

**Understanding Stress, Coping and Burnout in the Irish Police Service,
An Garda Síochána**

Aoife Eviston

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Arts (Hons), Psychology at
Dublin Business School, School of Arts, Dublin

Supervisor: Dr. Chris Gibbons

March 2019

Department of Psychology

Dublin Business School

Declaration

Declaration

‘I declare that this thesis that I have submitted to Dublin Business School for the award of BA (Hons) Psychology is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated, where it is clearly acknowledged by references. Furthermore, this work has not been submitted for any other degree.’

Signed: Aoife Eviston

Student Number: 10180472

Date: 22nd March 2019

Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| 1. Acknowledgements | 4 |
| 2. Abstract | 5 |
| 3. Introduction | 6 |
| 3.1 Stress | 8 |
| 3.1.1 Biological Model | 8 |
| 3.1.2 Stimulus Model | 9 |
| 3.1.3 Transactional Model | 9 |
| 3.2 Coping | 10 |
| 3.3 Burnout | 11 |
| 3.4 Years of Service | 12 |
| 3.5 Gender | 13 |
| 3.6 Role | 13 |
| 3.7 General Health | 14 |
| 3.8 Aims | 14 |
| 3.9 Hypotheses | 15 |
| 4. Methodology | 17 |
| 4.1 Participants | 17 |
| 4.2 Materials | 18 |
| 4.3 Design | 20 |
| 4.4 Procedure | 20 |
| 4.5 Ethical Considerations | 22 |
| 5. Results | 24 |
| 5.1 Descriptive Statistics | 24 |
| 5.2 Data Analysis | 26 |

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| 5.3 | Inferential Statistics | 28 |
| 5.4 | Hypothesis 1 | 31 |
| 5.5 | Hypothesis 2 | 32 |
| 5.6 | Hypothesis 3 | 33 |
| 5.7 | Hypothesis 4 | 33 |
| 5.8 | Hypothesis 5 | 34 |
| 5.9 | Hypothesis 6 | 36 |
| 6. Discussion | | 37 |
| 6.1 | Limitations | 41 |
| 6.2 | Strengths | 42 |
| 6.3 | Future Research | 43 |
| 6.4 | Conclusion | 43 |
| 7. References | | 45 |
| 8. Appendices | | 50 |
| Appendix A | | 50 |
| Appendix B | | 59 |
| Appendix C | | 67 |
| Appendix D | | 68 |

1. Acknowledgements

To my supervisor Chris Gibbons for his unwavering support, advice and constant encouragement throughout this process. To the Garda Research Unit for their assistance and belief that this research is both timely and necessary, and to the Garda officers who took the time to partake in this study I am indebted to you for your participation. Finally to Liam, Tiernán and Cadhla who selflessly gave up their time with me so that I could complete this research, your support was immeasurable.

2. Abstract

The present study investigated unique stress within policing and examined its relationship with dimensions of burnout. Further examined were coping behaviours, duty and disillusionment, using a volunteer sample (n=130) of An Garda Síochána, the Irish police force. Survey method was used, employing a correlational design. Responses to police stress, coping and well-being (operationalised as general health and burnout) were gathered. Hierarchical regression analyses revealed uniform members scored higher on operational stress than plain clothes officers. An inverse relationship was observed between years of service and depersonalisation with humour, as a coping response, as a mediator. Officers who believed they had been unfairly overlooked showed higher levels of depersonalisation & stress. Uniform officers showed higher levels of operational stress than plain clothes officers. In an effort to combat absenteeism and to increase well-being, policy should address the concerns identified with regard to post event counselling and actively pursue transparency of appointments.

3. Introduction

An Garda Síochána is the name given to the police force of the Republic of Ireland. It is a 13,751 person strong hierarchical organisation made up of largely unarmed men and women, its literal translation from Gaelic to English means 'Guardians of the peace'. Of that total figure, 11,454 are Garda rank, the lowest level of the hierarchical organisation with the next rank of Sergeant totalling 1,832 members, (An Garda Síochána, 2018).

Founded as an Organisation in 1922, the police force of Ireland has in recent years come under intense public scrutiny. A succession of Organisation heads over a three year period from 2016 failed to allay public concern regarding the image of the force. These external pressures on Garda members were equally matched by internal stressors such as lack of resources, manpower and management supports. Throughout these trying times for the police they continued to carry out their policing functions, often dealing with traumatic and difficult incidents.

While it is the Garda Commissioner's ultimate responsibility to ensure the provision of employee welfare supports, it is still down to individual Gardaí to choose to seek these supports or not following traumatic incidents (Department of Justice, 2018). This element of help seeking within the Force has been slow to evolve as the role of Gardaí historically has been to help others and not to be seen to need help themselves. As incidents of police suicides rise, the Organisation has yet to tackle the issue of mandatory counselling. This, coupled with what has been termed in recent reports (Garda Inspectorate, 2012) as significant concerns with not nearly enough supervisors to operate the organisation, means that front line members dealing with trauma, need to have the foresight, enlightenment, strength of character and confidence to self-refer for counselling rather than it being given as a matter of course, or mandated from a supervisor.

As a result of these criticisms, 2017 saw An Garda Síochána commission a cultural audit. This was a ‘first of its kind’ study published in May 2018 and results indicated a widespread frustration among front line members (PwC, 2018). While the study referred to key issues such as the supervision vacuum and the general disillusionment and depersonalisation among members, the audit lacked any attempt to identify how these findings actually affect the members surveyed, in terms of occupational stress, burnout or the effects on general health. The single lowest result of the entire survey was found when members of the force were asked if they believed the promotion system was based on meritocracy, and the report suggested that whether factual or not, the perception of unfairness was widespread and a cultural shift was needed in order to address the matter going forward (PwC, 2018).

Police specific stress can impact how trauma is perceived and even how it is dealt with and studies have shown that post-traumatic stress symptoms can be reduced in police officers in circumstances where both preparatory and post trauma counselling sessions have been availed of (Ellrich & Baier, 2015).

Absenteeism is seen by many as one of the leading costs in modern business and studies suggest that stress is one of the major factors which impact these absences (Zare, Choobineh & Keshavarzi, 2017), translating to severe losses in economic terms (Kocakulah, Kelley, Mitchell & Rugeiri, 2016). For police, who form part of a human services sector, absenteeism due to stress is not measured specifically and is therefore difficult to quantify. Baka (2015), conducted specific research in police officers and the effects of police specific job demands on their mental and physical health. They observed depletion of energy in participants leading to burnout and results confirmed an indirect effect of job demands on poor health. Absenteeism figures from 2014, among public servants showed a €320 million cost to the exchequer for days lost through employee sickness (Duncan, 2015). The effects of stress have been shown to impact physical health and wellbeing of police officers (Maran, Varetto, Zedda & Ieraci,

2015) and thus can be found to account for absenteeism not only due to stress but also to physical illnesses which may not be initially associated with exposure to prolonged stress. Again this study posited that the introduction of supports and role specific training for police officers could prevent chronic stress and the physical illnesses which can follow.

Many studies in psychological research look at stress in terms of the application of models of stress, however, for those working as police officers, stress, from an evolutionary perspective is often a misunderstood action. The presence of stress in a given moment often assists in the appraisal on that situation, which can then lead to an appropriate action for the police officer (Nelson & Smith, 2016).

3.1 Stress

Stress is defined depending on the context in which it is being examined. Originally a term borrowed from the world of engineering it describes both the physiological and biological changes which occur in the body in response to a stimulus or an action, (Schacter, Gilbert & Wegner, 2012). Stress in its most common use, refers to too much or prolonged physiological arousal in response to a stimulus, resulting in a negative emotional experience (Taylor, 2012, p.139).

3.1.1 The Biological Model

There are several models of stress used in research to examine the effects of stress. Early research focused on the biological model of stress (Cannon, 1929), where a fleeting physiological response in a healthy individual was found to be an adaptive feature of evolution in allowing an individual deal appropriately and swiftly with a threat to their environment. This stress response was accepted as an adaptive process of human evolution (Schneiderman, Ironson & Siegel, 2005), however Selye (1956), observed that repeated or severe exposure to

this stress response produced by the body could lead to physical disease. While the biological model is sufficient in terms of its physiological accuracy, the model does not explain response in terms of the psychological input.

3.1.2 The Stimulus Model

In response to the original theories put forward to explain physiological reactions to stress Holmes & Rahe (1967), developed a scale of measurement for external factors as causes of physiological symptoms of stress, in order to predict illness. They were successful in that their attempts to weight life events according to the levels of stress caused, found a correlation between higher scores and an increased risk of developing ill health in the future. Critically, Holmes & Rahe (1967) determined that these weighted stress events were transient and short lived, therefore giving little or no credence to either ongoing stressful events or the appraisal of the individual in how well they could meet the stress.

3.1.3 The Transactional Model

In answer to what was lacking in the previous explanations of stress, the transactional model of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), attempted to examine the psychological aspects of stress by acknowledging that appraisal and experience changes the perception and interpretation of stress events. A judgement is made on how stressful the event is in the form of appraisal. Secondary appraisal then occurs where the individual uses past coping, available support and even personality traits in their assessment of the event and how to meet it.

McCreary & Thompson (2006) identified specific police stressors and identified two distinct categories of distress for those working in policing, operational and organisational stressors. Fallon (2018) in a report commissioned by the Garda Representative Association identified that organisational stressors had a bigger impact on wellbeing in Irish police than

operational stressors. The report also found that no practical steps have been taken to ensure that staff feel free to share emotional issues, to help them better manage their work demands (Fallon, 2018). While studies have looked at operational and organisational variables in stress, no research has looked at plain clothes versus uniform policing and whether one duty exhibits less stress than the other.

In line with the transactional model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), the initial focus is on the primary appraisal of the individual to the stress and this is particularly applicable in policing terms whereby a judgement is made whether the stress is perceived to be a negative event or challenging in some way. The police officer on the beat chasing a suspect may have sufficient experience and levels of fitness to deal with the chase, and may not find the experience to be negatively stressful. Conversely, the same police officer may find the experience of taking the suspect before a court of law to be an extremely intimidating and stressful process. In this way, it is down to the individual primary appraisal of the situation which dictates if it is considered stressful or not (Stephens & Long, 2000). In this way the transactional model moves on to stage two, secondary appraisal, once the stimulus has been perceived as stressful. For secondary appraisal to occur, previous experience is drawn upon to assess if the coping abilities are present to deal with the stress. For policing, in particular this secondary appraisal can change over time and with experience where a police officer can become more adept at dealing with certain types of stress and draw on coping abilities which they may have previously employed successfully (Larsson, Kempe & Starrin, 1988).

