

## **Determinants of Special Education Lecturers' Psychological Work Hazards in Southeast Nigerian Universities**

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**Abstract---** Most personnel, particularly teachers, are exposed to one or more psychological hazards at work because of the multicultural nature of Nigerian schools. Psychosocial work hazards are common in Nigeria, and no research has been done to look into how teachers' demographics affect their psychosocial work hazards. As a result, this research looked into the impact of special education lecturers' age and location on their psychological job hazards. The study was conducted with a sample of 35 special education lecturers from south east universities in Nigeria, utilizing a quantitative research approach and an ex-post fact research design. The data for the study was acquired using a 28-item questionnaire on work deviant behavior devised by the researchers. The questionnaire items have an internal consistency reliability rating of 0.76. Mean and analysis of variance were used to analyze the data. It was discovered that special education lecturers' age and location had no significant influences on their psychological job hazards. This means that special education lecturers' age and location are not major determinants of their psychosocial job risks. Thus, it was recommended that secondary school authorities should be fair in the issue of psychosocial work hazards with reference to the age and location of teachers.

**Keywords---** Age, Location, Special Education Lecturers, Psychosocial Work Hazards.

### **I. Introduction**

Psychosocial hazards in the workplace include not only the physical but also the psychological and social components of the job. As a result of their professions, workers are likely to be exposed to a number of psychological hazards and risk factors. Stress, tiredness, bullying, aggression, hostility, harassment, and burnout are just a few of the health and wellbeing issues that can affect workers. There are various risk factors (such as alcohol or drug misuse, or poor change management) that increase the possibility of health injury as a result of exposure to a workplace danger. Bullying and violence in the workplace, job insecurity, and financial insecurity are all increasing psychosocial work risks globally (Cheng, 2018). Workplace stress is widely recognized as a significant source of psychosocial stress, and the impact of psychosocial workplace conditions on workers' health has been well documented in recent decades (Liang et al., 2018). Burnout is becoming more widespread among workers as a result of exposure to negative psychosocial work conditions and the resulting work-related stress (Misiak et al., 2020).

Despite the fact that teachers are known to have a variety of health and safety concerns, there has been very little research on these issues in the teaching profession (Ng et al., 2019). Bullying and violence in the workplace, job insecurity, and financial insecurity are all increasing psychosocial work dangers worldwide (Cheng, 2018). Workplace stress is widely recognized as a significant source of psychosocial stress, and the impact of psychosocial work conditions on worker health has been well documented in recent decades (Liang et al., 2018). Burnout is becoming more widespread among workers as a result of exposure to poor psychosocial working circumstances and the resulting work-related stress (Misiak et al., 2020).

Despite the fact that teachers are known to have a variety of health and safety difficulties, there has been very little research on these topics in the teaching profession (Ng et al., 2019). 72.9 percent of Putrajaya teachers faced psychological hazards on the workplace (Mohd Anuar et al., 2016). Job overload was the most common psychosocial work hazard component among Nigerian workers (67.72%), followed by poor communication and staff attitude (50.37%) and a lack of resources and equipment (50.37%) (Onigbogi & Banerjee, 2019). At the University of Port Harcourt in Nigeria, 62.2 percent of workers were found to be affected by psychosocial hazards, with workplace verbal abuse (43.9 percent) being the most common (Kennedy, 2018). The majority of psychosocial work risks, such as employment expectations, control, status, and relationships, have increased with time, causing anxiety (Wray & Kinman, 2020). This led to the establishment of this study, which intended to empirically analyze the impact of teachers' demographics on their psychological job hazards.

In the majority of research, women were shown to be at a higher risk of psychosocial work hazards, and authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership styles were found to be positively linked to psychosocial work hazards (Feijó et al., 2019). By reducing despair and anxiety, job management and social support helped teachers cope with

job stress (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Gender, education level, salary, job title, and length of service have all been linked to psychosocial workplace dangers (Azizah et al., 2016). Psychosocial work hazards were significantly influenced by age, gender, high job demand, and inadequate job control (Kabito & Mekonnen, 2020). Kindergarten teachers' age and qualifications have a significant impact on the psychosocial risks they face at work (echo et al., 2019). After controlling for other characteristics such as age, marital status, and other employment activities, gender was found to be substantially associated with psychological work hazards among teachers in Putrajaya (Mohd Anuar et al., 2016).

