

Influence of Age and Qualification on Psychological Wellbeing of Special Education Lecturers in Southeast Nigerian Universities

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Abstract: This study examined the sociodemographic factors that influence special education teachers' psychological wellness in Nigeria, taking into account the considerable responsibility placed on them. An ex-post facto research design was employed in this study. Utilizing the Psychological wellbeing scale ($\alpha = .78$), data were collected on 47 special education lecturers taken from Federal Universities in southeast Nigeria using the scientific research paradigm and quantitative research approach. The mean and analysis of variance were used to analyse the data. The study discovered that, age and qualification had no substantial ($p > .05$) effect on special education instructors' psychological wellbeing. As a result, among the key factors influencing the psychological health of special education lecturers are their age and educational background but such influence is not significant statistically. Therefore, it was recommended that special education lecturers' credentials be given priority when they are employed.

Keywords: Age, Psychological wellbeing, Qualification, Special education lecturers,

Introduction

A person's entire functionality and mental health are referred to as their psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is defined as the state of feeling well and doing well (Huppert, 2009). Work is crucial to one's wellbeing since it provides income and serves as a gauge of social standing (Ariza-Montes et al., 2018). It has been found that personal support systems and wellbeing play a significant role in keeping kindergarten instructors in their positions, which enhances job satisfaction and mental health (Matsuo et al., 2021). Studies show that those with higher levels of psychological well-being tend to live longer, healthier lives and have higher standards of living (Kubzansky et al., 2018). Additionally, a higher level of psychological well-being is linked to less social problems. However, the research indicates that teachers are subject to severe demands, thus there is a need to concentrate on concerns related to their occupational mental health (Ibrahim et al., 2021). In the modern environment, mental health illnesses are becoming more common among people who are employed (Kärner et al., 2021).

Teaching is a challenging profession in terms of mental and emotional stress (echo et al., 2019). A typical teacher's day starts early in the morning and concludes around five o'clock, with extracurricular activities, additional work, evaluations, and reports (Ibrahim et al., 2021). A law in Italy has highlighted the significance of monitoring organizational well-being and stress related to the job, ensuring health and quality of life at work, in accordance with European norms (Cortese et al., 2019). Occupational stress, one of the psychosocial job risks, significantly raises the risk of mental disease in the working population (Wang et al., 2017). Occupational stress refers to adverse physical and emotional reactions that take place at work (Luo et al., 2016). The demands placed on employees on a psychological and emotional level have grown as organizations switch from production to service.

The psychological impressions or experiences that are connected to a person's physical and social circumstances are known as psychosocial factors (Ng et al., 2019). Few studies have looked at early childhood educators' work-related wellness from an organizational viewpoint, despite the fact that their ability to function well in their work contexts is essential to providing children with high-quality services (Logan et al., 2020). On the basis of this premise, the researchers looked into the sociodemographic factors affecting the psychological health of special education teachers. Perceived stress was negatively correlated with psychological health (Hezomi & Nadrian, 2018). According to a team of academics, several studies have shown that stress at work negatively affects workers' health and well-being (Cortese et al., 2019). Emotional control and psychological wellbeing were revealed to be significant predictors of job engagement for the entire sample of British and Iranian teachers, with psychological wellbeing proving to be a superior predictor (Greenier et al., 2021). It was discovered that psychological demands at work were more important in predicting psychological well-being than physical demands at work (Ariza-Montes et al., 2018).

Positive personality and coping styles have been shown to predict well-being, whilst negative coping styles and job demands have been shown to negatively predict wellbeing (Williams et al., 2017). Teachers' psychological health was significantly impacted by their job demands, job control, and social support (Ibrahim et al., 2021). There are significant connections between different work environments and teachers' psychological health, some of which are advantageous and others which are detrimental (Kwon et al., 2021). Psychological

well-being has been found to be significantly influenced by emotional intelligence and a constructively rebuilt coping style (Pauletto et al., 2021). Employee happiness is significantly impacted by the workplace (Hvalic-Touzery et al., 2020). Teacher self-efficacy was found to be a greater predictor of psychological well-being than collective teacher efficacy, despite the fact that both predictors had a distinctive impact on psychological wellbeing (Jalil et al., 2020).

Employees will feel less worn out and their psychological well-being will increase as a result of a positive safety climate, and vice versa (Tamakloe et al., 2022). Job satisfaction has been demonstrated to strengthen the relationship between psychological well-being and work-family conflict, which has been shown to worsen it (Lizano, 2022). Happiness and health issues have been demonstrated to be significantly impacted by gender (Diego, 2018). Peer support, thoughtful organizational design, and employee reward programs have all been demonstrated to lessen the detrimental effects of unfavorable working conditions on employees' welfare (Schneider & Weigl, 2018). It has been established that various factors affect employees' psychological health. However, the sociodemographic aspects of the psychological health of special education lecturers at various university libraries had not been studied, according to the literature that was accessible at the time of this study. Thus, the need for this research.

