The Influence Of Work-Stress On Suicidality Among Members Of The Nigeria Police Force

Shide Sunday, PhD

Department of Police Professional Courses,
Nigeria Police Academy Wudil, Kano State, Nigeria

Abstract: Suicidality is an important term used to evaluate the presence of suicidal ideation, gesture, plans, or attempts to commit suicide. This study investigated "The Influence of Work-Stress on Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force". The study employed a Cross-Sectional Survey Design, where hundred (100) Members of the Police Force consisting 53 (54.6%) males and 44 (45.4%) females were used for the study. Their ages ranged from 19 to 59 years with the Mean of 33.12 (SD=8.15237). 55 (55%) of the respondents were junior cadre while 45 (45%) were from the senior cadre. Also, 70 (70%) of the respondents were married, 8(8%) were divorced while 22 (22%) were single. On their educational status, 48 (48%) were SSCE holders, 20 (20%) were OND/NCE holders, 22 (22%) were HND/First Degree holders and 10 (10%) respondents were M.Sc./PhD holders. On income basis, 67 (67%) respondents were of low income while 33 (33%) were of high income. The Workplace Stress Scale (WSS) and Suicide Behaviour Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R) were used for data collection. The researcher used 21 version of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data in which the correlation analysis was first used to find out the reliability and validity of the instruments. Factor analysis was also employed to assess the item communities of the various tests to be used. The final statistics was Regression analysis of variance. Simple Linear Regressions and Multiple Regressions were used to test the study hypotheses. Findings from the hypotheses indicated that, there was a significant negative influence of work stress on suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force (R = .223 = R² = .050 (F = 17.975, t = 25.115, p < .05). It was also revealed that, Age there was no significant influence of Age, Sex, and cadre on Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force (R = .156 = R² = .022 (F = 1.388, t = 16,140, p > .05). Based on these findings, it was recommended that, Police Officers should be enlightened on how to manage work stress, while policy makers and government should evolve policies that are aimed at reducing work- work stress among Members of the Police Officers. Also, more researches should be encouraged on the subject matter for further identification of long term solutions to the problems affecting suicidality among Members of the Police Force, and Nigeria at large.

Keywords: Work-Stress, Suicidality and the Nigeria Police Force

I. INTRODUCTION

The term suicidality entails the risk of suicide in an individual. It is evaluated by the presence of suicidal ideation, gesture, plans, or attempts to commit suicide (DI Nota, Anderson, Ricciardelli, Carleton, & Groll, 2020). The term suicide has attracted considerable attention of researchers in the twenty-first century (Krayer, Kulhari, Sharma, & Robinson, 2023. According to Rory, and Matthew, (2014) suicide refers to the act of an individual intentionally ending his or her own life. Suicidality can also be defined in terms of suicide ideation leading to the act or an instance of ending one's own life voluntarily and intentionally (Meriam Webster Dictionary, 2024).

Literatures on suicidality have progressed rapidly in recent time with sharp rise in cases of suicide among both Police personnel and civilian population. Studies have shown that, suicide ideation, gesture, plans, or commit suicides are often predisposed to mental health problems or an accompanying sympom of mental disorder. These include: anxiety disorder,

depression, stress disorder, post-traumatic and substance abuse (Bohnert, Ilgen, Louzon, McCarthy, & Katz, 2022). A study conducted in Lagos Nigeria by Rory, and Matthew, (2014) revealed that, 14% of Police Officers' surveyed showed signs of suicidality. Findings from another relivant study conducted by Azizat, and Tunde, (2023) revealed that, in some settings Police Officers have reported higher levels of suicidality compared to civilian or the general population.

Despite the fact that, most of the pre-existing laws in Nigeria considered suicide as felony or capital offence which Police Officers are expected to enforce or prosecute suicidal person; but many of the same Police Officers also have suicidal tendencies.

It is important to note that, aside the significant prevalence of suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force; most suicide cases may be largely undetected for various reasons (Lynch, Peterson, Rossom, & Waitzfelder, 2020). These are often attributed to the tedious nature of Police work, which the ethics of the job does not allow for any display of weakness or help-seeking behaviour even when they are faced with event of emotional distress (Hirsch, Wolford, LaLonde, Brunk, & Parker, (2007).

