The effect of occupational stress on health status of public officers: The case of Nigeria police

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Abstract

Against the backdrop that some jobs create a lot of stress inimical to optimal work performance, this paper investigates the effect of work related stress on the health status of public officers using the Nigerian Police Force as a paradigm. It looked into how these stressors affect Nigerian Police officers and the relationship between the level of stress encountered by Police officers and their health status. This paper adopts the survey design method of research, using the multistage sampling technique to select a sample of 1000 police officers, from the 18 local government areas of Edo State for the administration of questionnaire. Adopting the correlation coefficient statistical technique, a paired sample t-test revealed that police officers who were having health problems at the time they responded to the questionnaires felt significantly more stressed than officers who reported no health problems like high blood pressure, constant body aches, insomnia, back ache etc. Consequently, some policy advice became imperative, for example, it was advised that the Police agency should foster a culture where Police officers are very conscious of their health status as well as other socio-economic related stressors.

Keywords: Nigeria; Police officer; Work; Stress; Health status

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1. Introduction

It has been established that there is some degree of stress associated with the world of work (Coon and Mitterer, 2008; Gherman, 2008). While some jobs create a lot of stress for those who work at them, others are not so stressful. Among the most stressful jobs on earth is that of Police officers (Violanti and Aron, 1995). If stress were just a feeling of unease or discomfort, it would not be so worrisome. Research has however shown that at an organizational level, stress results in burnout, substance abuse in the form of alcohol or drug use\dependence, reduced job satisfaction, increased absenteeism and increased turn over (Rao, 2010). At the personal level, it has been proven scientifically that stress causes and aggravates existing ill health. There has been numerous links between stress and diseases like cancer, heart disease, insomnia and so on. There is therefore a tangible relationship between the amounts of stress a person experiences and his health status. Coon and Mitterer (2009) indicate that Police officers suffer from a high rate of stress related diseases. The threat of injury or death, confrontations with abusive, drunk or hostile citizens and other such events on an almost daily basis takes a toll. The major factor is the unpredictable nature of Police work. There are many stressors associated with Police work in Nigeria and it is the aim of this paper to investigate how these stressors affect Nigerian Police officers and to determine if there is any relationship between the level of stress encountered by Police officers and their health status. This study is divided into seven sections. Following this section is the conceptual analysis of stress; the next section deals with stressors in police work in Nigeria; the next section deals with the effects of job stress; next to this section is the impact of stress on police officers' health; following this section is the research methodology while the last section discussed the research findings.

2. Conceptual analysis of stress

Stress is a condition that occurs when the individual perceives a mismatch between the demands of a situation and the resources at his disposal based on his interaction with his environment (Idubor, 2013). According to Coon and Mitterer (2009), stress is the mental and physical condition that occurs when we adjust or adapt to the environment and a perceptual phenomenon arising from a comparison between the demand on the person and his ability to cope. Stress can be either good or bad. When stress is good, it is referred to as Eustress and this is the pleasurable stress that accompanies positive events (Cox and Mackay, 1976). Stress becomes distress (bad stress) when the stress response becomes too intense or lasts too long (Gherman, 2008). However, a certain degree of stress is required in life to propel the individual to act, and there is a level of stress that is needed for optimum performance.

Stressors are conditions or events that challenge or threaten a person's wellbeing. Events or conditions can only be appraised as stressors when the individual perceives that they are threatening and that he lacks the wherewithal to effectively deal with them (Selye, 1982). Auerbach and Gramling (2008) have grouped stressors into three major categories:

- Catastrophic events e.g. earthquakes wars, violent physical attacks etc,

- Major life changes e.g. the death of a spouse or close family member, divorce or losing job,
- Daily hassles e.g. work related irritations interpersonal relationships, financial workers etc.

This last group may seem the least disturbing but in reality many of the stresses individuals face in life arise from this category. They are experienced on a daily basis and thus add up to create a great deal of strain on the mind and body. Researchers have found that exposure to daily hassles is more predictive of illness than exposure to major life events (Auerbach and Gramling, 2008).

