
LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE AND EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE AS PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AMONG OFFICERS OF THE NIGERIAN CORRECTIONAL SERVICE, ANAMBRA STATE.

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ABSTRACT: Nigerian correctional centres and services are bedeviled with myriads of psychological challenges. This study investigated leader-member exchange and employee resilience as predictors of psychological distress of correctional services officers. One hundred and fifty-eight (158) officers of Nigerian correctional service participated in the study, with 82 males (51.9%), 76 females (48.1%), age-ranges 25-51 years, mean-age 34.8 years and SD 6.2. Incidental sampling was used. Leader-Member Exchange Scale, Employee Resilience Scale, and Psychological Distress Scale were the instruments. Correlational and multiple linear regression were the design and statistic respectively. Result showed leader-member-exchange had a significant negative predictive influence on psychological distress at $\beta = -.343, p < .05, (n = 158)$. Employee resilience did not reach predictive proportions at $\beta = -.070, p > .05, (n = 158)$. The study recommends synergy between leader and member relationship in handling organizational challenges. This facilitates adaption to changes in the workplace and reduce psychological distress.

KEYWORDS: Leader-Member Exchange, Employee Resilience and Psychological Distress.

INTRODUCTION

Most workers in this present-day organizations strive hard to reach to the peak of their careers and as much as having a good life. Despite greater pressure to meet the demands of modern working life, these workers are often times faced with certain challenges which could trigger work-related stress, work-life imbalance, mental, physical and emotional strain, and different health problems in the course of performing their duties (Trounson, Pfeifer, & Critchley, 2016; Boas & Morin, 2014). However, it has been observed that most frontline service personnel, especially officers in the Nigerian correctional service have in numerous ways experienced psychological related issues such as anger, sadness, self-consciousness, anxiety and

poor quality of life, while some are distracted, tired, confused, and at the extreme depressed, (Sylvester & Tosin, 2019; Mangwani 2012, as cited in Adegoke, 2014). Unbeknownst to many, this could be triggered by lack of effective communication skills, support, trust, motivation and rapport of supervisors to their subordinates (Muhammad & Ayesha, 2016; Lasisi, 2013, as cited in Adegoke, 2014). These problems also may at large extent contribute to subordinate's inability to resist pressure and demands of daily life needed to flourish in the face of conditions that are not favourable, not certain, and usually unstable, (Näswall Kuntz, Hodliffe, & Malinen, 2015; Lasisi, 2013, cited in Adegoke, 2014). This informed the direction of this study to investigate psychological distress of correctional officers and

its influencing factors and the factors considered in this study that could invariably influence psychological distress of correctional officers are leader member exchange and employee resilience.

Psychological distress (PD) has not been clearly expressed; it is often put in to practical use in different ways based on the combinations of symptoms ranging from depression and general anxiety symptoms to personality traits, functional disabilities and behavioural problems (Drapeau, Marchand, & Beaulieu-Prévost, 2012). However, Preville, Hebert, Bravo and Boyer (2002) conceptualized psychological distress as an unpleasant feeling or emotion that affects people's general functioning and could induce negative feelings of self, others and the environment. Furthermore, psychological distress seems more general in its definition and measurement, since it overlaps with the symptoms of psychic imbalance described and measured by other concepts (Marchand, Demers, Durand, 2005). Similarly, Mirowsky and Ross (2002) identified the clinical features of psychological distress in their definition; they largely defined as a state of emotional suffering characterized by symptoms of depression (e.g., lost interest; sadness; hopelessness) and anxiety (e.g., restlessness; feeling tense).

Psychological distress symptoms are prevalent in the work environment with work stress identified as a precipitant for depressive and anxiety disorders among young men and women (Melchior, Caspi, Milne, Danese, Poulton, Moffitt, 2007). Thus, amongst the police in Norway, males showed higher mean scores on depressive symptoms than females while females showed higher mean scores on anxiety symptoms (Berg, Hem, Lau, & Ekeberg, 2006). Psychological distress has been associated with sleep disturbances, symptoms of burnout, and depression (WHO, 1995). Meanwhile frequency of job pressure and lack of support of supervisors were also associated with anxiety symptoms (Berg et al., 2006). In contrast, with modest information on the mental health of correctional officers and other frontline service personnel in other parts of the world, data are lacking about this important information in Nigeria (Badrua et al., 2018).

