Job Stress and Occupational Burnout among Police Personnel: Moderating Roles of Gender and Marital Status

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Abstract

Previous studies on occupational burnout among police personnel did not pay enough attention to how gender and marital status may influence the connection between job stress and occupational burnout, especially in Nigeria; where cultural beliefs direct gender and marital issues in relation to work. This study, therefore, investigated the extent to which gender and marital status moderate the relationship between job stress and occupational burnout. Participants were 213 police personnel (male = 120; female = 93) selected from 10 urban and 10 semi-urban police divisions in Nigeria. Their ages ranged between 20 and 64 years (M_{age} =38.15 years; SD =10.0). Results revealed that job stress significantly predicted occupational burnout such that increase in job stress led to increase in the level of occupational burnout ($\beta = .37$, p < .001). Gender moderated the effects of job stress on occupational burnout in such a way that job stress tended to result in higher level of occupational burnout in female than in male police personnel $[\Delta R^2 = .08, F(4, 212) = 13.76, p < .001]$. Similarly, marital status moderated the relationship between job stress and occupational burnout; such that police personnel who were married tended to report higher level of occupational burnout in the presence of job stress than those who were single $[\Delta R^2 = .09, F(5, 212)]$ = 12.82, p < .001]. Implications for gender sensitivity and family supportiveness were discussed.

Keywords: Job stress, burnout, gender, police, Nigeria



INTRODUCTION

Occupational burnout, which refers to the extent to which employees experience emotional, physical exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Schaufeli 1993), has been associated with job stress (Iroegbu & Nwaogwugwu, 2012), especially in human service occupations such as police and health care (Ogungbamila, 2013; Xie, Wang & Chen, 2011). Concern about health of police personnel has dominated the focus of research in recent time (Ogungbamila, 2013). The concern may be connected with the fact that occupational burnout is not only injurious to the employees but also the individuals who are recipients of their services (Xie *et al.*, 2011). Occupational burnout may, therefore, adversely affect the functionality of police personnel in investigating, detecting, and managing crime, especially in Nigeria; where inadequate facilities hamper effective policing (Brownson, 2012; Chinwokwu, 2012).

Inadequate facilities and operational demands are two of the major sources of stress for police personnel (Amaranto, Steinberg, Castellano & Mitchell, 2003; Shane, 2010). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined job stress as a psychological state that results from perceived negative and threatening imbalance between employees' job condition and their psychological resources for dealing with the situation. Job stress may be more pronounced among police personnel in Nigeria because of the acute shortage of police personnel compared with the population of citizens they serve. According to Human Rights Watch (2010), the estimated 311,675 police personnel in Nigeria, as at 2008, were securing over 160 million citizens. Based on the United Nation's benchmark of 1 police to 400 citizens, Osuji (2012) submitted that there was a short-fall of 70,600 police personnel in Nigeria.

The negative imbalance in the police-citizen ratio in Nigeria may be a source of job stress to the employees (Ogungbamila, 2014b; Roberts & Levenson, 2001) because the shortfall in police personnel may culminate in work over-load and occupational burnout for the remaining employees (Ogungbamila, 2013), especially for female and married employees (Hallman, Thomsson, Burell, Lisspers & Setterlind, 2003). Previous studies (e.g. Wiese, Rothmann & Storm, 2003; Xie *et al.*, 2011) reported a strong positive connection between job stress and occupational burnout.

Gender and marital differences in job stress and occupational burnout have also been documented (Hall *et al.*, 2003). However, the roles of gender and marital status in the connection between job stress and occupational burnout have not been adequately investigated, especially among police personnel in Nigeria. An investigated of this research lacuna is important because of the social and cultural responsibilities associated with gender and marriage in Nigeria. For example, female employees who are married are expected to balance the family obligations with their job roles. The challenges associated with coping with work and family responsibilities may be more pronounced among employees who do not receive adequate social support from spouse, relative, and house help that may help in making up for their inadequacies in fulfilling their family obligations (Ogungbamila, 2014a). There is, therefore, the need to investigate the extent to which gender and marital status moderate the relationship between job stress and occupational burnout among police personnel.