3. Stressors in police work in Nigeria

The Nigeria Police Force has been in existence since 1861 when it was set up in the Lagos colony. The Hausa paramilitary constabulary was set up in 1879. The Northern and Southern Nigeria Police Forces were merged in 1930 to become the Nigeria Police Force (Ahire, 1991). The present day Nigeria Police Force is set up under section 194 of the 1979 constitution of Nigeria and its functions include the protection of harbours, waterways, railways and airfields.

The size of the Nigeria Police Force is estimated to be between 300,000 to 390,000. An Inspector General of Police heads the Force. Several Deputy Inspector Generals (D.I.Gs), Assistant Inspector Generals (A.I.Gs) who are in charge of zones and a Police commissioner in each state, support him. The Nigeria Police Force is divided into zones, states commands, area commands and divisional commands. There are seven departments in the Nigeria Police force labeled A to G responsible for administration and finance, operations, logistics and supply, investigations and intelligence, training and command, research and planning, information and communication technology respectively.

Several challenges have been associated with the Nigeria Police by many authors and they include problems with recruitment, training, indiscipline and corruption, ethnicity and culture, low level of confidence in the Nigeria Police force, poor interpersonal relationship with the public, poor funding and mismanagement of available funds, and creation of parallel security organizations (Idubor, 2012; Osayande, 2008; Onyeozili, 2005; Odita, 2005; Alemika and Chukwuma, 2003; Ilevbare, 2003; Olatise, 2001; Aremu and Adeyoju, 1998; Tamuno et al., 1993; Nwabueze, 1992).

The Nigeria Police Force has also claimed that some of the reasons it is unable to perform effectively include lack of adequate logistics and communication, inaccessibility of roads, lack of signposts, information withholding by the public and inadequate workers. Stressors in Police work can be divided into two categories: organizational and operational stressors (Constant, 2010; McCreary, 2004; Brown and Campbell, 1999).

3.1. Organizational stressors

Organizational stressors are those stressors associated with the how police work is organized, policies, welfare and remuneration issues (Crowe and Stradling, 1993). Studies by Brown et al. (1999) and Violanti and Aron (1995), have indicated that organizational issues are the most common source of Police stress.

Organizational stressors include poor pay, excessive paper work, inadequate training and equipment, changing shifts, limited promotional opportunities, unfair policies and procedures and lack of rewards for good job performance. Dwyer (1991) has also suggested that the effects of stress are exacerbated when people work in either extremely loosely or tightly structured organizations with the resulting rules and regulations that are imposed. These organizational dysfunctions create an undesirable work environment. Martin (1997) adds that among those elements that are considered "dominant" job stressors are role conflict, role ambiguity, organizational reward inequity and lack of participation in decision-making.

3.1.1. Operational Stressors

Operational stressors are those stressors inherent in Police work which include the followings.

3.1.1.1. The nature of Police work

Police officers are often in situations where they encounter stress especially for those who are involved in operational activities. Brown and 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 chases of criminals, responding to a felony in progress, especially in Nigeria where protective gears are not common and life insurance is not provided, create additional stress for Police officers.

3.1.1.2. Public expectations

The pubic expects the Police officer to be polite and friendly at all times but hardly anyone thinks of the uncertainty the Police officer feels when he approaches a car at a checkpoint - is the occupant of the car a law-abiding citizen or is he a psychopathic killer (Coon and Mitterer, 2009). A split second of letting down his guard may mean the difference between life and death. It is difficult to be on guard for your life and appear friendly at the same time. This is a dilemma for the average Police officer and this creates chronic stress for him

3.1.1.3. Risk of traumatic events

Spielberger et al. (2009) observed that the fear of killing someone in the line of duty, having your partner or member of your team killed on the job, the daily grind of dealing with the "stupidity" of the public, exposure to neglected, battered or dead children, and accident scenes are some other traumatic events inherent in Police work.

