



# Influence of Perceived Occupational Stress on Psychological Well-being of Federal Road Safety Personnel in Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study assessed the influence of perceived occupational stress on psychological wellbeing of road safety personnel in Osun state. This was with a view to understanding the extent to which perceived occupational stress could contribute to the psychological wellbeing of road safety personnel in Osun state. Primary data were used for the study. The data were collected among federal road safety corps in Osun State. The sample consisted of 268 personnel drawn from all the seven commands in the state using proportionate sampling technique. Two standardized psychological instruments namely: Job Stress Scale (JSS) by Theorell and psychological wellbeing scale by Ryff, were used to collect data from the respondents. Data collected were analysed using multiple linear regression and t-test independent sample. The results showed that perceived occupational stress had a statistically significant influence on the psychological wellbeing of road safety personnel [ $F(3,264)=8.690, p<0.05, F\text{-val}=8.690, R^2=0.90$ ]. The results further showed that there is no significant influence of sex on psychological well-being of Federal Road Safety Corps members in Osun state [ $t(266)=0.594, p>0.05$ ]. The study concluded that perceived occupational stress significantly important in influencing psychological wellbeing of road safety personnel.

**Keywords:** Psychological well-being; Perceived occupational stress; Sex

## Introduction

Psychological well-being of the employees has continued to attract serious concern and attention by psychologists. This is because every organization needs employees who are in good psychological state in order to flourish and endure the on-going changes in the world of work [1]. To tackle many challenges, organizations need to ensure that their employees are highly motivated and have high level of wellbeing [2]. Psychological well-being is the state of a mentally healthy person who possesses a number of positive mental health qualities such as active adjustment to the environment and unity of personality [3].

There are multiple facets of psychological well-being. These facets are self-acceptance, quality relations with others, autonomy in thought and action, mastering the environment to suit personal needs and values, pursuing meaningful goals and purpose in life, and continuing personal growth and development. It covers different factors like meaningfulness, wellness and satisfaction, positive and negative feelings. This implies that Psychological well-being involves many aspects of life [4].

Psychological well-being is important to all categories of employees to function effectively including law enforcement agents such as policemen, immigration, road safety corps, civil defense corps etc. It is not only important to how law enforcement agents feel and function but also how they are relating well with members of public in discharging their duties [5].

Federal Road Safety Corps is one of the law enforcement agencies in Nigeria, it is the foremost and lead agency in road traffic management, preventing and minimizing accidents on the highways [6]. The members of this organization are assumed to be under pressure due to the nature of the job and working condition. The law enforcement agency is seen as a stressful profession by researchers [7] and they experience degrees of psychological and physical problems unlike other members in other professions [8].

Road safety work is burdened with a wide range of dangerous situations such as high-speed chases, rescuing activities in the midnight, abduction of the staff by the aggressive motorists; the stress of dealing with irrational people due to their consumption of alcohol or drugs; and the unpredictable confrontations with dangerous drivers and criminals. All these problems may lead to stress, and thus affect their psychological wellbeing to the extent that some of the road safety personnel exhibit negative job attitudes, experiences burnout, poor commitment to work and engaging in unethical work behavior [5].

Several factors have been indicated in the research as the likely predictors of psychological wellbeing of employees. Adegoke [9] reported that there were significant effects of work-stress, frustration and depression on psychological well-being of police employees. He further identified environmental demands especially with regards to time, high workload, low work control, depression and aggression as the effect of psychological well-being.

Akintayo [10] reported that there was a significant impact of occupational stress on level of job satisfaction, commitment and compliance of the employees. Mangwani [11] identified multiple problems suffered from post-traumatic stress, depression, tension, frustration, sadness and loneliness prior to committing suicide. Despite

the identified consequences of poor psychological wellbeing among various categories of employees, little attention was given in an attempt to arrest the situation. Therefore, understanding how occupational stress predict psychological wellbeing of road safety personnel may help in suggesting ways by which problems associated with poor psychological wellbeing can be curbed in our society.

Occupational stress has known as one of the factors likely to predict psychological wellbeing. It has become one of the major influences on the health, daily living and psychological well-being of workers [9]. Stress not only contributes to the physical disorders, but also to their emotional problems and this makes them vulnerable to some illnesses and involve in unhealthy lifestyles such as excessive consumption of alcohol, smoking, substance abuse and self-medications. This is because high level of job stress has been linked to increased headache, cancer, heart disease, depression, anxiety, and emotional distress [12]. It decreased well-being, increased psychological distress, violence, and the desire to quit the job [13].

