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Managing Occupational Stress Among Nigerian Police Officers Deployed to Borno State, Nigeria

Babatunde Salmon Alabi
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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Babatunde Salmon Alabi

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Managing Occupational Stress Among Nigerian Police Officers Deployed to Borno State,
Nigeria

by

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MBA, University of Cumbria, United Kingdom, 2015

BS, University of Ilorin, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

August 2020

Abstract

The police officers in Borno State, Nigeria, lack adequate training to manage the occupational stress when deployed to perform their civic duties of protection of lives and properties. Using the theory of psychological stress and coping, the purpose of this general qualitative study was to explore strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State of Nigeria used in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties. The research question was written to address the strategies required by police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties. Using semistructured interviews, 15 participants were selected who had successfully worked in Borno State, Nigeria, for more than 2 years. Using triangulation, member checking, and theme analysis, data were analyzed to explore strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, used in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties. Analyses resulted in 9 themes which confirmed the reports that the corruption in the NPF is so endemic that it affects every aspect of their operations; including promotions and deployments. The findings may be used to create a public policy on how police officers may deal with such stress, which would improve the performance of the police force in Nigeria and improve their standards of living and wellbeing.

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Dedication

Dedicated to all the underprivileged kids of the world whose conditions would have been alleviated with effective, responsive and impactful public policy initiatives.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge the tremendous efforts of my Chair Dr. Robert Lance Spivey, my Second Committer Member Dr. Gregory Campbell and my URR Dr. Karen Shafer in this great journey. I am honored to have benefitted immensely from your individual and combined knowledge.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Occupational stress is a negative feeling that affects the performance of individuals, including police officers, who perform the civic responsibilities of protecting life and property. Occupational stress leads to negative organizational symptoms and high costs, such as employee turnover and absenteeism, and can jeopardize the safety of other employees (Irawanto & Primasari, 2015). This form of stress is the most significant type of stress, as expressed by employees who report their jobs are very stressful or extremely stressful (Irawanto & Primasari, 2015). Irawanto and Primasari (2015) described occupational stress as a mental and physical condition that produces negative organizational and individual outcomes in a working environment. Smollan (2015), using a qualitative phenomenological study, interviewed 31 police officers from New Zealand who had experienced considerable organizational stressors, such as (a) a negative working environment, (b) long duration of working hours, (c) lack of or less time for family, (d) irregular or improper eating habits, (e) needing to make tough decisions very quickly, (f) sleepless nights, (g) poor living and working conditions, (h) inadequate time for leisure activities, and (i) difficulties in their personal lives. However, the factors responsible for occupational stress to police officers in Nigeria remain unknown to researchers.

Findings on occupational stress in New Zealand reveal that transitions are particularly painful due to the uncertainty of outcomes and the heavier workload (Smollan, 2015). Some of the occupational stress factors are (a) having to adapt to new roles and new managers, (b) expectations of other colleagues, (c) heavy workload, (d)

increased targets, and (e) deadlines. Other factors of stress are increased responsibilities, insufficient resources, and health issues (Smollan, 2015). Factors during transitions are (a) higher workload during the transition phase, (b) job insecurity, (c) lack of support from supervisors, and (d) poor communication (Smollan, 2015). Smollan (2015) recommended that resources for the job should be adequate to enable police officers to perform their duties to the best of their abilities.

Building on the research of Smollan (2015), I leveraged the findings in the study to explore the strategies required of police officers deployed to Borno State in Nigeria for managing occupational stress when discharging their duties. In the current environment of terrorism in Nigeria, police officers perform their duties in the face of high demand(s) and increasing at-risk situations of insurgency with no effective public policy to address their challenges (Gershon, 2000). Therefore, this study was used to address how police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, manage occupational stress despite unavailable or inadequate government policies and programs. Stress among police officers may be present in the forms of fatigue, depression, difficulty in concentrating, irritability, and impulsive behavior (Kula, 2017).

Senjo (2011) and Violanti et al. (2017) revealed that not getting enough rest can increase the effects of fatigue that can result in higher rates of accidents and injuries, impaired speech, inability to balance, impaired eye-hand coordination, and falling asleep on duty. Studies have revealed that reduced work performance and increased physical and mental health illnesses are the negative effects of occupational stress on police officers (Adang et al., 2018; Bye et al., 2019; Kula, 2017; Schaible, 2018). However,

there is no previously known study on the influence of occupational stress and available public policies and programs for police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, for effective management of the occupational stress when discharging their duties (Adegoke, 2014). The purpose of the general qualitative approach was to explore the strategies used by police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties despite unavailable or inadequate government policies and programs.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge needed to fill the gap in developing policy and programs that may help to address occupational stress among police officers in Nigeria. The public policy implication is that the study findings may provide insight for government policy makers to understand the challenges of occupational stress for police officers in Borno State, Nigeria, and how to improve their job performance. The implications for positive social change include improving the performance of the police force and improving their standard of living and wellbeing.

Background of the Study

There is no previously known study on the influence of occupational stress and available public policies and programs for police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, for effective management of the occupational stress when discharging their duties (Adegoke, 2014). Studies on the effects of occupational stress in New Zealand revealed that transitions are significantly painful because of the uncertainty of outcomes and the enormity of workloads (Smollan, 2015). Severe stress can become dangerous and damaging because of the physical, behavioral, and harmful effects on its victims

(Akindenwa & Ehigie, 2017). Fighting terrorism, explosions, oil spills, accidents, and bomb attacks can also contribute to stress among police officers (Ogunsola & Ogundele, 2001). Since 2009, the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) has deployed over 4,000 police officers to fight insurgencies in Borno State and other Northeastern parts of the country as well as kidnappings, banditry, and armed robberies in the Southwestern and South-Southern regions (Nigeria Police Force; NPF, 2017).

Lasisi (2013) identified job insecurity, high demand for performance, technology, and workplace culture as factors of occupational stress among police officers. Van der Werff et al. (2017) pointed out that working in a highly stressful occupation carries many risks for the psychological wellbeing of employees. Van der Meulen et al. (2018) showed that occupational stress is a predictive factor in mental health disturbances among police officers.

Findings from the study conducted by Alessandri et al. (2018) identified poor performance, low retention, emotional instability, and lack of self-belief as the effects of emotional stress on police officers. Additional stressors in the police environment such as an imbalance or unavailability of the resources needed to address sources of stress can engender further stress for police officers. Equally, Mogadeghrad (2014) listed (a) emotional weakness, (b) mood fluctuation, (c) instability to sleep, (d) lack of concentration, (e) depression, (f) anxiety, and (g) suicidal ideation as psychological effects of occupational stress on police officers deployed to fight terrorism. Occupational stress and its associated physical and mental health related issues among Nigerian police officers have not received adequate attention due in part to poor mental health facilities

and lack of a policy framework that could enhance their recovery (Adekunle, 2017).

Coping with these issues can include stabilizing factors that may help individuals to maintain psychological adaptation during stressful periods (Meichenbaum, 2017). Effective intervention programs that focus on awareness programs and self-esteem, biofeedback training, diagnosis, treatment, spirituality, strong social support from families, community attachment, and economic status are keys to managing occupational stress among police officers in Western countries (Arble et al., 2018; Bishopp et al., 2018; Fleischmann et al., 2018; Garbarino et al., 2015; Lambert et al., 2018; Sollie et al., 2017; Wassermann et al., 2018). No studies exist on intervention programs for managing occupational stress among police officers in Nigeria.

Conversely, although there have been studies related to the effects of occupational stress and management of occupational stress in Nigeria (e.g., Adegoke, 2014; Adekunle, 2017; Lasthuizen & Paanakker, 2016; Ojedokun & Idemudia, 2014), no studies have documented the occupational stress of Nigerian police officers fighting terrorism in Borno State, Nigeria, and other criminal activities in other parts of the country. In this study, I used the psychological stress and coping theory developed by Lazarus and Folkman in 1984 to explore the availability of any government policy or program to support mental health for Nigerian police officers who are exposed to occupational stress and also find out about their coping strategies.

Adepelumi (2018) revealed that relying on studies involving occupational stress to form conclusions on the methods of coping with occupational stress among Nigerian police officers may be misleading because of a differing organizational culture, value

systems, and government programs and policies. Understanding the effects of occupational stress based on the lived experience of police officers in Borno State, Nigeria, may help policymakers and the NPF to guide its management and increase the quality of support services for the police force.

Problem Statement

In the NPF, there are cases of police officers confronted with occupational stress in performing their civic duties of protection of lives and properties (Rose & Unnithan, 2015). Sixty-five percent of police officers in Nigeria are exposed to occupational stress, and they suffer severe cognitive dysfunction, drunkenness, divorce, lower levels of job satisfaction, aggression, job burnout, poorer levels of commitment, generalized disorders, psychiatric illnesses, and an increased likelihood of resigning from the force (Gutshall et al., 2017; Halevi et al., 2016). Giga and Hoel (2003) argued that lack of effective treatment of occupational stress among police officers may increase posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among them. The general problem that I addressed in this study is that police officers in Borno State, Nigeria, lack adequate knowledge to manage the occupational stress when deployed to that region to perform their civic duties to protect lives and properties (Ojedokun & Idemudia, 2014). The specific problem that I addressed in this study is that inadequate public policies and programs are available for Nigerian police officers on strategies useful to manage occupational stress when deployed to Borno State to perform their civic duties.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the general qualitative approach was to explore the strategies used by police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties despite unavailable or inadequate government policies and programs. The study participants included selected police officers deployed to protect lives and properties in Borno State between 2009 and 2019. For each participant who has worked there, I used a face-to-face interview, took reflexive notes during the interviews, and reviewed the literature regarding strategies used by police officers who have successfully addressed stress. To participate in this study, participants must have met the following requirements:

1. Police officers who have worked in Borno State between 2009 and 2019 and served at least 2 years in that period.
2. Police officers with ranks ranging from Constable to Inspector of Police.
3. Specifically, only police officers who volunteer to participate in the study were included.

Research Question

The research questions for the study was: What strategies do police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework was based on the theory of psychological stress and coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman in 1984. The theory identifies two major

processes of managing stress: (a) cognitive appraisal and coping as critical mediators of personal stress and (b) interacting with the environment and their immediate and long-range outcomes. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) described cognitive appraisal as a process through which people evaluate whether a particular encounter with a certain environment is relevant to their well-being. Cognitive appraisal takes the form of primary and secondary appraisal (Carver et al., 1989). Whereas primary appraisal is when a person evaluates whether anything is at stake in an encounter, secondary appraisal is when the person evaluates what could be done to avert any harm associated with the encounter (Carver et al., 1989).

Coping is described as constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and internal demands that are appraised during the encounter (Carver et al., 1989). Carver et al. (1989) identified 12 conceptual scales of coping strategies as active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint coping, seeking social support for instrumental reasons, seeking social support for emotional reasons, focusing on and venting of emotions, behavioral disengagement, positive reinterpetative and growth, denial, acceptance, and turning to religion. I used this scale as a lens in developing the interview questions that may provide responses to the research question.

Nature of the Study

The study was qualitative in nature and I used an exploratory research design by developing the concept more clearly, establishing priorities, developing operational definitions, and improving on the final research design (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). The

nature of this study is one of a general qualitative approach for exploring strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties. A qualitative method is suitable for this study because it allows the researcher to explore the concept of human understanding through open-ended interview questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A general qualitative approach meets the needs for this study because of the ability to provide a detailed exploration of the effects of occupational stress for police officers in Borno State, Nigeria (see Marshall & Rossman, 2011). If the researcher is interested more in the actual outer-world content of their questions (the actual opinions themselves, the life experiences themselves, the participants' reflections themselves) and less on the inner organization and structure of the participants' experiencing processes, then the purpose is this general qualitative approach is to explore strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties despite unavailable or inadequate government policies and programs.

I used purposive sampling to select the participants for this study. Borno State is the place where participants relevant to this study currently reside. The sample size for this study was be 15 or more because Boyd (2001) suggested that with two to 15 research participants, saturation may be achieved. Groenewald (2004) recommended between five and 10 people for a qualitative study. The purpose of choosing purposive sampling was to focus on the characteristics of participants who are police officers that may have experienced occupational stress as a result of deployment to Borno State, Nigeria. I collected data until I achieved saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

The sample population was achieved using snowball sampling with the primary contacts among the police servicing at headquarters in Abuja. The general qualitative approach was adequate for this study because the objective was to study strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties. The exploratory case study design did not meet the needs for this study because I explored the lived experience of the police officers affected by occupational stressors during their deployment to the state rather than their perspectives alone. Face-to-face individual interviews related to the factors and effects of occupational stress on the participants was used to gather data from the study's sample population (Bernard, 2017). After I completed the face-to-face interviews, I used Collaizi's (1978) method of data analysis to extract, organize, and analyze the data.

Definitions

Deployment. Deployment is the time period when the police officer is away from home on service duty (Cheah et al., 2018).

Occupational stress. Occupational stress is stress related to an employee's job attributed to working conditions, workload, long hours, job status, bullying, and sexual harassment (Mosadeghrad, 2014).

Psychological illness. Psychological illness includes mental health dysfunction and malfunctions that could happen to an employee or an individual as a result of stress or other external factors such as illicit use of drugs (Vanhercke et al., 2015).

Police officers. A police officer is a police employee of a country who includes the responsibility of ensuring the security of lives and properties in a country (Bouranta et al., 2015).

Predeployment. Predeployment of police officers is the period or stage in which the warning orders are in place for deployment (Chu, 2018). For this studies, predeployment is a period from 5 to 7 years before deployment.

Postdeployment. Postdeployment is the time period that begins when the police officer returns home (Chu, 2018). The postdeployment period lasts until the police officer gets warning orders to deploy again.

Stressor. Stressors are the factors or pressure that cause or contribute to stress such as inappropriate leadership style, increased workload, and fear of job loss because of perceived inefficiency (Colligan & Higgins, 2006; Lornudd et al., 2016).

Stress management. Stress management is a technique used in planning and controlling the level of stress to alleviate the level of stress and to improve coping ability in individuals (Smollan, 2015).

Time pressure. Time pressure is a type of psychological stress that happens when an employee or individual has less time available to complete sufficient tasks (Gelbrich & Sattler, 2014).

Unexpected task. Unexpected tasks are duties that add to the work pressure of an employee that may result in stress (McNellis, 2013).

Work load. Work load is the amount of work or duties to be performed by an employee (McNellis, 2013).

Workforce ethics. Workforce ethics is defined as codes that guide employees on patterns of behavior in the organization (Ogunyemi & Laguda, 2016).

Assumptions

Assumptions reflect the nature of knowledge that determines the scope of inquiries and findings of a study (Fan, 2013). First, using a general qualitative approach, one would be able to study the strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, use in managing occupational stress while discharging their duties. Second, I assumed that 15 participants who would be willing and available to participate in the interview process helped me to reach saturation. Third, I assumed that upon making the proper arrangements, the interview environment was comfortable and that potential interviewee consented to and be available for the interviews during the field research period.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study was limited to police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, with experience in occupational stress. A general qualitative approach that involved the use of literature on the factors and effects of occupational stress along with face-to-face interviews was used to gather data for this study. The study was based on the theory of psychological stress and coping in which I explored the strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties. The findings of this study may have limited transferability because its effects are limited to police officers deployed in one region of Nigeria.

However, the outcomes of the study may enlighten readers about the factors and effects of occupational stress on police officers' performance and retention.

Limitations

Limitations in a study are the procedural intent and weaknesses of a study (Mitchell et al., 2013). The first limitation was that I was the sole instrument for data gathering, analysis, and interpretation. I was born in Nigeria and may have been biased toward the needs of the participants. Yin (2014) showed researcher subjectivity and bias in data collection, analysis, and interpretations as limitations of qualitative study. Second, the purposive sample for this study was 15 or more participants, which may have affected the quality of the data and transferability of the research findings. To address this problem, I used the same semistructured interview protocol for all the participants. Boyd (2001) and Groenwald (2004) suggested 10 research participants can reach saturation in qualitative studies. I used member checking, as well as thick description to improve accuracy and validity of the study (see Kroening et al., 2016). Third, focusing on Borno State, Nigeria, may have created a limitation in gaining a better understanding of occupational stress among police officers in other states in Nigeria. Such states may have unique circumstances that create occupational stress among police officers that may not be addressed in the study.

Significance of the Study

The effect of occupational stress on police officers deployed to fight terrorism have been extensively studied and analyzed internationally, in recognition of the significant roles of police in maintaining law and order (Hancock & Salman, 2019;

Ogunyemi & Laguda, 2016). However, the information on the factors and effects of occupational stress on Nigerian police officers in Borno State, based on their lived experiences, has not been investigated in previous studies. To obtain information on occupational stress among police officers in various deployment areas of Nigeria, it is important to understand the effects of occupational stress on Nigerian police officers and programs and services available to cope with such stress.

The study may be significant to the police officers currently in Borno State where insurgency remains. Lasthuizen and Paanakker (2016) identified factors that may enhance occupational stress in an organization including (a) organizational stressors, (b) operational stressors, (c) external stressors, and (d) personal stressors. The study may also be significant to the government, which may employ the recommendations in making policies that affect the NPF. In the process of planning for annual training and capacity building, the study may be significant for building a training module for the police officers in knowing how to deal with occupational stress in Nigeria. The NPF may be able to aid in building confidence and developing the capacity of police officers by implementing the recommendations in the study.

The study may also be significant to future researchers who may want to extend the body of knowledge on the occupational stress confronting police officers in Nigeria and in promoting positive social change by providing recommendations that may enhance government policies on police welfare, staff work rotation, and employee leave registers (see Dempsey & Forst, 2013). The implications for positive social change may include

creating awareness on how to address the factors responsible for occupational stress among police officers in Nigeria.

