive

outlook. Officers who struggle to balance personal and professional life may experience extreme distress, with one female officer reporting that mental stress has led to her struggles with depression.

4.5.1 Neglect of Family Responsibilities

Due to the nature of their job, police officers find it challenging to maintain family connections. Many respondents report that their family dynamics suffer due to long duty hours and overburdening responsibilities. They reported that they couldn't spend time with their family, especially their children. Due to their duties, they couldn't celebrate special events and occasions with their family and children. One respondent articulated the impact of duty on family life: "*Duty ki wajah sy humara jo family system hai naa... woh samjho, ek khatam ho kr reh jata hai... btanay ki had tk reh jata hai.*", ("Because of duty, our family system... it feels like it comes to an end... it remains to the extent of just telling.")

This reflects the severe impact of police duty on family life, where long working hours, unpredictable schedules, and job stress lead to weakened family bonds, emotional distance, and a sense of disconnection from loved ones. Furthermore, it was stated that, "*Ghar walo ko lagta hai hum jaan bujh kar time nahi dete, lekin kaam ka pressure samajhna mushkil hai.*", ("Family members feel that we intentionally don't give them time, but it's hard for them to understand the work pressure.")

It highlights the emotional distance, feeling of guilt, strained relationships, and sacrifices by officers, leading to a sense of disconnect from their loved ones.

4.5.2 Social Isolation

The unpredictable nature of their duties often results in social withdrawal, as officers find it challenging to maintain friendships or engage in social activities.

"*Doston ke sath milna mushkil ho gaya hai, kabhi duty kabhi extra shift.*", ("Meeting friends has become difficult... sometimes it's duty, sometimes an extra shift.")

This statement expresses the difficulty of maintaining friendships due to the demands of work, highlighting how professional obligations, such as regular duties and extra shifts, limit opportunities for socializing and connecting with friends. Besides that some officers prefer to isolate themselves from stressful situations. As one responder noted: *“apny in sy cut off ho kr... banda ghar beth...”,* (*“Disconnecting from them... a person just sits at home...”*)

Others reported that they disconnect from their surroundings and spend more time on their mobile phones can lead to feelings of loneliness or inactivity.

4.6 Coping Mechanisms and Resilience

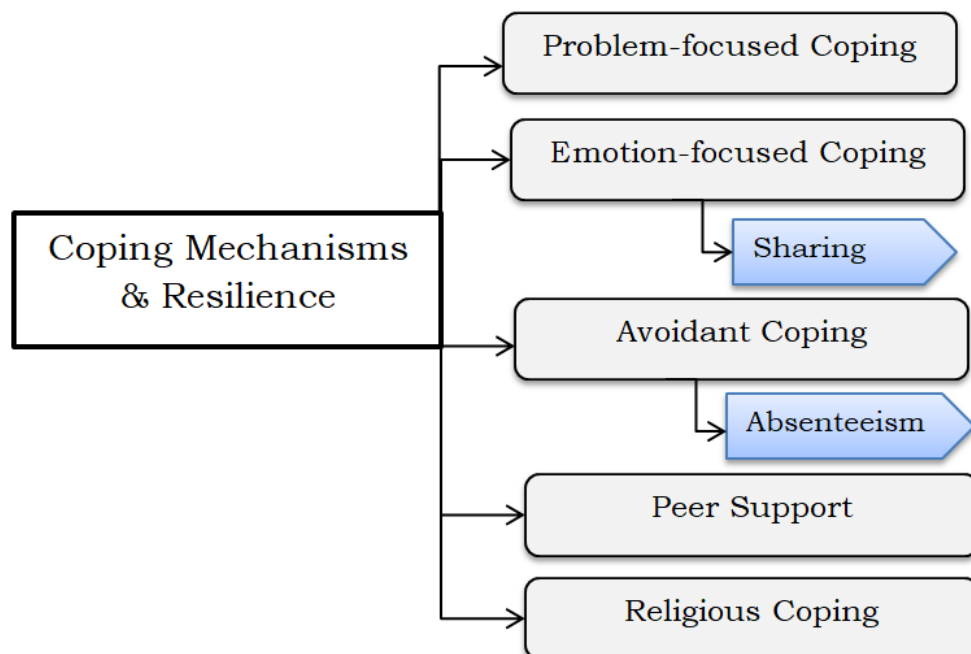


FIGURE 4.7: Theme 6

Respondents highlighted that each individual has their own coping style, adapting their priorities and behaviors based on their current situations. Resilience among police officers tends to increase with experience in the policing job, allowing them to better navigate difficult situations. One officer mentioned that his *“willpower”* is a key factor in overcoming challenges, reflecting the inner strength needed for resilience. Many officers find inner satisfaction and peace in helping others in need. Other coping mechanisms include using mobile devices, reading books, cooking,

cleaning, and spending quality time with family, which help female officers relax and refresh their minds.

One officer stated: “*gareeb ko paisay dyna bht khushi milti hai.*” (“*Giving money to the poor brings a lot of happiness.*”).

It provides a sense of purpose, satisfaction, and personal well-being. A female officer shared her approach to coping through “*socialization*”.

4.6.1 Problem-focused Coping

Self-confidence as coping strategy enables police officer to handle difficult situations effectively. Through self-confidence they can tackle challenges directly, solve problems, and take proactive steps. It was highlighted that policing job equipped with marked confidence in oneself.

4.6.2 Emotion-focused Coping

To manage stress, some officers engage in solitude, retreating to quiet places to rest and recharge before returning to their duties. This aligns with emotion-focused coping, offering temporary relief from emotional distress and helping restore mental well-being. Spending quality time with family enhances the overall well-being of police officers. Also people provide emotional support to one another.

4.6.2.1 Sharing

Many police officers prefer sharing departmental issues with colleagues rather than family, as this is a common coping style. They seek advice and solutions from peers to alleviate their distress when feeling mentally exhausted. Most officers feel more comfortable discussing their feelings and family matters with close peers rather than with seniors. Sharing with loved ones, such as fathers or husbands, also helps. However, one female officer suggested avoiding sharing issues within the department, as it can lead to gossip and ridicule.

4.6.3 Avoidant Coping

4.6.3.1 Absenteeism

When distress levels rise due to multiple factors, some officers may feel overwhelmed and start skipping work by taking fake medical leaves. If they don't get medical leave they get absent from the duty without informing. One officer expressed how overwhelming distress can lead to depressive symptoms, stating: *"absent ho gai.. ghar main beth gai ky mery sy dono kaam nahi ho rhy, bs aram sy beth gai."* (*"I became absent... stayed at home because I couldn't manage both responsibilities. So I just decided to rest."*)

This reflects the overwhelming burden of balancing work and personal life, where excessive stress leads to withdrawal, exhaustion, and an eventual inability to manage both roles effectively.

4.6.4 Peer Support

Teamwork within the police force serves as a vital support system, helping officers cope with challenging situations. Peer support is consistently available in various circumstances.

4.6.5 Religious Coping

Religious coping is a widely practiced and effective strategy among officers. Many police officers utilize religion as a strong coping mechanism, with prayer serving as a common form of spiritual support. One officer stated: *"pershan hoti hoon, tu phir bs kiya ky namaz parhti hun, Allah sy dua mangti hun, namaz main tub hoot sakoon milta hai."* (*"When I feel stressed, I just pray, ask Allah for help, and find peace in prayer."*)

It highlights the role of religious practices as a coping mechanism, where prayer provides emotional relief, inner peace, and a sense of resilience in dealing with

stress and challenges.

