



Do police officers experience discrimination at work? Analysis of perceived workplace discrimination, personal factors and psychological wellbeing

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Abstract. Scholars have established a link between workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing among different cohorts apart from the police officers. However, the role of resilience in the link, as well as how this condition differs across gender, among police officers within the context of Nigeria has not received sufficient research attention. *Purpose.* Thus, this study investigated the conditional indirect effect of gender on the relationship between perceived workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing through resilience of police officers in Nigeria. *Methodology.* A sample of 316 (mean age = 38.1; $\sigma = 13.6$; women = 47.2%) police officers that were selected through the stratified sampling technique, completed the Ryff Psychological Wellbeing Scale, Perceived Workplace Discrimination Scale and Resilience Scale. Data were subjected to both the structural equation modelling and hayes process macro analyses. *Findings.* Results from the hayes process macro statistical analyses revealed that resilience and perceived workplace discrimination independently predicted police officers' psychological wellbeing. Also, resilience was found to have an indirect effect on the workplace discrimination — psychological wellbeing link. Furthermore, perceived workplace discrimination had more effect on the psychological wellbeing of resilient female police officers than their male counterparts. The study concluded that the indirect effect of resilience on psychological wellbeing of police officers through perceived workplace discrimination was higher for female officers.

Keywords: gender, police officer, psychological wellbeing, resilience.

Introduction

Police officers' psychological wellbeing is necessary for optimum performance as studies have established the need for a healthy psychological functioning to enable police officers discharge their

sensitive duties (Garbarino et al., 2013). Policing is conceived as a stressful profession with numerous physical or mental or psychological concerns (Russell, 2014; Chitra, Karunanidhi, 2018; Queiros et al., 2020). Psychological wellbeing represents a state of optimal psychological functioning (Diener, 2000). Factors that can improve psychological wellbeing of police officers have been reported in studies that found an association between quality of work-life (Reni et al., 2012), optimism (Lee, 2019), personality, support from colleagues (Jackman et al., 2020) and psychological wellbeing. However, other factors such as stress, workload, (Demou, Hale, Hunt, 2020) have been established to have negative relationship with psychological wellbeing of police officers. There is a need to examine the mechanism through which workplace discrimination exerts its roles on the psychological wellbeing of police officers through resilience.

Theoretical background

Perceived workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing

Discrimination at work often referred to denial of equal treatment of employees on the account of age, sex, ethnicity, religion, cultural background (Allport, 1954). However, the sixth principle of labor in the United Nation Global Compact categorically discourages discrimination based on several work-related activities such as role assignments, training, promotion as well as conditions of employment. Workplace discrimination has been associated with several negative work outcomes like poor attitude to work, harmful to physical, mental and psychological wellbeing (Lee, Ahn, 2012; Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, Garcia, 2014). Perceived workplace discrimination refers to employee's perception of unequal treatment because of ethnic affiliation, sex or social group. Workplace discrimination has been found to be stressful which can largely impact employees' work attitudes and subjective wellbeing such as life satisfaction (Xu, Chopik, 2020). Similarly, perceived gender discrimination has been found to lower organizational citizenship behavior while increasing employee's turnover intentions (Dalton et al., 2014). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: Workplace discrimination will significantly predict (a) resilience and (b) psychological wellbeing of police officers,

Hypothesis 2: Resilience will significantly predict psychological wellbeing,

Resilience as a mechanism for workplace discrimination — psychological wellbeing relationships Resilience, which is often conceived as a personal resource, refers to people's ability to bounce back from an unpleasant experience (Rutherford, 2012). Since workplace discrimination relates positively with stress (Gershon et al., 2008), resilience is expected to mediate its debilitating impacts of workplace discrimination among police officers. Further studies have confirmed the inherent capacity of discrimination at workplace to drain personal psychological resources such as self-efficacy and sense of belonging (Tost, Hardin, Gino, 2020) and consequently reduces the capacity to cushion the impact of discrimination on psychological wellbeing. In a similar manner, the mediating role of resilience in the link between emotional social support and occupational psychology health (Bernabe, Botia, 2015) has been documented. In fact, resilience has been found to assist employees in bouncing back after negative experiences. For instance, the mediating effect of resilience between social conflict and wellbeing have been reported (Lanz, Bruk-Lee, 2017), distress tolerance and social adjustment (Falavarjani, Yeh, 2019). We therefore infer that since resilience is a personal resource, workplace discrimination will negatively predict resilience among police officers. We therefore hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3: Workplace discrimination will indirectly predict psychological wellbeing through resilience.

