

Occupational Stress and Demographic Difference among Police Officers; A Case of Niger State Police Command

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Received: 03.01.2020

Accepted: 22.01.2020

Published: 30.01.2020

Abstract: The study aims at finding the relationship between occupational stress and demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, qualification, experience, rank and income). A descriptive survey was used in the study. Questionnaire was the main instrument used to gather the data for this study. A total of 384 police officers were randomly selected from the four area command of the police in Niger state, with a staff strength of 11,750 (2017). The results showed that majority of the police officers were moderately and highly stressed with male officers' workers recording the highest level of occupational stress compared to their female counterparts. The study further indicated that, there is evidence of significant relationship between occupational stress and demographic variables (gender, age, marital status, qualification, experience, rank, and income). It is recommended that employers should take note and take the necessary measures to ameliorate occupational stress differences since individuals differ in their response to stressful situations.

Keywords: Demography Factors, occupational stress, Police officer, Niger state command.

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress that arises when individuals perceive that demands made upon them exceed their ability to cope (Cartwright and Cooper, 2002). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) viewed stress as a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between the person and his or her environment. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), stressors can range from catastrophic events to irritating incidents. However, these stressors do not elicit a stress response in the individual until the person appraises it as exceeding the available resources for coping with the changed situation. Siu (2002) argues that a stressful transaction occurs when people exert an impact on and respond to their environment. Furthermore, occupational stress is likely to increase fear, feelings of uncertainty, emotional instability and low productivity among police officers considering the fact that they may feel overwhelmed at work, loss of confidence and may become irritable or withdrawn when they feel they lack the ability to meet up with the work expectations Siu (2002).

Murphy (2005) observed a number of causes of occupational stress that affect workers in all spheres of life, positing that the lack or outright absence of autonomy, which is the ability to make your own decisions about your own job or about specific task, rather orders are dished out, affects the conduct and productivity of a worker. He also posited that Shift work/hours of work has caused serious stress in workers, the long hours and overtime have posed danger to the effective performance of workers. Murphy (2005) listed Role conflict (conflicting job demands, multiple supervisors/managers), Role ambiguity (lack of clarity about responsibilities, expectations, etc.) Ebiam (2010), Ogundele (2006), Marzabadi & Tarkhorami (2007) found that, pressure comes with environmental demands especially with regards to time, high workloads, perfection, frustration, conflict stress as depression and aggression.

Occupational stress fundamentally initiates a number of complex changes on the psychological and emotional level, anxiety and lack of motivation),

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cognitive level (increased potential for error and, in some cases, accidents arising through error), behavioral level (poor or deteriorating relationships with colleagues, irritability, indecisiveness, absenteeism, smoking, excessive eating and alcohol consumption) and on the physical level (increasing ill-health associated with headaches, general aches and pains, and dizziness) (Stranks, 2005).

Brown & Campbell (1994) posits that the nature of Police work situates them where they encounter such complex psychological and emotional stress level, especially for those who are involved in operational activities. Brown & Campbell (1994) state that duties required of law enforcement officers, such as delivering notice of death, or being fired upon while on the job are stressful events unique to being a Police officer. Having to participate in high-speed chase of criminals, responding to a felony in progress, especially in Nigeria where life insurance is not provided, creates stress for Police officers (Buhrmaster, 2006; Mangwani, 2012).

The relationship between occupational stress and demographic variables among police officers has been documented in literatures (James, B, 2010; Winefield, Gillespie, Stough, Dua, Hapuarachchi, & Boyd, 2003). However, these have been the experiences of developed countries of the world and scanty research works in the developing world especially in Africa. In Nigeria, the works of Aremu (1996; 1998; 2000) Adeyemo (1999) and Idowu and (2001) have concentrated on variables like organizational commitment, psychological behaviour, mentoring and emotional intelligence are important and rich literatures though did not deal demography and police stress. This study however investigates the influence of some demographic factors including age, sex, marital status, educational qualification, ranks, and income among the police.

In a study in Australian Bureaucratic Statistics, it was found that, proportionally fewer males than females across most age groups reported high levels of distress; of those who have very high levels of distress, 63% were females (Australian Safety and Compensation Council, 2005). In contrast, a non-significant gender difference with regard to occupational stress has been found among Taiwan managers (Siu, 1999).