The causes of suicidal behaviour are not fully understood; however, this behaviour clearly results from the complex interaction of many factors (Hirsch, & Conner, 2006). Even though, many risk factors have been identified, they mostly do not account for why people try to end their lives. Some researches have identified personality and individual differences, cognitive factors, social aspects, and negative life events as key contributors to suicidal behaviour (Carleton, Afifi, Turner, Taillieu, LeBouthillier, & Duranceau, 2018).

Also, most people struggling with suicidal thoughts and behaviours do not receive treatment because of the complex nature of identifying the predisposed tendencies. However, some evidence suggests that, different forms of cognitive and behavioural therapies can reduce the risk of suicide reattempt, but hardly any evidence about factors that protect against suicide is available (United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). Recent surveys show how psychologists and other social scientists have taken huge steps to further understand other silent factors influencing suicidality (Dombrovski Clark, & Siegle, 2010). Therefore, suicidality can simply be referred to the tendancy or risk whereby an individual comit or attempt to commit suicide (take his or her life by his or herself).

Research examining the incidence and prevalence of suicide and suicidality among police, particularly the extent to which they constitute a high-risk group, has produced conflicting results. Police appear to be at greater risk of posttraumatic stress reactions (resulting from higher exposures to trauma) and job burnout (resulting from the way in which Police work is organized), both of which increase the risk of psychosocial problems and suicide. Although, worker suicide is the result of a complex interaction of personal vulnerabilities, workplace stressors, and environmental factors, research into Police suicide has largely emphasized only two of these components: workplace trauma as a determinant of posttraumatic stress reactions; and organizational stressors as a determinant of job stress and burnout (Bohnert, Ilgen, Louzon, McCarthy, & Katz, 2022).

Personality factors and coping styles have received less attention and there have been few attempts to understand the complex interactions between all of these factors. Prevention strategies have focused on psychological debriefing for traumatic incidents and organizational change designed to improve job commitment and reduce job burnout (United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).

One variable that is found to be an important and implicated in suicidality among Police Officers is work stress. According to (Galton, 2022), work stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities, which challenge their ability to cope. Members of the Police Force meets numerous critical work problems which are described as having negative influence on their psychological well-being and capable of predisposing them to suicidality (John, & Pius, 2015). On his part; James, (2020) added that: while handling the criminal offences, the Police Officers encounter violence, cruelty and indifference to the welfare of others. In one perspective, they try to meet up with the conflicting demands of the public at the same time they face bureaucracy in their own organizations, internal politics and rigid traditional style of their Management structure.

Work stress is a critical factor in determining workers' mental health and suicidality. It is a phenomenon that has generated interest of researchers due to its negative perception and bio-medical effects on human behavioural manifestation. Stress has been described as a bio-chemical and behaviour reactions associated with fight or flight response (John, & Pins, 2021). Stress is scientifically used as a psychological precursor of illness; and serves as a catchall for anxiety, discomfort, and the likes. In some of the studies, it is identified that, being a Police Officer is a stressful job (Millo, Nixon, & Sams, 2024). Police Officers experiencing high levels of work stress, report a high incidence of physical syndrome and psychological problems that affect their psychological well-being which tends to lead to Suicidality (Ile-barefemi, & Ogunjemi, 2014).

Stress can on the other hand be referred to as the psychological factor that is harmful to physical and psychological health and dangerous to individuals' mental health. Many researchers found that some stressfull experience such as long shifts, violence, traumatic events, murder, assault, and other inherent danger, organizational factors are some important factors that affects mental health of Police Officers and can lead to suicidality (Marvel, House, Schurman, Heaney, & Mero, 3013). Police force is considered as one of the most stressful occupations, exposing staff to occupational, organizational, and personal stressors (Alexander, 1999; Paton & Violanti, 1999; Anshel, 2000). Significant research findings have documented that prolonged stress has negative effects on individual health and psychological well-being which tends to predispose the Police Personnel to suicidality (Mohren, 2003). It is against this backgraound that this study seeks to investigate The Influence of Work-Stress on Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Records of suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force appear to be raising steadily with cases of many Police Personnel commiting suicide day by day (Azizat, & Tunde, 2023). Suicide generally, is the 14th leading cause of death worldwide, responsible for 1·5% of all mortality (Rory, & Matthew, 2014). Nigeria Police Personnel are law enforcement Officers that are subjected to a number of stressful events particularly, because of the nature of their job. They are responsible for the security of lives and properties of others. Observation over the years has shown that, Officers in line of their duties are frequently exposed to violence from criminals; often engage in rescue operations of civilians from kidnappers, armed robbers, bandits, militants and other unknown gun men.