Methods

According to this scientific study paradigm, the investigation was directed by a quantitative research methodology. The study used an ex-post facto research approach to examine the impact of special education instructors' sociodemographic characteristics on their psychological well-being. Similar studies have utilized similar paradigms, techniques, and research designs in recent years (Ugwuanyi, Okeke, & Ageda, 2020; Ugwuanyi, Okeke, & Njeze, 2020). Forty-seven (47) special education lecturers from federal universities in southeast Nigeria made up the study's sample of participants. A straightforward random sampling method was used to sample the participants from three federal universities in Enugu, Anambra and Abia states. Based on Ryff's (1989) psychological wellbeing measurements, the researcher adapted 20-item psychological wellbeing scale (PWS). The responses were divided into four groups: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and very agree. The response possibilities were weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 for strongly agree, agree, disagree, and agree. To learn more about the demographic characteristics of the special education instructors who took part in the study, the researcher developed a demographic profile questionnaire.

The measure's face validity was assessed by experts in educational psychology, measurement, and evaluation from the researchers' universities' faculties of education. The experts were tasked with evaluating the components of the measures in light of their applicability to the goals of the study. They were invited to make recommendations to help the researchers accomplish their research objectives. The final form of the instruments was created after revisions were made to the draft instrument in response to the expert comments. The reliability of the measure was then tested using a PWS trial with 20 instructors from Ebonyi State University. The Cronbach alpha method was used to analyse the data from the Nigerian sample, and the results showed that PWS had an over reliability score of 0.78.

The researcher asked the University of Nigeria's Faculty of Education for ethical clearance and approval to conduct the study in primary schools in accordance with the university's ethical standards. The American Psychological Association's guidelines for conducting human-related research are met by this. Participants completed and signed informed consent forms prior to the actual data collection. Approximately four weeks were needed to gather all the data. Each participant was given 20 minutes to fill out the items of the measure. They were permitted to pick up the completed copies of the forms right away once they had finished filling them out.

To examine the data, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. In particular, analysis of variance was performed to evaluate the corresponding hypotheses while mean was employed to analyze the data to answer the study questions. These statistical techniques have been used by several researchers in related investigations (Ugwuanyi et al., 2021; Agboeze et al., 2021; Ene et al., 2021).

Results

Demographic profiles of the participants

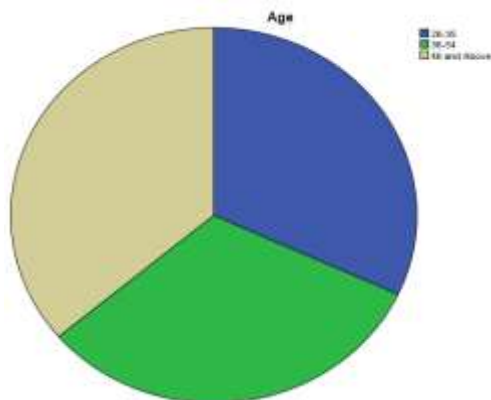


Figure 1: Pie chart representation of the age range of the participants

The pie chart of Figure 1 showed that 15 participants representing 31.9% are within the age range of 26-35 years as the same number represents those who are within the age range of 36-54 years, while 17 participants representing 36.2% are within the age range of 55 years and above.

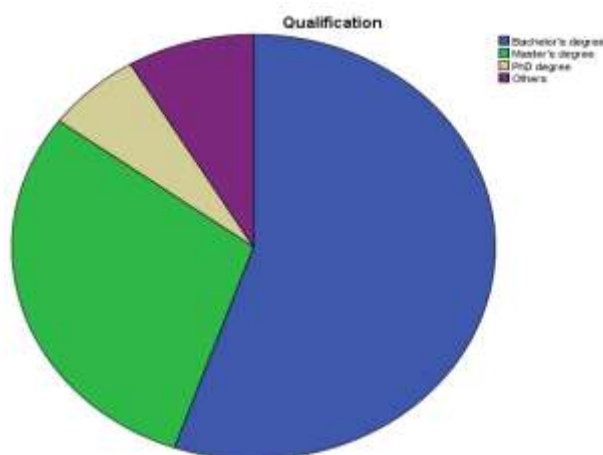


Figure 2: Pie chart representation of the age range of the participants

Figure 2 shows that 26 participants representing 55.3% are Bachelor's degree holders, 14 participants representing 29.8% are master's degree holders, 3 participants representing 6.4% are Ph.D degree holders, while 4 participants representing 8.5% had other qualifications not mentioned.