Practically speaking, tenants of the stress-distress model, posit that the 'defining features of psychological distress are the exposure to a stressful event that threatens the physical or mental health, the inability to cope effectively with this stressor and the emotional turmoil that results from this ineffective coping' (Horwitz, 2007), as seen in Boko-Haram assaults that were rarely accompanied by the killing of correctional officers in a bid to free their members as well as other inmates while leaving several other officers injured with continues threat of further attacks in custodian centers (Badrua et al., 2018; Jimoh, Bwala, J., & Olatunji 2012). Thereafter, they argued that psychological distress vanishes when the stressor disappears or when an individual comes to cope effectively with this stressor (Ridner, 2004).

Research has linked psychological distress to a number of adverse health effects. For example, people who experience psychological distress are more likely to die from cardiovascular disease, particularly coronary diseases and hypertension; cancer, and injuries (WHO, 1995; Goldberg & Huxley, 1992). This could mean that some factors within the workplace have adverse psychological effects, such as work that is isolated, monotonous, that requires constant concentration, shift work, and work under threat of violence which decreases officers' resilience to work (Moon & Maxwell, 2004), in the correctional service system. Meanwhile, superior's leadership style could affect or strengthen the relationship with their subordinates which may increase or decrease employee resilience. Some studies conducted in several countries has highlighted the working conditions that are particularly stressful in the correctional sector such as high demands; time pressures; low input into decision-making; role difficulties; procedural injustice; lack of resources and rewards; poor quality training; lack of support; and poor relationships with leaders and subordinates (Finney et al., 2013). Other studies indicate that stressors that are intrinsic to the job role, such as overcrowding, understaffing, and aggression from prisoners are also powerful sources of strain for correctional officers (Finney et al., 2013; Mahfood, Pollock, & Longmire 2013).

The quality of relationship between leaders and their subordinates has been described as one of the major characteristics of organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Northouse, 2010). It is also assumed that organizations that employ LMX theory into practice largely attain their goals (Harris et al., 2009) but if conversely practiced, may decrease individual's resilience and trigger negative consequences (Anand et al., 2016), that can degenerate officers' psychological distress in the organization. Going by this, Dadhich and Bhal (2008) explained two levels of exchange between the leaders and subordinates, where the emphasis is on reciprocity of exchanges in relationships. The in-group leader (high quality LMX) that develop close working relationship with some of the subordinate tend to be characterized by mutual respect, liking, and trust while subordinates who experienced out-group (low-quality LMX) are not accorded special treatment and are left with little or no support from their superiors (Mullins, 2010; Coglisier, Schriesheim, Scandura, & Gardner, 2009).

Leader and manager of every contemporary organization should develop as many high-quality relationships as possible, like supporting the views and opinions of their subordinates and as well as sharing ideas and opinions with them, since this would lead to organizational outcomes (Joe-Akunne, Iloke and Nnaebue, 2020). Again, one advantages of high LMX is for preventing negative outcomes such as insecurity, stress and depressive feelings, as low LMX and experiences of psychological related issues can enhance negative consequences (Probst et al., 2016). For instance, in organizations, where leaders differentiate among their subordinates by creating close and high-quality relationships with some and maintaining formal and distant relationships with others (Li & Liao, 2014), which is reflected in the leader's control and distribution of tangible and intangible resources. Officers may be driven to socially compare themselves with their colleagues on the basis of accumulated resources such as promotions, salary, support and confidential information (Wobker, 2015). The officers who have lesser resources induce unfavourable social comparisons that promote feelings of envy

(Duffy et al., 2008), that may decrease officers' resilience to work and in turn, resort to distress.