3.2 Coping

It has been found in recent studies that coping behaviours can have the biggest impact on differences found in an individual police officer's wellbeing, burnout and stress, specifically in terms of gender, which appear to account for vulnerabilities in stress appraisal and coping

strategies, (Maran et al. 2015). Coping is defined as how a person utilises different methods to counteract or avoid stressors in order to manage their situations (Schacter et al. 2012, p.644) According to Taylor (2012 p. 167), different people experience stress in different ways and some of those people find themselves at increased risk of mental distress simply because of how they appraise an event and experience it. This is an example of coping, and there are different ways of coping for different people. As police officers experience a different type of stress, or at least appraise stress differently to the general population, it is therefore possible that they have different forms of coping. The Brief Cope (Carver, 1997) is a measure designed to measure the different aspects of coping behaviours, social supports, problem solving, avoidance and positive thinking. Maran et al. (2015) in their research reiterated the importance for police organisations to identify mechanisms which officers can use to make them less susceptible to stress by utilising positive coping strategies. This finding has never been more important than at present in An Garda Síochána who are attempting to undergo a cultural shift and reinvigorate the force.

3.3 Burnout

Psychological burnout is a risk factor, particularly associated with service professions such as police who have been shown to experience a high level of occupational stress as a result of their job (Talavera-Velesco, Luceño-Moreno, Martin Garcia & Garcia-Albuernne, 2018). Burnout has been studied using a conceptual framework which is comprised of three distinct elements and as such are looked at as three phases of the one burnout measure as three separate subscales. Emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal achievement are the three elements which each contribute to occupational burnout, particularly for human services personnel who deal with others on an intense and personal level (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Burnout appears to manifest as an emotional weariness and cynicism within the individual

about their work and their worth (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The concept of police cynicism has been discussed since Neiderhoffer (1967) as a negative result of policing (Regoli 1976). More recent research however, looks at functional cynicism with a mediating role in work related health outcomes (Richardson, Burke & Martinussen 2006). Years of service appear to increase cynicism levels in police officers (Hickman, Piquero & Piquero 2004), but it is unclear if there is similar findings in an Irish context and if the cynicism is functional or if it correlates with stress. Burnout has been shown in a Netherlands study (Euwema, Kop & Bakker, 2004) to actually reduce the trait of dominance display among police officers which is arguably an important trait to possess in the area of policing. While the study found a correlation between this reduction in dominance and more effective conflict outcomes with members of the public, it lacks support in any other studies and the finding has not been replicated. In the present study burnout will be examined using the Maslach Burnout Inventory Human Services Survey (Maslach & Jackson, 1986).

3.4 Years of service

In relation to both stress and coping behaviours it has been found that police persons with more years of service not only reported lower levels of stress but also displayed a higher level of coping ability than their colleagues with lesser years of service (Maran et al. 2015). The findings found in terms of gender differences in policing stress and coping behaviours (McCarty, Zhao & Garland, 2007, Maran et al. 2015), becomes more important to understand in an Irish context as reported by the Irish Independent newspaper (Cusack, 2013), the Irish police force currently retires mostly male members every year but for a time ran an accelerated program of hiring female officers to address the gender imbalance. Years of service will be an important variable to continue to monitor in research as the gender balance continues to correct itself and the differences in stress appraisal across genders appear.

3.5 Gender

The findings for gender differences in stress and coping behaviours generally fall in line with previous research in that female officers are more vulnerable to organisational stressors (Maran et al. 2015). Within the body of this Italian research however, it was found that there does exist, some discrepancies in these figures in that male patrol officers reported a higher level of organisational stress, leading to questions about role in the Irish context and if there are gender or role differences apparent in the Irish Police Force. This study also posited that female officers reported a higher exposure to stress and that one possible explanation offered was that they had undergone this exposure in order to prove themselves to colleagues in a historically male dominated environment. This finding validated previous research in the area of gender and differences in police stress (McCarty, Zhao & Garland, 2007), who found that although their study pointed to similar predictors of stress and burnout across gender, there were unique stressors reported in the case of female officers. This finding was limited to one policing district in the United States of America, and although the experience of policing in Ireland is a completely different scenario, the findings suggest once again that it is an individual's appraisal of the stress rather than the stressor which may cause a person to cope or not to cope, and this study once again restated the importance of department policy and training with regard to planning for stress prevention and burnout among officers. An Garda Síochána stands out in Europe in terms of its gender split employing almost one third female officers, among the highest in Europe (Cusack, 2018), and the current research will record gender in order to examine any potential differences that arise.

3.6 Role

The current research will examine only front line members of the Irish Police Force rather than those employed on administrative duty. While previous research in the area of

police stress has looked at role or type of duty in terms of officers in operational service roles and officers on interior department or administrative roles, there is little research in the area of differences among police who are visible wearing a uniform or police officers who are on plain clothes duty and may not be as visible to the public. In an Irish context there is the added responsibility of policing without firearms. Conversely, for plain clothes personnel in An Garda Síochána there is the added responsibility of actually having to carry a firearm within a policing regime that generally polices without the use of such force.

3.7 General Health

The antecedents of stress are an important consideration when examining factors which affect the health of the general population, but especially in police organisations where stress is often a requirement of the job, for example in order to effect an arrest or even chase a burglar. While many of these stressors are considered transient and adaptive the frequency and appraisal of these incidents can change over the course of a career, and it is important to consider the impact stress can have on an individual's general health. The current study will use the general health questionnaire (GHQ) (Goldberg & Hillier, 1979) to examine if members of An Garda Síochána are at risk of developing a stress related illness.

3.8 Aims

The primary goal of the present study is to identify the organisational and operational stressors which exist in An Garda Síochána for front line members of the force, and to examine if any relationship exists between this stress and depersonalisation, as a core dimension of burnout. The research will also examine if and how these elements relate to coping behaviours among members of the force. The research aims to investigate if the perception of stress relates to dimensions of burnout, particularly depersonalisation, and if correlations with these

dimensions occur. While there is ample research in the area of police stress and police cynicism, there is little research to be found on police in an Irish context, which is an important contextualisation as Ireland has a largely unarmed police force.

3.9 Hypotheses

Following evaluation of available literature in the area of police stress, the following hypotheses have been identified by the researcher in order to examine a number of questions which have arisen, particularly when viewed in an Irish context.

Hypothesis 1 – It is hypothesised that there will be a statistically significant correlation between years of service and scores on depersonalisation.

Hypothesis 2 – It is hypothesised that there will be a significant difference in burnout levels between male police officers and female police officers.

Hypothesis 3 – It is hypothesised that there will be statistically significant sex differences in coping behaviours.

Hypothesis 4 – It is hypothesised that there will be a significant difference in stress levels between police persons on uniform duty and police persons on plain clothes duty.

Hypothesis 5 – It is hypothesised that there will be a statistically significant difference in well-being between police officers who feel unfairly overlooked for positions and those who do not feel unfairly overlooked.

Hypothesis 6 – It is hypothesised that there will be a significant difference in stress between police officers who feel unfairly overlooked for positions and those who do not feel unfairly overlooked.

4. Methodology

4.1 Participants

The present study was based on responses from 130 participants, both male and female who were all front line operational members of An Garda Síochána (95 males and 35 females) at the rank of either Sergeant or Garda. Those surveyed were done so on the basis that they operated in front line policing, involving everyday duties such as visible crime prevention, crime response, beat duty, escort duty, patrol duty, protection duty, crime investigation and station duty. Exclusion criteria ensured police who were employed solely on administrative duties or were inspector rank or above were not included in responses.

Age of participants was not requested. Instead, years of service was asked as a predictor variable. An Garda Síochána members are not employed unless they have attained the age of 18 years, therefore by default all participants were over the age of 18 years. Service range of participants fell between 1 – 40 years ($M=15.57$, $SD=8.3$).

Participants were sampled through convenient sampling methods and participants were drawn from a nationwide sample from 10 counties in Ireland spanning all four provinces of the Republic of Ireland. Access was gained to the required sample following successful application (Appendix A) to the Garda Research Unit based in the Garda College, Templemore, Co. Tipperary. Access was only granted if the research was conducted in paper format rather than through an electronic link to preserve the security of the Garda network.

Participants ($N=130$) were looked at in terms of a number of groupings. Gender, male ($N=95$) and female ($N=35$), type of duty, uniform ($N=61$) and plain clothes ($N=69$) and finally whether the participant felt overlooked for a position unfairly, yes ($N=49$) and no ($N=81$).

4.2 Materials

Research was conducted by means of a paper questionnaire booklet (Appendix B) containing a cover sheet with information about the research and instructions for completion, and a question asking participants if they consented to partaking in the research. Participants were instructed that participation was entirely voluntary but that due to the anonymous nature of the responses, participation could not be withdrawn once the booklet was returned. The booklet went on to collect demographic information in terms of gender (male or female), type of duty (Uniform or plain clothes) and years of service. For validation, participants were also asked if they were employed on front line duty, and only those who ticked yes were included in the research. The body of the questionnaire booklet was made up of a number of measures and questions to examine predictor and criterion variables as follows;

General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg & Williams, 1988) 12 questions were asked of the participant related to their own view of their general health over the previous number of weeks. The responses ranged from 'better than usual' to 'much less than usual' and were given a score of 0, 1, 2 or 3. There was a score range of 0-36, with a higher score, particularly of 12 or more, indicating that the participant was feeling a significant amount of stress which may increase their risk of developing a stress related illness in the future (Liang, Wang & Yin, 2016).

The Police Stress Questionnaire (PSQ), containing Organisational Police Stress questionnaire (PSQ-Org) and Operational Police Stress Questionnaire (PSQ-Op) (McCreary & Thompson, 2006) was utilised in a combined shortened version comprising of 25 questions pertinent to policing in Ireland. The shortened version omitted 15 questions from the original combined PSQ (questions 9, 10, 11, 12 & 14 from PSQ-Org, questions 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 19 & 20 from PSQ-Op), and was used in order to reduce the overall size of the questionnaire and to minimise the possibility of participant fatigue. The answer choices ranged from 1 -7

with 1 indicating 'No stress at all' to 7 indicating 'A lot of stress'. Results were dealt with as two separate totals for organisational stress and operational stress. Reliability for the PSQ Org fell at (.91), reliability for PSQ Op was found to be (.90) indicating a good internal reliability for both scales (Irnizia, Emelia, Muhammad Saliluddin & Nizam Isha, 2014).

