

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS PREDICTING PERCEIVED WORKPLACE STRESS AMONG POLICEMEN IN A ZONAL DIVISION

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Abstract

The study investigated psychosocial factors as predictors of perceived workplace stress among policemen in a Zonal Division, Ile-Ife of Southwestern, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design. A total of one hundred policemen were drawn from the Divisional Headquarters in Moore, Ile-Ife, Osun State comprising 64 males and 36 females within the age range 18 to 52years. Three hypotheses were drawn from the review of literature and tested with appropriate statistical tools. Results using a 2x2x2 Way ANOVA revealed that self-esteem does not have a significant influence on perceived work stress among the policemen ($F(1,92)=1.074, P>0.05$). Also, there was no significant self-monitoring differences on perceived workplace stress of participants ($F(1, 92) =0.017, p>0.05$). Further results indicates that locus of control does not have an influence on job stress among participants ($F(1, 92) =0.235, P>0.05$). Reasons were given why the outcome of this present study negates the outcome of previous studies with emphasis on the socio-political situation experienced by policemen in Nigeria. Recommendation was made with emphasis on the importance of adopting stress-reduction strategies among police officers to improve efficiency at workplace.

Keywords: Workplace stress, Locus of control, Self-monitoring, self-esteem stress reduction- strategies, policemen

Introduction

Stress at the workplace has continued to attract serious concern and attention by psychologists in occupational settings. This is because the changing demands of the working environment increase the level of stress and these have negative consequences for individuals working under pressure such as security personnel. This situation is more complicated due to latest development in the country of terrorism uprising which has required

the training of policemen in the handling of new technological weapons to confront the menace. However, the law enforcement is seen as a stressful profession by researchers (Berg, Hem, Lau & Ekeberg, 2006). This is because they experience a various degree of psychological and physical experience unlike other members in other professions. Irene (2005) refers to job stress as a pattern of reactions that occurs when workers are presented with work demands that are not matched to their knowledge, skills or abilities, which challenge their ability to cope. Similarly, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined stress as a relationship between the person and the environment that the person views as difficult or challenging. Workplace stress has been defined as the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when there is a poor match between job demands and the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker (The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, NIOSH, 1999). According to Mangwani (2012), the police are exposed to critical incident stressors in their daily assignments which cause an uncomfortable emotional reaction that affects their short- and long-term behaviour and that members working at the visible policing components need more intervention than other members. Workplace stress has been demonstrated to have lower productivity, increase absenteeism and creates patterns of dysfunction in the workplace (Anderson & Puluch, 2001). Similarly, Colligan and Higgins (2005) also posited that workplace stress has been associated with the etiology of physical disorders such as heart disease, hypoadrenia and chronic pain. In addition, the psychological impact of workplace stress includes depression, persistent anxiety and resentment.

The Nigerian Police Force as a security apparatus face a lot of stress such as working at mid-night to secure the safety of people in the society, staying under the sun at check points and also work shift that involve working both day and night, which mostly is related to the nature of work being carried out daily to curb crime. The present heightened state of insecurity due to terrorism, kidnapping, arresting fraudsters and ethno-ethnic clashes in the country poised the job challenges and stress to the Nigerian police officers. This stress, which is generally perceived by the police officers in diverse ways are precipitated through various factors which are either psychological or social in nature (Adebayo, 2010).

Several factors have been identified in literatures in predicting work stress, but little or few studies have investigated the role played by psychological attributes such as self esteem, self monitoring and locus of control that could aggravates stress in the work settings especially among policemen, hence this study intended to investigate these psychosocial factors as predictors of perceived workplace stress among policemen. Self esteem as a psychological variable could predict job stress of the police officer by making him feel inferior and thus prompting him or her to be

aggressive so as to assert an order or control considering the Nigerian factor where citizens look down on policemen as dropouts from secondary schools coupled with their low remuneration compared with other public servants in Nigeria. Rosenberg (1986) defines self-esteem in terms of a stable sense of personal worth or worthiness. This is a way in which we evaluate ourselves as good or bad, better or worse, acceptable or unacceptable. In their studies, Mossholder, Bedein and Armenakis (1981) found that self-esteem moderated the relationships of role stressors and job satisfaction.

