

Differential Influence of Demographic Factors on Job Burnout among Police Officers in Ibadan, Oyo State

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Abstract

All over the world, the police is an important arm of government which is responsible for the enforcement of law and order. No nation could excel without a well-trained and disciplined force that could protect life and property of the citizens. One fundamental problem that could militate against efficient and excellent policing is job burnout. Job burnout among police personnel most especially in Nigeria has been under-reported in research despite the effort of some researchers. Investigating job burnout is therefore important among the police officers, not only in terms of their well-being but also in terms of improving their performance in the face of peace-threatening activities that are currently threatening the co-existence of the nation. This study, therefore, investigated demographic factors (age, marital status, educational level and year of experience) and job burnout amongst police officers in Oyo state, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design of ex-post facto type. Multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select two hundred and twenty (220) police officers from the six area commands in the state. The participants responded to Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI α 0.87) to measure their level of job burnout. Data were analysed using analysis of variance and Duncan post hoc test. Results from the analysis indicated significant differences between marital status, educational level, job tenure, age, and the concept of job burnout among the police officers. Implications and recommendations for stakeholders were discussed.

Keywords: Demographic factors, Police officers and Job burnout

1. Introduction

Policing job, perhaps more than any professions, not only requires absolute professionalism, but also total commitment expected to make the practitioners proactive and efficient. This becomes expedient in a multi-ethnic country like Nigeria with increase profiling of crime and peace-threatening activities, like kidnapping, ethnic crisis, armed robbery, religious crisis, extra-judicial killing, political violence, and , of recent, the Boko Haram saga. All these could exert much pressure on the personnel of the Nigeria Police.

Job burnout is one of the problems that could militate against the efficiency of the police. Job burnout is not a factor to be taken lightly as the burnout syndrome could lead to indecision, disappointments, frustration, defence strategies, loss of creativity, physical and emotional exhaustion, low productivity which could therefore be counterproductive. Police personnel experiencing job burnout cannot be at ease with himself and this could be dangerous to him and the society at large.

According to Anshel (2000), law enforcement is one of the most stressful occupations world-wide. The peculiarity of the profession also makes the practitioners to experience job-related stressors such as dealing with unlawful, often dangerous actions of citizens, abusive treatment in the workplace which eventually leads to increased rate of illness, posttraumatic stress and decreased levels of job satisfaction (Anshel, 2000; Rothmann & Agathagelou, 2000.). Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the influence of some demographic factors (age, marital status, educational level and year of experience) on job burnout among the police officers.

2. Literature Review

Burnout is associated with workers in helping profession and people whose work is much more demanding of which the police is inclusive. Richelson (1980) defines burnout as a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause or a way of life, or relationship that failed to produce the expected reward. Maslach and Jackson (1981) provided a more detailed definition of burnout as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. This definition can be situated in police work because, according to (Aremu 1998), policing job is about human contact. From the above viewpoints in literature, it could then be deduced that stress is a major determinant of job

burnout.

In Nigeria, a high level of stress has been observed among the working class (Ndom & Makanjuola, 2004). Adeyemo and Ogunyemi (2005) assert that workers who are involved in personal interaction are more vulnerable to occupational stress and job burnout and this could include the police. There is the problem of image problem coupled with the harrowing climate in which they work, and in which they contend with many challenges in the course of their duties, like negative perception from the public, poor funding and mismanagement of available funds, in-fighting among senior officers for promotion and posting, decayed state of discipline, inadequate basic and continuous training of police personnel, obsolete and outdated arms and ammunition, overcrowded barracks, lack of conducive offices and basic working materials. These militate against their work performance, efficiency and effectiveness and could also endanger them emotionally and thereby, make them face serious job burnout while on duty.

Studies have been conducted on burnout and demographic factors, but not much has been done on the police, especially in Nigeria, where studies of Akinawo (1994;1995), Aremu and Idowu (2001), Aremu and Adeyoju (2003) Aremu (1996; 1998; 2000), and others have concentrated on variables like mentoring, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, pro-social behaviours and emotional intelligence. While these studies are themselves not exhaustive, their import on the development of literature on the police work cannot be ignored. Although, these studies were carried out on different populations other than the focus of this study, attempting to investigate the influence of the constructs on the police officers, would not only boost the literature – based on the police, but also on the demographic factors. This, notwithstanding, this study seeks to investigate the influence of some demographic factors (age, marital status, educational level and job tenure) on job burnout among the police officers.