Previous research considered leadership as a causal factor with both work-related outcomes and employee health (Nielsen et al., 2016; Shamir, 2011). For instance, studies by Finne et al., (2014) indicated that 'support of immediate leader' as well as 'fair leadership' prevent employees from psychological distress. Similarly, Junne et al., (2018) concluded that the factors 'social relationships in the workplace' and 'superior's leadership style' are seen as the most salient single dimensions among the investigated set of dimensions ultimately responsible for causing work related distress of employees. Howsoever, it is important to note that a high-quality relationship is a buffer against many stressors, such as being a misfit in an organization, having low resilience to job demands, and having unmet expectations (Bauer & Erdogan, 2014). Seemingly, some correctional officers are not psychologically prepared for the style of leadership utilized by the correction's administration or the everyday toil of working directly with inmates. Whenever officers are unable to deal with the daily pressure of their job, they could undoubtedly endure stress-related repercussions in their professional and personal lives, (McCarthy, 2012).

However, not every employee has developed the capabilities needed to thrive in the face of conditions that are surprising, uncertain, often adverse, and usually unstable. According to Davis-Laak (2014), resilience is proactivity to learn, develop and engage in nurturing one after being faced with difficulties. Reivich and Shatte (2002) describe the nature of resilience in the ability to overcome problems., steer through the adversity, bounce back after crisis, and reach out to develop their talents and experience that determines a long lasting and meaningful relationships with others, success at work and quality of health in their life. Windle (2011) opined that resilience can help employee to cope with developments such as problem-solving abilities, technology, collaboration and communication skills and manage their work environment successfully. There is unprecedented interest in resilience (Southwick et al., 2014), which is increasingly recognized as

a key approach to facilitate worker's wellness in challenging work environments (Brennan, 2017), and it has been operationalized in terms of workplace behaviours, rather than a set of dispositions or beliefs about one's ability to cope with adversity. Employee resilience captures the extent to which employees successfully deal with change and setbacks at work and to which they adapt accordingly to thrive in a new environment (Näswall, Kuntz, & Malinen, 2015).

Generally, the definition of employee resilience reflects a behavioral construct, which is different from, but related to, existing constructs that describe the capacity to cope with stress and pressure (Tonkin et al., 2018). Employee resilience is, however, defined as "employee capability, facilitated and supported by the organization, to utilize resources in order to adapt and flourish at work, even when faced with change and challenging circumstances," (Kuntz et al., 2016). It is in no doubt, employees that are resilient recover better and more quickly from disruptions than non-resilient employees, and are more adaptive and responsive to organizational changes necessary for organizational success (Shin et al., 2012). Contemporary researchers argue that organizations need to see how supervisors can be trained to "frame" challenges and adversity in a manner that motivates employees and promotes resilience. Therefore, there is need to enhance resilience on correctional officers, more specifically their ability to adapt, rebound and overcome adversity in order to avoid the negative consequences that would otherwise compromise their psychological and physical wellbeing (Russo et al., 2012). Against this backdrop, this study seeks to examine leader member exchange and employee resilience as predictors of psychological distress of correctional officers in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problems

Some frontline service personnel, especially officers in the Nigerian correctional service have been experiencing long hours on duty, unfair treatment by their superiors, redeployment, tight deadlines, rotating shifts, working weekends and holidays, disapproval of leave and gate pass, among others and these common factors could trigger employees emotional, cognitive, and behavioral state such as

