

## Assessment of job satisfaction, job stress and psychological health of journalists in South-South, Nigeria

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Received: 28.07.14; Accepted: 15.12.14; Published: 31.12.14

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The relationship that exists between job stress and job satisfaction has been investigated across several professional groups. **Aim:** The study assessed the job satisfaction, perception of job stress and psychological morbidity among journalists in a state in the Southern part of Nigeria. **Methods:** The cross-sectional study was carried out in Benin city, the capital of Edo state in Nigeria. Three hundred and twenty consenting journalists from 5 media corporations in the city were interviewed using structured pre-tested questionnaires. Data was analysed using SPSS version 16. **Results:** Eight (2.5%) respondents had no job stress, 124 (38.8 %) had mild job stress with 166 (51.9 %) having moderate job stress and 22 (6.95%) having high job stress. Job title [OR 2.99;  $p = 0.00$ , 95% CI (1.31, 6.84)], and gender [OR 0.11,  $p = 0.02$ ; 95% CI (0.02, 0.68)] were significantly associated with the experience of job stress. One hundred and ninety four (60.6%) respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their jobs. Respondents who had been in employment for < 15 years and those who experienced high job stress, 22 (6.95%) were significantly ( $P < 0.00$  respectively) more dissatisfied than others. Psychological morbidity was present in 44 (13.8%) respondents, with job title as the only single predictor of psychological morbidity [odds ratio 0.57, 95% CI (0.42 – 0.78),  $P = 0.00$ ]. **Conclusion:** Management of media organisations in the state should put in place interventions to reduce identified stressors in the work environment targeted at identified high risk groups.

**Key words:** Journalist, job satisfaction, job stress, prevalence, psychological morbidity

### INTRODUCTION

Journalism refers to the investigation and reporting of events, issues and trends to a broad audience.<sup>[1,2]</sup> Besides covering organizations and institutions such as government and business, journalism covers

cultural aspects of society such as art and entertainment.<sup>[2]</sup> The field includes jobs such as editing, photojournalism and documentary.<sup>[2]</sup> Journalism exists in a number of media including the newspaper, television, radio, magazines and the internet.<sup>[2]</sup> Although there is much variation



within journalism, the primary idea is to create a societal media for information dissemination people.<sup>[3]</sup>

Job stress refers to the extent to which employees, feels a tension of anxiety caused by their jobs.<sup>[4]</sup> Job satisfaction refers to the perception of health workers have regarding various aspects of their work.<sup>[5,6]</sup> Job dissatisfaction indicates negative feelings that individuals have regarding their jobs or facets of their jobs.<sup>[6]</sup> Job stress has been viewed as an antecedent of job satisfaction, can be incurred by work overload, competitiveness, self-worth demands, and impossible responsibilities.<sup>[7-9]</sup> An inverse relationship between job stress and job satisfaction has been documented across various occupational groups.<sup>[10-13]</sup> The same is true for journalism.<sup>[13]</sup> High job stress creates negative psychological effects (depression), physiological effects (headaches, heart disease), and behavioural effects (absenteeism, drug consumption) on employees.<sup>[14-16]</sup> A depreciation in job satisfaction will affect their organizational commitment, which subsequently affects their work performances and leads to intentions to leave.<sup>[17,18]</sup> Job satisfaction therefore is theoretically capable of boosting or harming the journalism industry, where product quality is largely dependent on the individual talents and motivations of key personnel.<sup>[3]</sup> Reports have it that journalists experience a higher level of job stress compared to workers in other fields.<sup>[19,20]</sup>

Journalism in Nigeria is well over 160 years old, but with the focus of job stress and job satisfaction studies on the United States journalists, there is a dearth of information on the work-health balance of journalists in Nigeria. The study was therefore undertaken to examine the prevalence of job stress, level of job satisfaction among journalist and psychological health of journalists with the aim to provide data that will not only show the burden of the problem, but will also highlight areas for intervention and possible future research.

## METHODOLOGY

The cross sectional study was carried out in Benin City, the capital of Edo state, in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria. The city is home to five media firms including one federal owned television station, two state-owned and one private-owned

television stations, and one state owned newspaper corporation.

Study population were employees of government and private media houses. Criteria for inclusion were being a full-time journalist in private or government-owned establishment for at least a year. Part-time journalists and those who were on leave or absent during the period of the study were excluded.

