

# Psycho-demographic Factors Influencing Social Well-being among Mobile Police Force

Rotimi Oguntayo<sup>1</sup> (MA), Oladele Abayomi Olaseni<sup>1</sup> (PhD), Johnson Tunde Oyeleke<sup>1</sup> (PhD), Helen Okiafe Osinowo<sup>2</sup> (PhD)

1. Department of psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

2. Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Science, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

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## Corresponding Author:

Rotimi Oguntayo,  
Department of psychology,  
Faculty of Social Sciences,  
University of Ilorin,  
Ilorin,  
Nigeria  
E-mail: rotimijoguntayo@gmail.com

## Abstract

**Introduction:** There is overwhelming evidence in the increase of dysfunctional social well-being among service members returning from deployment, and this is culminating into a wide range of social challenges. The present study investigated the psycho-demographic factors influencing social well-being among mobile police force in Kwara State, Nigeria.

**Method:** The study adopted a survey method utilizing an ex-post-facto design. The purposive sampling technique was used to sample 200 mobile police officers (152 males and 48 females). They completed a questionnaire pack which included-the Post-Deployment Readjustment Inventory Scale, Emotion Regulation Questionnaire and Mental Health Continuum of Social Well-being-Short Form. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, ANOVA and Multiple Regression.

**Results:** Findings showed that emotion regulation has a positive relationship with social well-being. Also, age, emotion regulations and post-deployment stress as a whole significantly predicted social well-being among the sampled participants. However, emotion regulation independently predicted social well-being, though marital status did not significantly influence social well-being among the participants.

**Conclusion:** This study presented emotion regulation as a great predictor of social well-being. It is recommended that; emotion regulation should be built into the training and debriefing of mobile police before and after deployment to aid their better social well-being.

**Keywords:** Age, Emotion Regulation, Police, Post-deployment Stress, Social Well-being

## Introduction

Many studies have contributed to the understanding of general well-being, however, there is still an increasing number of dysfunctional social well-being as a subdomain of general health especially among veterans; service members and those returning from deployment requires support from family, society and friends [1,2]. Social well-being is a construct focusing on the ability of human beings to maintain good relationship with others, sustain social stability and functioning within the society [3]. This concept actually explains why human beings are social creatures who collectively depend on others for survival in matter of wellness, relationship, needs, services and connections. Despite the importance of this phenomenon to individuals and the general public, there are still paucity of studies that have investigated factors mitigating the social wellness of police in Nigeria. The recent decline in police dyadic relationship with citizens in Nigeria has triggered the need to examine the psycho-demographic factors influencing their social healthiness.

According to a study, social well-being is very much of a collective project that an individual cannot experience by his or herself. It requires engaging a system of consensual understanding and practices as well as depending on other individuals, utilising social

connections and relations in order to sustain well-ness [4]. Thus, by focusing solely on individual ability, we may ignore the fact that human lives depend on the way they live and on the characteristics of the society which they live in. A study has shown that, the quality of relationship is a vital element to increase individual well-being [1]. For instance, the degree of interdependence in human beings has a positive effect on the social well-being of individuals especially the military and paramilitary officers who deal with the society to foster adequate security and safeguard lives and properties.

A study revealed that, well connected individuals are happier and have a stronger impact on the society than the less connected ones [4]. This analysis suggests that how individuals relate with others may provide important information for the intersection of individual well-being and societal progress. Additionally, the World Health Organization has defined social well-being as a condition in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities to cope with stresses that arise from life, can work productively and fruitfully with people in order to be able to make a positive impact in one's environment [5]. The Nigeria police force have a track record of unleashing mayhem on both innocent harmless citizens and their family [5]. The recent indiscriminate and extra-judicial killing, brutalization and extortion of harmless Nigerians by these law enforcement agents are products of longstanding neglect of researching on psychosocial causes of low social well-being among militaries. Meanwhile, a study has found that brutality has a significant positive relationship with post-deployment stress among paramilitary and military personnel [6]. Inadequate social well-being of individual veterans may predispose them to unprofessional conducts such as; brutality, dyadic relationships with the residents, and incivility among others.