anger, sadness, sleep disturbance, self-consciousness, low morale, fatigue, absenteeism, anxiety, distractions, depressive feelings and other work-related stress, (Sylvester & Tosin, 2019; Badrua, et al., 2018; Mangwani 2012, In Adegoke, 2014; Summerlin et al., 2010) which are the manifestations of psychological distress in the work environment. The possible causes of these stressors experienced in the workplace might be as a result of ineffective communication, interconnectivity and coherency between the leaders and followers, that is, many supervisors lack the effective communication skills, trust, support, motivation and rapport ((Muhammad & Ayesha, 2016; Lasisi, 2013, In Adegoke, 2014) which tend to decrease the subordinates capacity to resist pressure or deal vehemently with the stresses and strains of the contemporary organization, (Lasisi, 2013, In Adegoke, 2014). It is evident however, that behaviours and practices of unfair treatment of leader decreases work resilience and have negative effects on the follower's emotional state. This affects their perception towards work, consequently, making organizational goals and objectives difficult to accomplish, (Tang, 2014; de Lange et al., 2005). More so, an unfair treatment contributes to employees' negative experience or feelings (Long, 2016), such as a more devastating mood which may affect the employee's overall well-being. However, a considerable number of researches have been explored on psychological distress and its predictors among health workers. Based on the available literature reviewed, there is lack of research done using leader member exchange and employee resilience as factors determining psychological distress of Nigerian correctional officers. This study seeks to fill this gap in knowledge. This research is in furtherance to the earlier research by Meng et al., (2017) where LMX was discovered to be partially a moderating factor to employee resilience.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine leader member exchange and employee resilience as predictors of psychological distress of Correctional officers. The specific objectives are:

- To determine if leader member exchange predicts psychological distress.

- To know if employee resilience predicts psychological distress.

Operational Definition of Key Study Variables

Employee Resilience: This refers to as the developable capacity of employees, facilitated and supported by the organization, to utilise resources to positively cope, adapt and thrive in response to changing work circumstances as measured by Employee Resilience Scale (EmpRes) developed by Hodliffe (2014).

Leader Member Exchange: This refers to the quality of supervisor's-subordinate relationship from the perspective of the subordinate which measures three dimensions; trust, respect and obligation as measured by Leader Member Exchange (LMX) scale developed by Graen, Hui C and Taylor (2004).

Psychological Distress: This refers to a person's emotional state that is characterized by the level of anxiety and depressive symptoms experienced in the past 30 days as measured by Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6) developed by Kessler, Barker, Colpe, Epstein, Gfroerer, Hiripi, Howes, Normand, Manderscheid, Walters and Zaslavsky, (2003).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Psychological Distress

Interpersonal Theory by Carson (1996): Interpersonal theory attributed psychological constraints to abnormal patterns of interaction (Carson, Butcher & Mineka, 1996). They emphasize that people are social beings, and much of what people are is a product of their relationships with others. Hence, Carson, et al. (1996) viewed psychological distress as an unhealthy behavior developed from unsatisfactory relationships of the past or present. Psychological distress is identified when the distressed person's different patterns of interpersonal relationships is being examined.

According to this view, distress can be reduced to the barest minimum through interpersonal relationship that will aid on reducing problems emanated within relationships and on helping people achieve more satisfactory relationships through learning of new interpersonal skills. This means that high quality

relationship fosters better resilience in employee and reduces the level of distress because such employee may gain support from colleagues, supervisors and organization.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory

The theory was proposed by Fred Dansereau (1975). According to LMX theory, a one-on-one relationship between each employee and leader is established through repeated daily interactions. However, due to the different daily interactions between leaders and employees, each dyadic relationship is different, resulting in differentiated exchange relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In-group members get more attention and support from leaders and enjoy more resource allocation (Kacmar, Witt, Zivnuska & Gully, 2003). In addition, their jobs are more stable and they get more opportunities for promotion (Probst, Jiang & Graso, 2016). Conversely, subordinates in the out-group face a different situation (Probst, Jiang & Graso, 2016; Graen, Dansereau & Minam, 1972). Low-quality LMX limits their performance to that specified in formal job descriptions; moreover, they often do not have access to extra resources in their work, do not get the support of supervisors, and do not enjoy the same promotion opportunities, leading them to feel more negatively about their jobs (Probst, Jiang & Graso, 2016; Bolino & Turnley, 2009). In summary LMX describes how leaders maintain their positions in groups and how they develop relationships with other members that can contribute to growth or hinder development. This model assumes that leadership consists of a dyadic relationship that connects the leader to the members. The quality of relationship is measured by means of the level of trust, respect, support and loyalty.

