

Does Regional Traffic Management Center police have a good quality of work-life?: A qualitative study

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Yunus Adi Wijaya¹, Kiki Rizki Fista Andriana², Tita Hariyanti³, Komang Ayu Krisna Dewi⁴

¹ Bali Provincial Health Office, Denpasar, Bali – Indonesia

² Wira Medika Bali Institute of Health Science, Denpasar, Bali - Indonesia

³ Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia

⁴ Faculty of Education, Universitas Triatma Mulya, Bali – Indonesia

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Corresponding Author:

Yunus Adi Wijaya,
Bali Provincial Health Office,
Denpasar, Bali – Indonesia
Email: adibrewijaya@gmail.com

You Have to Know!

1. The police on duty at RTMC also experience stress at work
2. The study results show a harmful impact of work stress on the physical and psychological needs of members of the police.
3. Various coping mechanisms are carried out by police officers, both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping mechanism

Abstract

Introduction: Working as a police officer at the Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC) demanded physical, psychological, mental, emotional, and physical abilities. These demands often create pressure and reduce their quality of life and performance. This study aims to determine the quality of work-life (QWL) of the RTMC police officer. **Methods:** This research used the qualitative method of hermeneutic interpretive phenomenology. The data required for the study was collected through semi-structured interviews held with 4 participants selected according to purposive sampling with criteria: (1) 20-40 years old; (2) Members of the police who served in the Regional Police Traffic Management Center at the time of carrying out their work; (3) Members of the police who have experienced work stress and continued until data saturation was reached. **Results:** Based on the results of the data analysis, the researchers obtained two main themes, including 1) Stress in working as RTMC police officers; and 2) Coping mechanisms to overcome the work stress of the RTMC police officers. **Conclusions:** The good QWL of police officers will encourage work performance, including the emergence of discipline, a sense of responsibility, and compliance. Leaders can provide motivation, trust and establish rational regulations to prevent the increasing stress of the work of the police officers.

Keyword: Quality of work-life, police, RTMC, qualitative study

How to Cite:

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian police face more complex challenges, including eradicating drugs, misuse of money, money laundering, terrorism, cybercrime, human trafficking, radicalism, and intolerant groups, which can occur in national and international scope. Indonesian police not only maintain regional security and order, but they also play a role in order in various countries, such as the UN policy that has asked Indonesian police forces to play an active role in many international police operations, for example, in Namibia (South

Africa) and Cambodia (Asia).¹ There are various elements of the main task at the police of the Republic of Indonesia, one of which is the Traffic Corps in charge of pushing and regulating traffic functions that include public education, law enforcement, assessment of traffic problems, driver identification, and motorized vehicles, and do road patrols. The Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC) is one of the sub-directorates under the Directorate of Traffic located in regional police in each province in Indonesia.²

RTMC is a unit of the East Java Regional Police Directorate, which provides public services about receiving reports or complaints and provides information to the community based on technology. The aim is to increase the speed and accuracy of the East Java Regional Police Directorate service in handling every incident by utilizing the rate of technology-based information, such as the use of Call Centers, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), and Closed Circuit Television (CCTV). The various guidelines used are Law Number 22 of 2009 concerning Road Traffic and Transportation, Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the State Police of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 8 of 1981 concerning the Criminal Procedure Code, implementation guidelines, technical guidelines for investigation administration, and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001:2008. On the other hand, the duties of RTMC are: (1) Information Management, RTMC manages all information from every activity undertaken by East Java Regional Police Directorate; (2) Receiving of report or complaint; (3) CCTV Monitoring; (4) Surveillance of members through GPS.³

Police are one of the most stressful professions in America. In 2014, the police profession was ranked 9th out of 10 other stressful jobs. In 2015, the position increased to the fifth position until the following year. The ten jobs include firefighter, military, army, pilot, policeman, program chief, newspaper reporter, company executive, public relations executive, and taxi driver. These jobs require people who can face unpredictable, sometimes dangerous conditions and even face situations that put their lives on the line.⁴ These jobs are very vulnerable to stress on a person.

