

PERSONALITY TYPES AND WORK BURNOUT AMONG POLICE OFFICERS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the contributions of personality trait types to work burnout among police officers in Nigeria. This study involved (40) female and sixty-five (65) male police officers incidentally sampled from (3) police station in Anambra State. Their ages ranged between 24-50 years, with M age of 42.03 and SD age of 3.68. Big Five Personality Inventory (BF) and Maslach and Jackson (1986) respectively were used as instruments of data collection. Focused sample survey design were employed while repeated multivariate measure was used in data analysis. The result of the study showed significant differences among personality types on emotional exhaustion (EE) and Dehumanization (DH) subscales of the Burnout Inventory. On pairwise comparison, it was shown that the differences only existed between neuroticism and other personality types (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness) respectively. Discussion and recommendations were made in line with the result, obtained.

Introduction

Personality over the years had got wide publications as a result of its study on implications of numerous psychological disorders, coping mechanisms, adjustment to stress and response to pharmacotherapy as well as psychotherapy. Thus it is a gain saying that personality is a super ingredient in the formation and living of one's life. Allport (1937) defined personality as the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical factors that determine his unique adjustment to environment. Larsen and Buss (2002) defined personality as the set of psychological traits and mechanisms within the individual that are organized and relatively enduring and that influences his or her interactions with and adaptations to the environment.

Because of the importance of personality to psychology, numerous theories and typologies of personality including trait personality factors had been designed. These typologies thus help researchers, employees and clinicians in determining the type of the individual before them, what he can do, and what he cannot and how to help him (for clinicians)/how to place him on job (for employee selection). Numerous studies have been done on the roles of personality in diverse areas of psychology, life and adjustment. Cartbonel, Moorhead, & Megargee (1984) investigated the degree to which individual scale and multivariate combinations of scale on the MMPI and California Psychological Inventory (CP) could predict criteria of adjustment in prison. Participants included 1,313 inmates at a federal correctional institution who were admitted over a 2 year periods. The criteria of adjustment were ratings made by custodial personnel, work supervisors and teachers as well as disciplinary infractions, days in disciplinary segregation and days in seek call. The result however showed that neither the MMP nor CPI scales nor weighted linear combinations therefore provide enough accuracy to be used alone for individual actuarial prediction. On another note, Swagler and Jome (2005) examined the effects of personality in Taiwan. The study explored how personality factors and acculturation influence the cross cultural adjustment process of North American sojourning in Taiwan. The result of the study revealed that grater psychological adjustment to life in Taiwan was related to less neuroticism, greater agreeableness, greater conscientiousness and

being more cultural to Taiwanese culture. More successful social culturally adjustment was associated with being male, being more extraverted, and being more acculturated to Taiwanese culture. More successful social culturally adjustment was associated with being male, being more extraverted, and being more acculturated to Taiwanese culture. Their result suggested the importance of distinguishing between psychological and sociocultural cross cultural adjustment process, as well as viewing acculturation as a multidimensional construct. Holahan and Moos (1991) on their studies of life stressors, personality and social resources and depression using 254 adults showed that adaptive personality characteristics and positive family support operate prospectively over 4 years in predicting reduced depression even when prior depression is controlled. According to the researchers, by strengthening knowledge about the determinants and meditational role of coping, the results demonstrate in a 2 group LISREL analysis that the pattern of predictive relations differs under high and low stressors. Under high stressors, personality and social resources relate to future psychological health indirectly, through more adaptive coping strategies. Under low stressors, these resources relate directly to psychological health. The results support the idea that such resources play a causal role in maintaining psychological health and they suggest the potential for a general, adaptively oriented framework applicable to adjustment under both high and low stressors. From the foregoing literatures above, one can elicit the diverse implications of personality to human psychology and survival.

The present study therefore, had sought to examine the roles of personality types on work burnout among police officers in Anambra State of Nigeria. The personalities examined were extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness, while the domains of burn out examined was emotional exhaustion, dehumanization and reduced personal accomplishments. The main purpose/question of this study was to determine whether the varied personality types mentioned above would differ significantly on each subscales of burnout inventory (Emotional exhaustion, dehumanization and reduced accomplishment). Burnout on the hand is a form of physical emotional or mental exhaustion, especially in one's job or career, accompanied by decreased motivation, lowered performance, and negative attitudes towards oneself and others. It results from performing at a high level, until stress and tension especially from extreme and prolonged physical or mental exertion or overburdening workload take their toll (Vander Boss, 2007).

