

# The Effects of Gender, Tenure and Primary Workplace on Burnout of Ukrainian Police Officers

Ruslan VALIEIEV<sup>1</sup>,  
Vasyl POLYVANIUK<sup>2</sup>,  
Tetyana ANTONENKO<sup>3</sup>,  
Mykola REBKALO<sup>4</sup>,  
Andrii SOBAKAR<sup>5</sup>,  
Vladyslav OLIINYK<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PhD, Associate Professor of Police Tactics Department of Dnipropetrovsk State University of Internal Affairs, Dnipro, Ukraine, [osvitne.pravo@gmail.com](mailto:osvitne.pravo@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> PhD, Associate Professor of Police Tactics Department of Dnipropetrovsk State University of Internal Affairs, Dnipro, Ukraine

<sup>3</sup> PhD, Professor of the Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University, Severodonetsk, Ukraine, [tl.antonenko@gmail.com](mailto:tl.antonenko@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup> PhD, Associate Professor of the Academy of State Penitentiary service, Chernihiv, Ukraine, [btr8080@ukr.net](mailto:btr8080@ukr.net)

<sup>5</sup> Doctor of Law, Head of Police Tactics Department of Dnipropetrovsk State University of Internal Affairs, Dnipro, Ukraine, [k\\_tsp@mail.dduvs.in.ua](mailto:k_tsp@mail.dduvs.in.ua)

<sup>6</sup> PhD, Senior Lecturer of the Academy of State Penitentiary service, Chernihiv, Ukraine, [ovs17@ukr.net](mailto:ovs17@ukr.net)

**Abstract:** The postmodern era poses special challenge for police: the transition from the archetypal role of a warrior to the role of a servant. Purpose. To determine the level of Ukrainian police officers' burnout and effect of the gender, tenure and primary workplace (field work or office service) on it. The study involved police officers of the National Police of Ukraine (age – 20-45 years, n = 129 – men, n = 55 – women). The questionnaire was applied. The results of the questionnaire were processed by mathematical statistics methods. 53.8% and 30.4% of the officers revealed high and average levels of emotional exhaustion respectively. Only 15.8% officers revealed low level of depersonalization ( $\leq 6$  points) a reduction in their personal accomplishment ( $\geq 39$  points). The correlation analysis was performed by the Kendall rank correlation coefficient. The study did not reveal a statistically significant relationship between burnout and gender. However, a slight negative correlation of tenure and burnout was revealed. This requires further research of young officers, in particular, their job expectations. The primary workplace is identified as a significant predictor of emotional exhaustion ( $\tau$  Kendall=0.192), depersonalization ( $\tau$ -Kendall=0.176) and aggregated global measure of burnout ( $\tau$ -Kendall=0.179). The revealed condition and structure of occupational burnout of Ukrainian police officers testify to its risk level and the necessity of its constant monitoring and psychological support. The implications and limitations of research and practice are discussed.

**Keywords:** *policing; stressors; occupational burnout; emotional exhaustion; depersonalization; cynicism; reduction of personal accomplishment; disengagement from work.*

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## 1. Introduction

The development of the information society determines not only new opportunities but also new challenges. The postmodern era poses special challenges for police officers. So, Robert Reiner (1992) argues that public attitudes towards police in the UK have changed dramatically. 50 years ago, an ordinary patrol officer could become a national hero. But now police work is constantly criticized. Society does not forgive an inefficiency of the police, violations of human rights and lack of transparency, accountability and community interactions. This is due to a redefining of the police role in the knowledge-based society. In particular, the transition from the archetypal role of a warrior to the role of a servant.

Actually, post-industrial civilization is based on services. Meanwhile, there are some specific stressors among human services providers: lack of reciprocity (Buunk & Schaufeli, 1993), emotionally charged interactions (Maslach, 1982 as cited by Bakker & Heuven, 2006), and interpersonal conflicts with service recipients, emotional demands of their work (in particular, to control emotions). These stressors cause a widespread occurrence of the phenomenon of burnout.