Summary

The rationale for this general qualitative approach is that there is a need to understand the strategies used by police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, regarding occupational stress-readiness in performing their civic duties to protect lives and properties. In Chapter 1, I discussed the effect of occupational stress among police officers or former police officers of the NPF, the significance of the study, and the assumptions and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of the general qualitative approach was to explore strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, used in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties despite unavailable or inadequate government policies and programs. Nigerian police officers' constant exposure to occupational stress, if not handled effectively, may be destructive both for them in terms of the quality of their work and their physical and mental state (Melgosa, 2010). Research shows that police officers affected by occupational stress suffer (a) emotional weakness, (b) mood fluctuation, (c) instability to sleep, (d) lack of concentration, (e) depression, (f) anxiety, (g) divorce, and (h) suicidal ideation (Mogadeghrad, 2014). Haus et al. (2016) categorized occupational stressors to include (a) *job-related factors* such as work load, responsibility, role conflict, and job demands; and (b) *organizational factors* such as organizational structure, policies and procedures, pay and benefits, job security, and leadership style.

Specifically in Nigeria, there is a lack of effective programs and policies to provide coping and recovery to address the negative effects of occupational stress and burnout on the Nigerian police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria (see WHO, 2015). The purpose of the general qualitative approach is to explore the strategies used by police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties despite unavailable or inadequate government policies and programs. This chapter contains a review of literature on concepts and ideas about effects of occupational stress on police officers, as well as the modes of assessment and

treatment of occupational stress, and strategies for coping with occupational stress in law enforcement. In addition, I discuss the public policy programs and supports services that help police officers manage occupational stress. Finally, I discuss the barriers to improving the physical health and mental health effects of occupational stress on police officers.

Literature Search Strategy

To study the concepts and ideas related to the effects of occupational stress on Nigerian police officers for this study, I used literature that primarily included peer-reviewed articles and studies relevant to the occupational theories. The databases I searched were Academic Source Premier, Business Source Premier, Sage, EBSCOhost, Emerald Management, and ProQuest. I also analyze articles obtained from these databases to retrieve relevant information on occupational stress confronting police officers, and how to manage such occupational stress in carrying out their civic duties to protect lives and properties effectively. I used a subject based approach for the search, which means that I used the following keywords: *job demand, employee burnout, depletion of energy and health of police officer, job resources, employee engagement, lack of employee resources, employee performance, Nigeria Police Force, occupational stress at field work for police officers, challenges confronting the Fight against Terrorism in Nigeria, physical stress among police officers, inadequate welfare for police officers, training needs for police officers, job rotation frequency among police officers, poor remuneration among police officers, insufficient rest time for police officers, psychological stress among police officers, mental illness among police officers,*

depression among police officers, insurgency in Nigeria, comparison of stress between male, and female police officers.

Previous studies (e.g., Adegoke, 2014; Alessandri et al., 2018; Lasisi, 2013; Lasthuizen & Paanakker, 2016; Meichenbaum, 2017; Ojedokun & Idemudia, 2014; Ogunsola & Ogundele, 2001) included identification of the effects of occupational stress on police personnel. Most of what emerged through research on what the effects of occupational stress on police officers exposed were from quantitative research based on predictions regarding gender, performance, retention, police officer socioeconomic status, divorce, abuse, and aggressiveness (Mogadeghrad, 2014; Van der Werff et al., 2017). The outcomes from these studies mainly implicated poor job performance, poor police retention, hypertension, diabetes, renal problems, allergies, and mental health illnesses such as alcohol and tobacco consumption, fatigability, depression, difficulty in concentration, irritability, and impulsive behavior as effects of occupational stress on police officers.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework was based on the theory of psychological stress and coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman in 1984. The theory identifies two major processes of managing stress: cognitive appraisal and coping as critical mediators for stress on people and relating to specific environments and their immediate and long-range outcomes. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) described cognitive appraisal as a process through which an individual evaluates whether a particular encounter with an environment is relevant to personal well-being. Cognitive appraisal takes that form of

primary and secondary appraisal (Carver et al., 1989). Whereas primary appraisal is a situation in which a person evaluates whether anything is at stake in this encounter, secondary appraisal is when the person evaluates what could be done to avert any harm associated with the encounter (Carver et al., 1989). Coping is described as a constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and internal demands that are appraised during the encounter (Carver et al., 1989). Carver et al. (1989) identified 12 conceptual scales of coping strategies including active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint coping, seeking social support for instrumental reasons, seeking social support for emotional reasons, focusing on and venting of emotions, behavioral disengagement, positive reinterpretation and growth, denial, acceptance, and turning to religion. I used this scale as a lens in developing the interview questions that may provide responses to the research question.

Biggs et al. (2017) noted the theory of psychological stress and coping has been used for more than 50 years as the main driver behind research in this field. Biggs et al. also emphasized the changes that Folkman made to the seminal theory to include both negative and positive emotions that rise in stressful situations. Generally, people judge environmental stimuli, which lead to emotions, especially when the stimuli are dangerous or threatening. The distress that follows is used to develop strategies to cope with the emotions or confront the stressor directly (Biggs et al., 2017). The resolution can be favorable, with affirming emotions or negative, resulting in the need to develop further coping strategies. Studies have demonstrated cognitive appraisal as a mediator between

resources either individual or situational. Coping is usually a mediator between one's own resources and the outcomes of a situation (Biggs et al., 2017).

Folkman revised the original theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) more than a decade later when the research found there needed to be an accounting for coping when positive emotions were involved (Bigg et al., 2017; Folkman 1997). The two key areas Folkman (1997) identified were how positive emotions functions in the process of stress and coping as well as how facilitating good emotions plays a role in intensely stressful situations (Biggs et al., 2017). Folkman also posited that when coping is not successful the distress that results may lead to “meaning-focused coping” in the face of uncontrollable, hostile situations that are devastating for individuals. Biggs et al. (2017) also named four other areas of coping: *reactive* to address harm already experienced, *anticipatory* coping to address events in the future, *preventive* to gather resources for stressful events that might occur, and *proactive* for gathering strategies that lead to personal growth. Research under the framework of the theory of stress and coping can cover a variety of areas including those in educations of higher learning and other effects of stress in different occupations, including the study on how police in Borno State cope with stress in the course of their duties.

Dunkley and Blankstein (2000) conducted research on 102 men and 131 women, university students, who were typically engaged in self-criticism, perfectionism, autonomy, and distress. The researchers found in using confirmatory factor analysis that variables of self-critical perfectionism were connected strongly to the following factor. Dunkley and Blankstein found perfectionists who were also highly critical of themselves

and thus had high amounts of challenges and distress every day could be explained by maladaptive coping. The link between self-critical perfectionism and coping is significant for those experiencing a combination of frequent challenges and distress (Dunkley & Blankstein, 2000).

Guided by the theory of psychological stress and coping, Vine et al. (2016) discovered a gap in research regarding visuomotor performance because previous studies demonstrate that the process of evaluating stress are solely on how it can affect physiological and psychological areas but not visuomotor ones. Vine et al. developed an integrative framework to show how threats and challenges as well as focus of attention can result in heightened stress with a variety of outcomes in visuomotor performance. They emphasized anxiety as the top reason stress can result in inattention and low performance in visuomotor skills. Last, Vine et al. recommended some feedback loops to clarify not only why these responses are perpetuated by individuals themselves but also how to increase performance in different job situations in the real world including aviation and the military. Coping with stress takes a variety of forms, and policing work in dangerous situations as was highlighted in the study was similar to what personnel in the military experience. Thus, the theory of psychological stress and coping is an appropriate fit for my study.

The following research question, “What strategies do police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties?” builds on the existing theory of psychological stress and coping. The results of the study may extend the theory to fill a gap in the literature on how police in Borno State

cope with stress in what is often a high-risk occupation. The interview questions were connected closely with the theory to explore on an in-depth level how individuals on the force cope with stress in a variety of situations. Each question is geared to the individual participant to elicit in-depth data on lived experiences as a police officer in Borno State. They are also based on psychological stress, stress, or both, as indicated in brackets. These lived experiences were analyzed to uncover themes to deepen understanding of police work in Borno State, which lead to recommendations that might affect social change for law enforcement officers in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Factors of Occupational Stress Among Police Officers

Hancock and Salman (2017) described stress as worry caused by a difficult situation or something that results in the situation. Stress involves nonspecific responses of the body to any demand or threat, which results in symptoms such as rise in blood pressure, release of hormones, quickness of breath, tightening of muscles, perspiration, and increased cardiac activity (Seaward, 2017). Waters and Ussery (2007) and Maslach-Pines and Keinan (2007) defined *stress* as the adverse reaction people have due to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them. Arble et al. (2017) argued that stress emanating from a negative workplace environment and interactions at work are a major problem for police officers. Kula (2017) surveyed 538 Turkish National Police (TNP) officers in seven regions and found that when the officers experienced high stress levels at the organizational level, the more likely they were to burn out and be dissatisfied with their positions. Kula

recommended that TNP leaders become more aware of the need to reform the organization internally and develop good policies to increase well-being among their employees.

There are different kinds of stress that police officers undergo at the organizational level. Leigh Wills and Schuldberg (2016) discussed how cumulative occupational stress can affect personality traits through time including being exposed to traumatic incidents, developing PTSD, and the daily stress that occurs at the organizational level. Thirty-eight police officers in an urban law enforcement agency were tested in a longitudinal study using the California Psychological Inventory. The researchers measured occupational traumatic events, posttraumatic stress symptoms, and general organizational stress and found that mean trait scores decreased for all of the traits examined in the study. The change in traits was tested through the Reliable Change Index and it was found that changes in the officers' scores not happening by chance went from 11% to 63% (Leigh Wills & Schuldberg, 2016).

In the face of rising mental health illnesses among police officers, Rasdi (2018) studied 328 Malaysian police officers engaged in traffic control to find differences in stressors between urban and suburban settings. Rasdi used the Work Family Conflicts Questionnaires, the Police Stress Questionnaire, and the Content Questionnaire, the General Health Questionnaire, and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. With a response rate of 71.30%, they found that likely mental illness was 29.8% in suburban areas and 44.3% in the city with the most significant stressors in the latter case pollution, age, job control, and operational stressors whereas in the former

case, organizational stressors and chronic disease prevailed. Rasdi recommended health screening and a good support system for psychological issues to control and protect psychological and mental health issues for law enforcement personnel.

Negative working environment, long duration of working hours, lack or lesser time for family, irregular or improper eating habits, need to make tough decisions very quickly, sleepless nights, poor living and working conditions, issues with seniors, and inadequate time for leisure activities are difficulties in one's personal life cited as the reasons for occupational stress among police officers (see Lin et al., 2015). However, the association of high job demands with physical and mental health among police officers is not consistent. Such simple views are questionable in Nigeria. The present study examines whether, and to what degree, occupational stress in law enforcement was associated with job satisfaction, work-related burnout, and supervisor support.

Most studies that predict association of high job demands with the factors of occupational stress among police officers were quantitative studies that imposed statistical data on analyses and predicted the outcome (Slone & Mann, 2016). Still, in more recent years, some qualitative studies have been conducted on police officers and stress. Deschênes et al. (2018) explored factors that could help or harm psychological health on the police force. The researchers remarked that no such studies had been done before. They interviewed twelve law enforcement officers to find factors that could predict the state of psychological health. They found the following three factors: (a) organizational factors including lack of recognition, attrition of supervisors, leader issues, and support at the interpersonal level; (b) personal ones such as need for self-

employment, disappointment, efficacy, and emotional issues; and (c) socioeconomic ones (including cuts to operating budgets and negative perceptions of law enforcement). One recommendation of Deschênes et al. was to start a creative type of organizational reflection in a profession with insufficient knowledge development. Kelty and Gordon (2015) did conduct qualitative research on stress factors, yet their participants, in the forensics field, were divided among psychiatric interns, crime scene professionals, forensic doctors, and police officers. One outstanding factor, which is similar to the study was the high, long-lasting psychological stress that resulted from first-hand exposure to violent crime scenes for which Kelty and Gordon recommended investment in stress management.

To address these concerns, I conducted a general qualitative study that revealed the strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties. According to more recent work by Singh (2018), a majority of police officers ($n = 400$) implicated heavy workload that culminated in sleepless nights as the reason for their burnout. Outcomes of the Arble et al. (2017) study aligned with the results from Singh (2018) and Lambert et al. (2018) who reported that a negative working environment as well as long working hours as the reasons for occupational stress among police officers. Similar findings from Kimani (2010) showed that exposure to various stressful life situations negatively effects the health and performance of individual officers.

The objective of the study conducted by Kimani (2010) revealed that stress is a silent killer that affects the health of service providers and leads to mental, physical, and

emotional disorders. Furthermore, the key findings of the study were that police constables in Kisumu County in Kenya experienced occupational stress because of poor working environment, work overload, and work schedule. The results further revealed that occupational stress is responsible for low performance among the police officers (Kimani, 2010).

These results are similar to study outcomes of Ongoro and Oloko (2015); they found low performance among police officer exposed to occupational stress. Ongoro and Oloko examined the factors of occupational stress on work performance of police officers in Kenya. The study participants consisted of 269 police officers exposed to occupational stress. The researchers established that police officers ($n = 269$) exposed to high levels of occupational stress work performance rated low (Ongoro & Oloko, 2015). The study also established that occupational stress negatively affects work performance of the police. Furthermore, Ongoro and Oloko found out police officers lack a welfare support system despite the stressful nature of their work.

Notwithstanding, findings from these studies corroborate the Demerouti's job demands resources model that insists that resources may play significant roles in the development of job strain and motivation of police officers. Findings from these studies (Arble et al., 2017; Kimani, 2010; Ongoro & Oloko, 2015; Singh, 2017) were not based on the lived experience of police officers; rather they relied on statistical computations to arrive at the outcomes of the studies. Nevertheless, the study's findings corresponded with the aim of the study to determine the factors of occupational experience among police officers in Nigeria.

Aside from high job demands being implicated as the cause of occupational stress among police officers, Davis (2012), Erkutlu and Chafra (2006), and Gross (2005) noted that (a) low income, (b) slow promotion, (c) insecurity about one's job future and (d) poor remuneration are other factors of occupational stress among police officers. Fotinatos et al. (2005) revealed that in policing, longer hours at work are not unusual, and frequent changes in work environment and structure are part of the demands that organizational culture places on police personnel. Despite the long hours of work, Davis found that police officers, who feel they have been promoted too slowly, feel insecure about their job future. They feel their ambitions have suffered from stress because of the strain of job insecurity, which has a direct bearing on their emotions and thought processes.

Similarly, Beheshtifar and Nazarian (2013) found that stress is much more common in employees at lower levels of workplace hierarchies, where they have less control over their work situation. However, Omeja and Githigaro (2010) argued that the stressor level of law enforcement is increasing because of the nature of police work, poor housing arrangements, inadequate support systems, and ineffective coping mechanisms. They further suggested that the stressor level of police work increased because the working environment for police officers is marked by increasing violence, high crime rates, and executions of police officers on and off duty. This study therefore aims to explore factors that constitute sources of stress for the police employees because it affects their psychological well-being in Nigeria. The next discussion was used to explore the effects of occupational stress on Nigerian police officers.

Effects of Occupational Stress on Nigerian Police Officers

Previous studies have been conducted on the effects of occupational stress on job performance of police officers (Dikki, 2015; Nikam & Shaikh, 2014; Weke et al., 2014). However, very little attention has been given to explain the effects of occupational stress on mental health and physical health of Nigerian police officers. Ragesh et al. (2017) found a correlation between occupational stress and physical and mental health related issues experienced by Indian police personnel. Likewise, Dikki (2017) found a correlation between low job performance and occupational stress.

Dikki's (2017) study goal was to review the literature on police stress with emphasis on manifestations, as well as the symptoms of strain that facilitate recognition of problems and identification and delineation of stressors. Peer reviewed research articles dating from 1972 through 2013 undertaken in different journals and at conferences at national and international levels by psychiatrists, psychologists, researchers, and social science professors were reviewed. Findings from the review showed that occupational stress led to development of negative outcomes for the individual employee and the employing organization (Dikki, 2017).

Montgomery (2008) also showed degradation of general well-being as well as decreased levels of satisfaction and commitment to the organization as effects of occupational stress. Moreover, Dowler and Arai (2008) revealed that stress is harmful to people, society, and organizations, and that high levels of stress causes negative effects on employees' physical and mental wellbeing, ultimately negatively affecting performance. Lakshminarayanan (2010) captured the findings of Dowler and Arai (2010)

and stated that organizational stress is a common and costly health problems that makes police personnel unfit for work and negatively effects job satisfactions and reduces work performance. Akinawo (2010) agreed with Dowler and Arai (2010) that job stress is produced from some stringent rules and administrative policies that may be difficult for police officers to cope with, and thereby constitutes major sources of occupational stress. The study is used to explore the effects of organizational stress among Nigerian police officers.

Furthermore, Ragesh et al. (2017) conducted a study to report on the occupational stress and associated physical and mental health related issues of Indian police officers. Participants were 40 police personnel (both male and female) working in India. Data were collected using specifically designed datasheets covering sociodemographic profiles as well as physical and mental health related details. Respondents specified their diagnoses with regard to their health status. Occupational stress was measured by using the operational police stress questionnaire (PSQ-OP) and organizational police stress questionnaire (PSQ-ORG). Findings from the study revealed that operational stress was higher among police officers, and organizational stress was higher among the department officers (Ragesh et al., 2017).

The results further revealed that 23% of the participants reported diagnoses with physical health problems (hypertension/diabetes/renal issues/allergies, etc.). The results further showed that the majority of the participants reported being diagnosed for mental illnesses (psychosis / anxiety disorders), with 29% reporting that they abused substances (nicotine, alcohol, cannabis), and a few of them abused multiple substances. Outcomes

from the Ragesh et al. study aligned with the results from the study conducted by Dikki (2017) that reported high levels of stress may cause negative effects on police officers' physical and mental wellbeing. There is no known study that has documented the effects of occupational stress on the physical and mental health of Nigerian police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria. However, Dikki (2017); Dowler and Arai (2010); Ragesh et al. (2017); and Weke et al. (2014) provided the platform to determine the effects of operational stress among Nigerian police personnel.

The objective of the study conducted by Kapade-Nikam and Shaikh (2014) was to review the current evidence on job stress, burnout, and mental health related to effective research on the occupational stress of police officers in India. The second objective of their study was to review the literature on police stress with an emphasis on manifestations, as well as the symptoms, of strain that facilitate recognition of problems and identification and delineation of the stressors experienced by law enforcement agents and how they cope with them.