Minimum sample size was computed as 405 using the formulae for prevalence study

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2} \quad [21]$$

with  $P$  set at 60%, the level of job satisfaction among journalist in Saudi Arabia,<sup>[22]</sup>  $z$  as 1.96 corresponding to 95% confidence interval and a non-response rate of 10%.

Respondents were selected from the five media corporations within the city. Quota of respondents from each outfit was determined by multiplying the total number of eligible persons in each outfit by  $n/N$ , where  $n$  was the sample size and  $N$  as total number of journalists in the city. Using a list of employees, random sampling was used to select respondents.

The University of Benin Ethics Committee gave institutional consent for the study. Permission was obtained from the management of the media houses for participation of their staff. Information was provided to the potential participants on the purpose and scope of the study. They were assured that their responses would be confidential and would not be handled with personal identifiers. Consent was sought and voluntarily obtained.

Data was collected using a pre-tested structured self-administered questionnaire modified as a combination of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28) -28.<sup>[23,24]</sup> Job satisfaction index (JDI)<sup>[25]</sup> and the job stress questionnaires (JSQ).<sup>[26]</sup> These questionnaires have been validated for use in assessing job satisfaction and psychological health in studies within and outside the country.<sup>[27-29]</sup> The questionnaires collected information on demographic characteristics, sources of job stress, sources of job satisfaction and psychological health. Job stress was measured using a 25-item scale that covered four dimensions: work load, role conflict, role ambiguity and performance pressure. A 5-point Likert scale

with 1 =never to 5 =always<sup>[30]</sup> was used to rate each stressor. The total score for each respondent was interpreted as 25-35= no stress, 36-50= low stress, 51-70= moderate stress, 71-90= high stress, and 90-125= very high stress.

Job satisfaction was assessed using 15 questions within the context of 5 parameters. They included: Pay, promotion potential, work relationships with immediate supervisors and co-workers, communication within the organization and use of skills and abilities. Respondents indicated their level of agreement to the constructs on a 5-point Likert pattern of strongly disagree = 1, to strongly agree = 5. The total scores were graded and interpreted as dissatisfied if within 15–50, and satisfied if within 51-75.<sup>[31]</sup>

Psychological health of respondents was assessed using the general health questionnaire 28 (GHQ-28). Self-perceived symptoms were rated according to whether they had been experienced "not at all", "the same as usual", "rather more than usual", or "much more than usual" in the past 6 months. An overall GHQ score was obtained using the 0–0–1–1 scoring system for the four responses possible for each item.<sup>[32]</sup> Those who score <4 are regarded as having no psychological morbidities while those with scores of 4 and above are regarded as having some psychological morbidities.<sup>[32]</sup>

### Statistical analysis

Data collected from respondents were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, Ill., USA). Descriptive data was represented using bar charts and frequency tables. Continuous data were presented as means with standard deviation. Tests of association (using Chi-square test and fisher's test), and test of significance (using t-test and z-test) were used with  $P < 0.05$ . Logistic regression was applied to associations significant with bivariate analysis.

## RESULTS

Three hundred and twenty returned questionnaires were analysed giving a response rate of 79.0%. Majority, 208 (65.0%) respondents were males, mean age was  $35.5 \pm 10.1$  years, mean duration of employment was  $7.29 \pm 7.5$  years. Majority, 162 (50.6%) were married, and reporters, 130 (40.6%) (table 1).

Eight (2.5%) respondents had no job stress, 124 (38.8%) had mild job stress with 166 (51.9%) having moderate job stress and 22 (6.95%) having high job stress.

Aggravating factors for job stress were listed as employee's perception of management role in the organization of work expressed by 214 (66.9%) respondents, performance pressure by 179 (55.9%) and perceived work overload, by 172 (53.8%) respondents. Less common factors influencing job stress were role conflict, 140 (43.8%), sufficiency of funds to achieve agency's goals, 106 (33.6%) and role ambiguity 78 (24.4%).

Significantly more job stress was expressed by respondents <25 years and those >35 years ( $P < 0.00$ ). 44 editors (75.9%), 136 males (65.4%) and 102 married respondents (62.9%), experienced significantly ( $P = 0.02$ ,  $P < 0.00$  and  $P = 0.01$  respectively) more stress than others in their groups. Duration of employment >16 years was significantly ( $P < 0.00$ ) associated with higher experience of job stress (table 3). In a logistic regression model, only job title [OR 2.99;  $P = 0.00$ , 95% CI (1.31, 6.84)], and gender [OR 0.11,  $P = 0.02$ ; 95% CI (0.02, 0.68)] remained significant.