According to Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001), occupational burnout is a work-related psychological syndrome, which can be defined by a combination of three components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (or cynicism) and reduction of personal accomplishment. The third dimension also was interpreted as disengagement from work (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001).

As scientific pioneers recall, at first burnout was derided as nonscholarly “pop psychology” (Maslach et al., 2001). However, scholars quickly developed an experimental base and various theoretical models. And twenty years ago Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) counted over 3800 publications on burnout.

In general, the burnout genesis is based on the prolonged impact of job demands and job stressors combined with a lack of job resources (Hu, Schaufeli, & Taris, 2017). This leads to emotional tension and, in the long run, to emotional exhaustion. Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter (1996) state that employees who experience emotional exhaustion may decrease investments in relationships. Due to emotional distancing, they may experience depersonalization and disengagement from work. Three factors of burnout mutually impact each other on every new developmental stage.

Many researchers detect the direct impact and mediating role of occupational burnout on the mental (e.g., depression, neuroticism, hostility, irritability, anxiety, guilt, feelings of helplessness, confusion, loss of appetite, overall mood disturbances, insomnia and nightmares, family conflict) and physical (e.g., coronary heart disease, headaches and backaches, gastrointestinal problems such as stomachaches, bowel difficulties, even colds and flu). Respectively, occupational burnout can have negative consequences on the work environment: decreasing productivity and efficiency, staffing shortages due to high turnover and job absenteeism.

In recent years, Ukraine has been intensively joining global trends. In particular, there is the formation the Western model of policing. This transformation involves transition from repressive functions to service and partnership functions. Such a shift provokes additional stressors for police personnel, especially when the existing police culture has long been formed under the influence of a masculine, hierarchical, militaristic, punishing paradigm.

Police work is also a service job and thus vulnerable to burnout Kop, Euwema, and Schaufeli (1999). So the burnout of police personnel aroused wide interest among scientists all around the world even in less revolutionary changes.

Burke investigated many aspects of police job burnout, in particularly work-family stress, conflict, coping, and burnout in police officers (1993), stressful events, burnout, and well-being among police officers (1994), burnout, job stress and attitudes towards the use of force by Norwegian police officers (Burke & Mikkelsen, 2005). Cannizzo and Liu (1995) studied the relationship burnout with career state among sworn police officers.

Kop et al. 1999 investigated burnout, job stress and violent behavior among Dutch police officers. It was identified that burnout is associated with a lack of reciprocity between investments and outcomes in the relations that officers have with citizens, colleagues and police organization. Gershon, Lin, and Li (2002) revealed that perceived work stress was significantly associated with symptoms of burnout among US police officers aged 50 years and older.

Honig and Roland (1998) stated that the simple act of expressing, venting and discussing critical incidents and other traumatic events can greatly reduce negative effects among US officers. Amaranto, Steinberg, Castellano, and Mitchell (2003) provided educational preventive interventions for American officers. Rank and file police officers identified as source of direct stress a being “second-guessed” in fieldwork.

Getahun, Sims, and Hummer (2005) studied the job satisfaction and organizational loyalty among its employees. Bakker and Heuven (2006) explored the connection of emotional dissonance, burnout, and in-role performance among police officers. Louw (2007) investigated the dynamics of individual vigor and burnout in the police service of South Africa. McCarty, Zhao, and Garland (2007) stated that male and female officers did not report significantly different levels of occupational stress and burnout. Ranta and Sud (2008) offered a multidimensional intervention tool to manage stress and burnout of police personnel in India. Abdulla (2009) revealed the determinants of police officers' job satisfaction in Dubai. Agolla (2009) dissected the occupational stress among Botswana police officers. Bawa and Kaur (2010) studied occupational stress and burnout among Indian police officers.