The results from the Kapade-Nikam and Shaikh (2014) study showed that occupational stress leads to the development of negative outcomes for the individual employee and the employing organization. In addition, Mangwani (2012) observed that police officers diagnosed with depression experienced multiple problems at work and could no longer handle the pressure in the work environment. In contrast, Chapin et al. (2008) found (a) witnessing a fellow police officers' death in the line of duty, (b) killing someone, (c) the threat of physical attack, and (d) dealing with attempts at assault and

high-speed chases are reported by many police officers as the most important inherent stressors in policing.

Melgosa (2010) further reported difficulty in thinking logically, memory failure, lack of concentration, impatience, irritability when making mistakes, work absenteeism, and sleeping difficulties as the psychological effects of stress on police officers. Poonam and Mohsin (2014) and Ragesh et al. (2017), as well as Dikki (2017), implicated high job demand as one of the reasons for occupational stress among police officers. These researchers revealed that occupational stress has negative effects on physical and mental wellbeing of police officers and their poor job performance, and supervisor support, peer support, functional community resource centers, counseling, housing, cognitive capability, self-efficacy, relaxation, acculturation, religion, and traditions as factors that can mitigate stress among police officers. In addition, Greenburg (1990) identified relaxation training, training in mediation, training in biofeedback, and sensory awareness training as methods of managing. The next discussion focuses on occupational stress and coping skills for Nigerian police officers.

Occupational Stress and Coping Skills for Nigerian Police Officers

Significant to the police officers experiencing physical health and mental health illnesses are available programs and support services to address physical and mental health challenges following their burnout. Understanding the coping method(s) for police officers exposed to occupational stress is significant to their recovery (Dikki, 2017). Agolla (2009) and Halima (2012) provided guidance on how police cope with symptoms of severe occupational stress that include (a) poor job performance, (b) suicidal thoughts

or plans, (c) crying, (d) depression, (e) irritability, (f) short temper, (g) excessive indigestion or heartburn, (h) substance abuse or increased drinking, (i) increased use of sick time, (j) marital problems, (k) sleeping too much or too little, (l) loss of sexual drive, (m) nightmares, (n) isolation, (o) loss of interest in social activities, (p) high blood pressure, (q) heart problems, (r) insomnia, (s) suicide, and (t) PTSD (see also Aronie & Lopez, 2017; Rudofossi & Lund, 2017; Singh, 2017).

Odunayo et al. (2015) found differences in a study in Lagos State in Nigeria between organizational stress and operational stress. The latter was more relevant to police officers as they carried out their operations in dangerous situations in which fear of death in the line of duty was eminent. Odunayo et al. noted that people are less activated for high performance under low stress but when under high stress levels, they use most of their energy to deal with stress over performance. However, under moderate stress, they are most likely to perform well. The researchers also suggested that recruiting more female police officers would help defuse violent situations because of their propensity to communicate better and resort to more nonviolent means to resolve escalating situations (Odunayo et al., 2015). Odunayo et al. concluded a negative linear relationship between performance and stress was supported in their study as well as general stress levels and common death anxiety among Nigerian police officers. Adegoke (2014) suggested treatment that involves using emotional support such as listening sympathetically to another's problems within a social context as one of the methods of helping to cope with occupational stress. Barski-Carrow (2018) also recommended cognitive psychotherapy that teaches individuals how to govern their own thoughts instead of allowing their

thoughts to govern them as an effective therapy for coping with occupational stress. Helping police officers with occupational stress by talking or writing about traumatic events has beneficial effects in coping with occupational stress (Pennebaker, 1988).

The objective of the empirical study conducted by Agolla (2009) was to determine symptoms and coping strategies among police service in Botswana. The data for the study was a sample size of ($n = 229$) of police officers in Gaborone and its surroundings. Findings from this study revealed that the police work stressors in Botswana include getting injured while on duty and the use of force when the job demands one to do so etc. The following coping mechanisms were identified including (a) exercising, (b) socializing, (c) eating healthfully or going on special diets, and d) planning careers and training employees. Agolla also adopted the survey approach using a quantitative method only; therefore, it is suggested that the study be replicated using triangulation methods to validate these findings. The coverage of this study was confined to Gaborone and its surroundings because only Botswana police officers participated in the study. Nevertheless, findings from the Gaborone study may contribute to understanding the nature of police work stress in Nigeria and effective methods of coping with occupational trauma.

In addition, Halima (2012) asserted that police officers can use laughter to mitigate the effects of occupational stress. Halima further revealed that when people laugh, the lining of their blood vessels expand, boosting blood flow. The laughter releases chemicals in the brain called endorphins, also called happy hormones, which relax

muscles and relieve pain (McCrea, 1984). Scientists found that adults laugh on average 15 times a day (Halima, 2012). Other estimations showed that humor, relaxation, exercise, and physical activity in an individual's lifestyle are the best remedies to fight stress, depression, anxiety, tension, laxity, worries that trigger mental ailments, aggressiveness and rage, feeling of low self-esteem, and cognitive ability (Barski-Carrow, 2018; Weger et al., 2014). Garbarino et al. (2013) supported Halima's (2012) findings when they showed measures including relaxation and the evaluation of police officers' personality traits, work-related stress, and mental health problems such as depression, burnout, and anxiety can be used to prevent occupational stress. They also used demand-control support (DCS) and the effort-reward-imbalance (ERI) models to prevent occupational stress effectively. The study was used to reveal findings to determine if relaxation, for one, serves as a coping mechanism for Nigerian police officers diagnosed with occupational stress.

Garbarino et al. (2013) examined the correlation among job stress and the occurrence of mental health warning signs while screening for burnout and socio-demographical, occupational, and personality variables among the special police force (SPF). The respondents were 292 of 294 members of SPF in Italy who completed a questionnaire for the evaluation of personality traits, work-related stress, and mental health problems such as depression, burnout, and anxiety. The findings from the Garbarino et al. study showed that officers with higher levels of effort and over commitment were getting less support and inappropriate rewards associated with higher levels of mental health symptoms.

Garbarino et al. (2013) also revealed a noticeable increase in the risk of depression of employees who cannot cope in stressful situations, and over commitment, getting less support, and inappropriate rewards were associated with higher levels of mental health symptoms. Gichuki (2014) further suggested that preventive measures that include time management and job rotation should be implemented by departments to avoid distress and recover the mental well-being of police officers as they carry out sensitive tasks for which a strong psychological performance is required. On the other hand, Patterson, Chung and Swan (2012) suggested prioritizing tasks may ensure that individuals who spend their time and energy on those things that are important may help to reduce occupational stress.

Besides laughter, relaxation, physical activities, communication, strong social support, positive reinforcement, counseling that focuses on decision-making and problem solving, time management counseling, training in interpersonal skills, assertiveness, leadership training on self-management, and support groups are protective factors that police officers can use to cope with the effects of occupational stress (De Silva et al., 2017; Garbarino, 2013; Gichuki, 2014; Halima, 2012; Keith, 1981; Lahey, 2001; Patterson et al., 2012). With regard to strategies to prevent and mitigate the effects of occupational stress, Rudofossi and Lund (2017) stated that higher education and critical reflection by police on their career shows promise for alleviating or mitigating the symptoms of burnout.

It is apparent that stress reduction training should be provided early in police officers' careers (Lahey, 2001). Singh (2017) suggested this training can be performed

during initial police training, because police recruits are a *captive audience* and because information may remain with them throughout their police career. The study may be used to determine the types of trainings available to help police officers to cope with occupational stress. Aronie and Lopez (2017) observed that most training programs for police officers that include suicide awareness classes, training to identify *signs* in coworkers, support for employee assistance programs, critical incident stress debriefing, and often some form of mandatory counseling are effective in preventing and reducing stress.

The purpose of the study conducted by Singh (2017) was to determine methods to reduce, eliminate, or modify stress among Indian police personnel using psychological techniques based on the western model. Participants were volunteers chosen from different ranks of police personnel (e.g., constables, head constables, assistant sub-inspectors, and inspectors). Singh findings claimed that multidimensional psychological interventions were significant in reducing job stress. Finally, the research conducted by Melgosa (2010) showed that multidimensional intervention involving the symptoms of stress and enhancement of coping behavior, which includes relaxation, stress awareness raising workshops, employee assistance programs, critical incident stress debriefing, and mandatory counseling are effective ways to manage stress. The implication of these studies (Aronie & Lopez, 2017; Lahey, 2001; Melgosa, 2010; Singh, 2017) to the present study is to find out which of the stress management intervention strategies address the effects of occupational stress among Nigerian police officers.

Challenges to Prevent and Manage Occupational Stress Among Police Officers

Previous studies indicated the mechanism for preventing and managing the effects of occupational stress on physical and mental health of police officers. However, challenges remain in implementing findings from this avalanche of studies (Aronie & Lopez, 2017; Garbarino et al., 2014; Gichuki, 2014; Halima, 2012; Keith, 1981; Lahey, 2001; Melgosa, 2010; Ragesh et al., 2017; Singh, 2017). WHO (2015) identified corruption, the stigma attached to mental health, and lack of awareness as some of the impediments to the treatment of mental health illnesses in Nigeria. Moreover, the culture of silence, bureaucracy, and legitimate organizational culture involves extreme loyalty and overidentification with the police code of ethics. Saraceno et al. (2007) identified (a) funding, (b) few numbers of mental health professionals, (c) inadequate advocacy, (d) centralization of mental health resources, and (e) poor skills related to mental health treatment on the part of mental health services providers, poor health infrastructure, and reduced investment in mental health care as some of the barriers to providing efficient physical and mental health services in the countries of the south.

A significant challenge in modern policing where violence, corruption, and militarization is rising on a global scale is the traditional view of police work as a masculine culture. Rawski and Workman (2018) reviewed police literature and data from a Canadian police agency to emphasize the “masculinity contest culture” (p. 607). These contest culture dimensions are apparent in policing and include stamina and strength, not showing weakness, “dog-eat-dog” and putting jobs first (Rawski & Workman, 2018). The researchers posited that such a culture can result in discrimination, harassment, turnover,

use of excessive force, and stress. Thus, they recommend training interventions to prevent these issues in police organizations. However, they found a paradox in which the organizations most in need of the interventions have norms that contrast the most with the content of the training and therefore recommend social interactionism and reconceptualization of training.

Questionnaires and assessments have been made to measure stress levels among police officers, though related to Rawski and Workman (2018), gender is not sufficiently accounted for. McCreary et al. (2017) wrote about two such assessments: the Operational Police Stress Questionnaire and the Organizational Police Stress Questionnaire (also known as PSQ-Op and PSQ-Org). Though both tools were appropriate for assessing unique differences in stress factors related to law enforcement, they have limitations in normative values. Therefore, the researchers created norms based on gender and cutoff values for both assessments. They used data from 2840 law enforcement officers from Ontario in Canada and provided the norms for individual items as well as overall scores on scales (McCreary et al., 2017).

Andrade et al. (2014) conducted a study to examine barriers to initiation and continuation of mental health treatment among individuals with common mental disorders. The respondents' household samples were interviewed face-to-face in 24 countries including Nigeria. Andrade et al. found desire to handle physical and mental health illnesses and problems on one's own as the most common barrier among respondents with a disorder who perceived a need for treatment (63.8%). The study also showed attitudinal barriers were much more important than structural barriers both to

initiating and continuing treatment. In addition, perceived ineffectiveness of treatment was the most commonly reported reason for treatment dropout (39.3%) followed by negative experiences with treatment providers (26.9%) of respondents with severe disorders. In contrast, McDevitt et al. (2006) explored perceived barriers and benefits to physical activity in people with serious and persistent mental illnesses. The outcomes of the study included the identification of significant barriers to physical activity in the global south that included mental illness symptoms, medications, weight gain from medications, fear of discrimination, and safety concerns as the barriers to receiving diagnosis and treatment for mental health illnesses.

Furthermore, Shea and Yeh (2008) found that a higher level of perceived stigma towards receiving psychological help was correlated with a negative attitude towards help-seeking behaviors. Stigma towards psychological treatments stemmed from cultural differences between counseling and the methods of dealing with psychological problems among traditional African communities (Akinsulore et al., 2018). Receiving psychological help may be perceived as a sign of weakness or an indicator of a genetic flaw (Tayeb et al., 2018). However, relying on the findings from these studies to form an opinion on barriers to improving physical and mental health of Nigerian police officers is misleading because of differing organizational cultures and different political interests, cultural backgrounds, and religious beliefs. I used the lived experience of selected Nigerian police officers, despite availability challenges, to prevent and manage occupational stress among police officers.

Gap in the Literature

There are several limitations in the literature exploring occupational stress among police officers in Nigeria. Most of the literature reviewed used quantitative methods with convenience sampling (e.g., Aronie & Lopez, 2017; Dikki, 2017; Garbarino et al., 2014; Gichuki, 2014; Halima, 2012; Keith, 1981; Lahey, 2001; Melgosa, 2010; Nikam & Shaikh, 2014; Ragesh et al., 2017; Singh, 2017; Weke et al., 2014). The measurement process possesses an artificial and spurious sense of precision and accuracy. The analysis of relationships between variables creates a static view of social life independent of people's lives. Most of the studies (e.g., Aronie & Lopez, 2017; Dikki, 2017; Gichuki, 2014; Halima, 2012; Keith, 1981; Lahey, 2001; Melgosa, 2010; Nikam & Shaikh, 2014) were not based on the strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties. Imposition of scientific data may not accurately present or reveal the risk factors and adaptive coping skills of police officers with burnout in Nigeria. There is no previous known study on the influence of occupational stress and available public policies and programs for police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria for effective management of occupational stress when discharging their duties.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of the general qualitative approach was to explore strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State of Nigeria use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties despite the inadequacy of available government policies and programs. The theory of psychological stress and coping may serve as a lens in

exploring how police officers manage stress when deployed to perform their duties.

Chapter 3 contains the study methodology and a description of the qualitative research and the rationale for selecting it over quantitative research. Additionally, the goal of this chapter is to describe and present the rationale for choosing to conduct a general qualitative design for the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of the general qualitative approach was to explore the strategies used by police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties despite unavailable or inadequate government policies and programs. To develop an enhanced understanding of the subject, I used face-to-face interviews with key participants and wrote reflexive notes.

Chapter 3 contains the research design and rationale for this study, as well as the research question that may help to create an understanding of (a) the effects of occupational stress on Nigerian police officers, (b) the strategies they use to minimize the negative effect of occupational stress, and (c) programs and services available to promote coping and adjustment for Nigerian police officers affected by occupational stress. This chapter also includes a description of my role as the researcher based on the various stages of the design and execution of the study to explain how to ensure its trustworthiness and ethical treatment of participants, as well as providing a summary of why the qualitative research design may meet the needs for this study.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question for the study was the following: What strategies do police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties? The research question is a reflection of the problem statement explored in this study. I used a general qualitative approach to explore the strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties, the purpose of the study (see Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

A general qualitative approach met the needs for this study because this technique can uncover the strategies used by police officers who experienced occupational stress due to their deployment to fight insurgency in the Borno State region. The narrative design was not suitable because the narrative method of inquiry involves story-telling and biographical research, and it includes an assumption that people organize their lived experiences into stories (Finlay, 2012). Because of the robust, in-depth approach, the focus of narrative research is in the narratives of only one or two participants (Gill, 2014). Similarly, a phenomenological design was also not suitable because such research allows participants to share their lived experiences and assign meaning to them through these shared stories (Sather, 2012).

Although the narrative and phenomenological designs are similar for studying the occupational stress confronting police officers, the two designs are not adequate for this study because phenomenological design is used to target multiple perspectives rather than one or two points of view. The size of the population in a phenomenological study is determined at the data saturation level (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Robinson (2014) recommended that between three and 20 interviewees should be sufficient to achieve saturation in a phenomenological study. Furthermore, Hanson et al. (2011) suggested that interviewing participants should include between three and 20 participants to study a phenomenological case extensively. For example, Schenkel et al. (2013) used 11 participants to qualitatively explore phenomena pertaining to investor exit strategies.

Originally, I planned to use phenomenology but discarded it for a more general qualitative approach. Percy et al. (2015) posited that some topics are not appropriate for

traditional qualitative approaches, particularly phenomenology. Thus, using a general qualitative approach can be more suitable. The main goal of a phenomenologist is more for the inner essence of experience as opposed to those referents that might “trigger the cognitive process (Percy et al., 2015, p. 77). Overall, Percy et al. emphasized that more outward focus on people’s opinions and experiences would fit better into a general qualitative approach. With these guidelines in mind, I used purposive sampling to select 15 participants for this study, knowing that saturation has a higher probability of success with 15 participants, which leads to richer responses yielding new themes and understandings. I then coded the themes inductively and analyzed them using a constant comparative technique.

Other designs I considered and rejected for this study were grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Grounded theory does not meet the needs for this study because though unique in its approach, the aim of such research is to generate a theory from raw data (Yin, 2014). The grounded theory investigator begins the process of data collection with a large number of participants and ends with an empirically grounded hypothesis that can undergo further tests using either quantitative or qualitative methods (Cunliffe, 2011). Ethnography is the systematic, scientific study of human societies in their natural settings (Ellis et al., 2011). Using ethnographic research, researchers gather data by immersing themselves in the day-to-day activities of a culture-sharing group (Mutchler et al., 2013). However, for this study, the ethnographic approach is inappropriate for two reasons: (a) ethnography would fail to answer the primary research

question concerning the experiences of police officers in Borno State, Nigeria confronted with occupational stress, and (b) ethnography requires extensive time in the field.

Case study research is not suitable because case study is a systematic investigation of a case within its real-world context (Dasgupta, 20015; Tsang, 2013; Yin, 2014) and involves a particular group, program, issue, or social problem (Yin, 2014). In the case study, the unit of analysis may be one or more individuals, which is a common practice of psychology research (Yin, 2014). The data collection process of case study may involve conducting several interviews, document review, and field observations and artifact collections (Thyer, 2012). Given the nature and objectives of this study, the case study design, like other alternative qualitative designs, does not meet my needs to provide answers to the research question. Case study is valuable for in-depth, incisive approaches; nevertheless, case study requires extensive time, expense, and researcher labor (Snyder, 2012). Yin (2014) advocated that case study involves one or multiple cases and collection of data done through several sources such as interviews, focus groups, and document review, but the interest of the study is on the experiences and points of view of an individual rather than a group.