Previous studies have reported gender differences in employees' perception of jobrelated stress; with females reporting higher level of job-related stress than males (Meško, Videmšek, Štihec, Meško-Štok & Karpljuk, 2010; Rubina, Sadaf & Masood, 2011). Gender differences in perception of job-related stress may be associated with the gender differences in stress coping strategies. Males tend to adopt problem-focused coping strategies (Greenglass, 2002) and females usually adopt emotion-focused coping strategies (Burke & Greenglass, 1996).

Apart from that, Liu, Spector and Shi (2008) submitted that differences in perception of job-related stress may be connected with cultural and social construction of gender role expectations and responsibilities. For example, in Nigeria and other patriarchal or male-dominated societies, gender relations and stereotypes are defined in such a way that women are socialized to be less competitive with low ability to cope with and withstand stress than men (Akinwale, 2009; Fawole, 2008; Mudiare, 2013). This implies that socialization leads to internalization and expression of socially and culturally determined social role of gender, which may not necessarily reflect the biological gender of the individual.

Studies have shown that social role of gender was a stronger determinant of job stress than the biological role (Gianakos, 2000). Yu-Chi and Keng-Yu (2010) reported that masculinity and feminity characteristics were not more important than biological sex in employees' perception of job-related stress. They found that employees who showed masculine characteristics reported less job stress than those with feminine characteristics. In a study involving 1,104 police personnel, He, Zhao and Ren (2005) found that female police officers reported higher level of job-related stress than male officers.

As suggested in literature, marital status is an important factor in job-related stress among police personnel (Horwitz, McLaughlin & White, 1997). He, Zhao and Ren (2005) reported that work-family interference was a strong predictor of job-related stress among police personnel. Spill-over of work-family interference may be more pronounced among police personnel who are married than those who are single. In spite of job-related stress and negative work-family interference female police personnel who have access to adequate social support may not experience adverse effects of job stress, emanating from job demands, compared with those who do not have such opportunities (Rivera-Torres, Araque-Padilla & Montero-Simó, 2013). Studies suggest that negative interface between work and family demands may compound job stress in employees working long hours (Bazana & Dodd, 2013; Louw & Viviers, 2010), especially married police personnel.

Studies on gender and marital differences in occupational burnout have presented mixed results. Employees who are married tended to show higher level of occupational burnout than those who are single (Russell, Altmaier & Van Velzen, 1987). However, Taycan, Kutlu, Cimen and Aydýn (2006) and Odedokun (2015) reported that employees who were married experienced lower level of occupational burnout than those who were unmarried; with males being the more affected (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Other studies (e.g. Gulalp, Karcioglu, Sari & Koseoglu, 2008) found no marital difference in occupational burnout.

The job demands-resources model (Bakker, Demerouti & Euwema, 2005; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001) indicates that specific risk and demands, which are embedded in each job, culminate in job stress. The level of job stress is

balanced out if the job resources, which Bakker *et al.* (2005) referred to as the physical, social and organizational aspects of the job that enhance personal growth and development, are adequate. Therefore, the social roles of gender and marital status may interact with job stress to increase occupational burnout among police personnel, especially if there are no adequate social and family-supportive organizational resources that could mitigate the negative effects of work-family interference (Burke & Richardson, 2000; Montgomery, Peeters, Schaufeli & Den Ouden, 2003; Ogungbamila, 2014). Against this background, it is hypothesized as follow:

- 1. Gender will increase the relationship between job stress and occupational burnout; with females reporting higher level of occupational burnout than males.
- 2. Marital status will increase the relationship between job stress and occupational burnout; with police personnel who are married reporting higher level of occupational burnout than those who are single.

METHOD

Design and participants

This was a cross-sectional survey. Participants were 213 police personnel (male=120; female=93) sampled from 20 police divisions in Ondo State, Nigeria. Their ages ranged between 20-64 years (M_{age} =38.15; SD=10.00). In terms of job location, 125 (58.7%) were serving in 10 police stations in urban centres and 88 (41.3%) were serving in 10 police stations in semi-urban centres. Concerning marital status, 65 (30.5%) of the participant were single, 147 (69.5%) were married, and 1(0.5%) of the participants did not indicate his/her marital status. Concerning academic qualification, 32 (15%) had up to School Certificate, 64 (30.1%) had National Certificate in Education /National Diploma certificate, 88 (41.3%) had first degree/ Higher National Diploma, 19 (8.9%) had post graduate degree, and 10 (4.7%) of them did not indicate their academic qualification. In the case of job status, 72 (33.8%) were at the junior cadre, 73(34.3%) were at the intermediate cadre, 63 (29.6%) were at the senior cadre, and 5(2.3) of them did not indicate their job status.