Burnout is most often observed in professionals who work closely with people (e.g. social workers, teachers, correctional officers) in service oriented vocations and experience chronic high levels of stress. It can be particularly acute in therapists or counselors doing trauma work, who feel overwhelmed by the cumulative secondary trauma of witnessing the effects (Vanden Bos, 2007). Burnout is also experienced by athletes when continually exposed to stress associated with performance without commensurate rewards or rest, (Weinberg & Gould, 2003).

Research Hypotheses

The following were the hypotheses that the study had sought to reject/accept.

1. There will be no significant difference on the contributions of the five personality traits to emotional exhaustion subscale of Burnout Inventory.
2. No significant difference will exist on the contributions of the five personality traits on dehumanization subscale of Burnout Inventory.
3. There will be no significant difference on the contributions of the five personality traits on reduced personal accomplishment subscale.

Method

Participant

The participants included police officers drawn from three police stations in Anambra State, Nigeria. The three police stations were chosen because of their proximity and availability to the researcher. The participants were selected using incidental sampling method. They included forty (40) females and sixty-five (65) males with age range of 24-50 years and M age of 42.03 with SD age of 3.68. their ranks were those of inspector (15 participants), ASP (10 participants), rank files including constables, Corporals, Sergeants (80 participants).

Instrument

Two instruments were used for the study. They included the Big Five Personality Inventory (BF) and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MB). The BFI was used to measure personality. It was developed by John, Donahue and Kentle (1991). The 44 – Item Inventory is one of the six psychological instruments which assess personality from a five dimensional perspective. The essence of the perspective was that personality characteristics can be resolved into five broad dimensions which are distinct from one another. The five dimensions included:

- a. Extraversion characterized by high energy and activity level, dominance, sociability, expressiveness and positive emotions.
- b. Agreeableness: characterized by prosocial orientation, altruism, tender mindedness trust and modesty.
- c. Conscientiousness: impulse control, task orientation, goal directedness
- d. Openness: exemplifies the breadth, depth and complexity of individual's mental and experiential life. John et al (1991) provided the original psychometric properties for American samples while Umeh (2004) provided by John et al (1991) were; Cronbach Alpha = .80, 3-month test-retest = .85. The BFI has mean convergent validity coefficient of .75 and .85 with the Big Five instruments authored by Costa and Mc-Crae (1992) and Golberg (1992) respectively. The divergent validity coefficients obtained by Umeh (2004) with University Maladjustment Scale (Kleinmuntz 1961) were extraversion = .05, Agreeableness = .13, Conscientiousness = .11, Neuroticism = .39, Openness = .24. The norms used in he study were the mean score of the present participants for each personality subscales.

The MBI was developed by Maslach (1983) to measure burnout syndrome (BOS)/mental fatigue and physical exhaustion. The MBI scale had 3 subscales divided thus:

- a) Emotional Exhaustion (EE). Feelings of emotional overextendedness, depletion and irritation over daily work pressures.
- b) Dehumanization (DH): also called depersonalization manifesting as callous/negative attitude/uncaring/excessively detached response to fellow workers.
- c) Reduced Personal Accomplishment (RPA): feelings of incompetence/underachievement, motivation/lack of efficacy.

Maslach and Jackson (1986) provided the original psychometric properties for American samples while Coker (1999) provided the properties for Nigerian samples. Maslach and Jackson (1986) obtained convergent validity coefficients in the range of .01- .36. Cronbach Alpha of .90 and .86 were obtained using American and Nigerian samples respectively. The split half and odd-even reliability of 57 and 92 were obtained using Nigerian samples by Coker (1999).

Procedure

The questionnaire instruments were administered to the police officers in their stations. This was done immediately after their weekly lectures. The officers who were present for the lecture was informed of the study and the reason(s) behind the study. Thus after the briefing, the questionnaires were administered to those around and were willing to participate. However, some officers pleaded to go home with the questionnaire in order to concentrate and respond. It took the researchers two months to complete the administration and collection of the questionnaire instrument.

Design and Statistics

A focused group survey design was used in the study. The focused group was the police force. Repeated multivariate measure was used in data analysis.

Result

The data obtained was arranged based on the three subscales of the MBI and to determine then whether differences existed in the contribution of various personality traits to each subscale of MBI. The table below summarized the results of the study.