The mobile police is a subsidiary of the Nigeria Police Force to foster adequate security, combat sudden unrest and criminality among armed banditry, insurgents, violent militant groups, violent religious sects, and many other agencies of antisocial activities [7]. There are numerous distressing psychological and social based challenges that are being reported by the mobile police after operation; consequently, returned mobile police do feel disconnected from the rest of the society, co-officers and family members. Situations like this could trigger internal-and/or explicit-personal changes and social skills that may probably lead to poor quality of social well-being. This issue has led to the need to understand how post-deployment stress associate with social well-being.

Looking at the aftermath effects of lower social well-being among law enforcement personnel, the affected individuals may lack the ability to achieve optimal productivity in the services render [8]. Thus, identifying whether post-deployment stress is specifically a key for determining social well-being among the mobile police is needed. A group of scholars have defined redeployment as the relocation of a group of armed forces to support a new mission in another operational area or to return them to their home or demobilization station [8, 9]. The period

that directly followed the redeployment of mobile police personnel may be accompanied with symptoms of psychological distress such as; traumatic intrusive thoughts, extreme interpersonal difficulties, poor anger management, difficulties in coping with stress and hyper-vigilance, social withdrawal, increased alcohol use, mood swings, anxiety etc. [8]. Post-deployment stress may occur after mobile police personnel have been redeployed to their home station. However, due to probable diverse life-threatening events that might occur in the operational area, the way individual police may experience it could be different [10]. However, during post-deployment stress, emotional dysfunctions may increase such as; dyadic relationships with both family members, co-workers and the civilians; counter-productive work behaviours, aggressiveness, anxiety etc. This introduces emotion regulations into social well-being.

Some previous studies have found that, the ability to regulate one's emotion does not determine the level of social well-being. For instance, a study revealed that, there was a significant positive relationship between emotion regulation and well-being [11]. In addition, a study conducted among postgraduate students in Malaysia showed that individuals who recognize their emotional feelings, utilise their discretion or decisive skills effectively and use it to overcome social inadequacy [10]. Unfortunately, there is paucity of literature on the constructs that could predict social well-being among mobile police in Nigeria. Emotion regulation involves changes in how response components are interrelated as the emotion unfolds, such as when increases in physiological responding occur in the absence of overt behaviour [12]. Meanwhile, a study discovered that adults report higher and more positive emotion regulations when interacting with their social partners compared to younger adults [11]. This introduces demographics into social well-being.

Demographic information about the mobile police personnel could determine their social well-being. For example, a study established that older veterans who lose contact with colleagues during post-deployment period maintained the same amount of social network developed during the mission than the younger veteran counterparts [11]. Compared to military men who are married, adult women who are married, maintain more same-sex close relationships [12,13]. It has been discovered in various literature that married individuals have greater psychological and social well-being than their single counterparts [11,12,13]. The current study therefore examined to investigate the influence of psycho-demographic factors (post-deployment stress, emotion regulations, age, gender and marital status) on social well-being among mobile police in Kwara state, Nigeria. Thus, two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the purpose of this study. The hypotheses were stated as thus; i) age, emotion regulation and post-deployment stress will jointly and independently (significantly) predict social well-being among the sampled participants, and ii) individuals who are married will score significantly higher on social well-being compared to the single and the divorced individuals.

**Method**

This study adopted a survey method utilizing an ex-post-facto design. This is because the design enables the investigators to explore variables of interest after an exposure to natural events without causing manipulation. The independent variables were age, marital status, post-deployment stress and emotion regulation while the dependent variable was social well-being. Two hundred mobile police were purposively selected to participate in the study. Secondary to that, those who volunteered to participate in this study having signed the inform consent were purposively selected through a non-random sampling in their base in Kulende (MOPOL 49), Ilorin, Kwara state, Nigeria. These individuals were the most suitable for this type of study because they possessed the characteristics expected in events under investigation.

The respondents included 176 individuals, among those of which 152 (76.0%) were male while 48 (24.0%) were females. Also, 85 (42.5%) were Christians and 115 (57.5%) were Muslims. In terms of tribe, 35 (17.5%) were Igbo, 76 (38.0%) were Hausa and others from minority tribes were 20 (10%). Regarding their marital status, 74 (37.0%) were single, 123 (61.5%) were married and 3(1.5%) were divorced. Also, 179 (89.5%) were young adults and 21(10.5%) were middle age adult. However, participants' names were excluded for the sake of confidentiality and to ensure sincere completion of the measuring index.

