Analysis of the Stress Management of Policemen towards Increasing Job Satisfaction

Aleksandra Kaczmarek[1]

Abstract:

Purpose: *Introducing the issues of stress management in the Police, it is worth emphasizing that there is a growing tendency. Crime is on the rise, as evidenced by more and more frequent terrorist attacks.*
Approach/Methodology/Design: *This article presents the results of research on the determinants of occupational stress among police officers, as well as the types and level of stress occurring among them. It has been prepared against the background of the characteristics of tasks performed by police officers.*
Findings: *In research conducted by various institutions, the profession of police officer (not only in Poland) belongs to the group of profession the practice of which is associated with the occurrence of severe stress. A policeman is required to behave impeccably, to have an appropriate moral attitude and to be fully professional.*
Practical Implications: *Considerations indicate that the phenomenon of stress occurring in policemen should be taken into account in managing organizational units of the above-mentioned organization.*
Originality/Value: *The originality of work emphasizes the nature of work, which requires officers to be constantly ready (available), physical and mental endurance, and the ability to cope with difficult and dangerous situations.*

Keywords: *Management, stress, police, analysis, work, satisfaction.*

JEL classification: *M12, J28, J29.*

Paper Type: *Research study.*

[1]*PhD, Faculty of Management and Command, War Studies University in Warsaw,*
a.kaczmarek@akademia.mil.pl;

1. Introduction

In the era of civilisational development, faster life and increasing needs, professional work has become one of the most important forms of activity for people. On the one hand, it is a source of success, fulfilment, satisfaction and prosperity, and on the other hand, it can contribute to helplessness, apathy and a sense of lost time. Thus, practising a specific profession may bring both positive and negative consequences. The latter are very strongly associated with occupational stress, which in general is most often a negative and harmful phenomenon, both for the employee and for the whole organisation.

Hence, the concept of stress is becoming more and more popular, especially from the point of view of proper preparation of people to act under its influence through various trainings and courses, as well as the development of newer and newer techniques of coping with it. As it turns out, actions aimed at reducing the negative effects of stress are no longer only taken by psychologists, but also people involved in human resources management in various types of organizations are leaping to prominence. They study the influence of management on the level of satisfaction, effectiveness of duties performed by employees, and above all, their state of health. It turns out that the support of an employee, both on the part of a superior and co-workers, depending on their needs, may significantly reduce the level of perceptible stress and thus reduce the occurrence of conflicts, misunderstandings or prolonged absence from work.

One of the numerous professions where people are exposed to stress is the profession of a police officer. This profession is characterised by the fact that the performance of the duties entrusted to policemen is often connected with taking actions that put their lives or health in extreme danger. Police officers are expected to have an impeccable ethical and moral attitude, as well as to take actions in order to realize certain higher ideals, at the cost of sacrificing even their own lives. All this causes that the work of a policeman is connected with taking risks, which can often arouse strong emotions, making it a source of strong stress.

The aim of this article is to present a report on the conducted research related to the phenomenon of stress, and in particular to the identification of the most important stressors, characteristic of the police profession.

2. Sources of Stress Among Police Officers

Research carried out by many scientific centres (Dziedzic, 2013; Ogińska-Bulik, 2007; Mikołajczyk, 1998) indicates that the profession of a police officer is in the group of professions with a higher risk of stress occurrence in the broad sense of the term. Two groups of factors are usually referred to as the source of stress. The first one is a derivative of traumatic experiences (situations) resulting from the occupation. The second is the result of organisational conditions, e.g.

Work overload, unclear requirements or bad relations with superiors, subordinates or co-workers. Commonly, such a phenomenon is called chronic stress, characterised by quite low intensity, but occurring permanently. It is worth noting here that chronic stressors do not immediately cause negative health effects, because officers get used to them and tend to ignore them.

However, these factors are not indifferent to the body and gradually deplete human immune resources. In this situation, it is very important to identify the most common causes of stress, which can lead to many associated diseases. Eliminating potential sources of stress could become an incentive for more effective action and better performance of official duties by police officers.

