

Relating Literature and Theories on Stress to Police Job in Nigeria

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Abstract

The inefficiency and incapability of Nigeria police are common knowledge to Nigerian citizens. Shortage of staff, lack of equipment, lack of good planning, inadequate staff training, poor remuneration, police corruption, police brutality and negative public image are some of the problems confronting Nigeria police. However, the problem of stress is hardly mentioned in the discussions or writings of the myriad of problems the Nigeria police are battling with. This paper, therefore, examined the problem of stress among Nigeria police. It discussed the causes of stress as appeared in the literature and related the same to Nigeria police. The effects of stress, theories of stress and the interventions for the police job stress were also discussed in the paper in line with the police job context in Nigeria. Teachings on management of stress, employment of counsellors and psychologists on stress, government interventions, engagement of religious strategy of addressing the problem of stress, peer group counselling, establishment of welfare programs for the police officers, establishment of more hospitals, clear command structure, motivational practices, social supports at different level, improvement on working conditions, conflict resolution programs, teaching on decision making, interpersonal skills and training, time management, autogenic training, bio-feedback training, muscle relaxation and deep breathing exercise were recommended as ways to address the problem of stress, both at the level of primary intervention and secondary intervention.

Keywords: Literature, Theories, Stress, Police job, Nigeria.

Introduction

Police work is apparently the most challenging work in Nigeria and possibly in other nations of the world. The organization of police work in Nigeria, the social environment in which

police officers work and the insensitivities of Nigeria government to most of the demands of police work in Nigeria, all make the work practically and administratively difficult for the officers enlisted into Nigeria police, to perform their duties and responsibilities in ways befitting the police system that is very effective and efficiency to prevent crime, control crime and protect the citizens of the country from dangers, while at the same time, protecting and securing their properties.

These make the police work a stressful one for the officers of Nigeria police. The job of police officer is one of the most stressful one all over the world (Ruri, Gomes and Afongo, 2016). Police work is considered one of the stressful jobs, globally (Raju, Kumari and Tiwari, 2020). Policing, therefore, is one of the most stressful occupations (Savitha and Leeson, 2016). It is one of the most challenging and stressful services (Kaur, Chodagiri and Reddi, 2013). Policemen can be seen as social surgeons who give intervention in social situations to ensure law and order of the state (Kumar and Kamalanabhan, 2014). They have to work round the clock to keep public safe (Manubhai and Vaghela, 2013). They engage in law enforcement and riot control (Garbanna, Cuomo, Chiorri and Magnavita, 2013). They risk their valuable life for the safety and protection of another being (Ganachari, 2021). The work of maintaining law and order they perform is not an easy task for them (Husain and Faize, 2018). The work of policing is inherently stressful because of personal risk of exposure to confrontation and violence and traumatic incidents (Suresh, Anantharaman, Angusamy and Ganesan, 2013). Officers of the police may suffer direct harm to their lives or bodies (Lee, Jeong, and Choi, 2021).

The challenges in police work make the work to be stressful. Hence, stress in police has been an important area to research since decades (Gajjar, 2018). It is an inspiring area for the researchers (Husain, 2014).

Definitions of Stress

There exist many definitions of stress as we have many researchers on this subject matter. It has been defined in various ways in many years. Stress can be conceived of as pressure from the environment, then as strain within the person (Rajeswari and Chalam, 2018). It is an unpleasant emotion and feeling (Gajjar, 2018). It is a reaction to an external or demand while anything physically or mentally created burdensome or stressful condition (Angolla, 2009). It is a negative situation and non-specific response of human body to any unwanted harmful environment (Aytal, 2015). Stress is also considered as any influence of internal or surrounding environment on living being which disrupts its homeostasis (Shah-Savarani Abadi and Kalkhoran, 2015). It is a personal experience caused by pressure or demand on an individual, and impacts upon the individual's ability to cope or rather perception of that ability (Kumar and Kamalanabhan, 2014). It is a perceived dynamic state involving uncertainty about something important (Lin et.al, 2020). In summary, stress has been defined differently by many academicians over many decades (Kumar and Kamalanabhan, 2014).

Stress: A General and Universal Concept

Stress is a general psychological and social concept all over the world. It has attracted the attention of many writers and researchers which cut across many field of studies. Stress is 'unseen' illness which affects all people everywhere. It cannot be ignored in anyway (Kapade – Nikam and Shaikh, 2014). It affects everyone, yet few people understand what causes it, how

it develops, affects their bodies and how to manage it (Gutierrez, 2015). Individuals encounter potential stressors or events which extract physical, mental or emotional response (Manubhai and Vaghela, 2016). This is “stress age” where the impact of stress caused by work is spiraling out of control (Singh, Gupta, Sharma and Misra, 2019). Job stress has become a universal phenomenon which is part of mankind’s work environment (Ranta, 2012) and now, organisations worldwide are increasingly paying attention to effects of stress on their staff than ever before (Mongo, Fwaya and Sewe, 2020). There are three different categories of work related stress from literature: operational stress, organizational stress and external pressure from the socio-political context (Sauders, Kotzias and Ramchand, 2019). In another classification, it can be as a result of administrative and professional pressures, physical and psychological dangers and lack of support within and outside the police organization (Raju, Kumari and Tiwari, 2020).