The other qualitative methods were inadequate to provide answers to the core general qualitative approach. The general qualitative approach was the most appropriate to explore strategies used by police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, to manage occupational stress when discharging their duties. Consequently, I used the general qualitative approach with semistructured interviews of 15 participants so that these individuals can share additional thoughts and strategies that may give more insight into

their coping strategies when they experience occupational stress. With these guidelines in mind, I used purposive sampling to select 15 participants for this study, knowing that saturation has a higher probability of success with 15 participants, which leads to richer responses yielding new themes and understanding. I then coded the themes inductively and analyze them using a constant comparative technique.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher in this qualitative research study was to collect data, analyze the data, and interpret the data. I was the sole data collection instrument for gathering and analyzing data in this study. Peredaryenko and Krauss (2013) posited that the researcher's role is to be aware of potential bias in the research process. To reduce the potential for bias, selected participants did not have a personal or professional relationship with me. I adhered to the methods in a general qualitative approach to collect, analyze, interpret, and report the findings in this study (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). During this study, I treated all selected participants with respect and protect the participants from any harm during the data collection process.

I used journaling to collect personal reflections of participants and to record the collection process to mitigate bias, which Peredaryenko and Krauss (2013) recommended. Journaling reduced ethical concerns because participants only shared information that they are comfortable to share and at their own convenience. Such a tool may be relevant for any anticipated bias instead of ignoring its effect on the study. The findings from the study may contribute to positive social change in providing knowledge

and awareness of how police officers fighting terrorism could resolve and manage the occupational stress they confront in Borno State, Nigeria.

Methodology

For this study, I adopted a qualitative method to understand the lived experiences of police officers who have experienced occupational stress in their deployment to Borno State, Nigeria. The study included purposive sampling to identify 15 participants for this study or until saturation. The selection of 15 for this general qualitative approach aligns with the requirements of previous studies and literature on a general qualitative approach (Groenewald, 2004). The sampling method was based on my sense of judgment and purpose of this study. In using a general qualitative design, the phenomenon of a study influences the selection of participants. As mentioned, the prospective participants for this study was selected based on the following inclusion criteria:

1. Police officers who have worked in Borno State between 2009 and 2019 and served at least 2 years in that period.
2. Police officers with ranks ranging from constable to inspector of police.
3. Specifically, only police officers who volunteer to participate in the study included.

I used a purposeful selection method and snowball sampling to identify additional participants if the initial recruitment efforts result in only a few participants. Groenewald (2004) suggested that expanding the sample could be implemented by asking one participant or relevant organization to recommend others for interviews. Specifically, I made posts on social media (WhatsApp) groups seeking for interested participants with

the inclusion criteria clearly stated (see appendix D), I was able to select seven police officers who voluntarily agreed to participate in the interviews for this study. I later used snowballing technique to recruit the remaining eight participants. Those interested in attending were requested to give their names to the researcher on the date mentioned in the notice. During the meeting, the objective of the study and participation requirements was explained to use purposive sampling to select 10 from each of the four lower ranks (i.e., constables, head constables, assistant sub inspectors, and inspectors).

Following the meeting, I sent the informed consent letters to the selected participants to solicit their consent prior to the data collection process (Appendix E). The police officers were asked to take part in interviews that lasted approximately 50 to 65 minutes in a private room at a public library or a quiet public park as suggested by each of the participants. Participation was voluntary. Fifteen or more participants could generate sufficient data from which general themes emerged for analyzing the challenges confronting the police officers fighting terrorism in Borno State, Nigeria. The 15 participants have served in all three deployment areas, which should enhance a comparative analysis of occupational stress experience in each area. The themes were inductively coded and then analyzed using a constant comparative technique.

Walker (2012) revealed that point of saturation in a study is when no additional information emerges. In purposeful sampling, researchers rely on personal judgment to select participants who have a direct relationship to the population (Gill, 2014). Patton (2002) noted that informational considerations determine the number of participants in purposeful sampling. If the purpose is to maximize information, sampling finishes when

no new information arises from new sampled units, which makes saturation the primary criterion (Patton, 2002).

Instrumentation

I used semi-structured open-ended interview questions based on the research question for this study. The interview protocol served as a guide for the study as rooted in the theory of psychological stress and coping (see Appendix A). Open-ended questions are important in data collection, for participants were not be limited to giving simple *yes or no* responses. The semistructured interview process was used to ask follow-up questions for interviewees to provide in-depth meaning to their interview responses (see Yin, 2014). I conducted semi-structured interviews on a one-on-one basis to explore the research question. The interviews were audio-recorded, and participants would have the opportunity to review their respective transcribed interviews for correction. Thus, I used member checking before the data analysis stage of the study.

The semi-structured interview is the most common form of data collection in qualitative research, an important process in a study, yet it entails several challenging aspects (Jamshed, 2014; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). The semistructured interview is a framework that requires such practices and standards as data recording and archiving as well as challenging and reinforcing the data collected. Researchers use unstructured interviews when conducting field work that is long-term, because an unstructured interview allows participants to express their views in their own way and at their own pace (Jamshed, 2014). Semistructured interviews also allow researchers to share their views with minimal effect on participants' responses or when more useful information

can be obtained from focused yet conventional feedback interview process (Jamshed, 2014; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Semistructured interviews are in-depth interviews that allow the participants to answer open ended questions (Jamshed, 2014; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Semistructured in-depth interviews include interviews of one person or a group of persons. The duration of the interviews were between 50 to 65 minutes; furthermore, the semistructured interview is used when the sample size is relatively small (Jamshed, 2014).

A major advantage in the use of face-to-face semistructured interviews is the provision of social elements such as voice, intonation, and body language (Altin et al., 2015). Semistructured interviews are largely based on the interview protocol and follow-up questions, a representation of topics or questions that need to be explored by the researcher using the conceptual framework as a guide (Baskarada, 2014; Jamshed, 2014; Nguyen, 2015). The use of an interview protocol serves the purpose of ensuring that during the interview time, the interview focuses on the topic of discussion (Jamshed, 2014; see Appendix C). To effectively collect data during the interview process, the researcher records the interview once after obtaining proper permission because recording the interview enables him/her to focus on the content of the interview (Jamshed, 2014; Redlich-Amirav et al., 2014; Zargham-Boroujeni et al., 2014).

A disadvantage of a semistructured interview could arise from a first timer's inability to recognize where to ask prompting questions or to probe responses to guide the interview process. Interviews could be biased, as the participants may want to please researchers by saying what they believe the researchers may want them to say, especially

during an interview process leading to a certification of the interview questions. The researcher's views could create bias by expressing surprise or disapproval, expressly or through body language about a comment made by a participant (Jamshed, 2014; Smith & Noble, 2014; Tanggaard, 2014).

The interview protocol is the practical guide for leading qualitative researchers through the interview process, in addition to containing a set of interview questions (Zargham-Boroujeni et al., 2014). Interview questions would be designed to collect data on subjective and objective measures of the barriers and their influence on police officers in Nigeria. I used 16 interview questions to guide the interview process. The conceptual framework was used as tool in formulating the interview questions.

The procedures for developing interview protocol is to use an expert validation which involves the sending of invitational e-mails to qualitative research subject matter experts as contained in the information from the Walden University faculty expert directory (FED). The expert validation method, where one obtains feedback from experts in a general qualitative approach helps researchers to check for the alignment of the research question to the interview questions and get qualitative research subject matter experts' feedback (Anseel et al., 2015).

Using the FED, I sent an invitation to 12 qualitative research SMEs (see Appendix B), containing an attachment of the abridged proposal that includes the title page, the problem statement, the purpose statement, the research question, and the initial interview questions. Twelve qualitative research experts acknowledged receipt of the email; however, only three experts responded to this inquiry. The comments from the

three experts provided the insight for revising the initial interview questions that became the final interview questions (see Appendix A). The experts highlighted some of the elements omitted and provided further insights into ways of improving the quality of this proposal (see Ritter et al., 2013).

The first qualitative research expert, subject matter expert #1, asserted that the problem statement aligned with the purpose statement and the research question. The expert further provided a few suggestions to interview question 2. Subject matter expert #2 made suggestions on possible corrections to the problem statement and the purpose statement but affirmed that the problem statement, the purpose statement, and the research question aligned. I made corrections to the suggested areas. Subject matter expert #3 advised revision of interview questions 4 and 5. Further communication among the experts was conducted via e-mail; the feedback obtained became the final interview questions (see Appendix C). The evaluated interview question and the inputs from the subject matter experts help to make the necessary revisions. However, after further review from my committee and URR, I again revised the interview questions to apply more individually to the participants as well as to align the interview questions with the theory of psychological stress and coping. Thus, the quality of this work was improved to facilitate the collection of relevant data from the research participants used in answering the research question to address the gap in the literature.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Recruitment and participation. The data for this general qualitative approach was collected from a combination of individual face-to-face interviews, reflexive notes,

peer-reviewed journals, and pieces of literature related to the psychological effects of terrorism (Groenewald, 2004). I ensured that this qualitative data follow good data collection protocols. Activities for the interview included signing of a consent form and building rapport with the participants to gather information about their individual study participants' experiences with occupational stress.

Face-to-face interviews were used by participants to respond to open-ended questions in their words and enabled the researcher to comprehend participants' lives, as they are lived (Birchall, 2014; Lunnay et al., 2015). The contextual accounts of participants' experiences and their interpretations of these experiences were generated through such interviews (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). The exchange of information between the researcher and the participants during interviews may benefit future researchers who would want to expand the body of knowledge on occupational stress (Garey & Carey, 2014; Snelgrove, 2014).

Semistructured interviews were used as a way to explore occupational stress confronting police officers in Borno State, Nigeria, and how to manage such occupational stress that affect police officers in carrying out their civic duties of protecting lives and properties. I conducted an in-depth interview as a way to gather initial demographic information (age, education level, rank in office, and years of experience). I conducted interviews with participants utilizing general qualitative approach, semistructured, open-ended questions to gather rich and thick data about their experiences as police officers in Borno State, Nigeria. Once obtaining the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I sent the informed consent forms to the participant and then commence the interviews.

The length of each interview, however, depends on the participant's response to the interview questions. I conducted 15 interviews for this study, one interview per participant, using the same interview questions and protocol (see Appendix A), while at the same time recording each interview session to ensure accuracy and easy retrieval with the permission of the participant. In addition, I took notes during the interview process as a way to capture additional thoughts and ideas that would be useful in analyzing the interview data collected. The semistructured interview is useful to obtain information regarding the research question (Yin, 2014), which is the following: What strategies do police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties?

The research data are to be securely stored on my personal computer for 5 years using password protection, in addition to printed hard copies, and another electronic storage media as a backup. I sent letters of appreciation to the participants once the study was completed to thank them for participating in the study. I sent a copy of my findings to each participant. The participants' names were not mentioned in the study; rather pseudonyms were used to represent each participant as a way to protect their identities. I ensured that no hard copies and electronic storage media were accessible by anyone other than me. The research data included storage in a safe and fireproof location to prevent the loss of data because of unforeseeable circumstance such as fire. The data are retained for a minimum of 5 years and then could be destroyed as directed by Walden University.

Data collection. The steps involved in preparation for data collection are as follows (Colaizzi et al., 2006). The goals were the following:

1. Obtained approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board on the suitability of the letter of cooperation.
2. Obtained consent from the 15 participants to conduct interview for the study.
3. Obtained permission from Walden University Institutional Review Board to conduct research on the study.
4. Scheduled and conducted interviews with participants to collect data and to audio-record the interviews.
5. Transcribed the audio-recorded interviews.
6. Performed member checking by allowing participants to review the summary of the transcripts to ensure accuracy in researcher's interpretation and meanings of participants' interview responses
7. Imported the text of the transcript into Microsoft Word for commencement of data analysis using the emerged themes.

Data Analysis Plan

The data to be gathered from the lived experience of police officers experiencing occupational stress in Nigeria were the working transcripts for the data analysis. Once completing the interviews, the researcher transcribed them to analyze the data (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). To analyze the data, I used Colaizzi's (1978) methodological approach to conduct the description about the strategies regarding the police officers' methods of coping occupational stress. I used both NVivo 10 and Microsoft Word to organize data into thoughts, ideas, arguments, reasons, and principles. The summaries brought meaning to the manuscript of notes. The detailed information

about the research question, interview questions, and justifications for the interview questions are attached as Appendices A and C.

Qualitative research can create data, and it is important that the researcher create strategies for planning, organizing, collecting, managing, storing, retrieving, and writing about the data (Yin, 2014). As a result, I used Microsoft Excel to organize the data (see White et al., 2012). To ensure the ease of data retrieval, I organized all research data using an electronic filing system, which would be arranged in chronological order according to date, type, and time of data collection. After the data collection process, I transcribed the electronic data and interview notes. After transcribing the data, I summarized the responses and then returned to my participants to verify the interpretation made through member checking (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness could be inferred to as the openness and sensitivity applied to the phenomenon in a study (Baskarada, 2014). Baskarada (2014) described trustworthiness to refer to the credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of data collected during a study, which implies the sensitivity applied during data collection. Funder et al. (2013) shared a different view of ensuring trustworthiness in carrying out a study, categorizing the strategies that leads to research trustworthiness as (a) reporting the size of the population to be studied, (b) describing the choice of the sample size, (c) explaining the research processes relevant to future researchers, (d) maintaining openness and flexibility to standards and methods, and (e) teaching and encouraging transparency of data reporting among the stakeholders of the study. Using an interview protocol is

essential to collecting relevant information from participants (Patton, 2002). I adhered to the use of interview protocol to keep track of the questions for uniformity in the data collection process.

Credibility

Yin (2014) discussed the four criteria for judging the quality of research designs that include (a) construct validity (the use of multiple methods of data collection), (b) internal validity (performed during the data analysis process), (c) external validity (the use of a theoretical foundation to assess the application of the study), and (d) reliability (considerations for instrumentation design). For case studies, Yin (2014) suggested ensuring that the procedures in the four steps be applied to all aspects of the study, not just in the beginning.

In addition to adding depth to data collection during the study as a way to ensure trustworthiness in research, data triangulation also helps with a researcher's bias mitigation (Hyett et al., 2014). Member checking, as well as sense making, is another way to ensure trustworthiness, credibility, and quality in research (Elo et al., 2014; Reilly, 2013; Snyder, 2012). The use of long-term observation is another way to improve the research validity and findings, for adhering to the interview protocol among the different participants may help with a study's validity, as well as data saturation (Saunders & Rojon, 2014; Tanggaard, 2014; Zohrabi, 2013).

An understanding of a researcher's bias should also help the researcher achieve validity in the study, because, although all researchers have values, beliefs, and worldviews, it is important that data collection, analysis, and interpretation are conducted

in a way that is neutral and unbiased (Kardish et al., 2015; Smith & Noble, 2014). The credibility process can be achieved by following all ethical rules and regulations, accurately performing the evaluation, and reporting the results honestly (Smith & Noble, 2014; Zivkovic, 2012). I double checked the results of this study with the conceptual framework on JD-R as described in Chapter 2, as well as the existing literature on possible occupational stress confronting police officers in Borno State, Nigeria, and then used comparative techniques to see similarities, trends, and connections to come up with recommendations that may be useful for the public policy makers in formulating policies and programs that may help police officers to manage occupational stressors as a result of their civic duties of protecting lives and properties effectively.

Transferability

Transferability refers to how a reader can generalize the findings of a study and addresses the important issue of a researcher's claims for a general application of the theory in a study (Halkier, 2012). Transferability is the accuracy of the results of a study if transferred to another setting. Judging from the usual small sample sizes and the absence of statistical analyses, qualitative studies are usually not generalizable; thus, illustrating the importance in the presentation of the research is not to imply that the findings are generalizable to other populations. The readers usually make the decision whether a study is transferable or not (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Dependability

Dependability includes comparison to the notion of reliability in quantitative research; dependability refers to how constant the data are, as well as rigor in qualitative

research (Gibson et al., 2013; Houghton et al., 2013; Morse & McEvoy, 2014). I ensured the dependability of the study through rigor and an audit trail. I documented clear information about each research step taken to report the outcome of the study. The information was recorded using my audit trail to include interviews and the process that involves data theme identification. The audit trail may result in a clear portrayal of the specific research path chosen, the decisions to be made, and the process to employ in the evaluation and management of data.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the impartiality and precision of the data; it is also closely connected to dependability, for the process is needed to establish both are similar (Gibson et al., 2013; Houghton et al., 2013; Walker, 2012). I maintained qualitative objectivity within the study through reflective journal entries, an audit trail, and data triangulation. To ensure credibility, I used member checking to ensure reliability and validity of data. After transcribing the audio recording, I interpreted the transcript and share the interpretations with the participants and obtained their feedback to validate the data.

Ethical Procedures

Seidman (2013) explained that the data collection process involves obtaining a voluntary consent, full research disclosure and intention, privacy and consideration for vulnerable populations, as well as privacy and confidentiality (Kendall & Halliday, 2014; Sanjari et al., 2014; Yin, 2014). Another important factor involves ensuring that the researcher accesses harms, risks, and benefits associated with the research (economic,

legal, psychological, social, physical, dignitary, and others; Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Harriss & Atkinson, 2013; Peter, 2015).

To ensure the protection of participants for this study, I took the following steps. First, participants were informed about the nature of the study and the consequences associated with their participation in the study, as well as their role in the study. I ensured the participants their names would not be mentioned in the study. Rather letter/number codes (e.g., P1, P2, and so on) were used to represent each participant as a way to protect their identities. I ensured that no hard copies and electronic storage media were accessible by anyone other than me.

Participants were informed that their participation in the study was strictly voluntary, and therefore they had the right to refuse to answer any of the questions asked or to decide not to participate at any point throughout the study. As a result, they had the right to collect the interview notes; I deleted the interview recordings in their presence. I did not compensate or offer any incentives to the participants for their involvement in this study. I informed the participants about the confidentiality procedures. I ensured that personal identification information such as name, address, e-mail address, and others were not revealed in the study results nor would the information be provided in the results be connected back to the participants.