3.1.1.4. Role conflict

Task related stressors in Police work might occur when Police officers find themselves with conflicting roles. Personal conflicts can develop when Police officers are put in situations where they have to choose between contradictory goals e.g. the notions of loyalty to fellow officers and honesty, which includes conflicts arising from temptation, fear or inability to ease human suffering, conflict in belief with the law or authorities. Police offices must in addition cope with the tight controls of a quasi-military organizational structure combined

with the often-unstructured working conditions of the individual officer (Toch, 2002; Violanti and Aron, 1995; Eisenberg, 1985; Cullen et al., 1985).

3.1.1.5. Work Overload

Due to shortage of workers, many Police officers often have to work overtime. An emergency like a bank robbery, a terrible accident, fire outbreak, civil unrest, a visiting dignitary can totally upset the duty schedule of a Police officer. Many Police officers who are detailed as court duty men, orderlies and bank security are often also involved in other duties at the Station.

4. Effect of job stress

The consequences of job stress are three fold. It has direct consequences for the employee, for the organization and the society as a whole. The consequences of stress for the individual can be physiological, psychological or behavioural. It can be all three or a combination of two of them. It is very likely that poor job performance and therefore organizational ineffectiveness will occur in high stress situations.

Table 1. Consequences of job stress (Coon and Mitterer, 2009)

Physiological	Psychological	Behavioural
Coronary disease	Dissatisfaction with life	Increased smoking
High blood pressure	Low self esteem	Excessive drinking
Peptic ulcer	Psychological fatigue	Tranquilizers abuse
	Boredom	Drug abuse
	Emotional exhaustion	Marital discord
	Job resentment	Inability to relax
	Poor mental health	Loss of appetite
	Depression	Decreased interest in Sex

Coon and Mitterer (2009) states that chronic or repeated stress can damage physical health as well as upset emotional well-being Prolonged stress, they say is closely related to a large number of psychosomatic illness. According to Asmundson and Taylor (2005), psychological factors contribute to actual bodily damage or to damaging changes in bodily functions. The effects of stress are discussed more succinctly below.

4.1. Frustration

Coon and Mitterer (2009) define frustration as a negative emotional state that occurs when people are prevented from reaching their desired goals. Frustration, according to Rao and Rao (1996) can be due to many reasons like absence of recognition, tedious work, unsound relations with colleagues and bosses, poor working conditions, low self-esteem, occupational stress, time pressures, fatigue, lack of security, stability and so on. In a nutshell, obstacles cause frustration.

Sources of frustration can be either external or internal (personal). Frustration can be said to be external when it is based on conditions outside a person that impedes progress towards his desired goal. Coon and Mitterer (2009) states that external frustrations are based on delays, failures, rejection, loss and other direct blocking of motivated behaviour. Harding et al. (1998) states that repeated frustrations can accumulate until a small irritation sets off an unexpected violent response.

Personal frustrations on the other hand are based on personal characteristics. The frustration is based on personal limitations though failure may be perceived by the individual as externally caused. There are three major typical reactions to frustration – Aggression, Scapegoating, and Withdrawal.

4.2. Learned helplessness

Seligman (1989) describes a concept called learned helplessness. This he says is surrendering will power after deciding that whatever one does, does not matter. Such people become passive, quickly lose hope and get depressed when crisis come. It is an acquired inability to overcome obstacles and avoid adverse stimuli. Learned helplessness is a psychological state that occurs when events appear to be uncontrollable.

4.3. Depression

There are marked similarities between depression and learned helplessness (Seligman, 1989; Coon and Mitterer, 2009; Lolordo, 2001). Both are characterized by feelings of despondency, powerlessness and hopelessness. Feeling hopeless is also a major element of depression (Ciarrochi et al., 2002).

Depression as we have said earlier has various sources among which are stresses associated with work and career, isolation and loneliness, inadequate skills to face challenges, problems with interpersonal relationships, substance abuse, inability to live up to an idealized image and so on. According to Coon and Mitterer (2009), bouts of depression are closely related to stressful events and that severe depression is a serious problem that can lead to suicide or a major impairment of emotional functioning.

4.4. Conflict

Conflict according to Coon and Mitterer (2009) is a stressful condition that occurs when a person must choose between incompatible or contradictory alternatives – (needs, desires, motives, or demands).