Baumeister and Vohs (2003) examined the effect of high self-esteem on performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles and activities initiation. They discovered that happiness appears to be the most desirable correlate of high self-esteem and it may contribute to coping and adjustment after stress or trauma, although the precise nature of the relationship may be complicated and may depend on other factors. However there was minimal evidence found that self-esteem caused much beyond positive effect and activity initiation

Self-monitoring refers to a person's ability to adjust his or her behaviour to external situational factors. Individuals high in self-monitoring show considerable adaptability in their behavior. They are highly sensitive to external cues and can behave differently in different situations. They are capable of presenting striking contradictions between the public persona and the private self. By contrast, low self-monitors can't disguise themselves this way; they tend to display their true dispositions and attitudes in every situation; hence, there is high behavioral consistency between who they are privately and what they do publicly (Robbins, 1993). Several studies have linked stress and locus of control. For instance, Chan, (1977) suggests that when an individual perceives that they are in control of a situation "the probability is that he will be less likely to perceive the situation as threatening or stress-inducing". Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) also believe that the types of locus of control and adaptation to stress are related. Jennings (1990) finds associations among overall stress, locus of control and non-work stress (e.g., environmental stressors such as finances or parenting). Externality (i.e., more fate, chance, luck, or powerful others oriented) is positively correlated with general life stress and job stress (Evans & Coman, 1993). Since internal-locus-of-control individuals ("internals") experience lower anxiety (Toerstand, 1989; Jones & Page, 1986), internal locus of control may act as a stress buffer (Daniels & Guppy, 1992). Some individuals are either not affected by or thrive in an environment of stress. While more internally-oriented individuals are challenged by stressors, externals are more likely to be threatened by these stressors (Vitaliano, 1987).

Method

The design adopted for the study is a descriptive survey design. The independent variables for the study are self esteem, self monitoring and locus of control. Each of them has two levels each that is there is high and low self esteem, high and low self monitoring, external and internal locus of control and also the dependent variable is the perceived Job stress. Therefore, the statistical design for the study is the 2x2x2 ANOVA.

Participants

One hundred (64 males and 36 females) police officers participated in the study; their age ranged from 18 to 52 years with a mean age of 30.48 years and a standard deviation of 7.56years. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants revealed that 70% of the police officers claimed to be Christian, 28% were Muslim and the remaining 2% claimed other religion. 66% of police officers were Yoruba, 14% were Igbo 8% were Hausas and 12% belong to other ethnic groups. The majority (66%) of the participants were married, 33% were never married while only 1% was divorced at the time of the study. A major proportion (54%) of the police officers was of the rank of constables, 9% of Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASP) and the remaining 7% were Inspectors of Police as at the time of the study.

Measures

Biodata tapped personal information of the police officers which include sex, age, religion, ethnicity, marital status, and rank level at work.

Self-Esteem Scale (SES): The scale measures level of self esteem among participants, the scale was developed by Rosenberg (1986) and the scale contains 10 items that can be answer on a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree which is been identify as Likert scale. The internal consistency method was used to analyze the reliability of the self esteem scale. This was done by means of the Guttman split-half and the spearman-Brown reliability coefficients. The result of this analysis yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.46. This is below the conventionally accepted level. This implies that the self esteem scale lacks adequate psychometric property. However, the inability to get a more reliable scale to measure this variable necessitated its use in the study. However, the self esteem scale SES is now commonly scored as a Likert scale. The 10 items are answered on a five point scale ranging from strongly agree = 5 to strongly disagree = 1. The original sample for which the scale was developed in the 1960s consisted of 5,024 high school juniors and seniors from 10 randomly selected schools in New York State and was scored as a Guttman scale. The scale generally has high reliability: test-retest correlations are typically in the range of .82 to .88,

and Cronbach's alpha for various samples are in the range of .77 to .88 (Blascovich and Tomaka, 1993 and Rosenberg, 1986).