Walden University's requires the destruction of research data and signed consent forms. I had store the data in a safe place for a minimum of 5 years prior to properly destroying them. To minimize the possibility of exposing participants to any form of harm or ethical violations during the study, the research question and interview protocols

designed for the study exclusively focused on the occupational stress confronting police officers fighting criminal activities in the Borno State, Nigeria, and how to use comparative techniques to generate recommendations that may help the policy makers come up with policies and programs that may help police officers to manage such occupational stress while carrying out their civic duties of protecting lives and properties effectively. I coded the responses from the interviews chronologically and presented the data collected anonymously to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Upon transcribing the interview recordings and completion of the study, participants' interview notes were shredded and destroyed. I planned to make the final report available to the participants as a courtesy (Bowtell et al., 2013; Peter, 2015). I sent letters of appreciation to the participants once the study was completed to thank them for participating in the study along with a copy of my findings to each participant. It is also important to note that I did not collect any data for the full study until receiving approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The data collected and other information are stored electronically with a password that is known to only me to keep them secured and confidential to protect the participants.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I reviewed and explained the qualitative research methodology most suitable for this study and provided the rationale for selecting a general qualitative approach for this study. I described the role of the researcher; the rationale for data collection and analysis; the types of data; and the procedures used to collect, store, and analyze data. I described the setting and the criteria that was used to select participants

and explained the strategies that was used to improve the reliability and validity of the study. I concluded with the measures used for ethical protection of the participants and the data.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of the general qualitative approach was to explore the strategies used by police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties despite unavailable or inadequate government policies and programs. The study participants included selected police officers deployed to protect lives and properties in Borno State between 2009 and 2019. For all participants who have worked at that location, I used face-to-face interviews, took reflexive notes during the interviews, and reviewed the literature regarding strategies used by police officers who have successfully addressed stress. To address the research question and purpose of the study, I purposely selected the sample population of the 15 research participants and obtained data from them through the interviews and reviewed archived training documents to ascertain the correctness of information of the participants.

Research methodologies are used to describe the pattern of data analysis to provide common understanding of the findings from the research question and interview questions (Hyett et al., 2014). Data in the present study were collected through face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions to address the central research question: What strategies do police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria, use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties?

The data resulting from the interviews with the 15 participants served as the input for analysis after using NVivo 11 software to organize the data. This chapter entails the purpose overview, the design of this study, and the implementation of the research setting, demographics, data collection, analysis, and the general analysis strategy used for

this study. I illustrated the data collection procedures that were analyzed using coding and themes to reflect the findings ascertained from the stored data collection consisting of 15 respondent audio recordings and transcriptions. This chapter is a reflection of the attempts I made that were note-worthy of trust and integrity to recap the findings from my study.

Demographics

The inclusion criteria were the following:

1. Police officers who have worked in Borno State between 2009 and 2019 and served at least 2 years in that period.
2. Police officers with ranks ranging from constable to inspector of police.
3. Specifically, only police officers who volunteered to participate in the study included.

Participants included 15 police officers from the NPF who previously worked in Borno State, Nigeria. The purposeful sampling allowed me to intentionally select this sample size which constituted the demographics aligned with the criteria for participation in this qualitative study. The study population was composed of 15 police officers who previously worked in Borno State, Nigeria. In alignment with the objectives of the study, I used a sample size of 15 to establish data saturation and appropriately answer the central research question.

The central research question on strategies used to address occupational stress in Borno State was the basis for all 16 interview questions, asked of 15 participants up to IQ13. Eight participants answered IQ14, IQ15, and IQ16 when the data were getting

saturated (themes only arose from IQ3 though IQ13). The participants' answers gave rich data to confirm the research question. The first two interview questions are followed by demographic details on gender, rank, educational background, and years deployed in Borno State (Table 1). Subsequent sections are arranged by theme and interview questions.

Data Collection

As soon as I received the IRB approval #02-25-20-0606894 I commenced the recruitment process of the participants for the interview process. I purposely selected the sample population of 15 research participants and obtained data from them using semistructured face to face interviews. To recruit participants for this study, I created a social media post (see Appendix D) in three separate WhatsApp groups with the inclusion criteria clearly stated. I got responses from seven individuals who were voluntarily willing to participate in the research interviews. I then used a snowballing technique to recruit additional participants who had experienced occupational stress as rank and file officers. Then, I sent a direct email requesting their consent to participate in the interviews, which resulted in a total of 15 participants. I interviewed all 15 participants within 3 weeks in a private room of a public library to which they agreed. The interviewing process and member checking occurred in the public library, sufficiently silent for the purpose of gaining in-depth data. I administered and disseminated the script and the Consent Agreement Form (see Appendix B) to the research participants and explained the primary purpose of the study prior to asking them the interview questions.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Educational level	Position	Years at Borno State
PP1	Male	NCE	Inspector	5 years
PP2	Male	BSc	Inspector	6 years
PP3	Male	WAEC	Constable	6 years
PP4	Male	NCE	Sergeant Major	7 years
PP5	Male	Police College	Constable	5 years
PP6	Male	NCE	Constable	5 years
PP7	Female	BSc	Inspector	5 years
PP8	Male	WAEC	Constable	5 years
PP9	Male	WAEC	Lance Corporal	5 years
PP10	Male	BSc	Inspector	6 years
PP11	Male	NCE	Sergeant	7 years
PP12	Male	NCE	Sergeant Major	5 years
PP13	Male	HND	Inspector	5 years
PP14	Male	OND	Sergeant Major	5 years
PP15	Male	BSc	Inspector	5 years

Among the participants that I contacted, some potential participants declined to be a part of the study based on their busy schedules, whereas others did not respond to my email. Five of the potential participants did not have email addresses; therefore, I contacted them and learned they did not have the qualifications to participate according to the inclusion criteria as the basis for recruitment. As stated, using the snowballing technique, I found more than 15 participants. The interviews lasted approximately 50 to 65 minutes. I sent the transcripts to the participants the day after their interviews in the

course of the data collection process, to ensure their immediate review to enhance the strength, validity, and reliability of the study.

The participants expressed their excitement to receive copies of their final transcripts, and 10 participants requested copies of the final dissertation. The strength of the study reflects a mixture of interviewees' expertise varying from their area of specialization of service. The professional knowledge shared by the participants during the face-to-face interviews for the selected times demonstrated their deep knowledge of the experiences on causes and management of occupational stress they shared with me with no apparent signs of discomfort.

I also used field notes and archived training documents to ascertain the correctness of information of the participants (see Table 2). The interview questions were designed using the conceptual framework as a lens. I adhered to the strategy of triangulation to ensure the credibility of my study. I coordinated the time, date, and location of interview. The semi-structured interviews took 50 to 65 minutes to complete. The venue of the interviews was a public library outside the working environment of the police officers to gain the full attention of the participants. The participants approved the venue upon my suggestion. I used member checking to ensure I captured all the responses from the participants as well as accurate information and to ensure they agree with what they thought they said during the interview.

Individual Interviews

The individual interview is also referred to as the semi-structured interview with open-ended questions asked of the participants using the interview protocol (Appendix

A). Using face-to-face interviews, the interviewer has the opportunity to obtain extensive insight into the persons acting as participants: how they felt, what they think, and what the effects are of certain events (Hazzan & Nutov, 2014). The interview process took place within one month, with five interviews each week. In the face-to-face interviews with the police officers, I asked follow-up questions to gain more insight in receiving responses that could answer the research question.

Table 2

Research Questions and Data Analysis

Research question	Type of data collection tools	Data analysis
What strategies do police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties?	Semistructured interviews, field notes and document review	Coding and categorization in Word tables, and theme emergence

Field Notes

I used field notes to record responses that were very specific and directed at the questions. A field note in a qualitative study is a data-collecting tool that allows the researcher to acquire data from participants in the context of the activities or the environment (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Leedy and Ormrod (2015) explained that field notes are commonly used by qualitative researchers to collect observational field impressions that includes the following: (a) notes recording occurrences and events as they happen in the course of the interview, (b) notes taken

which reflect the preliminary understandings and connotation given to the meanings, (c) procedural notes and protocols written to serve as a reminder to the researcher on certain steps to be taken at the designated time, and (d) memos taken to close out each interview session, that served as a brief abstract of summaries.

Document Review

The document review is used to authenticate the claims of participants using documents as evidence. Yin (2014) explained that documentation is a significant source of relevant information for case studies; it can include employment letters, e-mails, and companies' formal reports available through search engine platforms. My document review was stable, specific, and broad; it covered an extended period over many settings. In conducting an examination of records, I searched across a broad range of databases, such as papers, articles, government websites and public libraries. I used such techniques as (a) theme generating, (b) designing, (c) interviewing, (d) transcribing, (e) analyzing, (f) verifying, and (g) reporting to ensure professionalism and data collection and reporting.

Themes generation is a process of identifying themes from the data collected through the interview process in providing direction to the research question (Yin, 2018). Designing is the process of preparing the interview protocol using the conceptual framework as a contextual lens and validating the interview question from subject experts (Yin, 2018). Interviewing is the processes of data collection where the researcher asks the participants questions from a set of predetermined questions to provide answers to the overarching research question (Appendix A). Transcription is the process of processing

the recorded interview into text for ease of reading (Yin, 2018). Reporting is the process of reporting findings of the research process. Through note taking in collaboration with using this data collection pattern, I was able to explore the strategies used by police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties despite unavailable or inadequate government policies and programs.

Data Analysis

My data analysis plan was deployed as previously outlined in Chapter 3. The selected instruments for data collection for this study included semistructured, face-to-face interviews, fieldnotes from observations, and archived document reviews. I used these sources of data to answer the research question: What strategies do police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties? Yin (2014) recommended that qualitative research follow the process of (a) data gathering, (b) data disassembling, (c) data reassembling, (d) data interpreting, and (e) data reporting and making recommendations. I transcribed all the audio-recorded semi-semistructured interviews and carried out individual member checking to validate the data collection process. I uploaded the textual transcripts into NVivo software from Microsoft word to organize the data into codes and themes. I manually cycled each sentence to arrive at codes and categories.

Data tools such as NVivo help in the organization of data collected from semi-structured interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Then, I performed manual coding, using a logical taxonomy coding process to create themes and codes from the transcribed

interview questions. Coding enables the researcher to connect the data to the transcribed data collected through the interview process (Kim, 2014). The research question served as a lens in the formation of codes and categories in the study. By repeatedly listening to the audio recording of the interviews, I achieved accuracy in the data transcription process. The participants also validated the accuracy of their interview responses through member checking when they reviewed the copies of the transcript for discrepancies.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness could be defined as the openness and sensitivity applied to the phenomenon in a study (Baskarada, 2014). Baskarada (2014) described trustworthiness as the credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of data collected during a study, which implies the sensitivity applied during data collection. Funder et al. (2013) shared a different view of ensuring trustworthiness in carrying out a study, categorizing the strategies that lead to research trustworthiness as (a) reporting the size of the population to be studied, (b) describing the choice of the sample size, (c) explaining the research processes relevant to future researchers, (d) maintaining openness and flexibility to standards and methods, and (e) teaching and encouraging transparency of data reporting among the stakeholders of the study. Using an interview protocol is essential to collecting relevant information from participants (Patton, 2002). I adhered to the use of interview protocol to keep track of the questions for uniformity in the data collection process.

Credibility

Yin (2014) discussed the four criteria for judging the quality of research designs. They include (a) construct validity (the use of multiple methods of data collection), (b) internal validity (performed during the data analysis process), (c) external validity (the use of a theoretical foundation to assess the application of the study), and (d) reliability (considerations for instrumentation design). For case studies, Yin suggested ensuring that the procedures in the four steps be applied to all aspects of the study, not just in the beginning.

In addition to adding depth to data collection during the study as a way to ensure trustworthiness in research, data triangulation also helps with a researcher's bias mitigation (Hyett et al., 2014). Member checking, as well as sense making, is another way to ensure trustworthiness, credibility, and quality in research (Elo et al., 2014; Reilly, 2013; Snyder, 2012). Long-term observation is another way to improve the research validity and findings, for adhering to the interview protocol among the different participants may help with a study's validity, as well as data saturation (Saunders & Rojon, 2014; Tanggaard, 2014; Zohrabi, 2013).

An understanding of researcher bias should also help the researcher achieve validity in the study because, although all researchers have values, beliefs, and worldviews, it is important that data collection, analysis, and interpretation are conducted in a neutral and unbiased way (Kardish et al., 2015; Smith & Noble, 2014). The credibility process can be achieved by following all ethical rules and regulations, accurately performing the evaluation, and reporting the results honestly (Smith & Noble,

2014; Zivkovic, 2012). I double checked the results of this study with the conceptual framework on JD-R as described in Chapter 2, as well as the existing literature on possible occupational stress, confronting police officers in Borno State, Nigeria. I then used comparative techniques to see similarities, trends, and connections to come up with recommendations. Such recommendations may be useful for the public policy makers in formulating policies and programs that may help police officers to manage occupational stressors as a result of their civic duties of protecting lives and properties effectively.

Transferability

Transferability refers to how a reader can generalize the findings of a study and addresses the important issue of a researcher's claims for a general application of the theory in a study (Halkier, 2012). Transferability is the accuracy of the results of a study if transferred to another setting. Judging from the usual small sample sizes and the absence of statistical analyses, qualitative studies are usually not generalizable; thus, illustrating the importance in the presentation of the research is not to imply that the findings are generalizable to other populations. The readers usually make the decision whether a study is transferable or not (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Dependability

Dependability includes comparison to the notion of reliability in quantitative research; dependability refers to how constant the data are, as well as rigor in qualitative research (Gibson et al., 2013; Houghton et al., 2013; Morse & McEvoy, 2014). I ensured the dependability of the study through rigor and an audit trail. I documented clear information about each research step taken to report the outcomes of the study. The

information was recorded in my audit trail to include interviews and the data theme identification process. The audit trail may result in a clear portrayal of the specific research path chosen, the decisions made, and the processes employed in the evaluation and management of data.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the impartiality and precision of the data; it is also closely connected to dependability, for the process is needed to establish the similarity of both (Gibson et al., 2013; Houghton et al., 2013; Walker, 2012). I maintained qualitative objectivity within the study through reflective journal entries, an audit trail, and data triangulation. To ensure credibility, I used member checking to ensure reliability and validity of data. After conducting each interview and transcribing the audio recording, I interpreted the transcript and shared the interpretations with the participants to obtain their feedback to validate the data.

Results: Introduction

The purpose of the general qualitative approach was to explore the strategies used by police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties in the absence of inadequacy of government policies and programs. The study participants included selected police officers deployed to protect lives and properties in Borno State between 2009 and 2019, towards gaining understanding on the following: What strategies do police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties? I purposively selected several participants and also used a snowballing technique to get

more participants in alignment with the research method and methodology of this study. I recruited 15 participants after getting the Walden University IRB approval. All of the participants of this study were interviewed in accordance with the steps outlined in Chapter 3 of this study and in accordance with the approval of the Institutional Review Board.

The responses from the 15 participants formed the basis for the generation and analysis of the themes based on the interview questions in alignment with the central research question. Participants' interviews were transcribed, and the transcription served as evidence to the theme formation. I presented the themes in the highest order of occurrence and order of the interview questions using the semi-structured interview protocol. I also included themes that emerged from the field notes and observations along with the interview questions to triangulate the data. The central research question for the study was the following: What strategies do police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties? I have arranged highlights of the data collected through the interview questions. There were 16 interview questions in all aligned to the research question and theoretical framework of psychological stress and coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman in 1984, which are presented in the following paragraphs.

Interview Question 1

What was your rank when you were deployed to Borno State, Nigeria for duty?

The 15 participants had seven different ranks upon deployment including sergeant, sergeant major, constable, lance corporal, and inspector (see Table 1 for specifics).

Interview Question 2

What year were you deployed to Borno State and how many years did you serve as a field officer in the Boko Haram counterinsurgency activities? The participants gave the detailed information about their deployment to Borno State ranging from 5 to 7 years between 2010 and 2019 (see Table 1).

Results: Themes and Interview Questions

I placed the highlights I made in the results into a data table for coding. After a thorough review, I uncovered 9 themes for 11 of the interview questions, four of which merged into two similar themes. The themes were as follows: burnout and stress in unfamiliar, violent territory (IQ3); work-life imbalances and costly mistakes (IQ4); lack of rest and inability to process trauma (IQ5); proper prioritization and avoiding distractions to cope (IQ6 & IQ7); depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation from stress (IQ8); corrupt, mismanaged, irresponsive leadership (IQ9 & IQ10); significant peer support for coping and recovery (IQ11); poor communication and stigma against getting support (IQ12); and lack of public policy to address trauma (IQ13). The following subsections in the results section detail the themes. Further, I found extensive information in the last three interview questions (IQ14, IQ15, and IQ16) consistent with the previous interview questions (IQ3 through IQ13). These three questions yielded rich data but no new themes. I incorporate them into the recommendations section in Chapter 5. First, Table 3 presents the themes and a summary of the interview questions from which they were derived.

Table 3

Themes and Interview Questions From Which They Came

Theme	Summary of interview question
1. Burnout and stress in unfamiliar, violent territory	IQ3 Work load level adding to stress
2. Work-life imbalances and costly mistakes	IQ4 Unexpected tasks adding to stress
3. Lack of rest and inability to process trauma	IQ5 Fast work pace contributing to stress
4. Proper prioritization and avoiding distractions to copy	IQ6 Ability to face stress independently <i>and</i> IQ7 Ability to adjust work pace to cope
5. Depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation from stress	IQ8 Depression, anxiety suicidal ideation
6. Corrupt, mismanaged, irresponsive leadership	IQ9 Leadership style adding to stress <i>and</i> IQ10 Managers' absence adding to stress
7. Significant peer support for coping and recovery	IQ11 Support of peers relieving stress
8. Poor communication and stigma against getting support	IQ12 Quality of communication
9. Lack of public policy to address trauma	IQ13 Barriers to receiving support

Theme 1: Burnout and Stress in Unfamiliar, Violent Territory (IQ3)

All participants expressed difficulty with their workload, which led to stress and burnout in a hostile environment in which they spent most of their time, especially because they were away from home for long periods. PP8 mentioned the stress of fighting terrorists in unfamiliar terrain, and PP1 saw the work load level as “high and demanding” so that it was common to observe stress and frustration among their

colleagues. The workload was especially hard in the heat of the location and their work was viewed as “strenuous” in their counterinsurgency work (PP2). Particularly upsetting was the “sight of dead colleagues and civilians in the hands of terrorists,” which built up trauma. All these conditions in addition to being “far from family,” subject to “surprise attacks,” “lacking motivation,” and difficulty “sleeping due to poor accommodations” (PP14), not seeing a connection between tasks and policing work (PP15) and difficulty “planning and scheduling tasks” (PP11) made quality of life insurmountable to most of the participants, who were given little time to consider anything but work and constant danger.