In conclusion, police officers utilize different coping strategies to manage their everyday stressors. They employ both adaptive and maladaptive coping, adaptive coping helps to reduce distress and improve mental health, as well as decrease symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety. Strategies such as solution-oriented approach, peers support, and religious coping are perceived as strong and more useful among police officers. In contrast, maladaptive coping may provide temporary relief from stress but is not beneficial for long term use. Maladaptive coping can worsen stressors or emotional issues rather than alleviating them, examples include avoidance and isolation.

4.7 Lack of Resources

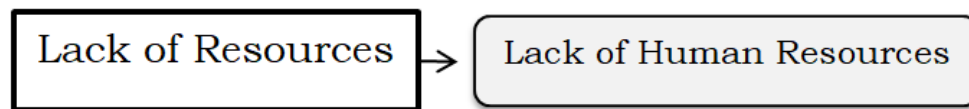


FIGURE 4.8: Theme 7

Police officers emphasized the urgent need for the government to strengthen financial and operational resources to improve policing functions. A key concern is the absence of a designated budget for essential responsibilities, such as arranging funerals and burials in cases where no heir is present. Additionally, officers highlighted challenges related to transport, convenience, and other investigation-related expenses. Due to limited financial support, officers often rely on complainants to cover investigation costs.

Beyond financial constraints, officers face inadequate institutional support, including a lack of proper hospitals, schools, and secure housing for themselves and their families.

4.7.1 Lack of Human Resources

The shortage of officers results in excessive workloads for existing staff, further amplifying stress levels. An officer reported: *"Staff kam hai aur kaam zyada, ek insan kitna kaam kar sakta hai?"*, (*"The staff is less, and the work is too much. How much can one person handle?"*)

The above stating shows that short strength of police personnel leading to excessive workload, stress, and burnout, which can negatively impact mental health, job performance, and overall well-being.

The burden of policing primarily falls on low-ranking officers, such as constables, who are responsible for frontline duties, including patrolling and conducting investigations. One officer quoted: *"Logon ko jo asal faida pohanchana hota hai wo constable nay... jis nay yahan ghoomna hai ..dhondhna hai."*, (*"The real service to the people is done by the constable... the one who has to go around, search, and handle things on the ground."*)

This highlights the critical yet often overlooked role of lower-ranking officers, emphasizing how constables bear the real workload and responsibilities in policing, despite receiving less recognition and authority. Overburden remains a significant issue, contributing to mental health struggles and cardiac problems among officers. Furthermore, salary deductions for absences due to illness add to their stress, making it difficult for officers to balance their demanding professional responsibilities with personal well-being.

4.8 Insufficient Mental Health Support and Lack of Awareness

Mental health concerns among police officers are widely recognized as social issues, yet they remain neglected due to a lack of awareness and institutional support. Officers experience various psychological challenges but often lack understanding and resources to manage them effectively. While a support system is under development, it is not yet fully operational.

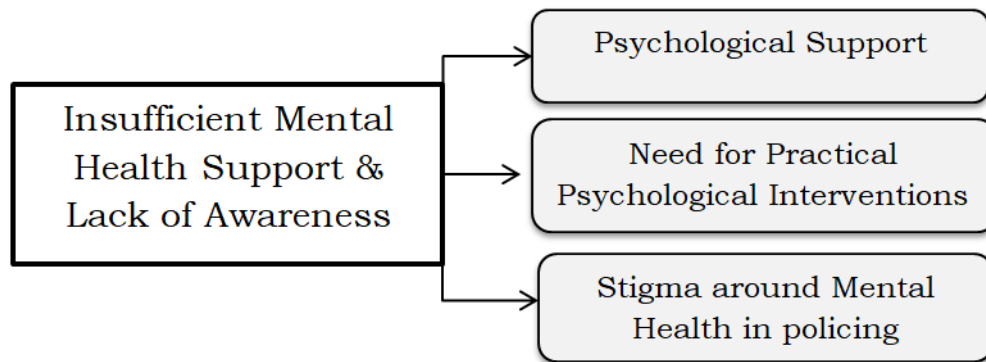


FIGURE 4.9: Theme 8

A key concern is the absence of dedicated healthcare facilities for police personnel. Officers emphasized the urgent need for a separate hospital to address their mental health needs. One officer stated:

“Zehni lyhaz pr kuch nahi Yeh aap naa bilkul wazeha likhein ky ..jo mental health hai na.. police ki us pr kuch bhi nahi..”, “Mental health aap 5% laga lyn 100 main sy.” (“Mentally, there is nothing. . . You should write this very clearly that when it comes to police mental health, there is absolutely nothing.”, “For mental health, you can estimate it at just 5% out of 100.”)

This reflects the severe neglect of mental health within the police force, where lack of awareness, support, and resources leads to psychological distress, burnout, and untreated mental health issues among officers. Participants suggested implementing a structured mental health support system, including regular psychological assessments and check-ups, either weekly or at least annually to address concerns at an early stage.

4.8.1 Psychological Support

Although some officers acknowledged the presence of psychologists in the department, they perceived their role as a formality, with minimal practical impact. One officer remarked: *“Bs formality puri ki thi.”*, (“it was just a formality”)

Others denied the existence of any psychological services or mental health support, stating they had to manage their mental well-being independently. Some

officers gave direct responses such as “NO” and “zero” when asked about available mental health resources. A female officer expressed skepticism about existing psychological support:

“Wasy kehny ki haad tk tu bht saray hain. . . lykin main ny nahi dekhey.” (*“There are supposedly many, but I haven’t seen them.”*)

She further explained that the effectiveness of therapy or psychological treatment is limited due to the intense and inflexible nature of police work. If a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist suggests rest, there is no option for rest available here. Similarly, if they recommend reducing working hours, that concept does not exist in the police force. She shared her experience, stating that she hasn’t had any leave or day off for the last 9 to 10 weeks, which is very stressful.

4.8.2 Need for Practical Psychological Interventions

Officers emphasized that mental health services should go beyond formalities and address their personal struggles beyond their professional role. One female officer stated: *“Humary bhi sessions krwaye jaein.. Formality puri na ki jaye.”* *“Humari zaat ko jana jaye. . . humein batoor e police officer na jana jaye.”*, (*“We should also have sessions, but they shouldn’t just be a formality.”*, *“Our individuality should be recognized. . . we shouldn’t be seen only as police officers.”*)

This highlights the need for personalized psychological support, including sessions on stress and anger management, rather than generic programs that do not align with their real-life challenges.

4.8.3 Stigma around Mental Health in policing

Police officers should take advantage of the available support and services. They believe that if someone is experiencing a mental health issue, they should seek treatment rather than fear the consequences.

One police officer described the situation as follows:

“Log yeh kehtay hain kay... main jaon ga tu log mazaq uthaein gy keh... kami mehsos krin gy... keh yeh dekho... main psycho ho gya hoon... ya is liye gya hoon... tu who chupaaty hain. Yeh chupaana nahi chahiye. Agr koi takleef hai... jana chahiye.”

(“People say that if I go, others will make fun of me... they’ll feel there’s something wrong... like, ‘Look at him, he’s gone because he’s gone crazy or has a problem.’ So they hide it. But this shouldn’t be hidden. If someone is struggling, they should seek help.”)

The above saying highlights the stigma around mental health in police, where due to fear of judgement prevent officers from seeking help for mental health issues.