The research conducted within the framework of the doctoral programme in 2013 among police officers of criminal services and prevention[2] shows that in relation to the knowledge of the concept of stress, most of them declare being familiar with this phenomenon, while this knowledge is derived mainly from life experience and the process of education. Interestingly, only a small number of officers underwent specialist training on stress, its symptoms and factors that may cause it. At the same time, the vast majority of respondents encountered the phenomenon of stress in their work. It turns out that the basic organisational factors contributing to the development of stress, according to the respondents' indications, include:

- excessive or contradictory requirements of superiors 83%;
- the need to perform tasks in conditions requiring considerable physical effort 80%;
- excess of tasks 70%;
- ambiguity of goals and expectations 64%;
- inadequate assessment of the results of business activity 61%;
- conflicts in relations with co-workers 55%;
- shortage of funds 46%;
- responsibility for subordinates 43%;
- conditions for personal development 25%;
- extended working time 23%.

It should be emphasised that the highest number of indications is directly related to relations between a superior and a subordinate (excessive or contradictory requirements of superiors, excessive tasks, ambiguity of goals and expectations). However, a significant number of indications concerned the necessity to perform tasks in conditions requiring significant physical effort. However, in the group of least stressful factors, the respondents indicate the conditions of personal development and extended working time.

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[2]*Note 1 at the end.*

Taking the above into account, it was checked which of the above mentioned organisational factors are the most frequent among respondents, perceived from the standpoint of the type of service in which police officers perform their tasks and the positions they occupy. The results obtained are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. *Stressors occurring among police officers of criminal services and prevention*

Stressors	Type of service	
	criminal	prevention
extended working hours	16%	28%
overload of tasks	65%	78%
shortage of resources	38%	58%
carrying out tasks in conditions of considerable physical strain	17%	30%
ambiguity of objectives and expectations	55%	69%
excessive or conflicting requirements of superiors	79%	87%
accountability for subordinates	62%	27%
conflicts in relations with colleagues	65%	42%
inadequate assessment of the results of the professional activity	64%	62%
conditions for personal development	35%	19%

Source: *Own research results.*

In criminal and prevention services, the most stressful organisational factor is excessive or contradictory requirements on the part of superiors. Another problem in both groups is the excess of tasks to be performed and conflicts in relations with co-workers (in criminal service), as well as ambiguity of goals and expectations (prevention). In both services, stressors also included inadequate assessment by superiors (65% and 42% of indications, respectively). The least significant organisational factors causing stress included personal development conditions (prevention service) and extended working hours (criminal service).

The analysis of the results obtained may lead to reflections. It turns out that for policemen who declare to hold managerial, staff and executive positions, the most important stress factor is excessive or contradictory requirements of superiors. In the group of managerial and staff positions, a large number of indications were also recorded in terms of excessive tasks (75% and 83% of indications respectively) and ambiguity of objectives and expectations (66% and 83% of indications respectively).

In the group of executive positions a large number of indications was also recorded in relation to the aspect of inadequate assessment of the results of official activities (66% of indications) and excessive number of tasks (64% of indications). The following factors were indicated the least frequently, in the group of managerial positions – performing tasks in conditions of considerable physical strain (14% of

indications), in the group of staff positions – responsibility for subordinates (16% of indications), in the group of executive positions – extended working time (26% of indications).

Table 2. *Stressors among police officers at selected positions*

Stressors	**Official post**		
	managerial	staff	executive
extended working hours	19%	28%	26%
overload of tasks	75%	83%	64%
shortage of resources	47%	56%	43%
carrying out tasks in conditions of considerable physical strain	14%	17%	34%
ambiguity of objectives and expectations	66%	83%	57%
excessive or conflicting requirements of superiors	86%	83%	81%
accountability for subordinates	54%	16%	40%
conflicts in relations with colleagues	56%	50%	56%
inadequate assessment of the results of the professional activity	58%	56%	66%
conditions for personal development	24%	17%	29%

Source: *Own research results.*

The answers given by the police officers show that 64% of them consider their preparation for action in conditions of severe stress as unprofessional. Whereas 33% of respondents have a different opinion. This may indicate imperfections in the system of preparation for service and errors in the system of vocational training. Disturbed subordinate superior relations and erroneous management styles may also be an important stressor (Kaczmarek, 2013).

