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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Stress and job satisfaction among journalists in Benue state, Nigeria****Daniel Bo<sup>1</sup> and Moses I. Ukeh<sup>2</sup>**

1. Benue State University, Makurdi, Benue state, Nigeria.

2. Department of Psychology, Nigeria Police Academy Wudil, Kano state, Nigeria.

**Abstract:**

The impact of stress on the general employee wellbeing receives little attention from employers and policy makers in Nigeria. This study examined the extent to which job demands on practicing journalists in Benue State, Nigeria, affect their stress levels and job satisfaction. Anchored on the Job Demands–Control–Support Model, the study surveyed a total of 153 journalists comprising 129 males and 24 females from 31 print and electronic media organisations in Benue state and relied on the Depression, Anxiety Stress Scale and the Job Satisfaction Survey. Using Correlation analysis and T-test (SPSS 16) the study found significant negative relationship between stress and job satisfaction among journalists. A T-test result indicates differences between male and female journalists in their levels of job satisfaction but finds no differences in their level of stress. The research recommends among others that management should organise stress management seminars for journalists in their organizations.

**Key words:** Stress, job demand, job satisfaction, gender, journalism, occupational stress.

**Introduction**

Stress may prove an asset as long as it is tolerable and helps in creating healthy competition. Organizational excellence and individual success are achieved via well managed stress. We all live in a stressful society. Deida (1997: 162) acknowledges this much thus: “No stress means no thoughts ... no mission to accomplish”. As a result, much concern has been shown through research into issues of stress. Despite the enormous researches and literature, there is considerable disagreement over the precise meaning and causes of stress. What is obvious however is that stress in the work place constitutes one of the major challenges to global public health. It affects work and productivity and constitutes the source of health problems for many working populations. Palmore’s (2006), Warr (2002) and Danna and Griffin’s (2002) view that job stress is one of the most important workplace health risks for employees in developed and developing countries aptly support this assertion.

There are a number of workplace factors, called job stressors that make jobs stressful and difficult for number of employees in services as well as manufacturing industries. Additional stressors concern interpersonal relationships at work, such as conflicts with the behaviour of supervisors, conflicts with colleagues, conflicts with subordinates and conflicts with management policies (Palmore, 2006). Literature of occupational stress highlights that occupational stress has the influence on the organizational activities and especially job satisfaction of employees. The negative characteristics of jobs, not only create stressful, emotional, mental and physical states within the work setting, but also create stressful conditions in the nonworking life (references needed).

Cooper, Dewe & O’Driscoll, (better Cooper et al) (2001) and Cranwell-Ward & Abbey, (2005) acknowledge the high cost of stress on individual health and well-being. They also note the importance and significance of stress for managers and the need to be more aware of the costs associated with ignoring the issue of stress. In the United States, for instance, stress in the work place, writes American Institute of Stress, is estimated to “cost U.S corporations \$300 billion or more annually, than the cost of all strikes combined”. While in the United Kingdom, Savery and Luks (2000) as cited in Shahu and Gole (2008) note that stress is estimated to cost an annual £63 billion and in Australia \$15 billion. Beside this financial implication, there is a health related consequence to stress.

The nature of journalism in this current era presents very demanding challenges that are prone to great deal of stress. Conferences are done via webcam and reports are expected to be communicated within minutes afterwards. There are deadline pressures and uncooperating sources as well as lack of working tools to execute professional duties. These create potential sources of stress peculiar to the journalism profession. Besides, there are issues of

interpersonal relationships at work, such as conflicts with the behaviour of supervisors, conflicts with colleagues, conflicts with subordinates and conflicts with management policies (Palmore, 2006). These are obvious stressors for the practicing journalist. Such stressors, if not well managed are capable of affecting the attitudes of employees to work and may manifest negatively in the way they treat other people and how they communicate with their peers and customers. For example, people with a higher percentage of occupational stress may not be satisfied with their job and therefore they will not feel happy working in the organization. They may feel frustrated or “burned out” when they are having problems with peers or customers.