Measures

Job stress was measured using Occupational Stress Index (OSI) developed by Srivastav and Singh (1981). It was designed to measure the level of stress employees perceive from various constituents and conditions of their job (role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, group and political pressure, responsibility for persons, powerlessness, under participation, poor peer relations, strenuous working condition, low status, unprofitability, and intrinsic impoverishment). It was a 46-item scale rated on a 4-point scale (4 = Strongly Disagree; 1 = Strongly Agree).

Sample items include: "I have to do a lot of work in this job" (role overload), "The available information relating to my job-role and its outcomes are vague and insufficient" (role ambiguity), "My different officers often give contradictory instructions regarding my works" (role conflict), "Sometimes it becomes complicated problem for me to make adjustment between political/group pressures and formal rules and instructions" (group and political pressure), "The responsibility for the efficiency and productivity of many employees is thrust upon me" (responsibility for persons), "Most of my suggestions are heeded and implemented here" (under participation), "My decisions and instructions concerning distribution of assignments

among employees are properly followed" (powerlessness), "I have to work with persons whom I like" (poor peer relations), "My assignments are of monotonous nature" (intrinsic impoverishment), "Higher authorities do care for myself respect" (low status), "I do my work under tense circumstances" (strenuous working conditions), and "I get less salary in comparison to the quantum of my labor / work" (unprofitability).

Srivastav and Singh (1981) obtained .90 Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale. In the present study, OSI had a Cronbach's alpha of .84. In this study, job stress was measured as a composite psychological condition based on the overall score on OSI. High score on the measure of job stress indicated the participants were experiencing high job stress and vice versa.

Occupational burnout was measured using Maslach's Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by Maslach and Jackson (1986) to assess the extent to which employees feel exhausted, callous, and underachieving as a result of daily work pressure. MBI was a 22-item inventory, which had 3 subscales rated on 6-point scale (1=A few times a year; 6=Everyday).

Sample items include: "I feel used up at the end of the day's work" (emotional exhaustion), "I have become more callous towards people since I took up this job" (depersonalization), and "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job" (reduced personal accomplishment). Cronbach's alphas ranging from .71 to .90 were obtained for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment subscales (Maslach & Jackson, 1986).

In a study involving police personnel in Nigeria, Ogungbamila (2013) obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .81 for the overall scale. The overall score on MBI was used in the present study because the study was not designed to assess the components of burnout; but it focused on occupational burnout as a syndrome. The Cronbach's alpha of MBI, based on the present sample, was .84. High score on MBI indicated that the respondents were emotionally drained from, were less responsive toward others, and felt incompetent or underachieving and vice versa.

Procedure

Out of the 43 police divisions in Ondo State, Nigeria (Ondo Command = 17 divisions; Owo Command = 14 divisions; Akure Command = 12 divisions), 20 police divisions were selected (10 from Ondo Command, 6 from Owo Command, and 4 from Akure Command). In selecting the divisions, all the police divisions in urban and semi-urban centers were arranged, separately, in alphabetical order and Table of Random Numbers was used to select 10 divisions from the urban centers and 10 divisions from the semi-urban centers. The police personnel in the selected police divisions were given adequate information about the purpose of the study.

They were also informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that there were no known physical and psychological harm attached to the study. They were assured that they were free to discontinue with the study if they felt highly uncomfortable at any point in the course of participating in the study. Active randomization process could not be used in selecting the participants because of the

nature of their job and the security situation in the country. Therefore, questionnaires were distributed to those who were available and willing to participate in the study. In all, 250 questionnaires (urban=150; semi-urban=100) were distributed. Out of the 250 questionnaires distributed, 213 were duly completed and found usable (urban=123; semi-urban=90). This yielded a response rate of 87.6%. Data collection spanned 5 weeks.