Causes/Sources of Stress in the Light of Nigeria Police

As earlier explained, there exist three sources of stress in police vis-à-vis operational stress, organizational stress and external pressure stress from socio-political context. The first classification of stress is operational stress. Operational stress refers to stressors that are related to job content or the features of police work inherent in the occupation (Sauders, Kotzias and Ramchand, 2019). Lack of control over workload, sleepless nights because of shift duties are parts of the operational stresses undergone by police officers (Raju, Kumari and Tiwari, 2020). It also involves exposure to risks which endanger personal safety, witnessing violent interactions and responding to natural disasters (Sauders, Kotzias and Ramchand, 2019). Long duty hours, long distance traveling without proper time and place to rest are also parts of operational induced stresses (Singh, Gupta, Sharma and Mighra, 2019) and also the pattern of the work (Mongo Fwaya and Sewe, 2020); dealing with violators of law and anti-social elements and threats of being injured or killed (Kumar and Kamalanabhang, 2014).

Agolla (2009) and Xavier and Prabhakar, (2016) argue that having to take a life in the line of duty, making violent arrests and gruesome scenes constituted reasons police officers faced operational stress. Agolla (2009) also added emotional demanding situation like informing relatives, of a sudden death of victims, dealing with suicide, fatal accidents and criminal or sexual offence with children as some of the operational stresses in police work. All these involved dealing with crisis situations by the police officers involved (Rajeswari and Chalam, 2018). Such crises involved, may also entail traumatic situations which threaten police officers or their family members, witnessing riots, death of citizen, bombing, shootings, and other criminal activities (Hussain, 2014; Hussain and Faize, 2018). These are pressure and unpredictable dangers which cause burn out among police officers (Richard and Abillah, 2018). The operational stress may also come into existence by the police reporting infractions, enforcing the law, resolving conflicts among individuals, assisting citizens and seeking suspects (Lucene-Morera, Garcia-Albuérne, Talavera-Velasco and Martin-Garcia, 2016).

Nigeria police are overloaded with police works. They lack control over the loads of the work they engaged in. It has been long affirmed that the number of the entire Nigeria police is not sufficient to carry out the police works in Nigeria. It is very amazing that the constant recruitments of the officers into Nigeria police by Federal Government have not made a

meaningful impact in reducing the workloads for the officers of the Nigeria police. This overloading has really impacted unnecessary stress in the lives of the officers.

Constant looks on the police officers when going around carrying out their works show that they are being overlaboured. Officers are assigned to cover beats that are far beyond what they can cope with. In many of the occasions, works meant for two or three police officers are assigned to one officer. Many officers of the Nigerian police have lost their lives because of this, whether as a result of deteriorated health or confronting dangers alone at work without having other officers to give help hand. Sleepless nights and unfavourable night shifts are other operational stresses confronted at work by police officers in Nigeria. On many occasions, police authority would not make adequate provisions to sustain night shifts. Many police stations do not have electricity supply at night which put officers at night duties on danger of being attacked by criminals, especially in bid of freeing their colleagues under police custodies. Another similar case is lack of adequate means of transport (vehicles) to carry officers to the points of their night shifts.

A police officer relayed the story of how he was sacked from the work because of the dilemma he faced in the past in this regard. The station where he was working did not provide vehicle to carry him to the place of night shift (a house of VIP in the town of Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria) and police forbidden officers from carrying weapons in private or commercial vehicles. He was unable to attend his night shift duty that day. Unfortunately, the robbers took the advantage to rob the house which consequently led to his dismissal from police work. Nigeria police officers are constantly exposed to risks and dangers which have taken the lives of many of them. Similar to this are the attempts many have made in the past to rescue and save the citizens involved in natural disasters. Traveling long distance without proper timing and place of rest also caused stresses for Nigeria police officers. In Nigeria, many roads are not motorable and constituted serious risks. A retired Inspector of police relayed his experience in conversation, how they (police officers) were nearly crushed in their official vehicle in the past by a haulage trailer, when they were travelling for official duty.

Many Nigeria police have also encountered stress in the past when making attempts to arrest suspects. Many hardened criminals have terminated lives of Nigeria police officers in the past when such criminals were trying to evade lawful arrests. Innocent police officers are usually the targets of criminals in the society. Hence, officers of the police usually take their lives in the line of duty physically and in some occasions, spiritually; spiritually because, there exist some nocturnal forces and powers which are dangerous for the humans to encounter in the night. An inspector of police who has retired from service related a story of how a spirit attacked him and other two junior officers (sergeants) in the course of night duty on Apogbon Bridge in Lagos, Nigeria. The two junior officers lost their lives in the process and it took divine intervention of God for the retired inspector of police to survive the attack.

