

## **Psychological Aspects of Police Training in Responding to Terrorism in Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

The study titled “Psychological aspects in police training and its role in responding to terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (a province touched with the border of Afghanistan), Pakistan” exploring the perception of police personnel about psychological aspects of police training and its significance and role in responding to terrorism. For data collection, a structured questionnaire was designed by using a Likert scale from 363 respondents determined through the Sekaran table from a total population size of 6564. To find out the sample size for each stratum, a proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used while a systematic sampling method was applied to select the samples from the three chosen sample groups. To find out the association between dependent and independent variable Chi-square test was used. The majority of the respondents opined that mental stress affects police performance ( $P=.004$ ), and knowledge of human behavior is important for every police personnel ( $P=.000$ ) and there is a lack of activities for releasing stress ( $P=.000$ ). It is concluded from the study that the psychological aspect in police training is needed to be focused to counter the terrorists. The study suggests improving the psychological conditions of police personnel in police training and to strengthen police mentally to fight more efficiently against terrorists.

**Keywords:** Psychological; Police; Training and responding terrorism

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## **Introduction**

The profession of police is an extremely difficult and challenging occupation that required continuous professional development and sound mental health. Effective police personnel must-have information on criminal law, investigation skills, and sound mental health. To counter terrorism more effectively, the significance of psychological aspects in police basic training increased throughout the world. Abbas (2011) argued that efficient, well trained, and psychological preparedness for police personnel are very critical to counter anti-terrorism efforts, now and in the future as well. Since September 9, 2001, along with ordinary crimes, police are also dealing with countering terrorism at the same time. So keeping in view this condition, Police personnel required to be trained on sound psychological grounds for which necessary steps are needed to be taken to enhance their psychological competencies and mental health to disrupt the terrorist threats.

The effective performance of a police officer depends upon understanding human behavior, stress management skills, psychological knowledge, and set of skills that addresses human aspects of modern policing. To counter-terrorism, the psychological capacity of Pakistan police and their training is inadequate to deliver. Police training related to stress management and terror psychology is missing in the syllabus. Courses taught in books to police personnel in lower and upper-level police training lacks issues related to stress management and mental health. Instructors are poorly trained in police training colleges (Abbas, 2009). Available facilities in police training colleges for trainers are not appropriate and properly trained psychologists are not available there. In Pakistan, greater emphasis is given to theoretical, bookish, and law-related subjects in police training. From constable to DSP level training there is repetition in most of the topics.

Shah (2013) argued that Police are the first line of defense against the terrorists. Police personnel in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa lack psychological competency more than any other provincial police (Taj, 2010). There is a lack of well-trained psychologists and trainers Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police. Police personnel is more vulnerable to terrorist attacks than the army. The reason for this is that army has better security arrangements and more mentally fit than the police. After September 11, 2001, responding to terrorism remains a challenge to police personnel.

## **Background and Rationale of the Study**

Pakistan is a front line state in the war against terrorism after 9/11 and because of this reason; the issue of terrorism is one of the most hotly debated

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topics in debates. It possesses a serious problem for the state at the national and international levels (Quraishi, 2002). Keeping in view the menace of terrorism, police training to tackle terrorism is one of the serious concerns of the world including Pakistan. It has been observed that Pakistan went into a new era of war against terrorism. Front line police forces in Pakistan face numerous challenges of countering terrorism since after 9/11. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, police reportedly lack proper training, equipment, facilities, and lack of resources, etc. to counter-terrorism. The same is the situation of the police forces in other provinces of Pakistan.

Keeping in view the perceived gap in the psychological aspects of police training to tackle terrorism in Pakistan, especially in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, this study is designed to find out all possible aspects of the psychological aspects of Police training and its impacts on their role to counter-terrorism. The study was conducted keeping in view the increasing threat of terrorism especially after 9/11. Numerous psychological issues were faced by police due to suicide attacks, stress, and many other issues as well. In the past, no such attempt was made to conduct academic research in the psychological aspect of police training. The reason for this was that policing and criminology is a new field in Pakistan. Another reason is that Police in Pakistan did not face the issue of terrorism in the Past as they faced after 9/11. Keeping in view this gap between theories in practice, there is a need for research in policing, police reforms, and police training. Finding research on such topics may help identify grey areas in police training practices.