RESULTS

Test of relationships

The results of relationships among the study variables are presented in Table 1. Table 1:

Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationships among the Study Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	38.15	10.0	1							
_		0								
2. Educational	-	-	.29**	1						
qualification										
3. Job status	-	-	.62**	.51**	1					
4. Job location	-	-	13	.03	08	1				
5. Job stress	131.20	15.0	.11	.01	.10	.07	1			
		3								
6. Gender	-	-	26**	-	-	.01	02	1		
				.19**	.19**					
7. Marital status	-	-	.54**	.26**	.45**	07	.03	1	1	
8. Occupational burnout	76.42	12.4	.07	-	06	.18**	.40**	.16*	.22**	1
•		0		.19**						

Note: ** p < .01, * p < .05, N=213. Gender was coded male 0; female 1.Marital status was coded single 0; married 1.Educational qualification was coded Up to School Certificate 0, National Diploma/National Certificate in Education 1;Higher National Diploma/first degree 2; postgraduate degree 3. Job status was coded junior cadre 1; intermediate cadre 2; senior cadre 3. Job location was coded urban 1; semi-urban 0.

The results in Table 1 show that job stress was significantly related with occupational burnout such that when police personnel experienced higher job stress, their occupational burnout tended to increase $[r\ (211)\ =.40,\ p\ <.01]$. Gender had a significant relationship with occupational burnout; with females showing higher burnout than males $[r\ (211)\ =.16,\ p\ <.05]$. Similarly, marital status had a significant relationship with occupational burnout; with married police personnel reporting higher occupational burnout than police personnel who were single $[r\ (211)\ =.22,\ p\ <.01]$.

Test of hypotheses

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested with a 4-step hierarchical regression. In step 1 of the analysis, the socio-demographic variables were entered. Job stress was entered in step 2 of the analysis. The interaction effects of job stress and gender were added to the model in step 3. In step 4 of the analysis, the interaction effects of job stress and marital status were added to the model. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Hierarchical Multiple Regression on the Moderating Effects of Gender and Marital Status on the Relationship between Job Stress and Occupational Burnout

Model	β	t	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	ΔF
Model 1	-		.11	.01	.01	3.37*	3.37*
Age	.06	.54					
Educational qualification	20	-6.53**					
Job status	09	39					
Job location	.19	5.26**					
Model 2			.28	.08	.07	5.89**	2.52*
Age	.05	.35					
Educational qualification	19	-5.30**					
Job status	06	16					
Job location	.18	4.06**					
Job stress	.37	9.85**					
Model 3			.41	.17	.09	13.76***	5.08**
Age	.03	.26					
Educational qualification	17	-3.31*					
Job status	03	24					
Job location	.17	3.99*					
Job stress	.39	10.09***					
Job stress x gender	.59	14.50***					
Model 4			.39	.16	.08	12.82***	6.93**
Age	.02	.25					
Educational qualification	16	-3.25*					
Job status	02	22					
Job location	.16	3.24*					
Job stress	.40	11.22***					
Job stress x marital status	.42	13.01***					

Note: *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, N=213. Gender was coded male 0; female 1.Marital status was coded single 0; married 1.Educational qualification was coded Up to School Certificate 0, National Diploma /National Certificate in Education 1; Higher National Diploma/first degree 2; postgraduate degree 3. Job status was coded junior cadre 1; intermediate cadre 2; senior cadre 3. Job location was coded urban 1; semi-urban 0.

Results in Table 2 reveal that job stress significantly predicted occupational burnout such that increase in job stress led to increase in the level of occupational burnout (β =.37, p < .001). Gender increased the effect of job stress on occupational burnout in such a way that job stress tended to result in higher level of occupational burnout in female than in male police personnel [ΔR^2 = .08, F (4, 212) = 13.76, p < .001]. Job stress alone accounted for 13% changes in occupational burnout; whereas its interaction with gender led to 35% changes in the level of occupational burnout among police personnel. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Marital status moderated the relationship between job stress and occupational burnout; such that marital status increased the extent to which job stress led to occupational burnout, especially among police personnel who were married than those who were single $[\Delta R^2 = .09, F(5, 212) = 12.82, p < .001]$. When the interaction effects of job stress and marital status were added to the model connecting job stress to occupational burnout the beta value increased from .37 (job stress alone) to .42 (job

stress x marital status). The moderated effects of marital status accounted for 18%; whereas job stress alone contributed 13% changes in level of occupational burnout. The results in Table 2, therefore, supported hypothesis 2.