Nigeria police usually faced demanding situations like informing relatives who lost their loved ones to sudden death, dealing with cases of suicide or other pathetic situations. Executing duties in such difficult circumstances may be really stressful for the police officers involved. For instance, telling a parent who lost the only child or informing a family who lost their bread winners may be very challenging and stressful, emotionally. Some police officers might have been attacked in the past by emotional relatives of the victims. Such attacks were

not usually intentional but out of emotions. For instance, biting or rough handling the uniforms of the officers who broke the sad news.

The organizational stresses also exist for the police officers. These are stresses which emanated from police structure and organization. These are primary contributors to officer stress. Such include administrative burden, interpersonal conflict, and scheduling (Sauders, Kotzias and Ramchand, 2019). Lee, Jeong and Choi (2021) listed conflict of opinions between bosses and co-workers, harassment by senior executives and pressure for promotion as some of the organizational stresses in police. Inadequate supervisory support, staff shortages, poor communication are considered as organizational stresses by Xavier and Prahbakar (2016).

Negative work environment and interactions at work have been recognized as a major stress for police officers (Agolla, 2009). Agolla (2009) also included management style, poor communication, lack of support, inadequate resources and death of colleagues at work. Singh, Gupta, Sharma and Mishra (2019) mentioned inadequate policies, poor salary structure and slow promotional processes which make police job all more stressful. Kumar and Kamalaribhan (2014) pinpointed excessive criticism by superiors, lack of rewards, inadequate value given to abilities and commitments and no satisfaction from work as sources of stress for police officers. Authoritarian management style, poor interpersonal relationship with supervisors, inter-departmental politics, lack of adequate planning and resources, excessive paperwork, lack of autonomy and lack of recognition for work accomplishments are also among the notable organizational stressors (Agolla, 2009). Kumar and Kamalanabhan (2014) mentioned in their study, the inadequate salaries, poor equipment, many cases to handle and irregular office work as additional organizational sources of stress. Rajeswan and Chalam (2018) also opined that inadequate salary, and excessive paperwork also play significant role in causing stress for the police officers. Raju, Kumari and Tiwan (2020) also stressed inadequate salaries as a prominent factor of stress.

Nigeria police is suffering from administrative burden. Police officers have to undergo some administrative cumbersomeness before they can get their official works done. There exists hierarchy in Nigeria police. A section of the police hierarchy may slow down administrative works when such section of the hierarchy does not perform its own parts of administrative tasks as at when due. Paperwork is another administrative problem which creates stress for the officers of the Nigeria police. There are a lot of paper works to treat on daily basis. The problem is worsened by the fact that Nigeria police system is not computerized. Police stations do not have computers to work with. The same is applicable to district headquarters. Lack of computers has made paperwork the only available alternative for the police officers. Stress is the outcome of such, for them.

Interpersonal conflict is another stressor of the police organization. Jealousy and envy are common phenomena among officers of the Nigeria police. The officers that are meticulous and hardworking are usually hated by the indolent officers. In a similar way, officers that are living decent life and very religious are usually the enemies of the officers that are morally corrupt. A retired police officer explained an experience he had when he was in the police. According to him, he was passionately hated by other officers because he is a faithful Christian that will not drink beer, womanize, take bribe or pervert justice. He was nearly shot dead by his junior rank officers who served under him in a night patrol because he wanted to prevent

them from taking bribe from a motorcyclist. Such occurrence created stress for the faithful police officer. There was also a story of a police woman who was shot dead by another police woman at a named police station in Lagos State, Nigeria. The Culprit was envied of the victim because she had a fiancé abroad that was taking good care of her.

Conflict of opinion also created stress in Nigeria police. It is very uncommon for the superior officers turning down the opinions of their subordinates in offices, whereas, the opinions of such subordinates can be very vital in addressing the problem at hand. Hardly, would superior police officers ask for opinions, advices and the contributions of their subordinates. The above indicated that Nigeria police system is very rigid and very authoritative. The slogan of 'obey the last order' reigns supreme. Such authoritative nature does not encourage harmonious work environment that can help the Nigeria police. File and rank officers usually obeyed the order of their superiors, even if they know quite well that such order can be destructive. They are expected to obey without objection.

In many occasions, such orders may even be out of police work ethics. A retired Inspector of police at Works Department narrated a story of how his superior officer ordered him to lead a haulage vehicle carrying building materials meant for the use of Nigeria police, to the hometown of the said superior officer. The superior officer used the building materials to build his own personal house in his home town.

Harassment in Nigeria police is also a common source of stress, especially sexual harassment. Nigeria police is a very difficult place for female to work because of constant unreported cases of sexual harassment by the superior officers and at times by colleagues at work. Many female police officers usually fall to the pressure of sexual harassment, especially when their promotions are at stake for denying such sexual advancement.

