The Good and Bad and the Tired Cop: The Burnout of Greek Police Officers During the Interrogative Process

Vasiliki Karpouza[1], Lamprini Ntountoumi[1]

1. Department of Psychology, Metropolitan College, Piraeus, Greece.

Abstract

Burnout is a serious condition resulting from prolonged and excessive workplace stress, leading to emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion. This phenomenon has been on the rise and can significantly impact all aspects of a person's life – professional, social, and personal – often resulting in the emergence of depression or anxiety disorders due to feelings of helplessness. The pre-interrogation process plays a crucial role in case creation and investigation. This study aims to explore the perspectives of Greek Police Officers on this issue. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, and a qualitative method, specifically thematic analysis, was employed. The findings highlight a notable gap in the training of police officers and a lack of ongoing training, which complicates their daily experiences and contributes to the development of burnout stemming from feelings of inadequacy. Unstable work schedules, undefined responsibilities, and mental burdens due to violent incidents emerge as the most significant factors contributing to burnout. As a preventative measure, it is recommended to introduce comprehensive and systematic training and individual psychotherapy for Police Officers.

Keywords

police officers, burnout, occupational stress, Greece, pre-interrogation procedure

Corresponding author: Lamprini Ntountoumi, *PhD Candidate, Sociology Department, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens, Greece - Lecturer in Forensic Psychology, Metropolitan College, Athens Greece* lamprinintountoumi@gmail.com

Introduction

Burnout

"Burnout" is a relatively new term, as the first reports were recorded only fifty years ago in more developed countries in the Western world(1). Maslach and Freudenberger, in the 70s, were the first to notice that employees with human resources often experienced emotional exhaustion and decreased or lost energy, resulting in quitting their jobs(2). Burnout is, therefore, defined as a situation that combines emotional, physical and mental exhaustion in the workplace; it results from excessive and prolonged stress and results in the person feeling emotionally exhausted and unable to meet their obligations(3).

One of the models of burnout, as outlined by Maslach and Leiter (2017) (4), consists of six stages. The initial stage is the honeymoon phase, during which the individual is highly productive, seeks more responsibilities and workload, enjoys contributing to the workplace, fulfils responsibilities and exhibits optimism and creativity. The second stage is the onset of stress, where the person realises they are dedicating excessive time to work and often not achieving desired results. This stage is characterised by a loss of energy, appetite disorders, sleep problems, headaches, and, as a result, decreased productivity or irritability.

The process begins with chronic stress, which arises when the earlier stages are not addressed promptly, intensifying negative emotions. This can lead to both physical and emotional exhaustion, with the individual experiencing significant physical and mental fatigue along with negative emotions such as feelings of failure, futility, and pessimism. Consequently, this can contribute to a sense of helplessness, inadequacy, and incompetence (5). As a result, the individual may begin to neglect themselves and their social environment, further intensifying negative emotions and potentially leading to depression6. This ultimately leads to depersonalisation or cynicism, causing the individual to become indifferent to their work, shirk responsibilities and interactions with colleagues, and exhibit increased irritability (7). Finally, decreased personal performance leads to self-doubt, perpetuating a vicious cycle impacting various aspects of their lives.

Aydemir and İçelli (2012) (8) classified the contributing factors and examined the onset of burnout into two main categories. The first category encompasses workplace-related aspects such as interpersonal relationships, workspace environment (including natural light, cleanliness, architecture, and noise), working hours, workload, inadequate compensation, lack of recognition for achievements, and absence of fairness. Additionally, conflicting personal values and beliefs with those espoused by the company also fall under this category (9). On the other hand, the second category emphasises the role of individual differences, including personality traits such as conscientiousness, empathy, neuroticism, aggression, alexithymia, self-control, and introversion-extroversion. Moreover, the literature suggests a connection between organisational/company characteristics and employee well-being, where a sense of identification with the company and the resulting self-esteem are positive indicators for lower stress levels, positive emotions, better working conditions, and reduced chances of burnout(10).

