



The Occupational Stress Questionnaire for Law Enforcement Services – The Possibility to revise A Questionnaire

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Abstract

Aim: Motivation is an important management tool, especially in organisations where people’s skills and abilities are crucial to effective performance. An example of such an organisation is the Police, which is still people-centred despite information technology modernisation. Motivation is therefore essential not only in leadership, but also in the psychological selection process, and its components and characteristics are examined.

Methodology: For each member of the law enforcement services is a must, based on the legal obligation, to have the proper health, psychic and physical condition. The psychological test can facilitate police recruit selection, which includes, among others, an Occupational Stress Questionnaire for Law Enforcement Services (OSQLES), which has been used for decades in Hungary.

Findings: In according to Herzberg’s two-factor theory, I review and analyse the OSQLES’ relevance and suitability for law enforcement services.

Value: I will answer two questions. Firstly, whether the OSQLES is a suitable method to obtain the right information through questions and scales and secondly, whether it is suitable to identify the factors of the Herzberg’s theory.

Keywords: motivation, Herzberg’s two factor theory, Occupational Stress Questionnaire

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Introduction

Our decisions are controlled by our personal needs. These needs are coming from different origins, which can be biological, sociable, or psychic origin. At the same time each and every one of these needs – regardless from it’s origin – creates a drive for a person, what directs him or her to reach a goal. We can call this drive also motivation, from which of course several can be found at the same time in a person’s life. Dealing with the fact of motivation has to be an important, human resources-related task, as even the necessary skills are available, to reach the required level of performance the motivation part has the same importance, and in case this part is missing, even having the best skills success cannot be guarantee. (Farkas, Jarjabka, Lóránd, & Bálint, 2013). Knowledge about motivation can be key to the successful functioning of an organisation (Farkas & Horváth, 2020; Farkas & Sallai, 2021).

According to Abraham Maslow’s well-known ‘Hierarchy of Needs’ theory (1943), the needs and personal motivations that drive a person are organised hierarchically. The theory has become known worldwide as the ‘Maslow pyramid’. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs explains what drives human behaviour and what makes people feel fulfilled. It represents five human needs that people need to satisfy to achieve mental well-being. These are the physiological needs, the security, the love and belonging, the esteem, and the self-actualization. According to this theory, the position of each motivation at one level of the pyramid provides information about the strength of the link between that motivation and the performance of the job, for example from a biological point of view. Maslow argues that when basic needs are adequately met, we are more focused on higher-order motivations (Gósiné Greguss & Bányai, 2006). When a person cannot meet their needs at different levels, it can lead to psychological problems.

Table 1
Specific effects if unmet the personal needs

Need	Effect if unmet
Physiological	Physical illness
	Hoarding behaviour
Safety	Anxiety
	Psychological trauma
Love and belonging	Loneliness
	Antisocial behaviour

Need	Effect if unmet
Esteem	Feeling worthless
	Feeling invisible or unappreciated
	Low self-confidence
	Depression
Self-actualisation	Boredom
	Cynicism
	Lack of meaning in life

Note. West (2022).

Even today, Maslow’s theory is still a major influence on traditional thinking about human motivation, but aspects of its practical applicability are being questioned. To better understand organisational functioning, we therefore apply Frederick Herzberg’s two-factor theory

Herzberg’s two-factor theory

Frederick Herzberg (1968) divided the human needs in two dimensions: the first dimension as hygiene factors, and the other as the motivators. Among the so-called hygiene category, we need to understand the items, whose presence alone does not cause satisfaction, but their permanent absence leads to dissatisfaction – for example as the quality of the relationship with the manager or the salary. On the other hand, motivator factors - such as recognition - are those that can possibly induce satisfaction in individuals, and their effect on employees also lasts longer (Benke, 2018).

Table 2

The hygienic factors and the motivators

Hygienic factors	Motivators
Corporate Policy and Administration	Result
Connection with colleagues	Appreciation
Connection with the Manager	The Work itself
Connection with subordinates	Progression
Work supervision (controlling)	Responsibility
Security	Development
Private Life	

Hygienic factors	Motivators
Rank	
Salary	

Note. Author's own elaboration based on Herzberg (1968).

As it is clearly visible from Table 1, the hygiene factors are the ones that have a significant influence on individuals from the point of view of everyday life, while the motivator factors are much more related to self-realization and the achievement of intrinsic motivations. In order to reduce an individual's dissatisfaction, we need to know the hygiene factors, but in order to make the related person truly motivated - and thereby encourage him or her to achieve the appropriate performance - we need to focus by strengthening the motivator factors. In the meantime, it is important for an organization to be aware of how the hygiene and motivator factors are changing in case of individuals, and it can be great potential in being able to regularly examine the existence of these groups of needs on a larger sample.