Employee Resilience

Role stressors theory: Mark (2008) roles stressors theory proposes role stressors theory as a triadic model and response of the body to any demand made in an organization. This theory proposes that a manager who is also an employee, strive to meet organizational goals by utilizing an effective role. A role is referred to as a set of expectations involving a manager's position within an organization. Expectations are referred to as behavioural requirements or limits,

which the manager/employee must pursue. Depending on the behavioural requirements and expectations, employees may form high levels of stress in carrying out these requirements.

The two role stressors in measuring stress are role conflict and role ambiguity. **Role conflict** occurs when the messages and cues from a superior about the role is clear, but may be contradictory or mutually exclusive (Ram, 2011). **Role ambiguity** arises when a role is unclear. Role ambiguity is the need for clear instructions so that the individual may perform their organizational tasks successfully. Unclear instructions may result from the overall complexity of the organization, constraints in the communication of information, or a very high dynamic performance environment (Rachel & Zawadi, 2013). Role ambiguity may also prevent individuals from understanding what the job is and this expectation may bring an unsecured feeling involving their position within the organization. Managerial positions are known for the high level of stress and this may affect their jobs.

Examples of stress are: downsizing, restructuring, mergers, acquisitions and competing in high velocity markets or limited time management constraints may contribute to the high stress environment and create detrimental effects on managers. The humanistic perspective identifies the relationship between role stressors and the impact on the individual. Financial health organizations are successful in reducing or maintaining acceptable levels of job stress, thus, retaining a productive workforce (Deborah & Keely, 2009). Understanding how role stressors have negative impact on organizations and identifying the organizational cultures surrounding it is the greatest strength of this theory. Although, it is weak in correlating other causative factors which do not emanate from role playing.

Empirical Review

Leader Member Exchange and Psychological Distress

Choi (2019) examined the moderating effect of LMX on the relationship between workplace ostracism and psychological distress, using a survey method and multiple regression analyses with multi-source data from 226 male Korean

employees and their supervisors. Result showed that there was a stronger positive relationship between workplace ostracism and job tension, or emotional exhaustion (psychological distress) for male employees with low, as opposed to those with high, levels of LMX.

Gregory and Osmonbekov (2019) explored the relationship between leadership-member exchange (LMX) and employee psychological and physical health. Survey responses from 182 employees across two organizations were collected to measure study variables. Structural equation modeling techniques were used to analyze data and test hypotheses. The result showed that an association between LMX and employee health was found to be fully mediated by distress.

Employee Resilience and Psychological Distress

Azzahra and Paramita (2019) investigated the Effect of Resilience toward Psychological Distress among females using 134 active medical students the various universities in Malang as the respondents of the study. Result showed that resilience has a negative influence on psychological distress in female medical students at 18.2%. This means that the higher the resilience, the lower the psychological distress, and the lower the resilience, the higher the psychological distress of female medical students. This can be applicable in the work milieu.

Andrew, Adam, Smith and Lynch (2017) examined Effect of Resilience on distress and Business Outcomes in Difficult Work Environments using 2063 individuals from the web-survey service survey sampling international (SSI) completed the survey online in spring 2015. Respondents were part of SSI's existing survey panel. Eligibility criteria included being 18 to 64 years of age and currently employed. Result showed that high strain work environments (high demand, low influence, and low support) have an unfavorable effect on all outcomes. Resilience has a protective effect on all outcomes. For distress, burnout, and sleep, higher resilience has a more protective effect under low-strain conditions. For depression, absence and productivity, resilience has a more protective effect when job strain is high.

Hypotheses

- Leader Member Exchange will significantly predict Psychological Distress.
- Employee Resilience will significantly predict Psychological Distress.