Burnout is the emotional response to dealing with stressors stemming from the interaction between an individual and the professional environment (11). It is closely tied to emotional resilience, such as optimism. Individuals with developed emotional resilience are less likely to experience burnout because they tend to seek changes in unproductive or discomforting conditions; therefore, they are also mindful of the company's and their colleagues' well-being and constructively express their observations (12).

Burnout syndrome manifests in various ways and symptoms in each individual, often leading to confusion or coexisting with other disorders such as anxiety, depression, or chronic fatigue syndrome (13). Stress can significantly diminish well-being and even impact cognitive and motor functions, potentially resulting in chronic stress and eventual burnout for individuals in high-stress occupations or roles (14). Furthermore, burnout can lead to emotional exhaustion and predict a decline in work performance, while personal accomplishments in the workplace have a positive impact(15).

Research findings from multiple studies shed light on the detrimental impact of burnout on the physical and mental well-being of police officers across different countries (16,17,18). The prevalence of burnout among police officers has been associated with a range of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety disorders, and even suicidal episodes, leading to an increased use of antidepressants, anxiolytics, and sedatives. Notably, Portugal has been ranked first in Europe for the increased use of these medications (19).

Furthermore, exposure to direct or indirect trauma, particularly in cases involving rape, sexual exploitation, child abuse, and crimes against life, contributes to the heightened risk of burnout among police officers due to the significant mental load involved (20,21). Additionally, workplace factors have been identified as key contributors to burnout among police officers. This includes a lack of stability, limited prospects for career advancement, and inadequate support for technological developments (22). Similarly, inadequate communication and transparency between management and employees, unfair promotional practices, and a lack of work-life balance have been highlighted as stress-inducing factors in the workplace, particularly in law enforcement settings (23).

Gender disparities in the experience of burnout have also been identified, with women being more susceptible to physical and emotional exhaustion in the workplace compared to men (24). This has been attributed to societal stereotypes related to gender roles, which create additional challenges for women pursuing uniform professions or managerial positions (25). However, addressing these stereotypes and transforming perceptions about gender roles could mitigate the gender gap in burnout experiences (26). These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of burnout in law enforcement and the need for comprehensive strategies to address its impact on officers' well-being and performance.

In general, proactive measures should be implemented before burnout concerns escalate (27). In their 2021 study,

Otto et al(28). highlighted that mitigating burnout requires developing resources from the employer or organisation, such as increasing staff. They also noted that individual efforts to maintain a work-life balance can be practical, but fostering a positive and collaborative atmosphere among colleagues also plays a crucial role. Additionally, they identified a positive correlation between an individual's physical well-being and a supportive family environment in preventing burnout. In summary, avoiding burnout involves timely and thorough communication with the employer, workplace changes, advocating for a healthy work environment, and ongoing research to gain a comprehensive understanding and improve prevention measures, ultimately enhancing working conditions (29).

Preliminary Investigation of Witnesses

Analysing the interrogation process is essential to mention that there is now a separation of terms in English since the verb "interrogate", in Greek ", anakríno" refers to a one-sided examination of the witness, giving a negative and often intimidating tone to the process. At the same time, it is often associated with coercion, prejudicing the witness in several cases and making it difficult for him to cooperate with the authorities (30). On the contrary, the word "interview", in Greek "pérno synéntefxi", refers to a dialogue or conversation between witnesses and police officers, suggesting the voluntary participation of the witness and portending a more positive cooperation between the two, something that is not yet applied in Greece.

Interrogation tactics are designed to overcome witnesses or suspects' resistance to eliciting testimony or a confession (31). The process typically lasts twenty minutes to an hour, and studies suggest that prolonged interrogations can lead to false confessions (32). In their 2004 study, Drizin and Leo (33) found that 34% of false confessions lasted 6 to 12 hours, and 39% lasted 12 to 24 hours, with many occurring during evening hours (34).