In spite of the negative impact job stress may have on employees and the organization itself, little research effort has been directed to it in Nigeria in general and journalism profession in particular. This study is an effort towards stimulating research concerns in other professions on an area that has the potential to adversely affect both work and off-work lives of employees in Nigeria.

This study is one such effort aimed at fostering understanding of causes and health consequences of stress. Research objectives were therefore set out and hypothesis formulated to guide the study. The objectives are: 1) To find out if Benue State journalists suffer any stress in the performance of their professional duties; 2) To determine whether journalists in Benue State are satisfied with their jobs; 3) To establish the extent to which stress affect job satisfaction among journalists in Benue State; and 4) To ascertain if there are differences in gender as it relates to stress and job satisfaction.

The hypotheses are: **H<sub>1</sub>**: There is a significant relationship between stress and job satisfaction; **H<sub>2</sub>**: Journalists who are high on stress will be less satisfied with their jobs; and **H<sub>3</sub>**: There is no difference between female and male journalists on stress and job satisfaction

### Theoretical framework

The relevant work-related stress theory upon which this study hinges is the Job Demands–Control–Support (JDCS) Model. This model is the product of controversies that surrounded the universal application of Job Demands-Control JDC Model (Beehr, Glaser, Canali, & Wallwey, 2001; Panatik, O’Driscoll, & Anderson, 2011 why don’t you include the 1<sup>st</sup> Surname followed with et al). The initial proposition put forward by Karasek (1979) is referred to as the Job Demands–Control (JDC) Model, although the term “discretion” was also used by Karasek as a synonym for control. He proposed that, although excessive job demands or pressures (both physical and psychosocial) can have an impact on stress levels (especially psychological strain), by themselves these demands are not the most important contributors to strain experiences.

Rather, the amount of strain people experience in their work will be determined by whether or not they have any control over the demands they have to deal with. That is to say, according to Karasek (1979), there will be interactive effects of Demands × Control (or discretion) on stress levels. Put another way, control will buffer (moderate) the impact of demands (pressures) on strain. This relationship is depicted in Fig. 1.1. When it was argued that it is possible the Western emphasis on personal control (at work and in other aspects of life) does not generalize to non-Western cultures, which may value more group-oriented mechanisms; the revised formulation of this perspective added social support to the mix of factors which will influence a person’s levels of psychological strain (and ultimately their psychosocial well-being at work (Johnson and Hall, 1988; Karasek and Theorell, 1990).

	Low job demands	High job demands
Low control	Passive job	High strain job
High control	Low strain job	Active job

**Table.1.1:** The job demands-job control model.

According to this model, a journalist that considers his/her job’s demands to be low and has low personal control over the strains will find the job they are doing “passive”. Journalists with high personal control over strain will experience a “low strain job” when their job demands are low. Invariably, where the job demands are high, and a journalist has low control over the strains to cope, he/she finds the job to be a “high strain job”. The most acceptable state of affairs is obtained when job demands are high and the journalist has high control over the strains produced by the demands of the job. Such a journalist will find his/her job to be lively or “Active” as depicted in the above

matrix between High job Demands and High control. It is this category of journalists that are presumed to feel satisfied with their jobs.

### **Empirical review**

It is a fact that the risk of burnout, absenteeism, cynicism, exhaustion and stress amongst journalists has increased during the past few years (Reinardy, 2007a; Greenberg, Thomas, Murphy & Dandeker, 2007; Teugels, Van Hoof, Mory, & De Witte, 2009). Regardless of this fact, few empirical studies border on stress and job satisfaction among journalists in Nigeria. Deprez and Raeymaeckers (2012) did a study on job satisfaction among the population of professional Flemish journalists by means of two surveys conducted in 2003 (N = 1,026) and 2008 (N = 682). Both surveys focus on intrinsic and extrinsic variables linked to job satisfaction as well as on several predictors of job satisfaction such as type of contract, job function, age, and gender. They found that the degree of job satisfaction seems to be related to the type of contract (freelance or employed on a permanent basis) and the job function. They also noticed a clear gender element in the discussion: Female journalists are not less satisfied but state to have more difficulties to combine the journalistic job with a private and family life.