4.5. Anxiety

Rachman (2004) defines anxiety as apprehension, dread, or uneasiness similar to fear but based on an unclear threat. Anxiety is a normal part of life but when it becomes excessive, there is usually an underlying problem. People who have a problem with anxiety feel threatened and often cannot do anything constructive about it. They struggle to control themselves but they remain ineffective and unhappy. Anxiety becomes a problem when it prevents people from doing what they desire or need to do and are unable to stop worrying.

Distress is often an integral part of anxiety disorders and it may underlie dissociative and somatoform disorder, where maladaptive behaviour serves to reduce anxiety and discomfort.

5. Impact of stress on police officers' health

Many studies have been conducted on the impact of stress on Police officers health and hence performance. These studies all agree that the pressures of law enforcement put officers at risk for high blood pressure, insomnia, increased level of destructive stress hormone, heart problems, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide (University of Buffalo, 2008; Toch, 2002; Anshel, 2000; Brosnan, 1999; Graves, 1996; Brown and Campbell, 1994; Violanti and Aron, 1993). Selye (1982) also states that the Police work is the most stressful occupation in America. Violanti and Aron (1995) in their study found that Police officers have one of the highest suicide rates in America. They also have a high divorce rate and are perpetual drinkers.

The majority of research on Police officers' stress indicates that the occupation creates or contributes to psychological and physical ailments resulting in high incidents of cynicism, absenteeism, alcoholism, post traumatic stress disorder, burn out, early retirement resignation from the force and tragically suicide (O'Toole et al., 2010; Toch, 2002; Anshel, 2000; Brosnan, 1999; Graves, 1996; Ayers and Flanagan, 1994; Reviere and Young, 1994).

5.1. Impact on physical health

The stress that the Police officers encounter on their jobs is made even more dangerous by the fact that it is on going and persistent. This unrelenting stress leads to chronic stress, which is very destructive. Violanti and Aron (1995) in their study of over 400 Police officers in Buffalo, U.S.A. discovered among other things that officers over the age of 40 had a higher 10-year risk of a coronary event compared to average national standard, 72 percent of female officers and 43 percent of male officers, had higher than – recommended cholesterol levels, and that Police officers as a group had higher than average pulse rates and diastolic pressure. The Measure of cortisol known as "stress hormone" increases when a person is under chronic stress. When cortisol levels become dysregulated due to chronic stress, it opens a person to disease. The body becomes physiologically unbalanced, organs are attacked, and the immune system is compromised as well. Constantly high cortisol levels are dissociated with less arterial elasticity, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Shift rotation in police work especially those that are after midnight wrecks havoc on the Police officer and his family. There is also the problem of physiological disruption of circadian rhythms,

moreover being awake at night while one is supposed to be sleeping can greatly impair judgment and decision making which in turn can mean the difference between life and death in a crisis moment. In addition to this, the risk of substance abuse may also increase because the officer may resort to excessive use of stimulants to stay alert during the day; especially when there is shortage of workers and officers are required to do double shifts.

5.1.1. Impact on mental health

Violanti (2008) has stated that police work is carried out in psychologically stressful work environment filled with danger, high demands, and ambiguity in work encounters, human misery and exposure to death. This kind of environment no doubt leaves scars on not just the bodies of Police officers but on their minds as well. The study by Violanti on how the stress of Police work affects an officers' physical and mental health found that 23 percent of male and 25 percent of female officers reported more suicidal thoughts than the general population (13.5 percent). A previous study by Violanti and Aron (1995) found that suicide rates were three times higher among Police Officers than other municipal workers were. He also found that women police officers are probably under more stress than male officers are. Police work according to him is still a male occupation and women feel socially isolated on the job.