Interrogation techniques involve isolating the individual from their friends and family, identifying inconsistencies in their statements, and establishing rapport to gain trust(35). Law enforcement officers often use evidence from the investigation to challenge the witness's statements or morally and socially justify their actions(36). Additionally, they may employ tactics such as showing depictions of the crime scene to elicit negative emotions or even to intimidate the witnesses about potential consequences if they do not cooperate (37).

In particular, the Reid interrogation technique is one of the most widespread interrogation techniques in the US. It was developed in the '40s, and its main characteristic is psychological manipulation. It consists of two stages: (a) an interview, usually involving non-incriminating questions, so that trained police officers observe the witness to conclude their character, and a means to understand a possible future deception through verbal and non-verbal behaviours and (b) the case-specific interrogation process (38).

Kassin et al. (2010) (39) conducted an analysis of the Reid technique, outlining the following steps. The interrogation process commences with the isolation of the witnesses in a small room,

where they are immediately treated as guilty by the police. The police present the witness with either authentic or fabricated evidence confirming their guilt. The officers then closely monitor the witness's reactions and behaviour following the accusations. The witness is encouraged to confess to the crime, with the police potentially using various tactics such as blaming the victim, justifying the perpetrator's actions, or downplaying the severity of their actions. Any attempts by the witness to deny the allegations are swiftly refuted by the police, who persistently insist on their guilt. If the witness displays passive behaviour, the police must swiftly regain their attention, using physical proximity, touch, or changes in their tone of voice.

Subsequently, the police officers are instructed to demonstrate empathy and understanding towards the witness or suspect to build trust and encourage cooperation (39). Furthermore, the preliminary investigators are advised to present two scenarios, one notably more severe than the other, compelling the witness to opt for the seemingly less serious option. Once this is accomplished, the police seek a comprehensive and detailed oral admission of the crime, obtaining a written confession containing all details about the offence, which may be an aggravating factor in court.

The Reid technique seems to be used more when the authorities believe that the witness is the perpetrator or at least involved in the case, resulting in bias before even the police start and conduct the interrogation, asking more guiding or incriminating questions and putting more pressure on the witness, often leading to unfair and soul-destroying treatment of innocent witnesses (40). Nevertheless, multiple false confessions create new problems. Several experts, such as Wheatcroft and Walklate (2014) (41), acknowledge that Reid is not a completely ethical method; however, they consider it very effective. On the contrary, Bull (2018)(42) claims that a large percentage of witnesses have already decided to confess their guilt before the interrogation process even begins, and this is very wrongly attributed to the effectiveness of the technique itself.

Another commonly used interview method is P.E.A.C.E, developed in England in the early 1990s (43). The acronym is "Preparation-Planning, Engage-Explain, Account, Closure, Evaluation." It aims to help police officers build a constructive relationship with witnesses and create an atmosphere of trust, allowing witnesses to recount events without bias or suspicion (44). Another method primarily used in the United States military and intelligence operations is HUMINT (Human Intelligence), which involves gathering, processing, and analysing information obtained from human sources, such as interviews (45).

According to global literature, continuous training for police officers has enhanced success in fraud detection, case resolution, and preventing false confessions (46). Meissner and Kassin (2002) (47) found that experience, training, interrogation duration and established trust can improve the ability to detect deception. Other research suggests that due to the high rates of false testimony and the complexity of detecting deception, individuals involved in the investigative process should demonstrate high levels of empathy and work

to create a trusting environment during interviews (48). This approach can lead to increased witness cooperation and honesty, resulting in the collection of more reliable information and a greater chance of solving a case (49). It is also crucial to audio or video record interrogations to protect witnesses' rights and allow for further review of witness statements by law enforcement officers (50).

However, it is observed that the same techniques are used for all types of crimes, from felonies to misdemeanours, and for both adult and juvenile offenders and witnesses, indicating a gap in the education and training of police officers on the pre-investigation process (51). There is also a noted gap in intercultural knowledge, particularly in cases involving migrant witnesses or defendants, and the communication barrier due to language must be addressed (52). It is essential to study the interrogation techniques used in Greece, as well as the general training that police officers undergo, to determine whether they contribute to the occurrence of burnout.