Studies show that gender may be an important demographic characteristic to be considered in the experience of stress (Jick & Mitz, 1985). According to (Necsoi, 2011) women reported high level of anxiety and depression in a research aimed at investigating the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among Romanian academicians. In another study, Mondal, Shrestha, & Bhaila, (2011) found a significant difference between male and female teachers, with male

teachers having more psychological stress and physical stress than the female teachers. Also, male teachers were reported to be more insecure and emphasized financial concerns, while females expressed concerns about intrinsic facets of their jobs (Rosenblatt *et al.*, 1999). Moreover, males were observed to have higher stress and anxious than the females (Cheng., Kelly, 1993; Brember *et al.*, 2002, Gursel *et al.*, 2002, Chaplain, 1995).

Marital status was related to the reporting of stress with those who were widowed/divorced/separated generally having a higher proportion in the high reported stress category (Smith *et al.*, 2000). A study by Jeyaraj (2013), found the unmarried teachers experienced less level of stress. In a related study by (Affum-Osei, Agyekum, & Addo ,2014) showed that, 50% out of a total of 54 of married respondents experienced high level of occupational stress.

In a study titled “The relations between stress experience on the job-age, personality and general ability” (Mutawa, Jdaitawi, Saleh, & Awad ,2014), found a negative significant correlation between stress and age. They reported the level of stress increases with age. Contrary to this (Necsoi, 2011) report that younger employees experience high level of stress compared to older employees. In a study to find out the factors that influence strain among University lecturers in Saudi Arabia, (Mutawa, Jdaitawi, Saleh, & Awad, 2014) found no significant difference on the lecturer’s level of strain on the both.

Studies on the relationship between occupational stress and qualification have shown that postgraduate teachers have significantly less job satisfaction on job role item than the undergraduate and graduate teachers (Mondal *et al.*, 2011). Munt, (2004). The Awful Truth: A Micro history of Teacher Stress at Westwood High School Teachers : Job stress and Job Satisfaction, Kaski, Nepal. International Journal of Occupational Safety and Health, 1, 27–33., 2011). Employees with lower qualification experience high level of occupational stress (Affum-Osei E. *et al.*, 2014). Hong Kong teachers without finishing professional training and of junior rank reported themselves to be more burned out in a study by Lau, Yuen, & Chan, (2005). A contrary research revealed that the stress causing dimensions do not differ drastically for the graduates and undergraduates (Hunnur & Bagali, 2014).

A study has shown that, employees with less experience are exposed to high level of stress compared with employees with longer years of working experience. (Abdul -Majid, 1998; Lau *et al.*, 2005; Bhadoria & Singh; 2010). Contrary to this, the years of experience on the school teachers did not show any significant effect on job stress (Mondal, Shrestha, & Bhaila, 2011; Johannsen, 2011; Jepson & Forrest, 2006;

Chona C. Roxas, 2009). Another study has shown that, employees with less experience are exposed to high level of stress compared with employees with longer years of working experience. Alexandros-Stamatios, Matilyn, & Cary, (2003), argued that role management is of the organization aspect of work-related stress likely that these are attached ranks of employees. With the custom service seniority may comes with higher responsibility.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the level of occupational stress of police officers on demographic variables.
2. To ascertain whether there is significant relationship between Occupational Stress and demographic variables.

Research Questions

1. **What is the level of occupational stress of police officers on demographic variables?**
2. **Does a significant relationship exist between occupational stress and demographic characteristics?**
- 3.

Hypothesis

H₁: There is no significant relationship between demographic variables and occupational stress among officers of the Niger state command of the Nigeria Police.

Significant of Study

Sample Size.

The sample size was calculated using Yamane (1967) as proposed by Israel (2012). The formula thus;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n = Sample size
 N = Total population
 1 = Constant
 e = Sampling error = 0.05

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{11,750}{1 + 11,750 \times (0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{11,750}{11,751 \times 0.0025}$$

$$= \frac{11,750}{29.3775}$$

$$= 399.97$$

Sample in each area command was drawn proportionately, $n_h = \frac{N_h}{N} \times n$

n = Sample size required
 N_h = Population of the unit

The significance of this study is in twofold; theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study will enrich the existing body of knowledge on the demographic factors influencing occupational stress and will also be of importance to future researchers treading on this part of research. It can also form part of police training and re-training syllabus achieving effective policing of Nigeria society.