The tools used in this study were as follows:

**Post-Deployment Readjustment Inventory Scale (PDRI):** The post-deployment stress was assessed utilizing PDRI [14]. It was designed as self-report questions on symptoms and level of functioning across a variety of domains of post-deployment stress that veterans can encounter after returning from deployment. It uses a 5-point Likert-type scale thus; 1=not at all, slightly true=2, somewhat true=3 and 4=extremely true. Scores ranged as follows: Global (36 to 180), Career Challenges (5 to 25), Social Difficulties (7 to 35), Intimate Relationship Problems (5 to 25), Health Concerns (5 to 25), Concerns About Deployment (6 to 30), and PTSD Symptoms (8 to 40). Scoring is the sum of the following items: Career = 1, 6, 13, 23, 34; Health= 2, 8, 11, 14, 30; Intimate relationship=5,15,17,31,35; Social readjustment=3, 7,19,22,25,27,33; Concerns about deployment=9,12,16,28,36,26; PTSD symptoms=4, 10,18,20,21,24,29,32; Total score sum of all scales [22].The Cronbach Alpha recorded for the present study was .78 .

**Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ):** The ERQ is a 10-item scale designed to examine respondents' tendency to regulate their emotions in two ways: (1) Cognitive Reappraisal and (2) Expressive Suppression [15]. This scale involves two distinct aspects of emotional life. One is what the person feels like inside. The other is how

individuals show their emotions in the way they talk, gesture or behave. Respondents answer each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Scoring Norms: Items 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10 makeup the Cognitive Reappraisal facet. Items 2, 4, 6, 9 made ups the Expressive Suppression facet. Scoring is kept continuous. Each facet's scoring is kept separate. The Cronbach Alpha recorded for the present study was .73.

**Mental Health Continuum of Social Well-being-Short Form:** The Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF) was part of the mental health Module of December 2007 [16]. It meant to measure three dimensions; social well-being, emotional and psychological well-being. The MHCSF includes 14 items for assessing positive mental health: 3 items for emotional well-being, 6 items for psychological well-being and 5 items for social well-being. The scale for the social well-being dimension was utilised in this study to assess social well-being .The respondent was asked to rate the frequency of every feeling on a 6-point Likert scale (0=never, 1=once or twice a month, 2=about once a week, 3=two or three times a week, 4=almost every day, 5=everyday).The MHC-SF has a reliability value (Cronbach's alpha) of .89. For the present study, the Cronbach Alpha was recorded to be .83. Before handing the questionnaire to each participant, a simple introductory discussion was conducted stating partial intention of the research so as to gain the participant's cooperation and sincerity.

Participants were located in their various duty posts, offices and apartments. All applicable protocols regarding the ethical use of human volunteers were followed during the research; respondents gave their consents and their participation was voluntary and anonymous. It took the researchers five weeks to administer and retrieve the filled questionnaires.

Data was analyzed using (statistical packages for the social sciences) SPSS 21.0. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, Standard Deviation and variance were performed to describe the subject's information. The reliability analysis of the instruments was ascertained and reported as local reliability for future reference. Pearson Product Moment Correlation, multiple regression and one-way ANOVA were used for the inferential statistical analysis.

**Results**

The findings of this study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between emotion regulation and social wellbeing (r=.277; p<.01). However, there was no relationship between age, post-deployment stress and social wellbeing (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Pairwise inter-variable correlations using Pearson product moment correlations

Variable	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD.
1 Age	-				29.79	6.36
2 Emotion Regulation	.17*	-			22.69	8.38
3 Post Deployment Stress	-.14*	-.02	-		33.65	14.63
4 Social Wellbeing	.09	.27**	-.137	-	22.56	11.51

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows that age, emotion regulation and post-deployment stress have significant joint prediction on social wellbeing among the sampled participants [ $R=.69$ ;  $R^2=.136$ ;  $F(6,839)$ ,  $t=3.382$ ,  $p<.01$ ]. The results further revealed that 14% of the variance observed in social wellbeing were strictly accounted for by the joint impacts of age, emotion regulation and post-deployment stress. However, only emotion regulation [ $t = 3.89$ ,  $p<.01$ ,  $\beta=.269$ ] independently predicted social wellbeing among

mobile police personnel. Therefore, age, emotion regulation and post-deployment stress can be used to explain social wellbeing among the sampled participants.