Members of the Nigeria Police Force deal directly with the hardest criminals and the worst of the society. Sometimes, they watched their colleagues killed or maimed in the course of their legitimate duties. They are the ones to stand in the turbulent election process to ensure order, they are on the streets to monitor traffic and ensure law and order among so many others. Regrettably, they are also susceptible to losing their jobs/careers easily for committing the slightest mistake or blunder (Azizat, & Tunde, 2023). As a results of these challenges, many Officers during operations are faced with injuries, pain, thought of whether they will return home and reunite with their families or not and some even die in the process; and right in presence of their colleagues which leads to changes in physical and mental functioning of the survivors. This trend has given birth to a situation known as "work Stress" among Police Officers (John, & Pins, 2021). Consequences of work tress go beyond boundaries of the Police circle as a whole; but it affects the mental health of Police Personnel.

Thus, to be a Policeman is therefore very tough in the Nigerian context with sharp rise in recent cases of suicide among Members of the Nigeria Police Force. This explains why, not much study of this nature were carried out in the study area therefore, the understanding of The influence of Work – Stress on suicidality among members of the Nigeria Police Force run the risk of becoming culturally biased. By conducting this study with Nigerian sample, the researcher hopes to address this problem. It was therefore hypothesized that:

✓ There will be a significant negative influence of Work Stress on Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force.
✓ Age, Sex, and cadre will independently and jointly predict Suicidality among among Members of the Nigeria Police Force.

II. METHOD

A. DESIGN

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to elicit information from respondents on the influence of Work – Stress on Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force. This research design enabled the researcher to elicit information from respondents (Police Officers) cutting across different sex, age, rank, marital status, education, and income working in Nigeria Police Academy Wudil – Kano, which adequately measured the study variables. The independent variables in this study are Work-Stress and Demographic Factors while the dependent variable is Suicidality.

B. SETTING

The study was conducted among Members of the Nigeria Police Force serving in Nigeria Police Academy Wudil – Kano State, located in North Western Nigeria. The Police Academy was established on the 15th of March, 1998 with sole aim of training young and vibrant Nigerians to become Police Officers in the future (Nigeria Police Academy, 2025).

C. SAMPLING

Multi-Stage Sampling Procedures was used for the study. A purposive sampling technique was first used for the study. Purposive sampling is the procedure in which the investigator identified individuals who were considered to be typical of the population (only Members of the Police Force) and select them as the sample (Akinsola, 2005). Therefore the researcher first recruited only Police Officers who volunteered within the study area. Proportional Sampling Technique was used at the second stage to ensure that, Police Officers at different Ranks, age, religion and Sex who volunteered within the Study Area were represented.

a. SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION

In order to determine sample size of the study, Taro Yamane's (1967) formula was used from the population of Seven Hundred (700) Members of the Nigeria Police Force working within the institution (Nigeria Police Academy – Wudil – Kano - 2025).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:
n = the sample size
N = the population size
E = the tolerable sample error (0.05)

Therefore substituting the formula stated above

$$n = \frac{700}{1 + 316 \quad (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{700}{1 + 316 \quad (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{700}{1 + 6.125}$$

$$n = \frac{700}{7.125}$$

$$n = \underline{100}$$

D. PARTICIPANTS

The participants for this research cut-across Members of the Nigeria Police Force of different sex, age, rank marital status, education and income, working in Nigera Police Academy Wudil – Kano. The researcher purposely drew participants from both members of the rank and file and superior Officers. The size of the population is Seven Hundred (700) Police Personnel working within the institution, while 100 were sampled for the study.

E. INSTRUMENTS

Data for this study was collected using two standardized research instruments thus:
- ✓ Workplace Stress Scale (WSS)
- ✓ Suicide Behaviour Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R)

✓ WORKPLACE STRESS SCALE (WSS)

Workplace Stress Scale was developed by Marlin and American Institute of Stress (Yonkers, 2001). Workplace Stress Scale is 8-item scale designed to measure work stress among employees. The scale is scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = Never, 2= Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often to 5 =Very Often. Total score of 15 or lower indicate that stress is not a problem. Total score 16 to 20 is fairly low stress level. Total score 21-25 indicate moderate stress. Total score 26-30 indicate severe level of stress. The wrong time, and might benefit from counseling. Total score 31- 40 (2%) show that stress level is potentially dangerous. The instrument has overall norms: 18.4, for Men: 18.6; Women: 18.1. Ages18-34: 17.6; Ages 35-49: 19.2; Ages 50+.