In the police force, people share and talk about their tensions and stress but are hesitant to share with seniors. They feel more comfortable discussing their issues with close fellow officers and batch mates. One female officer stated:

“Agr farz karain senior baji bethi hain, in ko yahan kitne saal ho gaye hain... main yahan new ai hun, agr main in se discuss karti hun, tu ye agay discuss kar dain gi... tu mujhe in se dar lagta hai... hum nahi kar sakte... hum aapas mein khul ke kar sakte hain.”

(Suppose a senior female officer is sitting here... she has been here for many years, and I am new. If I discuss something with her, she might pass it on to others. So, I fear speaking to her. We can’t do it... but among ourselves, we can talk openly.)

The above statement conveys a sense of apprehension about discussing issues with senior colleagues, fearing that their thoughts may be shared or misinterpreted, which hinders open communication. This highlights the need for a supportive environment where individuals feel safe to express their concerns and collaborate without fear of judgment.

4.9 Recommendations for Improvement

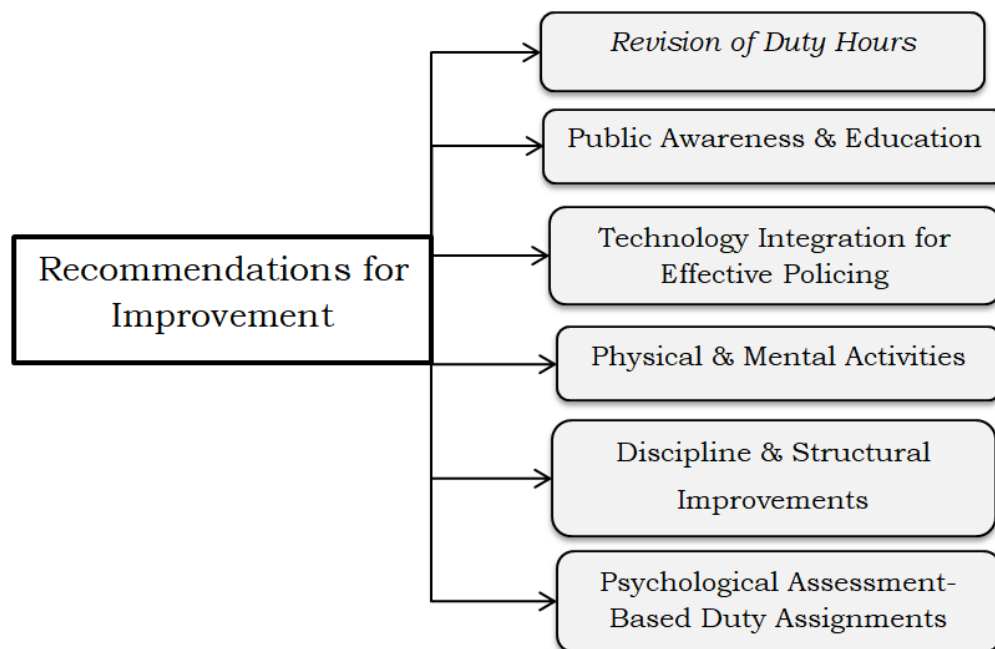


FIGURE 4.10: Theme 9

To enhance the mental well-being of police officers, several key improvements were suggested, particularly focusing on duty hours, training, technology integration, and overall work-life balance.

4.9.1 Revision of Duty Hours

One of the most pressing concerns is the demanding work schedule, which negatively impacts officers' mental and physical health. It was recommended that duty hours be reduced and revised to allow officers proper rest and recovery.

4.9.2 Public Awareness and Education

To improve public cooperation and reduce unrealistic demands on police officers, it was recommended that basic legal education, including knowledge of rules, regulations, and citizens' rights, be integrated into academic curriculum.

4.9.3 Technology Integration for Effective Policing

Given the evolving nature of crime, particularly cybercrimes, police officers emphasized the importance of integrating advanced scientific technologies and upgrading investigative methods to enhance efficiency.

4.9.4 Physical and Mental Well-being Activities

To manage stress and maintain good health, officers recommended introducing recreational and sports activities within the police department. A male officer suggested:

“Inko timetable banana chahyie, hafty main ek br relax hona chahyie.”, “gaming honi chahyien”.

(“They should make a timetable... there should be one day in the week to relax.”

“There should be gaming activities.”)

The need for break, recreational activities like gaming in policing is emphasized for relaxation and reducing stress, improve mental wellbeing and enhance work life balance.

4.9.5 Discipline and Structural Improvements

Despite being a disciplined force, some officers noted a lack of structured discipline within the Pakistani police compared to international standards. Strengthening internal discipline and organizational structure could improve overall functioning.

A male officer highlighted this concern:

“Hum kehtay hain ky agla theek ho... hum khud theek nahi hoty agly ko hum theek krtay hain... keh main kehta hoon ky yeh theek ho jaye tu muashrah theek hoga... jab sab apna apna role play krin gy tu phir muashrah theek hoga.”

(“We say that the other person should be fine... while we ourselves are not fine. We try to fix others... I say that if this gets better, then society will improve... when everyone plays their own role, then society will be fine.”)

A police officer expressed his belief that while they strive to help others improve, they often neglect their own well-being. They emphasize that substantial/societal

change can only occur when everyone fulfills their individual responsibilities and roles.

4.9.6 Psychological Assessment-Based Duty Assignments

It was suggested that officers who are particularly vulnerable to mental health issues should undergo psychological assessments. Based on these evaluations, their duties should be adjusted to reduce stress, such as assigning them to VIP security instead of high-pressure investigation roles.

The findings of the study, in light of the Biopsychosocial Model, reveal the complex interplay of both psychological and socio-cultural factors in policing. The findings highlight the intricate role of policing culture and its characteristics on the mental health of police officers. The policing job is physically and psychologically demanding in nature, and officers face significant stressors during their work. These stressors are compounded by psychological and social influences, such as operational and organizational stressors. In order to fulfill their job responsibilities, officers must encounter these stressors on a daily basis. The frequency and intensity of these prolonged exposures make them vulnerable to mental health illnesses.

The analysis of the data shows that police officers often suppress their feelings and emotions. Many officers adopt maladaptive coping strategies, such as emotional suppression, avoidance, or detachment, as policing culture often discourages emotional expression. They frequently opt for avoidance as a coping mechanism, which further exacerbates mental health issues. The most common and probable mental health issues include suppression of emotions leading to depression, anxiety, and PTSD.

Public interaction is an integral part of their job responsibilities, and the relationship between the public and police is significant. When viewed through the lens of socio-cultural aspects, the relationship and interaction between the public and police are influential. The results highlight a weak and strained relationship

among them. The cumulative effect of this dynamic leads to burnout, aggression, frustration, distress, and other psychological issues.

Furthermore, police officers face numerous challenges that adversely affect their well-being. In Pakistan, hierarchical structures within law enforcement contribute to stress, as junior officers may experience cultural influences, bureaucratic interference, and pressure to comply with unrealistic demands while receiving minimal support. Negative public perception further exacerbates stress, as officers often face criticism and hostility from civilians, leading to feelings of demotivation and isolation. Gender-based challenges also play a crucial role, as female officers encounter additional workplace discrimination and social expectations that increase their psychological burden.

This study examines how these social dynamics influence police officers' mental health. The analysis also reflects a lack of mental health resources and a reluctance to seek psychological help, which further contributes to distress. By addressing these factors, this study can inform policies that promote leadership support, peer mentoring, and reforms to create a more supportive and mentally healthy work environment. The stigma surrounding mental health in policing culture further prevents officers from seeking professional help, as they fear being perceived as weak or incapable.