The One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show that the levels of marital status do not have a significant influence on social wellbeing ( $F(2, 197) = 1.178$ ,  $p>.01$ ). This hypothesis is therefore, rejected. It could be inferred that mobile police personnel's marital status does not have an influence on their social wellbeing.

**Table 2. Prediction of social well-being linear regression**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.	Beta	T	Sig.
Age					.01	.23	.81
Emotion Regulation	.369	.136	4.34	.0001	.26	3.88	.0001
Post Deployment Stress					-.13	-1.94	.05

\*\*p < .01, \*p < .05

Dependent Variable: Social Well-being

**Table 3. Influence of marital status on social well-being**

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P	np <sup>2</sup>
Marital Status	311.46	2	155.73	1.178	>.01	.06
Error	26037.92	197	132.17			
Total	26349.39	199				

## Discussion

Considering the result of this study, age, emotion regulation and post deployment stress did have a significant joint prediction on social well-being. However, only emotion regulation independently predicts social well-being among the police personnel. This result supports the previous findings [12]. This implies that the ability of people to effectively modify emotional regulation behaviour may help people adapt easily to social demands. Equipped with this ability, individuals might be more successful in communicating attitudes, goals, and intentions that are appropriate in various situations and that might be rewarding, productive and fulfilling in dealing with public as police officers [17]. This is similar to a study that found that age combined with emotion regulation are often important determinants of social well-being [18]. Research have shown that emotion regulation is a central aspect of people's affective functioning, influencing well-being, positively or negatively as a function of how effectively people manage their emotional responses to everyday events [19, 20, 21]. Also, a study found that demographic variables impact employees' social well-being more [22]. Notwithstanding, this implies that age could be used to explain social well-being that is, probably as individuals increase in age, learning may increase too which may consequently increase social well-being.

With respect to the second hypothesis postulated in this study, the results revealed that levels of marital status do not have a significant influence on social well-being. Though some researchers believe that married individuals have greater psychological and physical well-being than their single counterparts [23, 11]. A study found that married individuals have larger social networks and greater social support than unmarried ones [24, 13]. Married individuals are also more likely to participate in organized situations compared to non-married persons

[12]. The contradiction of the present study with previous studies could be as a result of some confounding variables not considered in the current study such as; training undertaken by the police, degree of remunerations, length of services and educational qualifications. Other studies may investigate these constructs to ascertain the generalizability of this study.

## Conclusion

In this study, some specific psycho-demographic factors determining social wellbeing have been examined. The study investigated whether age, emotion regulation and post-deployment stress have joint and independent prediction on social wellbeing. Also, it assessed whether individual mobile police who were married would score high (significantly) on social wellbeing compared to those who were single and separated or divorced. After examining 176 mobile police officers, the statistical analysis concluded that, age, emotion regulation, and post deployment stress did jointly significantly predict social wellbeing while only emotion regulation independently predicted social wellbeing among the police personnel.

However, results revealed that marital status did not significantly influence social wellbeing among the respondents. In this study, age, emotion regulation and post deployment stress have been discovered as the psycho-demographic factors to be considered when considering means of enhancing social well-being among the police in the sampled area. Although previous findings indicated that levels of marital status have influence on social well-being, but the present study revealed that levels of marital status does not have significant influence on social well-being. Also, future researchers should consider investigating the influence of psychosocial factors especially the roles of education and psychological training (emotion regulation) by involving larger numbers

of participants than the present study to ascertain the generalization of the current findings. It is also possible that outcomes would vary if measured over 1000 or more participants.

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following measures are suggested in order to increase social well-being of police globally and in Nigeria particularly:

1. Police clinicians are to build in emotion regulation modules into intervention when training for mission and/or debriefing after mission.
2. All military cadres should integrate psychological knowledge into the training of their personnel, for them to better understand the importance of human relationship, learn how to manage their stress and regulate their emotions to promote greater social well-being.

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