Gender as a moderator

The study proposed that gender will moderate the negative effect of workplace discrimination on the psychological wellbeing of police officers through resilience. Past research had confirmed that employees do face workplace discrimination by virtue of gender (Xu et al., 2020). The negative effect of gender discrimination was found to be more pronounced among women than men (Tost, Hardin, Gino, 2020). When women encounter negative work experiences, such as incivility, the relationship was stronger for female in the link between perceived workplace incivility and occupational wellbeing than their male counterparts (Miner, Cortina, 2016). Also, the relationship between job stressor and personality with counterproductive work behavior was found to be less with women than men (Spector, Zhou, 2014). In another dimension, women were found to possess higher level of conscientiousness compared to men when assessing the impact of gender in the link between workplace spirituality and organizational citizenship behavior (Nasurdin, Nejati, Mei, 2013). Perceived fairness was found to be stronger among male police officers in predicting emotional exhaustion than for female police (Adebayo, Sunmola, Udegbe, 2008). Based on these studies, it is proposed that:

Hypothesis 4: The indirect effect of workplace discrimination on psychological wellbeing through resilience will be lower among male police officers than their female counterparts.

The current study

Perceived workplace discrimination has been positively linked to stress, poor attitude to work, harmful to physical and mental health, turnover intention, but negatively with organizational citizenship behavior, psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction. Resilience has been reported to cushion the effect of negative work experiences on work outcomes such as social conflict and wellbeing, distress tolerance and social adjustment. The current study investigated the conditional indirect effect of gender in the association between perceived workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing among police officers through resilience. Specifically, the study examined how perceived discrimination affect psychological wellbeing who are resilient among male and female police officers.

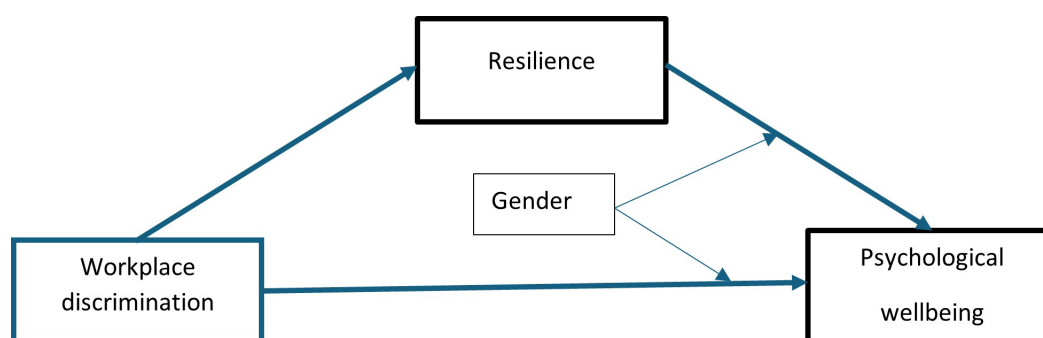


Figure 1. Hypothesized model of variables in the study

Methods

Participants and procedure

Approval to conduct the study was sought and granted by the Osogbo Zonal office of the Nigerian Police Force. Participants who appended their signature on the informed consent were assured of their confidentiality as well as voluntary participation in the study. Two research assistants that have been trained in the ethics of research administered the questionnaire on 316 ($F = 47.2\%$; mean age = 38.1) police officers across the ranks in Osun state command. Data collection spanned two weeks.

Three hundred and sixteen (316) out of the 350 copies of questionnaire that were administered were eventually found useful for analyses.

Measures

Psychological wellbeing. This was assessed using the 18-items Ryff's Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWB-S) with a 7-point Likert type response format that ranges from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (7) (Ryff, Keyes, 1995). The sum of the responses produces participants' psychological wellbeing. Thus, higher scores indicate higher level of psychological wellbeing. The Cronbach alpha of internal consistency for the scale was reported to be 0.86. The observed Cronbach alpha value established for this study is 0.92.

Workplace discrimination. Perceived workplace discrimination scale was used to measure workplace discrimination (Sanchez, Brock, 1996). It is a 15-item, 5-point Likert type ranging from 1 – 5. These points indicate the degree of perceived discrimination from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly disagree' (5), where a higher score indicates high perceived discrimination and vice versa. J. I. Sanchez with colleagues established an internal consistency of 0.87 for the scale while a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.91 was found for this present study (Sanchez, Brock, 1996).