Self Monitoring Scale (SMS): The SMS was used to measure self-monitoring of the participants. The SMS was developed by Lennox and Wolfe (1984). It is a 13-item self-report instrument in a 5-Likert type format ranging from strongly agree =5 to strongly disagree=1 for positive statement and vice-versa. The scoring of items was summed to form a single score. The authors reported a Kuder-Richardson reliability of 0.70 and a test-reliability of 0.83. Ilevbare (2011) reported a co-efficient alpha reliability of 0.74 of the scale among Nigerian sample which suggests suitability for use of the scale. In this present study reliability co-efficient of 0.58 was reported for the scale.

Locus of Control Scale (LOCS): The LOCS is a 17-items scale measuring locus of control of behavior. The scale was developed by Craig, Franklin and Andrew (1984). The response format ranged from “strongly agree=5 to strongly disagree=1, so that high score means external locus of control and low score indicate internal locus, no item was reversed in scoring, all relevant items answered by the participants were equally weighed and then summed together to get a composite score. Craig, Franklin and Andrew (1984) reported an alpha coefficient of 0.79 for the scale; Ilevbare (2011) also reported a reliability coefficient of 0.51 for the scale among a Nigerian sample. In this present study, an alpha coefficient of 0.67 was reported for the scale.

Job Stress Scale (JSS): The JSS was used to measure perceived workplace stress among the participants. This was done using a 10 item Scale developed by Khan *et al.* (1964). The purpose of the scale is to measure organizational stress. There is no time limit for answering all the questions. The items are scored directly by adding together the values of the numbers shaded. Divide the sum of the shaded items by 15(number of text items) to obtain a clients mean score. The psychometric properties of job stress scale were provided by Kahn et al (1964). He provided the psychometric properties for American samples while Oseghare (1988) provided for Nigerians sample through the extrapolation on his finding on stressors checklist by McLean (1969). The coefficient of alpha reported by Sheridan et al (1978) and Oseghare (1988) are .87 and .39 respectively. A concurrent validity coefficient of .01 was obtained by correlating job stress with rated performance Sheridan et al (1978) while Osaghare (1988) obtain a coefficient of .46. The job stress questionnaire was scored directly by adding together the values of the numbers shaded and dividing the sum of the shaded items by 15 (number of text items) to obtain a client’s mean score. The clients are to choose from the following options: 1 – Never, 2 – Rarely, 3 – Sometimes, 4 - Rather often, 5 - Nearly all the time. The internal consistency method was used to analyze the reliability of the perceived job

stress scale. This was done by means of Guttman split-half and the spearman-brown reliability coefficients. The result of these analyses yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.70. This indicates the job stress scale is a very reliable instrument. This justifies its use in this study.

Procedure

The sample used for this study comprised one hundred police officers (100) in Police Zonal Headquarters ‘Area A’ Moore , Ile-Ife in Osun State , Southwestern, Nigeria. Questionnaires were administered randomly to the respondents during their less busy hours and it took respondents about 20 minutes to complete and return it. This was to ensure that there was no loss of questionnaires. The sampled respondents were from different Sections and Departments of the police force. It was also aimed at generating a homogenous sample for the research. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants’ informed consent was solicited under the condition of anonymity. The period of data collection took a week. (i.e Monday to Friday) to administered.

Results

Table 1: Summary of the 2x2x2 way anova on perceived work stress by self esteem, self monitoring and locus of control.

