

# Work Stress and Demographic Factors as Predictors of Psychological Well-Being among Police Officers in Makurdi Metropolis

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## Abstract

*This study investigated work stress and demographic factors as predictors of psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi metropolis. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, where three hundred and forty six (346) police Officers consisting of 202 (58.7%) males and 143 (41.3%) females were used for the study. Their ages ranged from 18 to 64 years with the Mean of 41.61 (SD=11.226). Workplace Stress Scale (WSS) and Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale (RPWS) were used for data collection. Statistical analysis involved the use of Multiple regression. Findings from the hypotheses indicated that, Work stress significantly influenced psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi metropolis. And the result further showed that, there was no significant independent and joint influence of demographic variables on psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi metropolis. Based on the findings, it was recommended that, Police Officers should be enlightened on how to manage work stress. It was also recommended that government should evolve policies that are aimed at reducing work stress among police Officers. Also, nongovernmental organizations with caring mind for the police Officers should help reduce work stress, so as to enhance better policing by the Officers. Finally, more researches should be encouraged on the subject matter for further identification of long term solutions to the problems affecting psychological well-being of police Officers in Makurdi metropolis in particular, and Nigeria at large.*

**Keywords:** work stress, demographic factors, psychological well-being, police Officers and metropolis.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Psychological well-being within the social sciences is used to determine the state of an individual in terms of experience, perception, feeling and cognitive state. The concept has attracted considerable attention of researchers in the twenty-first century (Archontakil, Lewis, & Bates, 2012; Diener &

Seligman, 2002). According to Diener (1997) psychological well-being refers to how people evaluate their lives in terms of cognition, emotion or feelings. It expresses the frequency with which people experience pleasant or unpleasant moods and emotions, which have a positive or negative effect. Thus, people experience level of subjective well-being even if they do not often consciously think about it, and the psychological system offers virtually a constant evaluation of what is happening to them. Psychological well-being can also be defined in terms of internal experience of the respondents and perception of their lives (Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2002). Literatures on psychological well-being have progressed rapidly since the emergence of the field over five decades ago (Archontakil, Lewis, & Bates, 2012).

Recent surveys show how psychologists and other social scientists have taken huge steps in their understanding of the factors influencing psychological well-being (Christopher, 2015). Therefore, psychological well-being can be referred to as general term used by psychologists to explain the general condition of an individual or group of people, which includes psychological, social, economic, spiritual or medical state. Many studies found a rich and fulfilling social life and a network of close social support with family and friends as being strongly correlated with psychological well-being. A study of the happiest 10% of college students showed that those found to engage in large amounts of social activity were the happiest (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Consistent with the conclusions from this study was the experiment conducted by Fleeson, Malanos and Achille (2002) where both extroverted and introverted college students were asked to record their activities and moods over a period of 3 weeks in a diary. The results showed that, both groups were happiest when engaged in 'extroverted' activities. Both of these studies support the theory that, social participation is a strong predictor of psychological well-being. Indeed, it is easy to see why extroverts have a predisposition to greater levels of psychological well-being, given their propensity to socialize more. However, this does not explain the findings of Diener, Sandvik, Pavot and Fujita (1992)

which showed that, whether extroverts lived alone or with others, whether they had jobs which involved working with other people or not and whether they lived in rural or urban areas, extroverts were happier than introverts. This raises the question as to whether the social aspects that lead to greater experiences of positive affect have been over emphasized.

One variable that is found to be implicated in psychological well-being of police officers is work stress. According to Christopher, (2014) work stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities, which challenge their ability to cope. Police profession is meeting numerous of critical work problems which are described as having negative influence on officers' psychological well-being (Joseph, 2015). On his part; Christopher (2015) added that: while handling the criminal offences, the police officers encounter violence, cruelty and indifference to the welfare of others. In one perspective they try to meet the conflicting demands of the public at the same time they face bureaucracy in their own organizations, internal politics and rigid traditional style of management.