However, female police officers can also harass their male superiors at work. Some of them do make sexual advancement in order to gain promotion or other favours from the system. A retired police officer narrated how a female police officer usually pestered him and harassed him sexually, but for his Christian faith and to protect the work ethics, he refused to yield to her pressure. The work concept of 'mentorship' is very rare in Nigeria police. Junior officers are not always mentored by the senior officers. Hence, no supervision as such by the senior officers and no support to the junior officers when one is needed in many occasions. The process of communication among Nigeria police officers is not strong also, which has created some stresses. Modern ways of information and communication have not be fully and satisfactorily implemented by the authority of the Nigeria police. Truncated information, communication and order created a lot of hiccups in the system. Delayed promotion is another source of stress in Nigeria police. Many officers are not usually promoted as at when due without any offences committed. Some officers are usually denied their promotion because they refused to be initiated into caucuses and secret cults. A retired police officer who shared his experience relayed that he worked for twenty-six (26) years in Nigeria police but was forced to retired as Senior Inspector because he refused to be initiated into cult. The superior officers used to hide document in his file anytime officers were slated for promotion exercise. Inadequate resources are another stressor. It is a common public knowledge that Nigeria police do not have enough resources and this has created stresses for the officers of the Nigeria police. Human resources are not enough likewise the material resources to work with

(equipment, gadgets e.t.c). Death of police officers is almost a daily occurrence in Nigeria police. An officer witnessing the death of his colleagues at work can be stressed up. Many officers of the Nigeria police have been slain in the course of active service to their father's land. Such death may be from the notorious criminals like armed robbers, kidnappers and other hardened criminals. For instance, many police officers have lost their lives in bank robbery in places like Offa, Benin City, Lagos, Ado-Ekiti, Port- Harcourt, Aba and many other places in Nigeria. Moreover, many officers have been spiritually attacked and killed in the past by fetish offenders or their cohorts.

Many widows and children of the slain officers are not usually taken care of by the police authority in Nigeria or such cares are delayed. Family members of slain police officers do not normally get succor from the police authority. Except few cases, when other colleagues would contribute money and other relief resources to help the family members of their slain colleagues.

Poor salary structure or inadequate salaries is another stressor inherent in police organization. Nigeria police are among the poorly paid police in the world. The meager salary of the Nigeria police is not enough to take good care of the police officers. Many live on borrowing or loans to assist their spendings. This is one of the reasons many police officers in Nigeria are corrupt. They extort money from Nigeria motorists or from suspects or their families to augment their salaries. The slogan of "Bail is Free" is known to be fallacy in Nigerian society because bail is one of the avenues, the officers of the Nigeria police get additional money to keep them living. In addition to this, exhibits used in prosecutions are usually sold off by some scrupulous officers after the completion of such prosecutions.

Equipment or materials things used in offices are often stolen by some bad police officers. All these can be traced to poor salary structure of the Nigeria police. Many officers were disappointed when they joined Nigeria police because of the poor salary. They thought police officers are handsomely paid by the government.

Other stressors within police organization which make police work stressful are: excessive criticisms by superiors, lack of rewards for the works done, inadequate value given to abilities, lack of job satisfaction, inter-departmental politics, inadequate planning, lack of autonomy and lack of adequate planning. All these stressors mentioned are visible in Nigeria police organization and formed sources of stress for the officers of the Nigeria police.

The third source of stress in Nigeria police is the socio-political context of policing. The socio-political context of policing involved how officers are treated by the network of people and other organizations they interacted with and accountable to, including also the political structure. This also included their friends, and family members. Accountability to these groups can cause stress to officers (Saunders, Kotzias and Ramchand, 2019). Hence, police do not have a personal life within the society due to their job role demand (Ganachafi, 2021). Officers do not have time for their family or personal leisure time (Lee, Jeong and Choi, 2021 and Ranta, 2012); likewise political pressure and negative public image (Kumar and Kamalanabhan, 2014); criminal justice system (Kapade-Nikam and Shaikh, 2014) and society at large (Rajeswari and Chalam, 2018) and irregular eating habits (Raju, Kumari and Tiwari, 2020)

Negative public image is the commonest source of stress under this category. Nigeria police are the most hated set of people among people working for the Federal government in Nigeria. The slogan 'Police is your Friend' was initiated by the Nigeria police to address this anomaly. However, average Nigerian is not a friend to the police because of many factors. The Nigeria police are considered to be corrupt, brutal and therefore unfriendly. Different experiences Nigerians had with the police in the past show that police are enemies of the public. Many Nigerians do not want to have anything do with them and therefore, always avoided them. This is one of the reason, police do not get support of the public when carrying out their duties. The politicians can also create stress for the police. Cases being handled by the police can be interfered with by some politicians. Such may happen when politicians are interested in those cases, whether to be sympathetic to the victims or to pervert justice from being carried out. Both will exact pressure and stress on the officers handling those cases. Many Nigerian police have received threat messages on the cases they were handling in the past. Many cases have been aborted because of the popular slogan of 'order from above'.

The criminal justice system can also stress police officers in Nigeria. Some judges always find faults with the officers of Nigeria police. Criticisms from courts and unnecessary abuse of the police officers by the courts do cause job stress for the police officers in Nigeria. Many good cases have been dismissed by courts on the ground of putting extra demands on the police to prove their cases beyond what is stipulated or required in the criminal justice system.