Practically, Policy makers such as the National Assembly and Ministry of Police Affairs will use the findings to plan effectively towards policies that affect the police.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted descriptive survey research design to elicit information from respondents on work stress and demographic among police officers in Niger State, Four (4) Area Commands of the Nigerian Police force in Niger state were selected, in which 37 were from Bida, 201 from Minna, 94 from Suleja, and 69 from Kontagora. 384 were administered all duly returned.

Quantitative data was generated through the use of structured questionnaire which were carefully designed with both closed and open ended questions to seek the opinions of the respondents on occupational stress as affected by demographic characteristics. The reliability indicated internal consistency for the occupational stress at (0.67) and (0.72) for demographic variables.

nh = Sample size of the population

N= population of the command

For Minna Area Command with an estimated police population of 5,910

$$\frac{5,910}{11,750} \times \frac{400}{1}$$

$$= 0.502978723 \times 400$$

$$= 201$$

For Suleja Area Command with an estimated police population of 2,754

$$\frac{2,754}{11,750} \times \frac{400}{1}$$

$$= 0.234382978 \times 400$$

$$= 93.75$$

Kontogora Area Command with an estimated police population of 2,011

$$\frac{2,011}{11,750} \times \frac{400}{1}$$

$$= 0.1711489362 \times 400$$

$$= 68.46$$

For Bida Area Command with an estimated police population of 1,075

$$\frac{1,075}{11,750} \times \frac{400}{1}$$

$$= 0.91489361 \times 400$$

$$= 36.60$$

DATA ANALYSIS

What is the level of occupational stress of police officers on demographic variables including age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, job experience, rank and income?

Table 1. The Level of Occupational Stress on Demographic Variables

Variables	Low	Moderate	High	
Total			N (%)	N (%)
N (%)	N (%)			
Age 18-32 218(100)	33(15.1)	73(33.5)		112(51.4)
33-47 110(100)	15(13.6)	24(21.8)		71(64.5)
48> 56(100)	13(23.2)	16(28.6)		27(48.2)
Total 384(100)	61(15.9)	113(29.4)		210(54.7)
Gender				
Male 296(100)	52(17.6)	101(34.1)		143(48.3)
Female 88(100)	26(29.6)	28(31.8)		34(38.6)
Total 384(100)	78(20.3)	129(33.6)		177(46.1)
Marital Status				
Single 96(100)	42(43.8)	31(34.1)		23(23.9)
Married 248(100)	48(19.4)	66(26.6)		134(54.0)
Divorced 40(100)	9(22.5)	11(27.5)		20(50)
Total 384(100)	99(25.8)	108(28.1)		177(46.1)
Educational Qualification.				
Primary/Secondary schools 189(100)	18(9.5)	65(34.4)		106(56.1)

Diploma/ND/HND	21(15.9)	45(34.1)	66(50)
132(100)			
B.sc >	29(46.0)	20(33.3)	14(22.2)
63(100)			
Total	68(17.7)	130(33.9)	186(48.4)
384(100)			
Rank			
Junior	54(18.9)	98(34.3)	134(46.8)
286(100)			
Senior	42(42.8)	42(32.7)	24(24.5)
98(100)			
Total	96(25)	130(33.9)	158(41.1)
384(100)			
Working Experience			
1-10years	35(16.1)	72(33.2)	110(50.7)
217(100)			
11-20years	28(20.3)	42(30.4)	68(49.3)
138(100)			
21years >	8(27.6)	11(37.9)	10(34.5)
29(100)			
Total	71(18.5)	125(32.6)	188(48.10)
384(100)			
Income			
45,000-79,000	54(18.8)	98(34.3)	134(46.9)
286(100)			
80,000 >	42(42.8)	32(32.7)	24(24.5)
98(100)			
Total	96(25)	130(33.9)	158(41.1)
384(100)			

Source: Field data

Table1. Represents the level of occupational stress of the police officers, from a total of 384 police officers, 61(15.9%) had low stress, 113(29.4%) had moderate stress and 210(54.7%) were highly stressed. This implies that police officers experience some reasonable stress level because of the nature of their jobs. The data gathered on ages show that majority of the officers within 33-47years, 71(64.5%) category had the high occupational stress levels, while those within the ages of 48 years and above experienced low level of occupational stress. This maybe reasoned that those with a high level of stress do so because of the role conflict faced by these categories. The result from the table show that majority of male and female officers were moderately and highly stressed, with male police officers recording the highest level of occupational stress 143(48.3%). This could be obvious about the Nigeria police because the male police officers are most likely to be engaged in tedious and dangerous duties in the police force. The table evidently shows that married officers are most stressed 134(54.0%), while the single officers had lower stress. The data on qualification revealed that officers with Primary/Secondary schools had high level of occupational stress 106(56.1%). However, B.sc, master's degree and PhD holders