Stress is an internal state caused by physical demands from the body or environmental and social requirements evaluated potentially can cause harm, uncontrolled or exceed the individual's ability to overcome them.⁵ Symptoms of stress are characterized by changes that include psychological aspects, physical-physiological aspects, and attitude aspects. Emotional changes usually indicate the presence of psychological transformations. Changes in the body describe Physical-physiological changes, for example, increased production of hormones exclusively, blood pressure increases, sweats, and pulse accelerate. The behavioral aspect is characterized

by daily habits, diet, sleep patterns, and increasing smoking.⁶ Another study revealed that many physical health problems are caused by stress due to mental health disturbance. In the case of some instances, such as acute stroke, a person's physical health does not reach a point of balance. Unhealthy mental and physical conditions can adversely affect interpersonal life (social) and work life. Interpersonal relationships and the execution of a person's task will experience constraints if a person is experiencing mental health disorders, anxiety, stress, and depression.⁷

The results indicate that the factors that indicate a work stress relationship in traffic police members are intrinsic in work (workload), career development (promotion), as well as and individual character (age and gender).⁸ A similar study conducted by Hunnur (2014) revealed that members of the police experience high-categorized job stress in the traffic department showed an Occupational Stress Index (OSI) analysis on 85.5% of 475 respondents, there are 22 hours taken on the lives of police officers in America used to carry out their work.⁹ The phenomenon is a black sheet of police that is contrary to the task performed. The protracted state of stress experienced by the police often results in two things. First, bad decision-making on the individual is evidenced by a phenomenon or suicide incident in the higher police. Second, the individual becomes angry and offended and unable to think clearly, including his colleagues and leaders.

In general, the study results indicate that the selection and use of different coping mechanism strategies cause different levels of work stress in shift workers.¹⁰ According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) classify two coping management that individuals usually use, including; coping focuses problems, whereby individuals actively seek solutions come from problems to eliminate stressful conditions or situations; and coping focuses on emotions, where the individual involves an attempt to regulate his emotions to adapt to the effects or effects that a stressful condition or situation would cause. The results showed that individuals use both techniques to overcome pressing problems in various scope of everyday life.⁵ Based on the above description, the author is interested in conducting a more in-depth

study to know the quality of work-life (QWL) of RTMC police officers.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative phenomenological method with a hermeneutic interpretive phenomenology approach that prioritizes and describes intentionality and intersubjectivity and is more detailed in interpreting, giving meaning, and understanding a phenomenon.¹¹ The selection of participants in this study used purposive sampling. The participants selected in this study must meet the criteria: (1) 20-40 years old; (2) Members of the police who served in the RTMC East Java Regional Police Directorate at the time of carrying out their work; (3) Members of the police at the RTMC East Java Regional Police Directorate, who have experienced work stress.

Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with participants to four members of the police who served in the Sub-directorate of RTMC East Java Regional Police Directorate in June 2018. After the data is collected, an analysis based on the theme is carried out. Before conducting in-depth interviews, researchers introduced themselves and asked participants to do in-depth interviews. After the participants agreed and agreed to be interviewed, the researcher gave an approval letter to become a research participant. The conversation data collected includes first placement when becoming a policeman, including the functions of unity, tasks, and tasks at RTMC, feeling during work outside the office, working all day in the RTMC, having experienced stress due to work, how to recognize work stress at work, the adverse effects of work stress, how to recognize stress at work, family efforts when you have finished working at RTMC and return home, feeling when meeting with family, community views on police work, and efforts made to overcome work stress.

Data processing begins with a complete examination of the results of in-depth interviews, observation and observation, literature, and documentation. The next step is to transcribe data sourced from recordings into written form.¹² Then, at the end of the implementation, the researcher validated the data regarding the opinions, statements, themes, or interpretations obtained by the researchers. This is an effort of validation on hermeneutic circles, and the

researcher explains the meaning conveyed about the theme or interpretation to the participants. In addition, at the end of the implementation phase, the researcher contracts time if there is still something that needs to be asked or clarified to the participants.