One hundred and twenty six (39.4%) respondents expressed satisfaction with their jobs. Satisfaction with pay was expressed by 106 (33.1%) respondents, satisfaction with additional benefits by 128 (40.0%). Two hundred and fifty eight (80.6%) respondents felt the organization gave them ample opportunities for career advancement, 180 (56.2%) felt a sense of being valued by the company. One hundred and forty (43.7%) were of the view that their work gave them ample time for vacation or sick leave.

Relationship with co-workers was expressed as cordial by 238 (74.4%), 236 (73.8%) received support from supervisors, while 302 (94.4%) said lines of communication with supervisors was open. One hundred and eighty six (58.2%) expressed satisfaction with their ability to gain access to professional support groups, 262 (81.9%) were satisfied with their ability to use their skills in their present position. A large number, 312 (97.5%) found their work interesting, and 294 (91.9%) felt the work to be personally meaningful. Two hundred and seventy (84.4%) opined that their initial orientation did not prepare them well for the job (table 3).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents and percentages (n=320)

CHARACTERISTIC	VARIABLE	FREQUENCY (%)
Sex	Male	208 (65)
	Female	112 (35)
Age group( years)	21-25	32(10)
	26-30	92(28.8)
	31-35	84(26.2)
	36-40	32(10)
	>40	80(25)
	Mean $\pm$ SD	35.53 $\pm$ 10.14
Job tenure (years)	1-5	184(57.5)
	6-10	76(23.6)
	11-15	32(10)
	16-20	8(2.5)
	>20	20(6.2)
	Mean $\pm$ SD	7.29 $\pm$ 7.46
Marital status	Single	146(45.6)
	Married	162(50.6)
	Widowed	12(3.8)
Job title	Editors	58(18.1)
	Managers	58(18.1)
	Reporters	130(40.6)
	Newscasters	34(10.6)
	Publishers/ Consultants	40(12.5)

Respondents who had been in employment for <15 years were significantly ( $P<0.00$ ) more dissatisfied with their jobs than others. Gender, job category and age were not associated with satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Respondents who experienced high stress, 18 (81.8%) were significantly ( $P<0.00$ ) more dissatisfied than others (table 4).

Psychological disorder was found present in 44 (13.8%) respondents. Most commonly expressed psychological reaction included feeling of tiredness on resumption and during work by 138 (43.2%) and feeling of being used by the organization by 132 (41.3%). To a lesser extent, frequent absenteeism was reported by 30 (9.3%), feeling of negativism at work by 38 (11.9%), frequent expressions of anger by 90 (28.1%), and a tendency to dread going to work in the mornings by 60 (18.8%). Male gender, 36 (17.3%), editors, 16 (27.6%) and those with high stress levels

22 (6.95%) stress levels, were found to have psychological morbidities, with job title returning as the single predictor of psychological morbidity on logistic regression [odds ratio 0.57, 95% CI (0.42–0.78),  $P=0.00$ ].

## DISCUSSION

The higher prevalence of job stress among editors may be from pressure to meet up with tight deadlines, accurate decision making and ensure the truth is broadcasted.<sup>[33]</sup> This makes the editor a target for stress management programmes. The lower prevalence of stress among newscasters may be from the less demanding nature of their job. Long shifts, work over load, performance pressure and perceived inadequate funding for the achievement of organizational goals were sources of job stress in this study corroborating with findings from a study among community

nurses in United Kingdom.<sup>[34]</sup> Perceptions of management's commitment to personnel and organisational goals and job roles were both found to affect job satisfaction in a study of 1149 journalist in the United States.<sup>[35]</sup> Role ambiguity and role conflict played less significant roles in job stress, similar to findings from some studies.<sup>[36,37]</sup> Long shifts and work over load identified in this study as

sources of dissatisfaction can be overcome by increasing staff strength and training in stress and time management. The low level of job satisfaction in this study corroborates with a study done in the United States in 2002 where about 33% of journalists were fairly or very satisfied with their present jobs.<sup>[38]</sup> Similar low levels of job satisfaction have been reported in other professions.<sup>[27,28]</sup>

Table 2: Factors associated with stress level of respondents (N=320)