Table 1

Mean analysis of the influence of age on special education lecturers' psychological wellbeing

Age range	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
26-35 years	15	89.73	46.90
36-54 years	15	109.40	14.39
55 years and above	17	108.05	20.76
Total	47	102.63	31.02

Table 1 shows that participants who are within the age range of 26-35 years had mean psychological wellbeing score of ($M = 89.73$, $SD = 46.90$), those within the age range of 36-54 years had mean psychological wellbeing score of ($M = 109.40$, $SD = 14.39$), while those within the age range of 55 years and above had mean psychological wellbeing score of ($M = 108.05$, $SD = 20.76$). This indicates that participants who are within the age range of 36-54 years had higher mean psychological wellbeing score, followed by those within the age range of 55 years and above.

Table 2

Analysis of variance for the influence of age on special education lecturers' psychological wellbeing

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3683.377	2	1841.688	1.996	.148
Within Groups	40607.475	44	922.897		
Total	44290.851	46			

Table 2 revealed that there is no significant influence of age on special education lecturers' psychological wellbeing, $F(1,44) = 1.996$, $p = .148$. This means that the psychological wellbeing of special education lecturers is not dependent on their age.

Table 3

Mean analysis of the influence of qualification on special education lecturers' psychological wellbeing

Qualification	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Bachelor's degree	26	103.73	29.05
Master's degree	14	105.35	33.77
PhD degree	3	118.66	6.11
Others	4	74.00	36.98
Total	47	102.63	31.02

Table 3 shows that participants who hold Bachelor's degree had mean psychological wellbeing score of ($M = 103.73$, $SD = 29.05$), those who hold Master's degree had mean psychological wellbeing score of ($M = 105.35$, $SD = 33.77$), those who hold Ph.D degree had mean psychological wellbeing score of ($M = 118.66$, $SD = 6.11$), while those who hold other degrees had mean psychological wellbeing score of ($M = 74.00$, $SD = 36.98$). This indicates that participants who hold Ph.D degree had higher mean psychological wellbeing score, followed by those who hold Master's degree.

Table 4

Analysis of variance for the influence of qualification on special education lecturers' psychological wellbeing

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4185.855	3	1395.285	1.496	.229
Within Groups	40104.996	43	932.674		
Total	44290.851	46			

Table 4 revealed that there is no significant influence of qualification on special education lecturers' psychological wellbeing, $F(1,43) = 1.496$, $p = .229$. This means that the psychological wellbeing of special education lecturers is not dependent on their qualification.

Discussion

This study looked into how special education instructors' psychological health was impacted by their age and educational background (qualification). The findings demonstrated that both age and qualification had no influence on the psychological health of special education professors. As a result, among the key factors influencing special education instructors' psychological wellbeing is their age and educational background but such influence is not significant. These results suggest that an individual's psychological health is not significantly influenced by their education and age. According to these results, psychosocial hazards have an impact on workers' psychological and physical health, as well as their capacity to form relationships with coworkers. They can result in both behavioral and psychological effects like work burnout, anxiety disorders, and depression as well as physical discomfort or illness like cardiovascular disease or musculoskeletal injury. Employee well-being is inextricably related to their work environments, supporting these findings (Hvalic-Touzery et al., 2020). A favorable safety climate will result in less fatigue and greater psychological wellbeing for employees, and vice versa (Tamakloe et al., 2022). Job satisfaction has been found to strengthen this relationship, which has been proven to be adversely correlated with work-family conflict (Lizano, 2022). Contrary to this finding, it was also found that while teachers' qualifications showed no significant negative link, their age had a large positive association with their psychological well-being. Similar research has shown that gender has a substantial impact on both happiness and health concerns (Diego, 2018). Several studies have indicated that stress at work negatively affects employees' health and well-being, claim a group of researchers (Cortese et al., 2019). In a large sample of British and Iranian teachers, emotional control and psychological wellness were found to be significant predictors of professional engagement, with psychological wellbeing appearing to be a better predictor (Greenier et al., 2021). It was discovered that psychological demands at work were more significant in predicting psychological well-being than physical demands (Ariza-Montes et al., 2018). Positive personality and coping have been shown to predict well-being, whereas poor coping and job demands have been shown to predict wellbeing adversely (Williams et al., 2017).

Conclusion and recommendations

The findings of this study demonstrate that special education teachers' psychological wellbeing is not significantly influenced by their age and educational background. It was concluded as a result that age and education level influence the psychological health of special education teachers but such influence is not statistically significant. Based on the aforementioned, the researcher advises that labour employers make sufficient preparations to assess the potential impact of qualification on the psychological wellbeing of special education instructors during recruitment.

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