Police stress is made even worse by its chronic nature and this saps their emotional strength. This daily stress gradually erodes the officers' mental and emotional strength and makes them more vulnerable to traumatic incidents and normal pressures of life. Chronic stress causes people to regress. Their psychological growth reverses and they become immature. Rapidly, they become more childish and primitive. Secondly, chronic stress numbs people's sensitivity. Police officers see human suffering, human stupidity, error, human inhumanity, and wickedness to others on a daily basis. They must stop feeling, stop "taking it personally" otherwise, they will not survive. This is a natural defense mechanism of the mind so that people can continue to work in horrible situations but the down side of this is that as they become insensitive to their own suffering, they also become insensitive to the suffering of others. Oshodi (2011) reports that police officers who have suffered some traumatic events may have some emotional reactions such as flashbacks, nightmares, physical sensation of fear, excessive sweating and pain. He adds that the traumatic deaths of fellow officers could lead to numbing, being always on-guard, hyper-vigilance, jumpiness, insomnia, irritability, panic, irregular heartbeats, and alcohol/drug abuse. The disparaging attitude of the public and media towards them makes them lose a sense of their dignity and by extension, the dignity of others. They now appear to be cold, cynical and unfeeling, unwilling to help, the exact opposite of what a Police officer should be.

5.1.2. Impact on interpersonal relationships

Gentz and Taylor (2004) have stated that Police officers are much more likely to experience interpersonal relationship problems than the general population. This they say, is demonstrated by divorce rates among Police officers which has been reported as the second highest of all occupation. It is typically reported that divorce rate for Police officers is 60 to 70 percent higher than the general population (Gentz and Taylor,

2004). They also reported that the propensity to domestic violence is also thought to be higher for Police officers than for the general population. Statistics on these are rather controversial and inconclusive; however, Violanti and Aron (1995) states that Police officers seem to have relationship problems at work, typically with superiors and strained relationships with non-police friends. Martin (1994) stated also that a majority of officers interviewed reported that Police work inhibits non-Police friendships, interferes with scheduling family social events, and generated a negative public image. Moreover, they take job pressures home, and spouses worry about officers' safety. He further states that a study of 2,500 officers from various Police departments reported that 36 percent of the officers had serious problems with their children.

5.1.3. Alcoholism

Although the statistics for Police officers abuse of alcohol are controversial, there is a general concession that clinically treated alcohol addiction rates are usually calculated to be twice as high for Police officers than for the general population in the US (Aamodt, 2002). Despite the controversies in the interpretation of the statistics, it is generally considered evident that Police officers are more susceptible to alcohol abuse than other occupations. The same conclusions are usually made regarding the Police's abuse of other substances. Considering the kind of work Police officers do, being under the influence of alcohol or other substances can be quite dangerous for them, their partners and the public. Apart from this, the health implications of alcohol abuse are not pretty. Knops et al (2004) sums it up by stating that having three or more drinks a day greatly increase the risk of stroke, cirrhosis of the liver, cancer, high blood pressure, heart disorders and other diseases.

5.1.4. Isolation

Loosely defined, isolation means feeling alone and uncared for in life (Coon and Mitterer, 2009). According to Constant (2010), when people are isolated they become disoriented and confused. Their behaviour changes drastically and they can become apathetic to the point of illness or death. Social isolation among Police officers fosters the attitude that "it is us against them". The effects of social isolation are most prominent in the first six years of an officer's career. Mostly, officers tend to associate with other officers only and make excuses (real or fabricated) for not attending non-police functions. Police officers suffer from what one might call superiority complex. Police officers know how to handle a gun, defend themselves or be on the offensive, they learn street wisdom and hence develop confidence in themselves that they are invincible and can handle almost any situation themselves. Because of this, they begin to look down on others, they become cynical, because they see the seamy side of life, which most people do not see and begin to believe that the world is made of criminals and stupid people alone. They judge the world from a limited perspective and see everything with a jaundiced eye. It is no wonder they feel isolated. Lastly, Police work lack balance or has an unhealthy balance. A job with a healthy balance has a mixture of good and bad outcomes to give a proper perspective, unfortunately, in Police work, even many of the positive outcomes occur only after a crime has been committed, thus eclipsing the positive outcome. In call after call, Police officers only see criminals,

drunks or those making fools of them. Hence, the average Police officer tends to feel that the only good and sensible people are in the Police force.