METHOD

Participants: A total of one hundred and fifty-eight (158) officers of the Nigerian correctional service (NCS) participated in the study. They were drawn from four custodian centers in Anambra state (Awka, Aguata, Nnewi and Onitsha). Among the one hundred and fifty-eight staff, 82 were males (51.9%) and were 76 females (48.1%). The participant's age ranges 25 to 51 years with mean age of 34.8 years and standard deviation of 6.2. In the study, incident sampling technique was used to select the participants because their selection was based on availability, accessibility and willingness to participate. Further analysis showed that 2 (1.3%) officers have Ph.D, 14 (8.9%) officers obtained Master degree, 100 (63.3%) officers attained first degree (Bachelor of Science and Higher National Diploma) while 34 (21.5%) have Ordinary National Diploma /NCE and 8 (5.1%) have Senior Secondary School Examination Certificate.

Instruments: Psychological Distress Scale was measured using Kessler psychological distress scale (K6) developed by Kessler, Barker, Colpe, Epstein, Gfroerer, Hiripi, Howes, Normand, Manderscheid, Walters and Zaslavsky, (2003). It consists of a 6-item questionnaire that is a short screening scale of non-specific psychological distress and a simple measure of a person's emotional state that is characterized by the level of anxiety and depressive symptoms experienced in the past 30 days. The items were rated on a 5-point likert scale to measure psychological distress of Nigerian Correctional Officers. The items responses were scored from 0 (None of the time) to 4 (All of the time). A pilot study was carried out by correlating psychological distress and life satisfaction scale and a negative correlation indicated that the scale was discriminated by -.78, indicating that the scale in question measures a clear and valid construct. Kessler et al. (2003), K6 had 0.89 excellent

internal consistency reliability (cronbach's alpha) in the telephone pilot sample. While in this study, a cronbachs alpha of .80 was generated using (n=63) participants from NCS Anambra Headquarters.

Leader Member Exchange was measured using an 11-item LMX scale developed by Graen and Taylor (2004). The instrument assessed the quality of supervisors-subordinate relationship from the perspective of the subordinate. It is one of the most commonly used scales used in assessing the quality of LMX, and measures three dimensions; trust, respect and obligation. It is a five (5) point Likert-type response. Some of the items in the scale include "I like my supervisor very much as a person", My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with", I admire my supervisor's professional skills". A pilot study was carried out by correlating lmx and Work alienation scale and a negative correlation indicated that the scale was discriminated by -.79, indicating that the scale in question measures a clear and valid construct. Graen and Taylor (2004) reported a Cronbach alpha of .95, indicating that the scale has high internal consistency. However, a Cronbach alpha of .88 was obtained in Nigeria by Joe-Akunne, Iloke & Nnaebue, (2020). While, a cronbachs alpha of .90 was generated from this study using (n=63) participants.

Employee Resilience is measured using employee resilience scale (EmpRes), a 13-item scale developed by Hodliffe (2014) was used to measure developable capacity of employee that organization can help develop through the provision of enabling factors. Items were rated on a 7-point likert scale and responses were scored from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). Hodliffe (2014) also reported an internal consistency of $\alpha = .89$. A pilot study was carried out by correlating employee resilience and Workplace deviance scale and a negative correlation indicated that the scale was discriminated by -.76, indicating that the scale in question measures a clear and valid construct. Also, reliability analysis was carried using cronbach's alpha method with (n=63) participants and obtained coefficient of .95 for standardized value.

Procedure: A self-introductory letter that explained the purpose of the study was written to

seek permission from the Controller, Nigerian Correctional Service, Anambra State, as copies of the approval letter was sent to authorities (Deputy Controller) of the various custodian centers to administer the questionnaire sheets. The researcher also met with the heads of Admin Unit of the custodian centers to solicit for their assistance to allow their staffs participate in the study. The researcher and research assistants used two weeks to administer and retrieve the questionnaires. Thursdays are for their weekly routine lectures, which is the day one would find reasonable number of staff and it was utilized immediately after the lecture. However, the questionnaire was shared on the first week at Aguata and Awka, while Nnewi and Onitsha were done on the second week. Both research assistants shared themselves the same day at

different locations. The participants' consent was taken and they were assured that their responses could be kept confidential. They were briefed about the study and that there are no wrong or right answers as per the instructions given in the questionnaire. In the study, a total of 170 questionnaire sheets were administered, while 158 were properly answered, tallied and were used for analyses.