In turn, J.M. Brown and E.A. Campbell, on the basis of the conducted research, formulated a list of the most common stressors typical of police work. They include, first of all (Ogińska-Bulik, 2007):

- participation in a situation related to death (58%);
- arresting the attacking person (50%);
- contact with victims of violence (38%);
- informing family and relatives about the death of a close relative (37%);
- searching for a missing person (37%);
- participation in court hearings as a witness (34%);
- securing and protecting public events and events (21%).

However, it turns out that everyday situations in the workplace are an important stress factor from the point of view of the police officer's work. They concern mainly organisational problems. In this area there are such stressors as (Ibidem, 42):

- staff shortages (72%);
- shift work (68%);
- time pressure (57%);
- lack of consultation and communication mainly with superiors (52%);
- directing and supervising others (49%);
- long working hours (49%);
- excessive workload (48%);
- underwhelming salaries (44%).

The analysis of the source literature also indicates that additional causes that may affect the emergence of stressful situations are, among others: disciplinary threats (resulting in a decrease in motivation to work), lack of adequate equipment for work, low level of professional knowledge, bureaucracy, sharp regulations or negative press reports. Interesting conclusions are drawn from a survey conducted in the Police Training Centre in Legionowo. It turns out that not only performing dangerous work activities has an impact on experiencing strong stress, but also bad interpersonal relations, especially business relations with superiors. This mainly concerns the treatment of employees, constant misunderstandings at work or cases of mobbing (Mikołajczak, 1998).

Violanti and Aron mentioned the following police-specific stressors: killing someone while on duty, killing a colleague, physical attack, maltreated child, fast pursuit, shift work, use of force, inadequate support of the authorities, incompatibility with a partner, accident using a service car, insufficient number of police officers, aggressive crowd, growing crime, excessive discipline, defending oneself against attempts at bribery, notification of death, inadequate equipment, family quarrels, negative press reports, professional conflicts, lack of recognition, bureaucracy, court understanding, strict regulations, exposure to pain and suffering, exposure to death, social apathy and racial conflicts (Ogińska-Bulik, 2007).

However, the research conducted by M. Chmielewska shows that the direct sources of stress are: bad treatment by superiors, work overload and behaviour of people towards police officers during the performance of their duties. In the author's opinion, it clearly shows that the management of employment relations in the police is not efficient and that it is necessary to train superiors in this respect[3].

Among numerous studies conducted by T. Cichorz and his co-workers, it appears that significant reasons generating stress among police officers are: problems with obtaining promotion, an unfair system of appraisals, awards and distinctions, lack of participation in decision-making processes, performing work that does not comply with qualifications, assigning officers positions requiring lower qualifications,

[3]*https://www.wspol.edu.pl/kwartalnikpolicja/index.php/w-numerze-redakcja-rekomenduje-35.*

relatively low prestige of the profession, strict evaluation on the part of the society (Cichorz and Chmielewski, 1995; Cichorz, 1998).

Other surveys concerning the sources of stress at work of a police officer included mainly: severe consequences of a mistake made and often unfair treatment by superiors, improper treatment of subordinates by superiors, the need to meet deadlines regardless of significant obstacles, a sense of uncertainty resulting from acting without full information and a clearly defined purpose, imposing unexpected tasks and hasty performance of them, underestimation of efforts by superiors, lack of resources necessary for work (Dziedzic, 2013).