The concept of age has been identified as one of the variables that consistently predict job burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Some researchers reported that younger employees tend to suffer more from burnout when compared to their older colleagues (Tonder & Williams, 2009; Collings & Murray, 1996). Other researchers like Giebels & Janssen, 2005; Ben-Zur & Yagil, 2005), in their own findings reported that there is no significant relationship between age and job burnout.

As per marital status, (Maslachi et. al., 2001) reported that singles, especially men, are more exposed to burnout than married individuals, while in some studies, married employees' job burnout is reported to be higher than single ones (Russell et al., 1987). Shubin, Milnazic, & JEnnings, (1978) was of the view that married employees in the medical profession were found to have decreased level of job burnout as compared to the single employees. In the findings of Taycan, Kutlu, Cimen, & Aydyn (2006), they reported that job burnout is less in married employees than that of single employees. However, Gulalp, Karcioğlu, Sari, & Koseoglu, (2008) found no difference between single and married employees with respect to job burnout.

As far as job tenure is concerned, studies show that employees who stay longer on a job will have higher likelihood of suffering from job burnout (Acker, 2003; Lewig et al., 2003; Derry, Iverson, & Walsh, 2002;). This contradicts the findings of Holman (2002) when he opined that job tenure is negatively related to job burnout. Other studies found no significant relationship between job tenure and burnout (Giebels & Janssen, 2005; Fujiwara, Tsukishima et al., 2003).

Academic qualification has also been found to be a significant contributor to the concept of job burnout Langemo (1990). Although some researchers have associated burnout with higher levels of education (Maslach et al. 1996) others like Smith-Stevenson and Saul, (1994) reported that workers with doctoral degree are less likely to report burnout than those with master's degree. Higher levels of burnout have previously been associated with faculty mainly involved in teaching (Dick 1992; Jackson et al. 1993).

3. Research Objectives

In view of the above review, the present research studied the role of age, marital status, educational level and job tenure of the police officers in relations to the concept of job burnout among the officers in Oyo state. The study integrated previous findings to empirically form the framework upon which further knowledge on demographic and policing would be advanced.

4. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in order to achieve the purpose of the study.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the job burnout of police officers as far as their age is concerned.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the job burnout of police officers as far as their marital status is concerned.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the job burnout of police officers as far as their job tenure is concerned.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the job burnout of police officers as far as their academic qualification is concerned.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design using the *ex-post* facto type. *Ex-post* type was defined by Kerlinger and Lee (2000) as a systematic empirical inquiry in which the researcher does not have direct control on the independent variables because their manifestation have already occurred or were present in the participants prior to the period the researcher goes to the field.

5.2 Participants

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design using the *ex-post* facto type. The Oyo state police command has about 6000 officers out of which two hundred and twenty (220) police officers were randomly selected. The participants involved forty eight female officers representing 21.8 % and one hundred and seventy two male officers representing 78.1%. The ages of the respondents range from 27 years to 49 years with mean and standard deviation of ages as 32 years and 4.24 respectively.

5.3 Instrumentation

Maslach Burnout Inventory was used to measure the officer's job burnout. This scale has 22 items to be responded to on 5 – point scale : "never" (1) "a few times a year" (2) "a few times a month"(3), "once a week"(4) "everyday"(5). The items are distributed in three dimension: emotional exhaustion (feelings of being emotionally sapped), depersonalization (feelings of impersonal response towards recipients of the service) personal accomplishment (diminished feelings of competence and success in working with people). The instrument was reported to have alpha reliability co-efficient of 0.73. The internal consistency of the scale was established by this study and it returned a Cronbach coefficient alpha of 0.87. Three of the items are: 'I feel burned out from my work'; 'I feel frustrated by my job'; and 'I feel like I am at the end of the rope'.

5.4 Procedure

The participants were administered Maslach Burnout Inventory along with a bio-data form that included their age, marital status, educational level and year of experience . The consent of the police authority and the officers involved in the study was sought before the distribution of the questionnaire.

6. Results

Significant differences were found among marital status, educational level, job tenure, age, and job burnout of the police officers. As such, H₀₁: H₀₂: H₀₃: H₀₄: were rejected

Table 3:

F	Sig
ANOVA Age	2.140 0.036
Marital status	3.256 0.031
Job tenure	2.114 0.001
Academic Qualification	1.227 0.012

Duncan Post Hoc test was done on marital status, age, academic qualification, and job tenure. The table below reveals the results

Duncan Post Hoc Test showing differences in the Marital Status and Job burnout of the officers

@ alpha = 0.05
Marital status N 1 2
Single 23 4.876
Married 169 3.347
Others 28 2.351
Sig 0.5810 1.000

Duncan Post Hoc Test showing differences in the job tenure and Job burnout of the officers