3. RESULTS

Participants in this study were four police officers, two female police, and two male police. Each participant is distinguished from age, rank, marital status, educational background, work experience, and work stress experience. All participants are cooperative and able to answer questions from researchers. Participant characteristics are described as follows:

- a. First participant (P1) is a female, thirty years old, police brigadier, married, graduated with a bachelor of a law degree, and has worked as a policewoman officer for ten years.
- b. Second participant (P2) is a female, twenty-three years old, with the rank of two police brigadier, single, currently taking a third-semester in bachelor of law, and working as a policewoman for three and a half years.
- c. The third participant (P3) is a male, twenty-six years old, unmarried, the rank of one police brigadier, completing his final semester bachelor's degree education, and has six years of experience working as a police officer.
- d. The fourth participant (P4) is a male, thirty-two years old, married, graduated with a bachelor of a law degree at one of the national police-owned universities in Surabaya. He has fourteen years of experience working as a police officer.

Based on the results of in-depth interviews, then transcribed and analyzed data. Data analysis through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and description of the meaning obtained the following themes:

3.1 Stress in working as an RTMC police officer

This first theme provides an overview of participants' assumptions about work stress. Participants' statements describing this theme include:

"If you are too focused in the RTMC room itself, there will be tired, can not stand, sleepy. I've been in my body for twenty-four hours and feel uncomfortable. But because it has become

a job, it must love it. But because it has become a job, it must love him. Otherwise, the head can get dizzy, or it can be stressful...I find it hard to concentrate on work, not focus, especially when menstruation and stress can be emotional.” (P4)

“I feel anxious, we are also human beings naturally have a fear, ...tired but not complaining, long sleepy, ...try to imagine that we are here to work twenty-four hours a day, keep working the following day in service, if I wait for the schedule to leave the leadership office, ...if I can't get a headache, can be stressed, ...must be obedient and disciplined, if my body is uncomfortable, it means my body is tired.” (P1)

“Certainly tired, hungry, want to go home soon, if too often must be bored, sleepy, ...at RTMC the count worked all day morning to meet again in the morning, the following day I had to work in the service to the community I happened to be on Samsat B. Then the next day off but entered the reserve, it means that if you reserve even though you have a holiday status if you have anything to do, ...I am currently stressed at work, ...must be sincere and obedient, must obey the rules and leadership.” (P3)

The participant statement above shows that the work stress experienced comes from the official schedule or 24-hour non-stop work, followed by a service schedule to the community without being followed by a program of work breaks, disciplinary demands, compliance with rules and leadership, and anxieties about self-security and safety while on duty. Job stress experienced by participants can be harmful. It hurts physical and psychological conditions, including (1) physical disturbances such as dizziness, fatigue, and chills, (2) psychological disorders can include drowsiness, uncontrolled emotions, and difficulty concentrating.

3.2 Coping mechanisms to overcome work stress of the RTMC police officers

This second theme explains how the coping mechanism of participants.

“On average, my friends here, if they are tired, are made to lay it down for a while in the control room. If I get bored, I use playing cellphones, open social media like youtube; if I don't communicate with my husband via cellphone, sometimes when I'm tired in the RTMC room, I just put my hands on the office

desk, sit on the floor while playing cellphones. Otherwise, I stay out looking for fresh air, go to the cafeteria to buy ice tea, send messages to children and husbands, watch television in the room, make ablutions and prayers, and stretch myself.” (P3)

“Suppose the intention to work is physically born smoothly for up to twenty-four hours. In that case, it's brilliant that we will not be tired and stressed out, must be able to manage time to take a break, drink coffee and smoke, be smart, enjoy the fun, ...usually, I just lay it down for a while it's already good, which is essential it can sweat and does not interfere with the hours of service to the community. Working must use the heart with a spirit of body and responsibility. Sometimes I get angry, so my stress can disappear.” (P2)

“Listening to music via smartphone, I sleep, usually wash my face, work with a strong spirit, and have a sense of responsibility... if I am at home, I will lie down all day at home, play out with friends at the mall, eat together, watch movies in the cinema, drink sweet tea, all for the sake of duty and responsibility, trust, obey leadership orders.” (P4)

Coping mechanisms used by participants in overcoming stress as RTMC police officers include: sitting, resting, lying down, playing cell phones (watching videos online, opening social media, communicating with family and people nearby), watching television, listening to music, walking, washing face, drinking tea or coffee, smoke, vent emotions by anger, and worship according to trust. When police officers are confronted with the demands of the work that is the source of the stressor and create a sense of distress, the officer will decide to resolve the problem facing him in completing the case. Therefore, coping mechanisms are how a person performs a problem, adjusts to change, and reacts to threatening situations. If someone's coping is effective, it can positively deal with the stressor. If the coping is ineffective, the individual will face a stressor using maladaptive and stressful changes to become heavier.