Work stress is a critical factor in determining workers' health and psychological well-being. It is a phenomenon that has generated interest of researchers due to its negative perception and bio-medical effects on human behavioural manifestation. Stress has been described as a bio-chemical and behaviour reactions associated with fight or flight response (Joseph, 2015). Stress is scientifically used as a psychological precursor of illness; and serves as a catchall for anxiety, discomfort, and the likes. In some of the studies, it is identified that, being a police officer is a stressful job (Christopher, 2015). Police officers experiencing high levels of work stress, report a high incidence of physical syndrome and psychological problems that affect their psychological well-being (Joseph, 2015). Stress can be referred to as the psychological factor that is harmful to physical and psychological health and dangerous to individuals' psychological well-being. Many researchers found that such a long shifts, violence, traumatic events, murder, assault, and other inherent danger, organizational factors are some important factors that affects psychological well-being of police Officers (Mohren, 2003; Ursin & Eriksen, 2004). Police force is considered as one of the most stressful occupations, exposing staff to occupational, organizational, and personal stressors (Alexander, 1999; Paton & Violanti, 1999; Anshel, 2000). Significant research findings have documented that prolonged stress has negative effects on individual health and psychological well-being (Mohren, 2003;

Ursin & Eriksen, 2004), as well as employees' attitudes towards the organization (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003). Among many professional adverse effects of work stress are job dissatisfaction, poor public relations, reduced productivity, absenteeism, and high staff turnover; adverse personal effects, anxiety, depression, and burnout (Gershon, 2002).

Studies have also shown that demographic factors such as age, sex, rank, educational status and marital status also plays vital role in determining the individual psychological well-being (Solomon, Mark & Johnson, 2015). On their part, Karen, Lincoln, Robert and Collinks (2011) holds that: certain demographic variable like sex, age, religion, marital status, level of education, ethnicity, income among others are vital factors that have links with individual level of orientation, perception and behavior, which in turn may determines police Officers' psychological well-being. Police Force, being one of the major security outfits in Nigeria is made up of officers of different sex, age, marital and educational status, and rank amongst others.

Fry and Greenfeld (1980) acknowledged the research of Hennig and Jardim (1976), and Standley and Soule (1974) which suggested that "in general", psychological well-being has link with demographic variables. In this findings, Standley and Soule (1974) hold that when a woman enters a male-dominated occupation like police force; she is viewed as competent, hardworking, determined, single, childless, career-oriented, committed to the organization, and influenced by her father, who provides a strong role model" which portray her as "tough, strong woman" in a man's world and is in conflict with the general perception of a woman in 1980s society as a "warm expressive individual, sensitive to needs of others and placing family over job". They suggested that the psychological well-being of a woman trying to handle a male dominated job caused anxiety. They proposed different reasons for this anxiety, for example, the fear of success in competition with men, the feelings of isolation, the lack of support from male colleagues, loneliness, and sex discrimination. Fry and Greenfeld (1980) reported no significant differences between the attitudes of males and females in terms of psychological well-being. The authors noted that their findings supported Terborg's (1977) review of the literature that asserted that "women who pursue non-traditional careers reject sex role stereotypes and once in such positions, they have needs, motives, and values similar to men who also are in similar positions". They attributed these significant differences to the fact that males and females face the same responsibility at the same time. This environment and control system is called the "bureaucratic paramilitary command model"

in policing and rehabilitation process. It is against this background that the present study seeks to investigate work stress and demographic factors as predictors of psychological well-being among police officers in Makurdi metropolis.

#### A. Statement of Problem

Nigeria Police officers occupy a central role in protection of lives and properties, maintaining law and order as well as providing a safe and secure environment for Nigerians. Experience has shown that, officers are faced with a lot of challenges, in the course of carrying out their primary assignments. These challenges occur as a result of a sharp rise in insecurity across the country; whereby, officers are faced with cases of arm robbery, kidnappings, terrorism (Boko Haram insurgency/militancy), and religious/communal crisis among others.

