

# OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND EXPECTED REWARDS AS PREDICTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG MEN OF THE NIGERIAN ARMY

Nnauko, Ayochukwu Oliver<sup>1</sup>, Oguagha, Willams Obidi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Department of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Caritas University Amorji-Nike Enugu, Enugu State Nigeria

Email - naolive2006@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** The military profession has been rated by researchers as one of the high stress profession. Joining the Army is seen as a voluntary assumption of risk under the law and *volenti-Non Fit injuria* applies. This study therefore is an attempt to bring into focus how occupational stress and expected reward can predict job satisfaction among soldiers. 150 subjects were used for the research. These subjects were soldier drawn randomly from Ikeja cantonment, Nigerian army school of finance and Administration Apapa, Nigerian Army medical school Ojo cantonment and the Nigerian army school of Education Illorin. Simple Random Sampling and Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling were the sampling technique used for the study. The sampling included 34 senior NCO'S and 116 junior NCO'S. 125 of the subjects were male soldiers while the remaining 25 were femal soldiers. The research instruments used for the study were standardized questionnaire for measuring job satisfaction. The dependent variable is Job satisfaction while the independent variables are occupational stress and expected rewards. The simple percentage, the independent T-test and chi-square was used to test the hypothesis stated at 5% or 0.05 level of significance. The major findings in the study include that: i) there is a significant relationship between occupational stresses, expected rewards and job satisfaction among men of the Nigerian Army. ii) the soldiers who feel that their expected rewards have been relatively achieved (met) will experience less stress and more Job satisfaction. iii) there is presently brain drain of graduate other rank soldiers from the Nigeria Army whose expected rewards are not achieved (Job dissatisfaction). iv) the expected rewards are usually in terms of career advancement, promotion in rank, recognition, better condition of service better post service life, good pension and retirement benefit. v) junior NCO'S will significantly experience more Job stress than the senior NCO'S. vi) the senior NCO'S will experience more job satisfaction than the junior NCO'S, and vii) the poor treatment and low standard of living of some retired soldiers triggers job stress and job dissatisfaction on serving soldiers approaching retirement age. Recommendations were equally made by the researcher to the management of the Nigerian Army that will aid in stress management and enhance job satisfaction of men of the Nigeria Army.

**Key Words:** military profession, job satisfaction, pressure/stress, Nigeria Army.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Stress is an inevitable part of modern day life. Thus, there is no organization in the world that does not have its stress, even the community of saints. In factories and industries, the constant drive for all workers to produce their maximum, the exploitation of every opportunity and all possible raw materials and the speed, pace and impersonality of machines, all throw an enormous burden and stress on workers. The military job is said to be among the high stress occupations. Every day we hear of wars and rumours of wars, threat by insurgence and the current attacks by terrorist. All this pose a great challenge and high stress to the military and soldiers in particular. In fact the soldiers, due to the nature of their job are by and large bed follows of stress.

*IT NEEDS BUT AN ORDER,  
TO SETTLE THEM IN THIS PLACE,  
TO MOVE THEM TO THAT PLACE,  
TO SEPARATE THEM FROM THEIR FAMILIES,  
TO DISLOCATE THEIR NORMAL LIVES,  
ON THE WORD OF COMMAND,  
RISE, MARCH, RUN, AND ENDURE BAD WEATHER,  
BE ISSOLATED IN SOME DISTANT DUTYPOST,  
WORK TILL THEY DROP,  
THEY HAVE CEASED TO BE MASTER OF THEIR FATE,  
IF THEY DROP IN THEIR TRACK,  
IF THEIR ASHES ARE SCATTERED IN THE WINDS,  
THAT IS ALL PART AND PARCEL OF THEIR JOB,  
THEY HAVE BEEN INITIATED INTO (THE PROFESSION OF ARMS)*

This is a clear picture of Job stress of soldiers.