The stressors presented above, most frequently occurring in the work of police officers, can be presented in a synthetic way, taking into account the 7 basic categories they belong to:

1. The binding legal system – expectations for hearings, lengthy court hearings, not always fair judgements in the opinion of police officers.
2. Professional career course – small or complete lack of promotion opportunities, work performed against qualifications, lack of awards or distinctions at work, lack of a sense of permanence at work.
3. Fulfilment of organisational roles – excessive, ambiguous or contradictory expectations and requirements on the part of superiors, too high level of responsibility, small participation in decision-making.
4. Social expectations - expectations on the part of the society, perceiving a policeman as a brave man with extraordinary mental resilience, able to cope with any situation.
5. Simultaneous functioning within and outside the organisation – policeman's availability and 24-hour system of work.
6. The way of performing work - pressure of time, lack of rhythm and shift work, the need to make quick decisions, risk of losing health or life, large amount of office work.
7. Interpersonal relations at work – improper relations with superiors, subordinates and co-workers, as well as lack of social support at work.

When analysing all of the above factors determining stress at work, it would be worth asking a question whether they actually contribute to an increased, perceptible level of stress among officers. It turns out that yes, which is presented in a synthetic way below, using the results of studies that have been indicated earlier.

The analysis of the results of the survey conducted among police officers with the help of the Perception of Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) (Plopa and Makarowski, 2010)[4] was divided into particular types and levels of stress in relation to several intermediary variables. The most important ones included: age, length of service,

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[4]*Note 2 at the end.*

grade and type of service. The survey did not take into account the participation of police officers in missions abroad, due to the very small percentage of participants among the respondents.

Taking into account the age of respondents and intrapsychic stress, it turns out that these variables are correlated with each other and the result is statistically significant ($p<0.05$). This is presented in the table below.

Table 3. *Intrapsychic stress and age*

statistics	Statistics: age x intrapsychic stress		
	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson's Chi^2	18.89734	df=8	p=.01542
Chi^2 NW	19.85549	df=8	p=.01090
Fi	.3648011		
Contingency factor	.3427093		
Cramér's V	.2579533		

Source: *Own study.*

The analysis of the research results presented in Table 4 indicates that the lowest level of intrapsychic stress (stens in the range of 1-4) occurs among police officers over 40 years of age (66.67% of respondents), i.e., in the group with the greatest professional and life experience. Whereas the highest number of police officers with average levels of intrapsychic stress (sten 5-6) are in the 30-35 age group (54.24%). Comparing the results of the high level of stress (sten 7-10), it can be seen that it affects mainly police officers between 36 and 40 years of age (12.20%).

Table 4. *The level of intrapsychic stress compared to the age of the police officers*

	Sten 1-2	Sten 3-4	Sten 5-6	Sten 7-8	Sten 9-10
30-35 yo	8	17	32	2	0
%line	13.56%	28.81%	54.24%	3.39%	0.00%
36-40 yo	5	20	11	5	0
%line	12.20%	48.78%	26.83%	12.20%	0.00%
over 40 yo	6	22	13	0	1
%line	14.29%	52.38%	30.95%	0.00%	2.38%
Total	19	59	56	7	1

Source: *Own study.*

In turn, emotional tension is high in each of the studied age groups. While the average and high level of external stress is most frequently represented in the group of young policemen up to the age of 30. This situation is probably the result of the respondents' limited professional and life experience. The above thesis is confirmed by the results of general stress tests in relation to the length of service. The research results confirmed that this correlation is also statistically significant ($p<0.05$), as

shown in Table 5. Whereas the graphical presentation of the discussed issue is presented in Figure 1.

Table 5. *The general scale of stress and seniority in service*

statistics	Statistics: service seniority x general scale		
	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson's Chi^2	29.41621	df=12	p=.00342
Chi^2 NW	24.23754	df=12	p=.01888
Fi	.4428409		
Contingency factor	.4049138		
Cramér's V	.2556743		

Source: *Own study.*

Figure 1 shows that there is a significant number of people with high levels of general stress in each of the studied groups. In turn, the average level of stress (sten 5-6) is the most common among officers with service experience between 11-15 years, although a similar result was achieved by many people with 5-10 years of service experience. While 44% of police officers with more than 15 years of service experience show a very low and low level of stress (sten 1-4).