DISCUSSION

A lacuna that has not been adequately addressed in burnout literature is how gender and marital status moderate the relationship between job stress and occupational burnout, especially among police personnel in Nigeria; where cultural and social expectations may direct how employees balance work and family obligations. Results show that gender moderated the effects of job stress on occupational burnout. Job stress increased the level of occupational burnout among police personnel. The findings of Wiese *et al.* (2003), Xie *et al.* (2011), and Iroegbu and Nwaogwugwu (2012) that job stress increased occupational burnout, were supported by the results of the present study.

The fact gender moderated the relationship between job stress and occupational burnout may be associated with gender differences in perceived job stress. Females might have perceived higher job stress than males (Meško *et al.*, 2010; Rubina *et al.*, 2011) because males tended to use pragmatic and problem-focused approach to managing job stress than females, who usually result to emotion-focused strategies to managing job stress (Burke & Greenglass, 1996; Greenglass, 2002). This may be because females in Nigeria are usually not socialized to withstand stress compared with their male counterparts who are more socialized to withstand stress in order to enhance their competitiveness (Akinwale, 2009; Fawole, 2008; Mudiare, 2013).

As submitted by Horwitz *et al.* 1997), marital status remains an important factor in the connection between job stress and occupational burnout. Previous studies (e.g. Russell *et al.*, 1987) reported that employees who were married showed higher level of occupational burnout than those who were single. This position was supported by the results of the current study. The findings of Taycan *et al.* (2006), Odedokun (2015) and Maslach *et al.* (2001) that employees who were single tended to experience higher level of occupational burnout than those who were married were not corroborated by the results of the current study.

Marital status might have moderated the relationship between job stress and occupational burnout because of the negative interference between work and family demands among employees who were married (Bazana & Dodd, 2013; Louw & Viviers, 2010). Marital status might have increased the extent to which job stress led to occupational burnout in married police personnel because of inadequate social support from the home front (Burke & Richardson, 2000; Montgomery *et al.*, 2003; Rivera-Torres *et al.*, 2013).

The results of the current study extend the job demands-resources model (Bakker *et al.*, 2005; Demerouti *et al.*, 2001). The results of the current study have suggested that married employees, especially females, who did not have access to adequate family-supportive resources (which would helped to buffer the effects of job stress that emanated from high job demands), reported high level of occupational burnout (Burke & Richardson, 2000; Montgomery *et al.*, 2003; Ogungbamila, 2014). The results of the current study, therefore, suggest that family-supportive job resources

should be provided by the organization in order to reduce the effects of job stress and occupational burnout on police personnel.

CONCLUSION

Previous studies have shown that job stress increases occupational burnout. Gender and marital differences in occupational burnout have also been investigated. What have not been adequately documented in literature are the moderating roles of gender and marital status on the connection between job stress and occupational burnout among police personnel in Nigeria.

Police personnel in Nigeria may be prone to occupational burnout when the effects of job stress interact with gender and marital obligations because gender and marital obligations are dictated more by social and cultural expectations rather than biological characteristics. The findings of the current study that, when exposed to job stress, female police personnel who were married were more prone to occupational burnout than males or employees who were single, have made a unique contribution to literature.

The current study has implicated work-family interference in the moderating roles of gender and marital status in the relationship of job stress to occupational burnout. Its findings have pointed to the fact that family-supportive job resources may be important aspects that may be considered when applying the job demands-resources model (Bakker *et al.* 2005) to explaining occupational burnout.

In spite of the contributions of the current study, there is the need to investigate how family supportiveness moderate the moderated effects of gender and marital status on the relationship between job stress and occupational burnout (Burke & Richardson, 2000; Montgomery *et al.*, 2003). This may help direct the focus of intervention on occupational burnout, especially among female police personnel who are married.

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