At close observation, you can see some soldiers going about with stress written in their faces and some even displace this stress on their families and innocent civilians in the forms of aggression. MC Greth's (1970) defined stress as "a perceived substantial imbalance between demand and response capability under conditions where failure to meet demand has important perceived consequence" This applies very much to military profession and duties. This definition does not see stress as stimulus but an event is stressful to individual based on how he perceived it. Dr. Carl Albrach, the author of stress and manager stated that stress is a natural part of human functioning and the type of stress managers are concerned with is characterized by excessive physiological strain.

Gardner and Taylor (1981) emphasized the importance of individual in stress phenomenon which is subjective in nature and occur in any one who feels that he or she is under pressure. Everyone experiences a certain amount of pressure stress. The absence of stress is death. Thus it is essential for life. In fact, stress can be beneficial because it may act as stimuli when carrying out interesting and challenging task. Excessive stress, however can have strong and negative impact on individual managers and workers performance and thus on the achievement of organizational goals.

Severe and painful pressure can be caused by competition for acceptance to college, grade, job and promotions and by social demands, worries about economic security, political instability and the possible outbreak of war.

It is important to note that when a person is under pressure/stress, he is faced with disrupted emotional, cognitive and physiological functioning. The symptoms of stress include lack of appetite, inability to sleep, constant irritable feeling and aggression, inability to sit and relax, bursting fears, irritability, impatience, headaches, excessive smoking and drinking, low concentration, lack of enjoyment, lapse of memory, depression, neurosis, misery, frequent self-doubt, feeling of dread, feeling of tiredness, uneasy feeling, high blood pressure, frustration, etc.

Excessive stress can cause or aggravate a number of ailments such as arthritic, bursitis, cancer, diabetes, diarrhea, heartbeat, hypertension, sexual impotence. Job related stress can lead to high rate of absenteeism, poor productivity, job dissatisfaction, high accident rate, tardiness in work place, antagonism, high blood turnover and poor decision making. One thing about stress is the fact that the effect of the environmental or physiological demands on the individual are dependent on how he perceives the demand. Thus, not everyone reacts to the same situation in a stressful manner. The cause of stress can be classified as job related factors and personal factors. Job related factors arise from work environment or work itself. Examples are impossible deadline, difficult tasks, high noise levels, unwanted overtime, shift work, excessive travel job, insecurity, organizational rules are procedures. Personal related factors are those arising from the characteristics of the individual managers or workers, they include self-imposed pressure, self-doubt, aging, fear of success or failure, over aggressiveness, low self-esteem, frustration, inability to relax, impatience and family problems. Thus every organization has its own stress.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The theories used as a framework for the explanation and understanding of this study are

- i. Expectancy theory by Vroom.
- ii. Equity theory by Adams
- iii. Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

The various empirical reviews by the researcher indicates that the Army is a highly bureaucratic organization with a hierarchy of command from top to bottom. The duties or job schedule are assigned according to the rank of the personnel but no matter the rank of any personnel, he still have his own stress of the job. The hierarchy structure exemplified by the military chain of command postulates a downward flow of directives. The high command from whom the most general directives emanate is concerned with broad questions of strategy and management. Responsibility for the evacuation of orders rests ultimately on the tactical commanders and the ordinary soldier on whom the various orders and directives tend to converge. He has no recourse but to obey. The first rule in the military organization is obedience to commands from superiors. Discipline is a soldiers' primary virtue. His judgments concern only how to overcome the external difficulties or stress he encountered in the execution of orders. It is the rank that determines the responsibilities and degree of authority officers and men of the Army holds. The rank also determine status, salary and even the type of accommodation personnel have. The fundamental inequality between the ranks persists as one of the pillars of military authority. The Warrant Officer Play supervisory role and they serve as a link between the commissioned and non-commissioned officers. As already mentioned, no matter the rank or position one finds himself in the hierarchy he still has his own stress of the job, both officers and soldiers. The primary duty of the Nigerian Army is to defend the territorial integrity, wealth and people of Nigeria. In order words, the military is

the custodian of national security and hence, the executor of a nation's war, protector of her borders and the critical element of social control in times of great internal life.