showed low to moderate level of occupational stress. This maybe so for the lower qualification officers because they are usually used for the tedious police duties such as high way patrols, chasing criminals, quelling riots and are not involved in decision making etc. The data also showed that, officers who have 1-10years' experience, showed high level of occupational stress 110(50.7%) but majority of those who have 21years and above experience, tend to have low level of stress recording 8(27.6%), possibly because of their experience and have adapted to the police work. The result from the table clearly shows that junior police officers will suffer high occupational stress 134(46.9%) than senior officers. On income it is displayed that he officers with higher income are less stressed 42(42.8%) as compared with those with lower income. The result also revealed that senior ranking officers suffer less stress 24(24.5) than the junior officers 134(46.8)

Research question 2. Do significant relationships exist between occupational stress and demographic characteristics including age, gender, and marital status, educational qualification, working experience, rank and income?

Table2. Chi-square results of stress and demographic variables

Values	Chi-square value	sign
Age	2.310	0.00
Gender	51.557	0.00
Marital status	9.808	0.00
Educational qualification	20.687	0.00
Rank	255.102	0.00
Working experience	17.223	0.00
Income	56.822	0.00

**P<.0.05

Table 2 displays the results of Chi-Square with evidence of relationship between demographic variables and occupational stress (Age, Gender, Marital status, Educational qualification, Working experience, Rank, and Income). Age shows a significant relationship with occupational stress (Chi-square=2.310, P<.0.05). Therefore, a null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship is rejected.

It can be observed from the table above that, gender has a significant relationship with occupational stress (Chi-square=51.557, P<.0.05), Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between age and occupational stress is rejected for the alternative. Result from the table indicates that, there is a significant relationship between occupational stress and marital status (Chi-square=9.808, P<.0.05), rejecting the null hypothesis. The chi-square indicates that there is a significant relationship between occupational stress and educational qualification (Chi-square=20.687, P<.0.05), it therefore reject the null hypothesis. The results further indicates that Rank has the greatest evidence of association with occupational stress in the police (Chi-Square=255.102, P<.0.05), therefore we reject the null hypothesis. There was also a significant relationship between occupational stress working experience (Chi-Square =17.223, P<.05), therefore we reject the null hypothesis. Income also show a significant relationship with occupational stress (Chi-Square =56.822, P<.05), rejecting a null hypothesis. Therefore, it may be concluded that, there is very strong significant relationship between occupational stress and demographic characteristics of the police officers.

FINDINGS

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of the demographic factors (age, gender, marital status, academic qualification, working experience, rank, and income) on occupational stress. The results revealed that these demographic factors influence occupational stress. From a total of 384 respondents, 113(29.4%) were moderately and 210(54.7%) were highly stressed. Similar research works on other sectors have found that majority of employees experienced high level of occupational stress (Kebelo 2012; Yunus & Mahajar 2011; Shikieri 2012; Ali *et al.*, 2013; Jeyeraj 2013). This is perhaps be

peculiar with the police because there is a higher number of other ranking police offers who are perpetually saddled with more stressful duties in the police (criminals chase, crowd control, arrest and detention of dangerous criminals, patrols etc).

Male officers reported higher occupational stress as compared to the female officers. This also corroborates with the finding by Kumasey., Delle., and Ofei (2014) that purported that, male employees were highly stressed compared to their female counterparts. Males tend to takes responsibility for the whole family, while also maintaining their own careers, making their jobs more challenging. In comparison, female workers are more likely to get help and social support for others. Lack of support resources for males is more likely to cause psychological stress. The findings are in contrast with Affum-Osei, Agyeku and Addo (2014) who opined that female officers reported high level of occupational stress compared to their male counterparts. In another related National Survey by the Australian Bureaucratic Statistics (2005) confirmed that, proportionally fewer males than females across most age groups reported high levels of distress; of those who have very high levels of distress, 63% were females.