Many Officers are faced with a lot of problem in the course of discharging their duties, which results to work stress, emanating mostly from the tedious demands of their work. Studies have also shown that, demographic variables such as sex, age, rank, marital status, education and income also tend to affect the psychological well-being of police Officers negatively. These challenges hamper the Officers' psychological well-being because they struggle to cope with pressure from each angle (Saidu, 2013).

Consequences of these problems go beyond boundaries of the police circle. It affects every family, community and the country at large. Studies have linked negative effect on psychological well-being of police Officer to the sharp rise in incidences of extra-judicial killing of innocent citizens by the officers, unprofessional policing and lack of self confidence to combat crime (Pamson & John, 2013). These problems increase day by day and even led to the order of the inspector general of police; Arase to subject police officers whose duty include carrying of fire arms to undergo psychological test and evaluation (Olabisi, 2016).

Finally, not much study of this nature were carried out in the study area therefore, the understanding of Work Stress and demographic factors run the risk of becoming culturally biased. However, by conducting this study with Nigerian sample, the researcher hopes to address this problem. It was therefore hypothesized that:

- i. There will be a significant negative influence of work stress on psychological well-being among police officers in Makurdi metropolis.

- ii. Sex, Age, rank, marital status, education, and income will independently and jointly predict psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi metropolis.

## II. METHOD

#### A. Design

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to elicit information from respondents on work stress and demographic factors as predictors of the psychological well-being among police officers in Makurdi Metropolis Benue State. This research design enabled the researcher elicited information from respondents (police officers) cutting across different sex, age, rank, marital status, education, and income working in Makurdi Metropolis, which adequately measured the study variables. The independent variables in this study are work stress and demographic factors while the dependent variable is psychological well-being.

#### B. Setting

The study was conducted among police officers serving in Makurdi metropolis; a capital city of Benue state, located in central Nigeria along the Benue River; at latitude of 7,37° and 7,47° N; and longitude of 8,27° and 8,40° E. Benue State Police Command was established in 1976 (Nigeria Police Force, June, 2016). The command is made up of three Area Commands; Gboko Area Command, Otukpo Area Command and Makurdi Area Command. The study included officers of the state Headquarters, 13 Mobile Police Force, A division, B division, C division, D division and E divisional Police Headquarters within Makurdi metropolis respectively.

#### C. Sampling

A purposive sampling technique was used for the study. Purposive sampling is the procedure in which the investigator identifies individuals who are considered to be typical of the population and select them as the sample (Akinsola, 2005). Therefore the researcher recruited only Police Officers who volunteered within the study area.

##### 1) Sample Size Determination

However, in order to determine sample size of the study, Taro Yamane's (1967) formula was used from the population of 2,450 police officers working in police formations within Makurdi metropolis (Nigeria Police Force, June, 2016).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = the sample size  
N = the population size  
E = the tolerable sample error (0.05)  
Therefore substituting the formula stated

above

$$n = \frac{2450}{1 + 2450 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{2450}{1 + 2450 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{2450}{1 + 6.125}$$

$$n = \frac{2450}{7.125}$$

$$n = \frac{346}{1}$$

#### D. Participants

The participants for this research cut-across Police Officers of different sex, age, rank, marital status, education and income, in Makurdi metropolis, which were purposely drawn from the state headquarters, 13 Mobile Police Force, A division, B division, C division, D division and E divisional police headquarters. The size of the population is 2,450 Police Officers from all police formations within Makurdi metropolis, while 346 were sample for the study.

#### E. Instruments

Data for this study were collected using two standardized research instruments thus:

- Workplace Stress Scale (WSS)
- Ryff's Psychological Well being Scale (RPWS)

Workplace Stress Scale was developed by Marlin and American Institute of Stress (Yonkers, 2001) Workplace Stress Scale is 8-item scale designed to measure work stress among employees. The scale is scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often to 5 = Very Often. Total score of 15 or lower indicate that stress is not a problem. Total score 16 to 20 is fairly low stress level. Total score 21-25 indicate moderate stress. Total score 26-30 indicate severe level of stress. The wrong time, and might benefit from counseling. Total score 31- 40 (2%) show that stress level is potentially dangerous. The instrument has overall norms: 18.4, for Men: 18.6; Women: 18.1. Ages 18-34: 17.6; Ages 35-49: 19.2; Ages 50+.