In a similar study, Reinardy (2007b) examined organizational and life issues that affect overall job satisfaction of daily newspaper journalists. He used the Herzberg motivational-hygiene theory to examine intrinsic or motivational factors (perceived organizational support; social support) and extrinsic or hygiene factors (work-family conflict; role overload; job demands) that affect overall job satisfaction. Results indicate that perceived organizational support and social support create satisfaction, and work-family conflict, role overload and job demands influence dissatisfaction. Reinardy (2007b) further maintained that deadlines, long hours, clashes between work and family were the tangential elements that tend to wear on journalists and appear to take their toll and create dissatisfaction, but added that they are not enough reasons to drive journalists from the workforce.

Mansoor, Fida, Nasir and Ahmad (2011) in their study on the impact of job stress on employee job satisfaction among employees from the telecom sector from Pakistan found that stress is negatively related to employee's job satisfaction which support Usman, Ahmed, Ahmed & Akbar's (2011) result. In Usman, Ahmed, Ahmed & Akbar's (2011) study, job stress was measured by conflict at work, workload and physical environment and how these factors impact on job satisfaction. In a similar study, Ahsan, Abdullah, Fie and Alam (2009) investigated the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among public university academician from Klang Valley area in Malaysia. The determinants of job stress examined include, management role, relationship with others, workload pressure, homework interface, role ambiguity, and performance pressure. The results show that there is a significant relationship between four of the constructs tested and a significant negative relationship between job stress and job satisfaction. Results of a study of naval personnel of Malaysia in which the relationship between stress and job satisfaction was examined, revealed that occupational stress was negatively associated with job satisfaction (Nor Liyana & Mansor, 2009).

Nescoe (2011) investigated the relationship between stress and job satisfaction among 70 Romanian academics. Stress was indicated by the levels of depression and anxiety. Burns Anxiety Inventory, Burns Depression Inventory and Warr Job Satisfaction Scale (adapted by Travers and Cooper) were used to collect data from respondents. The results indicated that: a) there is a negative correlation between stress and job satisfaction; b) women report a high level of anxiety and depression and a low level of job satisfaction and are found to be significantly different on these scales from their male counterpart. Spector (2004) studied that long working hours in the organization increase the stress among the employees and in this situation; they can reduce their stress level by making conversation with their peers and family members. The results of this study is found true on reporting the effect of stress on job satisfaction among the employees, Malhotra and Chadha (2012) said that 60.8% employees responded that stress is positively related to employee turnover, when the stress in the organization increase, the more employees show their tendency to leave the organization. This is the easiest way for the employees to escape from the stress; and 50.8% employees in the organization reacted that stress badly impact upon the performance of the employees.

### **Methods**

This research aims to investigate the relationship between stress (measured by the level of depression, anxiety and stress) and job satisfaction among 153 journalists in both private and public media houses in Benue state, and to highlight the individual differences in experiencing stress and job satisfaction depending on demographic factors. To emphasize the dynamic and complex nature of stress phenomenon, we used, as research instruments DASS-21, and Spector's JSS. These instruments were administered to 153 journalists comprising 129 males and 24 females

randomly selected from 31 print and electronic media organisations in Benue state. The reliability and validity features of the instruments are described in detail below.

### **Instruments**

Two self-report standardized questionnaires were administered in the study: (a) Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scales (DASS) (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1993 short version 21) and (b) Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS) (Spector, 1985).

DASS measures the constructs of Depression scale: dysphoria, hopelessness, devaluation of life, self-deprecation, lack of interest/involvement, anhedonia, inertia. Anxiety scale: autonomic arousal, skeletal muscle effects, situational anxiety, subjective experience of anxious effect. Stress scale: difficulty relaxing, nervous arousal, agitation, irritability, impatience, and reactivity. The purpose of the scale is to measure the negative emotions associated with depression, anxiety, and stress. It is NOT intended as a diagnostic scale on its own. However, it may be used to assess the severity of depressive, anxious, and stress symptoms, or to distinguish the source of emotional disturbance as being due to depression, anxiety, or stress. It has been used among children, adolescents and adult populations and translated into almost 30 languages except Africa (Africa is not a language). DASS is a 4-point Likert scale from 0 (*did not apply to me at all*) to 4 (*applied to me very much, or most of the time*) and has high reliability and validity. The higher the score, the higher the level of negative emotions associated with depression, anxiety, and stress.

Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS) by Palmore E. Spector, (1985) was used to collect data and demographic factors such as Age and Gender, length of service, marital status, educational level, work hours and department of employees were included. The JSS has some of its items written in each direction – positive and negative. Scores on each of nine facet subscales (*pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, nature of work and communication*), based on 4 items each, can range from 4 to 24; while scores for total job satisfaction, based on the sum of all 36 items, can range from 36 to 216. Each item is scored from 1 = *very much disagree* to 6 = *very much agree*, if the original response choices are used. High scores on the scale represent job satisfaction. According to the author (Spector, 1985) the JSS has good internal consistency (Cronbach alpha =.73). In this study, the overall job satisfaction was measured rather than the subscales. As such, the total job satisfaction score of each respondent was considered. It was adopted for this study because of its applicability in almost all types of organisations and the JSS is provided free for non-commercial educational and research purposes.

### **Procedure**

Through instruction on the questionnaires we sought the consent of staff to participate in the research by anonymously responding to the questionnaire within a day or two. The management staff at each of the organisation that assisted in the administration of the questionnaires was delegated the responsibility to debrief the staff on the purpose of the study after they completed answering the questionnaire. The purpose was not explained prior to administration to forestall participant response bias to the questionnaire items. The completed survey copies were collected from the representative of the organisations.

### **Scoring**

DASS has three constructs with 7 questions each, with a minimum of 0 and maximum score of 63. The minimum score of 36 and maximum of 216 defines the score range for overall job satisfaction (Spector, 1985). The low score was arrived at by dividing the maximum score of 216 by half. The product of the division gave rise to score of 36 to 108 as low job satisfaction, while that of 109 to 216 for high job satisfaction.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

In this study, the responses and information collected from the survey were tested using statistical techniques such as descriptive analysis (frequency distribution), correlation analysis and T-test. The researchers used 'The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences' (SPSS, version 16.0) for the analysis of data. All the items and variables were coded before giving the questionnaire to the employees. Under the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), if the Significant (Sig.) value is less than .05 (.01, .001 etc.), which is the predictable alpha probability confidence level set for the study, the variables are said to be significantly correlated (Pallant, 2003).

## Results

### Demographic characteristics

The respondents were predominantly male with 129 (84.3%) and female 24 (15.7%), out of which majority 108 (70.6%) held the position of reporter/correspondent, 36 (23.5%) were editors and 9 (5.9%) line editors. Marital representation was not evenly distributed in the respondent pool, because of the generally huge disparity in the number of male and female journalists in favour of the male. The majority of respondents were married, 111 (72.6%), with a relatively mix of singles, 30 (19.6%) and widowed 12 (7.8%). Only 48 (31.4%) of the respondents were freelance, the majority of 105 (68.6%) were staff. This is due largely to the premium paid to employee job rather than self-employment. Respondents who worked for less than 5 years were 51 (33.3%); 6-7 years, 30 (19.6%); 8-12 years were 42 (27.5%) and those above 13 years 30 (19.6%).

### Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics presents a summary of scores from which relationships or differences can be inferred or made. It is a good idea to check that (Mean, Standard deviation, N) these make sense in determining variance. Is there the right number of people in each group? Do the mean values make sense given the scale that was used? It actually provides room for replication of study and should be included before test of hypothesis.

Table 1.1: Correlation means and standard deviations for DASS and job satisfaction scores

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Total DASS Scores	18.3333	11.73501	153
Total Job Satisfaction score	128.2941	19.24252	153

The correlation table 1.1 above presents the mean differences and standard deviations of DASS and job satisfaction scores for the 153 respondents. DASS had a mean score of 18.33 and standard deviation of 11.73, while job satisfaction had a mean score of 128.29 and standard deviation of 19.24.