The Brief Cope (BC) (Carver, 1997) asked participants 28 questions regarding their coping styles in order to measure coping ability. The measure uses 14 subscales comprising of two questions each measuring self-distraction, active coping, denial, substance use, use of emotional support, use of instrumental support, behavioural disengagement, venting, positive reframing, planning, humour, acceptance, religion and self-blame. The measure is designed to oscillate within the question framing between adaptive and maladaptive coping behaviours. Items were further reduced on analysis to 4 subscales; approach coping using items 1, 2, 7, 12, 14, 17, 20, 24 and 25, avoidance coping using items 3, 6, 8, 13, 16, 18, 19, 26 & 28, altering consciousness using items 4, 11, 22 & 27 and seeking support using items 5, 10, 15, 21 & 23, (Gibbons, 2010). Item 9 of BC did not group in factor analysis. Item 9 relates to venting and two extra questions were asked in order to more fully measure venting in the members of An Garda Síochána surveyed. The first item asked how much experience the participant had of a supportive environment whenever pent up feelings were expressed. The second asked how much experience the participant had of being genuinely listened to by colleagues whenever things were said to let unpleasant feelings escape. Participants were asked to rate their experience on a scale of 1 – 10, 1 being 'no experience of this' to 10 being 'lots of experience of this'.

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) asked participants 22 questions relating to a number of common stress responses with regard to police personnel and each participant was asked to read a question such as "I feel used up at the end of the day" and to rate these statements on a 7 point scale ranging from 'Never' to 'Everyday'. These items

were scored from 0 – 6 on completion. The measure is divided into three subscales which measure the participants levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and professional accomplishment.

The materials necessary to complete this study were the cover page and consent form (Appendix C), the self-administered 94 question survey booklet itself (Appendix B), debrief sheet for participants containing helpful phone numbers such as Garda Employee Assistance service and Aware (Appendix D), paper clips, pens, envelopes to ensure confidentiality returning survey to researcher, a box to secure paper surveys before data entry, a computer with SPSS software package, printer, paper and securely encrypted key to store data set.

4.3 Design

The present study incorporated a mixed design, partly correlational and partly cross-sectional which involved the analysis of data testing for both relationships and differences. The analysis of data was focus driven as it examined data collected from one societal group, namely members of An Garda Síochána, the Irish Police Force. Predictor variables examined in the present study were years of service, gender, duty (uniform members or plain clothes members) and whether the participant felt that they had recently (within the previous 3 years) been unfairly overlooked for a position that they felt qualified for, stress and coping behaviours. Criterion variables examined were well-being measures, general health and burnout.

4.4 Procedure

The Garda Research Unit based at the Police training college in Templemore Co. Tipperary required a detailed research proposal (Appendix A) before granting permission for the research to be conducted. The researcher was refused permission to conduct the present research electronically due to security concerns but was granted permission to distribute 10

paper questionnaires each to 15 nominated ethical gatekeepers throughout Ireland who each distributed the questionnaires for completion to front line personnel in their station party and returned them via internal Garda mail to the researcher. Each single questionnaire booklet was attached to an envelope in which the participant placed the questionnaire booklet before returning to the nominated ethical gatekeeper, therefore anonymity and confidentiality was strictly adhered to. Ethical gatekeepers were chosen purposively to ensure a national distribution in both rural and urban policing districts and also to ensure an even distribution of uniform and plain clothes units. Questionnaires were distributed in Dublin, Meath, Kildare, Waterford, Sligo, Donegal, Cork, Kerry, Galway and Mayo.

The cover sheet (Appendix C) instructed participants of the nature of the research and the details of the researcher. Participants were informed that the researcher had received permission to conduct the research from the Garda Research Unit and that the survey would take approximately 15 minutes to complete and that participation was completely voluntary, however once consent was given and questionnaire was completed and returned, consent could not be withdrawn due to the anonymity of the research. The debrief sheet (Appendix D) was paperclipped to the questionnaire booklet for participants to detach and save should they wish. The debrief sheet thanked participants for their time and participation and restated the aims of the study. The debrief sheet also acknowledged that participants may encounter some negative feelings and relevant helpline numbers were provided for Garda Employee Assistance, Aware and The Samaritans. Individual envelopes were returned to the 15 nominated ethical gatekeepers, who in turn mailed the envelopes back to the researcher. On receipt of questionnaires via internal Garda mail, the envelopes were opened and numbered and stored securely in a cardboard box in a secure office. Following receipt of 130 questionnaires at an appointed cut-off date, the data was entered into SPSS software for subsequent data analysis by the researcher.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

Consideration was given in respect of the present study to all ethical guidelines and principles laid down by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) Code of Ethics (2010).

Significant consideration was given to the nature of the study and the requirement of official permission in line with The Official Secrets Act (1963) in preparing the proposal for the Garda Research Unit, Garda Training College, Templemore, Co. Tipperary and the use of electronic data collection was considered by the researcher with an alternative proposal for paper collection should electronic means be refused.

The researcher was cognizant of data usage and storage which may have been a concern for some participants and to minimize this risk the introduction page of the survey addressed these concerns in line with the Data Protection Act (2018) legislation. Information regarding data issues was clearly outlined in relation to the anonymity and confidentiality of the survey and the rights of the participant to withdraw their consent from participation in the survey. Participants were informed that this could be done at any time prior to completion without the need for explanation.

Due consideration was given to the informed consent of the participant and clear information was given to participants as to the nature of the research, the length of time it would take and that it would be submitted for examination.

In line with informed consent the researcher was identified to participants and email contact details were made available. Participants were informed that individual feedback would not be provided but that the results of the research on completion would be made available through the Garda Research Unit and Dublin Business School (DBS).

The researcher considered the possibility of mild distress caused to some participants given the self-reflective nature of the measures used, and to minimize this risk pertinent phone numbers were included in the debrief sheet which was made available to participants. It was

considered that the potential benefit which could be gained from conducting the research could outweigh the potential risk caused by arousing mild distress in some participants and this was negated by supplying pertinent helpline phone numbers to participants in the debrief sheet (Appendix D).

The paper record of the questionnaire was transferred into electronic format and safely stored on a password protected private laptop for the purpose of data analysis. No identifying features were included in the paper record and as such the electronic data could not be attributed to any individual.

5. Results

Statistical analyses were conducted on the data using a number of statistical tests utilising SPSS version 25 software. Analysis produced descriptive statistics and frequencies. The present research was based on 130 valid responses. The sample consisted of 95 males (73%) and 35 females (27%). The sample was further analysed and consisted of 61 uniform officers (47%) and 69 plain clothes officers (53%). All participants were asked if in the previous 3 years they felt they had been unfairly overlooked for a position they feel qualified for and 49 respondents (37.7%) answered yes while 81 officers answered no (62.3%).

A number of statistical tests were carried out which will be discussed individually below. Internal reliability and validity for each measure used was examined in the present research using Cronbach's Alpha results. The GHQ was examined and Cronbach Alpha for this measure returned at (.55), showing low internal consistency (Goldberg & Williams, 1988), the Brief Cope returned at (.90) demonstrating a high value of internal consistency (Carver, 1997), the MBI-HSS was (.85) also showing a high level of internal consistency (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) and the PSQ Org was (.91) demonstrating a high internal reliability and PSQ Op was (.90) also within ideal range (McCreary & Thompson, 2006). While the results in the case of the GHQ was deemed to be below the normal threshold the figure will be discussed in the following section.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

General health and the 3 dimensions of burnout were operationalised as health and well-being measures and descriptive statistics for these measures are listed for ease of reference in Table 1.

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics for Psychological Wellbeing Measures*

| Measure | N | Min | Max | Mean | SD |
|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| General Health | 124 | 5 | 23 | 13.27 | 3.17 |
| Emotional Exhaustion | 129 | 0 | 54 | 20.40 | 12.48 |
| Depersonalisation | 122 | 0 | 27 | 10.15 | 6.98 |
| Personal Achievement | 129 | 7 | 48 | 26.80 | 9.92 |

Descriptive statistics for the predictor variables which were used to test the hypotheses in the present study are detailed in Table 2. The predictor variables listed in Table 2 account for police stress both operational and organisational, years of service and the 14 types of coping.

Table 2 *Descriptive Statistics for Predictor Variables*

| Measure | N | Min | Max | Mean | SD |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| PSQ Org | 125 | 16 | 105 | 64.68 | 19.16 |
| PSQ Op | 129 | 10 | 70 | 35.43 | 14.24 |
| Years of Service | 130 | 1 | 40 | 15.57 | 8.33 |
| Self - Distraction | 128 | 2 | 8 | 3.92 | 1.61 |
| Active Coping | 127 | 2 | 8 | 4.19 | 1.73 |
| Denial | 129 | 2 | 7 | 2.57 | 1.12 |
| Substance Use | 129 | 2 | 8 | 2.71 | 1.50 |
| Emotional Support | 128 | 2 | 8 | 3.37 | 1.57 |
| Instrumental Support | 130 | 2 | 8 | 3.32 | 1.48 |
| Behavioural Disengagement | 129 | 2 | 7 | 2.70 | 1.10 |
| Venting | 129 | 2 | 8 | 3.47 | 1.63 |
| Positive Reframing | 129 | 2 | 8 | 4.02 | 1.73 |
| Planning | 130 | 2 | 8 | 4.03 | 1.77 |
| Humour | 128 | 2 | 8 | 3.78 | 1.83 |
| Acceptance | 129 | 2 | 8 | 3.89 | 1.59 |
| Religion | 129 | 2 | 8 | 2.50 | 1.20 |
| Self-Blame | 130 | 2 | 8 | 3.67 | 1.69 |

5.2 Data Analyses

In order to proceed with testing the hypotheses a number of preliminary statistical tests were carried to establish any significant differences or correlations in the data. Tests of normality were conducted to establish that the data was normally distributed and to confirm

that parametric tests were appropriate. Independent samples T-tests were conducted and identified significant differences in a number of cases listed in Table 3 and Table 4 below. In addition to tests for difference Pearson's correlations were conducted between the predictor variables of years or service, Operational and Organisational police stress and the 14 types of coping behaviour to establish significant correlations.