The findings by Gül and Delice (2011) indicated that high level of job stress is positively, strongly and significantly associated with the spousal relationship of Turkish police officers. Basinska and Wiciak (2012) investigated fatigue and burnout among Polish police officers. Houdmont (2013) investigated psychosocial hazard exposures and burnout among Britain officers. Queirós, Kaiseler, and da Silva (2013) examined burnout as a predictor of aggressivity among Portuguese police officers. They revealed that feelings of high depersonalization and low personal accomplishment strongly explain anger and aggressivity. Russell, Cole, and Jones III (2014) found differences in perception of depersonalization between high and low-stress individuals with high and low coping.

Anshel and Brinthaup (2014) examined the effects of an approach-avoidance coping skills program on changes in perceived stress among US officers. Baka (2015) tested the mediating role of job burnout among Polish officers.

Khizar and Mustafa (2016) investigated the correlation between personality traits and job satisfaction of Pakistani police officers. Lokesh, Patra, and Venkatesan (2016) carried out a socio-demographic study of Indian police officers' job satisfaction. Panigrahi (2018), Subhiksha and Subramanian (2014) studied female police officers' job satisfaction in different parts of India.

A longitudinal study among Chinese police officers completed Hu, Schaufeli, and Taris (2017). Participants who experienced an increase in job demands and/or decreasing job resources reported a significant increase in burnout.

In the Ukraine, Pekarchuk, Valieiev, and Zozulia (2018) investigated job satisfaction among parole and probation officers. Valieiev,

Tohochynskyi, Pekarchuk, Sobakar, and Iermakov (2019) determined the condition, structure and key predictors of job satisfaction of Ukrainian police officers. The most significant correlation is revealed between the gender and the level of satisfaction with fringe benefits, satisfaction with pay and satisfaction with operating conditions. Ukrainian rank and file police staff members less satisfied with the job than their line managers (average means are 108.2 and 117.6 respectively).

However, the level and features of job burnout of the Ukrainian police officers have not been studied. Meanwhile, this study should be interesting to foreign researchers. Firstly, the nature, functions, workplace activity, job demands and job rewards of police officers are similar in all countries. Secondly, the transformation of the police in Ukraine has a cardinal, crucial nature and the corresponding conditions will be typical for many countries of transition type. In addition, such a simple factor as the primary workplace, as far as we know, has not yet been investigated as a direct predictor of occupational burnout. With that, field work is associated with the archetypal role of a warrior, and office service is associated with the work of a servant.

A natural understanding of burnout as a sequential process led us to the first hypothesis: ***hypothesis 1***. Tenure of Ukrainian police officers is positively related to the level of their occupational burnout.

The preliminary stage of the study (conversations and observations) allowed us to make an assumption about the absence of a significant difference in the level of burnout of police officers from among women and men: ***hypothesis 2***. Gender of Ukrainian police officers isn't related to the level of their occupational burnout.

The authors' experience in the law enforcement agencies led to the choice of the next burnout factor. Different departments, workplace, and job descriptions determine different operational and organizational stressors, and ultimately, the burnout process: ***hypothesis 3***. Primary workplace (field work or office service) of Ukrainian police officers is positively related to the level of their occupational burnout.

**1.3. The aim** of the study is to determine the level of Ukrainian police officers' burnout and effect of gender, tenure and primary workplace (field work or office service) on it.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### **2.1. Participants**

The police officers' sample included 129 men (70.1%) and 55 women (29.9%). Gender, tenure, and primary workplace were included as variables for this study. Gender was included as a dichotomous variable, female (1) or male (2). Age ranged from 20 to 45 years with an average of 30.45 years (SD 6.56). Tenure in the police (militia) was a continuous variable, and responses ranged from 1 to 25. Mean organizational tenure was 8.75 years (SD 6.48). 126 officers marked their workplaces as field work (68.5%) and 58 officers marked as office service (31.5%). Officers represented nine various departments from 18 regions of Ukraine. All participants give consent to participation in the study.

### **2.2. Instruments**

The data were collected in 2019 at Dnipropetrovsk State University of Internal Affairs (Ukraine). Participation in the study was voluntary. It was created the online form with questions. The survey was accompanied by a letter explaining the general aim of the study and emphasized the participants' privacy. Full confidentiality of data and anonymity were guaranteed.