Resilience. Participants' resilience was accessed via the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) developed by B. W. Smith with colleagues (Smith et al., 2008). It consists of 6 items was used to assess information on the level of resilience of the respondents. It is a 5-point Likert response format ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). Responses are summed together to ascertain the level of resilience. B. W. Smith with colleagues reported a Cronbach alpha of 0.80 and test-retest reliability of 0.69. The internal consistency Cronbach alpha from the sample of this study was found to be 0.92 (Smith et al., 2008).

Results

The data collected for the study were analyzed by means of Pearson's r , structural equation modelling (SEM) and the regression-based Process Macro developed by A. F. Hayes (Hayes, 2013). As part of the preliminary analyses, both the skewness and kurtosis of the data were determined to ascertain the normality of the data.

Table1. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix (N = 316)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Age	38.10	13.67	1				
2. Length	13.29	12.44	.89**	1			
3. Work discrimination	44.42	12.06	-.12*	-.17**	1		
4. Resilience	5.63	1.39	-.06	-.13*	-.58**	1	
5. Psychological wellbeing	64.11	18.80	-.17**	-.14*	-.60**	.52**	1
Cronbach's α	-	-	-	-	.91	.92	.91
Skewness	-	-	-	-	.61	-.29	.34
Kurtosis	-	-	-	-	.13	-.92	-.51

Note: * — $p < .001$; ** — $p < .005$

Results on Table 1 showed that there is a significantly positive relationship between age and years in service ($r = .86, p < .01$) but a negative correlation between age and workplace discrimination ($r = -.12, p < .01$) and psychological wellbeing ($r = -.17, p < .01$). It also revealed a negatively significant relationship between years in service and resilience ($r = -.13, p < .01$), workplace discrimination ($r = -.15, p < .01$) as well as psychological wellbeing ($r = -.14, p < .01$). Workplace discrimination was also found to be significant and negatively correlated with resilience ($r = -.58, p < .05$) and psychological

wellbeing ($r = -.60, p < .05$). Results further revealed that resilience positively correlated with psychological wellbeing ($r = .52, p < .05$).

Table 2. Regression weights: (group number 1 — default model)

	Variables	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Resilience	<--- Age	.100	.070	1.438	.151
Resilience	<--- Yearsinservice	-.122	.077	-1.580	.114
Resilience	<--- Workplace discrimination	.452	.037	12.091	***
Psychological wellbeing	<--- Age	-.462	.126	-3.650	***
Psychological wellbeing	<--- Resilience	.539	.102	5.289	***
Psychological wellbeing	<--- Yearsinservice	.402	.140	2.868	.004
Psychological wellbeing	<--- Workplace discrimination	.694	.082	8.492	***

The model presented in figure 2 revealed both the direct (table 2) and indirect effects (table 3) of workplace discrimination and resilience on psychological wellbeing. Table 2 showed that workplace discrimination has a direct effect on resilience ($\beta = .45, p < .05$) while age has a direct but negative effect on psychological wellbeing ($\beta = -.46, p < .05$). Furthermore, both years in service ($\beta = -.47, p < .05$), and workplace discrimination ($\beta = .69, p < .05$) had direct effects on psychological wellbeing.

Table 3. Indirect (mediating) effects of resilience on workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing

Independent Variables	Mediator	Dependent variable	β	p
Workplace discrimination	Resilience	Psychological wellbeing	.24	.01
Age	Resilience	Psychological wellbeing	.06	.01
Year in service	Resilience	Psychological wellbeing	-.66	.01

Results on Table 3 presents the indirect effect of resilience on the association between workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing. It showed that resilience mediated the relationship between workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing ($\beta = .24, p < .05$). It further revealed that resilience had an indirect effect in the relationship between age and psychological wellbeing ($\beta = .06, p < .05$). Resilience also mediated the association between years in service and psychological wellbeing ($\beta = -.06, p < .05$).

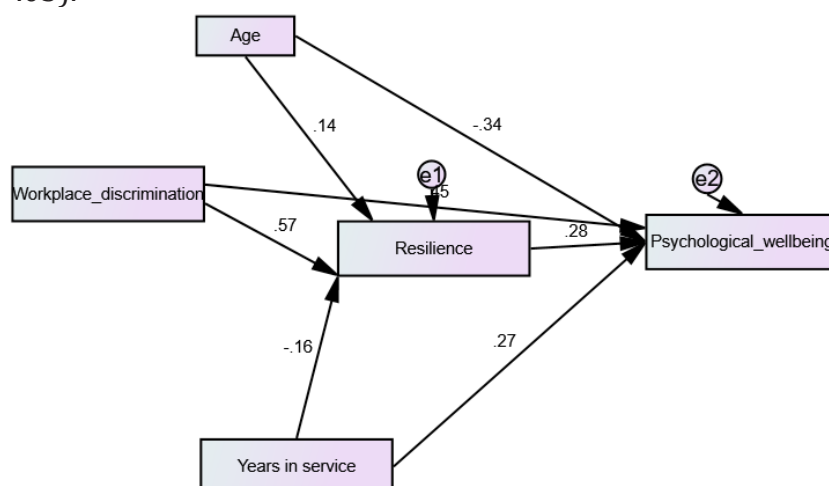


Figure 2. Mediating effect of resilience on the link between age, length of service and psychological wellbeing