5.1.5. Post traumatic stress disorder

Police officers typically encounter or undergo some traumatic experience in their working life that they may never recover from, leading to suicide, divorce, alcoholism, etc. Traumatic stresses generally are occurrences such as war, torture, rape, assassination, natural disasters or street violence. The individual may suffer from nightmares, flashbacks, insomnia, irritability, nervousness, grief, depression and emotional numbing. Furthermore, Fields and Margolin (2001) states that traumatic stress produces feelings of helplessness and vulnerability. It is very important for the Police officer undergoing traumatic stress to be helped to deal with the psychological effects of a traumatic event otherwise it will lead to the development of the post traumatic stress disorder (Kaplan et al., 2001).

6. Research methodology

The research design for this study was the survey type. Primary data were collected by means of the Organizational Police Stress Questionnaire (PSQ- Org), Operational Police Stress Questionnaire (PSQ-Op) and a demographic and personal variable Questionnaire administered on 1000 Police officers serving across the 18 Local Government Areas of Edo State. These data collection instruments were selected because they were deemed the most suitable for obtaining information on both operational and organizational stressors among Police officers. The questionnaires were developed by McCreary (2004) and have been validated to be psychometrically sound. The questionnaires were designed to investigate separately both operational stressors and organizational stress. The questionnaires consist of 20 items each and respondents were required to circle how much stress each item caused them within the last six months. The scale for each item ranged from 1 (no stress at all) to 7 (a lot of stress). The official Police website claims that there are about 350,000 – 390,000 Police officers in Nigeria. On the assumption that on the average there may be about 10,000 Police officers or so in each of the 36 states of Nigeria, this study decided to use a sample size of 1000 (or one-tenth of assumed Police population in Edo State). The sample included constables, sergeants and inspectors in the Nigeria Police force. Hence, the term "Police officer" was used to describe respondents in the general sample. A multi – stage sampling technique was adopted in the study, the entire Police formation was purposively selected to give the study a wide scope. Thereafter a sample of 1000 Police officers was randomly selected from a total of 10,000 officers of the Edo State Police command in both the Headquarters and Divisional commands. Fifty respondents were randomly selected from each Divisional Police command per Local Government Area and a hundred respondents from the State Police Headquarters. Due to the random nature of the sampling procedure, the percentage of Police officers involved in uniformed policing and administration could not be controlled. It was discovered during analysis that about 80 percent of the respondents were in uniformed policing while 20 percent were in administration; this may have an effect on the result as those in administration will most closely be affected by organizational issues than operational

issues and vise versa. The response rate to the study's questionnaires was 90 percent with 100 questionnaires uncompleted or unreturned. The study concentrated on organizational and operational stressors associated with Police work in Nigeria. The demographic and personal variable Questionnaire was used to collect information on the respondents' health status among other things. The period of the study was 6 months, running from May to October 2013. The questionnaires were administered between 1 August and 12 September 2013. The data generated were aggregated and analyzed using data presentation and interpretation.

6.1. Determining the effect of stress on health outcome of the Nigerian police

The research question put forward was: What is the health status of Nigeria Police officers and their stress levels? Table 2 presents a summary of health outcome of stress for Nigeria Police officers.

Table 2. Health Challenges of Police officers

S/N		No.	%
A.	CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS		
1.	*Frequent back pain and body aches*		
	Yes	149	16.6
	No	734	81.6
	No response	17	1.9
2.	*High blood pressure*		
	Yes	47	5.2
	No=	787	87.4
	I don't know	55	6.1
	No response	11	1.2
3.	*Being recently ill*		
	Yes	79	8.8
	No	807	89.7
	I don't know	14	1.6
4.	*Long standing health problems (diabetes, liver problems, renal problems etc.)*		
	Yes	31	3.4
	No	861	95.7
	No response	8	0.9
5.	*Trouble going to sleep at night (insomnia)*		
	Yes	61	6.8