VARIABLE	STRESS LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS		
	No stress n (%) 132 ( 41.2)	Stress present n (%) 188 ( 58.8)	Total
<b>Gender</b>			
male	72(34.6)	136(65.4)	208(100.0)
female	60(53.6)	52(46.4)	112(100.0)
	$\chi^2=10.79$ df=1 P=0.00.		
<b>Age group ( years)</b>			
21-25	10 (31.3)	22 (68.7)	32 (100.0)
26-30	54 (58.6)	38 (41.4)	92 (100.0)
31-35	32 (38.1)	52 (61.9)	84 (100.0)
36-40	10 (31.3)	22 (68.7)	32 (100.0)
>40	26 (32.5)	54 (67.5)	80 (100.0)
	$\chi^2=17.067$ df=4 P=0.00.		
<b>Job title</b>			
editor	14 (24.1)	44 (75.9)	58 (100.0)
managers	28 (48.3)	30 (51.7)	58 (100.0)
reporters	58 (44.6)	72 (55.4)	130 (100.0)
newscasters	18 (52.9)	16 (47.1)	34 (100.0)
Publishers/Consultants	14 (35.0)	26 (65.0)	40 (100.0)
	$\chi^2=11.359$ df=4 P=0.02		
<b>Marital status</b>			
single	62 (42.4)	84 (57.6)	146 (100.0)
married	60 (37.1)	102 (62.9)	162 (100.0)
widowed	10 (83.3)	2 (16.7)	12 (100.0)
	fishers test p=0.01		
<b>Job tenure ( years)</b>			
1-5	82 (44.7)	102 (55.3)	184 (100.0)
6-10	38 (50)	38 (50)	76 (100.0)
11-15	12 (37.5)	20 (62.5)	32 (100.0)
16-20	0 (0)	8 (100.0)	8 (100.0)
>20	0 (0)	20 (100.0)	20 (100.0)
	fishers test P=0.00		

Table 3: Work related factors perceived to influence job satisfaction among respondents (N = 320)

Variable	Frequency (%)
<b>Sources of job satisfaction</b>	
Work perceived to be interesting	312 (97.5)
Work perceived as personally meaningful	294 (91.9)
Opportunities for career advancement	258(80.6)
Ability to use skill	262 (81.9)
Relationship with supervision	236 (73.8)
Relationship with co-workers	238 (74.4)
Remuneration	106 (33.2)
Additional financial benefits	128 (40.0)
Length of time allowed for vacation/sick leave	140 (43.8)
Orientation for job	50 (15.6)

The role played by remuneration and financial benefits on job satisfaction corroborates with findings from other studies,<sup>[39-41]</sup> and is contrary to what was documented in some other studies.<sup>[42]</sup> Indeed, remuneration and compensation are valuable tools for retention and reduction in staff turnover.<sup>[43]</sup> Management of media outfits need to put in place periodical salary increments, allowances, and other welfare packages to keep staff morale high, and employees satisfied. The roles of professional development opportunities and good social relationships with co-workers and supervisors in enhancing job satisfaction is supported by other studies.<sup>[44,45,46]</sup> The large proportion of employees satisfied with the nature of the work they do goes to support the assertion that of all the major job satisfaction areas, satisfaction with the nature of the work itself including job challenge, autonomy, variety, and scope best predicts overall job satisfaction, as well as other important outcomes like employee retention.<sup>[47]</sup> It is therefore also important that managers put in place staff orientation programmes to ensure that they are

adequately prepared to handle positions for which they are employed.

The absence of a statistical significance in level of job satisfaction amongst the various professional categories is at variance with findings from a 1993 United States study where television producers had higher satisfaction with their jobs than television reporters.<sup>[48]</sup> The inverse relationship between job stress and job satisfaction has been noted in other studies.<sup>[10,11,49]</sup> A study has emphasized that job stressors are predictive of job dissatisfaction.<sup>[50]</sup> Other scholars have identified that a lack of satisfaction in itself can be a source of stress, while high satisfaction can alleviate the effects of stress.<sup>[51]</sup> Thus the relationship between job satisfaction and job stress is two way, in which job satisfaction can affect job stress and vice versa.