In policing, the psychological demands significantly influence the mental health and job performance of police officers. The nature of the job affects various aspects of police officers' lives. Constant and frequent exposure to stressors, coupled with socio-cultural influences, results in adverse outcomes. The workload and long duty hours impact cognitive functioning, decision-making, performance, and contribute to burnout.

Chapter 5

Discussion

In the discussion chapter, the key findings of this study critically relates to existing literature, provide a comprehensive analysis on the role of policing culture and its impact on mental health of police officers in Pakistan. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of objectives, methodology, particularly related to population, procedure, and key themes (expected trends and unexpected findings) that emerged from the data. Researcher's observations during the field work, strengths and limitations of this study, and potential directions for future research are suggested. By integrating the Biopsychosocial Model (50), the findings were interpreted within a broader framework by narrows the focus and utilize only psychological and socio-cultural dimension. It illustrates that how psychological and socio-cultural factors contribute to mental health concerns. It also helps to understand that complex interplay of these factors within the profession of police the role of policing culture and impact of high-stressful job on mental health of police officer.

5.1 Key Findings of the Study

This study explored the mental health challenges and impact of policing culture on mental health of police officers in Islamabad, Pakistan. The qualitative analysis of the data has provided diverse understanding of mental health and policing culture. The finding revealed the complex interplay of policing culture in mental

health of police officer. The result chapter highlight that police officers experience high levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, and poor work-life balance due to excessive workload, lack of structured support systems, organizational and societal expectations and demands. The participants' understanding of mental health as "mental peace" and "relaxation of mind," while they also linking poor mental health with stress, burden, struggles and disturbed everyday functioning. They also identified the impact of poor mental on cognitive functioning.

The results not only highlight the presence of deeply rooted cultural norms but also shed light on the complex factors that impact officers' willingness to share vulnerabilities and seek assistance. A few officers showed strong reluctance to acknowledge any distress, pressure, disturbances, or mental health difficulties in their police work. They were very defensive and reported that their mental health is good, stating that they never feel tense or disturbed and that they face all difficulties and problems with ease. But bureaucratic interference and unnecessary pressure by the use of power, authority creates problems for them that have detrimental effect. Research literature showed, bureaucratic red tape and ineffective leadership as influential operational stressors within the police force that contribute to high level of stress (158; 156).

One of the most significant findings was that police officers perceive their mental health as secondary to their professional responsibilities. Many officers described their work as an 'all-consuming duty', leading to persistent stress and emotional fatigue. The inability to manage personal and professional life for law enforcement officers was a recurring theme, illustrate that how they are trapped in a spiral of job duties and responsibilities, long duty hours, administrative challenges, organizational and public demands, authoritative pressure, family responsibilities, emotional and physical exhaustion, burnout, aggression, traumatic experiences, death of fellow officers, dealing with people in their worst conditions, experiencing emotional pain compiled with lack of financial resources and support in line of duty(65; 39). These finding are consistent with literature, such situations can potentially cause catastrophic effects on police officers.

Previous research on first respondents found that shift work is strongly associated with poor mental health outcomes which involve poor sleep, anxiety, depressive

symptoms, poor quality of life and impaired cognitive functioning (122). Moreover, immediate requirement to fulfill multiple demands cause stress and frustration among police officers. It increases psychological burden, leading to stress, burnout, and reduced efficiency.

The key findings also uncovered both positive and negative impacts on behavior of police officers due to nature of police job. While analyzing the situations, negative aspects were found to receive more attention than the positive ones. Some officers believed that a direct connection between a police officer's behavior and their profession may not exist, suggesting that behavior is influenced by an individual's social background and educational experiences (142; 143; 144; 145; 141; 136). However, few officers did acknowledge that factors such as increased workload and long hours can lead to irritation or anger among officers.

In the contextual framework, the characteristics of policing culture identified based on existing literature. It includes operational and organizational stressors, long duty hours, authoritative roles and accountability, the behavior of police officers, public policing interaction.

This study also indicates burden of work and extended duty hours significantly affects the behavior and attitudes of police officers, impacting personal relationships as well. Poor physical health was highlighted as a factor contributing to irritability and agitation on duty, emphasizing the importance of physical well-being in maintaining professional conduct. The research literature demonstrates that police officers exhibit range of responses under stress such as nervous tension and irritability (275).

Additionally, the research pointed out the challenges faced by officers in managing stress during long working hours, with adequate breaks being identified as essential for improving behavior and efficiency.

The recruitment of educated police personnel was acknowledged to have brought positive changes in communication and behavior within the force, although the stressful nature of the job continues to contribute to behavioral issues among officers. Furthermore, post-mortem experiences were found to be traumatic for

officers, especially for those new to the profession, causing sleepless nights and extreme distress. These experiences were described as having severe psychological impacts on the mental and physical well-being of officers, highlighting the emotional distress of policing duties may lead to psychological illnesses. The operational and organizational stressors were identified as particularly complex and stressful in operational division duties influencing different aspects police officer lives (194; 195).

The results validate long-standing literature on the mental health challenges faced by law enforcement personnel. Prior research has similarly documented that high operational demands and traumatic exposures, coupled with an ingrained enduring culture, intensify the risk of mental health issues among officers (33). These findings complement earlier studies that have highlighted the need for systemic changes within police organizations, including the development of supportive infrastructures and more open discussions about mental health (3). By reinforcing and extending these prior observations, the current study contributes to a growing consensus that both organizational practices and cultural norms must evolve unitedly to support officers effectively.

While analyzing data, it provides rich information on all the major themes described in the result section. The findings highlight that the policing profession expose officers to numerous health-related challenges, including biological, psychological, and social issues. The participants reported disturb routine, the major components of routine crucial for physical and psychological health are shift work; irregular and long duty hours, disturbed body clock or circadian rhythm, rest and inadequate sleep impair cognitive functioning, decision making, quality of effective policing, disturbed eating patterns result in gastro intestinal issues, cardiovascular issues, diabetes, obesity, and mental health disorders like depression and anxiety.

The persistent chronic stress and experiencing traumatic incidents frequently increase the vulnerability to develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, burnout, substance abuse significant psychological and biological

health consequences. These findings correspond with existing literature.

The impact of public perception also emerged as a key theme, with officers expressing frustration over the lack of support and appreciation from the community they serve. Many officers reported that their interactions with the public were often encountered with criticism and hostility, which contributed to feelings of frustration, stress and demotivation. This aligns with previous studies that indicate how negative public perceptions can add psychological strain to law enforcement personnel.

Gender differences in mental health experiences were another notable finding, consistent with (121), who reported that female officers experience additional stressors such as societal expectations. The study also highlighted gender differences in the experience of mental health challenges. Female police officers reported additional stress due to societal expectations and balancing dual responsibilities at work and home. Many female officers described their struggles with maintaining a work-life balance, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities, which exacerbated their emotional burden.

Females face more challenges in law and order duties that last for days without break or even a day off. They struggle to manage basic necessities during these duties, as it has been reported that sometimes they find no food or washrooms nearby while on duty. They often have to request permission from public or even knock on people's doors to use their washrooms. They express excessive worry about their family responsibilities during duty time make them prone to overthink about the responsibilities. Furthermore, due to long duty hours, when they are unable to fulfill their family responsibilities including giving time to family and kids they experience feeling of guilt, tension or depression.