For example, the Army was used to bring internal order during the Tiv riots and the 1981 Maitatsine religious uprising in Kano as well as other religious disturbances in the North and other serious tribal conflicts within the country including the WARRI, Itsekiri and Ijawtribal conflict as well as the Ife-Modakeke conflict (1997).

The Nigerian Army is also involved presently in bringing internal order in northern Nigeria and the Niger areas. The terrorist activities of the Boko Haram has thrown a big challenge and stress on the military and the Nigerian Army in particular. Many soldiers lost their lives and the uncertainty and secret activities of this terrorist brings a lot of stress and tension. The Nigerian Army also has to contain with the Niger Delta Militants and Avengers in the difficult creeks and maritime terrain. The Nigerian Army also has been participating in peace keeping operations in war torn countries such as Congo, Lebanon, Yugoslavia, Liberia and Sierra Leone etc. There are various corps in the Army and these Corps are divided into two, the teeth arms and the service arms. The teeth arms are Infantry Corps, the Armor Corps and the Artillery Corps. The service arms are the medical corps, military police corps, finance corps, Army Public Relations Corps, Band Corps, Signal Corps, Ordinance Corps, the workshop corps, the Intelligence Corps, Education Corps, Engineering Corps and the Chaplain Corps.

Each of these corps has their various roles both at war and peace times and personnel are deployed to the various units; headquarters, company Battalions, Brigades and Divisions. Each having its own area of responsibilities. The degree of stress soldiers experience to some extent depends on the area of deployment, area of responsibility and area of operation. In a world situation in which there is neither war nor peace but a state of continued preparedness for war is stressful in itself because of the uncertainty of events. In actual war situations, military operations, internal conflicts or even peace-keeping operations, the soldiers also suffer great uncertainty. In particular, they constantly face the prospect of being killed or seriously injured and they witness death and injury to others. The level of individual performance as well as the point at which he ceases to be motivated vary considerably in accordance with personality dispositions as well as his perception of the stressful situation. Some men become ineffective after relatively minor stress, while others break down only as a consequences of prolong exposure and after having performed admirably in battle or operations.

Medical officers and psychologists have long recognized that endurance of all individuals has objective limits and that persons who have escaped physical injury may begin to manifest various kinds of psychiatric or psychological incapacity. The limit to which ground combat personnel could be expected to go before exhibiting serious signs of ineffectiveness was calculated by Beebe and Apple (Brill and Beebe, 1955) from World War II casualty figure as 100 days of continuous combat. War, whenever it occurs, constitutes a crisis. There is always a discontinuity between the preparatory state and the emergency response to events whose disruptive effects cannot be completely controlled.

Psychologists believe that events that are uncontrollable or unpredictable tend to be experienced as stressful. In an emergency, all soldiers are required to carry out their assignments in disregard of the amount of danger from enemy fire and at least some of them must be sufficiently motivated to court the risk of death or injury deliberately. Conflict between personal goals and organizational demand is potentially much greater than before. Strictly, utilitarian incentives no longer can guarantee performance (Etzroni, 1961). Outside war, the soldier goes on routine guard duties to strategic locations. The soldiers constantly undergo physical exercise (to keep fit), occasionally they go to bush exercise or mock war. They also engage in various operations both within and outside as well as guard around the country's borders. Training and re-training of soldiers is done on constant basis. The use of armors especially blank and live ammunitions in training and exercises expose them to the type of stress they are likely to encounter in performance of their duty under combat conditions (Stouffer et al, 1949).

In other words, being subjected to fire during training apparently helps men to anticipate and cope with the anxieties aroused in combat. Beside the opportunity that realistic tasks of tactical nature offer for rehearsing appropriate responses, they also help to predict future performance under conditions of stress (Stouffer et al, 1949).