Occupational stress was defined as the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope [14]. Studies have shown that some jobs such as the military, police and other law enforcement agencies apparently place the individual widen and unusually high degree of stress which result in vulnerability to heart disease and other physical problems [9]. Stress has been a problem across different occupations and job roles especially among the military and paramilitary organizations where the access and freedom to complain about the job hazards is limited due to their regimented life.

Also, studies have provided valuable insight into how psychological well-being is structured or not structured by gender and emerging evidence leads us to question the convention that women experience poorer psycho-socio-emotional well-being than men, and points to the assumption that women and men are not really so different on psycho-socio emotional well-being [15]. In view of this, sex difference on psychological well-being among Federal Road Safety Corps was examined to give more clarifications on the matter.

Sex is biological characteristics that defines humans as a male or a female. It is assumed that sex is an important indicator to predict psychological well-being of workers. It is believed that female members of the military and paramilitary organizations are disadvantaged than their male counterpart in respect to emotional and psychological well-being, this may be due to the nature of the job which considers all of them as men and as such being treated the same way without consideration of their sex. One of the most robust findings in literature is that women have higher rates of negative affect, depression, poorer life satisfaction and psychological well-being than men [16-19].

The issue of improved psychological well-being and management of occupational stress among the workers in the society are part of indispensable prerequisite for psychologists in order to enhance their general well-being. Health psychology focuses on understanding individuals who experience deep happiness, wisdom, resilience, and psychological, physical and social well-being [20].

Lyubomirsky, et al., [21] reported that happy individuals tend to have larger social rewards, better work outcomes greater coping abilities, better immune systems to be more co-operative, pro-social, and charitable and to live longer than individuals who are not happy.

## Hypotheses

- Perceived occupational stress will not predict the psychological well-being of members of Federal Road Safety Corps in Osun state.
- There will be no significant difference between male and female on psychological well-being of members of Federal Road Safety Corps in Osun state.

## Research design

This is a survey study that adopted ex-post facto research approach. The design was chosen because the independent variables were not subjected to manipulation; rather the researcher only studied the self-reported responses of the participants to the items on the questionnaire. The independent variable in the study is perceived occupational stress. The dependent variable is psychological wellbeing.

## Materials and Methods

### Participants and setting

A total of 268 members (203, 75.7% men and 65, 24.3% women) of Federal Road Safety Corps in Osun State participated in the study. They comprised of officers and marshals from all the commands in Osun State. The commands are Osogbo, Ife, Ilesa, Ipetu, ikirun, Ila and Gbongan. The sample was selected through the use of proportionate sampling technique. The permission was applied for and granted by the sector commander. The data was collected during the routine weekly parade and in-house training which usually hold on every Monday and Wednesday respectively.

The researcher distributed the questionnaires personally and assisted in clarifying any problem the participants encountered in completing them. The respondents were selected from the commands within the state with the help of the head of administration and human resources. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the personnel and with the assistance of head of administration and human resources department, the researcher administered the instrument for data collection and most of the questionnaires were collected immediately after completion but others were retrieved after a week.

The participants' ages ranged from 21 and 57 years. The analysis of sex distribution of participants indicates that male respondents were the majority in this study. Furthermore respondents' age distribution showed that 78 (29.1%) of total respondents were within 21-30 years old, 124 (46.3%) of them were within 31-40 years old, 39 (14.6%) were within 41-50 years while only 16 (6.0%) were above 50 years. The analysis indicated that majority of the respondent were within 31 to 40-years-old. Also, the respondents' relationship status indicated that 192 (71.6%) of total respondents were married while 67 (25.0%) were single and only four respondents were widowed while one respondent was divorced. Finally, respondents educational qualification showed that eight respondents did not disclose their certificate, 41 (15.3%) had SSCE/O'Levels certificate, 61 (22.8%) were NCE/OND holders, 135 (50.4%) were HND/B. Sc holders, 23 (8.6%) were higher degree (M. Sc/PhD) holders. The analysis also state that majority of the members of Federal Road Safety Corps who participated in this study were HND/B. Sc holder.