They call themselves "service providers" and perceive policing job as rewarding job. Respondents also emphasized that if individuals take interest in their work and enjoy their tasks, they do not perceive their responsibilities as a burden. Besides that the major characteristics of policing make individuals more confident, independent, courage and mature. However, it requires lot of patience, tolerance and hard work.

5.1.1 Strengths and Limitations of the study

This research study focuses exclusively on Islamabad police officers accurately reflects the diverse experiences and opinions of police personnel in the capital territorial region of Pakistan. The finding reveals the in-depth analysis of unique socio-political and cultural influence on police officer. It also provides insight into perception of mental health and support system with the specific context of Islamabad as capital of the country.

In discussing the strengths of this study, it is important to highlight several key aspects. First, the conceptualization and in-depth exploration of mental health within the context of policing culture provide valuable insights into an area that has been largely overlooked, particularly regarding Pakistani police officers. This research offers a holistic view of particularly, psychological and social influences of the challenges they face and the impact of a stressful work environment on their lives. By incorporating the perspectives of police officers, the findings strengthen the study and serve as a foundational basis for future research in this field. The highlighted findings are not only significant for understanding the current state of mental health among officers but also have the potential to inform policy reforms aimed at improving their well-being.

The data for this study was collected in a police station, which presented several challenges due to the nature of the officers' work. Interviews were conducted at the officers' convenience, and efforts were made to arrange the best possible environment for conducting interviews. However, interruptions were frequent, primarily due to the officers' ongoing job demands. This is a significant limitation of the study.

Despite these challenges, arrangements were made to ensure data accuracy and maintain the flow of conversation. The police officers appeared comfortable in the environment and were focused on the on-going interview conversation. However, it was evident that they were under considerable pressure, often handling multiple tasks simultaneously. In short the efforts were made to create a conducive atmosphere for interviews, the officers' busy schedules and the high-stress nature

of their work impacted the data collection process there were other short conversations that come across during the interview.

While this study identified significant themes related to mental health, operational and organizational stressors, coping mechanisms, and the impact of policing culture on mental health, it did not examine the long-term effects of these challenges. The in-depth exploration of factors affecting mental health is required to study separately to identify the substantial root causes of mental illnesses. Factors may include financial conditions, community violence and personal relationship can also impact mental health. The longitudinal research tracking changes in mental health over time would offer valuable insights into how officers adapt to stress and whether interventions are effective in improving their well-being.

This study did 'not explore the severity of mental health issue of police officer. In addition to that the suicidal ideation and suicidal thoughts were not explored. As the most common mental health illnesses increase the probability of suicidal thoughts and suicidal ideation. But few respondents mentioned that the few fellow officers in police office committed suicide due to overburden and exacerbated mental health issues.

Furthermore, the study identifies various factors affecting officers, ensuring that the voices of those most impacted are heard through findings of this study. This approach lends authenticity and real-world relevance to the identified challenges and recommendations. Additionally, this study is focused on multiple dimensions of well-being (mental, physical, and organizational aspects) provides a comprehensive perspective that is often overlooked in law enforcement research, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in police work.

5.1.2 Key Trends and Unexpected Outcomes

The commonly used strategy to manage hazardous critical situation in operational division is "prioritization" or "categorization". They prioritize tasks based on their severity and urgency. They emphasized the need to develop strategies

for handling job responsibilities. For instance, when faced with multiple incidents and other tasks, priority will be given to the most urgent issues, while other will be addressed later. Most officers use the same strategy because, due to insufficient human resources and an increased workload, they often encounter such conditions.

Furthermore, coping mechanisms varies among officers, in previous research study conducted by (276) highlighted that avoidance coping, religious coping, and peer support are commonly used strategies among police personnel to manage stress. Based on findings of this study many police officers strongly opt religions as effective coping style, some relying on avoidance strategies such as absenteeism and emotional suppression, peer and support. Police officers also use other coping styles, such as problem-focused and emotion-focused coping (60). The lack of access to mental health resources was a notable concern, with many officers stating that they had no formal support system to address their psychological distress. The stigma surrounding mental health in policing culture further prevented officers from seeking professional help, as they feared being perceived as weak or incapable.

The study underscores that policing culture significantly affects officers' well-being, with social, structural and systemic barriers exacerbating their struggles. The absence of well-defined policies for mental health support, excessive workload, and a rigid hierarchical structure contribute to the worsening mental health conditions of police officers. These findings emphasize the urgent need for institutional reforms to address mental health issues in law enforcement agencies and create a more supportive and sustainable work environment.

The results of this study align with previous literature emphasizing the high levels of occupational stress and psychological distress among police officers. (95) found that police work stressors, such as exposure to traumatic events, long working hours, and public scrutiny, are directly linked to increased symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. Similarly, the present study identified chronic stress as a major factor affecting officers' mental well-being, highlighting a need for targeted mental health interventions.

The results indicates the reluctance of officers to seek mental health support due to stigma, a finding supported by (16), who noted that the fear of being perceived as weak discourages law enforcement personnel from accessing psychological care. This cultural barrier to mental health treatment is deeply embedded in policing traditions worldwide, reinforcing a cycle of unresolved psychological distress.

Additionally, work-life balance emerged as a critical issue, mirroring the findings of (277), who identified significant work-family conflict among police officers. The unpredictable nature of policing, coupled with excessive working hours, often results in strained family relationships, emotional exhaustion, and burnout. In this study, officers expressed concerns about their inability to maintain personal relationships and fulfill family responsibilities, further emphasizing the impact of occupational stress on their overall well-being.

Overall, these findings contribute to the growing body of research on police mental health by confirming established trends while also highlighting specific challenges within the Pakistani policing context. The need for structural reforms, confidential and indigenous mental health interventions and treatment, and a cultural shift toward prioritizing well-being remains critical for fostering resilience among police officers.

An unexpected finding was the more variations in coping strategies among officers. While many officers relied on avoidance mechanisms such as absenteeism and suppression of emotions, some developed resilience through experiences and learning, most of them practice religious coping, and other utilize problem-focused, emotion focused and peer support. This divergence suggests that personal coping mechanisms play a significant role in mitigating workplace stress, reinforcing previous studies on the importance of individualized stress management strategies in law enforcement (29).

Another surprising result was the perception among some officers that emotional detachment is necessary for effective policing. They stated that they "get used to" the painful, traumatic, and critical incidents they encounter. They witness dead bodies, blood, accidents, and rape cases on a daily basis. Initially, such incidents disturb them, but over time, they become habituate. While emotional regulation

is essential for high-stress professions, excessive emotional suppression can lead to long-term psychological consequences such as burnout and decreased job satisfaction. This finding suggests that police training programs should incorporate emotional resilience strategies that allow officers to balance professional detachment with emotional well-being.

Additionally, this study revealed that many officers, despite facing severe mental health challenges, normalize their stress and perceive it as an inherent part of policing. This normalization of stress and trauma can hinder proactive mental health interventions, as officers may not recognize the severity of their psychological distress or may resist seeking help. The normalization of high stress levels within police culture is mostly due to lack of awareness and attention regarding mental health concerns among police officer. This lack of awareness further contributes to the reluctance of officers to seek professional support, which aligns with previous research that has identified cultural barriers to mental health care within law enforcement agencies.

The significant insight from the findings was that the officers reported about new recruited young officers are educated and demonstrated a more open attitude in line of duty, particularly well in public dealing. This generational shift suggests a potential future change in police force and policing culture. The potential change will help to bring positive outcome, effective policing and probable acknowledgment of support to address mental health concerns within law enforcement officer.