The training of soldiers is very tedious and strenuous. The individual is made to die completely to the civil in him and be resurrected to a tough, roughed and combatant military personnel. The civilian-soldier transition demands from most a temporary deferment or abandonment of previously established life goals. Janis (1945) has therefore likened it to one of those major life crises to which people must adjust. Both the magnitude of the adjustment problem and the satisfactions found in the military situation reflects one's prior orientation to military service and the conditions under which the services is performed. Conditions of service therefore becomes very important given the nature of the job in

determining the job satisfaction among soldiers. Therefore, the issue of soldier's welfare to enhance his job satisfaction has become of critical importance.

The milieu of the military organization differ most clearly from that of the 'civilian' occupation in the degree to which organizational control extends to many phases of personal life normally left untouched. A soldier is employed for 24 hours unlike his civilian counterpart. A soldier can be called to duty any time even after closing from office work. The civilian when not at work or on weekends or public holidays can travel if they wish to do so but not so for the soldier, he has to obtain pass if he wants to travel when off-duty, during weekends or public holidays and there is no guarantee that the pass must be approved (given). There are even situations where a signal of 'No leave, No pass' is sent from higher headquarters to all units under command and even those personnel already on leave or pass can be called back to work. Therefore, unless there is a strong identification with military goals, the curtailment of freedom to regulate ones' own off-duty activities will be felt as deprivation particularly among new recruits, reactive responses to these frustrations are likely to be evident.

- THERE IS NO FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS.
  - THUS SOLDIERS CANNOT LIVE ANYWHERE THEY CHOSE.
  - SAY WHATEVER THEY THINK OR
  - DRESS AS THEY WILL from the moment they become soldiers.
- These contradicts the relative freedom of civil life.

It is inevitable that soldiers who have obtained higher education and are still within lower ranks, those who have some special trades or even those from middle-class background or upper class background may experience their enlisted-man's status as a demotion, especially when they compare their position with what others had achieved or what they themselves had hoped to achieve. Judgment of one's own military position as inferior to those of relevant reference groups results in feeling of relative deprivation that helps to explain the different amount of dissatisfaction experienced by soldiers serving under like conditions (Merton and Kitt, 1950). Sometimes certain aspects of military job affects family life. Therefore, making military life compatible with the demands of specific job within the military and promoting a modus Vivendi between the demands of a military career and those of family life continues to pose a problem. Due to prolonged absent from home on distant duty posts or in operations outside the country, some unfaithful Army wives became promiscuous and some even became pregnant through other men before their husband could return from such distant duties or operations outside the country.

The pains and stress of these to the Army husband can easily be imagined. Some grown up daughters and sons grow out of control because of their fathers' prolonged or constant absence from home. This underpins the problem of deviant or delinquent behaviour among some soldiers' children. A point of departure in this project is the fact that there is no woman in the military. This need to be understood. All serving personnel are referred to simply as officers and soldiers which is applicable, making the descriptive adjective of male or female soldiers superfluous. The rational lies in one assumption that once enlisted or commissioned soldiers, irrespective of gender, perform almost the same functions. This, the Army is meant to be gender blind. There is no separate terms and conditions of service of men and women. The united state ARMY AND EVEN THE Nigerian Army assigns women some variety of functions some for which used to be regarded as the exclusive preserve of men.

For the purpose of more explanation in this work, the adjective female or male is therefore used for such peculiar stress to the genders. The female soldiers, to some what extent cannot be friend an officer even when unmarried? In a hierarchical organization, too much camaraderie between the sexes is seen as likely to weaken discipline and dilute rank fighting spirit of soldiers. It is thus an offence for an officer to have romantic relation with a female soldier. This creates a stressful approach – avoidance conflict in both sexes especially when attraction starts developing between them as they work together. The female in the military also have the stress of not getting husband even from among the male soldiers. Those who are lucky enough to get married to fellow soldiers have to live in the barracks because every soldier is expected to live in the barracks but the civilian husband cannot.