This study is of enormous significance as it would not only draw the attention of researchers but also policymakers, implementers, trainers, and the general public as well; rather few state-level policies could also be improved, revised and enhanced based on the study findings.

### **Literature Review**

The prime responsibility of the police is to maintain order and peace in the society with the help of other law enforcement agencies. But when police personnel themselves suffer from stress at work and lack mental readiness, then it's become difficult to respond. Presently, Pakistan lacks a properly planned counterterrorism policy and effective psychological police training. As we know, suicide terrorism is considered the worst form of terrorism among other forms of terrorism. It's a fact that the prevention of suicide attacks is very difficult than the prevention of other forms of terrorism (Hoffman, 2003). Before the US intervention in Afghanistan, police never experience suicide attacks. The psychological and physical impacts of the suicide attacks are very larger. The investigation of suicide attacks is very difficult for the police

(Naushad, 2009). It is generally argued that the majority of the suicide attacks have adverse effects on police personnel. It creates fear and demoralizes police will to fight against the terrorists.

Rineheart (2010) states, to improve the psychological condition of police personnel; there is no universal police training policy for countering terrorism. This could have serious consequences if police personnel are not mentally ready to fight against the terrorists. Psychology-related courses in training curriculum have not existed which affects police performance. Mental readiness is a must for police personnel to enhance police personnel's role in countering terrorism. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, psychologically prepared police personnel is a pillar for effective counter-terrorism strategy and proper psychological police training is essential to make this pillar stronger to face the challenge of countering terrorism. Miller (2006) argued that effective psychological training enhances the energy level and psychological condition of police personnel during stress.

The primary duty of police personnel to protect the safety of the communities from the threat of terrorism. The police personnel should raise awareness in public and make them out of stress regarding the impacts of terrorism and counter-terrorism. Every police personnel should be given full training about basic terrorist psychology and human behavior, and when dealing with terrorism how they should not violate basic human rights. Police should ensure public safety at any cost. They should be given proper psychological training on how to address human rights challenges in countering terrorism.

Pakistan in general and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular is the primary target of terrorism. The performance of police personnel in responding to terrorism is disappointing. Police personnel in Pakistan are corrupt, ill-equipped, poorly trained and their psychological condition is very poor. Many factors influence the police role in countering terrorism. The infrastructure of law enforcement in Pakistan is outdated and needed to be improved.

Abbas (2011) argues that in recent decades Pakistan police became politicized and almost all the police officers want to be in the favorites of any of the political parties. During elections, in rural areas of Pakistan, local police officers influence the electoral process through the rigging. Besides, politicians in Pakistan use police personnel for torturing their political opponents and poor people. Police personnel are also affected by suicide attacks. Hoffman (2003) stated that among all the forms of terrorism, suicide attacks are the worst form of terrorism. Prevention of suicide attacks is very difficult than dealing with other forms of terrorism. Pakistan Anti-Terrorism laws require major

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amendments (Khurshid, 2012). Perito (2012) stated due to lack of proper psychological police training police personnel not devoted their mental energies fully towards their duties.

A public information campaign is needed to be started by police personnel to make them psychologically strong in the war on terror. In police training colleges, course books used in lower and upper-level courses require serious amendments (Rineheart, 2010). It could have serious consequences if police personnel are not mentally ready to fight against terrorist Training at all levels must be updated, improved, and revised to produce service-oriented policing. Some new courses related to terror psychology, stress management, suicide terrorism, and target killings needed to be introduced in police training.

### **Research Objective**

- To find out the association between psychological aspects of police training and countering terrorism.

### **Study Methodology**

The rationale behind this study is to find out the role of the psychological aspects of police training in countering terrorism. A quantitative research paradigm is used in the present study for data collection to quantify the opinions of the respondents and other defined variables to generalize results from a larger sample population. Keeping in view the nature of the objective and research topic, the quantitative technique is best suited for this study. Further, to find an association between dependent and independent variables a chi-square (statistics) was used as well.

### **Participants**

Trained police personnel in Peshawar and Kohat city, instructors at PTC Hangu and RTC Kohat were selected as respondents for the study. These are the people who have information regarding police training. Proportionate stratified sample technique was used to determine the sample size from each stratum whereas a systematic sampling method was applied to pick the samples from the three selected sample groups. A sample of 363 respondents was drawn from a total of 6534 police personnel and trainers through the Sekaran table (Sekaran, 2003). Data was collected using a structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale. Data were analyzed with the help of the SPSS version 21 and the Chi-Square test was used to measure the association between the different psychological aspects of training related factors and responding to terrorism.