## Instrumentation

### Job stress scale

Occupational stress was measured using Theorell's [22] Job Stress Scale (JSS). It is a 17-item version of the modified 49-item scale originally developed by Karasek [23] to tap employees' perception of job demands, job control, and social support. The scale has three dimensions: Job demands (5 items), and job control (6 items) subscales were rated on a 5-point scale (1=Always; 5=Never). Social support (6 items) was also rated on a 5-point scale (1=strongly agree; 5=strongly disagree).

Sample of the items included: "How often do you have to work very fast?" (Job demands), "How often do you have a choice in deciding? How you do your work?" (Job control), "My co-worker supports me" (reverse scored) (social support). The possible obtainable score for job demand was ranged from 5-25, while job control was from 6-30 and social support was ranged 6-24 depending on the individual respondents.

Chungkham et al., [24] reported the composite reliability for demands, Decision authority and Social support as 0.73, 0.78 and 0.86 respectively. They also reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.79, 0.87 and 0.85 for the job demand, job control, and social support subscales, respectively. This scale has been described to have satisfactory psychometric qualities in Nigeria [25].

A Cronbach's alpha of 0.71 was obtained for the overall scale. High score on the scale implied high occupational stress and low score meant low occupational stress. Additionally, the researcher conducted a 2 week test-retest reliability and obtained reliability coefficient of  $r=0.78$ . Job stress was also correlated with job burnout; it is hypothesized that a positive relationship will exist between these two variables in order to establish a convergent validity. The analysis result shows that there is a positive relation between job stress and job burnout ( $r=0.37, p<0.05$ ).

### Ryff's scale psychological well-being

The Ryff's [26] scale of psychological well-being was used to measure the psychological well-being in the study. It is an 18 item instrument with six dimensions of self-acceptance, personal growth, autonomy in thought and action, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and positive relations with others. Each dimension has three items. It has a 5-point Likert scale response categories that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These responses were scored as follows; strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, undecided=3, agree=4 and strongly agree=5.

A summation of the scores on the 18 items represents the individual score on psychological well-being. The possible obtainable score ranged from 18-90 depending on the individual respondent. The higher the total scores the better the psychological well-being of the respondents. To obtain the overall score, it was summed across items, and the mean score calculated. Higher scores above the mean value on the scale represent higher levels of psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being scale Ryff [26,27] has been reported to be valid and reliable. Ryff [27] reported reliability estimates for the psychological well-being's scales ranging from 0.87 to 0.93 for coefficient alphas and from 0.81 to 0.88 for 6-week test-retest reliability. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.94. Internal consistency value provided by Van Dierendonck [28] for the 18 items scale was

significantly higher than the values of other versions. He reported the reliability coefficients of the subscales ranging from 0.72 to 0.81 each. Additionally, the researcher conducted a 2 weeks test-retest reliability and obtained reliability coefficient of  $r=0.92$ .

### Sample and sampling procedure

A total of 268 respondents were selected from a population of 536 officers and marshals. This represents a proportion of 50% of the total population of the members of Federal Road Safety Corps in Osun state. This comprised officers and marshals from each of the seven Commands in the state. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select the number of staff needed from each command based on their staff strength. The total numbers of seven Commands were used in this study and half of their populations in the state were used as respondents. 78 respondents were selected from Osogbo office, 34 respondents from Ife unit, 37 respondents selected from Ilesa, 30 respondents selected from ikirun while 27 respondents selected from Ila and 27 respondents selected from Gbongan unit command.

### Data analysis

Data collected in the study were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS package (Version 23). Demographics were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and percentage. The stated hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis and t-test independent sample for hypothesis one and two respectively. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the prediction of perceived occupational stress in psychological wellbeing.

## Results

### Hypothesis one

Perceived occupational stress will not significantly predict psychological well-being of Federal Road Safety Corps members in Osun state. The hypothesis was tested using multiple linear regressions at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Variable	$\beta$	Standard error	t-val	p-val	R <sup>2</sup>	F-val
Constant	52.454	5.296	9.905	0.001	0.9	8.69
Job demand	-0.176	0.228	-0.77	0.442		
Job control	0.267	0.178	1.504	0.134		
Social support	0.718	0.167	4.309	0.001		
Result: F (3,264)=8.690, p< 0.05, F-val=8.690, R <sup>2</sup> =0.90						