Design and Statistics: This research was a survey study and a correlational design, the statistics for analysis was multiple regressions. It allows analyzing the relationship of more than one independent variable in respect to the dependent variable and consequently builds a model of the relationship between variables to establish the strength of these relationships.

RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for mean, standard deviation and standard error

	N	Mean	SD	SE
Leader-member exchange	158	32.6899	2.37	0.804
Employee resilience	158	42.8608	6.45	0.731
Psychological distress	158	11.5823	1.47	0.779

Data in Table 1 reveals the descriptive statistics for variables under study. The norm score of the sample indicates a moderate level psychological distress at $M = 11.6$ ($SD = 1.47$) among the participants with a moderate

employee resilience at $M = 42.9$ ($SD = 6.45$) whereas LMX was high at $M = 32.7$ ($SD = 2.37$). However, a correlation test will be required to ascertain if the variables are related.

Table 2: Assumption check for normality test (Shapiro-Wilk)

	W	P
LMX	0.982	0.187
Employee resilience	0.982	0.174

Note. A low p-value suggests a violation of the assumption of normality

Data in Table 2 reveal that using the Shapiro-Wilk for the assumption check, the test of normality or even distribution of the participants was confirmed at $W = 0.98$ and $W = 0.98$ with p-

value greater than 0.05 significance ($n = 158$) respectively for LMX and employee resilience. Hence, sample distribution for the study is normal.

Table 3: Zero order correlation matrix among LMX, employee resilience, and psychological distress among the sample

S/N	Factors	LMX	Employee resilience	Psychological distress
1	LMX	1.00		
2	Employee resilience	-.176	1.00	
3	Psychological distress	-.355	-.130	1.00

Data in Table 3 reveals the relationship among variables. Negative and significant correlations were recorded between LMX, employee, and

psychological distress. $LMX = -.355$, $p < .05$, ($n = 158$), employee resilience = $-.130$, $p < .05$ ($n = 158$). Findings among variable of interest

imply that the relationship of the predictors is inversely proportional to the criterion. This

denotes negative influence on psychological distress among the sample.

Table 4: Beta weight coefficient analysis of LMX and employee resilience as predictors of psychological distress

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	5.306	1.833		2.895	.004
	Employee Resilience	-.016	.017	-.070	-.920	.359
	LMX	-.213	-.047	-.343	- 4.506	.000

Data in Table 4 reveals that (LMX) was significant in the model as a predictor of psychological distress among the sample. Beta weight coefficient analysis revealed that leader-member-exchange (LMX) had a significant negative predictive influence on psychological distress at $\beta = -.343$, $p < .05$, ($n = 158$).

Conversely, employee resilience did not reach predictive proportions at $\beta = -.070$, $p > .05$, ($n = 158$). Thus, only hypothesis one which sought the predict effects of LMX on psychological distress among employees was confirmed in the model; hence, accepted.

DISCUSSION

The study investigated leader member exchange (LMX) and employee resilience as predictors of psychological distress of Correctional officers in Anambra. Two hypotheses were tested. The study revealed that the first hypothesis which stated that lmx will significantly predict psychological distress was confirmed. This shows that, lmx is inversely related and predicted psychological distress. As leader member exchange increases, psychological distress decreases. In a nutshell, the better the lmx among correctional officers, the less psychological distress. This is in tandem with the findings of Choi (2019) which indicated that male employees had a stronger positive relationship on psychological distress with low level of lmx, as opposed to those with high, levels of lmx. It is also consistent with the findings of Nnaebue, Etodike, Okeke and Nwangwu (2022) which revealed that leader member exchange predicted psychological wellbeing.

theory of planned behavior which assumes that behavior is planned; hence it predicts deliberate behavior such as out-group relationship with subordinates. In that sense, it tells us that some supervisors employ maladaptive ways of interacting with their subordinates which may reduce individual’s resilience to work and in turn, increase psychological distress in the work environment.