S/N		No.	%
	No	834	92.7
	No response	5	0.6
B.	COPING STYLE		
7.	*Frequency of exercise*		
	Not at all	166	18.4
	Sometimes	568	63.1
	Everyday	126	14.0
	No response	40	4.44
8.	*Length of exercise*		
	30 mins-1hr	662	73.6
	1hr-2hrs	102	11.3
	2hrs-3hrs	24	2.7
	None	18	2.0
	No response	94	10.4
9.	*Frequency of alcohol use*		
	Everyday	48	5.3
	3 times a week	79	8.8
	Only on weekends	169	18.8
	Never	568	63.1
	No response	36	4.0
10.	*Smoking*		
	Yes	69	7.7
	No	819	91.0
	No response	12	1.3

Source: Field Survey (2013)

In Table 2 above, over 82 percent of the Police officers affirmed that they do not suffer from frequent backaches and pains; high blood pressure; being recently ill; longstanding health problems (diabetes, high blood pressure, etc.), and trouble going to sleep. This is rather surprising. However, the reasons for this result may be linked to the response bias that is usually associated with self-report questionnaires. The majority of the respondents' coping style: frequency of exercise (sometimes); length of exercise (30 minutes. to 1 hour); frequency of alcohol use (never); smoking (no). These responses look deceptive given the antecedents of members of the force that we know. These findings are a subject of future investigations.

In most organizational behaviour investigations, a good approach is to first identify all the pertinent factors that are at play; and then go on to examine the interrelationships between all such factors before commencing the main analysis. This helps to isolate important variables of the research and identify useful causality in the underlying models proposed.

6.2. Testing for relationship between health outcomes and organizational and operational stressors

We now examine the relationship between the level of organizational and operational stresses and the health outcomes of Police officers. This research therefore tests the below proposition/hypothesis of the study.

Hypothesis: There is no relationship between the level of stress encountered by Nigeria Police Officers and their health status.

7. Results

Table 3. Paired-sample t-test of the relationship between health outcomes and organizational and operational stress variables for Police officers

S/N	Paired T-tests	Means		Paired Samples Correlations			Paired Differences				Status
		1	2	N	r	Sig	Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	
1.	OPR and HOC	4.38	4.07	853	.79	.00	.31	9.12	852	.00	S
2.	ORG and HOC	4.44	4.07	1.17	1.63	.00	.37	7.18	849	.00	S

Note: (1) OPR=Operational Stress; ORG=Organizational Stress; HOC=Health Outcome;; r= Correlation Coefficient; S= Significant; (2) Values in parentheses=Standard Deviations.

Source: Field Survey (2013).

A sample t-test revealed that police officers who were having health problems at the time they responded to the questionnaires felt significantly more stressed than officers who reported no health problems like high blood pressure, constant body aches, insomnia, back ache etc. The results indicate that there is a significant

relationship between the presence of health problems and operational stress in police officers. The same finding was reached for organizational stress and the presence of health problems. From the above result, H1o was rejected and H1i accepted (P<0.05).

8. Discussion of findings

One of the objectives of this study was to determine if there was any relationship between the levels of stress experienced by police officers and their health status. A paired sample t-test revealed that police officers who were having health problems at the time they responded to the questionnaires felt significantly more stress than officers who reported no health problems like high blood pressure, constant body aches, insomnia, back ache etc.

The Police agency should foster a culture where Police officers are very conscious of their health. From the data collected, only 9.0 percent claimed to have health problems while the rest claimed to be in excellent health. Considering the level of stress reported by the officers and the average life expectancy figures for Nigerians released by the World Health Organization, the above claim is suspect. It has been scientifically proven that the presence of high level of stress causes physical and psychological problems. The above claim of good health may have been for the reasons already stated that is, responses bias or because they really are not aware that they suffer from some health problems like high blood pressure and diabetes. Whichever way, it is important that the physical and mental wellbeing of Police officers should be a concern for the Police organization.

This study relied on the use of self-report questionnaire and as a result had some contradicting results. Future research may include in addition to the self-report questionnaire – a subjective measure, an objective measure for example cortical levels measurement to get the actual levels of stress among police officers. Actual measurement of blood pressure may be more accurate than just asking police officers to state if they had high blood pressure or not especially in a society as ours where many people are in denial over even obvious health problems.

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