Table 3 *Significant Results for Tests of Difference on Stress & Well-being*

| Measure | Group | Mean | SD | <i>t</i> | <i>Df</i> | <i>p</i> |
|----------------------|----------------|------|------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Emotional Exhaustion | Male | 2.03 | 1.30 | - | - | - |
| | Female | 2.99 | 1.44 | -3.67 | 128 | <.001 |
| Emotional Exhaustion | Overlooked | 3.04 | 1.48 | 5.23 | 128 | <.001 |
| | Not Overlooked | 1.83 | 1.14 | - | - | - |
| Depersonalisation | Overlooked | 2.44 | 1.39 | 2.74 | 128 | .007 |
| | Not Overlooked | 1.77 | 1.34 | - | - | - |
| Personal Achievement | Uniform | 3.60 | 1.14 | 2.06 | 128 | .041 |
| | Plain Clothes | 3.15 | 1.31 | - | - | - |
| PSQ-Op | Uniform | 3.82 | 1.41 | 2.22 | 128 | .028 |
| | Plain Clothes | 3.27 | 1.40 | - | - | - |
| PSQ-Org | Overlooked | 4.60 | 1.29 | 2.10 | 128 | .046 |
| | Not Overlooked | 4.14 | 1.22 | - | - | - |

Table 4 *Significant Results for Tests of Difference on Coping Behaviours*

| Measure | Group | Mean | SD | <i>t</i> | <i>Df</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-----------------------|----------------|------|------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Self-Blame | Male | 1.73 | .75 | - | - | - |
| | Female | 2.13 | 1.02 | -2.45 | 128 | .016 |
| Humour | Uniform | 2.07 | .96 | 2.35 | 128 | .020 |
| | Plain Clothes | 1.70 | .84 | - | - | - |
| Self-Distraction | Overlooked | 2.15 | .80 | 2.24 | 128 | .027 |
| | Not Overlooked | 1.83 | .78 | - | - | - |
| Denial | Overlooked | 1.45 | .65 | 2.66 | 128 | .009 |
| | Not Overlooked | 1.83 | .48 | - | - | - |
| Substance Use | Overlooked | 1.57 | .89 | 2.64 | 128 | .009 |
| | Not Overlooked | 1.22 | .61 | - | - | - |
| Behave. Disengagement | Overlooked | 1.51 | .64 | 2.71 | 128 | .008 |
| | Not Overlooked | 1.25 | .46 | - | - | - |
| Venting | Overlooked | 1.96 | .92 | 2.34 | 128 | .021 |
| | Not Overlooked | 1.61 | .73 | - | - | - |
| Self -Blame | Overlooked | 2.08 | .95 | 2.65 | 128 | .009 |
| | Not Overlooked | 1.69 | .74 | - | - | - |

5.3 Inferential Statistics

The present study examined the data in terms of years of service and did not gather age data. Figure 1 shows the years of service range of participants which ranged from 1 to 40 years service ($M = 15.57$, $SD = 8.33$).

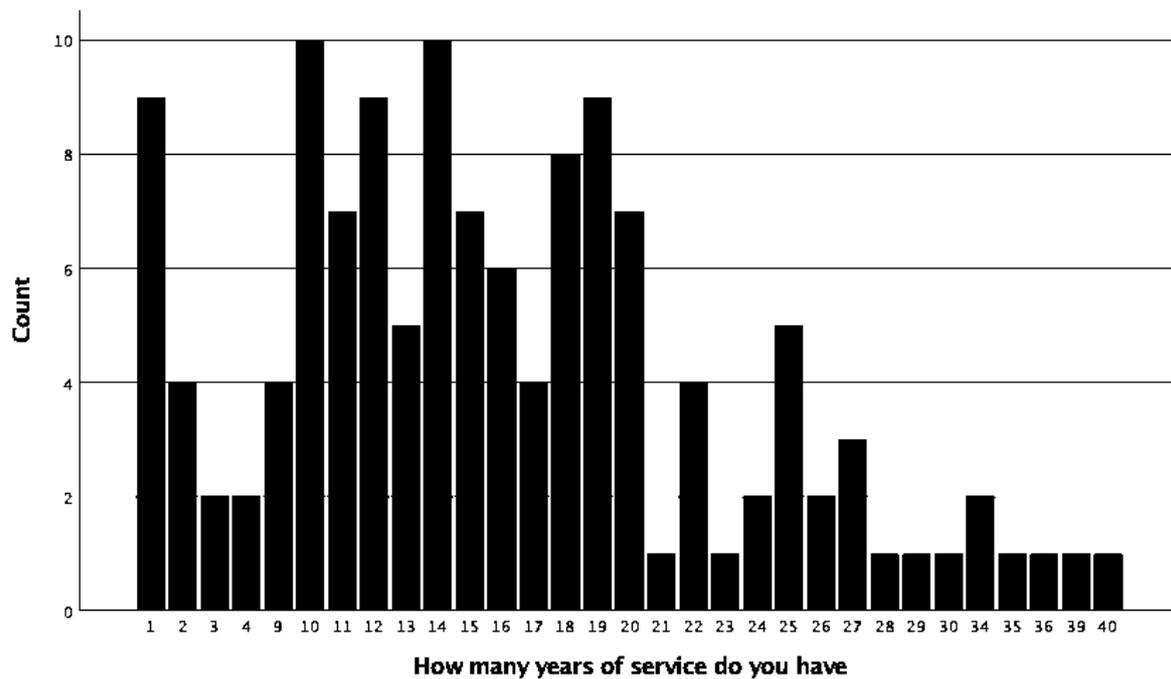


Figure 1 *Years of Service of Participants*

The results of a number of independent samples T-tests and Pearson's correlations were used to identify the significant variables which were used within regression models with each outcome variable, operationalised as well-being in the present study. Those correlations found to be significant were again analysed using hierarchical multiple regression models and details of the initial model for each regression are described in Table 5. In each case the regression coefficients for the final model are described, assumptions for using the regression in each case were checked and met. In each case the variable used was a continuous measure and the Mahalanobis' distance values showed no outliers, with normally distributed data in each case. Tolerance values did not exceed .2 suggesting lack of multicollinearity.

Table 5 *Correlation table showing significant correlations prior to regression analyses ** significant at .01 level, * significant at .05 level*

| Variable | EE | DP | PA |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| PSQ Op | .437** | .380** | - |
| PSQ Org | .535** | .391** | - |
| Years of Service | - | -.263** | - |
| Gender | .308** | - | - |
| Overlooked | -.420** | -.235** | - |
| Duty | - | - | -.179* |
| Self - Distraction | .477** | - | - |
| Active Coping | .282** | - | - |
| Denial | .341** | .173* | - |
| Substance Use | .425** | .206* | -.260** |
| Emotional Support | .217* | - | - |
| Instrumental Support | - | - | - |
| Behavioural Disengagement | .430** | .288** | -.178** |
| Venting | .389** | .247** | - |
| Positive Reframing | - | .214* | - |
| Planning | - | - | - |
| Humour | .266** | .460** | - |
| Acceptance | - | .217* | - |
| Religion | - | - | - |
| Self-Blame | .495** | .233** | - |

5.4 Hypothesis 1

It is hypothesised that there will be a significant correlation between years of service and mean scores on depersonalisation.

Multiple regression analysis were used to establish if years of service, PSQ Op, PSQ Org and the significant 9 types of coping behaviour listed at Table 6 were predictors of depersonalisation levels. It was found that humour, PSQ-Op, feeling unfairly overlooked and years of service, were statistically significant factors in predicting depersonalisation scores, ($R^2 = .34$, $f(2, 124) = 12.82$, $p < .001$). While years of service were a predictor in the model it was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.02$, $p = .146$). The final model and the most parsimonious model in the regression analysis indicated that use of humour as a coping behaviour ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$), PSQ-Op ($\beta = .20$, $p = .010$) and feeling unfairly overlooked ($\beta = -.49$, $p = .022$) were all statistically significant predictors of depersonalisation levels.

While it was found that as years of service rise, depersonalisation levels significantly decrease, in support of the hypothesis. The regression model showed evidence of mediation in the use of humour as a coping behaviour as can be seen in Figure 2. Specifically, use of humour as a coping behaviour accounted for variance in increased depersonalisation levels, however, this was influenced by years of service where an inverse relationship was observed.

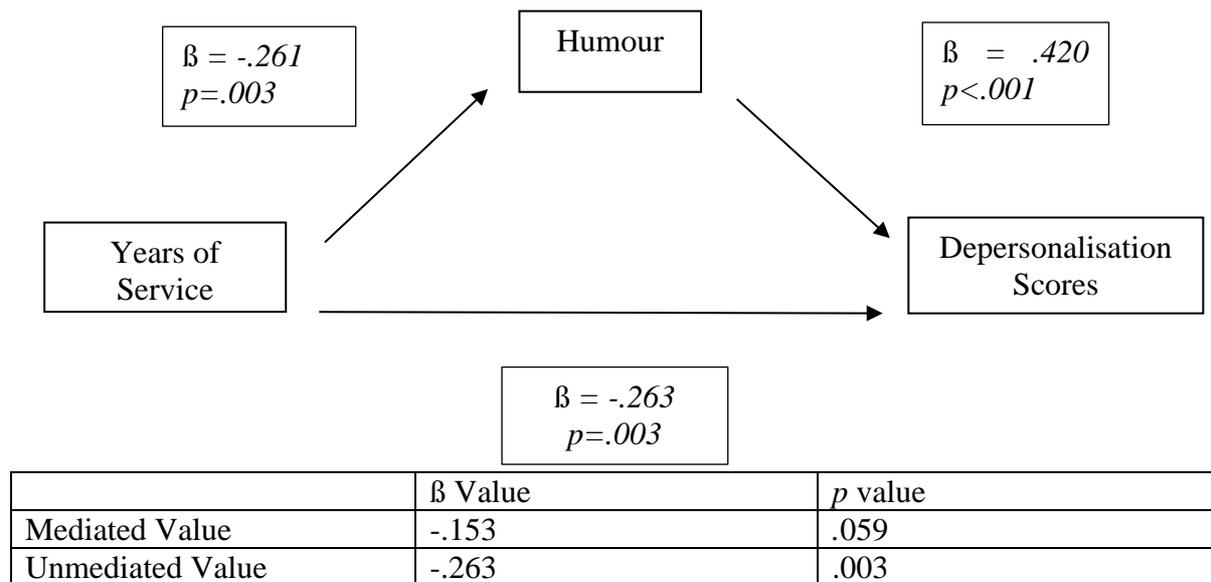


Figure 2 *Depersonalisation Mediation*

5.5 Hypothesis 2.

It is hypothesised that there will be a significant difference in burnout between male and female officers.

Independent samples T-tests showed no significant difference between depersonalisation levels ($t(128) = .47, p = .640$) or personal achievement ($t(128, 2) = .79, p = .432$), however female officers ($M = 2.99, SD = 1.44$) were found to be significantly higher than male officers ($M = 2.03, SD = 1.30$) on levels of emotional exhaustion ($t(128, 2) = -3.67, p < .001$).

Multiple regression analysis was then used to examine sex and other significant predictors of emotional exhaustion in combination. The final model consisted of organisational stress, being unfairly overlooked, substance use as a coping behaviour, self-distraction as a coping behaviour and gender as all contributing significantly to emotional exhaustion ($R^2 = .6(7, 122) = 25.75, p < .001$). Self-blame and behavioural disengagement were contributing factors in the parsimonious model while not being significant.

5.6 Hypothesis 3.

It is hypothesised that there will be statistically significant sex differences in coping behaviours.

Independent samples T-tests showed that of the 14 coping behaviours examined the only significant difference on gender was the coping behaviour of self-blame ($t(128) = -2.45$, $p = .016$), as demonstrated in Table 4, where female officers displayed significantly higher mean scores on self-blame (2.13, SD 1.02) than male officers (-1.73, SD .75), supporting the hypothesis.