Occupational burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS; Maslach et al. 1996) combined with an adapted version by Vodopyanova and Starchenkova (2009). This questionnaire was translated and adapted into Ukrainian by a classical translation procedure by independent bilingual judges.

The 22 items regarding the three areas that typify burnout were scored on a 7-point rating scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always). There are nine items for emotional exhaustion, for example 'I feel emotionally drained due to my work', five items for depersonalization, for example 'I just want to do my job and not be bothered' and eight items for reduction of personal accomplishment, for example 'I deal effectively with the problems members of the public'.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was good in this study ( $\alpha=0.72$ ).

### **2.3. Data Analysis**

The StatSoft Statistica software was applied to process the results. The authors construct scatterplot and boxplot to test the normality of the collected data distribution. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-

Wilk test were applied too. The correlation analysis was performed by the Kendall rank correlation coefficient. Fisher's criterion  $p \leq 0.05$  was applied to determine the data statistical significance.

Age as a demographic variable was excluded because of high correlations with tenure, and therefore risks of multicollinearity.

### 3. Results

Descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Three dimensions of the of occupational burnout among Ukrainian police officers

	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Std. Dev.
	1	2	3	4	5
Emotional Exhaustion (0-54)	27.50	27	0	50	10.87
Depersonalization (0-30)	13.24	14	1	25	6.03
Personal Accomplishment (0-48)	31.97	31.5	15	48	6.61
Aggregated global measure of burnout (0-1)	0.26	0.26	0.04	0.44	0.09

Note. *Median* – median value, *Mean* – average mean, *Std. Dev* – standard deviation.

The authors applied cut-off points that can be used for distinguishing burned-out cases from non-cases (Schaufeli & Van Dierendonck, 1995). Based on these cut-off points, 53.8% of the Ukrainian police officers revealed a high level of emotional exhaustion ( $\geq 27$  points), 30.4% revealed an average level of emotional exhaustion (17-26 points), only 15.8% revealed low level of emotional exhaustion ( $\leq 16$  points). 53.2% of the Ukrainian police officers revealed a high level of depersonalization ( $\geq 13$  points), 31% revealed the average level of depersonalization (7-12 points), only 15.8% revealed a low level of depersonalization ( $\leq 6$  points). 50% of the Ukrainian police officers revealed a high level of reduction in their personal accomplishment ( $\leq 31$  points), 31% revealed an average level of reduction in their personal accomplishment (38-32 points), only 15.8% revealed low level of reduction in their personal accomplishment ( $\geq 39$  points).

During the study were constructed scatterplots, box-plots with the main variables. It wasn't determined the normality of the collected data distribution regarding such variables as gender, tenure, and primary workplace according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk



test (table 2). So, the authors applied the Kendall rank correlation coefficient (indicators  $\tau$ -Kendall are given in table 3).

**Table 2.** Analysis of the collected data normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test <i>1</i>	Shapiro–Wilk test <i>2</i>
Tenure	d=0.218 p<0.1	W=0.867 p=0.000
Gender	d=0.443 p<0.1	W=0.574 p=0.000
Primary workplace	d=0.435 p<0.1	W=0.584 p=0.000
Emotional Exhaustion	d=0.088 p<0.15	W=0.98 p=0.013
Depersonalization	d=0.081 p<0.1	W=0.973 p=0.001
Personal Accomplishment	d=0.091 p<0.1	W=0.979 p=0.009
Aggregated global measure of burnout	d=0.068 p>0.2	W=0.986 p=0.073