Figure 1. *Level of general stress due to length of service*
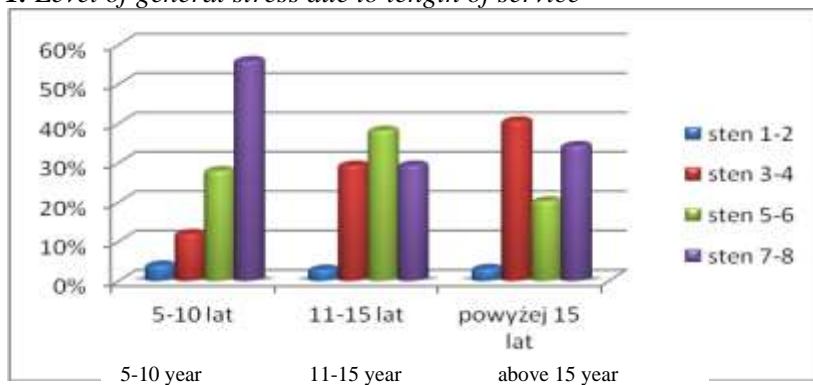
Source: *Own stuay.*

Another study concerned the relationship between the police rank of the respondents and various dimensions of stress. The results showed statistically significant correlations (p<0.05) between emotional stress, intrapsychic stress and general stress and police rank. The aggregate results are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6. *The scale of stress and the police degree*

Emotional tension x degree			
Statistics	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson's Chi^2	28.49599	df=12	p=.00468
Chi^2 NW	24.56444	df=12	p=.01703

Fi	.4358593		
Contingency factor	.3995560		
Cramér's V	.2516435		
Intra-psychical stress x degree			
Statistics	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson's Chi^2	25.12360	df=12	p=.01425
Chi^2 NW	18.82940	df=12	p=.09273
Fi	.4092562		
Contingency factor	.3787639		
Cramér's V	.2362842		
Psychical stress x degree			
Statistics	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson's Chi^2	28.13666	df=12	p=.00528
Chi^2 NW	20.64265	df=12	p=.05586
Fi	.4331024		
Contingency factor	.3974290		
Cramér's V	.2500518		

Source: *Own study.*

Analysing the results of the research contained in Table 7, it can be stated that the high and very high level of emotional tension (sten 7-10) characterises the personnel composed of non-commissioned officers (75% of the respondents) and warrant officers (62% of the respondents). Emotional tension at the average level (sten 5-6), most often occurs in the group of younger officers (46.67%). Whereas the lowest level of emotional tension (sten 1-4) is characteristic of older officers (45.45%).

Table 7. *Level of emotional tension compared to police rank*

Rank	The level of emotional tension				
	sten 1-2	sten 3-4	sten 5-6	sten 7-8	sten 9-10
Higher-ranking officer	0.00%	45.45%	18.18%	27.27%	9.09%
Lower-ranking officer	3.33%	10.00%	46.67%	40.00%	0.00%
Warrant officer	1.23%	11.11%	25.93%	59.26%	2.47%
NCO	0.00%	7.14%	17.86%	60.71%	14.29%

Source: *Own study.*

On the basis of the results of the research, we can risk a statement that the highest level of emotional tension occurs among the police officers at executive posts, characterised by a significant frequency of actions in dangerous or traumatic situations. A relatively high number of senior officers (36.36%) with a high level of emotional stress may be a result of the responsibility for the life and health of their subordinates, resulting from their official position and decision-making powers.

Analysis of research results in the aspect of intrapsychic stress (tab. 8.) indicates that its lowest level (sten 1-4) is found in the group of senior officers (64.63% of

respondents), while at the same time it does not differ significantly from the results obtained by younger officers (63.33%) and warrant officers (58.02%). The least numerous group (35.71%) is found in the NCO corps. In turn, this group is the most numerous when it comes to average stress level (sten 5-6), because 60.71% of non-commissioned officers show this level. It is also worth noting that the high and very high level of intrapsychic stress (sten 7-10) concerns older officers (slightly more than 9% of respondents).