## Demographic Information

Respondent's nature of the job and marital status are important variables that determine their knowledge, maturity level, and understanding about the relevant study topic i.e. psychological aspects of police training and its relationship with countering terrorism. Table 1 depicts that out of the total 363 respondents, 354(97.5%) respondents were trained police personnel and 9(2.5%) respondents were trainers. In addition to the nature of the respondents' job, the table also shows the marital status of respondents. It indicates that (81%) respondents were married and (19%) were unmarried.

As a whole, the table shows that the Majority of the respondents are trained police personnel and married.

**Table 1: Nature of Job and Marital status**

Nature of the Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Trained Police Personnel	354	97.5
Trainer	9	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	294	81
Unmarried	69	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>100</b>

## Results and Analysis

### Findings

Table 2 shows Chi-square results of the role of the psychological aspect of training in responding to terrorism. A significant association was recorded on the factors such as police experiences sleeplessness at night ( $p=.000$ ), mental stress affects the performance of police to counter-terrorism ( $p=.004$ ), knowledge of human behavior is very important for every police officer ( $p=.000$ ) and now a day's most of police officers thinking of leaving their jobs ( $p=.000$ ) with countering terrorism. Besides, countering terrorism was also significantly associated with police personnel feel hopelessness about life during duty ( $p=.001$ ), most police officers have sleeping problems ( $p=.000$ ) and sufficient Prizes and rewards on good performance is given to increase their mental satisfaction from duty ( $p=.004$ ). Unlikely, a non-significant association

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was noted on factors such as “police feel fear because they are the first victims of terrorist attacks, ( $p=.142$ )”, most of the police personnel do not know how to negotiate in crises situation ( $p=.730$ ) and psychologically police personnel is not well prepared to counter-terrorism ( $p=.205$ ) with countering terrorism. Similarly, a non-significant relation was found on factors such as, special courses related to terrorist psychology are taught in police training colleges ( $p=.065$ ), there is a fear of insecurity to the families of police personnel ( $p=.315$ ), mental stress affects the job performance of police personnel ( $p=.155$ ), regular counseling is available to increase the performance of police personnel ( $p=.322$ ) and there is lack of activities for releasing stress ( $p=.000$ ) with countering terrorism.

**Table 2. Bivariate Analysis of the role of Psychological aspect of Training in Countering Terrorism**

Statements	Response	Countering Terrorism			Chi Square P Value
		Yes	No	Don't Know	
Police feel fear because they are the first victims of terrorist attacks	Yes	205(56.5%)	65(17.9%)	13(3.6%)	<i>6.890<sup>a</sup></i> <i>P=.142</i>
	No	53(14.6%)	21(5.8%)	4(1.1%)	
	Don't Know	0(0.0%)	2(0.6%)	0(0.0%)	
Mental stress affects the performance of police to counter terrorism	Yes	238(65.6%)	77(21.2%)	14(3.9%)	<i>7.938<sup>a</sup></i> <i>P=.004</i>
	No	11(3.0%)	9(2.5%)	1(0.3%)	
	Don't Know	9(2.5%)	2(0.6%)	2(0.6%)	
Police experiences sleeplessness at night	Yes	84(23.1%)	19(5.2%)	6(1.7%)	<i>20.009<sup>a</sup></i> <i>P=.000</i>
	No	168(46.3%)	68(18.7%)	8(2.2%)	
	Don't Know	6(1.7%)	1(0.3%)	3(0.8%)	
Knowledge of human behavior is very important for every police officer	Yes	249(68.6%)	77(21.2%)	11(3.0%)	<i>57.038<sup>a</sup></i> <i>P=.000</i>
	No	3(0.8%)	10(2.8%)	1(0.3%)	
	Don't Know	6(1.7%)	1(0.3%)	5(1.4%)	
Now a day's most of police officers thinking	Yes	34(9.4%)	7(1.9%)	9(2.5%)	<i>28.213<sup>a</sup></i> <i>P=.000</i>
	No	210(57.9%)	80(22.0%)	8(2.2%)	