Ryff's Psychological Well being Scale (RPWS) is a widely-used instrument designed by Ryff

(1989). A 62-item Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales (RPWS) was designed to measure six dimensions of psychological well-being which include: a positive attitude toward oneself and one's past life (self-acceptance), high quality, satisfying relationships with others (positive relations with others), a sense of self-determination, independence, and freedom from norms (autonomy), having life goals and a belief that one's life is meaningful (purpose in life), the ability to manage life and one's surroundings (environmental mastery), and being open to new experiences as well as having continued personal growth (personal growth).

Psychological Well-Being Scales (RPWS) is scored based on 4-point likert scale of strongly agree=4; agree=3; disagree=2 and strongly disagree=1. However, items 1, 6, 17, 23, 34, 42 and 57 are scored in a reverse order. The total score for each respondent is arrived at by sum up scores for each item.

Psychological Well-Being Scales (RPWS) was originally validated on a sample of 321 well-educated, socially connected, financially-comfortable and physically healthy men and women (Ryff 1989). The internal consistency coefficients were quite high (between 0.86 and 0.93) and the test-retest reliability coefficients for a subsample of the participants over a six week period were also high (0.81-0.88).

#### 1) Pilot Study

In order to ensure reliability and validity of instruments used on indigenous and study sample, the instruments were subjected to pilot study using police Officers in Otukpo Area Command, Benue State, Nigeria. For this pilot study, a total number of 103 copies of instruments were administered to the participant using convenience sampling in which each officer were contacted while on duty to response voluntarily. Out of these number distributed only 97 were returned representing the return rate of 99.9%. 6 copies representing 6.2% were not returned. Result indicated the following:

In the current study the Work-Family Conflict Scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .83 and total variance of 67.506 indicating that the test items are highly reliable and validly measures 67.5% of work-family conflict among police officers

In the current study the Work Place Scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .62 and total variance of 52.179 indicating that the test items are highly reliable and validly measures 52.2% of work place stress among police officers



In the current study the Rift Psychological Well-being Scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .87 and total variance of 67.506 indicating that the test items are highly reliable and validly measures 76.9% of psychological wellbeing among police officers. The six dimensions of the scale have Cronbach's Alpha .72, .66, .78, .69, .72 and .70 for autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purposive in life and self-acceptance

#### F. Procedure

In the course of the research, the researcher personally administered the questionnaire to officers of the Nigeria police force within Makurdi metropolis purposively; state Headquarter, 13 police mobile force, A division, B division, C division, D division and E divisional police headquarters respectively. The researcher first took a letter of introduction from the Department of Psychology to the Commissioner of Police Benue state command Makurdi. Approval was given and the researcher established rapport with the respondents; after which their consent was sought. Finally, questionnaires were administered to them with assurance that the information will be handled with confidentiality.

#### G. Data Analysis

The researcher used 21 version of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data

in which the correlation analysis was first used to find out the reliability and validity of the instruments. The final statistics used was Regression analysis of variance. Multiple Regressions were chosen to test whether there will be a significant negative influence of work stress on psychological well-being among police officers in Makurdi metropolis and to test whether Sex, Age, rank, marital status, education, and income will independently and jointly predict psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi metropolis.

### III. RESULTS

This study examined work stress and demographic factors as predictors of psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi Metropolis. In regards to this, data were collected, tested and this chapter presents results derived from data analysis according to the stated hypotheses.

#### A. Hypotheses Testing

1) **Hypotheses I:** This hypothesis states that there will be a significant negative influence of work-stress on psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi metropolis.

This hypothesis was tested using Regression Analysis and the results are tabulated and interpreted as shown below.