Source	Type III sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P
Corrected model	755.761a	7			
Intercept	98537.477	1	107.966	1.452	.194
Self esteem	79.842	1	98537.477	1325.459	.000
Self monitoring	1.299	1	79.842	1.074	.303
Locus of control	17.440	1	1.299	.017	.895
SS*SM	24.963	1	17.440	.235	.629
SS*LOC	186.910	1	24.963	.336	.564
SM*LOC	281.655	1	186.910	2.514	.116
SS*SM*LOC	4.894	1	281.655	3.789	.055
Error	6839.479	92	4.894	.066	.798
Total	142578.000	100	74.342		
Corrected Total	7595.240	99			

Note: SS = self esteem, SM= Self monitoring, LOC = Locus of control.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis one: this hypothesis states that people with high and low self esteem will have no significant difference on the perceived work stress experienced by police officers. The hypothesis was tested by means of 2-way ANOVA. The results of the analysis are presented in the Table 1. The results indicate that there is no statistically significant main influence of self esteem

on the perceived job stress of the police officers. [$F(1, 92) = 1.074, p > .05$]. This finding suggests that the level of self esteem of police officers does not influence their perception of job stress. This hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis two: this hypothesis states people with high and low self monitoring will have no significant difference on the perceived work stress experienced by police officers. The hypothesis was also tested by the 2- way ANOVA summarized in Table 1. The result of the analysis indicates that there is no statistically significant main influence of self monitoring on the perceived work stress of police officers. [$F(1, 92) = 0.017, p > .05$]. This finding suggests that the degree of self monitoring engaged by police officers does not influence their amount of stress they experience on the job. This hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis three: this hypothesis states that people with external and internal locus of control will have no significant difference on the perceived work stress experienced by police officers. The hypothesis was also tested by the 2-way ANOVA summarized in Table 1. The result of the analysis indicates that there is no statistically significant main influence of locus of control on the perceived work stress of police officers. [$F(1, 92) = 0.235, p > .05$]. This finding suggests that the locus of control (whether internal or external) does not influence the amount of stress experienced by police officers on the job. This hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Discussions

Respondents with high and low self esteem would have no significant difference on the perceived work stress experienced by police officers was confirmed. This implies that self-esteem do not have influence on perceived work stress. This outcome is contrary to previous studies of Baumeister and Vohs (2003) who looked into the effect of self esteem on job stress, showed that there was minimal evidence found that self esteem caused much beyond positive affect and activity initiation. The outcome of the findings could be attributed to the socio-political environment in Nigeria where the average policeman have inferior complexity compared to other working class. The public have some sentiments concerning the average policeman on the streets and couple with their poor working conditions as most police stations buildings and barracks lack basic facilities like toilet and are generally dirty. This often contribute to low productivity.

Respondents with high and low self monitoring will have no significant difference on the perceived work stress experienced was accepted. This implies that both respondents with high and low self-monitoring tendencies expresses the same level of perceived work stress.

However, this finding contradicts the study of Pugliesi (1999) that demonstrated that self- focused (monitoring) emotion management has the most pervasive and detrimental impacts on job stress as influenced by emotional labour. This outcome may also be attributed to the perception of the general public that see the policemen in a negative light due to the corruption that are very rampant among them. Despite the fact that there are some of them that present themselves in a positive light to the public while performing their duties the impression formation of the public still lingers on.

Respondents with external and internal locus of control will have no significant difference on perceived work stress was also accepted. This implies the work stress experienced by police officers who attributes their actions to external events and that of those who take responsibility for their actions are the same. This outcome is sharply in contrast with the findings of Marino and White (1985) that established that locus of control and job stress in relation with the effect of a moderator, discovered that formalization measured as job specificity was positively related to job stress among internal and negatively related to stress among externals. The reason for this outcome is attributed to the identical socio-political settings in Nigeria which the study took place. The average police have the belief that they can perform better with incentives and social support from the community and government rather than having a degree of control over their behaviour.

Conclusion

This research has been able to fulfill the research objectives by testing the hypotheses formulated for the study. The study has shown that psychological factors such as self-esteem, self-monitoring and locus of control do not predict work stress of the policemen in the study area. Nevertheless, other factors such as personality types and social support should be considered in further studies perhaps the outcome could have been different. The researchers recommend the use of a larger sample that cut across the geo-political region of Nigeria to gauge the responses of policemen for any researchers that want to replicate this study. Despite the outcome of the findings, the researcher suggested effective stress-coping strategies such as meditation techniques, relaxation techniques and stress management centre's in all police Division in Nigeria in order to improve their productivity.

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