@ alpha = 0.05
Job tenure N 1 2
Less than five years 30 4.235
Between 6yrs and 15 years 159 3.247
Above 15 years 31 2.376
Sig 0.475 1.000

Duncan Post Hoc Test showing differences in the Ages and Job burnout of the officers

@ alpha = 0.05
Age description N 1 2
Below 35 years 22 4.435
Between 35 and 50yrs 137 3.347
Above 50 28 2.876
Sig 0.481 1.000

Duncan Post Hoc Test showing differences in the Academic qualification and Job burnout of the officers

@ alpha = 0.05
Academic Qualification N 1 2
Masters 18 4.847
Bachelor/Higher Diploma 42 3.235
Non -Degree 162 1.676
Sig 0.364 1.000

7. Discussion

The goal of this study was to investigate the influence of the demographic factors (Age, marital status, academic qualification and job tenure) on job burnout among police officers. The results reveal that marital status, age, academic qualification and job tenure were found to influence job burnout.

As per marital status, the results show that the single individual experiences more burnout than the married individual. This assertion corroborates the findings of (Maslach et al., 2001; Kalemoglu & Keskin, 2006; Taycan, Kutlu, Cimen, & Ayдын, 2006). This could be as a result of family support that the married individual enjoys at home.

Concerning job tenureship, the results showed that officers with more years in the service experience less job burnout than their counterparts that have spent few years. This contradicted the opinion shared by (Acker, 2003; Lewig et al., 2003; Derry, Iverson, & Walsh, 2002) when they concluded in their various researches that employees who stay longer in a job will have a higher likelihood of suffering from job burnout. The reason for this could be that the longer years an employee stays with the organization, the more they get used to the organization's values, missions, expectations which indirectly helps them to overcome the burden occasioned by job burnout.

Age is another factor in this study. It shows that older officers experience less job burnout compared with the younger officers. This opinion was shared by Sowmya & Panchanatham (2011) and Kabuoh & Anazodo (2012) who studied bank managers and found out that the younger ones experience a higher level of burnout and stress. Similarly in their research Garrosa et al. (2008) found that younger people experience burnout more often. The assumption here is that the exposure of the officers coupled with the experience must have been a source of strength with which they withstand the job burnout.

Lastly on the concept of academic qualification, it was observed that the officers with higher academic qualification experience higher job burnout compared with officers with lower educational qualification. In support of this assertion, Cakinberk (2011) found that bank employees that held bachelor's and master's degree experienced depersonalization more often compared to non-university degree holders. This could be as a result of professional expectations,

responsibilities and anxieties among the higher academic qualification officers as many of them are in position of authority and leadership knowing fully that uneasy lies the head that wears the crown.

8. Implications

The findings have a practical relevance to the Nigeria Police Force, academic scholars, psychologists, social workers, and other professionals whose call has to do with policing. The findings will help to ensure proactive approach in managing psychological burdens that police officers encounter in their day to day activities. These could be in form of developing psychological packages like social supports and stress management skills.

9. Recommendations

Job burnout among Nigerian police officers is yet to receive attention as a subject of research in Nigeria; hence the need to investigate job burnout among the officers of the Nigerian Police Force. The study has shown that demographic factors are great predictors of job burnout among the officers. In view of this, it is hereby recommended that a training intervention aimed at reducing and managing the problem of job burnout among the officers is most desirable. Also, interventions like social supports and coping strategies should be introduced at all levels in order to enhance the capacity of police members to cope with job burnout in the workplace.

The Nigeria Police Force leadership especially the Police Commission, which is saddled with the responsibilities of recruitment, training and welfare of police officers as a matter of urgency, should ensure the establishment of counselling centres, relaxation centres, social support packages, stress management centres and other on the job policies through which strains and other psychological burdens occasioned by policing duties could be addressed and ameliorated in all the divisional headquarters, if not in all the police stations.

Lastly, job burnout as a result of excessive paper work and insufficient personal time, inadequate and delay in salary, obsolete equipments, delay in promotion, staff shortages, poor funding, inadequate basic and continuous training of police personnel, should be targets for intervention.

10. Limitations and Future Directions

Firstly, the study is only limited to demographic factors; other factors like psychological and sociological were not included. Also, the study is limited to only a command of the Nigeria Police Force, studying other states or zones could lead to more representative findings. It is suggested that subsequent studies on this or similar topics should extend the scope of this study

11. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is shown in this study that the importance of demographic factors cannot be over emphasized in the management of job burnout among the police officers. In view of this, all hands must be on deck in managing this psychological burden called 'job burnout'.

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