**Table 1: Multiple regression analysis showing the negative influence of work stress on psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi Metropolis.**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	$\beta$	T	P
<b>Psychological Wellbeing</b>						
Constant	.223	.050	17.975		25.115	.000
Work Stress				-.223	-4.240	.000
<b>Autonomy</b>						
Constant	.125	.016	5.464		15.633	.000
Work Stress				-.125	-2.337	.020
<b>Environmental Mastery</b>						
Constant	.179	.032	11.369		18.472	.000
Work Stress				-.179	-3.372	.001
<b>Personal Growth</b>						
Constant	.212	.045	16.128		19.201	.000
Work Stress				-.212	-4.016	.000
<b>Positive Relations</b>						
Constant	.256	.086	24.144		22.898	.000
Work Stress				-.256	-4.914	.000
<b>Purpose in Life</b>						
Constant	.110	.012	4.230		17.507	.000
Work Stress				-.110	-2.057	.040
<b>Self-acceptance</b>						
Constant	.111	.013	4.247		17.347	.000
Work Stress				-.111	-2.061	.040

Criterion Variable: Psychological Wellbeing

The results presented in table 1 above showed that there was a significant negative influence of work stress on psychological well-being of police Officers in Makurdi metropolis ( $R = .223 = R^2 = .050$  ( $F(1, 344) = 17.975$ ,  $t = 25.115$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This means that work stress contributes 50.0% to changes in psychological well-being of police Officers. This finding implies that higher level of work stress is likely to leads to lower level of psychological well-being among police Officers. Therefore, this research hypothesis has been confirmed and the null hypothesis rejected.

The results presented in table 1 with regards to dimensions of psychological well-being showed that there was a significant negative influence of work stress on autonomy of police Officers ( $\beta = -.125$ ,  $p < .020$ ). The result further means that work stress contributes 18.0% to changes in autonomy of police officers. This finding implies that higher level of work stress leads to lower level of police Officers' autonomy.

The results presented in table 1 further showed that there was a significant negative influence of work stress on environmental mastery of police Officers ( $\beta = -.179$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The result further indicated that work stress made a significant contribution of 32.0% to changes in environmental mastery of police Officers. This finding implies that higher level of work stress is leads to decline in environmental mastery of police Officers.

Similarly, the results presented in table 1 in respect of hypothesis I indicated that there was a significant negative influence of work stress on personal growth of police Officers ( $\beta = -.212$ ,  $p < .000$ ). The result further means that work stress contributes to 45.0% decline in personal growth of police Officers. This finding implies that higher level of work stress is

likely to affect personal growth of police Officers negatively.

The results presented in table 1 in respect of hypothesis I indicated that there was a significant negative influence of work stress on positive relations among police Officers ( $\beta = -.256$ ,  $p < .000$ ). The result further indicated that work stress contributes 86.0% decline in personal growth of police officers. This finding implies that higher level of work stress is likely to affect positive relations of police Officers negatively.

The results presented in table 1 in respect of hypothesis I indicated that there was a significant negative influence of work stress on purpose in life among police Officers ( $\beta = -.110$ ,  $p < .040$ ). The result further means that work stress contributes 12.0% to the decline in purpose in life of police officers. This finding implies that higher level of work stress is likely to affect purpose in life among police Officers negatively.

The results presented in table 1 in respect of hypothesis I indicated that there was a significant negative influence of work stress on self-acceptance among police Officers ( $\beta = -.111$ ,  $p < .040$ ). This result further showed that work stress significantly contributes 13.0% to the decline in self-acceptance of police Officers. This finding implies that higher level of work stress is likely to affect self-acceptance of police Officers negatively.

2) **Hypotheses II:** This hypothesis states that Sex, Age, Rank, Marital Status, Education, and Income will independently and jointly predict psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi metropolis. This hypothesis was tested using Multiple Regression Analysis and the results are tabulated and interpreted as shown below.

**Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis showing the influence of demographic factors on psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi Metropolis.**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	$\beta$	T	p
Constant	.156	.024	1.397		15.157	.000
Age				-.002	-.027	.978
Sex				-.094	-1.627	.105
Education				-.103	-1.646	.101
Marital Status				-.014	.244	.807
Rank				-.067	-1.143	.254
Income				-.125	-1.759	.080

Criterion Variable: Psychological Wellbeing

The results presented in table 2 above showed that there was no significant influence of demographic factors on psychological well-being of police Officers ( $R = .156 = R^2 = .024$  ( $F(6, 334) = 1.397$ ,  $t = 15.157$ ,  $p > .05$ ). This means that all the six demographic factors (Age, sex, education, marital status, rank and income) jointly and insignificantly contributed to 24.0% variation in psychological well-being among police Officers. There was also no significant independent influence of age ( $\beta = -.002$ ,  $p > .05$ ), sex ( $\beta = -.094$ ,  $p > .05$ ), education ( $\beta = -.103$ ,  $p > .05$ ), marital status ( $\beta = -.014$ ,  $p > .05$ ), rank ( $\beta = -.067$ ,  $p > .05$ ) and income ( $\beta = -.125$ ,  $p > .05$ ) on psychological well-being. Therefore, the hypothesis that demographic factors will jointly and independently influence psychological well-being of police Officers has been rejected.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION**

Various hypotheses in relationship to the study were discussed in this section.

Hypothesis one sought to find out if work stress will significantly influence psychological well-being. This hypothesis was confirmed. This finding agreed with the work of Adegoke (2014) whose work revealed that, work stress has become one of the major predictors of health, daily living and psychological well-being of police Officers. Liberman, Best, Metzler, Fagan, Weiss, and Marmar (2002) also holds that, work stress can be harmful to physical and psychological health and dangerous to psychological well-being. However, this finding disagreed with the finding of Ursin and Eriksen (2004) who indicated that, work stress is just a factor that can predict psychological well-being; only when paired with another factor. Also in line with this finding is the work of Mohren (2003) who noted that, long shifts, violence, traumatic events, murder, assault, and other inherent danger are occupational factors that affects psychological well-being of police Officers. The implication of this finding to the research is that, in order to minimize factors affecting psychological well-being of police Officers, there is a need for holistic understanding of these factors including work stress by both government (police management team) and the general public so as to minimize factors that can increase these factors.

Hypothesis two was to find out if Sex, Age, rank, marital status, education, and income will independently and jointly predict psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi metropolis. The hypothesis was statistically insignificant and was rejected. This finding is in consonance with the study carried out by Csikszentmihalyi (1975), whose work revealed that, demographic factors such as sex, age rank, marital status, education, income among others

are not factors that determine psychological well-being among employees. This finding on the other hand goes contrary to that of Bastemur's (2006). According to him, demographic factors are complex phenomenon that must be specified; before one can conclude whether they can predict psychological well-being or not. Frone, Russell and Cooper (2002) conducted a study that is in line with this finding. Their work revealed that sex, age, rank, income, education and marital status do not influence psychological well-being among employees. They further noted that demographic factors stand to influence psychological well-being only, when they are accompanied by other predisposed factors. The implication of this finding is that; as much as, there is no way one can do away with demographic variables when it comes to predictors of psychological well-being, but they are not to be considered as independent predictors. The major implication of this finding is that, the outcome will help to discourage focusing on demographic factors as the only predictors of psychological well-being among police Officers; rather, demographic factors should only be considered as predisposed factors when, there are other determinants and predictors.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Conclusively, the present study examines work stress and demographic factors as predictors of psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi metropolis. Work-stress significantly influenced psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi metropolis. However, demographic factors such as: Sex, Age, Rank, Marital Status, Education and Income did not independently or jointly influenced psychological well-being among police Officers in Makurdi metropolis.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were hereby advanced:

- i. Police Officers should be enlightened on how to manage work stress.
- ii. On policy basis, it was therefore recommended that government should evolve policies that are aimed at reducing work-family conflict and work stress among police Officers.
- iii. Also, nongovernmental organizations with caring mind for the police Officers should help reduce work-family conflict and work stress, so as to enhance better policing by the Officers.
- iv. Finally, more researches should be encouraged on the subject matter for further identification of long term solutions to the problems affecting psychological well-being of police Officers in Makurdi metropolis in particular, and Nigeria at large.

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