The man can visit the barracks but what happens during emergency or in an operation? Here, a tactical separation between the couple is inevitable. There are also aspects of military job that may affect a soldier's personal or religious beliefs but the soldier has no option but to comply with orders. Thus when he is involved in operations or actions that left alone, he would not have, he experiences cognitive dissonance. Festinger (1957) postulated that when one's actions are not in consonance with his beliefs, that person will experience cognitive dissonance which is a stressful experience. This underpins some soldiers drinking and smoking behaviours as coping mechanisms. Not surprising signs of mal-adjustment which becomes evident and to some extent in manifestations of neurotic anxiety. Given all these, various Nigerian Army chiefs have come up with various policies, welfare packages and rewards to enhance the

job satisfaction of soldiers. Moreover, some special rewards and incentives have been attached to certain duties or operations given its stressful nature to enhance the motivation and job satisfaction of soldiers. Various tactical commanders has also taken the welfare and job satisfaction of their troops as their priority. At the end of the 1987, Chief of Army Staff conference tagged. “EFFECTIVE RESOURCES MANAGEMENT TO ENHANCE OPERATIONAL READINESS” the then Chief of Army Staff, Major General Sani Abacha informed participants among other things that as part of Nigerian Army Welfare programme and as a follow up to the benevolent fund which was started in 1983, that he has approved, in principle, the establishment of the Nigerian Army Welfare and Insurance Scheme (NAWIS). He observed that the schemes which will run alongside each other were aimed at enhancing the general welfare of officers and soldiers and nuclear families (Soja, p. 24; Jan/Feb., 1987).

Satisfaction in the job is believed therefore to lead to less stress. This also is believed to depend on the value outcomes the soldier derives from job. This can be seen from the instrumentality theory of job satisfaction view. This theory views the individual as calculating the degree to which job leads to valued outcome such as pay, promoting in rank, or good working condition. Also, the theorist believed that by weighing the perceived value or attractiveness of each outcome and considering all outcomes in the set, the individual arrives at an estimate of the satisfaction he feels will come from the job.

### 3. CONCLUSION:

The conclusion arrived at from the study was based on the analysis of the subjects response to the questionnaire items administered to them. The results indicated also that job satisfaction level has much various facts of attainment as elicited by the specified theories that gave credence to this dimension. That the soldiers rank position or status on the job satisfaction one attains on the job. It is also summarily concluded that a soldiers job is a very stressful one. In fact, Hans Seyle and others had a research on stress and he placed the job of a soldier at the top of the occupational stress league.

Moreso, it was concluded that the junior NCOs significantly experience more stress than the senior NCOs. Also that the female soldiers experience more job stress than the male soldiers. An individual who experiences stress at work place will necessarily engage in one form of withdrawal behaviour or other. The increasing rate of “AWOL” (especially total desertion of the Army) particularly among young enlisted soldiers is a pointer to the level of dissatisfaction. This is also a danger signal not only to the Army but for the security of the country at large.

The research revealed that generally there is a low level of job satisfaction among the other rank cadre of the Nigerian Army. However, the senior NCOs experience more job satisfaction than the junior NCOs. It was also summarily concluded that there is presently brain drain of graduate other ranks from the Nigerian Army as a result of unsatisfied condition of service. Copper and Marshall (1986) has highlighted the impact of status (rank) incongruity as a factor comprising as it does under promotion, frustration at reaching one’s own career ceiling, thwarted ambition, poor salary as contributing highly to the stress and job dissatisfaction.

How much therefore can the efficiency of a corrupt and dissatisfied Army be guaranteed?

### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The whole essence of this work is aimed at helping the military organization especially the Army to reduce occupational stress, enhance job satisfaction and motivation of troops so that performance will improve.