Table 1: Summary table of Mean Scores of Personality Types on Two Subscales (EE & OH) of MB

Source 1		Mean Score
EE	Extraversion	17.27
EE	Agreeableness	17.19
EE	Conscientiousness	18.07
EE	Neuroticism	12.2
EE		
EE	Openness	19.05
DH	Extraversion	8.19
DH	Agreeableness	8.32
DH	Conscientiousness	7.85
DH	Neuroticism	5.74
DH	Openness	8.91

Table 2: Summary Table of Repeated Multivariate Analysis of Personality on Burnout

Source	Type III Sum of Square	Df	Ms	F
Personality on EE	2801.68	4	700.42	3.73*
Personality on DH	590.07	4	147.52	3.30*
Personality on RPA	168.53	4	42.13	0.58

* Show significance at .01 level of testing

Table 2 above showed significant differences among personality types on burnout (emotional exhaustion and dehumanization). From the mean scores (table 1), neurotic personality appeared to show reduced burnout than other personality types.

Table 3: Summary Table of Pair wise Comparison of Personality Types on Burn out (Emotional Exhaustion and Dehumanization)

(I) Personality	(J) Personality (Emotional Exhaustion)	Mean Difference
Extraversion	Agreeableness	-.07
	Conscientiousness	-.80
	Neuroticism	5.05*
	Openness	-1.78
Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	-.88
	Neuroticism	4.97*
	Openness	-1.861
Personality	(J) Personality (Emotional Exhaustion)	Mean Difference
Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	5.85*
	Openness	-.98
Neuroticism	Openness	-6.83*
(I) Personality	(J) Personality (Dehumanization)	Mean Difference
Extraversion	Agreeableness	-.13
	Conscientiousness	.34
	Neuroticism	2.45*
	Openness	-.72
Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	.47
	Neuroticism	2.58
	Openness	-.59
Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	2.11*
	Openness	-1.06
Neuroticism	Openness	-3.17*

* Showed significant difference at .05 level of testing

Table 3 above showed pair wise comparisons of personality types on the two subscales of burnout that showed significant differences respectively. The table showed that the differences existing among personality types of each subscale was significant with neurotic personality only.

Discussion

The result of the study was in this section discussed and conclusion arising from the discussion was made. The hypothesis one of the study was rejected and therefore, significant differences were found among personality types on emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion as had said was characterized by emotional over extendedness, emotional depletion and irritation over daily work pressures. The study showed that the difference was found on only neurotic personality when compared with other personalities. Thus other than the neurotic personality type, no difference was found among other personality types on burnout. In essence, the study showed that neurotic personality type had significantly reduced burnout than other personality types, when compared from their means scores.

Furthermore, the null hypothesis two was also rejected, and thus, the neurotic personality type showed significant reduced burnout syndrome on dehumanization than other personality types. Dehumanization however implies depersonalization manifesting in the form of callous, negative attitude, uncaring and excessively detached response to fellow workers. The study thus demands explanation over the findings that neurotic personality type showed reduced burnout on emotional exhaustion and dehumanization than other personality types that did not show any difference among them.

According to VandernBos (2007) burnout results from performing at a high level until stress and tension especially from extreme and prolonged physical or mental exertion or overburden of workload, take their toll. The neurotic personality on the other hand is characterized by anxiety, sadness, irritability and nervous tension. From this premise, it implies that neurotic personality type was less involved on the burnout (emotional and dehumanization) because they are likely not to be performing at a high optional level at their work place that will then warrant stress and tension to take their tool. This is believed because burnout is mostly seen among service professionals. The service professionals included all that work at close relationship with people. Neurotic personality is likely to impede/reduce interpersonal relationship and thus reduce the amount of service the person offers and thus reduce his work load. The neurotic personality characterized by sadness and irritability may pave the way for the worker to discharge the tension that accumulates from the work environment on the customers there immediately thus reducing the level of stress that person has. An example of the neurotic personality could be seen from the events that happen in the hospitals sometimes where patients may say I don't want to see this consultant; he is always bitter and irritable. In such a consultant, the case flies are likely to be reduced and thus reduction in work stress. Furthermore, the neurotic person is not likely to be emphatic with his clients, and thus may not carry the emotional burden clients may lay on them. On another note, the null hypothesis 3 was accepted and thus no significant difference was found among personality types on reduced accomplishment.

In summary therefore, neurotic personality showed less burnout syndrome on emotional exhaustion and dehumanization than other personality types.

Implications of the Study

The following were implications of the findings:

- i) The neurotic personality traits may not be working at optimal level in the service job. Thus although it reduces burnout in the persons, it deteriorates work performance in the service sector and thus reduce efficiency in job.

- ii) The other personality types that appear to work at optimal level in the service job needed stress inoculation therapy to help them reduce the stress that accumulate from day to day service job.
- iii) Part of the ways to reduce burnout may then include increasing of manpower to reduce the burden of workers, training in relaxation and meditation, assertiveness training to help workers say no at certain times, annual leave and mental imagery techniques.
- iv) Psychologists are needed highly in service industries to help workers with such needs as burnout.

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