✓ SUICIDE BEHAVIOUR QUESTIONNAIRE-REVISED (SBQ-R)

Suicide Behaviour Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R) is a four items self-report questionnaire used to assess for suicide risk. The instrument was designed by Osman, Bagge, Gutierrez, Konick, Kopper, and Barrios, (2001). Each of the four questions addresses a specific risk factor: the first item concerns presence of suicidal thoughts and attempts, the second, concerns frequency of suicidal thoughts, the third concerns the threat level of suicidal attempts, and the fourth concerns likelihood of future suicidal attempts. A maximum score of 18 is possible, and total score of ≥ 7 indicates significant risk of suicidal behavior. This instrument has an internal consistency of 0.93, (Azizat, & Tunde, 2023) and has been validated for use in Nigeria.

a. PILOT STUDY

In order to ensure reliability and validity of instruments to be used on the study sample, the instruments (Workplace Stress Scale (WSS) & Suicide Behaviour Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R) were subjected to pilot study using Police Officers in Benue State Police Command. The choice of the location is due to the fact that these Police Officers have similar characteristics with the proposed population for the

main study which is the Police Officers in Nigeria Police Academy Wudil - Kano. Hence, this ensured robust and objective trial that qualified the instrument for a major study that is efficient and objective. For this pilot study, a total number of 103 copies of instruments were administered to the participant using conveyance sampling in which each officer were contacted while on duty to response voluntarily. Out of these number distributed only 97 were returned representing the return rate of 99.9%. 6 copies representing 6.2% were not returned. Result indicated the following:

The researcher made used of Cronbatch's Alpha test of reliability to determine norms of the instruments used: ranging from 0 to 1 (George & Miller 1995) which was based on SPSS/PC+ step by step interpretation. The Cronbatch's Alpha test of reliability according to George & Miller holds that, higher value denotes higher internal consistency. These values and the norms were considered as follows:
- A value below 0.5 range shows unacceptable level of reliability
- A value between 0.5 and 0.6 range could be considered as a poor level of reliability
- A value between 0.6 and 0.7 range could be considered as a weak level of reliability
- A value between 0.7 and 0.8 range would be refer to an acceptable level of reliability
- A value between 0.8 and 0.9 range would be considered as a good level of reliability
- A value above 0.9 range would be refer to an excellent level of reliability

The result of The Pilot study showed that:

✓ WORK PLACE STRESS SCALE (WSS)

In the current study the Work Place Stress Scale (WSS) has a Cronbach's alpha of .61 and total variance of 8.331 indicating that the test items are highly reliable and validly measures 61.0% of work place stress among Members of the Nigeria Police Force.

✓ SUICIDE BEHAVIOUR QUESTIONNAIRE-REVISED (SBQ-R)

The item total correlation of the 4 items for Suicide Behaviour Questionnaire-Revised (SBQ-R) ranged from .34 to .67. The output of the result yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .85 which was considered adequate for use in this study.

F. PROCEDURE

The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to Members of the Nigeria Police Force working in Nigeria Police Academy Wudil - Kano. The researcher first seeks the consent of the participants before questionnaires were administered to them with assurance that, the information will be handled with confidentiality.

G. DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used 21 version of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data in which the

correlation analysis was first used to find out the reliability and validity of the instruments. Factor analysis was also be employed to assess the item communities of the various tests used.

The final statistics used was Regression Analysis of Variance. Simple Linear Regressions were chosen to test whether there will be a significant negative influence of work-Stress on suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force and Multiple Regresiona to find out whether Age, Sex, and Cadre will independently and jointly predict Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force.

III. RESULTS

This study examined the influence of work stress on suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force. In regards to this, data were collected, tested and this chapter presents results derived from data analysis according to the stated hypotheses.

✓ *HYPOTHESES I:* This hypothesis states that, there will be a significant negetive influence of Work Stress on Suicidality among members of the Nigeria Police Force.

This hypothesis was tested using Simple Linear Regression Analysis and the results are tabulated and interpreted as shown below.

Variables	R	R^2	F	β	T	P
Suicidality						
Constant	.223	.050	17.975	-.223	25.115	.000
Work Stress					-4.240	.000

Creterium Variable: Suicidality
Table 1: Simple Linear Regression Analysis showing the Negative Influence of Work Stress on Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force

The results presented in table 1 above showed that there was a significant negative influence of work stress on suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force ($R = .223 = R^2 = .050$ ($F = 17.975$, $t = 25.115$, $p < .05$). This means that work stress contributes 50.0% to changes in suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force. This finding implies that, the higher level of work stress; the higher the likelihood of suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force. Therefore, this research hypothesis has been confirmed and the null hypothesis rejected.