5.1.3 Field Challenges and Key Observations

In conducting this study, the researcher encountered significant challenges in engaging participants from a specific population that generally exhibited limited insight into mental health issues. Engaging with participants required extensive explanation and probing to elicit meaningful information about their mental health experiences. Initially, when asked about mental health, many participants were focused on physical illness or issues, often describing stress and tension only after further prompting. This tendency indicates a broader societal pattern where

mental health is often overshadowed by physical concerns. It also highlights a common tendency among individuals to prioritize physical health concerns over mental well-being.

Throughout the fieldwork, it was observed that the officers were consistently busy, with numerous complainants waiting for assistance and their mobile phones ringing continuously with job-related calls. They were under so much pressure due to these phone calls. During my last interview with a female police officer, she had just arrived at police station after her day long security duty with polio team. Almost immediately, her phone began ringing with calls for another duty about 35 minutes away. The continuous calls created so much pressure for her that she haphazardly rushed to fulfill that duty. It is evident that such pressures are part of their everyday job duty.

Many officers reported that they had been on duty for extended periods, with some stating they had arrived at the police station 24 hours prior or had been working for 14 hours straight before the interviews. This high-pressure environment, coupled with their demanding schedules, posed challenges for them. These long duties make them suffer through physical and psychological exhaustion.

Additionally, the length and depth of interviews varied notably across different genders. Male participants typically provided more extensive narratives about their experiences, which may reflect both greater exposures to stressors associated with their roles and a willingness to discuss these issues in greater detail. Conversely, female participants often reported shorter interviews, primarily attributed to their comparatively fewer experiences in high-stress environments. A female officer reported that during a shootout encounter male fellow officers were saying "*Madam aap peechay ho jaien... aap side pr ho jaein*". This reflects the particular culture within police department, where role of socio-cultural factors are manifesting in different perspective. Like, it might be due to dominating of male gender in our society, or male officers feel the need to protect her suggesting that the female officer should move to a safer position during a dangerous situation.

This reflects a kind behavior among colleagues to ensure each other's safety. This interaction also underscores the complexities of gender relations in policing, particularly in high-stress scenarios where quick decisions and actions are vital. This point also adds up into less exposure and experience of challenging and risky incidents. Moreover, their availability and time constraints also emerged as significant factors influencing the duration of interviews.

The differences in interview duration suggest that female officers may have had fewer opportunities to encounter stressors related to their roles, or they may have been less inclined to discuss their experiences in depth. Moreover, female Officers are observed to feel pressured to suppress emotions and avoid discussing mental health for fear of being seen as weak or discussed by the colleagues. This disparity in engagement not only underscores the complexities of addressing mental health topics within diverse populations but also highlights the necessity for tailored approaches that consider gender differences in experiences and perspectives on mental health and well-being.

5.1.4 Future Research Directions

Researchers can explore role of organizational interventions and leadership support in mitigating mental health challenges. Future research could investigate how police departments can develop and implement structured mental health programs, including peer support networks, confidential counseling services, and training sessions on stress management. Understanding the impact of leadership practices on officers' psychological well-being could also provide crucial recommendations for improving policing culture and mental health support systems.

Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking officers' mental health over time could offer a deeper understanding of the long-term impact of policing culture on psychological well-being. Studies could examine how supportive leadership styles, and workplace flexibility influence police officers' mental health. Understanding these dynamics may help in developing training programs for senior officers to foster a more supportive work environment.

Additionally, there is a need to investigate the effectiveness of integrating mental health education and resilience training into police training academies. Examining how early interventions, such as stress management workshops and mental health awareness programs, impact recruits' long-term mental well-being could provide valuable guidance for shaping more comprehensive training curricula. This would ensure that officers enter the force with better coping strategies and an awareness of available support systems.

Moreover, researcher should explore the societal perceptions of police officers and how these perceptions influence their mental health. Investigating the relationship between media portrayals, public expectations, and officers' psychological stress could offer insights into the broader social dynamics affecting law enforcement personnel. Public awareness campaigns and community engagement programs could be assessed to determine their effectiveness in fostering mutual respect and support between police officers and the public.

Finally, future studies should assess the long-term impact of high-stress police work on post-retirement mental health. Many officers experience ongoing psychological effects after leaving service, including PTSD, anxiety, and social reintegration difficulties. Research in this area could lead to the development of post-service mental health programs aimed at providing ongoing support to retired officers.

5.1.5 Participants' Recommendation

To enhance the mental well-being of police officers, several key recommendations have emerged. First, revising duty hours to reduce demanding work schedules is crucial for allowing officers necessary rest and recovery, which will improve their mental and physical health. Public awareness and education initiatives should be integrated into academic curricula to foster understanding of legal rights and responsibilities, thereby easing unrealistic demands on officers. Additionally, the integration of advanced technology in policing is essential for addressing the evolving nature of crime and enhancing efficiency. To manage stress, the introduction of recreational activities within the police force is recommended, alongside strengthening internal discipline and organizational structures to promote accountability

and self-care among officers. Finally, implementing psychological assessments for duty assignments can help tailor roles to individual needs, ensuring that those vulnerable to mental health challenges are placed in less high-pressure positions. Collectively, these strategies aim to create a supportive environment that prioritizes the well-being of police officers, essential for a resilient law enforcement community.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

The mental health of police officers is the invisible backbone of an effective law enforcement system, yet it remains one of the most neglected aspects of policing culture. This study provide valuable insights into the intricate relationship between policing culture and the mental health of police officers in Pakistan. The findings reveal that the unique challenges faced by officers, including high levels of stress, emotional suppression, and a lack of support, significantly impact their mental well-being.

The study highlights that the prevailing policing culture often discourages emotional expression and vulnerability, leading many officers to adopt maladaptive coping strategies. This culture of silence not only exacerbates mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD but also contributes to a strained relationship between police officers and the communities they serve. The cumulative effects of operational stressors, hierarchical pressures, and negative public perceptions create an environment where mental health concerns are often overlooked or stigmatized.

Moreover, the research underscores the importance of addressing systemic issues within law enforcement agencies. The lack of mental health resources, coupled

with societal stigma surrounding mental health, poses significant barriers to officers seeking help. This study calls for the implementation of comprehensive mental health programs, peer support systems, and training that promotes emotional intelligence and resilience among police officers.

In conclusion, the findings of this study emphasize the urgent need for reforms within the policing culture in Pakistan to prioritize the mental health of officers. By fostering an environment that encourages open dialogue about mental health and provides adequate support, law enforcement agencies can enhance the well-being of their personnel and improve their overall effectiveness in serving the community. Future research should explore the effectiveness of specific interventions aimed at improving mental health outcomes for police officers and examine the long-term impact of these changes on both individual officers and the communities they protect.

6.2 Future Implications

Future Implications: This study highlights the profound impact of policing culture on the mental health of officers, emphasizing the urgent need for institutional reforms. The findings demonstrate that excessive workload, public scrutiny, lack of structured mental health support, and gender-specific stressors contribute significantly to officers' psychological distress.

First and foremost, the exploration of mental health challenges within the context of policing culture underscores the urgent need for systemic changes within law enforcement agencies. Further, the normalization of stress within police culture prevents officers from seeking necessary support, exacerbating the risks of burnout, anxiety, and depression.

The implications of these findings extend beyond individual officers to the broader effectiveness of law enforcement agencies. Police officers with poor mental health may struggle with decision-making, emotional regulation, and job performance, which can affect public safety and community trust. Therefore, addressing mental health concerns within the police force is essential not only for officers' well-being

but also for improving overall law enforcement outcomes.