Moderated mediation

The recommendation of A. F. Hayes on the procedure for estimating indirect effect through the use of SPSS process macro was utilized (Hayes, 2013). This approach uses bootstrapping to estimate

correct confidence interval for non-normal data distribution (Hayes, 2014). The model 8 was used to test moderated mediation with 5000 resample at 95% bias corrected confidence interval.

Table 4. Moderated mediation model of psychological wellbeing among police officers

Models	β	Std. error	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	(C.I)LL	(C.I)UL
MV model						
Constant	-4.104	5.151	-.797	.426	14.24	6.031
Work discrimination	.704	.114	6.193	.001	.480	.928
Gender	7.203	3.457	2.084	.038	.401	14.01
Work discrimination * Gender	-.168	.075	-2.254	.024	-.315	-.214
F(3,312) = 54.02, R = .585, R ² = .342.						
DV Model						
Constant	-.166	9.501	-.381	.986	-18.88	18.55
Work discrimination	1.097	.222	4.936	.001	.659	1.534
Resilience	.488	.104	4.673	.001	.283	.694
Gender	14.23	6.421	2.217	.027	1.601	26.87
Work discrimination * Gender	-.277	.139	-1.998	.047	-.551	-.004
F(4,311) = 54.87 R = .643 R ² = .414						
Conditional direct effect (gender)						
Female	.819	.107	7.654	.001	.607	1.030
Male	.542	.110	4.922	.001	.325	.758
Conditional indirect effect (gender)						
	β	Boot(SE)			Boot(LL)	Boot(UL)
Female	2.614	.054			.153	.363
Male	.179	.044			.097	.271
Index of moderated mediation	-.082	.038			-.162	-.271

Note: I.E = Indirect effect, C.I = Confidence interval, Boot = Bootstrapping.

Results of the moderated mediation analysis on Table 4 reveals that the conditional indirect effect of gender in the relationship between perceived workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing through resilience was significant ($\beta = -.17$, $t = -2.25$, $p < .05$). This is because there is zero between the upper and lower confidence interval. Also, the moderated mediation effect of gender on the relationship between perceived workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing through resilience was found to be higher among female [$\beta = 2.61$, CI (0.15, 0.36)] than their male counterparts [$\beta = 2.61$, CI (0.15, 0.36)]. The index of moderated mediation was found to be negative [$\beta = -0.08$, CI (-0.16, -0.27)].

Discussion

The study investigated the relationship between perceived workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing along with the conditional indirect effect of gender in the link between perceived workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing through resilience among police officers.

In accordance with the hypothesis, our findings revealed that perceived workplace discrimination has a negative relationship with psychological wellbeing. This implies that as police officers perceive the presence of discriminatory treatments, their psychological wellbeing becomes negatively affected. Workplace discrimination has been previously reported to negatively associated with attitude to work, physical and mental wellbeing as well as psychological wellbeing (Lee et al., 2012; Schmitt et al., 2014), life satisfaction (Xe et al., 2020). Optimum psychological functioning is required for police officers to perform their numerous functions (Garbarino et al., 2013). Therefore, when police

officers perceive that certain discriminatory move are made at work, which may negatively impact their capacity to function optimally, delivery of policing services may consequently be affected.

We also found a positive association between resilience and psychological wellbeing. That is, the more resilient the police officers are, the better their psychological wellbeing. Resilience, which is personal resource, most often assist individuals to bounce back from unpleasant experiences (Ruther, 2012). Since perceived workplace discrimination is considered as stress (Gershon et al., 2008), resilience is expected to cushion its effect. Furthermore, resilience was found to mediate the relationship between perceived workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing among police officers. The negative effect of perceived discriminatory treatment on police officers' psychological wellbeing is dampened by their capacity to bounce back after stressful experiences. Previous studies have reported the role of resilience in mediating the link between workplace variables such as emotional support and occupational psychology health (Bernabe at al., 2015), conflict and wellbeing (Lanz et al., 2017), distress tolerance and social adjustment (Falavarjani et al., 2019). Plausibly, when police officers are resilient, the distressful impact of perceived workplace discrimination on their psychological wellbeing is dampened, thus, sustained capacity to still perform their policing roles with minimal outputs.