Occupational Stress Questionnaire for Law Enforcement Services

As far as the Police as an organisation is concerned, we have the possibility to carry out this task through a questionnaire procedure called Occupational Stress Questionnaire (in Hungarian: Rendvédelmi Szervek Munkahelyi Stressz Kérdőíve, RMSK). To establish a legal relationship for the regular members of the law enforcement services is a must, to have the proper psychic health and physical condition according to the Hungarian law 2015. XLII / 33. § c. point. These types of examinations are also regulated according to the directive of 45/2020 (XII. 16.) issued by the Internal Affairs. The directive 45/2020 (XII. 16.) 70. § (1) issued by the Internal Affairs demonstrate that the medical examination has to cover the below mentioned environments:

- 1) psychical stability;
- 2) psychical loadability;
- 3) sources to handle the psychical/mental „strain” inside the work environment and in tasks during service time;
- 4) assessment of any relevant alternatives for stress handling.

The above mentioned factors can be analysed by several psychical methods (e.g. Projective Tests, Instrument Questionnaire methods, etc.), however among the

relevant methods we can find the Occupational Stress Questionnaire for Law Enforcement Services, which is an own questionnaire of the psychologist of the law enforcement services (put together by Beatrix Szabó, István Böröcz and Pál Bilkei), however the specialists who designed it did not publicate it immediately, therefore the first detailed presentation happened by Erika Malét-Szabó in 2009. The OSQLES is a self-fulfilling, paper-pencil test (includes 199 items), which can be separated into two bigger parts (and beyond that are another parts also): one part about the work and workplace (116 items) and another about individual, personal factors (83 items) (Fridrich, 2015). The questionnaire measuring each item on a so called „Likert scale” between 1 and 6 (Tegyey 2018).

Like it was mentioned beyond that, the first big part is split into two environments:

- The first one provides a list of happenings connected to the working environment with negative effects and negative experiences.
- The another one provides 75 potential statements by mixing the factors and the list of daily problems until all the facts and events, which can have/cause a negative impact on an individual’s performance inside the work environment.

In the end after the proper statistical analysis, the questionnaire gives the result based on 26 scales. Szabó (2009) proved, that the OSQLES can be considered as a reliable and stable point for a psychologist during the examination of an individual. The results of her examinations have been confirmed, therefore we can declare, that overall the Cronbach- α index of the questionnaire is valid for the questionnaire (0,939) (Tegyey, 2018). Since that the OSQLES has been used several times during several scientific kinds of researches, namely: Szabó (2009), Fridrich (2015), Tegyey (2018), Borbély (2019; 2020a; 2020b; 2021a; 2021b).

OSQLES based on two-factor model

The 75 items of the OSQLES, which are related to workload, can be interpreted separately as hygiene factors or motivators of the Herzberg’s two-factor theory. The items are all negatively phrased, which is why this part of the test may be suitable for identifying factors that frustrate or permanently demotivate individuals. Table 2 contains the related 75 items and their classification.

Table 3
The first 75 items of OSQLES

The Item	Hygienic factors/Motivators
Conditions to get into the workplace	Hygienic factor
Workplace comfort, convenience	Hygienic factor
The possible absence and condition of the equipment required for work	Hygienic factor
Noise what I can experience in my workplace	Hygienic factor
Lighting possibilities of the Workplace	Hygienic factor
Air pollution in the workplace	Hygienic factor
Workplace hygiene	Hygienic factor
Length of working hours	Hygienic factor
Predictability of daily working hours	Hygienic factor
Ability to plan free time	Hygienic factor
The negative opinions of my friends about the work and my workplace	Motivating factor
Moral problems occurring during work	Motivating factor
I also have to do a task that I don't like to do	Motivating factor
The required work pace	Motivating factor
The organization of work	Motivating factor
The transparency of work	Motivating factor
Physical stress from my job	Hygienic factor
The mental strain of my work	Hygienic factor
Financial problems arising from income	Hygienic factor
Lack of material appreciation	Hygienic factor
Uneven workload	Motivating factor
Frequent decision situations	Motivating factor
Consequences of wrong decisions	Motivating factor
Increased individual responsibility	Motivating factor
Lack of time	Hygienic factor
Professional responsibility	Motivating factor
Moral responsibility	Motivating factor
Uncooperative coworkers	Hygienic factor
Lack of information	Hygienic factor
The person has to solve the tasks alone	Motivating factor
Adaptation to instructions and regulations	Hygienic factor
Assessment of the law enforcement career	Motivating factor
My place in the workplace organizational ranking	Motivating factor
Lack of competence and influence	Motivating factor
How my coworkers treat me	Hygienic factor
How my job affects my everyday life	Hygienic factor
Lack of opportunities for self-realization in my work	Motivating factor