Law enforcement agencies must implement structured mental health interventions, such as confidential counseling services, peer support programs, and resilience training integrated into police training academies. Policy reforms that promote manageable work hours, stress debriefing sessions, and leadership-driven mental health advocacy can significantly enhance officers' psychological well-being. Furthermore, public awareness campaigns should be launched to bridge the gap between police officers and the community, promote mutual respect and support.

By prioritizing mental health in policing culture, law enforcement agencies can build a more resilient and effective workforce. Future research should continue exploring innovative strategies for reducing occupational stress and promoting psychological resilience among police officers, ensuring that they are equipped to serve their communities without compromising their well-being.

One of the key implications is the necessity for revising duty hours to alleviate the burdens placed on officers. By implementing more balanced shift schedules, police departments can help officers achieve a better work-life balance, ultimately improving their mental and physical health. Additionally, public awareness and education initiatives about mental health can help destigmatize the issue, encouraging officers to seek support when needed. As recommended by the participants the public awareness about legal procedures and rights is necessary for improvement relationship of public and police. It will also aid in maintaining law and order effectively.

The integration of technology in policing practices is another critical implication. By streamlining operations and reducing administrative burdens, technology can allow officers to focus more on community engagement and less on paperwork, thereby reducing stress. Furthermore, promoting physical and mental well-being activities, such as gaming, sports, fitness programs and stress management workshops, can foster resilience among officers and improve their overall quality of life. The study also emphasizes the importance of structural improvements within police organizations. Clear disciplinary protocols and support systems are essential

for creating a positive work environment that encourages officers to share their vulnerabilities and seek assistance without fear of stigma. Psychological assessments should guide duty assignments, ensuring that officers are placed in roles that align with their mental health needs and strengths.

Moreover, the findings regarding gender differences in mental health experiences highlight the need for tailored approaches that consider the unique challenges faced by female officers. Correspondingly, males face more risky, traumatic experiences that affect them differently. Addressing these disparities through targeted support and resources can enhance the overall well-being of all personnel within the police force.

6.3 Limitations

Following are the limitations for this study

1. First, the focus on police officers in Islamabad may not accurately reflect the diverse experiences and opinions of police personnel across different regions of Pakistan. The unique socio-political and cultural context of Islamabad could influence the results, making them less applicable to other areas. Future studies should include a more diverse sample from various regions to enhance the validity of findings and provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.
2. Second, the data collection process was conducted in a police station, which presented challenges due to the nature of the officers' work. Frequent interruptions and the high-pressure environment may have affected the depth of the interviews. Although efforts were made to create a conducive atmosphere for data collection, the officers' busy schedules and ongoing job demands posed significant challenges.
3. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data through interviews may introduce social desirability bias, as officers might underreport or over report their psychological distress due to concerns about confidentiality or stigma associated with mental health issues. Future research should consider incorporating quantitative methods, such as standardized psychological assessments, to provide a more objective evaluation of officer's mental well-being.
4. The length of interviews varied significantly, particularly between male and

female officers. Female officers often provided shorter responses, which may limit the richness of the data collected from their perspectives and experiences related to mental health challenges.

5. Lastly, while this study identified significant themes related to mental health, operational and organizational stressors, and coping mechanisms, it did not examine the long-term effects of these challenges. Longitudinal research tracking changes in mental health over time would offer valuable insights into how officers adapt to stress and whether interventions are effective in improving their well-being.

In conclusion, the implications of this study highlight the critical need for systemic reforms within police organizations to address mental health challenges and create a supportive environment for officers. By implementing the recommendations derived from this research, law enforcement agencies can foster resilience and improve the overall well-being of their personnel, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of policing in the community.

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Appendix A

6.4 Information Sheet

معلوماتی فارم

میں نور الصباحت، کینٹل یونیورسٹی آف سائنس اینڈ ٹیکنالوجی میں علم نفسیات کی طالبہ ہوں، اور میں آپ کو اس تحقیق میں حصہ لینے کی دعوت دینا چاہتی ہوں۔ برائے مہربانی! مندرجہ ذیل معلومات کو احتیاط سے پڑھیں۔

تحقیق کا مقصد: اس تحقیق کا مقصد پولیس افسران کی ذہنی مشکلات اور اس سے متعلق پیش آنے والے چیلنجز کو جاننا ہے، جس کے لئے پولیس افسران سے انٹرویوز کے ذریعے پولیس کی نوکری کے دوران آنے والی ذہنی اور نفسیاتی مشکلات کو سمجھنا ہے۔
مجھے تحقیق میں حصہ لے کر کیا ہوگا؟

اس تحقیق میں حصہ لینے کے لیے آپ کی رضامندی ضروری ہے۔ اس کے بعد کچھ بنیادی معلومات کا فارم بھرنے ہوگا۔ اور پھر آپ سے تقریباً 40-45 منٹ تک بات چیت کی جائے گی۔

اس تحقیق کی معلومات کس طرح کام آئیں گی؟

آپ سے حاصل کردہ تمام معلومات دونوں شکلوں (کاغذ اور کمپیوٹر) میں خفیہ اور محفوظ رہے گی۔ اس کے علاوہ نتائج کے شائع ہونے پر آپ کی شناخت کو کسی بھی شکل میں ظاہر نہیں کیا جائے گا۔ اس بات چیت کو تحقیقی مقاصد کے لئے ریکارڈ کیا جائے گا۔
اس تحقیق میں حصہ لینے سے کیا ہوگا؟

اس تحقیق سے اس بارے میں آگاہی حاصل ہوگی کہ بحیثیت پولیس افسران آپ کو کن مشکلات کا سامنا کرنا پڑتا ہے وہ آپ کو کس طرح متاثر کر رہا ہے۔ اس بات کی آگاہی نظام کو بہتر بنانے میں مدد کرے گی۔

سوالات یا مزید معلومات کے لئے مجھے کس سے رابطہ کرنا چاہئے؟ کسی بھی سوال یا مسئلہ کی صورت میں آپ یہاں رابطہ کر سکتے ہیں:

051-111-555-666 Ext: 178

یا

noorul.sabahat@gmail.com

sabahat.haqqani@cust.edu.pk

شعبہ نفسیات، کینٹل یونیورسٹی آف سائنس اینڈ ٹیکنالوجی، کبوتر روڈ، اسلام آباد

مددگار اداروں کا پتہ: اس تحقیق کے دوران یا بعد اگر آپ کو کسی قسم کے ذہنی تباہی یا دباؤ کا سامنا کرنا پڑے تو نیچے موجود پتہ پر رابطہ کریں۔

1. **Well Being Center:** 051-111-555-666 Ext: 296/wbc@cust.edu.pk

یہاں پر آپ صبح 9 سے 5 بجے تک جا سکتے ہیں: کینٹل یونیورسٹی آف سائنس اینڈ ٹیکنالوجی، کبوتر روڈ، اسلام آباد