of leaving their jobs	Don't Know	14(3.9%)	1(0.3%)	0(0.0%)	
Police personnel feel hopelessness about life during duty	Yes	90(24.8%)	28(7.7%)	13(3.6%)	17.744 <sup>a</sup> P=.001
	No	159(43.8%)	60(16.5%)	3(0.8%)	
	Don't Know	9(2.5%)	0(0.0%)	1(0.3%)	
Most of police officers have sleeping problems	Yes	31(8.5%)	11(3.0%)	12(3.3%)	44.418 <sup>a</sup> P=.000
	No	226(62.3%)	76(20.9%)	5(1.4%)	
	Don't Know	1(0.3%)	1(0.3%)	0(0.0%)	
Most of the police personnel do not know how to negotiate in crises situation	Yes	199(54.8%)	67(18.5%)	14(3.9%)	2.034 <sup>a</sup> P=.730
	No	55(15.2%)	21(5.8%)	3(0.8)	
	Don't Know	4(1.1%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	
Psychologically police personnel is not well prepared to counter terrorism	Yes	208(57.3%)	69(19.0%)	14(3.9%)	5.928 <sup>a</sup> P=.205
	No	34(9.4%)	18(5.0%)	2(0.6%)	
	Don't Know	16(4.4%)	1(0.3%)	1(0.3%)	
Special courses related to terrorist psychology are taught in police training colleges	Yes	161(44.4%)	66(18.2%)	13(3.6%)	8.855 <sup>a</sup> P=.065
	No	82(22.6%)	22(6.1%)	3(0.8%)	
	Don't Know	15(4.1%)	0(0.0%)	1(0.3%)	
There is fear of insecurity to the families of police personnel	Yes	209(57.6%)	72(19.8%)	15(4.1%)	4.742 <sup>a</sup> P=.315
	No	39(10.7%)	16(4.4%)	2(0.6%)	
	Don't Know	10(2.8%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	
Mental stress affects the job performance of police personnel	Yes	203(55.9%)	63(17.4%)	15(4.1%)	6.658 <sup>a</sup> P=.155
	No	45(12.4%)	24(6.6%)	2(0.6%)	
	Don't Know	10(2.8%)	1(0.3%)	0(0.3%)	
Regular counseling is needed to increase the performance of police personnel	Yes	205(56.5%)	72(19.8%)	14(3.9%)	4.682 <sup>a</sup> P=.322
	No	42(11.6%)	16(4.4%)	3(0.8%)	
	Don't Know	11(3.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	

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Sufficient Prizes and rewards on good performance is given to increase their mental satisfaction from duty	Yes	92(25.3%)	19(5.2%)	9(2.5%)	15.555 <sup>a</sup> P=.004
	No	149(41.0%)	68(18.7%)	8(2.2%)	
	Don't Know	17(4.7%)	1(0.3%)	0(0.0%)	
There is lack of activities for releasing stress	Yes	212(58.4%)	79(21.8%)	11(3.0%)	7.140 <sup>a</sup> P=.129
	No	23(6.3%)	5(1.4%)	3(0.8%)	
	Don't Know	23(6.3%)	4(1.1%)	3(0.8%)	

### Discussion and Analysis

The study was conducted to evaluate the perception of police personnel regarding the psychological aspect of police training and its role in countering terrorism. Newman and Clarke (2007) argued that during the risks most of the time police officers feel fear and depression and because of the fear the quality of police officers is lower. He further argued that reducing fear should be an important part of counter-terrorism strategies. Cordner (2010) also commented that the reduction of fear has an important role in the counter-terrorism strategy of police personnel. Morre and Braga (2003) stated that for police personnel, it is very important to adopt fear reduction strategies on a priority basis. Similarly, the findings of Waqar Hussain, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Peshawar are also in contrast with the findings of this study. Who finds that “*Law enforcement is constantly identified as one of the most stressful occupations*”. In Contrast, this study found that police feel fear because they are the first victims of terrorist attacks has a nonsignificant association (P=.142) with responding to terrorism and the study further finding stated that mental stress affects the performance of police (P=.004) has a significant association with responding to terrorism. Police experience sleeplessness at night (P=.000) is significantly associated with responding to terrorism. Cochran (2001) found that sleep is often viewed as a weakness or part of laziness or inability or unwillingness to perform police duty accurately. Officers, who work the most, sleep the less are one of the major findings of Cochran study. Likewise, knowledge of human behavior is very important for every police officer (P=.000) is significantly associated with countering terrorism. Euwema M. C. et al. (2004) argued that it is important for a police officer that he should have a professional behavior in dealing with people. Police should use force but they should avoid violence and their behavior should be human right friendly. Now a day's most of police officers thinking of leaving their jobs (P=.000) has a significant association with responding to terrorism. In contrast, Cordner (2010) wrote that reducing fear is the responsibility of the police, and fear reduction efforts should be enhanced. Police personnel feels hopeless about life during