Purpose of the survey

This study sought to explore the burnout experienced by police officers in Greece within the context of preliminary witness investigations. Specifically, the research will examine (a) the working conditions faced by Greek police officers that may contribute to burnout, and (b) the interrogation procedures and techniques they use and the training they receive. Additionally, the research will seek to identify (c) potential measures to improve working conditions or provide support for police officers, focusing on preventing burnout rather than simply addressing it. The study also aims to analyse burnout specifically within the context of preliminary witness investigations, as it significantly impacts case outcomes.

The qualitative method is being utilised due to the extensive use of quantitative surveys in previous research on burnout, primarily correlating it with stress. Furthermore, most research has focused on other professions, such as healthcare and corporate. Thus, understanding the perspectives of Greek police officers regarding burnout is crucial for gaining a better understanding of the phenomenon.

Method

Design

To conduct this research, the qualitative method was selected for its ability to facilitate in-depth exploration of research questions, highlighting the perspectives and experiences of the participants (53). Data was specifically gathered through semi-structured interviews to facilitate the examination of each police officer's individual experiences, opinions, and beliefs regarding burnout in the context of witness interrogation. Semi-structured interviews allow for exploring participants' personal beliefs, opinions, and potential biases in cases where there is no clear hypothesis or correlation between variables, particularly in topics that have not been extensively studied, allowing for reasonable inferences (54).

The semi-structured interview also enables the researcher to adapt according to the participant, ask clarifying questions where necessary, and study more sensitive topics, which often cannot be studied adequately or in-depth with quantitative methods (55). Also, it is often observed that in questionnaires, participants do not carefully read the questions, respond to chance or leave them unanswered, which can affect the validity of the results and the researcher's work and effort (56). On the contrary, through the interview, the researcher can quickly regain the participant's attention if lost, can give time to structure their response comprehensively, and can observe other parameters, such as body language, tonality of the voice, pauses and repetitions due to the direct contact of the two (57).

After conducting the interviews, Braun and Clarke's (2006) (58) thematic analysis method was used to analyse the data. Squires (2023) (59) explains that this method involves five steps. First, all interviews are transcribed, and then excerpts related to the research questions are identified and compiled. Next, coding is done, conceptual labels are assigned to the data, and topics are organised to address the research questions. The final step involves writing the results and using participants' quotes within the text.

Participants

Given the specialised nature of the investigation, police officers of both genders are only eligible to participate provided that they conduct preliminary interviews with witnesses. There are no other restrictions, such as geographical constraints. A total of nine police officers, comprising six men and three women with an average age of 36, took part in this study. All participants are members of the Hellenic Police Corps, with lengths of service ranging from 11 to 24 years, and investigative experience spanning from 5 to 24 years. Seven officers are stationed in Attica, one in Northern Greece, and one on an island.

Participants were initially contacted through an online form, and the snowball sampling method was used to reach the required number. Prior to their involvement, participants were duly informed of their rights, and it was emphasised that their participation would be anonymous and voluntary yet crucial for the research. They were also assured that they could terminate the interview at any point if they experienced emotional distress, address any questions or concerns with the researcher, and request the removal of their data from the survey after being fully informed.

Materials

The interview guide was created using a combination of three different tools: the "Antoniou Police Stress Inventory"23, the "Operational Police Stress Questionnaire" (60), and the Portuguese "Escala de Estresse no Trabalho" (22).

These questionnaires assess burnout, anxiety, stress, fatigue, feelings of security and fear, relationships between police officers and superiors, as well as satisfaction levels regarding pay and the general working environment in the Police Force. These parameters formed the basis of the interview guide for this research. As a result, 21 questions were formulated. This

number ensures that the interview process is not time-consuming or tedious, while still allowing for the comprehensive collection of information on the feelings and experiences of police officers regarding burnout in the context of the preliminary investigation of witnesses.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through an online expression of interest form shared on Instagram, and the snowball method was employed to reach the necessary number of participants. Interviews took place at a location of the participant's choice to ensure their comfort, and the entire process typically lasted around 45 minutes on average.