2. **Rozan Counselling Helpline:** 0304-1111741/helpline@rozan.org

مال سٹریٹ #22A سیکٹر A، بحیرہ انگلیو، اسلام آباد

Appendix B

6.5 Consent form

اجازت نامہ

تحقیق کا مقصد: پولیس افسران کی ذہنی مشکلات اور اس سے متعلق پیش آنے والے چیلنجز کو جاننا	
1.	میں اس بات کی تصدیق کرتا/کرتی ہوں کہ مجھے اس تحقیق کے بارے میں اور اس میں ہونے والی سرگرمیوں اور طریقہ کار کے بارے میں معلومات فراہم کی گئی ہیں۔
2.	میں جانتا/جانتی ہوں کہ میری شرکت رضا کارانہ ہے اور میں کسی بھی وقت بغیر کسی فائدے یا نقصان کے اپنی شرکت ختم کرنے کا حق برقرار رکھتا/رکھتی ہوں۔
3.	میں سمجھتا/سمجھتی ہوں کہ میری معلومات خفیہ ہیں اور صرف تحقیقی مقاصد کے لئے استعمال کی جائیں گی۔
4.	میں یہ بھی جانتا/جانتی ہوں کہ نتائج کے شائع ہونے پر میری شناخت کسی بھی طرح ظاہر نہیں کی جائے گی۔ میں اس تحقیق میں حصہ لینے کے لئے رضامند ہوں۔

نام: _____

دستخط: _____

مورخ: _____

Appendix C

6.6 Demographics Sheet

ذاتی معلومات کا فارم

1	نام:	
2	جنس:	
3	عمر:	
4	آپ کی پولیس فورس میں نوکری کی مدت (تقریباً):	
5	آپ کا رینک/پوزیشن:	
6	آپ کی تعلیم کتنی ہے؟	
7	آج کل آپ پولیس کے کس ڈیپارٹمنٹ میں نوکری کر رہے ہیں؟	
8	کیا آپ کو کبھی کسی جسمانی بیماری کی تشخیص کی گئی ہے؟ (اس میں عام یا موسمی بخار شامل نہیں)	1. ہاں، اور مدد حاصل کی 2. ہاں، لیکن مدد حاصل نہیں کی 3. نہیں
9	کیا آپ نے نوکری کے دوران ذاتی طور پر ذہنی صحت کے مسائل یا مشکلات کا سامنا کیا ہے؟	1. ہاں، اور مدد حاصل کی 2. ہاں، لیکن مدد حاصل نہیں کی 3. نہیں
10	کیا آپ نے پولیس محکمہ کی طرف سے فراہم کردہ کسی ذہنی صحت کی تربیت یا تعلیم حاصل کی ہے؟	1. ہاں 2. نہیں

Appendix D

6.7 Interview Guide

انٹرویو گائیڈ

1. آپ کا آج کا دن کیسا ہے؟
2. آپ کتنے عرصے سے اس نوکری سے وابستہ ہیں؟
3. آپ نے کتنا عرصہ تھامنے میں ڈیوٹی کی ہے؟
4. آپ کے خیال میں ذہنی صحت سے کیا مراد ہے؟
5. آپ کا پولیس آفیسر کے طور پر سب سے مشکل تجربہ کون سا ہے؟
6. ایسے تجربات نے وقت کے ساتھ آپ کی ذہنی صحت پر کیا اثر ڈالا ہے؟
7. آپ کو اپنے کام میں سب سے زیادہ دباؤ کس چیز کا محسوس ہوتا ہے؟
8. کیا آپ نے کبھی محسوس کیا ہے کہ آپ کی ذہنی صحت آپ کے کام کی وجہ سے متاثر ہوئی ہے؟ کوئی مثال دے سکتے ہیں؟
9. آپ کے لیے پولیسنگ کلچر کا کیا مطلب ہے؟
10. آپ کے خیال میں پاکستانی پولیس فورس میں پولیس کی نوکری کی سب سے اہم خصوصیات کیا ہیں؟
11. آپ کے خیال میں پاکستان میں پولیس کی نوکری پولیس افسران کی ذہنی صحت کو کیسے متاثر کرتا ہے؟
12. پولیس کی نوکری کا ذہنی صحت پر کیا اثر ہے؟
13. کیا آپ کو لگتا ہے کہ پولیس فورس میں ذہنی صحت پر کھل کر بات ہوتی ہے؟ کیوں یا کیوں نہیں؟
14. پولیس فورس میں آنے کے بعد آپ کی ذہنی صحت میں کوئی تبدیلی آئی ہے؟ اگر ہاں، تو کیا تبدیلیاں آئیں؟
15. آپ کے خیال میں پولیس فورس کا طریقہ کار ذہنی صحت پر کس طرح اثر ڈالتے ہیں؟
16. کیا آپ کو لگتا ہے کہ پولیس افسران سے مخصوص توقعات اور مطالبات ذہنی صحت کی مشکلات کا سبب بنتے ہیں؟ کس طرح؟
17. پولیس فورس میں آپ کی نوکری کے دوران کوئی خاص واقعات یا حالات جس نے آپ کی ذہنی صحت پر گہرا اثر ڈالے ہوں؟
18. پولیس فورس میں اعلیٰ افسران یا ان کے نافذ کردہ انتظام نے آپ کی ذہنی حالت پر کیا اثر ڈالا ہے؟
19. کیا پولیس افسران کے آپس کے تعلقات اور میل جول ان کی ذہنی صحت پر مثبت یا منفی اثر ڈالتا ہے؟ کیوں؟
20. آپ اپنی نوکری کی ذمہ داریوں کے دباؤ کو کس طرح سنبھالتے (handle) ہیں؟ اور آپ کو اس طریقے سے کتنی مدد ملتی ہے یا فائدہ حاصل ہوتا ہے؟
21. اپنی ذمہ داریوں اور کام میں مستقل رہنے کی توقعات کس طرح آپ کی مدد حاصل کرنے کی صلاحیت پر اثر انداز ہوتی ہیں؟

22. آپ کے خیال میں پولیس فورس کا کام کرنے کا ماحول اور ادارے کا نظام پولیس افسران کی ذہنی صحت کے مسائل میں کس طرح کردار ادا کرتا ہے؟
23. آپ کے خیال میں پولیس کی نوکری میں کیا تبدیلیاں یا بہتری لائی جاسکتی ہے تاکہ پولیس افسران کی ذہنی صحت کی بہتر ہو سکے؟
24. آپ اپنے کام کے دباؤ اور مشکلات سے نمٹنے کے لیے کون سی حکمت عملی استعمال کرتے ہیں؟
25. آپ سنگین حادثے یا واقعات دیکھنے اور ان میں شامل ہونے کے جذباتی اثرات کو کیسے سنبھالتے ہیں؟
26. کیا آپ اپنے ذہنی صحت کے مسائل پر سناٹھیوں، دوستوں، یا خاندان سے بات کرتے ہیں؟ کیوں یا کیوں نہیں؟
27. کیا آپ نے کبھی ذہنی صحت میں مدد حاصل کرنے کے لئے کسی سے رجوع کیا ہے؟ یعنی ماہرے نفسیات وغیرہ، اگر ہاں، تو کس مسئلہ کے لئے؟ اگر نہیں، تو کیوں؟
28. کیا آپ نے ان سپورٹ سسٹمز کا فائدہ اٹھایا ہے؟ اگر ہاں، تو یہ کتنے موثر تھے؟
29. کیا آپ کو لگتا ہے کہ پولیس فورس میں ذہنی صحت کے مسائل کے لیے مناسب مدد موجود ہے؟ کیوں یا کیوں نہیں؟
30. کیا کوئی رکاوٹیں ہیں جو آپ یا آپ کے ساتھیوں کو ذہنی صحت کے لئے مدد حاصل کرنے سے روکتی ہیں؟
31. پولیس افسران کے لیے موجود سپورٹ سسٹمز میں کیا بہتری کی جاسکتی ہے؟