Table 8. *Level of intrapsychic stress compared to police grade*

Rank	Intrapsychic stress levels				
	sten 1-2	sten 3-4	sten 5-6	sten 7-8	sten 9-10
Higher-ranking officer	27.27%	36.36%	27.27%	0.00%	9.09%
Lower-ranking officer	10.00%	53.33%	36.67%	0.00%	0.00%
Warrant officer	13.58%	44.44%	34.57%	7.41%	0.00%
NCO	7.14%	28.57%	60.71%	3.57%	0.00%

Source: *Own study.*

The logical consequence of the research results discussed above is the level of general stress. The highest level of stress (sten 7-8) is found in the group of non-commissioned officers, while the lowest level (sten 1-4) is found in the group of higher-ranking officers. An interesting situation is noticeable in lower-ranking officers, because a similar number of people had both low and high levels of stress. A graphical representation of general stress in relation to police rank is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. *Level of general stress in relation to police rank*
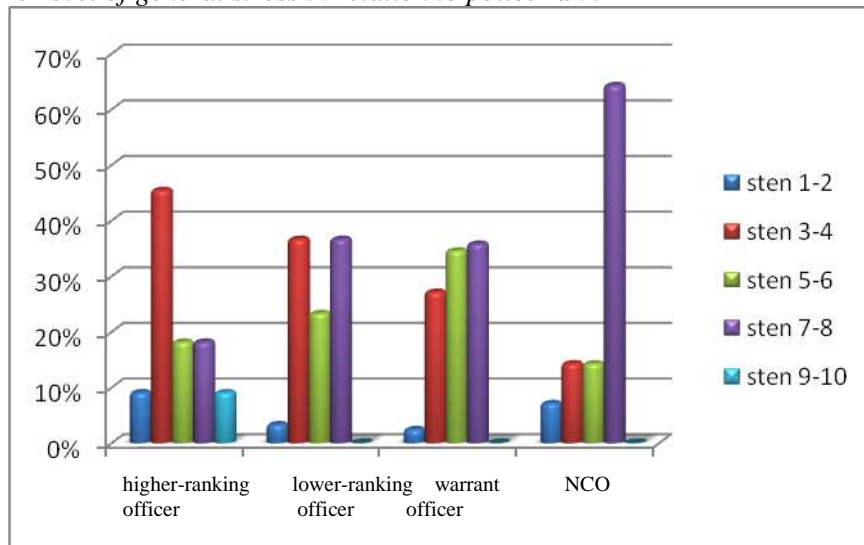
Source: *Own study.*

The results of surveys conducted among police officers also prove that there is a correlation between external stress and the type of service. The result is statistically significant (p<0.05), as shown in Table 9. It should be added that the analysis included officers representing the criminal service and prevention. Respondents representing other services (support services, prevention units and anti-terrorist units) were not taken into account due to the fact that their number in relation to the requirements of statistical surveys was too low.

Table 9. *External stress due to type of service*

statistics	Statistics: type of service x external stress		
	Chi-square	df	p
Pearson's Chi^2	23.21015	df=3	p=.00004
Chi^2 NW	24.47076	df=3	p=.00002
Fi	.4101092		
Contingency factor	.3794397		
Cramér's V	.4101092		