5.7 Hypothesis 4.

It is hypothesised that there will be a statistically significant difference in stress levels between uniform officers and plain clothes police officers.

Following independent samples T-tests, Table 3 demonstrates the significant difference on mean score between uniform officers and plain clothes officers on operational police stress ($t(128) = 2.22$, $p = .028$), with uniform officers indicating a significantly higher mean score on operational stress (3.82, SD = 1.41) than mean scores of plain clothes officers (3.27, SD = 1.40) in support of the hypothesis, this is further demonstrated in Figure 3. However no statistically significant difference in mean scores on Organisational stress levels was observed between the two groups.

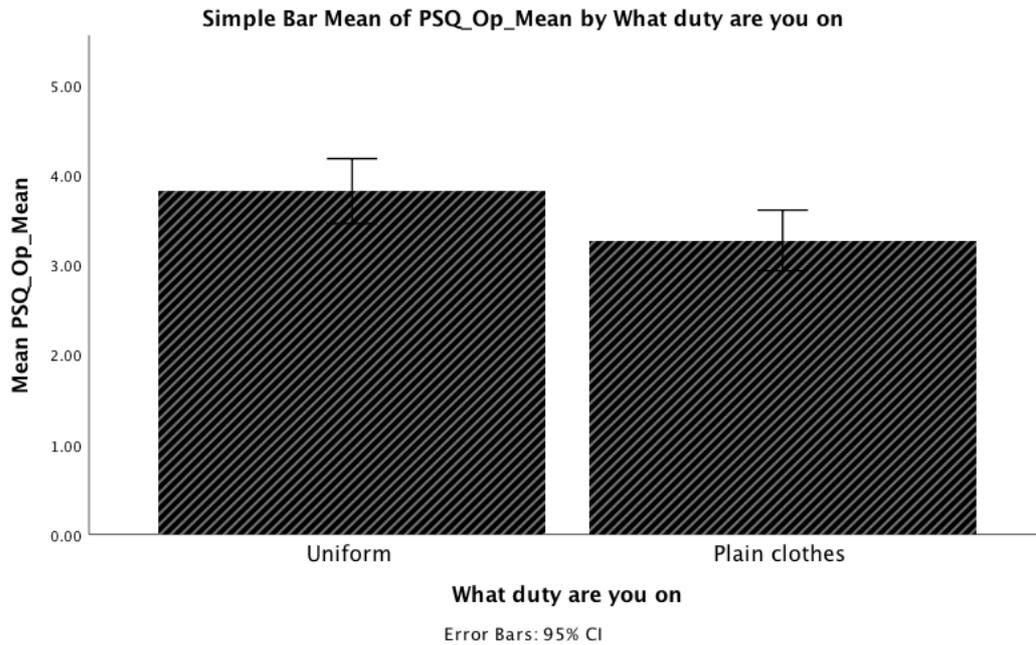


Figure 3 *Significant Difference in Operational Stress between Uniform and Plain Clothes Police Officers.*

5.8 Hypothesis 5.

It is hypothesised that there will be a statistically significant difference in well-being between police officers who feel unfairly overlooked for positions and those who do not feel unfairly overlooked.

Significant differences were observed on two dimensions of burnout as can be viewed in Table 3 where independent samples T-tests showed that there was a statistically significant difference in emotional exhaustion levels between police officers who felt unfairly overlooked for positions and those who did not ($t(128) = 4.91, p < .001$), as the test for Levene's was significant in this case, equal variances were not assumed. The results indicated that officers who felt unfairly overlooked reported significantly higher mean scores of emotional exhaustion (3.04, $SD = 1.47$) than the mean scores of those who did not feel unfairly overlooked (1.83, $SD = 1.14$).

Independent samples T-tests also showed a statistically significant difference in depersonalisation mean scores between the same group ($t(128) = 2.74, p = .007$) with officers

who felt unfairly overlooked reported significantly higher mean scores of depersonalisation (2.43, SD = 1.39) than the mean scores of those who did not feel unfairly overlooked (1.76, SD= 1.34). No statistically significant differences were observed in the third dimension of burnout, personal achievement. The results indicate a support for the hypothesis and the significant results were entered into regression models for each of the remaining 2 dimensions of burnout along with significant correlations described at Table 5.

The final regression model for emotional exhaustion included feeling unfairly overlooked or not, gender, organisational stress, and 4 items of coping behaviour, self-distraction, substance use, behavioural disengagement and self-blame. Mediation was tested by entering the significant variables into block 1 and repeating in block 2 of the model but none of them were found to have significant mediating influence. The final model indicated a likelihood that a combination of the variables in the final model significantly predicted emotional exhaustion together, although only 5 of the variables in the final model were significant, ($R^2 = .59$, $F(4, 122) = 25.75$, $p < .001$). The significant factors were organisational stress ($\beta = .35$, $p < .001$), feeling unfairly overlooked ($\beta = -.65$, $p < .001$), substance use as a means of coping ($\beta = .40$, $p = .001$), gender ($\beta = .56$, $p = .004$) and self-distraction as a means of coping ($\beta = .29$, $p = .014$).

In the case of personal achievement the final regression model indicated that type of duty, substance use coping and behavioural disengagement coping all contributed to 11% of the variance in personal achievement ($R^2 = .11$, $F(2, 126) = 5.2$, $p = .002$). These results indicated that uniform members were significantly higher in personal achievement scores and were a significant contributing factor in predicting these scores ($\beta = -.44$, $p = .039$) along with substance use ($\beta = -.37$, $p = .013$). While behavioural disengagement was a contributing factor in the final model it was not significant ($\beta = -.28$, $p = .169$). Feeling unfairly overlooked for positions were not a significant factor in relation to the general health or the dimension of

personal achievement, however it was a significant factor in both emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation levels and therefore the hypothesis is supported.

5.9 Hypothesis 6

It is hypothesised that there will be a significant difference in stress between police officers who feel unfairly overlooked for positions and those who do not feel unfairly overlooked. Although officers who felt unfairly overlooked for positions were higher on both types of police stress, than officers who did not feel unfairly overlooked, only differences in organisational police stress levels were found to be statistically significant ($t = (128, 2) = 2.01$, $p = .046$) and thus, the hypothesis is supported. Mean scores for each group are detailed in figure 4.

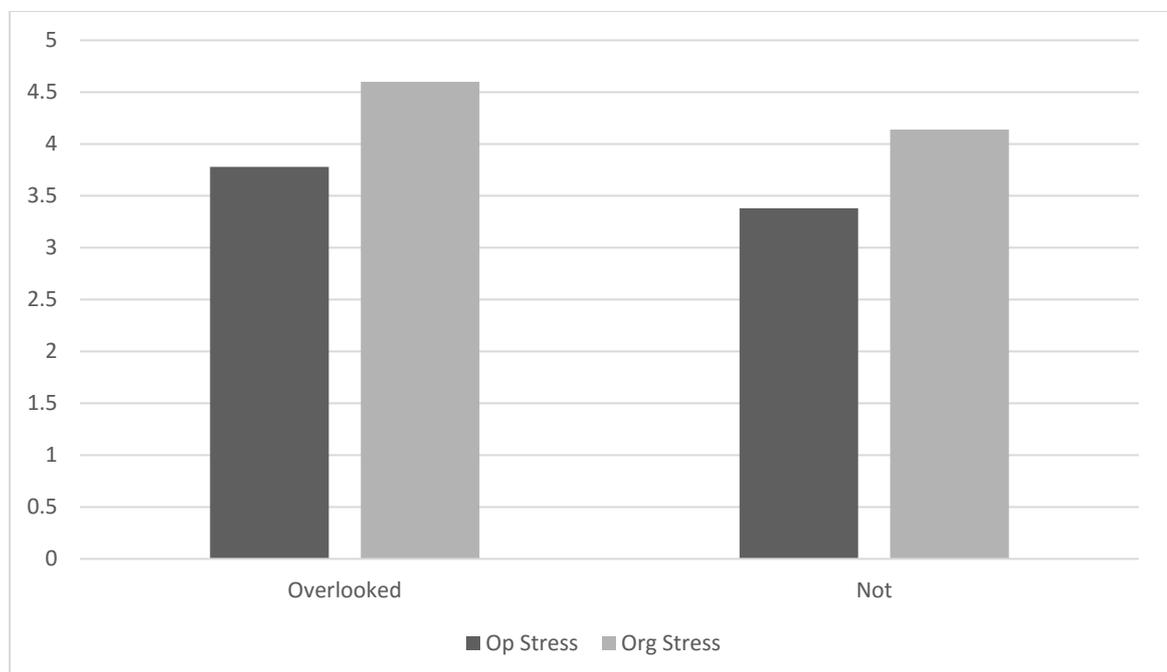


Figure 4 *Mean Scores on Difference Between Officers Unfairly overlooked and officers Not Unfairly Overlooked.*

6. Discussion

The aim of the research in the present study was to examine the unique stress in policing and examine the different ways in which these operational and organisational stressors impacted different cohorts of front line officers in An Garda Síochána, particularly in relation to their general health and 3 dimensions of burnout, operationalised as well-being. The research aimed to examine these aspects of stress and wellbeing in relation to coping behaviour, both adaptive and maladaptive. The research also aimed to examine if and how the disillusionment of Gardaí, alluded to in recent publications (PwC, 2018), impacted stress and well-being. It is widely accepted in the academic community that policing is a stressful occupation. So too, is it accepted there are distinct causes of stress specific to policing (McCreary & Thompson, 2006), but what had not been researched until the present study, is if this disillusionment and cynicism in the form of depersonalisation, adds to the organisational aspect of police stress. What is clear from the findings in the present study, is that a large cohort within the sample feel unfairly overlooked within their career (37.7%), and that this section of the force have significantly raised levels of organisational stress. It is equally significant to note that uniform police officers, the visible presence, are suffering greater levels of operational stress than their plain clothes colleagues. This fact may be what drives the officers to look for alternative, over-subscribed positions within the force and then feel disillusioned and dejected when these positions are filled by others, thus perpetuating the cycle.