Theoretically, this finding is in support of Leader Member Exchange theory (Dansereau, 1975) which posits that a one-on-one relationship between each employee and leader is established through repeated daily interactions. The level of this leader member exchange determines the employee’s psychological health at the workplace. This could be strengthened more as, employee’s interactions with his/her supervisor affect the individual’s level of psychological distress. It is in consonance with Ajzen (1991)

The second hypothesis which stated that employee resilience will significantly predict psychological distress was disconfirmed. This shows that employee resilience is not significant, although it has negative (inverse) influence. However, resilience means that things are not going the employees’ way, which may be lack of support from leader, exposure to a stressful event, continues threat of further attacks in custodian centers, work pressure, long hours on duty and so on, and the employee has to adjust than usual. This could also be source of stress or distress in itself. That is to say, resilience is also a form of stress and it may be the reason for not being significant. This corroborates with the study conducted by Azzahra and Paramita (2019) that resilience has a negative influence on psychological distress in female medical students at 18.2%. This means that the higher the resilience, the lower the psychological distress, and the lower the resilience, the higher the psychological distress of female medical students.

Theoretically, this finding is in support of Roles Stressors theory (Mark, 2008) which posits that employees strive to meet organizational goals by utilizing an effective role, depending on the behavioural requirements and expectations; they may form high levels of stress in carrying out these requirements. That is to say, some supervisors knowing that subordinates must work harder to earn a living, intentionally assign job roles that is contradicting or conflicting, and ambiguous to their subordinates. These two common factors may contribute to the high stress in the environment and create detrimental effects on the subordinates. The psychological wellbeing or health of the subordinates depends on the two role stressors in measuring stress which are the role conflict and role ambiguity. If the instructions on the job roles are clear and understandable, it reduces distress but if it's ambiguous, it increases distress.

Implications of the Study

From the findings of this present study, it implies that leader member exchange and employee resilience have an inverse influence on psychological distress. This means that the better the relationship between the supervisor and the subordinate, the less psychological distress that will be experienced, conversely, the poorer the relationship between the supervisor and subordinate, the higher the psychological distress. Also, the higher the employee's resilience, the lesser psychological distress experienced, and vice versa.

However, employers of labour in every organization should see how supervisors can be trained to "shell" challenges and problems in a manner that promotes resilience so as to drastically reduce distress with the workplace.

Conclusion

From the findings of this present study, it has been made known that leader member exchange and employee resilience have an inverse influence on psychological distress. This explains how cordial relationship is needed in the organization between the leader-member and subordinate so as to drastically reduce distress and keep employees' psychological wellbeing intact. Also, supervisors would understand that giving clear instructions on job role, training and

development is germane, for this would help them cope or steer through adversities and manage their work environment.

Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need for management of Nigerian Correctional Service to employ high quality leader member and allow for leaders to share ideas and opinions with their subordinates. This enables their subordinates to overcome and adapt to changes in the environment and this in turn will reduce psychological distress at the workplace.
2. Management of Nigerian Correctional Service should review their leadership style through development programs like leadership training, collaboration with management experts and organizational psychologist.
3. Ministry of internal affairs should ensure that the management of Nigerian Correctional Service takes proactive organizational measures to increase resilience and reduce psychological distress and also embark on sensitization workshops to broaden supervisors' knowledge on the dangers of distress in the work settings.

Limitations of the Study

Bias might not have been avoided in responding to the questionnaire.

Suggestions for future Research

Future studies should utilize a larger sample using other designs with participants from different geopolitical zones in order to be able to generalize the study as behavioural attitude in the workplace.

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