IQ3: How would you describe your work load level as a police officer in Borno State? How does it contribute to occupational stress? All 15 participants experienced high levels of stress due to occupational workload fighting terrorists in “unfamiliar terrain” (PP8). PP1 saw the work load level as “high and demanding” and that it was common to see officers “stressed and frustrated” in addition to the effect of the heat in the work location. PP2 discussed the “strenuous work in view of the nature of counterinsurgency activities” and PP3 said that as a police officer fighting the Boko Haram insurgency, he saw “death every day” and “the sight of dead colleagues and civilians in the hands of terrorists builds up trauma that eventually led to occupational stress.” PP4 talked about “strategies that have to be reviewed from time to time and the anticipation of any unexpected attack was a trigger.” For PP5, confronting the insurgency was “new to Nigerian security agencies” making the workload “burdensome and unpredictable.” Being “far away from family and in daily confrontation with deadly

terrorists defined” PP6’s duty. PP7 served in Borno when Boko Haram “was at its peak,” which made her work “scary and multifarious.” Much of the stress came from overtime and no time “to rest in between breaks.” To PP8, the workload “overstretched” his capabilities.

Anticipating “surprise attacks” constantly was particularly stressful for PP9. PP10 described the workload as “huge” and PP11 felt the lack of “properly designed roles” made it “difficult to plan and schedule tasks.” Although PP12 did not feel he had a difficult workload, he was mostly frustrated with the paucity of resources. PP13 felt the workload was “uninspiring” which led to “lack of motivation” and eventually occupational stress. PP14 complained about the “lack of effective coordination from superior officers” and PP15 experienced burnout by his sixth month of deployment to Borno.

Also contributing to the “enormous” workload (PP6) were “inadequate provisions of equipment and resources” (PP9), “lack of enough sleep and poor working environment” (PP10), a “hostile environment especially during the dry season” (PP11), “inadequacy to carry out the tasks especially in the area of logistics” (PP12), “poor accommodation [leading] to poor sleeping arrangements” (PP14), and that “some of the tasks were not really connected with policing [that] made it very frustrating” (PP15).

Theme 2: Work-Life Imbalances and Costly Mistakes (IQ4)

In addressing IQ4 on unexpected tasks, most participants found such work not only to be obstacles in balancing work and family life but also a factor that could lead to “costly mistakes” (PP4). Unexpected tasks, according to PP13, were counterproductive

due to individual limits of “stress tolerance... a huge burden.” If these unexpected tasks are repeated, PP warned that they may result in “burnout and breakdown” of the police officer (PP15).

IQ4: Describe how unexpected tasks have contributed to occupational stress.

Every participant saw unexpected tasks as a significant stressor on getting their jobs done safely and efficiently as well as a personal stressor, even their “worst nightmares” (PP9).

PP1 related unexpected tasks to the conditioned mind getting altered. One example was being switched from guarding a roadblock to “evacuating civilians from attacked villages,” which resulted in his “being caught between two different mental calculations to deliver a good job.” PP2 saw tasks that “suddenly occur[red] as frustrating “all efforts that had gone into the planning and might affect to composition of the team.”

Unanticipated “extra hours reduced “time to rest and recuperate, thereby leading to occupational stress (PP3). PP4 saw security as a meticulous task; thus, any “haphazard arrangement could be very costly,” stressing “every individual on the team beyond their limits.” PP5 viewed unexpected tasks in a more positive light: “In counterinsurgency activities, we cannot rule out unexpected tasks because terrorists use surprise elements to wreak havoc.” However, PP5 conceded “the nature of unexpected tasks” have led officers “to have experienced exhaustion as a form of occupational stress.” PP6 was used to “unprepared tasks” as part of the orientation” before he was deployed to Borno, “however the problem is that no two unprepared tasks are the same and so confronting them requires different approaches.” Further, when a police officer is already “stressed out,”

unprepared tasks are “the occupational hazard of being at the forefront of terrorism” (PP6).

PP7 saw most of the counterterrorism activities “as unprepared because Boko Haram terrorists strike at unlikely targets and at unlikely times so as to cause maximum damage.” Most of these unexpected tasks lead to occupational stress that “confronts police officers in the fight against Boko Haram are mostly due to burnout, lack of enough sleep and family frustrations” (PP7). PP8 saw unexpected tasks “as the major cause of occupational stress because of its effect on the psychology of individual police officers” and when they are given to “any officer, they alter his or her own personal schedules thereby causing imbalance in their family lives.” PP9’s view of unexpected tasks as his worst nightmares “stretched [him] beyond [his] limits,” and their “effects were enormous.” PP11 noted that “every human being has his or her limits,” but the “moment the endurance limits are stretched beyond its elastic limits they break down.”

PP11 stated that “unexpected tasks lead to occupational stress because the tasks already assigned to every police officer were overwhelming. Unexpected tasks are like overload and overburden.” Agreeing with PP11 about piling tasks on officers who already were involved in other tasks, PP12 noted that “whenever unexpected tasks are assigned to already fully engaged police officers, there is a likelihood of poor output because psychologically the mind was preparing for a rest after the originally assigned tasks.” PP13 saw unexpected tasks as “counterproductive because every individual has her or his limit of stress tolerance.” Although PP14 saw unexpected tasks as parts of the “preparation for the unexpected, still, they are caused by “lack of adequate motivation,

care and encouragement for the police officers.” Last, PP15 saw unexpected tasks as creating a huge burden on police officers, if unexpected tasks are repeated they may lead to burn out and break down of the individual police officer.”

Theme 3: Lack of Rest and Ability to Process Trauma (IQ5)

The relentless, fast-paced environment affected 12 participants. Mostly, they cited lack of rest and insufficient time or support to process the trauma they were experiencing day to day. Officers had different learning paces; thus, not everyone could follow the counterinsurgency processes in which they were involved, which also affected their ability to meet deadlines and process being away from their homes when there was “no room to rest and rejuvenate” (PP4). Many of them had “different ways of doing things,” which made the new regimentation challenging (PP5). Those with “family troubles” had “no room” to deal with their psychological trauma on their work base (PP8). In such a fast-paced work environment, the main focus was on “how to meet the targets” and “overlapping deadlines” in the context of insufficient rest and down time increased stress levels (PP13).

IQ5: Describe how the fast pace of work may have contributed to occupational stress. Overall, the fast-paced environment had the following factors for the 12 participants who responded to IQ5 related to psychological stress: lack of rest, different learning paces, no room to process being away from family due to psychological stress, and not being able to meet deadlines. PP1 said that “the fast pace of work does not take cognizance of individual police officers’ strength and capabilities.” Thus everyone needs to “catch up with the rest” and end up experiencing frustration. Different learning paces

hampered cohesive workloads because “the slow learners would have to struggle within the team” (PP2). PP3 found the fast pace led to “unnecessary competition instead of collaboration,” similar to PP2 where officers could not be in concert in their task work. PP4 decried how the fast-paced working environment “makes it difficult for individuals to have quality time to rest and rejuvenate.” People have “different ways of doing things” and have trouble with regimentation (PP5).

PP6 found “no room for rejuvenation” and PP7, like PP5, stressed the different “coping mechanisms” with stress in a fast-paced environment. PP8 felt the fast-paced environment was challenging because it “does not give room for individuals who may have been going through some psychological trauma from family troubles.” PP9, PP12, PP14, and PP15 declined to answer the question. It was “impossible for individuals to discover their own natural work styles and patterns,” which led to occupational stress (PP10). PP11 said that occupational stress can be “triggered by a fast-paced work environment because individuals are treated with the goals of the organization in mind instead of looking at individuals’ psychological challenges. Last, PP13 noted that when “individuals are given tasks in a fast paced work environment, the main focus will be how to meet the targets. When deadlines began to overlap then the stress levels would be rising.”

Theme 4: Prioritization and Avoiding Distractions to Cope (IQ6 & IQ7)

All officers reported being able to cope well enough with stress levels and their freedom to do so (IQ6 and IQ7), though most struggled daily with them. Still, some had practical solutions to cope. PP1’s solution was to “put every task in its simplest form.”

Delegation to others according to their “skills and capabilities made coping possible” (PP2). PP8 suggested the best way to prioritize and avoid distractions was to avoid the latter “during working hours” and to “spend quality time” with family when possible. Keeping a healthful diet that included drinking “plenty of water” and eating “organic foods” as well as making sure sleep was “deep and restful” was the practical advice of PP11.

IQ6: Describe any abilities you might have to decide how to perform your duties or solve problems related to your work. How can that relieve stress? A significant variety of answers were present from all participants to IQ6 related to coping, yet all of them addressed relieving stress. PP1 “put every task in its simplest form” and PP2 noted that “proper delegation to individuals according to their skills and capabilities made coping possible.” PP3 found his ability “to multitask” was his main way of coping. PP4 took “one task at a time” to cope. PP5 maximized “every opportunity to rejuvenate and reinvigorate.” PP6 reached out to his “superiors to either reassign the task or give [him] a longer deadline.” PP7 “staggered [her] tasks according to [her] own comfort” and created her “own schedule” to avoid working “in structured hours.” Avoiding distractions during working hours and “spending quality time with [his] family” worked best for PP8.

Creating “quality resting time and spending time with [his] family and friends to take away the burden of stress from official duties” was PP9’s way of relieving stress and solving work problems. PP10 created “short rests in between stressful tasks” and PP11 ate “organic foods” and drank “plenty of water and ensuring [his] sleep was deep and restful.” PP12 liked to watch “entertaining programs like comedy, football, or listening to

music to maintain [his] sanity.” PP13 went for a “long walk in the woods or went for swimming. Taking a holistic view for “every problem to be related to [his] personal wellbeing,” PP14 made “a mental determination that [his] work and [his] wellbeing are two separate aspects of [his] life that should not affect each other negatively.” Finally, PP15 considered every “difficult and stressful challenge with a personal philosophy of ‘No Condition Is Permanent,’ so [he tried his] best and left the rest.”

IQ7: What degree of freedom do you have to adjust the pace of your work, and how has that assisted in managing occupational stress? This question, relating to coping with adjusting work pace, had answers connecting balancing and staggering tasks as well as adjusting them. PP1 was able “to a very moderate degree” balancing his work-family life. PP2 “adjusted the pace of [his] work to the level of delivering tasks just before the deadlines and still maintaining a healthy mind.” PP3 reported “a high degree” of freedom to adjust work pace and PP4 enjoyed “the freedom to stagger tasks as a coping mechanism for occupational stress management.” PP5 only had “a minimal degree” of freedom but still understood “the concept of health and safety in carrying out [his] tasks. PP6 did not “have to adjust the pace of [his] work schedule” yet took his work “very seriously.” He did not go beyond his limits. PP7 created “a work-life balance that promotes good work ethics and quality family life.” PP8 was fortunate in having “a considerable level of freedom to adjust the pace of my work to be able to cope with stress level.”

Reviewing strategies “for every emerging situation” helped PP9 overcome stress, and PP10 found it “imperative for me to consider my health and wellbeing in carrying out

my duties, so [he] leveraged on the freedom to adjust the pace of [his] work. PP11 found it “important as a police officer so [he could] make sure that my official duties are taken as seriously as [he took] my wellbeing.” “Balancing [his] priorities” was an important strategy for PP12. PP13’s unit had a “special arrangement for members to adjust their work schedules to fit into their comfort so as to minimize or cut out occupational stress.” A “good relationship” with his superiors and “a high level of freedom to take time out to recuperate whenever [he felt] stressed was reported by PP14. PP15 declined to answer IQ7.

Theme 5: Depression, Anxiety, Suicidal Ideation from Stress (IQ8)

Based on IQ8, many participants had answers to why the lack of support and stigma might lead to depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. There was general agreement that support from supervisors and policies were completely lacking. Not only were there few supports but psychological barriers due to the stigma of speaking up and their own “fear, intimidation, or shame” (PP1). No government policies and programs were present to help the officers “deal with such a situation” (PP2) and “coping mechanisms are not accessible or denied” (PP3). The facilities were poor and there are “lack of family supports” (PP15). Depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation seem to be natural results when most people do not have the “knowledge or skills” to address their problems (PP4).

IQ8: How might occupational stress at work lead to depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation for you or others? Back to psychological stress, participants outlined many reasons their occupation lead to negative ends. PP1 thought occupational stress

might lead to depression when the “victims do not speak out because of fear, intimidation, or shame.” PP2 mentioned depression and other negative results may occur “when there is no government policy and program to deal with such a situation” and PP3 said it was when “coping mechanisms are not accessible or denied. Occupation stress at work can lead to depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation when “an individual lacks the knowledge or skills to address the problem” (PP4). PP5 blamed “lack of government programs and supports” and PP6 emphasized “no support from family and friends.” Like PP2, PP7 said it was the government that failed “to cater for the occupational stress challenges of police officers” and PP8 also noted that no “provisions to help sufferers deal with occupational stress” did not exist.

“Ignorance and lack of adequate knowledge about occupational stress whereby sufferers are seen to be mentally deranged” was PP9’s main reason for employee issues. PP10 and PP13 like PP2, PP7, and PP8 blamed the government for not providing help: Government schemes and a care system to help the victims are “non-existing” (PP10) and there is a “lack of government programs and policies to help victims (PP13). PP11 blamed “poverty, lack of education, and superstition,” which have “made many sufferers of occupational stress commit suicide.” PP12 simply emphasized “societal stigma” while P14 said that people seek “self-medication instead of “seeking professional help.” Last, PP15 highlighted “poor facilities and lack of family supports.”

Theme 6: Corrupt, Mismanaged, Irresponsive Leadership (IQ9 & IQ10)

Leadership support as covered in IQ9, was described as so corrupt that P7 viewed it as the “most corrupt agency” in the entire nation. Not only have all the participants had

negative experiences with leadership, but it has only heightened their stress levels almost unbearably due also to the “mismanagement of resources.” A series of terms to describe leadership from the participants was “corrupt,” “insensitive,” “mismanaged,” and “wicked,” the latter being the strongest term. PP8 summed up leadership in a word: “irresponsive.” Finally, in answer to IQ10 on general support or its absence, PP1 said “the lack of support from the management made [stress levels] worse.” PP8 saw management as “not officially mandated to help in occupational stress management.” Too often stress is seen as a “personal sickness,” thus increasing the stigma and barriers to getting help.

IQ9: What effect does the leadership style contribute to occupational stress on the police force? IQ9 related to psychological stress. All the participants had negative experiences on this front of leadership, mostly as corrupt, insensitive, mismanaged, and wicked among other negative attributes. PP1 said, “Bad leadership style made occupational stress worse among Nigerian police officers.” PP2 highlighted the corruption among their leadership, which is “responsible for poor welfare of police officers which is a factor of occupational stress.” PP3 saw the officers as “insensitive to the plights of officers in the frontline of counterinsurgency.” Official corruption in the leadership of the NPF has “influenced negatively to contribute to the occupational stress on the police force, according to PP4. PP5 saw the bad leadership as “oblivious of the problems faced on the battlefield by police officers,” and PP6, like PP6, like PP3, saw their superiors as “insensitive and irresponsible,” which only worsens stress in the ranks. PP7 emphasized that the “NPF is adjudged to the most corrupt agency in Nigeria,” which

has “affected everything that has to do with the welfare and wellbeing of the police officers.” PP8 simply stated, “Irresponsive leadership.”

PP9 saw a “lack of knowledge of the police leadership in NPF about occupational stress,” which “might have been the reason the problem was not given government intervention.” PP10 thought “the Nigerian police leadership themselves do not understand the concept of occupational stress enough to focus their attentions on it.” According to P11, “Corruption and mismanagement of resources among the leadership of the police made occupational stress difficult to manage among police officers.” P12 cited a “very bad leadership style that does not care for the wellbeing of lower ranked police officers.” PP13 had a strong name for the leadership. He said it was “wicked” and “sends lower ranked police officers to the frontline without adequate health and welfare packages.” P14 decried the “lack of police welfare and health insurance to be initiated by the leadership of the police officers,” and PP15 called the leadership style “incompetent” and it “worsens the occupational stress among police officers.”

IQ10: How has support of management or the absence of it contributed to occupational stress? IQ10 related to both psychological stress and coping. All 15 participants answered the question concisely, and only PP7 and PP11 had positive replies about their management support experiences. PP7 said she “enjoyed the supports and encouragement from my deal with occupational stress when I was experiencing it,” and PP11 praised the management for its help to make him “recover quickly.” Most participants did not see sufficient support to address stress. PP1 said the “lack of support from the management made it worse.” PP2 claimed “because there is no existing public

policy that mandates the management to intervene there is no support of any kind” and PP3 felt “absence of support from management has made coping with occupational stress difficult. PP4 described management as lacking “any law compelling them to help victims in coping with occupational stress. PP5 said the “lack of support from management made it frustrating” and PP6 was not “aware that the management has ever helped any sufferer of occupational stress.” The management of police, according to PP8 is “not officially mandated to help in occupational stress management” and “individuals often treat it as personal sickness.”

PP9 felt the lack of support “made [him] feel very bad against police management” and PP10 claimed occupational stress management in police officers in Nigeria does not attract the attention of police management.” PP12 saw “inadequate support from the management” as “saddening” for him. P13 already knew there was no support system as such so he “did not bother reaching out to management.” P14 was not aware of “any support in such circumstances from Nigerian police” and PP15 said pointedly that “police officers in Nigeria do not enjoy such luxury as supports during occupational stress.”

Theme 7: Significant Peer Support for Coping and Recovery (IQ11)

In the midst of corrupt policies and leadership, the only people police officers have to turn to when they experience occupational stress is their peers. PP1 expressed it best when he talked about enjoying “tremendous support” from his colleagues and peers. Such support helped him not only cope with the difficulties of his deployment to Borno

State but also helped him “recover miraculously.” Peer support seems to have been the most significant coping aid in the study.