The present study tested 6 hypotheses. It was hypothesised that a significant relationship would be observed between years of service and depersonalisation levels. The hypothesis was accepted, as hierarchical multiple regression results indicated a significant inverse relationship between years of service and depersonalisation levels. Mediation however, was observed between the two variables in the form of humour as a coping mechanism. Years of service as a predictor was a significant factor in the parsimonious model

in block 1 but not in block 2 when the coping mechanism of humour was added. This indicates that although the general observation in the present study appears to be that depersonalisation decreases with years of service, once coping behaviour of humour is considered, years of service stops accounting for significantly lower depersonalisation scores. In fact, in the present study, humour coping appears to be maladaptive as it increases significantly in line with depersonalisation. This mediation is an important factor in why police stress is unique within occupational stress. As a frame of reference, Margaret Mitchell (1996), describes how police officers deal with death and indicates that it is in their training to always see the worst case scenario and consider the worst. She goes on to state that in traumatic incidents, where others have the luxury of looking away, police officers are paid to observe and to examine the minutiae when confronted with a horrifying scene. The use of black humour or gallows humour has long been described in philosophical literature and particularly in the realm of emergency services (Scott, 2007) where this black humour is a known technique in normalizing emergencies for these professions and is often used as a tool to distance the officer from the emotional difficulty as an adaptive feature. In the present study the regression model indicated a significant relationship between the use of humour as a coping response and higher levels of depersonalisation. This could be explained by the fact that the officers surveyed had recently had reason to use black humour as a means of coping, meaning they may have recently been exposed to something traumatic causing increased depersonalisation levels. While theory suggest that this humour is used to increase coping, the present study suggests that it also correlates with increased levels of burnout. This suggests that it might be something about the type of humour being expressed or that there may be factors not observed or tested in the present study which require further examination.

It is apparent following the results observed that although in the main, cynicism in the form of depersonalisation decreases in line with years of service, there are a myriad of other

factors to consider in the area of policing. The repeated exposure to trauma, use of maladaptive coping and lack of post event counselling as a protective feature all add to burnout in ways that are beyond the scope of the present study. If years of service were the only predictor variable and officers were not exposed to police stress it would be a simple result, however the findings in the present study are in contrast with previous research in cynicism levels in police officers (Hickman, Piquero & Piquero 2004).

Hypothesis 2 predicted that there would be a significant difference in burnout between male and female police officers. While the hypothesis was supported in the case of emotional exhaustion where female officers were found to exhibit higher levels than male officers there were no significant differences observed in the other dimensions of burnout. This finding is in line with previous research. There are other factors at play however, in the dimension of emotional exhaustion which also contribute significantly to its presence. The analysis in the present study found that after removing the influence of other non-significant factors, being female, coupled with increased organisational stress and feeling unfairly overlooked, all increase the possibility of exhibiting emotional exhaustion. This in turn indicates that police officers may be more inclined to turn to substance use as a means of coping, perhaps in the form of alcohol or prescription medications. What is also evident from the model is the use of self-distraction as a form of coping, behavioural disengagement and self-blame, all of which in combination are maladaptive coping responses. The results are supportive of previous research (Maran et al. 2015), but the complex nature of the parsimonious model found in the present study which showed that it was not just gender which influenced emotional exhaustion levels, indicates a need for more in depth testing in coping behaviour.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that there would be significant sex differences in coping behaviour. Significance was found in only 1 of the 14 types of coping examined where female officers were found to be significantly higher in the use of self-blame as a form of coping. As

in the discussion in hypothesis 2 these findings should be examined in light of the regression analysis for emotional exhaustion, which indicated that both self-blame and being female influenced emotional exhaustion levels. Again the use of maladaptive coping in this case can be seen to have a negative effect on the wellbeing of female officers, and when viewed in terms of the entire model the use of coping by means of substance use, self-distraction and behavioural disengagement, are combined factors. It can be argued that many of the 14 types of coping examined are learned behaviours (Bandura, 1977) within the police force and thus this would account for why difference in gender was observed in only self-blame which is an introspective process. In part explanation of the model which accounted for 7 different factors which influenced emotional exhaustion in combination, Maran, Varetto, Zedda & Francini (2014) examined stress and coping differences on grounds of gender in police officers in Italy, and their findings indicated that female officers were at a higher risk of somatization where their appraisal of stress and coping behaviour contributed to the manifestations of physical symptoms. This would be an apt explanation for the combination of all factors identified in the model, including substance use, which would initially appear to be a juxtaposition for police officers.

Hypothesis 4 predicted a significant difference in stress between uniform officers and plain clothes officers and in the case of operational police stress, uniform officers were significantly higher. This indicates that uniform officers may be more exposed to operational factors such as more stringent shift hours or working alone. While plain clothes officers also work alone perhaps it is the wearing of the uniform which accounts for how the uniform officer appraises the situation. A uniform can be a target identifying an officer while the plain clothes member may operate unidentified. Uniform officers are exposed to negativity from the public and it is possible that they are held to a higher standard merely because they are visible.

Hypothesis 5 predicted a significant difference in wellbeing between officers who felt unfairly overlooked for positions and officers who did not feel unfairly overlooked. As the 3 dimensions of burnout and general health were operationalised as wellbeing in the present study, all of these factors were tested for significance and only emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation were significantly different with those who felt unfairly overlooked reporting higher levels in both cases. With such a high proportion of respondents indicating that they do feel unfairly overlooked, it is important to consider that statistical difference in their wellbeing going forward. Not only are they reporting higher levels of burnout, but regression analyses consistently showed the influence of maladaptive coping behaviours in the officers concerned.

Hypothesis 6 predicted a significant difference in stress between officers who felt unfairly overlooked for positions and officers who did not feel unfairly overlooked. While both types of police stress were higher in officers who perceived that they had been unfairly overlooked, the difference was significant in the case of organisational stress. The result is not surprising considering being unfairly overlooked is an organisational factor. However it is unclear if these is representative of other police forces or indeed other occupations as there is no known measure for disillusionment. While feeling overlooked or not was a question designed for the present study it is an important factor which has come to light in Irish policing (PwC, 2018) (Fallon, 2018) and one which the present study has identified as a contributing factor in lower levels of wellbeing of Irish police officers.

6.1 Limitations

Cronbach Alpha, while within reasonable parameters for the GHQ was below normal threshold at (.55). Participants indicated a dislike for the phraseology of answer options in the GHQ section of the present research and this may be a reason for the apparent low Cronbach Alpha result in this measure. Additionally studies have referenced the problematic nature of

the negatively phrased items as a cause of response bias leading in some cases to low Cronbach's Alpha (Hankins, 2008).

The present study was based on the years of service of participants and did not collect data on the age of the participants. Future study should capture age data in tandem with years of service, to establish if depersonalisation and stress factors rise and fall with age along with service, or if the levels change due to occupational burnout or wellbeing as opposed to age.

Due to security concerns from the Garda Research Unit, the present study was conducted using pen and paper questionnaire and this may have contributed to participant fatigue or participant dislike of the method of data collection. Should electronic means have been permitted the sample size may have been substantially increased and the process made faster and more efficient.

6.2 Strengths

The present study was based on 130 responses and while this sample is small considering the size of the force of An Garda Síochána, the sample was drawn from a diverse, national spread and therefore may be considered representative.

As the researcher is a member of An Garda Síochána the ease of access to the sample and the ethical gatekeepers who distributed the questionnaires increased the response rate and ensured the data was collected appropriately.

The exclusion of administrative roles from the collection of data ensured that only those members working in the area of frontline policing, who experience both the operational and organisational stress, responded to the survey, giving the research ecological validity.

6.3 Future Research

It is unclear if being armed effects results from plain clothes Gardaí, and future studies should test the uniform section of armed Gardaí in the Armed Response Units new to Irish policing while also testing plain clothes officers who are armed.

Future studies should be conducted on newly promoted personnel to establish if their depersonalisation or burnout levels differ significantly to those found in the present study. While 62.3% reported that they had not recently felt unfairly overlooked for a position they felt qualified for, it was unclear if that participant had applied for any such position at all and therefore may not be an accurate reflection of burnout or wellbeing among that cohort.

The Organisation would benefit from a longitudinal study commencing with student police officers at the Garda Training College in Templemore, to establish a baseline with burnout and wellbeing measured at a number of intervals over the following years of service. This would produce important data from a research perspective in psychology but would also show an acceptance on the part of management and policy makers that wellbeing factors are an important and substantial addition to policing.

6.4 Conclusion

The front line members of An Garda Síochána are the backbone of an organisation who are responsible for the safety of the residents of the state. It is these officers who run toward danger without a second thought for their own safety and it is imperative that policy makers recognise the lived reality for these frontline officers on a daily basis. Members of the public have a right to an efficient and highly functioning police service who serve the public without fear. The frontline members made their voices heard in recent years and it is clear that they are disillusioned and are suffering from aspects of police stress which are not a fixed aspect of policing. Policy makers and police management can make small changes which impact the

lived reality for these police officers. Mandatory post trauma counselling or mandatory biennial counselling for all officers regardless of trauma could impact stress and maladaptive coping. Changes to internal competitions should be addressed publicly and without delay to allay fears within Garda members that promotion systems are unfair. Outside bodies and occupational psychology can offer extensive changes with regard to these systems. Richard Branson (2014), famously said that he would look after his staff and they would look after the customers and the same can be said for An Garda Síochána officers who are appreciated, understood and validated, will be far more efficient at providing the service which the public have come to expect from these officers.

7. References

- Acquadro Maran, D., Varetto, A., Zedda, M., & Franscini, M. (2014). *Stress among Italian male and female patrol police officers: a quali-quantitative survey* (Vol. 37).
- An Garda Síochána. (No date). *Code of ethics for the Garda Síochána*. Dublin, Ireland.
- Bandura, A., & Walters, R. H. (1977). *Social learning theory*(Vol. 1). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-hall.
- Baka, L. (2015). The Effects of Job Demands on Mental and Physical Health in the Group of Police Officers. Testing the Mediating Role of Job Burnout, *57*(4), 285–299.
- Branson, R. (2014, March, 27). Re: Look after your staff. Retrieved March 3rd 2019, from www.virgin.com/richard-branson/look-after-your-staff.
- Cannon WB. *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage*. 2nd ed. New York: Appleton; 1929
- Cusack, Jim. (2013, April 7). One third of Gardai will be women by next year. *Independent.ie*.
- Dáil Eireann Debate (16th October, 2018). Garda Support Services. *Dáil Question 42007/18*
- Data protection Act, Government of Ireland, (2018).
- Duncan P. (2015, July 6). Public Service absenteeism cost €320 million in 2014. Retrieved from www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/public-service-absenteeism-cost-320m-in-2014-1.2275629
- Ellrich, K., & Baier, D. (2017). Post-traumatic stress symptoms in police officers following violent assaults: a study on general and police-specific risk and protective factors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *32*(3), 331.
- Euwema, M., & Bakker, A. (2004). The behaviour of police officers in conflict situations. In *Politiekundige verkenningen 2003-2004* (pp. 71–90). Elsevier; Amsterdam.
- Fallon, F. (2018). Garda Representative Association Wellbeing Survey 2018. Dublin, Ireland: City Colleges.