4. DISCUSSION

Stress-related to work is a condition of tension that creates an imbalance between physical and psychological, affecting an officer's emotions, thought processes, and requirements.¹³

The study results show a harmful impact of work stress on the physical and psychological needs of members of the police. Stress can occur at several similar levels of inability to work well in specific roles due to the misunderstanding of superiors and subordinates, even from the lack of skills (especially management skills) to simply not liking someone with whom to work closely.¹⁴ Before entering into more specific ways to deal with certain stressors, some general guidelines must be taken into account to spur changes and countermeasures. Understanding the basic principles becomes an integral part of designing solutions to problems that arise, especially those related to the causes of stress in the workplace. In this case, an influential individual coping mechanism is needed.

The participants' coping mechanism in this study included arranging the time between resting between working hours, enjoying work, working with enthusiasm and full sense of responsibility, always being ready in any condition. Coping management that is usually used by individuals, namely coping focuses on problems, where individuals actively seek solutions come from problems to eliminate conditions or situations that can cause stress (5), in this study participants did things; (1) sitting resting and lying down, this action is the management of physical tension due to the emotional pressure that is constantly experienced by someone¹⁵; (2) playing smartphones (watching online videos, opening social media, and communicating with family or friends), is a pattern of defense against available resources so that they can be allocated to face the demands or problems faced; (3) watching television and listening to music, is a visual and auditory distraction technique to divert attention to things that can cause work stress¹⁶; (4) small walks, is a relaxation action that aims to relax, lengthen (about muscles), and the ability to control the level of body muscle tension¹⁶; (5) face washing, drinking tea or coffee, smoking, is a form of guided relaxation that aims to calm the mind¹⁶; and coping focuses on emotions, where individuals involve efforts to regulate their feelings in order to adapt to the effects or consequences that will be caused by a condition or a stressful situation. In this study, participants showed uncontrolled emotions (anger); anger is a normal emotion experienced by humans, namely a robust emotional response and unpleasant to a provocation both real and interpreted by

individuals.¹⁷ Anger is a feeling of irritation that arises due to anxiety perceived as a threat.¹⁸ Stress in work can be prevented and dealt with without negative impact. Stress management is more than just overcoming it; learning to adapt it adaptively and effectively. It's almost as important to know what not to do and what to do.¹⁹

The earlier a person or member of the Police in the RTMC East Java Regional Police Directorate recognizes the symptoms and signs of work stress, which can lower QWL. The possibility of bad things can be prevented and minimized. Stress is a response in adjusting influenced by individual differences and psychological processes due to environmental actions, situations, or events that carry too many mental and physical demands.⁷ Exploration of this experience is critical, useful for other police members who will carry out activities in the same unit. In addition, it can also be used as material for the study of the Head of the RTMC East Java Regional Police Directorate in recognizing early the effects of work stress on its members.

5. CONCLUSION

Stress-related to work is when individuals face tasks and jobs that are less capable or unable to reach their abilities, leading to incapacity to answer a demand. The coping mechanism is a method individuals use to solve problems, overcome changes that occur, and situations that threaten, both cognitively and behavior. Coping procedures are more directed at people to overcome stressful and emotionally arousing demands. This study shows that an excellent coping mechanism has a positive contribution to the physical and psychological conditions of police members in supporting performance and finally can increase the QWL of each police officer.

6. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All the authors have no conflict of interest related to the study.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The Health Research Ethics Commission, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang - Indonesia, declared this study ethically feasible (certificate number 304/EC/KEPK-S2/11/2018). Before interviewing, the researcher explained the purpose of the survey to each participant. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants voluntarily.

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