✓ *HYPOTHESES II:* This hypothesis states that Age, Sex, and cadre will independently and jointly predict Suicidality among members of the Nigeria Police Force.

This hypothesis was tested using Multiple Regression Analysis and the results are tabulated and interpreted as shown below.

Variables	R	R^2	F	β	T	P
Constant	.114	.022	1.388		16.140	.000
Age				- .004	-.028	.979
Sex				- .096	-1.628	.106
Rank				-.068	-1.144	.255

Criterion Variable: Suicidality

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis showing how Age, Sex, and Cadre Independently and Jointly Predict Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force

The results presented in table 2 above showed that there was no significant influence of Age, Sex, and cadre on Suicidality among among members of the Nigeria Police Force ($R = .156 = R^2 = .022$ ($F = 1.388$, t = 16,140, $p > .05$). This means that all the three demographic factors (Age, sex, and rank) jointly and insignificantly contributed to 24.0% variation in Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force. There was also no significant independent influence of age ($\beta = -.004$, p > .05), sex *($\beta = -.096$, p > .05)*, and rank *($\beta = -.068$, p > .05)* on Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force. Therefore, the hypothesis that, Age, Sex, and cadre will independently and jointly predict Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force has been rejected.

IV. DISCUSSION

Various hypotheses in relationship to the study were discussed in this section.

Hypothesis one sought to find out the significant negative influence of Work Stress on Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force. Based on the result of this study, this hypothesis was confirmed. This finding agreed with the work of (Charles (2021) whose result shows a statistically significant influence of operational stress on suicidality. This finding is also similar with that of Wright, and Bonelt, (2022) who also holds that, the more Officers experiences problems or un-successful operations, the more it will affect their psychological well-being negatively leading to suicidal thought. This finding on the other hand disagreed with the finding of Areshwick, and Millings, (2020) whose results show that, there is a negative relationship between work stress and suicidality. Also in line with this finding is the work of Azizat, and Tunde, (2023) who noted that, the many dangers and stressors associated with Police work often place Police Officers at a great risk of a variety of mental health morbidity, including suicidality.

The implication of this finding to the research is that, in order to minimize factors affecting Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force, there is a need for holistic understanding of these factors including work stress by both government (police management team) and the general public so as to minimize factors that can increase these factors.

Hypothesis two was to find out if Age, Sex, and cadre will independently and jointly predict Suicidality among members of the Nigeria Police Force. The hypothesis was statistically insignificant and was rejected. This finding is similer to the finding of a study carried out by Dantzker's (2023), whose work revealed that, demographic factors are not factors that determine suicidality rather, his work findings illustrate a more multifaceted pattern in the relationship between demographic factors and suicidality among employees. This finding on the other hand, goes contrary to that of Reiner, (2023) who's finding revealed that, younger Officers are more excited about their jobs than their senior Officers is. According to Reiner, demographic factors are complex

phenomenon that must be specified; before one can conclude whether they can predict suicidality or not.

Wright, and Bonelt, (2022) conducted a study that is in line with finding. Their work revealed that sex, age, cadre, income, and education do not influence suicidality among employees. They further noted that demographic factors stand to influence suicidality except, when they are accompanied by other predisposed factors. The implication of this finding is that; as much as, there is no way one can do away with demographic variables when it comes to predictors of suicidality, but they are not to be considered as independent predictors. Nevertheless this finding is to discourage focusing on demographic factors as only predisposed factors, determinants and predictors of suicidality.

CONCLUSION

The main findings of the study are summarized as follows:
- ✓ Work stress significantly influence Suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force.
- ✓ Age, Sex and Cadre did not independently or jointly influenced suicidality among Members of the Nigeria Police Force.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were hereby advanced:
- ✓ Police Officers should be enlightened on how to manage work stress, while policy makers and government should evolve policies that are aimed at reducing work- work stress among Members of the Police Officers.
- ✓ Also, nongovernmental organizations with caring mind for the Police Officers should intensify support, for Members of the Force to reduce work stress in order to reduce or limit suicidal tendancies.
- ✓ Finally, more researches should be encouraged on the subject matter for further identification of long term solutions to the problems affecting suicidality among Members of the Police Force, and Nigeria at large.

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