**Table 1:** Multiple linear regression analysis of psychological well-being by occupational stress.

The result on Table 1 showed that there is significant joint prediction of job demand, job control and social support components of occupational stress on psychological well-being [F (3,264)=8.690, R<sup>2</sup>=0.090, p<0.05]. The result indicates that perceived occupational stress accounted for 9.0% variation in psychological well-being. Furthermore, one of the dimensions of occupational stress, social support ( $\beta=0.718, t=4.309, p<0.05$ ) independently predict psychological well-being of members of Federal Road Safety Corps in

Osun state. However, job demand ( $\beta=-0.176$ ,  $t=-0.770$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) and job control ( $\beta=0.267$ ,  $t=1.504$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) were not found to be independent predictors of psychological well-being among them. The hypothesis which state that occupational stress will not significantly predict psychological well-being of members of Federal Road Safety Corps in Osun state is therefore rejected.

### Hypothesis two

There will be no significant difference between male and female on psychological well-being. To test this hypothesis, an independent sample t-test was employed at 0.05 level of significance. The mean scores of male employees and those of their female counterparts were subjected to test of comparison based on their scores on psychological well-being. The summary of the result is presented in Table 2.

Variable	Category	N	M	SD	df	T	p-val
Psychological well-being	Male	203	72.66	10.33	266	0.594	0.553
	Female	65	73.54	10.55			
Result: $t(266)=0.594$ , $p>0.05$							

**Table 2:** Independent sample-t-test showing the influence of sex on psychological well-being.

The result showed that there is no significant influence of sex on psychological well-being of Federal Road Safety Corps members in Osun state [ $t(266)=0.594$ ,  $p>0.05$ ]. Furthermore, No significant difference exist between male study participants ( $N=203$ ,  $M=72.66$ ,  $SD=10.33$ ) and female counterpart ( $M=73.54$ ,  $SD=10.55$ ). It is observed from the analysis that both male and female respondent display similar level of psychological well-being. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference between male and female on psychological well-being of Federal Road Safety Corps members is accepted.

### Discussion

The main purpose of this study is to examine the perceived occupational stress as predictor of psychological well-being of Federal Road Safety personnel in Osun state, Nigeria. The results obtained revealed that perceived occupational stress significantly predicted psychological well-being.

The first objective assessed the extent to which perceived occupation stress predicts the psychological well-being of Federal Road Safety Corps in Osun state. The study found out that perceived occupational stress significantly predicted psychological well-being. The job demand and job control components of perceived occupational stress had no significant influence on psychological well-being but the social support component of the occupation stress predicted the psychological wellbeing of the members of the Corps. This present finding has been able to show that availability of social support has direct influence on psychological well-being of Federal Road Safety Corps members and it indicates that the social support receives by the members of Corps from colleagues, friends, immediate boss/supervisors and family members goes a long way in helping them enjoy good psychological well-being.

These various supports could be in form of encouragement, mentoring, empathy and the likes that might give relieve to any perceive life challenges. Job demand and job control had no direct influence on psychological well-being among members of Federal Road Safety Corps, this may be due to long term training every member of the Corps had been exposed to which made them familiar with demand of their job and also they were aware that they do not have control over the job as it is commonly done in military and paramilitary settings where the decision is taken by the superior officer and the subordinates should seek approval or permission before taken any decision except on extreme cases where it needs urgent judgment.

This finding is in conformity with previous findings by Goswami and Burman [29] who reported that policemen responded that their work was having a negative impact on health, leisure and economic well-being and also reported that undesirable occupational factors are more dangerous to the well-being of police officers and the stress is experienced due to nature of police work. The finding is similar to Ikonne [30] who reported that role ambiguity, role conflict and work environment had strong positive relationship with psychological well-being among library employees in selected Universities-libraries in South-West Nigeria.

The finding also similar to Akpunne [31] who reported that there was significant inverse relationship between job stress of formal caregivers and their psychological well-being and established that increase in job stress significantly relate to decrease in psychological well-being of formal caregivers. This finding also consistent with the Adegoke [9] who established that there were significant effects of work-stress, frustration and depression on psychological well-being of police employees It is similar to the finding of Lasisi [32] who reported that police officers especially those who are stationed in the visible policing components, doing crime prevention duties such as patrol, attending to complaints etc. are more prone to commit suicide.

This finding is also in conformity with the findings of Akintayo [10] who established that occupational stress had a deleterious effect on the psychological well-being of worker and his finding is similar [33-37]. Mojoyinola [38] who submit that work related stress has impacted on the health and psychological well-being of the workers.