Ethical Issues

The researcher thoroughly provided all necessary forms to the participants, ensuring that they understood their participation was voluntary and without any additional commitments. It was clarified that the survey had been reviewed and approved by an Ethics Committee, and all internal procedures had been followed to safeguard the participants. Additionally, the participants were assured that their data would be protected in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Conduct as well as the European Data Protection Law (GDPR). Furthermore, the researcher emphasised that the research was anonymous and that no identifiable information would be disclosed in the paper.

Findings

Upon analysing the interview transcripts, four distinct topics surfaced based on the interviewees' perspectives: (a) factors contributing to potential burnout, (b) lack of specialised training in investigative techniques, (c) absence of lifelong education, and (d) self-identified burnout prevention measures by the police officers themselves.

Factors contributing to burnout

Initially, all participants had accumulated more than a decade of experience in the field, signifying substantial expertise. Accordingly, they concurred that irregular working hour, extended work shifts leading to reduced rest and sleep, and inadequate compensation undeniably contribute to physical exhaustion initially, followed by mental fatigue. Therefore, fatigue, instability of everyday life, and lack of recognition of good results through remuneration affect their efficiency and increase the chances of burnout. It is worth emphasising D.'s phrase: "*Burnout is how much philotimo you have left.*" (philotimo is a cultural-specific word that cannot be translated precisely in English; it's a series of virtues, such as love, effort, pride, justice, self-sacrifice, respect, gratitude, hospitality and honor that is put in an action) suggesting that, beyond external factors, he understands the importance of personal emotional resilience and the assumption of responsibility in the workplace.

The participants have identified a lack of clearly defined responsibilities, resulting in instability and a heavier mental burden as they often handle multiple tasks simultaneously and take on extra duties beyond policing, such as managing COVID-19 tests back in the day. They also note that it's difficult to delineate a typical workday due to its unpredictable nature and the multitude of unclear responsibilities, leading to burnout. For instance, initiating a preliminary investigation involves managing unique situations and calming victims, which can be time-consuming, require additional officers, and be emotionally taxing, especially when children are involved. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy as officers take on roles beyond their expertise, contributing to burnout.

The experience of negative emotions, particularly due to the frustration of being unable to solve cases, is cited as a significant factor contributing to burnout among police officers. Feelings of sadness, futility, and frustration, as well as exposure to violent situations, can take a toll on their well-being. Additionally, maintaining a work-life balance is acknowledged as crucial, but it's often challenging to achieve and can strain their personal relationships. While their families try to offer support, it's difficult for those outside of the profession to fully comprehend the pressures they face, leading to increased feelings of frustration and contributing to burnout.

The potential occurrence of burnout may be influenced by several factors. Among these, the lack of adequate support and equipment stands out as a significant issue. It has been noted that the Headquarters fail to provide the necessary means and equipment for the daily lives of police officers. This inadequate support can lead to additional anxiety and stress for officers, as they heavily rely on the actions and cooperation of citizens to carry out their duties.

Furthermore, participants have identified the potential conflict between carrying out orders from superiors that contradict their values and beliefs as another important contributor to burnout. This conflict arises from the oath to "*obey my superiors and willingly carry out their orders*". Such situations can create internal struggles and feelings of guilt among police officers, thereby impacting their mental health and even leading to absences from work.

Lack of specialised training in investigative techniques

Upon reviewing the interviewees' responses regarding the initial investigation process, it becomes evident that police officers are fully aware of its intricacy and underscore its significance in resolving cases. However, it is apparent that there is a lack of specialised training on the subject and specific techniques. The officers mentioned that they primarily rely on the observations of experienced colleagues and on their own personal experiences.