This project summarizes some of the effects by stressor, physical, environmental, psychological and social factors of stressors; since stress is inevitable in the profession of Arms, three approaches to training people to perform under stressful conditions are hereby described and recommended.

The first approach involves focusing on the stress itself and assumes that if individuals can be taught to manage the stress their job satisfaction and performance will improve. Thus soldiers should be taught stress management right from Depot and other Army training schools.

The school approach is the cockpit resource management approach in which participants are taught effective interpersonal skill to deal with any potential stressor. Thus enhancing effective interpersonal relationship between the high ranking personnel and their subordinate and among subordinates themselves.

Effective stress management skill among workers in organizations has been found to improve organizational effectiveness, job satisfaction of workers and improve performance.

Further Recommendations Include

1. The Nigerian Army should be professionalized in the real sense like the American Army.

2. The policy of recruiting primary school certificate holder or those who attempted senior secondary school examinations with poor results should be discouraged in this computer age where sophisticated weapons and equipments are being used in military organizations.
3. Effort should be made constantly by the military authorities to reduce the inherent stressors in the job and to pair the inevitable ones with rewards and incentive to enhance job satisfaction and motivation of troops.
4. Promotion should be based on seniority and those who are facing career frustration without any justifiable reason should be given double promotion to level up with their colleagues, this has the chance of fostering cohesion, discipline, spirit de corps and above all professionalism.
5. Monitor/Counsellors: at the Battalion/regimental or unit level there ought to be a monitor. The monitor or counselor is usually one who through counseling or direct intervention assists the soldier to attain his goals. The monitor guides the soldier to appropriate courses both in the military and civil institution and ensures soldier presentation for promotions. Therefore, the primary and over-riding responsibilities of the monitor/counselor are to manage the career of the soldiers put in his care and also teach the soldiers effective stress management skills. He monitors and distributes these soldiers in the most efficient manner to support the N.A needs. Monitor/counselor are however to harmonize N.A interests, desires and needs of the individual soldier concurrently to ensure the supremacy of the Nigerian Army interest. When the soldiers' needs are met on the job definitely they will be satisfied, when they are satisfied, they will be motivated then job performance will also increase. These recommendations will enhance the building of a professional soldier and professionalism in the Army. The management of such programme will be more effective where military commanders or administrative officers are graduates of personnel/human resources management or have ideas of organizational psychology and career management.

#### 6. Nigerian Army Research Institute for Behaviour and Social Sciences

I recommend further the establishment of Nigerian Army Research Institute for Behaviour and Social Sciences. This Institute when established will run a consultancy contract with the department of industrial relations and personnel management and other relevant departments of a reputable university. These departments will serve as a third party intervention to enhance research studies in the Nigerian Army. This type of Institute exist in the U.S Army and they have done a lot of a research and recommendations that has helped to reduce stress, increase motivation, job satisfaction and performance of American soldiers. Most of the military literatures are based on European countries; Nigeria which plays a leading role not only in Africa but also in the whole black world and should provide the world with researches on military based on pure black world. For African environment is different from Euro-American environment while the basic needs of American workers are met, the basic needs of African workers are hardly met. Hence the difference in motivation.

Furthermore, this institute when established should also work in conjunction with the Nigerian Army education corps and headquarters (TRADOC) Training and Doctrine Command of the Nigerian Army should provide Nigerian Army personnel with counseling facilities in all Army Barracks throughout the country.

7. Recognition of performance should not be restricted to performance in rank only. Income level/salary should not be tied to rank. The Army should make and approved the policy whereby the soldier pay should be commensurate with his qualification. Thus a graduate soldier should be paid according to his civilian counterpart.
8. Finally, a continuous valuation of performance must be embarked on. This is so important that any organization that fails to have formalized and enhanced process of evaluation would definitely be unable to achieve their organizational goal.

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