Stresses may also emanate for Nigeria police officers from their family members and friends. At the family level, the poor conditions of service may create friction between officers and their spouses. This may lead to divorce which can further complicate the problem. Furthermore, stresses from demands made by the officers' children may also cause additional problem. The same are the demands from other family members and friends.

Although, rules of the police allow annual leave for the officers at various ranks. However, experiences have shown to officers do not usually go for leisure time to relax and rejuvenate their strength and health. Officers at lower ranks, especially, do not usually go for vacation. Hence, not doing this has been known to be a source of stress for police officers in Nigeria.

Finally, irregular eating habits are another stressor. Many officers spend most of their time at work and do not have time to eat at home with their family members. Restaurants are not provided in many police stations and this will make officers to skip meals during the day. This irregular eating habit may consequently stress the officers involved. Many officers declined bringing food from home because of the fear that such food may be poisoned by other officers who have conflict or misunderstanding with them. Sharing meals with others who came with food from home is not also a common phenomenon. A retired police officer shared how other police officers attempted to poison him twice when he was in Nigeria police but escaped this through divine intervention of God.

Effects of Stress and the Experiences of Nigeria Police officers

The effects of stress on police officers are very monumental. The Nigeria police officers included. Stresses have effects on the health of the police officers, their lives, the police organization, their families at large and the entire society. Stress can cause migraine headache, hyperphoea, blood pressure, hypertension, heart attack, heart stroke or brain stroke

(Shahsavarani, Abadi and Kalkhoran, 2015). It is a source of many cardio-vascular diseases (Manubhai and Vaghela, 2015). Stress can also be linked to ulcer and digestive disorders (Kapade-Nikam and Shaikh, 2014); with fatigue and dizziness (Gatens and Otto, 2020) and with cognitive problems like confusion, poor concentration and poor memory (Gatens and Otto, 2020). Stress is also associated with psychiatric morbidity (Kaur, Chodagiri and Raddi, 2013); insomnia (Xavier and Prabhavar, 2016); with obesity and diabetes (Lin et al, 2019). The physiological effects of stress also include palpitations and nausea (Rajeswari and Chalam, 2018).

The effects of stress also include psychological disorders. Stress can cause depression, fatigue, anger, irritability, anxiety, distress, aggression, and post-traumatic stress symptoms (Gomes and Afoso, 2016; Singh, Gupta, Sharma and Mishra, 2019; Xavier and Prabhakar, 2016; Ranta, 2012; Gatens and Otto, 2020 and Hussain and Faize, 2018). Stress can also alter the behavioural statuses of police officers. They may engage in various anti-social behaviours and increase in consumption of alcohols (Gatens and Otto, 2020; Hussain and Faize, 2018; Agolla, 2009; Kaur, Chodagiri and Raddi, 2013; Suresh, Anantharaman, Angusamy and Ganesa, 2013 and Hussain, 2014).

Suicide is among the most terrible effects of stress on police officers. Suicide rate is higher among the police than other groups within population. (Lin et.al 2020; Kapade-Nikam and Shaikh, 2014; Agolla, 2009; Gatens and Otto, 2020; Hussain and Faize, 2018; Kumar and Kamalanabhan, 2014; Suresh, Anantharaman, Anglisamy and Ganesan, 2013) and fratricide (Kapade-Nikam and Shaikh, 2014). It may also include anti-social behaviour like sexual misconduct of the male police officers with female suspects in police custody.

Stress also affects the families of the police officers. Spending insufficient time with their families is a serious stressor (Ranta, 2012) and this can lead to family disorganization. Stress affects officers' relationships with their family members (Gomes and Afonso, 2016). It is also a source of spousal violence (Gatens and Otto, 2020) and other domestic violence (Agolla, 2009). It created family and marital problems (Hussain, 2014) and caused frustration at the family level (Manubhai and Vaghela, 2015), especially in area of marriages, over protecting the spouses and problem with rearing of the children (Rajeswari and Chalam (2018). All these happened because officers have to stay away from family for days (Gajjar, 2018). The personal life of officer is negatively impacted (Kaur, Chodagiri and Reddi, 2013) and their life happiness (Singh, Gupta, Sharma and Mishra, 2019) and difficulties in coping with the world (Gajjar, 2018).

Stress also has serious implication on the police organization and the entire society at large. It causes risk of litigation, liabilities, bad publicity and loss of reputation for the police organization. Hence, it is very debilitating to individual officers, the police organization and the community at large. Stress can make police personnel to engage in mis-conduct behaviours which are immoral and callous towards civilians and victims (Kumar and Kamalanabhan, 2014). Stress may lead police officers to the use of excessive force in dealing with subjects and be at greater risk of error and over-reaction that may compromise their performance and public safety (Richard and Abillah, 2018 and Ranta, 2012). Stress may cause police officers to have negative job perception (Kaur, Chodagiri and Reddi, 2013); cause poor work performance, less work productivity and even injury (Manubhai and Vaghela, 2013). It

can decrease satisfaction in the work environment, increased intention to leave and impair peer relations in the work place (Hussain, 2014).