Interestingly, despite this, the police officers seem to inadvertently follow some aspects of the Reid technique, including deceiving or isolating witnesses and softening the severity of their actions. Similarly, they appear to employ elements of the P.E.A.C.E. technique by allowing witnesses to recount the facts without distraction or deception.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the most common

reasons for witnesses to deliberately lie are to protect a family member or friends, conceal information, financial gain, or out of fear for their safety or stigmatisation. Additionally, all participants acknowledged the necessity for sensitive individual management when dealing with witness victims. They emphasised the importance of approaching victims with care and allowing them sufficient time to cope with the situation to prevent secondary victimisation. With the same way, some of the participants stressed the need for education on mental health issues, so they can approach witnesses accordingly.

Absence of lifelong learning

One significant factor contributing to burnout is the ongoing need for continuous learning. Many police officers feel that the training provided by the Police Academy is insufficient and fails to adequately prepare them, especially after years on the job, as additional training opportunities are scarce. They emphasise the necessity of staying updated and relevant, especially as new types of crime emerge. Furthermore, they highlight the absence of mental health training and the lack of specialised training, both of which are crucial for effectively managing their responsibilities. Consequently, many officers have taken it upon themselves to pursue further education to handle the demands of their daily work better.

Burnout prevention measures

In conclusion, participants feel they are experiencing burnout and recognise conditions that could be modified to avoid or reduce it. To prevent burnout, they propose structural changes in the Police Academy, implementation of selection procedures, more comprehensive and lifelong training, integration of specialisation and exemption from unrelated duties, better remuneration, staff increase, reduced bureaucracy, and the provision of personal psychotherapy by the Police Force. Moreover, they emphasise the State's contribution, proposing the examination of the real conditions for the comprehensive implementation of new measures before making a decision. As often the proposed measures cannot be implemented practically.

Moreover, it appears that participants understand the value of personal psychotherapy in helping them effectively manage their personal emotions and experiences. This enables them to maintain their effectiveness in their daily lives, fulfil their professional obligations, and either prevent or delay experiencing burnout. As a general observation, it is notable that the majority of the police officers' responses flowed naturally; indicating that they were already contemplating many of the research questions and had likely discussed them among themselves. Moreover, the examples they provided were highly focused.

Discussion

Greek police officers seem to be prone to experience burnout due to emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion at work3.

Several factors contribute to this, such as exposure to violence and traumatic events, unclear job responsibilities, unpredictable schedules, conflicting personal values with superiors, lack of work-life balance, and feeling misunderstood by their social environment (61,8,23,28).

On the other hand, there seems to be a significant training gap, especially in the preliminary investigation process. The participants noted that they lack specific training or techniques for conducting preliminary investigations and rely on the guidance of older colleagues and personal experience, leading to subjective practices. It would be beneficial to provide targeted training and encourage officers to tailor the investigative process based on the type of crime and witness' personality (35).

As far as continuous and lifelong education is concerned, it is necessary since it provides adequate supplies to police officers to face everyday challenges and be more effective and fair (62). Thus, they avoid the self-image of a person who is helpless, inadequate and incompetent since they have the necessary skills to cope more effectively with their duties. This may reinforce positive emotions such as pride and satisfaction (4). It is also necessary to consider that police officers in smaller departments and remote areas only come into contact with some types of crime as often. Therefore, continuous further training, such as drills, is the only way to ensure readiness.

The following considerations need to be considered for the preliminary investigation process. Police officers must undergo systematic training to enhance the chances of solving a case63. This training should also include knowledge of mental health issues to ensure proper handling of witnesses and victims, prevent unfair treatment and stigmatisation, and avoid manipulation by individuals with antisocial personality disorder and narcissistic traits (64). Understanding mental health issues is also crucial for managing potential panic attacks, psychotic episodes, or withdrawal symptoms during preliminary investigations until specialised medical assistance is available (65). By doing so, the experience of preliminary questioning can be less traumatic for witnesses and defendants, who are ultimately found to be uninvolved in a case, and also less stressful for the police officers themselves, as they will be better prepared to handle various scenarios.