The finding is similar to Mark and Smith [39] who established that extrinsic effort and over commitment would be positively associated with depression and anxiety and intrinsic reward would be negatively associated with anxiety and depression. It is also conformity with Basinka [40] who reported that occupational stress was found to be strongly affecting the psychological well-being among firemen in Poland. That work demands and stresses are generally acknowledged to have impacts on the quality of life of families and the psychological well-being of family members.

It is also consistent with the finding of Malek, et al., [41] looked at sources of occupational stress and their impact on job satisfaction and psychological well-being among Malaysian fire-fighters. They found that sources of occupational stress had significant reverse correlations with job satisfaction and well-being. This finding also in conformity with Brandy and Cox [35] who submitted that occupational stress has impacted on the health and psychological well-being of workers with the attendant effects on their attitude to work.

This study also examined the sex difference of psychological well-being among members of Federal Road Safety Corps in Osun state. The study found that both male and female respondents display similar level of psychological well-being and there is no significance difference



between both sexes and this may be attributed to their belief that all of them are men whether male or female staff and they are treated like that except in some cases where unofficial privileges are given to the female staff by assigning them to less tedious assignment and exonerates them from night duty shift.

This finding is consistent with Ojedokun and Idemudia [15] who found that men and women are not significantly different on measures of psycho-social emotional well-being among members of Nigeria Prison Services. The finding is similar with Akintayo [10] who says that both male and female respondents have been affected by occupational stress with its corresponding effects on their attitude to work and their health [33-34,42].

Olagunju [43] who assert that stress is a manifest of both male and female individuals to defiling basic needs of life in an environment of competing needs. This implies that work related stress tends to have deleterious effects on workers attitude to work as well as their condition of health. It is similar with Akinnawo [44] who reported that there is no significant difference could be attributed to sex and marital status of shift workers and it is also similar with these findings who reported that no significant sex differences on psychological well-being [45,46]. In contrast to this finding, some studies, Banal et al., [16], Mohammed, et al., [17], Pinguart, et al., [19] have reported that psychological well-being of women is lower than that men, because their lives are more stressful than men's, they are more vulnerable to the health consequences of life stressors due to their relative lack of material, personal, and social resources and higher levels of demands and obligations associated with their social and marital roles [47-49] and Prause, et al., [50] have reported quality of life of females to be lower than that of males.

### Implications of the study

The study has established that perceived occupational stress predicted psychological well-being of Federal Road Safety Corps in Osun state and it was shown that the major relevant component of occupational stress that could help in ensuring better psychological well-being by members of Federal Road Safety Corps is social support they receive from the colleagues and immediate boss when they run into trouble as a result of their assigned official duties. The finding indicated that job demand (workload and workplace) and job control (decision latitude) are not that relevant in explaining psychological well-being of members of Federal Road Safety Corps.

### Recommendations

As a result of the outcome of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- The management should provide good working environment for the staff such as provision of rescuing tools, good patrol vehicles, well equipped ambulances and well furnished offices etc. these will reduce stress from the working place.
- The management of FRSC should enhance the support given to staff especially the posting of the staff members close to their family base and those that posted far should be adequately allowed to see their family regularly. Improved social support for the employees will go a long way in reducing the occupational stress among them and also positively enhances their psychological well-being.

- Federal Road Safety Commission should adopt stress management techniques by encourages their personnel to involve in regular exercises, allow them to enjoy the annual leave with their loved ones and psycho-educational intervention should be given to those with high level of stress to educate them on stress management; these will improve their well-being and also enhances their general health condition. A low level of occupational stress is of critical importance to the health of the employees and also for the improve performance in the workplace.

### Limitations of the Study

This research study was limited to members of Federal Road Safety Corps in Osun State. This choice of this state was to reduce the problems of time, proximity and cost constraints. Getting permission from other state Commands could have delayed the study or prolonged the time required to complete it. Due to the limited population in the state, 50% of all members of Federal Road Safety Corps in Osun state were used in this study. It is suggested that future studies such as the present study are needed on a larger sample and other paramilitary formations to enable the generalization of the outcome of this study.

### Conclusion

The finding of this study indicated that perceived occupational stress predicted psychological well-being and there was no significant sex difference in psychological well-being of Federal Road Safety Corps in Osun state.

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