Agolla (2009) posits that stress may cause error of judgement, irresponsibility, low morale, tardiness, early retirement and quitting the police service all together. It can increase number of accidents and errors by police personnel which are very costly financially, in resources and loss of life (Mongo, Fwaya and Sewe, 2020). Stress also increases absenteeism at work (Xavier and Prabhakar, 2016; Agolla, 2014). It can also cause employees turn over and distancing the people from the job (Aytal, 2015 and Gatens and Otto, 2020).

Many of the health challenges of the officers of the Nigeria police are attributed to stress. It is not uncommon that some officers have blood pressure – hypertension, cardio-vascular diseases and stroke. Others are fatigue, constant dizziness and digestive disorder. Unfortunately, there is no formidable health insurance scheme that can really assist officers suffering from physical health challenges. In order to make the matter worse, the police hospitals are not enough to take care of the health of police personnel. There are no sufficient medical doctors, drugs and medical equipment and facilities. To compound the problem, only few police officers can afford taking money from their salaries to access medical treatments. Many of the sick police officers normally indulge in self-medication or trado-medical treatments. Hence, many have died as a result of this in the past.

Some Nigeria police officers are also suffering from psychological health deterioration. Hence, encounters with some Nigeria police officers show that they suffer psychiatric morbidity, depression, anxiety, distress, excessive aggression, anger, irritability and post-traumatic stress symptoms. Hence, it is not a strange behaviour any longer that some police officers engage in substance abuse, like smoking of marijuana.

Heavy consumption of alcohols is another behaviour associated with Nigeria police officers as a result of stress they always undergo. Hence, seeing police officers in beer parlours in nook and cranny of Nigerian streets is a common phenomenon, some even in their police uniforms. A video clip was trending of a recent on social media, of a police officer who was drunk to a stupor and lying in water drainage. Hence, some officers may abuse alcohols just because they wanted to reduce stress. Some Nigeria police officers also engage in suicide because of excessive stress. Failure in their jobs may warrant self-killing or it may be as a result of outrageous work demands. Suicide is very common among Nigeria police officers handling sensitive criminal cases in court. This may be as a result of frustration from the criminal justice system (courts). Very recently, a Deputy Commissioner of Police who was aide to former Oyo State Governor in Nigeria (Chief Alao Akala) was alleged to have committed suicide in his home town of Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria.

A story was also told in the past of a police officer who killed himself by hanging. The man was having a bad time in court with a criminal case he was prosecuting. Hence, suicide rate is very high among police officers as explained previously in the literature. Very similar to suicide is fratricide. Fratricide is an act of killing one's sister or brother or someone from one's country or local area. Stress at work can translate to aggression at home. Under such circumstance, officers that are not careful can commit fratricide, homicide patricide, matricide, uxoricide or in some cases mariticide.

News featured, in the past, a police woman who nearly committed homicide by burning her maid servant in Lagos State. Furthermore, a police officer related a story of a colleague who beat his wife to death because the woman had not prepared food before the arrival of the man at home. These two incidences indicated that stress can make police officers to engage in killing. Numerous killings of the motorists and innocent citizens at slight provocation, by the police officers are uncountable in Nigeria history of the police operations. Sexual misconduct, especially by the male police officers, is another effect of stress. Some men considered sexual intercourse as a physiological way of relieving stress. There are cases of sexual harassment of female suspects kept in police custodies by some male police officers. A police officer who has retired from active service told a story of a police officer that was sacked by the police authority for having sex with a female suspect behind the counter during his night shift. He was caught red handed by other officers on duty.

Family members, relatives and friends of the police officers also suffer as a result of stress. Some Nigeria police officers do not have stable marriages. They are in habit of frequently divorcing their spouses because they cannot keep with the demands of the marriage. Women like their husbands staying around them and the children. Divorce is a cogent reason many police officers are living alone, thereby increasing the danger of isolation and depression. Stress is also a source of spousal abuse (wife battery), child abuse and other domestic violences. This is the reason families of some police officers are disorganized. Many male police officers in Nigeria are not successful fathers. Their children are spoilt because they do not have time to ensure their proper upbringing and discipline. Many of these children have been over pampered by their mothers and in some circumstances by their fathers. It is not uncommon, therefore, that children of police officers do engage in some deviant behaviours and criminal activities within the police barracks and outside in the society. Hence, discipline has become an issue in the families of police officers. Hence, many police officers are denied the happiness and the joy the good family supposed to bring.

In area of police organization, stress has caused many officers to commit errors which have led to litigations against Nigeria police and payments of liabilities and compensations in the past. A close relative was shot dead in an error during police operation against armed robbers in the past. The matter was taken to court and the court ruled that the Nigeria police must place an advertisement in a widely read national newspaper to acknowledge that the victim was not an armed robber but shot dead in error. Compensation was also awarded to the family. This is one, out of numerous cases of errors made by police officers in course of their job performance. Nigeria police officers' errors during their job operation have earned them negative public image. This is one of the reasons an average Nigerian hates Nigeria police and correcting this will take a longer time than expected. Furthermore, stress makes some officers of Nigeria police to be callous and immoral against Nigeria citizens. Extortion of money, physical assault, brutality and forms of corruption are exemplary immoral and callous behaviours of some Nigeria police. All these affect the public image of Nigeria police organization.