The Item	Hygienic factors/Motivators
Lack of advancement opportunities in my work	Motivating factor
Nervous and mental demands on my job	Hygienic factor
Physical requirements for work	Hygienic factor
Inflexibility and rigidity of supervisor	Motivating factor
Co-workers' inflexibility and rigidity regarding problems	Hygienic factor
Feeling undervalued	Motivating factor
A sense of helplessness	Motivating factor
Evaluation of work	Motivating factor
The workplace atmosphere	Hygienic factor
Behavior of employees	Hygienic factor
Rivalry	Hygienic factor
The conduct and behavior of the direct supervisor	Motivating factor
Conduct and behavior of workplace managers	Motivating factor
Lack of human help and support	Hygienic factor
Lack of professional help and support	Hygienic factor
Lack of help and support from the manager	Motivating factor
Workplace conflicts	Motivating factor
They prescribe how to behave	Hygienic factor
Lack of empathy	Hygienic factor
disinterest to others	Hygienic factor
Order of command	Hygienic factor
Lack of trust	Hygienic factor
Handling social problems	Hygienic factor
Unpredictability of work tasks	Hygienic factor
The unpredictability of managerial behavior	Motivating factor
Managing and supervising the work of subordinates	Hygienic factor
Carrying out work at a lower level than qualifications, skills or knowledge	Hygienic factor
Bringing home the Work	Motivating factor
Adaptation to constantly changing expectations	Hygienic factor
Experiencing discrimination and exceptionalism from managers	Motivating factor
Lack of encouragement from managers	Motivating factor
When I feel that my work has no reason or meaning	Motivating factor
Incompetent leader	Hygienic factor
Intertwining of workplace interests	Hygienic factor
Lack of calm work environment	Hygienic factor
There is no opportunity for further development	Motivating factor
Unrealistic expectations and goals	Motivating factor
Adaptation to colleagues	Hygienic factor

Note. Author's own editing based on the questionnaire.

In addition, among the individual factors, we can find also items which are dealing directly with the individual's motivation, and at the same time, there is a 14-item section related to the satisfaction of a test person, which also displays a mixture of hygiene factors and motivators. Based on all the mentioned above we can state, that the OSQLES has several items which are connecting to the two-factor model and can be interpreted within its framework. At the same time, it is also relevant that the final result of the test distinguishes 26 scales (the 'subjective assessment of workload' also appears in the case of 3 scales, with a different sign, so in the context of my article, I have merged these 3 scales in terms of naming). Although the final, complex evaluation of the OSQLES which has been actioned by the program produces a different interface, these names of the related scales are not derived from the final interface of the program, but based on an excel table which has been designed for police psychologists.

Table 4
The Scale's of OSQLES

Hygienic factors	Motivators	Scales that cannot be classified from the point of view of the theory
Load arising from the nature of the organization	Subjective assessment of workload	Examining the health status
Subjective assessment of workplace atmosphere	Complex assessment of workload	External and Internal control
Subjective assessment of leadership and management	Effective workload	A-B personality
Assessment of the comfort of workplace	Role conflicts arising from work	Activity
Assessment of working time	External assessment of the workplace	Support
Assessment of material recognition	Ethical aspects of work	Stress relief
Assessment of the organization's expectations	Attitude to work	

Note. Author's own editing based on the questionnaire.

Based on all of this, we can say that Herzberg's two-factor model can be used to the OSQLES both for the individual items and for the scales. By approaching and analysing the data in such a framework can help us to highlight, that which organizational factors are those, where frustration appears on an individual level, or which help as a lasting motivator the individual, and thus the organization's long-term work and high-quality performance.

Conclusions

According to Herzberg, a person's experience of job satisfaction includes two factors: by analyzing the hygienic factors it can be clarified if the person feels, that in relation to his/her work all the necessary equipment and the conditions are available for him/her. By analyzing the motivator factors, it can be revealed to what extent she is able to live her inner motivations, to what extent she feels that her work contributes positively to her personal development.

The OSQLES is a very frequently used test within law enforcement – it has an extremely big advantage, in that method exist for a long time and it still has valid indicators. By knowing the questionnaire we can say that the OSQLES is suitable for us to be able to examine the needs of the police force in a novel approach by using the Herzbergian two-factor model, which would be able to enrich human strategic thinking with new knowledge.

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Laws and regulations

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Ethics

The data will be made available on request.

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