The proportion found to have psychological morbidity is lower than what was observed in some studies conducted among other professional groups,<sup>[32,52,53]</sup> and similar to what was reported among Nigerian executives.<sup>[54]</sup> This finding is not unexpected

Table 4: Factors affecting level of job satisfaction among respondents (N= 320)

Variable	Status of satisfaction on the job			P-value
	Satisfied n (%)	Dissatisfied n (%)	Total	
	126 (39.4)	194 (60.6)		
<b>Gender</b>				
<b>Male</b>	84 (40.4)	124 (59.6)	208 (100)	0.61
<b>Female</b>	42 (37.5)	70 (62.5)	112 (100)	
<b>Age group (years)</b>				
<b>21-25</b>	12 (37.5)	20 (62.5)	32 (100.0)	0.07
<b>26-30</b>	44 (47.8)	48 (52.2)	92 (100.0)	
<b>31-35</b>	32 (38.1)	52 (61.9)	84 (100.0)	
<b>36-40</b>	6 (18.8)	26 (81.2)	32 (100.0)	
<b>&gt;40</b>	32 (40.0)	48 (60.0)	80 (100.0)	
<b>Job tenure ( years)</b>				
<b>1-5</b>	80 (43.5)	104 (56.5)	184(100.0)	0.00
<b>6-10</b>	14 (18.4)	62 (81.6)	76 (100.0)	
<b>11-15</b>	12 (37.5)	20 (62.5)	32 (100.0)	
<b>16-20</b>	6 (75.0)	2 (25.0)	8 (100.0)	
<b>&gt;20</b>	14 (70.0)	6 (30.0)	20 (100.0)	
<b>Job title</b>				
<b>Editor</b>	24 (41.4)	34 (58.6)	58 (100.0)	0.85
<b>Managers</b>	22 (37.9)	36 (62.1)	58 (100.0)	
<b>Reporters</b>	50 (38.4)	80 (61.5)	130 (100.0)	
<b>Newscasters</b>	16 (47.1)	18 (52.9)	34 (100.0)	
<b>Publishers/Consultants</b>	14 (35.0)	26 (65.0)	40 (100.0)	
<b>Stress level</b>				
<b>No stress</b>	8 (100)	0 (0)	8 (100.0)	0.00
<b>Low stress</b>	66 (53.2)	58 (46.8)	124 (100.0)	
<b>Moderate stress</b>	48 (28.9)	118 (71.1)	166 (100.0)	
<b>High stress</b>	4 (18.2)	18 (81.8)	22 (100.0)	

Table 5: Factors affecting prevalence of psychological disorder among respondents (N = 320)

	PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDER		TOTAL n (%)
	PRESENT n (%)	ABSENT n (%)	
	276 (86.2)	44 (13.8)	
<b>Gender</b>			
<b>Male</b>	36 (17.3)	172 (82.7)	208 (100)
<b>Female</b>	8 (7.1)	104 (92.9)	112 (100)
<b>total</b>	44 (13.8)	276 (86.2)	320 (100)
	$\chi^2 = 6.343$	$df = 1$	$P = 0.01$
<b>Job title</b>			
<b>editor</b>	16 (27.6)	42 (72.4)	58 (100)
<b>manager</b>	14 (24.1)	44 (75.9)	58 (100)
<b>reporter</b>	10 (7.7)	120 (92.3)	130 (100)
<b>newscasters</b>	0 (0)	34 (34)	34 (100)
<b>others</b>	4 (10)	36 (90)	40 (100)
	<b>Fishers test <math>P = 0.00</math></b>		
<b>Perceived stress level</b>			
<b>no stress</b>	0 (0)	8 (100)	8 (100)
<b>low stress</b>	6 (4.8)	118 (95.2)	124 (100)
<b>moderate stress</b>	22 (13.3)	144 (86.7)	166 (100)
<b>severe stress</b>	16 (72.7)	6 (27.3)	22 (100)
<b>total</b>	44 (13.8)	276 (86.2)	320 (100)
	Fischer's test $p = 0.00$		
<b>Level of satisfaction</b>			
<b>Satisfied</b>	112 (88.9)	14 (11.1)	126 (100.0)
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	164 (84.5)	30 (15.5)	194 (100.0)
	$\chi^2 = 1.22$	$df = 1$	$P = 0.32$

judging the proportion with significant job stress. These individuals will form a group that repeatedly attend clinic on health grounds, and unless the root cause is identified and handled, may never enjoy good health. Interestingly, the male gender, editors and managers had more psychological morbidities than others, and are also the categories that encounter more job stress. These groups of workers therefore require attention in stress management and other stress-relieving interventions.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors express their gratitude to all the journalists who participated in the survey. They are also grateful to the management of the various media outfits for permission granted them.

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doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14194/ijmbr.3.3.9>

**How to cite this article:** Ofili A.N, Tobin E.A, Ilombu M.A, Igbinosun E.O, Iniomor I. Assessment of job satisfaction, job stress and psychological health of journalist in South-South, Nigeria. *Int J Med Biomed Res* 2014;3(3):209-218

**Conflict of Interest:** None declared

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