Table 1.2: T-test means and standard deviations of DASS and job satisfaction scores according to gender

Group Statistics				
	Gender of respondent	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total DASS Scores	Male	129	17.7442	12.17277
	Female	24	21.5000	8.54655
Total Job Satisfaction score	Male	129	130.1395	19.53072
	Female	24	118.3750	14.22738

The T-test group statistics shown in table 1.2 reflects the mean scores of 129 males and 24 females for DASS and job satisfaction. The male group for DASS had a mean of 17.74 and standard deviation of 12.17 while the female group had a mean of 21.50 and standard deviation of 8.54. For job satisfaction variable, male group had a mean score of 130.13 and standard deviation of 19.53, whereas the female group had a mean of 118.37 and standard deviation score of 14.22.

### Data analyses

In testing the hypotheses, correlation analysis and T-test were used to determine whether the collected data present sufficient evidence to indicate a relationship between the variables of DASS and Job satisfaction.

Table 1.3: Correlation analysis of stress and job satisfaction

## Correlations

		Total DASS Scores	Total Job Satisfaction score
Total DASS Scores	Pearson Correlation	1	-.271**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	153	153
Total Job Satisfaction score	Pearson Correlation	-.271**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	153	153

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between the variables was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Table 1.3) at probability level of  $p \leq 0.05$ . The result showed a significant negative relationship between the two variables,  $r = -.27$ ,  $n = 153$ ,  $p < .005$ , with high DASS levels associated with lower levels of job satisfaction. The first and second hypotheses “there is a significant relationship between stress and job satisfaction” and “Journalists who are high on stress will be less satisfied with their jobs”, are therefore accepted. This result implies that debilitating stress levels affect the job satisfaction of journalist in Benue state and the higher the stress experienced, the less satisfied they are with their job. This result provides answers to the research hypotheses 1 and 2, objectives 1 and 2 as well as research questions 1, 2 and 3.

Table 1.4: T-test analysis of gender differences on stress and job satisfaction

## independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total DASS Scores	Equal variances assumed	3.705	.056	-1.445	151	.151
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.834	42.548	.074
Total Job Satisfaction score	Equal variances assumed	2.266	.134	2.812	151	.006
	Equal variances not assumed			3.486	41.048	.001

The independent T-test (Table 1.4) above showed a difference between males and females on DASS and job satisfaction, measured at same probability level of  $p \leq 0.05$ . The T-test results indicates no gender differences for DASS, at  $t = df (1, 151) = .15$ , Not Sig. (2-tailed) but showed a significant gender difference for job satisfaction at  $t = df (1, 151) = .00$  Sig. (2-tailed) These results imply that there are no differences among male and female journalist in the level of stress felt in the course of exercising their job but they differ in the level of job satisfaction felt. These results provide answers to hypotheses (3) the last research question (4) and objective (4).

### Discussion, conclusion and recommendation

Analyses for the first hypothesis indicate that there is a linear and negative association between occupational stress and overall job satisfaction, as found in the literature (Ahsan, Abdullah, Fie and Alam 2009; Nor Liyana & Mansor, 2009; Nescoe, 2011; Mansoor, Fida, Nasir and Ahmad, 2011;). Thus, overall job satisfaction correlates negatively with the stress supporting the hypothesis that the higher the level of stress felt by journalists the lower

their satisfaction. The study by Deprez and Raeymaecker (2012) supports the third hypothesis when they asserted that “Female journalists are not less satisfied but state to have more difficulties to combine the journalistic job with a private and family life.” Gender analysis in the study also indicated job satisfaction differences felt between male and female journalists and found no stress difference in the level of for the groups. In other words, gender is only found to modulate job satisfaction but not stress levels among journalists.

This research reveals that: there is a negative correlation between stress and job satisfaction; Since there is a negative correlation between stress and job satisfaction, it follows that the higher the stress, the lower the satisfaction with job; there is significant difference in the way male and female journalist feel satisfied about their job but they did not differ in their experience of stress.

Employers of journalists should take the issue of stress management very serious as many of the journalists experience different degrees of stress. Management of various organizations from which journalists serve should endeavour to organize seminars on stress management to enable journalists learn stress coping strategies. Individual journalists on their part should learn to exercise personal control over the demands of the work they have to deal with to avoid stress. It is imperative for policy makers to establish legal framework that makes stress management issues mandatory for employees.

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