Source: *Own study.*

The analysis of the research results led to the conclusion that the problem of high levels of external stress mainly concerns prevention officers, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. *External stress in relation to the type of service*
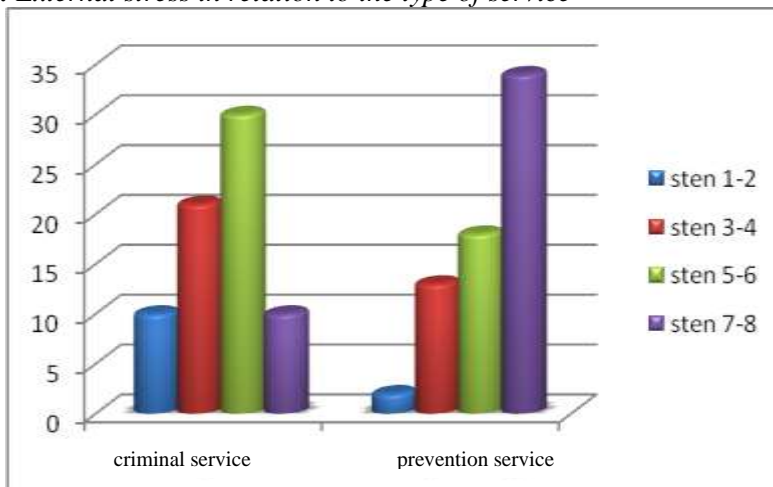
Source: *Own study.*

It probably results from the specificity of the tasks performed, which mainly include ensuring security and public order during mass events, legal gatherings, constitutionally defined states of emergency, catastrophes and natural disasters, conducting chases after dangerous criminals. Additionally, the duties of preventive service officers include patrol service. The most numerous group of respondents in criminal services includes those policemen whose external stress is at the average

level, within the range of sten 5-6. It is also worth noting that there are few people with high levels of stress among this group (Kaczmarek, 2016).

In turn, the research conducted by Ogińska-Bulik (2007) among the police officers using the Subjective Work Assessment Questionnaire, shows that the highest levels of stress were achieved by officers from the anti-terrorist brigade, indicating such stressors as: sense of mental workload, lack of awards, uncertainty at work, physical nuisance, unpleasant working conditions, lack of control, lack of support and responsibility. The lowest levels of stress were achieved by CBŚP (Police Investigation Headquarters) officers. High levels of stress were also felt by police officers from the crime department (indicating the sense of threat as the strongest stressor), prevention and traffic and district police (Ogińska-Bulik, 2007 p. 69). It is worth mentioning at this point that the worst health condition occurs in the group of anti-terrorists, and the best among the officers of the CBŚP, prevention and traffic department.

However, according to OBOP (Public Opinion Research Centre) studies, the factors causing dissatisfaction with work included excessive formalities and bureaucracy, low remuneration, constant organizational changes and bad relations with superiors[5].

Exposing people to persistent high levels of stress can cause many health consequences. It is triggered mainly by the fact that a person is not prepared or does not have adequate support or skills to cope with the requirements set for him/her. This leads to the fact that the growing problems are not solved in time and the person is in a state of high emotional tension. All internal systems of the human body are stimulated, which may cause many psychosomatic diseases. Due to problems in the form of coping with difficult or new tasks at work, self-esteem is reduced, which may adversely affect both the employee and the employer, and consequently affects the entire organization.

Taking into account occupational stress at work of police officers, the main health consequences include general fatigue, unwillingness to act, sense of helplessness, lack of trust in oneself, co-workers or superiors. The results of surveys conducted among Canadian police officers indicate that the persistence of high levels of stress over a long period of time predominantly causes (Ogińska-Bulik, 2007, p. 51):

− serious marital problems;
− alcohol abuse;
− use of sedatives;
− health problems;
− emotional disorders among children;
− suicides.

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[5]*www.nszzp.rzeszow.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=503:ycie-rodzinne-a-rygory-suby-w-policji-&catid=3:newsflash&Itemid=55.*

In turn, the most common psychosomatic diseases among police officers are: cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, gastric ulcers, digestive system diseases, neurosis, depression, and the emergence of PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder).

It should also be stressed that under the influence of stress, police officers become a threat not only to themselves, but also to the environment. We often hear about cases of outbursts of great aggression against other people, which mainly results in beatings or unjustified use of weapons.