**Table 3.** Correlation between various aspects of burnout and demographic/biographic variables

	Tenure <i>1</i>	Gender <i>2</i>	Primary workplace <i>3</i>	Emotional Exhaustion <i>4</i>	Depersonalization <i>5</i>	Personal Accomplishment <i>6</i>	Aggregated global measure of burnout <i>7</i>
Tenure	1	0.1	0.008	-0.026	-0.082	0.076	-0.066
Gender		1	-0.34	0.024	-0.005	0.06	0.001
Primary workplace			1	-0.192**	-0.176**	0.37	-0.179**
Emotional Exhaustion				1	0.524**	-0.409**	0.755**
Depersonalization					1	-0.475**	0.709**
Personal Accomplishment						1	-0.524**

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Aggregated  
global  
measure of  
burnout

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Note. Displayed  $\tau$ -Kendall

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 1 predicted that the tenure of Ukrainian police officers is positively related to the level of their occupational burnout. To the authors' surprise, a negative link was found between the duration of professional experience and three aspects of burnout (but p-value of these correlations less than 0.05). So, Kendall rank correlation coefficient between tenure of Ukrainian police officers and their emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment and aggregated global measure of burnout (0.026, -0.082, 0.076 and -0.066 respectively) don't support our H1.

Identified indicators  $\tau$ -Kendall (table 3) contribute to test our hypotheses. The results indicated that gender of Ukrainian police officers isn't related to the level of their emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment and aggregated global measure of burnout (Kendall rank correlation coefficient is 0.024, -0.005, 0.06 and 0.001 respectively). These coefficients support our H2.

Hypothesis 3, it is predicted that primary workplace (field work or office service) of Ukrainian police officers is positively related to the level of their occupational burnout. Identified Kendall rank correlation coefficient indicated that primary workplace of Ukrainian police officers significantly related ( $p < 0.05$ ) to the level of their emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and aggregated global measure of burnout (Kendall rank correlation coefficient is 0.192, 0.176 and 0.179 respectively). These coefficients support our H3.

#### 4. Discussion

At the preparatory stage, in order to formulate the most likely hypotheses, the authors undertook a series of conversations with the police officers, department heads and experts. Also, police officers' behavior and activity were monitored in the course of resolving various situational training tasks in continuing education courses conducted on the Dnipropetrovsk State University of Internal Affairs. The authors made an assumption about the absence of a significant difference in the burnout of female and male police officers.

No demographic variable correlated with job burnout also investigate Kop et al. (1999), Özbağ and Ceyhun (2014), Russell et al. (2014), Baka (2015) and others. McCarty et al. (2007) emerged that male and female police officers did not indicate significantly different levels of occupational stress and job burnout.

This is in contrast to some other studies reporting higher emotional exhaustion, and lower depersonalization for women compared to men (Johnson, 1991; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998).

Results in the present study indicate that years served in the police force did not have a significant influence on the officers' burnout and its three aspects. This corresponds to other studies (Özbağ & Ceyhun, 2014).

But initially, the authors predicted that the level of Ukrainian police officers' occupational burnout was positively related to their tenure. We relied on research by some scientists. In particular, Cannizzo and Liu (1995) reported that police officers with 16-25 years of work experience scored highest on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Shane (2010) stated that job conditions once seemed insignificant for a recruit become unbearable after 15 years of their career.

At least the authors predicted positive significant relation the work experience with emotional exhaustion. Corresponding results revealed Kop et al. (1999) combined with the lack of significant correlations with depersonalization and personal accomplishment.

The H1 suggested the gradual accumulation and growth of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduction of personal accomplishment. But the revealed results attest to the initially high level of these burnout elements among Ukrainian officers. In our opinion, this is due to the high expectations of young Ukrainian police officers.

However, similar results were recently discovered by other researchers. So, Bano (2011) revealed that stress is significantly more noticeable among those Indian police personnel who are younger and have less work experience.

The results revealed that type of primary workplace (field work or office service) have a significant relation with officer burnout. As far as we know, this factor has not yet been investigated as a direct predictor of occupational burnout. With that Brown and Campbell (1990), Violanti and Aron (1995) revealed that lower-ranking officers reported higher levels of stress than others. Besides the field service as a primary workplace makes more job demands. It is clear that high job demands are a predictor of high job burnout. It was revealed, in particular, by Baka (2015), Hu et al. (2017).