duty ( $P=.001$ ) is significantly associated with countering terrorism. Police officers experience serious, long term emotional problems then that can lead to suicide and most of the police officers lose their lives in terrorist accidents (White, 2007). In this study, it is reported that most of the police officers have sleeping problems ( $P=.000$ ) that are significantly associated with responding to terrorism. Lane (2012) found that police officers and other law enforcement agencies are vulnerable to multiple diseases and health problems because of a decrease in sleeping duration. Violanti (2012) also found that physical health, psychological well-being safety, and efficiency of a police officer at work has a close relationship with proper sleeping.

Most of the police personnel do not know how to negotiate in crises situation ( $P=.730$ ) has a nonsignificant association with responding to terrorism. In contrast to the research findings, Fasihuddin (2009) stated that in all the police training college's conflict management and conflict negotiation training are not given to police personnel. Perito and Parvez (2014) commented that Pakistan police have proven ill-prepared and poorly equipped and they even do not know how to manage the conflict. Police public relations needed to be improved so they can be able to negotiate with the terrorist. Similarly, psychologically police personnel is not well prepared for counter-terrorism ( $P=.205$ ) and have a nonsignificant relationship with countering terrorism. But the finding does not support the views of Perito and Parvez (2014) who argued that Pakistani police had found themselves in the front line, yet they are not able to protect their citizens against the terrorists. Pickering et al., (2008) also stressed that to psychologically prepare police personnel; there is a need for greater counter-terrorism training. According to his findings, there is a high level of disagreement among the respondents about the training related to counter-terrorism. Special courses related to terrorist psychology are taught in police training colleges ( $P=.065$ ) and have a nonsignificant association with responding to terrorism. Fasihuddin (2009) argued that criminal psychology-related courses needed to be improved, revised, and updated. The findings that there is a fear of insecurity to the families of police personnel ( $P=.315$ ) and mental stress affect the job performance of police officers ( $P=.155$ ) has a nonsignificant association with responding to terrorism. Anxiety, stress, and depression are the major commonly diagnosed psychological problems (Farmer, 1998; Ollendick & Yule, 1990). Similarly, in contrast, numerous studies revealed that stress, anxiety, and depression result in several negative consequences in the workplace such as a decrease in satisfaction level (Poole, 1993, Greenberg, 1999; Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000). Similarly findings, regular counseling is needed to increase the performance of police personnel ( $P=.322$ ) has a nonsignificant association with responding to terrorism. In contrast, law enforcement is one of the most stressful tasks and stress affects the performance of police personnel. The police department has

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realized officers face psychological problems and intends to take measures to address these problems (Abbas, 2012). Sufficient Prizes and rewards on good performance are given to increase their mental satisfaction from duty ( $P=.004$ ) has a significant association with countering terrorism. The finding is the same to some extent with the findings of William Tillier. Tillier (2012) concluded that to enhance job performance and self-esteem of an individual, the person should be rewarded with prizes. There is a lack of activities for releasing stress ( $P=.000$ ) has a significant relationship with countering terrorism. Very similar to the findings of the study, police personnel are exposed to the sudden and intense situation after September 11, 2001, in Pakistan but unfortunately, there is no such program in the police department to release the stress situation caused by terrorism (Abbas, 2012).

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Proper psychological training is of significant importance in counter-terrorism strategies and police training must be focused upon strengthening the psychological condition of police personnel. It was noted that the police training system has a lot of loopholes and shortcomings. For enhancing the psychological level of police, several areas of police training needed to be improved. Well trained psychologists are required to provide counseling services to police personnel regularly. Some new subjects related to stress management needed to be introduced in police training. Police performance is also affected by feelings of insecurities and many police personnel is not happy in their profession because of this reason. Police in Pakistan is not ready in countering terrorism, for this reason, the psychological level of police needed to be improved.

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