- Garda Inspectorate. (2012). *Frontline Supervision*. Garda Siochana Inspectorate. Retrieved from www.gsinsp.ie/en/GSINSP/FrontLine%20Supervision,%20April%202012.pdf/Files/Front-Line%20Supervision,%20April%202012.pdf
- Gibbons, C., Dempster, M. and Moutray, M. (2010), Stress, coping and satisfaction in nursing students, *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 67(3), 621-632.
- Gibbons, C. (2010) Stress, coping and burn-out in nursing students, *International Journal of Nursing Studies*. (47) 1299-1309.
- Goldberg, D., & Williams, P. (1988). *General health questionnaire*. Granada Learning Group.
- Hankins, M. (2008). The reliability of the twelve-item general health questionnaire (GHQ-12) under realistic assumptions. *BMC Public Health*, 8, 355–355. doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-8-355
- Hickman, M. J., Piquero, N. L., & Piquero, A. R. (2004). The validity of Niederhoffer's cynicism scale. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 32(1), 1–13. doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2003.10.001
- Holmes, T. H., & Rahe, R. H. (1967). The Social Readjustment Rating Scale. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 11(2), 213-218. doi.org/10.1016/0022-3999(67)90010-4
- Irniza, R., Emilia, Z. A., Muhammad Saliluddin, S., & Nizam Isha, A. S. (2014). A Psychometric Properties of the Malay-version Police Stress Questionnaire. *The Malaysian Journal of Medical Sciences : MJMS*, 21(4), 42–50.
- Kocakulah, M. C., Kelley, A. G., Mitchell, K. M., & Ruggieri, M. P. (2016). Absenteeism problems and costs: causes, effects and cures. *The International Business & Economics Research Journal (Online)*, 15(3), 89.
- Larsson, G., Kempe, C., & Starrin, B. (1988). Appraisal and coping processes in acute time-limited stressful situations: A study of police officers. *European Journal of Personality*, 2(4), 259–276. doi.org/10.1002/per.2410020404
- Lazarus R. S, Folkman S. Stress, Appraisal and Coping. New York: Springer; 1984

- Liang Y, Wang L, Yin X. The factor structure of the 12-item general health questionnaire (GHQ-12) in young Chinese civil servants. *Health Qual Life Outcomes*. 2016;14(1):136. Published 2016 Sep 26. doi:10.1186/s12955-016-0539-y
- Maran, D. A., Varetto, A., Zedda, M., & Franscini, M. (2014). Stress among Italian male and female patrol police officers: a quali-quantitative survey. *Policing: An International Journal*, 37(4), 875.
- Maran, D. A., Varetto, A., Zedda, M., & Ieraci, V. (2015). Occupational stress, anxiety and coping strategies in police officers. *Occupational Medicine*, 65(6), 466–466 – 473. doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqv060
- Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 2(2), 99-113.
- Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., Leiter, M. P., Schaufeli, W. B., & Schwab, R. L. (1986). *Maslach burnout inventory* (Vol. 21, pp. 3463-3464). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- McCreary, D. R., & Thompson, M. M. (2006). Development of two reliable and valid measures of stressors in policing: The operational and organizational police stress questionnaires. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 13(4), 494.
- Mitchell, M. (1996). Police coping with death: assumptions and rhetoric. In *Contemporary issues in the sociology of death, dying and disposal* (pp. 137-148). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Nelson, K. V., Smith, A. V.; Occupational stress, coping and mental health in Jamaican police officers, *Occupational Medicine*, Volume 66, Issue 6, 1 August 2016, Pages 488–491, doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqw055
- Official Secrets Act, Government of Ireland, (1963).
- Play your part Cultural audit of An Garda Siochana. (2018, May). pwc.

- Regoli, B., Crank, J. P., & Rivera, G. F. (1990). The Construction and Implementation of an Alternative Measure of Police Cynicism. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, *17*(4), 395–409. doi.org/10.1177/0093854890017004001
- Regoli, R. M. (1976). An empirical assessment of Niederhoffer's police cynicism scale. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *4*(3), 231–241. https://doi.org/10.1016/0047-2352(76)90005-2
- Schacter, D., Gilbert, D., Wegner, D., & Hood, B. M. (2012). *Psychology: European Edition*. Macmillan International Higher Education.
- Schneiderman, N., Ironson, G., & Siegel, S. D. (2005). Stress and health: psychological, behavioral, and biological determinants. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, *1*, 607–628. doi.org/10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.1.102803.144141
- Scott, T. (2007). Expression of humour by emergency personnel involved in sudden deathwork. *Mortality*, *12*(4), 350–364. https://doi.org/10.1080/13576270701609766
- Selye H. *The Stress of Life*. New York: McGraw-Hill; 1956.
- Stephens, C., & Long, N. (2000). Communication with police supervisors and peers as a buffer of work-related traumatic stress. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *21*(4), 407–424. doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(200006)21:4<407::AID-JOB17>3.0.CO;2-N
- Talavera-Velasco, B., Luceño-Moreno, L., Martín-García, J., & García-Albuerne, Y. (2018). Psychosocial Risk Factors, Burnout and Hardy Personality as Variables Associated With Mental Health in Police Officers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*, 1478–1478. doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01478
- The British Psychological Society. (2018). *Code of ethics and conduct 2018*. Leister, U.K.
- The Psychological Society of Ireland. (2010). *Code of professional ethics of PSI* (3rd ed.). Dublin, Ireland.

Zare, R., Choobineh, A. & Keshavarzi, S. (2016). Relationship Between Occupational Stress Dimensions and Sickness Absence Among a Gas Company Employees. *Journal of Health Sciences and Surveillance System, Vol 4, Iss 3, Pp 115-120 (2016), 4(3), 115–115 – 120.*

8. Appendices

Appendix A (Garda Research Proposal and Agreement)

An Garda Síochána Protocol for Research

This document is intended to formalise the relationship between An Garda Síochána and any researcher (Garda member, student, academic institution, practitioner or agency) carrying out research into or on behalf of An Garda Síochána.

On completion of the research, we ask the researcher to submit to An Garda Síochána a summary report of the research findings for internal publication. External

This document is to be completed for research either funded or not by An Garda Síochána. This includes any individual, academic institution or agency requesting the assistance of An Garda Síochána data, personnel or resources.

| | Contact Details |
|------------------|---|
| Name | Aoife Tolan/Eviston D/Garda 29470E |
| Org / Uni / Dept | Dublin Business School (DBS) |
| Address | C/O Special Detective Unit, Block 2, Harcourt Sq., Dublin 2 |
| E-mail | |
| Phone | |

Part 1: Research Agenda

| | |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">1)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Research Aim and Design</p> | <p>Please give details of the research aim, methodology and design.</p> <p>a) What is the aim of the research? The primary goal of the research is to identify the organisational and operational stressors which exist in An Garda Síochána for front line members and examine its relationship, if any, with cynicism. Furthermore, the researcher aims to investigate the potential impact on general health by assessing the risk of developing a stress related illness.</p> <p>b) What methodology do you intend to use? Should the research proposal prove successful, the researcher intends to employ a questionnaire based method to complete a quantitative study using a convenience sample of operational Gardaí across all regions who are employed in various roles both uniform and plain clothes. The questionnaire will include a welcome note and explanation of the research, instructions for participation and a short demographic collection followed by a number of survey scales and a debrief note from the researcher.</p> <p>Measures which will be employed are as follows;</p> <p>Organizational Police Stress Questionnaire and Operational Police Stress Questionnaire, (McCreary & Thompson, 2006) – this scale will be used in a shortened combined version to assess stresses for front line police specific to Ireland and to differentiate between stresses caused by operational (traumatic incidents, difficult prisoners) and organisational stressors (administration, management issues).</p> |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>The General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg & Hillier, 1979) – It is proposed that this scale be used to determine the participants risk of developing a stress related illness and is suitable for use as an undergraduate as it is not a diagnostic tool.</p> <p>Police Cynicism Scale (Neiderhoffer, 1967) – It is proposed that this scale be used (in its shorter form) to address the phenomenon of police cynicism. The researcher will supplement this scale with a question designed for An Garda Síochána following one of the main findings in the 2017 cultural audit (published 2018) which stated that members of An Garda Síochána believed that the ‘competition process is not based on meritocracy’, An Garda Síochána 2018. The question will be designed to replicate or refute these findings by asking if participant believes they have been unfairly overlooked for a position they considered themselves suitable for in the previous 3 years of service.</p> <p>Researcher may employ further scales as follows if size and time constraints allow;</p> <p>The Brief Cope (Carver, 1997) – A scale designed for measurement of coping strategies.</p> <p>Maslachs Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) – A measure designed to detect burnout attributes such as emotional exhaustion.</p> |
|--|---|

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>Depression, anxiety and stress scale DASS21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) – A non-diagnostic measure suitable for use by undergraduate students to measure 3 related states of depression.</p> <p>c) What sample of participants is required & how will they be recruited? (Please state no. of interviews, interviewee type and detailed method of accessing them)</p> <p>The researcher requires a minimum of 100 participants (N=100) to satisfy Cohen’s effect size, (Cohen 1977). To ensure sufficient response researcher proposes to send out 130 – 150 questionnaires. If research authorisation is granted the researcher hopes to gain permission to forward the questionnaires via personal Garda email on a secure Google link, utilising random sampling of registration numbers. The author is aware that this practice has not been previously authorised by An Garda Síochána and an alternative method will be to print the questionnaire booklets and distribute randomly through a nominated colleague from each region.</p> |
| <p>2) AGS Contributions required for research?</p> | <p>Please give details of the any An Garda Síochána contributions required of the research</p> <p>a) An Garda Síochána Sponsor / Contact</p> <p>The Garda Research Unit has assisted thus far, and it may be prudent to contact the unit throughout the research for advice and clarification. The Garda Employee Assistance Service may also be contacted for facts.</p> <p>b) Access to An Garda Síochána Data (Please specify whether aggregated or personal data is required)</p> <p>Personal data will be requested from participants regarding their years of service and information (answers) relating to the scales which may be of a personal nature and completely anonymous.</p> |

c) Access to An Garda Síochána staff (Rank, roles, unit, responsibility, quantity)

As above, access to operational members of Garda and Sergeant rank across all regions, both on plain clothes and uniform duties. Members of the Garda Representative Association (GRA) may also be consulted in light of the release of the GRA wellbeing survey 2018.

d) Access to An Garda Síochána IT systems (Specific equipment, software or specialist techniques)

Personal Garda email will be utilised if permitted.

e) Access to An Garda Síochána sites

An Garda Síochána's public website will be used to cite force numbers and breakdown of the rank structure.

f) Is your research funded by the An Garda Síochána

This BA (hons) Psychology has been funded in the amount of one third for the past four years and authorisation has been secured for the continued funding of one third for this the final academic year 2018/2019 pending successful completion.

g) If it is not An Garda Síochána funded, please specify who is the funding body

The remaining two thirds has been self funded by the researcher

h) Any other contributions

No.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">3)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Timescales and Deliverables</p> | <p>Please give details of any timescales or milestones required of the research. (Please include details of your access to An Garda Síochána resources; security clearance; data collection and analysis; final reporting, publication etc)</p> <p>The research will begin once approval has been sanctioned by the Garda Research Unit and DBS ethics board. It is estimated that ethics approval, if successful, will be given in October/November 2018 and the research will begin immediately and may take up to 6 months for completion.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">4)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Corporate & Strategic Context</p> | <p>Please give details of the corporate context of the research and its scope with respect to internal or external stakeholders.</p> <p>a) How does the proposal meet An Garda Síochána strategic priorities?</p> <p>Based on the results of the cultural audit conducted by PwC on behalf of An Garda Síochána this research has the potential to replicate and endorse certain findings and inform the direction of further study. This research has the potential to gauge if indeed a cultural shift has commenced within the Organisation. The need to promote organisational development and change has also been identified by the GRA wellbeing survey 2018 and it is more important than ever that the issues identified need to be addressed and solutions applied while simultaneously feeding back into updated research.</p> |

It is proposed that the research may aid the Employee Assistance Service in informing their strategic vision. This research has the potential to identify the extent to which the work environment contributes to physical and emotional well-being of employees.