It is not a gain saying that many officers of the Nigeria police are dissatisfied with the jobs because of the negative perception they have about it. This has caused poor work performance, less work productivity and even injury. Some officers of the Nigeria police are still in service, waiting for opportunities to get other jobs or get enough money to engage in

business. Many are counting time on the job. Hence, there is huge labour turn over in police. This is one of the reasons Nigeria police is constantly recruiting people for the work. However, the problems in Nigeria police are making citizens to distant themselves from the job

Nigeria police in the Light of Theories of Stress

There are many theories to explain the concept of stress. However, the following theories have been selected to explain it as they related to the discussion of stress among police officers with special reference to Nigeria police. The first theory is systematic theory which is also known as Selye's theory of stress. Hans Selye was regarded as the founder of modern stress theory. The theory explains that individual experiences three stages during the stress response. The stereotypical response pattern, named "General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) are in three stages as follows:

1. Alarm reaction: under alarm reaction, resistance to stress is lowered and consequently followed by a counter shock which elicits defense mechanism which is more active.
2. Resistance stage: at this stage, there would be maximum adaptation which represents an equilibrium for the individual. This is when the impact of the stressor is compatible with the adjustment.
3. Exhaustion stage: at the exhaustion stage, prolonged exposure to the stressor to which the body has adapted may cause depletion and signs of an anxiety reaction reappear. Hence, the adaptive mechanisms collapse (Bheemaiah and Venkataiah, 2022; Avramova, 2020).

As explained in literature, there are many occurrences or events that can create stress for the police. Nigeria police resistance to stress is very low because many of the stresses came from very severe events and factors. The process of eliciting defense mechanism is also low because of social environment in Nigeria. Only few Nigeria police can build resistance which represents equilibrium for individual that makes stressor compatible with the adjustment for the exhaustion stage. Almost all the Nigeria police experienced this. This is because they are usually exposed to prolong stressors which deplete their body adaptation to stresses. This collapses their adaptation mechanisms. The daily exposure of police officers has made this possible among the Nigeria police.

The psychological stress theory also known as Lazarus theory also exists. Two concepts are germane to this theory. The appraisal (individual's evaluation of the significance of what is happening for their well-being and coping mechanism which is individual's efforts in thought and action to manage particular demands. (Bheemaiah and Venkataiah, 2022). There are three levels of appraisal. The primary appraisal is when individual encounter stressful event. Individual appraises situation regarding the effect on their well beings. It may be positive or negative or unimportant. A stressful appraisal indicates harmful or threatening situation. At the secondary appraisal level or stage the individuals form impression of their abilities to control or cope with the situation. Interpretation of threat is seen as anticipation of harm and interpretation of challenge means the confidence of overcoming the demand of the situation. The third level or stage is termed reappraisal. At this stage individual's appraisal of the situation may change as a result of new information that are available. Reappraisal does not mean the stress will be reduced, of course, it can even increase it. Previously not threatening situation may be viewed as threatening (Bheemaiah and Venkataiah, 2022 and Avramova 2020).

Every Nigeria police normally appraise situation on ground and how this will affect their well-being whether positively or negatively. They further assess their ability to cope with the situation, where they form the anticipation of harm or confidence to cope with the challenge of the stress. Finally, they reappraise it again, which may reduce the stress or even increase it. For instance, Shina Rambo in early 1990s, a notorious armed robber and his gang were operating in Lagos. The previous appraisal of the police favoured that he will be eventually arrested like Lawrence Anini and his gang in 1986. However, the reappraisal showed that he and his gang were great stress to the entire police in Lagos State, because of the sophisticated weapons he and his gang had, which those of the Nigeria police cannot match. Hence, Nigeria police exhibited withdrawal mechanism and till today the Nigeria police were unable to arrest him.

Resource theory of stress is another theory. This theory focuses on resources rather than stressor. For instance, the resources like social support or self-efficacy or optimism, especially when the resources are in short supply or absent. For instance, loss of resources is sufficient for stress response to occur or a default stress response when no information of safety is present. Social support, sense of coherence, hardiness, self-efficacy and optimism are sources of the resources. The theory proposes four categories of resources like object resources (home, clothing, transportation), condition resources (employment, personal relationships); personal resources (skills or self-efficacy) and energy resources (Money, credit or knowledge) (Bheemaiah and Venkataiah, 2022 and Brosschot, Verkuil and Thayer, 2018).

A general experience with the Nigeria police indicates that they lack resources to protect them from stress. Nigeria police lack social support, self-efficacy, optimism, safety, sense of coherence, hardiness to overpower the effects of stress. It is not an over statement that Nigeria police lack necessary resources which can help them to tackle the problem of stress in their works. They lack object resources, condition resources, personal resources and energy resources to combat stress. Hence, many interventions are needed to reposition Nigeria police to deal with the problem of stress in their job.