This targeted training can also help identify unintentional false statements (66). Additionally, research indicates that individuals tend to remember the emotions they experienced in a situation more than the actual facts, which can affect the objectivity of their statements (67). Therefore, proper training can facilitate the identification of these factors.

To prevent burnout, the Hellenic Police should implement significant changes, such as grading graduates, conducting continuous staff competency checks, providing specialised employee training based on departmental needs, clearly assigning responsibilities, and offering systematic psychotherapy. Psychotherapy can play a vital role in preventing burnout and supporting the mental health of police officers (68), which can ultimately reduce the occurrence of anxiety disorders, depression, chronic fatigue syndrome (13), suicidal episodes, and the use of antidepressants, anxiolytics, and sedatives (19).

Furthermore, due to the frequent exposure to secondary trauma, which occurs daily for many, the well-being of police officers must have access to psychotherapy (20). By implementing these changes, we can work towards preventing burnout and improving working conditions (28). It's important to note that half-measures should be avoided, as they are impractical and do not effectively address burnout (69). For instance, while some departments have assigned psychologists, many police officers are hesitant to seek their support due to concerns about privacy and interruptions. These concerns stem from inadequate space, poor insulation, and the fear of negative comments from colleagues. Unfortunately, mental health issues and the act of seeking psychotherapy are still considered taboo (70). Therefore, it would be more effective for the Police Corps to create dedicated spaces for psychological support outside of police stations or to collaborate with private psychologists and psychotherapists, allowing officers to seek support as needed.

In general, measures and changes must be substantial, which initially requires an extensive study of needs and then special training of staff to avoid incidents such as the one mentioned by D. "*They were just putting a label on a door*", referring to the establishment of new Departments, such as Sports and Domestic Violence, which is ultimately a superficial move. It does not have any immediate effect on society, and it does not prevent or resolve violence.

Limitation and future research

This survey was conducted with the participation of only 9 police officers, primarily serving in Athens, indicating that the sample represents only a portion of the country. To draw more comprehensive conclusions, the study should encompass police officers from across the country, taking into account potential geographic variations in the prevalence of burnout. It is plausible that there are fewer violent incidents in certain small provincial areas compared to parts of Attica, resulting in lower susceptibility to burnout among police officers. Conversely, on some islands, crime rates may significantly rise during the summer, potentially contributing to burnout among officers serving there. Therefore, examining an appropriate population sample is essential to validate or refute such hypotheses.

It is essential to increase the participation of female police officers in the survey as well, as only three were involved. By involving more women, we can conduct a more thorough comparison of survey results between genders. This will help us understand whether noticeable differences are contributing to gender-related burnout in the police profession. In general, to obtain more comprehensive results, it would be beneficial to involve police officers of various ages, ranging from recent graduates to retired professionals. This comprehensive approach will allow us to thoroughly assess the impact of years of service on burnout and determine whether more experienced officers are better equipped to adapt to the work environment and avoid burnout or if they are disengaging from their duties.

Broadly, several similar studies can be conducted, looking at burnout from different angles or targeting similar issues.

For example, a survey could target police academies and how police officers are trained to identify practices that could be improved. Also, a questionnaire could be recompiled with more social content to examine possible discrimination that someone may experience in this profession, which is likely to contribute to burnout. Discrimination related to gender, sexual orientation, and height since it is a selection criterion. Other social issues that could be addressed are the role of family and society in choosing this profession and the citizens' views on the Hellenic Police and how these views affect them.

Another potential study could delve into the emotions and perspectives of detectives as they handle cases involving serious crimes and explore how they cope with their emotions. In addition, further research could compare initial interviews with witnesses and defendants to examine law enforcement's interactions with them and identify potential variations in approach, ultimately aiming to elicit more reliable testimonies.

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