The research may also benefit the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland who have recently outlined a roadmap for major reform in An Garda Síochána. The issues which may identified by this primary research, if addressed appropriately and relevant concepts are applied, can lead to a cultural shift within the Organisation, improving group functioning, motivation, performance and can enhance effective leadership.

b) What are the expected benefits of the research?

This research will be conducted with a view to understanding police stress and police cynicism, and how it may motivate behaviours of frontline members of An Garda Síochána. The long-term goal of this research will be to effect positive change for employees. It is foreseen that the research will in turn benefit all stakeholders as a cultural shift within An Garda Síochána will create positive working environments, positive interactions with the public and reduced absences due to work related stress and illnesses developed through repeated exposure to these stressors.

Health psychology is not well embraced yet in An Garda Síochána and it is hoped that studies such as this will increase awareness and assist in designing measures

to ensure a fair and transparent working environment for the future, and more importantly a system that is universally seen to be fair and transparent for all.

From an organisational standpoint, it is expected that this research can assist in building a strategic plan for organisational development particularly if designing future interventions and utilising the concept of 360 degree feedback as opposed to operating a linear process.

c) Who are the likely audiences for the products of the research?

The research, if successful in its approval will be available for all Gardaí. It is hoped that both Garda management and the Policing Authority will gain insight from the research and its analysis. The Garda Employee Assistance Service may also find the research useful particularly when coaching and mentoring employees.

It is also hoped to present the research at the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI), should the required minimum standard be met.

d) Any internal / external stakeholders, units, agencies or institutions involved?

DBS will oversee the research and as the degree is accredited by the PSI who are the governing body of psychologists in Ireland, they too will have access to the research as a presentation given by the researcher, if successful.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>5)</p> <p>Next Steps</p> | <p>Would you be happy to present your findings to an An Garda Síochána-wide audience in an academic seminar?</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No </p> |
|---|--|

Completed by: Aoife Eviston, D/Garda

Date: 20/9/2018 **Part 2:**

Meeting the AGS requirements

(To be read and agreed by the Researcher)

- To assure anonymity and confidentiality, when handling data or other information provided by An Garda Síochána I / we will ensure the requirements of the Data Protection Act are maintained.
- I / we will acknowledge An Garda Síochána as a source of information in any final report.
- I / we will acknowledge those that carried out any original analysis / research or collection of data and declare they have no responsibility for further analysis or interpretation of it.
- I / we will submit a summary report detailing the aims, methods, findings and implications for policing to An Garda Síochána.
- I / we understand that I / we may be invited to present the research findings before an internal An Garda Síochána audience in an academic seminar.
- I / we will give access to the data / information only to persons directly associated with the project. The data will not be used in connection with any other analysis except that outlined in this document.
- I / we will maintain a list of all persons who handle the data / information provided.
- I / we will consult with the An Garda Síochána regarding any media interest in this project.
- I / we will establish whether security clearance is required to undertake the proposed research, and complete any necessary applications relating to this.

13. Been able to face up to your problems?

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Better than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|

14. Been feeling unhappy and depressed?

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Better than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|

15. Been losing confidence in yourself?

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Better than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|

16. Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Better than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|

17. Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Better than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|

Here are some different aspects of being a police officer. After each item, please circle how much stress it has caused you over the past 6 months, using a 7-point Scale (see below) that ranges from “No Stress At All” to “A Lot Of Stress”:

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|-----------------|---|---|-----------------|
| No Stress at All | | | Moderate Stress | | | A Lot of Stress |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

18. Dealing with Co-workers

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

19. The feeling that different rules apply to different people (favouritism)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

20. Feeling like you always have to prove yourself to the organisation

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

21. Excessive administrative duties

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

22. Constant changes in policy/legislation

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

23. Staff shortages

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

24. Bureaucratic red tape

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

25. Too much computer work

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

26. Lack of resources

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

27. If you're sick or injured your co-workers seem to look down on you

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

28. Leaders over emphasize the negatives (supervisor evaluations, public complaints etc.)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

29. Internal investigations

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

30. Dealing with court systems

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

31. The need to be accountable for doing your job

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

32. Inadequate equipment

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

33. Shift work

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

34. Working alone at night

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

35. Overtime demands

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

36. Risk of being injured on the job

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

37. Traumatic events

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

38. Finding time to stay in good physical condition

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

39. Lack of understanding from family/friends about your work

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

40. Upholding a 'higher image' in public

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

41. Negative comments from the public

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

42. Limitations to your social life (eg. Who your friends are, where you socialise)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Thank you, you're doing great. These items below deal with ways you've been coping with the stress in your life. There are many ways to try to deal with problems. These items ask what you've been doing to cope with present stresses. Each item says something about a particular way of coping and please avoid answering on the basis of whether how you've been coping seems to be working or not—just whether or not you're doing it. Use these response choices and try to rate each item separately in your mind from the others. Make your answers as true FOR YOU as you can. Looking at the number scale below, write 1,2,3 or 4 in the space provided after each question.

- 1 = I haven't been doing this at all
- 2 = I've been doing this a little bit
- 3 = I've been doing this a medium amount
- 4 = I've been doing this a lot

43. I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things

44. I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in

45. I've been saying to myself 'this isn't real'

46. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better

47. I've been getting emotional support from others

48. I've given up trying to deal with it

49. I've been taking action to try make the situation better

50. I've been refusing to believe that it has happened

51. I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape

52. I've been getting help and advice from other people

53. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it

54. I've been trying to see it in a different light , to make it seem more positive

55. I've been criticising myself

56. I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do

57. I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone

58. I've been giving up the attempt to cope

59. I've been looking for something good in what is happening

60. I've been making jokes about it

61. I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching T.V., reading, daydreaming, sleeping or shopping

62. I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened

63. I've been expressing my negative feelings

64. I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs

65. I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do

66. I've been learning to live with it

67. I've been thinking hard about what steps to take

68. I've been blaming myself for things that have happened

69. I've been praying or meditating

70. I've been making fun of the situation

Super, now, on a scale of 1-10 (1= no experience of this, 10= lots of experience of this) please rate the following statements.

71. I experience a supportive environment whenever I express pent up feeling

72. When I've been saying things to let unpleasant feelings escape I've been genuinely listened to by colleagues

Thank you, nearly there. The items on the next page relate to a number of common stress responses with regard to policing. Please insert an X under the response which best describes how you feel about each statement (recipient refers to anyone you deal with as a police person, eg. Public/criminal/solicitor):

| | Never | A few times a year or less | Once a month or less | A few times a month | Once a week | A few times a week | Every day |
|---|-------|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 73. I feel emotionally drained from my work. | | | | | | | |
| 74. I feel used up at the end of the day. | | | | | | | |
| 75. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job. | | | | | | | |
| 76. I can easily understand what my clients feel about things. | | | | | | | |
| 77. I feel I treat some recipients as if they were impersonal objects. | | | | | | | |
| 78. Working with people all day is really a strain for me. | | | | | | | |
| 79. I deal very effectively with the problems of my recipients. | | | | | | | |
| 80. I feel burned out from my work. | | | | | | | |
| 81. I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work. | | | | | | | |
| 82. I've become more callous towards people since I took this job. | | | | | | | |
| 83. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally. | | | | | | | |
| 84. I feel very energetic. | | | | | | | |
| 85. I feel frustrated by my job. | | | | | | | |
| 86. I feel I'm working too hard on my job. | | | | | | | |

| | Never | A few times a year or less | Once a month or less | A few times a month | Once a week | A few times a week | Every day |
|--|-------|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 87. I don't really care what happens to some recipients. | | | | | | | |
| 88. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me. | | | | | | | |
| 89. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my recipients. | | | | | | | |
| 90. I feel exhilarated after working closely with recipients. | | | | | | | |
| 91. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job. | | | | | | | |
| 92. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope. | | | | | | | |
| 93. In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly. | | | | | | | |
| 94. I feel recipients blame me for some of their problems. | | | | | | | |

Appendix C (Consent Form)

My name is Aoife Tolan Eviston and I am a final year student of psychology at Dublin Business School. I am a Detective Garda based at the Special Detective Unit and I have received authorisation from the Garda Research Unit to conduct this research as part of my thesis, which is looking at the relationship between stress and depersonalisation in Irish police and the impact on the general health.

I wish to invite you to take part in this research, which is completely voluntary and involves completing and returning the attached anonymous survey which will take 15 minutes. Once your answers have been returned your contribution cannot be withdrawn as the survey is anonymous. Some of the questions asked may cause minor negative feelings, however they are questions which are widely used in research. If any difficult feelings arise for you, contact details for support services are included on the final page.

Participation is completely discretionary and you are not obliged to take part. Should you complete and return survey, it shall be taken as consent and cannot be withdrawn.

On completion, the questionnaire will be securely stored and data will then be transferred from the paper record to electronic format and stored securely on a password protected computer.

On completion of the research the paper record will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or would like to inquire about the research after it has been concluded please do not hesitate to contact me on xxxxxxxx@mydbs.ie. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Do you consent to partaking in this research? (Please circle)

Yes

No

Appendix D (Debrief Sheet)

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. If any issues emerge as a result of your participation you can find below details of support groups which can help. The overall research aim is to examine the relationship between stress, burnout and depersonalisation in Gardai. Should you require any further information regarding this study please feel free to contact me via email on xxxxxxxx@mydbs.ie.

Garda Employee Assistance 01 8980120

AWARE: 01 661 7211

The Samaritans: 116123