IQ11: How has support from your peers relieved you of occupational stress?

Thirteen out of 15 participants had much support from peers. Two, P7, the only female officer, and P13 had different answers. P7 said she “did not get any support from [her] peers, perhaps everyone was after his or her own safety.” P13, on the other hand, did not seek support to begin with. The positive comments of the other participants were as follows. PP1 “enjoyed tremendous support” from colleagues and peers, which helped him “cope and recover miraculously.” PP2 said the support went “very well.” PP3 was “relieved steadily from occupational stress” because his peers were “always there” for him. PP4 experienced “strong support” and PP5 had “great support from peers” which was always “key for [his] coping mechanism.”

PP6 described the support as “incredible ... for [his] most vulnerable moments.” PP8 experienced “great support” and PP9 stated that “if not for the supports from [his] peers, [he] wouldn’t have been relieved quickly.” PP10 “enjoyed priceless supports, which hastened [his] recovery” and PP11 had “great support from peers, which was very helpful.” PP12 felt the support he received from his peers “complemented the supports of [his] family for quickest recovery.” PP14 found peer support to be a “form of a ‘buddy system’” in his team, where people looked out for each other. He added, “I enjoyed the support of my peers and it accelerated back to wellness.” Finally, PP15 simply said that “supports from peers” helped him “a lot.”

Theme 8: Poor Communication and Stigma Against Getting Support (IQ12)

The quality of communication was a problem for all participants. PP1 reiterated that communication was good among peers but it was a problem “between the lower and higher ranks,” which helped little in handling stress. The only good communication, according to PP5 was “within a unit” because there is “no standard communication across rank and file.” Further, most participants felt that if they sought help, they would be stigmatized.

IQ12: How has communicational quality in the police force assisted in handling occupational stress? This coping question was answered somewhat generally by most of the participants and mostly in a negative light. P1 said that “poor communicational quality between the lower and higher ranks does not help in handling stress but communication among peers helps a lot.” PP2 said he “really can’t say.” PP3 felt it “would have been better if there is a good communication channel for lower ranks to pass messages about their welfare and wellbeing to top management.” PP4 saw “no effective communication in occupational stress handling among the police. Apart from communication within a unit, PP5 reported “no standard communication across rank and file.” PP6 saw the communicational quality as “poor and it negatively affected the handling of occupational stress” and PP7 saw “zero communication to top management in handling occupational stress.” PP8 argued that “communication needs to be improved upon.”

PP9 saw communicational quality as “poor” and PP10 saw it as an area of “attention within the Nigerian Police Force.” PP11 witnessed “bad communication

quality” and PP12 saw it as “unimpressive.” PP13 experienced “no effect of communicational quality on [his] stress coping techniques.” P14 said it “would have been better if there is anything as communicational quality among the police.” Finally, PP15 saw “no impact at all.”

Theme 9: Lack of Public Policy To Address Trauma (IQ13)

The final theme addresses the broader scope of public policy. The participants universally agreed that such policies are almost entirely lacking. The barriers exist in “lack of government programs, public policy, or welfare packages” to deal with occupational stress. PP6 decried the “lack of enabling laws to deal with [such] stress.” The final theme paints a bleak picture of life in Borno State as a police officer in the counterinsurgency against Boko Haram.

IQ13: What are the barriers you have experienced to receiving support for occupational stress? IQ13 addressed both psychological stress and coping, and all 15 participants answered the question briefly. PP1 said the major barriers are “lack of government programs, public policy or welfare packages to deal with occupational stress. PP2 reported there was “no existing communication channel for police officers to report occupational stress.” The next three participants answered in one or two word phrases: “Stigma” (PP3), “bureaucracy” (PP4), and “official insensitivity” (PP5). PP6 said there were a “lack of enabling laws to deal with occupational stress,” PP7 noted a “lack of enough time to spend with family,” and PP8 complained about “insufficient time to rest and recuperate.” PP9 simply stated, “Workload,” and PP10 noted the “fast paced work nature.” PP11 named “poor welfare package and poor working environment as barriers,

and PP12 simply said, “Societal stigma.” “Inadequate provisions for sufferers of occupation stress” were named by PP13, and PP14, like PP7 decried the “insufficient quality time with family and friends.” Finally, PP15 blamed police leadership for “poor understanding of occupational stress and its consequences.”

Summary

The key findings of the study addressed the gap in the literature on programs and policies to help those in the NPF cope with the occupational stress that arose when they were deployed to engage in counterterrorism work against Boko Haram in Borno State. In the interviews, the participants went into great detail about their circumstances, which yielded rich, thick data about what they had to face every day of deployment. Unlike most police officers, the participants, whose ranks included constable, inspector, lance corporal, sergeant, and sergeant major, were boarded in inadequate military barracks or rental units in town absent the support of friends and family. The gap was not only in the literature but also in reality, where work programs and government policies were almost entirely absent. For example, Themes 7, 8, and 9 came out of questions on peer support, quality of communication across rank and file, and barriers to receiving support. It was only from the officers’ peers from which the support came (Theme 7). If officers sought psychological help, they were greeted with silence or stigma (Theme 8). Finally, no public policy to help these police officers get help with coping was present (Theme 9).

Chapter 4 contains a reiteration of the purpose of the study and the research question as well as research setting, participant demographics, techniques for data collection and analysis, results, and description of the nine themes that arose from the

data. The honest, in-depth answers of police officers who have experienced occupational stress in Borno State carefully outlined in Chapter 4 provided rich material for interpretation, recommendations, and implications. Chapter 5 contains all of these elements and concludes the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to explore strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State of Nigeria used in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties. The study was conducted to fill the gap in developing policy and programs that may help to address occupational stress among those engaged in counterterrorism work. The research question was written to address the strategies these professionals use in managing stress during their deployment. The general qualitative method I adopted in this study was to understand the lived experiences of police officers who have been engaged in counterterrorist work to fight Boko Haram. I selected 15 participants, whose ranks ranged from Constable to Inspector of Police. All had worked in Borno State between 2009 and 2019, serving at least 2 years.

As stated in the Chapter 4 summary, the study helped fill the gap in the literature about the stress and the coping strategies experienced by members of the Nigeria Police Force when deployed to Borno State to fight the Boko Haram insurgency. All themes arose from these stress and coping issues, from being burned out in violent and unfamiliar territory with work-life imbalances that led to costly mistakes, to lack of rest and inability to process trauma, to finding only in themselves and among their peers the ability and support to cope independently to avoid stigma, to dealing with corrupt and irresponsible leaders who only greet their pleas for psychological help with poor communication and no real public policies to relieve the officers' stress.

Interpretation of Findings

After reviewing the extensive literature on occupational stress among law enforcement officers around the world, I found that the present findings both confirm and extend knowledge in the discipline. The study confirmed other research on occupational stress. Arble et al. (2018), for example saw stress among police officers as a major problem that stems from negative work environment and interactions among personnel. Kula (2017) studied high stress experiences at the organizational level, causing burnout and job dissatisfaction. The present study extends the research in its uniqueness because few researchers have studied police officers engaged in counterinsurgency operations. Further, the trauma and stress undergone by the NPF in Borno State has never been addressed by the Nigerian government, and this research may have a role in promoting social change and reformation of this important government agency. They also conform to the theoretical framework based on Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory of psychological stress and coping, whose main factors, cognitive appraisal and coping are critical mediators for individual stress especially in specific environments and immediate and long-range outcomes. The following subsections are arranged and interpreted according to the nine themes that arose in the data analysis stage of the study to answer the central research question of how police officers deployed to Borno State manage stress in the line of duty.

How the Findings Align With and Extend the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the study was based on theory of psychological stress and coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Two major processes of

stress management are the coping and cognitive appraisal of the situation as critical personal stress mediators as well as individuals' interaction with their environment, which includes both immediate and long-range outcomes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The cognitive appraisal element with which people evaluate whether a certain encounter with a set of circumstances is relevant to their well-being was difficult for the participants in the study. Though they had little support, they did not have the option in their new military duties of leaving the Nigeria Police Force as they might have if they were working in urban areas. Cognitive appraisal is in the form of primary and secondary appraisal (Carver et al., 1989). Although I have explained the first appraisal, the secondary one is the point at which individuals decide what they can do to change the situation to avoid harm (Carver et al., 1989).

The 12 conceptual scales Carver (1989) developed were the basis of the interview questions, which were effective in eliciting detailed data. The scales were as follows: active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint coping, seeking social support for instrumental reasons, seeking social support for emotional reasons, focusing on and venting of emotions, behavioral disengagement, positive re-interpretative and growth, denial, acceptance, and turning to religion. Although the participants had elevated levels of stress almost constantly (especially because they were in a dangerous, unpredictable situation involving counterterrorism), their only means of using secondary appraisal to prevent harm to themselves was to turn to each other to lessen the stigma of needing psychological help. They also developed personal strategies such as drinking plenty of water and eating nutritious, organic foods to get a deep and restful sleep;

spending quality time with friends and family during leaves; and making space for coping a priority for action-oriented personal goals. All in all, the theory of stress and coping was an appropriate fit for the study. The interview questions based on the elements of the theory yielded in-depth, rich data, which led to my ability to write detailed data interpretation, implications, and recommendations.

Theme 1: Burnout and Stress in Unfamiliar, Violent Territory

All the police officers involved in counterterrorism activities in Borno State were far from their homes, friends, and family, which were factors that increased their stress levels significantly. They saw their work as highly demanding and strenuous, especially in view of the violence they often witnessed in a place they had to work, eat in, and sleep 24 hours a day for weeks at a time. The environment was hot and hostile, especially during the dry season of the year. Much of their work was unpredictable in the light of surprise attacks from Boko Haram that could happen at any time. Thus, their lives of constant insecurity made it difficult to plan and schedule work. Their sleeping accommodations were poor. Thus, getting sufficient rest was difficult only to face the next day with a heavy workload and unexpected tasks. Haus et al. (2016) looked at job related factors and organizational factors as occupational stressors, the former of which included work load and job demands among other factors, that confirm the findings of the present study. Three of the four factors that police officers reported were the most important inherent stressors in their work included witnessing a colleague's death in deployment, having to kill another human, and dealing with threats of being attacked

physically (Chapin et al., 2008), which confirmed the theme of working far from home in violent territory.

Theme 2: Work-Life Imbalances and Costly Mistakes

All the officers experienced imbalances between their jobs and their personal lives. Such imbalances hindered their ability to operate at the best capacity. Being far from home and having inadequate sleeping arrangements particularly skewed the balance. Responses to “unexpected tasks” in IQ4 led directly to multiple responses complaining about significant life imbalances. Most important, the imbalances negatively affected the general operations of their tasks where PP1 explained he was “caught between two different mental calculations to deliver a good job.” Such conditions did result in costly mistakes that could mean life or death. However, ruling the unexpected tasks out entirely could lead to surprise elements on the part of the terrorists to “wreak havoc” (PP5). Still, too many of these tasks, which continued to upset the work-life balance, led to burnout and even personal breakdowns of individual officers. Folkman (1997) discussed coping strategies, both positive and negative, the latter of which can be present in the face of uncontrollable, hostile situations destructive for the individual. In such situations, individuals may resort to meaning-focused coping strategies.

Theme 3: Lack of Rest and Inability To Process Trauma

The third theme on poor rest and inability to address psychological trauma arose from IQ5 on the fast work pace. The officers were engaged well beyond a normal working day to the point of having little time for themselves and to rest sufficiently to process their problems. Even though they were far from home and family, they barely

had psychological room to think about their loved ones. Singh (2018) found that most police officers out of 400 in the study claimed that the heavy load of work ended in nights with little sleep, which was the chief reason for their burnout. Arble et al. (2017) and Lambert et al. (2019) found that a harsh working environment and long hours led to occupational stress for police officers. A recent study by Garbarino and Magnavita (2019) confirmed issues with sleep deprivation for police officers engaged in high criminal activities ($N = 242$). Their purpose was to confirm if sleep problems mediate the relationship between metabolic syndrome and stress.

In their 5-year study, Garbarino and Magnavita measured perceived stress levels repetitively with questionnaires on effort-reward-imbalance and demand-control-support; gauged insomnia with the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index; and extreme sleepiness during the day with the Epworth Sleepiness Scale. They measured metabolic syndrome at baseline and at follow up, finding a reciprocal connection between sleep problems and job stress. Insomnia, insufficient sleep, sleepiness, and being dissatisfied with quality of sleep all led to work-related stress. Those officers who had problems at the beginning were significantly more likely to have high stress at the end of the study.

Theme 4: Proper Prioritization and Avoiding Distractions Help Coping

IQ6 and IQ7 both covered more positive ways to cope with occupational stress. The former was related to how well officers were able to perform their duties. Some of the methods were delegating tasks to others, avoiding distractions during working hours, and spending quality time with their family when possible. One officer said that drinking plenty of water and eating nutritious, organic foods helped him get a deep and restful

sleep. IQ7 concerned how much freedom the officers had to balance their duties to manage stress. Few were able to do more than minimally, but PP1 said he could achieve the balance to a moderate degree and PP5 to a minimal degree. Still, he understood how health and safety played a role in his duties.

Somehow, the officers had to find ways to balance their priorities (see Patterson et al., 2012) suggesting prioritizing tasks may ensure that individuals who spend their time and energy on those things that are important may help to reduce occupational stress, a continual challenge according to most participants. Several studies in the literature review outlined methods on which officers should be trained to avoid stress (e.g., Andrade et al., 2014; Gichuki, 2014; Singh, 2017). However, any such trainings or help from public policies, standard practices, or commanding officers, according to all the participants was missing entirely in their time at Boko Haram. Thus, the lived experiences of the participants in my study disconfirm these recommendations to reduce occupational stress.

Theme 5: Depression, Anxiety, Suicidal Ideation From Stress

Much of the literature addressed depression and anxiety and even suicidal ideation from lack of support and stigma, which was largely the case in the present study. Stigma, fear, feeling intimidated, and shame were listed as reasons occupational stress might result in depression (PP1). Some of the participants directly blamed lack of public policies or outright denial of services as the cause of negative results. Not only were policies and higher ups responsible according the participants but it could be their own lack of knowledge and skills to address personal problems that were to blame (PP4).

Another culprit was the poor facilities in which they lived and their distance from family support (PP15).

According to Rawski and Workman (2018), stigma and a masculinity contest culture were partly to blame for the lack of support. Such a culture can lead to harassment, discrimination, stress, turnover, and use of excessive force (Rawski & Workman, 2018). Thus, it comes as no surprise that most officers would hesitate to admit their problems to get help in such an atmosphere of stigma and machismo. Andrade (2014), found that 63.8% of participants in a study of 24 countries, including Nigeria, had an attitude of needing to fix their stress issues on their own rather than seeking help, which confirms the present study's findings.

Theme 6: Corrupt, Mismanaged, and Irresponsive Leadership

Both IQ9 and IQ10 involved corruption, mismanagement, and irresponsive leadership. Not one participant had anything significantly positive to report on the leadership style they were under nor the level of support, or rather, the absence of support. To sum up the participants responses on their leadership, it was corrupt, insensitive, mismanaged, and wicked as well as irresponsive. The "corruption and mismanagement of resources among the leadership of the police" made their stress almost impossible to manage (P11). Further, under IQ10, this lack of support made stress much worse (PP1).

Leadership had no official mandate to help in managing stress to the point that the stigma of having day to day problems made it like a personal sickness (PP8). Such issues are common in many African and other developing countries in the literature that confirm

the findings of my study. Higher levels of perceived stigma toward getting psychological help have been connected to a negative attitude toward seeking such help (Shea & Yeh, 2008). Cultural differences are a factor between methods of addressing psychological issues and counseling in many traditional African societies (Akinsulore et al., 2018). Getting such help can be seen as being weak or being flawed genetically (Tayeb et al., 2018).

Theme 7: Significant Peer Support for Coping and Recovery

The one positive light besides the ways that some people have found to cope with their problems by getting more sleep, eating healthfully, or getting exercise is support from peers. Because the participants had no government policies, support from their supervisors, or comfortable, safe rooming or working conditions, they could only turn to each other. The first participant said it best when he praised his colleagues and peers for “tremendous support,” which was a miracle to help him cope and recover from extreme occupational stress. Most of the positive findings in the literature focused on training programs and improved public policies rather than seeking help from individuals. The present findings helped to extend the literature on this topic.

Theme 8: Poor Communication and Stigma Against Getting Support

The consensus of the participants was that communication quality from top to bottom and bottom to top was almost entirely lacking. Again, the first participant praised his peers as helping “a lot,” but stated there was poor communicational quality between the lower and higher ranks,” which was a barrier to dealing with occupational stress for ordinary police officers. PP5 also stressed good communication among peers, but “no

standard communication across rank and file.” There was little about communication in the literature review, though Smollan (2015) mentioned that poor communication can be a stress factor during job transitions, where there is also higher workloads, job insecurity, and low support from supervisors. Odunayo (2015) suggested one path to improving communication was to recruit more female police officers to help defuse violent situations. Thus, the theme of poor communication quality across rank and file did extend the finding of the present study toward filling the gap in the literature.

Theme 9: Lack of Public Policies and Programs To Address Trauma

In the field of public policy, the final theme is significant, in its implications for social change. The present study was unique in that the participants decried an entire lack of public policies, especially because at least one participant believed the police structure in Nigeria was the most corrupt in the nation. The major barriers to receiving help for occupational stress are “lack of government programs, public policy or welfare packages (PP1). There are “no enabling laws” to deal with such stress (PP6). Gershon (2000) described a state of terrorism in Nigeria two decades ago, and even then decried the lack of public policy to address the challenges for police officers.

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to explore strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State of Nigeria used in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties. The key findings, expressed in nine themes that arose from the coding of 16 interview questions addressed the research question on how officers handle occupational stress in Borno State in rich detail, which not only confirms previous findings in the literature but also extends them with new data.