Interventions for Police Job Stress and Nigeria Police Evaluation

Research has clearly explained that practicing police officers believe that stress management is one of the most important things to teach students who enrolled in police academic (Nygren and Karp, 2010). Such teachings may involve rational thinking and practical planning as explained by Ganachari (2021). They will equip the police cadets the abilities to eliminate the sources of stress and at the same time how to deal with stressful conditions before they escalate to serious problem (Gutierrez et. al. 2015). Most of the police were trained in policing but not about how to maintain their mental and physical well-being (Raju, Kumari and Tiwari, 2020). However, there is a compelling need for police services to trace and understand the organizational origins of stress experienced by their officers and use the same information to develop well informed and targeted stress prevention strategies (Xavier and Prabhakar, 2016). The roles played by psychologists and governments are also very important (Kapade-Nikam and Shaikh, 2014). Police authorities can also engage the services of religious chaplains, the uses of peer group counseling, welfare organizations within the police, hospitals for the treatments of sick officers, ensure clear command structure and motivational practices in order to prevent and manage stress (Mongo, Fwaya and Sewe, 2020)

The availability of social support is also very important. These are the resources provided by others to help the police. The supporters include the family members, friends and colleagues. The degree of support provided, the degree of recognition of support provided and the degree of the satisfaction of the support needs, all determine how effective the social support would be in helping police officer to combat stress (Lee, Jeong and Choi, 2021). Religion can also assist in solving the problem of stress among police officers. Religion doctrine on faith, remembrance of God, trust in God, virtue, piety, penitence, reliance on God's mercy, patience, prayer, worship, chastity and continence are religiously prescribed ways of stress reduction and having peace of mind (Shahsavaran, Abadi and Kalkhoran, 2015).

Avramova (2020) advocated for primary prevention programs: programs for improving and optimizing working conditions, workers' rights advocacy programs, conflict resolution programs, teaching on decision making, training in interpersonal skills and training in time management skills and avoiding "time" stress. Secondary prevention according to Avramova (2020) included autogenic training, biofeedback training, deep breathing, muscle relaxation and yoga stretching as ways of dealing with stress. Unfortunately, research shows that police officers would not use intervention programs on stress as such, because they are afraid of being identified as an individuals who have been compromised by stress. They do not want to be discriminated against in their jobs, removed from their active duties or relegated to only administrative works (Garbarino, Cuomo, Chiorri and Magnavita, 2013).

It is quite unfortunate that Nigeria police do not have tangible and sustainable structure to manage stress and the effects of stress on the officers of the Nigeria police. There are not enough hospitals to treat officers' poor health as a result of stress. The available hospitals are under staffed. In addition, the Nigeria police do not have psychologists that can counsel and assist officers in dealing with stress or getting over it. No clear-cut programs on primary prevention of stress and secondary prevention of stress as advocated for by Avramova (2020). Hence, there is a long way to go on stress management among the Nigeria police.

Conclusion

Since stress is virtually omnipresent in today's society (Naxer, 2021), there is need to address the problem among populace and in this regard, the police officers in Nigeria. The different stressors or sources of stress identified in the literature are quite relevant to occurrences within the Nigeria police. The same is applicable to different effects of stress on the police officers. The theories applied in this study are also relevant to what are happening among the Nigeria police. It is, therefore, concluded that what have been written in literature and theories about police in other nations of the world are also relevant and peculiar to the situation of Nigeria police. The same is applicable to intervention programs on stress management. There is a necessity, therefore, to make some recommendations that will benefit Nigeria police on stress management.

Recommendations

This paper recommends the following for the management of stress among Nigeria police officers:

The teaching of stress and its management must be expanded in the curriculum of Nigeria Police Training Colleges both at the cadets' level and at the officers' level. Such curriculum must include the teachings on the recent findings on stress and management from different

researches within and outside the country. Secondly, different social supports should be made available to help officers in overcoming stress. The social supports should be advocated for among the people in the society, right from the family level. Thirdly, constant workshops, seminars, conferences and public talks on stress should be initiated by the authority of the Nigeria police and officers should be encouraged to attend. In addition, experts in stress counseling should be employed by Nigeria police and their services should be made accessible by the police authority. It is advocated that unit for stress counseling should be made available in each police district headquarters. The officers should be encouraged to use the same and be tutored that there is no stigma in using them.

The work environment in Nigeria police should be revisited and organizational structure should be re-structured in a way that will eliminate conditions and factors that may generate stress for officers. Work relationships among officers should be improved, equipment should be adequately provided in quantity and quality and officers should be well remunerated. We also advocate for recruitment of more 'hands' in police to lessen the burden of work e.g. in shift and beat reduction. This will prevent work overloading and therefore, reduce stress. Finally, we advocate the establishment of more hospitals within the police system in Nigeria to take care of the physical health and psychological health of the police officers in Nigeria in order to reduce and cure the stress induced physical illness and psychological challenges they may encounter in their job.

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