The findings also revealed that, that majority of the younger police officers experience high occupational stress levels, as compared to the older officers with lower level of occupational stress. This opinion is shared by Odedokun, (2015) who posited that younger officers experience less job stress compared with older officers. The finding is so perhaps due to the nomenclature of the police job that in most cases engages younger police officers, who may have been engaged in police jobs at younger ages who are trying to adapt to the work-life balance with succeeding on the job.

Result revealed that married officers experience higher occupational stress than the singles and other categories. This result confirm the finding of Jeyaraj (2013) that unmarried teachers experienced less level of stress and Affum-Ese, O. *et al.*, (2014) showed that, 50% out of a total of 54 of married respondents experienced high level of occupational stress. Work-family conflict may lead to stress and strain (Lingard, 2009) and inability to balance the demands of work and

home is a source of stress (Donaldson-Feilder, Yarker, and Lewis, 2011).

Concerning working experience of officers, the result shows that officers longer years of service experience less job stress than their counterpart that have spent fewer years. This finding is consistent with the result of Guan, Zhao, and Wang (2014). This suggests that workers with long employment history can better adapt to the working environment, as they have good mentality, strong compressive ability, strong job satisfaction, allowing them to be able to deal with all kinds of stressful situations. This contradicts the opinion shared by (Acker, 2003; Lewig *et al.*, 2003; Derry, & Iverson, & Walsh, 2002) that employees who stay longer with the organization are more likely to have higher stress than those who stay less.

Also findings on academic qualifications revealed that officers with lower academic qualification experience higher occupational stress as compared with those with higher qualifications. This result is consistent with the finding of Affum-Osei E, *et al.*, (2014) who suggests that employees with lower qualification experienced high level of occupational stress because higher education employees were able to handle stress positively (Donaldson-Feilder, Yarker, Lewis, 2011; & Ryhal, 1996).

The study reveals that officers that receive lower salaries are prone to higher stress than those who receive higher income. This corroborate a study conducted among teachers that job security or better pay of teachers simulates less stress (Robbins *et al.*, 1994) Quite opposite to this, poor salary was found to be the main cause of dissatisfaction and invariably job stress (Ofili 2009; Anitha, 2007).

The study revealed that junior ranking officers experience higher levels of stress when compared to the senior officers. This position is corroborates with Alexandros-Stamatios, Matilyn, & cary (2003) that junior custom officers will suffer higher stress than senior officers. Role related stress especially role ambiguity is another factor that influence job stress in the workplace and it is more common among lower ranked officers since they usually have to take and act on instruction and directives from their superior officers (Alexandros-Stamatios, *et al.*, 2003).

The Chi-Square test applied confirmed a strong evidence of relationship between demographic characteristics and occupational stress. All the null hypotheses were rejected in favour of the alternative hypotheses. This finding corroborated with previous researches (Dua, 1994; Reddy, & Ramamurthy, 1991). Therefore, it may be concluded that, there is very strong evidence of a relationship between occupational stress and demographic characteristic.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that more than half of the police officers experience stress. The male officers face more occupational stress than their female counterparts. It is also revealed that the older officers are less stressed than the younger police officer. The result confirmed that married officers experience higher occupational stress than the singles and other categories. Furthermore, it is revealed from the result that graduate and post-graduate officers have significantly lower occupational stress than those with lower qualification. The study also finds that occupational stress is most prevalent among officers with fewer 1-10years of experience in the police work than the ones with more 11-and above years. It is concluded also that rank play a significant in determining stress, as senior officers display less stress than the junior officers. Further, a significant difference is seen between the salary and occupational stress of police officers as those with less income display a higher level of stress.

Recommendations

The study recommended amongst others that regular assessment of stress level should be conducted for preventive direct physiological measures of stress like diagnostic tests and consultation should be conducted by the Guidance Center and Medical Clinic.

The study has also provided information on demographic variables since individuals differ in their tolerance of exposure to stressful events. Therefore, employers should take note and take the necessary measures to ameliorate occupational stress based on individual differences.

Welfare policies for police officers as a matter of necessity should be enacted to ensure the establishment of relaxation centre's, social support packages, stress management centre's to address the work stress among the police.

Likewise workshops and seminars should be Jermaine to the police, in order to help alleviate and cope with stress especially the ones emanating from such deographic factors.

Contribution to Knowledge

The current study has evidential relevance to Nigeria police, academics, social workers, psychologists and others whose work is linked to dealings with policing. The findings will help in practical approach in dealing with elucidated causes of stress among the police; which could be in forms of social supports for stress management.

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