Limitations of the Study

As stated in Chapter 1, the present study had some limitations. First, as a Nigerian, I might have been biased toward the needs of the participants. I addressed that limitation by taking field notes and using a reflexive journal as well as accessing publicly available information to triangulate the data. I noted whenever bias came up during the interviews. Second, the number of participants I recruited (15) might have affected the quality of the data. I addressed that limitation using the exact same interview protocol for each participant and was able to reach saturation mostly through the interviews. I used eight participants for the final three questions and got even more in-depth answers, especially for IQ14, where each participant gave a detailed story of their significantly stressful experience. Third, my focus on one region, Borno State, could have created a limitation in terms of exploring occupational stress among law enforcement officers in other states. Still, the abundance of data I collected, though not exactly the same as it might be in other regions, was sufficiently detailed to get a good picture of occupational stress among police officers deployed in hostile territories far from their homes, families, and friends.

Recommendations

Despite the limitations of this general qualitative study set in Borno State, Nigeria, the lived experiences of the 15 participants included rich material that can be addressed both by my recommendations and material from the literature. In general, many of the studies involved solutions for police officers who had experienced difficulties in addressing occupational stress. The problem was exacerbated by not only

deployment to a violent area with inadequate facilities and support but their lack of being able to reach out to the comforts of home and family much like the military, a situation that the overwhelming majority of police officers in the world do not face.

I believe future researchers should look at the historical trend of occupational stress in the NPF to find out why government programs and policies are either non-existent or grossly inadequate especially given that the NPF was established by the British during the time of colonial rule. Using a social context approach, Otu (2004) examined the development of the NPF since colonial times, which was complex, especially because it was seen as “more humane than precolonial methods of social control” including exile, death, or banishment (p. 19). One factor for its origin was economics.

Future researchers need to explore the effects of fighting corruption by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) on the activities of the leadership of the NPF. There is need to understand that in spite of the EFCC being led by police bosses the NPF still remains the most corrupt among government security agencies. This corruption is responsible for the inadequacies in the care for sufferers of occupational stress. Otu (2004) posited that the force’s current role is creative in that none of the other agencies could assume the same role. However, as discussed by the participants in the present study, guidelines for exercising authority are not clear and the Nigerian government has done little to improve the force since independence in 1960. Otu touches on corruption and bribery, calling for rules that must be enforced to decrease decisions

made from bribery and to have an independent policy making entity to oversee decisions from superiors are not tainted with corruption.

Hope (2016) had fresh insights on the complicated nature of police corruption. First, it is generally hidden. Second, there are limited cases to examine. Third, much of the research is out of date. Fourth, researcher have no standard definition of police corruption. Fifth, quality, impactful research is dependent on a nontransparent mix of factors. Sixth, most studies come from so-called developed countries rather than developing ones (Hope, 2016). Working against corruption, therefore, can be an insurmountable challenge unless oversight is well established and completely transparent. Few problems will be solved without such oversight of government agencies and policies.

In my findings, I confirmed the reports that the corruption in the NPF is so endemic that it affects every aspects of their operations. Promotions and deployments are not left out of corrupt practices. The lack of policy and programs for managing occupational stress officially was largely due to the corruption, mismanagement and irresponsive leadership of the NPF. What I would recommend would be to draw the attention of the anti-corruption agency (EFCC) to every aspect of the police force. It is strange that in spite of repeated public reports of the police being the most corrupt agency in Nigeria nothing appreciable has been done to sanitize the organization.

Regarding the present police standards, I would have expected the NPF to have developed a workable system with a communication process in place. After having been exposed to internationally based practices and standards such as being involved in

peacekeeping operations, I was surprised about the lack of good practices in the NPF. I recommend a complete evaluation of the communication system and make it accessible to every police officer, regardless of rank and area of deployment. Existing professional development programs are not addressing issues of stigma and occupational stress in a robust way. Thus, if I were in a position of authority, I would incorporate best evidence-based practices to address heretofore unchallenged areas of negative professional experiences that are a reality for most people in the law enforcement profession.

I recommend that future researchers look at the process of policy formulations to establish whether there are political encumbrances that have made attracting national attention to occupational stress difficult. Future researchers should also look at individual culture, faith and traditions of police officers to explore the effects any or all of these have in the management of occupational stress. One approach to the mental and physical health of all police staff, including civilians is an innovated one that gathered employees of the police department to name their challenges to well-being and how those challenges can be solved (Clements et al., 2020). One hundred eighty staff members participated based on the Job Demands-Resources model. The themes were occupational health processes, management practices, continuing mental health stigma, and workload. Clements et al. (2020) concluded that an atmosphere of insufficient resources to meet employee needs likely will contribute to occupational stress among subordinates, a finding highlighted in the present study. More resources involving all members of the force including civilian employees would attract attention to problems and issues of diversity of faith, traditions, and culture among the ranks. The more solutions to the deep

problems are given, especially through personal work on all levels, the higher the chances these issues can be addressed.

The participants did address public policies, some of which are not incorporated in the themes, which I found appropriate to add to the recommendations for their perspective. PP1 advised the government to make public policies that will address occupational stress among the police officers fighting insurgencies in Nigeria, for there is need for adequate welfare packages and programs to help them. PP3 also addressed government programs because they are needed to address occupational stress problems. PP7 emphasized the need for occupational stress to have the attention of public policy makers for the purpose of creating a management and coping system for the sufferers. PP8 was more specific: "The national orientation agency (NOA) needs to enlighten the public about occupational stress. It is often misunderstood by the society. The sufferers of occupational stress need love and care, they do not need stigmatization." Through their anecdotes and direct answers to the interview questions, effective public policies can be recommended.

What did surprise me about the lack of effective public policies and programs is despite the fact Nigeria's democracy has been unbroken for 18 years, we have been having national assemblies at every election cycle. Bills have been passed, laws have been made on many issues. It is surprising that no one has raised the issue of occupational stress for security forces like the military, police forces, and border security. Nobody has come up with policies they are facing daily. If I had the opportunity, I would recommend that private citizens sponsor a bill to the National Assembly. They should

follow it up and engage all stakeholders to make sure the bill goes through all the channels, becomes law, and gets enforced. Of course, many of these measures need to be backed by adequate funding.

The budgetary allocations to the welfare and wellbeing of Police Officers need to be researched to ascertain that there are adequate funding for the treatment of psychological consequences of fighting terrorism by the police. Pauer and O'Donnell (2020), for example, touted a plan at the Cleveland Clinic to improve employee wellness, which can include both mental and physical wellness. The program was started in 2005, and 13 years later, not only had the number of employees with chronic biomarkers increased 700%, but the Clinic had saved \$260 million in medical costs. At the same time, the number of employees went from 32 thousand to 53 thousand, and the clinic stayed in the top ranks of the nation in hospitals—the program was paid for by the employee health plan (Pauer & O'Donnell, 2020). Such programs, if prioritized in local, private, and government budgets can decrease burnout and stress and increase transparency and lessen stigma, all of which yield economic benefits.

Implications

As stated in the significance of the study, the effect of occupational stress on police officers deployed to fight terrorism has been researched in various international contexts, particularly in their duty to keep law and order in society (e.g., Hancock & Salman, 2019; Ogunyemi & Laguda, 2016). Still, there is a gap in the literature on how Nigerian police officers deployed to Borno State, far from their homes and families, address occupational stress in the context of fighting Boko Haram. The purpose of my

research was to explore how they face their daily challenges in such hostile territory.

I addressed the gap in the literature by recruiting an appropriate number of participants, all of whom had been actively engaged in fighting counterterrorism in Borno State where the Boko Haram insurgency was high. No previous studies have addressed this level of stress and coping for the Nigeria Police Force in a dangerous region in Nigeria. The data I collected from the 15 participants went into great depth on the issues and yielded nine distinct themes on not only the high levels of stress these officers encounter daily but also their challenges in addressing the stress levels in the absence of communication and support from their superiors and public policies and the presence of stigma if they desire to meet the challenges. Although I have several recommendations to make for public policy and programs, the participants themselves have provided many sound recommendations themselves, which I present in the recommendations section.

The present study has significant implications at the individual level in the atmosphere of a culture of masculinity and stigma for anyone who admits they have difficulties functioning in their jobs or in their lives. All the factors identified by Lasthuizen and Paanakker (2016) that enhance occupational stress were present for the participants in the study, which were (a) organizational stressors, (b) operational stressors, (c) external stressors, and (d) personal stressors. Public policies can address these stigmatic problems so that individuals can feel free to get help to help themselves. The first step would be to lessen the stigma of psychological stress and weakness, which would result in a stronger police force that can do their jobs well and at the same time not hesitate to get help in their downtime away from home (e.g., personal and group

counseling, better accommodations, and opportunities to rest and exercise).

The implications for change at the family level are particularly significant for the present study. Most police officers work near their homes and families, but the police officers who are deployed to Borno State do not have that privilege. Better public policies for improving family contact and leave time would significantly enhance quality of family life. One strategy would be enhanced electronic communication and group sessions that involve improving family ties.

The implications at the organizational level are strong. The overwhelming consensus that leadership was entirely noncommunicational and uncommitted to improving the harsh conditions of deployment are particularly significant. Especially noteworthy was the remark of one of the participants that the police agencies in Nigeria were the “most corrupt” in the country. Addressing such corruption is an immense task. However, publicity about the conditions and gradual changes within the organization would bring transparency to the public and the rank and file toward the goal of law enforcement following the law toward more equitable and just employment and functioning.

Regarding implications for practice, I recommend that leadership of the police should not be subjected to political expediency but a robust process that would ensure that all aspects of policing as well as fallouts for working in hostile environments are understood and provided for. The more police officers can address occupational stress both through programs and self-care, the less political factors would negatively affect the force, even if expediency prevails. In Nigeria, Aremu et al. (2009) investigated the factor

of self-efficacy as a counseling process. The study included 200 police personal from two different states, Lagos and Ogun. Aremu et al. used the Police Attitude to Corruption Scale and found that, barring political expediency, putting resources into counseling strategies produces positive results in individual change, which was particularly true, in this case, for the female officers. The researchers found that bottom-up approaches have implications for public policies and practices. These implications for practice might significantly reduce police exposure to the devastating results of occupational stress. I recommend that the present study be made available to government agencies that could begin to put such practices into effect, which can bring gradual social change to policing in Nigeria. The study can be turned into a book format and widely publicized. In turn, individual officers might reap a multitude of positive benefits.

Implications for social change can be brought about through the government and the populace, which may employ the recommendations in making policies that affect the NPF such as issuing policies for training and retaining officers who deal with occupational stress in Nigeria. Such changes can help to build individual confidence, capacity, and integrity of police officers when the recommendations in the study are implemented.

As stated in Chapter 1, the present study has implications to future researchers who may want to extend the body of knowledge on the occupational stress confronting police officers in Nigeria and in promoting positive social change by providing recommendations that may enhance government policies on police welfare, staff work rotation, and employee leave registers (see Dempsey & Forst, 2013). More studies on

occupational stress for police officers in posts far away from their homes and families can be done quantitatively to expand the participant database. The implications for positive social change may include creating awareness on how to address the factors responsible for occupational stress among police officers in Nigeria.

Conclusions

The occupational stress as experienced by officers of the NPF has revealed that much is required to be done in terms of government policies, programs, and laws to address the mental health of the field officers in general and occupational stress in particular. Evidence has shown that the Nigerian police officers lack adequate knowledge about how to handle occupational stress issues. This qualitative general study has provided insights into the personal experiences and challenges faced by police officers in the discharge of their constitutional duties of protecting the lives and properties of Nigerian citizens.

The NPF is a centralized agency whereby officers are posted to anywhere in the country based on emergency or routine needs. Thus, they are vulnerable to occupational hazards and professional challenges because they often find themselves in unfamiliar terrains. To optimize their performances, a robust public policy is needed not only to cater for their redeployments but also to cover their welfare, wellbeing, and health concerns.

Based on the responses from the participants to this study and the analysis of the data collected, the officers of the NPF need to be treated according to the international best practices of policing through adequate training, provisions of welfare packages, and

attendance to their mental health issues. Policing all over the world is a serious aspect of governance. Police officers need to be adequately motivated, professionally prepared, and mentally activated to face the challenges of curbing criminalities in the societies. Most of the lapses in security and unwholesome practices among lower ranked police officers could be attributed to lack of government policies and programs that respond to their needs. An incentive system for policemen who accepted deployment to hostile environment would go a long way to help police officers perform to their utmost capabilities. In Nigeria, public policy administration in the areas of policing needs to integrate the voice and attitudes of lower rank officers into forming public policies. Corruption among the police officers and management can better be tackled when every officer is assured that their wellbeing and welfare are adequately considered in his condition of service.

This study may form the basis for overhauling of the welfare system for police officers and also contribute to the resources for the formulation of public policy processes of the Nigerian Police Service Commission.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

The research question for the study is: What strategies do police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties?

1. What was your rank when you were deployed to Borno State, Nigeria for duty?
2. What year were you deployed to Borno State and how many years did you serve as a Field Officer in the Boko Haram counterinsurgency activities?
3. How would you describe your work load level as a police officer in Borno State?
How does it contribute to occupational stress? [psychological stress]
4. Describe how unexpected tasks have contributed to occupational stress.
[psychological stress]
5. Describe how the fast pace of work may have contributed to occupational stress.
[psychological stress]
6. Describe any abilities you might have to decide how to perform your duties or solve problems related to your work. How can that relieve stress? [coping]
7. What degree of freedom do you have to adjust the pace of your work, and how has that assisted in managing occupational stress? [coping]
8. How might occupational stress at work lead to depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation for you or others? [psychological stress]
9. What effect does the leadership style contribute to occupational stress on the police force? [psychological stress]

10. How has support of management or the absence of it contributed to occupational stress? [psychological stress and coping]
11. How has support from your peers relieved you of occupational stress? [coping]
12. How has communicational quality in the police force assisted in handling occupational stress? [coping]
13. What are the barriers you have experienced to receiving support for occupational stress? [psychological stress and coping]
14. Tell me a story about a time you experienced a stressful event and how you coped with it. [psychological stress and coping]
15. What advice would you give an incoming police officer on what to expect in law enforcement in Borno State? [psychological stress and coping]
16. What more can you add that might not have been covered in the interview?

Appendix B: Consent Form

Background Information:

The purpose of the general qualitative approach is to explore strategies that police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to consent to a thirty-minute audio-recorded interview. The one on one interview will focus on your experiences with the occupational stress in your line of duty. In addition, there will be a 15-minute member checking session, in which the researcher will confirm the validity and *meaning* of the answers. Any exclusion will only be voluntary by the participant and there will be no penalty against the participant.

Here are some sample questions:

- How does your work load level contribute to occupational stress as a police officer during experience at Borno State, Nigeria?
- How does unexpected task contribute to occupational stress to you as police officer?
- How does working as fast pace contribute to occupational stress to you as police officer?
- How does your ability to decide how you perform your duties relieve you of occupational stress?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision if you choose to participate in the study or opt out. No organization or researcher will treat you differently if you decide to opt out of the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in the Study:

Participating in this type of study does not involve any risk of discomfort other than those associated with the discussion of a challenging and thought-provoking topic. However, you will contribute to a body of knowledge by sharing some strategic business processes that you used to implement the employer shared responsibility provision of the PRA in Lagos, Nigeria for business sustainability

Debriefing:

The summary of the findings will be provided in a small presentation and all participants will be offered a one-page summary of the findings by email. The briefing is voluntary and regardless of attendance; all participants will receive the summary of the findings by email. The dissemination of the findings is a culmination of the answers received in the individual interviews, and the company documents.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you or your organization in the

study reports. Data will be kept secure in a locked, fire proof safe in my home. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now or in the future. You may contact the researcher by cellular phone or email. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call a Research Participant Advocate. The Research Participant Advocate is a Walden university representative who can discuss your concerns. Walden University's approval number for this study is 02-25-20-0606894 and it expires on February 24th, 2021. The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Payment:

There is no compensation associated with your participation.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below or replying to this email with the words, *I consent*, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of consent _____

Participant's Signature _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Appendix C: Invitation Letter or E-mail to Potential Participants

Dear

Doctoral Research Study

My name is Babatunde Salmon Alabi. The research is supervised by Dr. Robert Lance Spivey of the faculty of Public Policy and Administration, Walden University.

I am writing to invite you to participate in this research study. The consent form document will be given to you that will provide information so that you can make an informed decision concerning participation.

I am doing a research study to explore what strategies do police officers deployed to Borno State, Nigeria use in managing occupational stress when discharging their duties?.

Participation in this study is limited to 15 individuals and it would involve you participating in a semistructured interview, a document review process that would explore your opinion and experience on the subject matter. All assessment results will be kept confidential.

The interview process would take 30-60 minutes to complete. Participation in the interview is voluntary. Should you initially agree to participate, you also have the opportunity to withdraw at any time through the study.

All information obtained in this study is completely confidential unless disclosure is required by law. None of the individual interview results are made available to participating organizational leaders or the organization as a whole. The results of the study may be used, at an aggregate level, in reports, presentations and publications. Individual participants will not be identified.

This email is used to elicit your interest to participate in the research. I hereby invite you by responding to this email your willingness to be included in the study.

I am happy to respond to any questions or concerns you have about the research.

Kindest regards,

Babatunde Salmon Alabi

Appendix D: A Draft of Social Media Post for Recruitment of Participants

Hi Everyone!

I'm recruiting participants for my PhD program in Public Policy and Administration with specialization in Terrorism, Mediation and Peace of the Walden University, USA. I'm conducting my qualitative research on "Managing the occupational stress of Nigerian Police deployed to Borno State, Nigeria". I'm seeking volunteers among police officers with occupational stress experience, the volunteers must have served in Borno State for at least two years between 2009 and 2019 in the Boko Haram counterterrorism activities. I will arrange a face to face interview at a place and time of comfort for the volunteers. The interview will be conducted in English language and it will be audio recorded. Each participant will have privacy during the interview and the identity will not be revealed. The interview will comprise of 19 questions and it is expected to last between 30 minutes and 1 hour. I will compensate participants upon completion with a lunch.

While I do not anticipate any discomfort from this study, some questions may be sensitive in nature. Also, please note that this is entirely confidential and that nobody will be made aware of your participation unless you choose to share as such. If you, or anyone you know, might be interested in participating, please contact me or send me a private message inbox.

I have made this post public, so please feel free to share with anyone that you believe may be interested in this kind of study.

Thank you.