126 officers marked their primary workplaces as field work (68.5%) and 58 officers marked as office service (31.5%). This ratio corresponds to other studies, for example, Wolter et al. (2019). 65.2% of the participants in their study worked primarily in field service while 34.8% did mainly office work.

Detected in this study burnout rates testify to the high level of this psychological syndrome among Ukrainian officers. However, direct comparison with indicators identified in other countries or professions will not be appropriate. Different studies use other tools or do not report scores. In this regard, earlier Kop et al. (1999: 328) pointed out that

*making comparisons of the actual level of burnout between groups of police officers is impossible.*

In addition, even researchers using MBI indicate average cumulative scores for all items of scale - Silva and Queirós (2010), Werner-de-Sondberg, Karanika-Murray, Baguley, and Blagden (2018) and others - or average indicators for one item of respective scale - Bakker and Heuven (2006), Wolter et al. (2019) and others.

Indirect comparison testifies high level of burnout among Ukrainian police personnel. So, as detected in the recent study by Wolter et al. (2019) the average emotional exhaustion of German police officers' index was 2.71 (out of 7). It was measured with the help of an adapted version of the MBI-HSS with four items instead of nine ones and 7-point rating scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always). The mean emotional exhaustion score among Ukrainian police officers was indicated as 3.05 (out of 6 because we used a 7-point rating scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always)).

Emotional exhaustion rate of the Dutch police officers was 1.50 (measured with MBI-GS (0–6)), their cynicism index (depersonalization) was 1.56 (measured with MBI-GS (0–6)) as revealed by Bakker and Heuven (2006). Respective depersonalization score among Ukrainian police officers equaled 2.64 (out of 6).

Emotional exhaustion rate of the US police officers was 1.82 (measured with MBI), their depersonalization score was 2.16 (measured with MBI) and their personal accomplishment index was 3.63 (measured with MBI) as revealed by Russell et al. (2014).

Emotional exhaustion rate of the English police forces' employees was 28.86 (measured with MBI-HS), their personal accomplishment index was 33.31 (measured with MBI-HS) as revealed by Werner-de-Sondberg et al. (2018). Emotional exhaustion rate of the male police officers working in Polícia Municipal of Oporto (measured with MBI-HS) was 13.7 (out of 54), their depersonalization score (measured with MBI-HS) was 4.3 (out of 30)

and their personal accomplishment index (measured with MBI-HS) was 36.5 (out of 48) as revealed by Silva and Queirós (2010). The mean emotional exhaustion score among Ukrainian police officers was indicated as 27.5 (out of 54). The average depersonalisation score among Ukrainian police officers equaled 13.24 (out of 30). Personal accomplishment score among Ukrainian police officers was revealed as 31.97 (out of 48).

So, this comparison with the burnout rates of American, Dutch, German and Portuguese police employees indicates a higher level of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of officers of the National Police of Ukraine.

The present research has several limitations, which weaken its external validity and call for caution in the interpretation of the results. First, the most notable of these was the small sample size, which engenders concerns about statistical power and the stability of correlations. Another of these limitations is the unequal sex ratio in the sample with a 70% rate of male participants and unequal tenure ratio in the sample (49.5% of officers have less than 6 years of police work experience).

The result of the H3 test should be interpreted with caution. Undoubtedly, the use of such a factor as the primary workplace requires additional analysis of the distinction between different types of police workplaces, their relationship with various job demands.

## 5. Conclusions

1. The revealed level of Ukrainian police officers' burnout testifies its risk level and the necessity of its constant monitoring and psychological support of officers. This is especially actual for young employees, most of whom are already emotionally exhausted and exhibit a high level of depersonalization and reduction of personal accomplishment.

2. The primary workplace of police officers significantly associated with the level of their emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and aggregated global measure of burnout. These results were received for the first time and were required further processing: what job demands inherent in the field service cause a high level of burnout and what job resources inherent in the police office work prevented the job burnout.

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