

Paper 3: Burnout predictors: the role of work stress sources

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The world is becoming increasingly competitive and characterised by the existence of pressure that is frequently much greater than what is desired. For this reason, it becomes difficult to respond actively and on time to this pressure and maintain the emotional and psychological balance needed to face daily pressures. In this context, stress associated with work is one of the major problems which originates from industrialisation and modern technology. Facing intense stress over permanent periods results in burnout.

Growing concerns about the impact of burnout on both employees and organization well-being have stimulated efforts to understand their antecedents and consequences in the workplace. Some professions are associated with higher risk for burnout development. One of these professions is the police officer.

In this way, the present study aims to investigate the predictive role of stress sources on burnout levels. The sample is composed of 355 members of one Portuguese Police Force (Lisbon, Portugal). A questionnaire was completed which included the Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (adapted from Maslach et al., 1996) and the Police Work Stress Sources Scale (Gonçalves & Neves, 2009).

Results show that the different dimensions of burnout have different predictors in terms of stress sources: work-family conciliation and work related ambiguities, and uncertainties are significant predictors of emotional exhaustion, no-operational work demands and work related ambiguities and uncertainties are predictors of cynicism; and finally, internal management and no-operational work demands predicts personal accomplishment. These results reinforce the importance of diagnostic and monitorisation of this population.

Paper 4: Stress, coping and engagement among Portuguese police recruits

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It is well known that police officers have a risky and stressful job, and academy training is crucial to prepare recruits for duty (Violanti & Aron, 1995). However, relatively little research has been conducted among police officer recruits. The aim of the current study therefore was to investigate the relationship between engagement, stressor type and coping strategies among Portuguese police recruits attending academy training.

626 Portuguese (Lisbon) recruit police officers, aged between 20 and 25 years (M age = 22,84 years; SD = 1,45), going through the last month of academy training participated in the study. The recruits were asked to describe the most stressful

situation experienced over the last month, and to report their coping preferences using the short version of the Brief Cope (Carver, 1997) and engagement levels-UWES (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). The results showed that Portuguese police recruits faced two main sources of stress related with their personal life and with the course. Coping explained a significant proportion of variance among engagement scales: Absorption ($R^2 = .16, p < .001$); Vigor ($R^2 = .13, p < .001$) and Dedication ($R^2 = .10, p < .001$) after controlling for stressor type. In particular, higher levels of religion were associated with higher levels of engagement (Absorption $\beta = .18, p < .001$; Vigor $\beta = .20, p < .001$, Dedication $\beta = .15, p < .05$), higher levels of self blame were associated with lower levels of engagement (Absorption $\beta = -.14, p < .05$; Vigor $\beta = -.17, p < .05$, Dedication $\beta = .14, p < .05$), finally higher levels of humor were associated with lower levels of engagement (Absorption $\beta = -.124, p < .05$; Vigor $\beta = -.11, p < .05$, Dedication $\beta = -.11, p < .05$).

The results suggest that engagement levels are influenced by the coping strategy employed by the police recruits. Thus, it is recommended that future academy training should aim to increase engagement levels among Portuguese police recruits should further concentrate on exploring coping strategy preferences.