As hypothesized, gender was found to have a conditional indirect effect on the relationship between perceived workplace discrimination and police officers' psychological wellbeing through resilience. Specifically, the moderated mediation effect of gender on the link between perceived workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing through resilience was found to be higher among female police officers than their male counterparts. Past studies have reported similar moderating roles of gender at workplace. Scholars (Miner et al., 2016; Tost et al., 2020) have established stronger impact of discrimination and other negative workplace behaviour on female employees than male employees. Although, when fairness and conscientiousness is concerned, the negative impact was found to be stronger for men than women (Adebayo et al., 2008; Nasurdin et al., 2013). Women are emotional and may not appreciate any unfair treatment at work, especially where both genders are exposed to nearly similar working conditions, except on rear cases.

Given the deleterious effects perceived workplace discrimination, policy makers and police force and practitioners may need to conduct further researches that could address factors which may enhance psychological wellbeing of the rank and file. At the police management level, the study has further exposed the presence of discrimination at work as well as its negative impact on psychological wellbeing. This in turns reflects in the way they discharge their duties because employee who is not functioning optimally may not be able to perform duties maximally and acceptably. When police management makes attempts to reduce potential opportunities for discriminatory treatments, employees will also be able to function optimally. At the individual level, police officers will also be able to understand the subtlety of discrimination and the possible effects on their psychological wellbeing. This will enable them to be ready to incorporate with the police management in the event that positive policy framework is made in this direction. Furthermore, resilient enhancing programmes are encouraged to in the meantime, provide a cushioning effect to police officers.

The study has several limitations. First, the conditional indirect effect of gender on the link between perceived workplace discrimination on psychological wellbeing through resilience was investigated. Future research could examine other moderators such ad personality, self-efficacy, organizational culture and climate. Furthermore, dimensionality of workplace discrimination may be examined on other work outcomes. A more nationally representative sample may also be considered in further research among police officers. The current study offers insights into workplace discrimination from employees' perception using the quantitative approach, this could be examined using the qualitative approach.

We conclude that resilience plays an important role in cushioning the negative impact of perceived workplace discrimination on police officers' psychological wellbeing. Also, the cushioning impact of resilience was stronger for female police officers than their male counterparts in the link between perceived workplace discrimination and psychological wellbeing.

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Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest of any kind among the researchers.

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Подвергаются ли сотрудники полиции дискриминации на работе? Анализ воспринимаемой дискриминации на рабочем месте, личных факторов и психологического благополучия сотрудников полиции

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Аннотация. Учёные установили связь между дискриминацией на рабочем месте и психологическим благополучием в различных группах, помимо сотрудников полиции. Однако роль устойчивости в этой связи, а также то, как это состояние различается в зависимости от пола у сотрудников полиции в Нигерии не получили достаточного исследовательского внимания. *Цель.* Таким образом, это исследование изучает условное косвенное влияние пола на связь между воспринимаемой дискриминацией на рабочем месте и психологическим благополучием через устойчивость сотрудников полиции в Нигерии. *Методология.* Выборка из 316 (средний возраст = 38,1; $\sigma = 13,6$; женщин = 47,2%) сотрудников полиции, которые были отобраны с помощью метода стратифицированной выборки, заполнили «Шкалу психологического благополучия» К. Рифф (*Ryff Psychological Wellbeing Scale*), «Шкалу воспринимаемой дискриминации на рабочем месте» (*Perceived Workplace Discrimination Scale*) и «Шкалу устойчивости» (*Resilience Scale*). Данные были подвергнуты как моделированию структурными уравнениями, так и макроанализу процесса Хейса. *Результаты.* Результаты макро-статистического анализа процесса Хейса показали, что устойчивость и воспринимаемая дискриминация на рабочем месте независимо предсказывали психологическое благополучие сотрудников полиции. Было также обнаружено, что устойчивость оказывает косвенное влияние на дискриминацию на рабочем месте в связи с психологическим благополучием. Кроме того, воспринимаемая дискриминация на рабочем месте оказала большее влияние на психологическое благополучие устойчивых женщин-полицейских, чем их коллег-мужчин. Исследование привело к выводу, что косвенное влияние устойчивости на психологическое благополучие полицейских через воспринимаемую дискриминацию на рабочем месте было выше у женщин-полицейских.

Ключевые слова: биологический пол, полицейский, психологическое благополучие, психологическая устойчивость.