An important, negative consequence of permanent stress in the police profession is burnout. It is characterised by emotional exhaustion, reduced self-esteem, as well as depersonalisation. Research conducted by Ogińska-Bulik, using the MBI Maslach and Jackson Questionnaire, indicate that the officers of the anti-terrorist brigade show the highest rates of professional burnout, and the lowest rates are observed among the district policemen (Ogińska-Bulik, p. 74). It turns out that dynamic police officers, leaders and perfectionists who are completely dedicated to work are the most vulnerable to burnout.

To sum up, police officers are exposed to strong stimuli related to various traumatic situations, e.g., when they are forced to use guns to save their (or their partner's) life or the life of another person, or when they are confronted with a very aggressive crowd. Additionally, a traumatic event can be a participation in various rescue actions, e.g. after the occurrence of catastrophes. A policeman may then be exposed to a state of severe depression associated with direct contact with corpses or very injured bodies of victims of various accidents. Therefore, the profession of a policeman, as the results of the research show, is at the forefront of the most stressful professions. Moreover, everyday situations in the workplace itself, which are mainly related to organisational problems, may also be an important stressor.

3. Conclusion

As the occurrence of occupational stress in police officers is an increasingly frequent phenomenon, in recent years attention has been drawn to the need to develop and implement prevention and antistress therapy. It is dealt with by appropriate psychological police services, which operate in accordance with Ordinance No. 428 of the Chief Police Commander of 17 April 2009. Appropriate education of police officers at various levels, using psychology, is also an important element. First of all, attention is paid to the ability to cope with stress, relieve tension and interpersonal contacts.

Additionally, it should be noted that reducing occupational stress among police officers should include activities at two levels – organisational and individual (Ogińska-Bulik, pp. 153-158). At the organisational level, the following factors should be taken into account in particular: reduction of the sense of: mental workload, lack of work rewards, risks, uncertainty caused by work organisation and

responsibility, as well as improvement of social contacts. At the individual level, more attention should be paid to assisting disadvantaged officers, building personal resources and strengthening resilience to stress.

The research also shows that an anti-stress programme for police officers should include reducing or minimising stressors, reducing mental tensions, strengthening personal resources (self-esteem, sense of coherence), improving qualifications and professional competences, developing social competences, shaping strategies for coping with stress focused on the problem, shaping the skills of problem solving and making correct decisions, developing skills for coping with extreme situations and reconstruction after a critical event in order to reduce the risk of PTSD occurrence.

We should also remember to select candidates for police service, especially in terms of psychological resilience, negotiating skills and cooperation with others, as a high level of stress is somehow inherent in the pursuit of this profession.

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Notes:

[1] The analysis of the answers contained in the questionnaire indicated that men were the most numerous group, accounting for 93% of respondents. The most numerous respondents (39.3%) were the people aged 30-35. Whereas the lowest percentage among the surveyed group was represented by respondents aged up to 30 (5.3%). The majority of police officers had higher education (98.6%). In turn, taking into account the length of service, the most numerous group included officers who served more than 15 years (42.6%). The least numerous group was constituted by 2 respondents with up to 5 years of service experience. The largest number of people had the warrant officer rank (54%), the smallest group were the higher-ranking officers (7.3%).The surveyed group was also diversified in terms of its official position. 48.6% of respondents represented staff positions, 39.3% executive positions, and 12% – managerial positions. The respondents represented different professional divisions. These were mainly police officers of the crime department (47.3%) and the prevention department (44.6%).

[2] Sten scales are used in the research conducted with the use of PSQ. They consist of 10 different units. Sten: 1-2 show very negative results, 3-4 negative results, 5-6 average results, 7-8 positive results, while 9-10 show very positive results. The interpretation is performed on the basis of the degree of intensity of the measured trait either in the desired or undesired direction (taking into account the psychological theory). Stress level studies are perceived in different dimensions - emotional tension, intrapsychic stress, external stress, scale of lies and general stress. Stress norms for a tool such as the Perception of Stress Questionnaire can be found in the methodological guide of the mentioned questionnaire - Plopa M., Makarowski R., KwestionariuszPoczucia Stresu, Vizja Press & IT, Warsaw 2010.