Age, male gender, unemployment of the father, low school ranking, not living with both biological parents, perceived family disharmony, low self-esteem, and depression have all been linked to an elevated risk of psychological job risks (Lee et al., 2021). Both formal and informal teachers had similar correlations between exposure to psychosocial work risk variables and the prevalence of work-related disorder (Gimeno Ruiz De Porras et al., 2017). Female principals reported more indicators of suspected psychosocial work disorder than male principals, despite the fact that school level was not linked to reports of psychosocial work disorder (Persson et al., 2021). The work experience of male principals was linked to tiredness symptoms of psychosocial work disorder (Persson et al., 2021). The characteristics of workplace psychosocial factors were discovered to have a substantial link with the age of workers (Xu et al., 2022). Gender, education level, and age of Italian workers all influence work-related psychological risks (La Torre et al., 2018).

Workplace and marital status influence work-related stress (Wireko-Gyebi & Ametepheh, 2016). The age and gender of Malaysian primary school teachers had a substantial link with psychological employment risks, according to Alias et al. (2020). According to some work organization models, gender was not significantly correlated with exposure to psychosocial components at work and in job-related health (Migliore et al., 2021). Women's psychosocial work risks were reduced by low levels of work-family conflict and supervisor support, but men's psychosocial work hazards were raised by high physical demands and moderately high work-family conflict (Weale et al., 2021).

According to the findings, many studies have been conducted worldwide on the factors that influence workers' psychosocial work hazards. However, because the majority of the research was done outside of Africa, this study was required to fill in the gaps in the literature. The researcher wanted to learn more about the influence of special education lecturers' school location and age on their psychological work hazards in Nigeria.

## **II. Methods**

### ***Research Design***

Because the inferences were based on the results of hypothesis testing, this study followed the scientific research paradigm. A quantitative research technique was used to guide the investigation in accordance with this scientific study paradigm. The study's goal was to see how special education lecturers' age and location influence their psychological job hazards using an ex-post facto research design. In recent years, similar investigations have used similar paradigms, methodologies, and research designs (Ugwuanyi, Okeke & Ageda, 2020; Ugwuanyi, Okeke & Njeze, 2020).

### ***Participants***

The study included 35 special education lecturers from south east universities in Nigeria. The study participants were sampled from various federal universities in southeast using a simple random sampling technique.

### ***Measures***

The researchers designed a demographic profile questionnaire to determine the demographic features of the primary school teachers who participated in the study. Age, gender, employment position, qualification, marital status, years of teaching experience, and location are among the demographic characteristics of the participants.

The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire by Kristensen et al. (2005) was utilized in the investigation (COPSOQ). The COPSOQ is a 30-item self-report questionnaire that evaluates psychosocial aspects such as stress, personal health and well-being, and personality characteristics (coping style, sense of coherence, etc.).

### ***Validity and Reliability of Measures***

Experts in educational psychology, measurement, and assessment from the researchers' universities' colleges of education assessed the measure to determine its face validity. The specialists were entrusted with assessing the measurements' elements for their relevance to the study's objectives. They were asked to provide suggestions to assist the researchers in achieving their research goals. The draft instrument was revised as a result of the expert judgements, resulting in the final form of the instruments. Following that, 20 special education lecturers in university in Ebonyi state were subjected to COPSOQ trial testing to assess the measure's reliability. The data from the Nigerian sample were analysed using the Cronbach alpha method, which yielded an over reliability value of 0.76 for COPSOQ.

**Ethical Considerations**

In compliance with the university's ethical rules, the researchers sought ethical approval from the University of Nigeria's Faculty of Education, as well as permission to perform the study in primary schools. This follows the standards for conducting human-related research set forth by the American Psychological Association. Before the data was collected, participants were given informed consent forms to fill out and sign.

**Procedure for Data Collection**

Prior to data collection, the researcher received ethical approval for the study as well as gatekeeper letters from the universities that were used in the study. The data collection took about four weeks to finish. Each participant had 20 minutes to complete the measures they were provided. When they finished filling out the documents, they were allowed to pick up the completed copies on the spot.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The data was analyzed using the mean to offer responses to the study questions, while the hypotheses were evaluated using analysis of variance. Many researchers have utilized these statistical approaches in similar studies (Ugwuanyi et al., 2021; Agboeze et al., 2021; Ene et al., 2021).

**III. Results**

Table 1: Mean Analysis of the Influence of Age on Special Education Lecturers' Psychosocial Work Hazards

Age of Teachers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
26-35 years	11	87.18	51.86
36-54 years	10	116.40	41.66
46 years and above	14	99.50	40.16
Total	35	100.45	44.71

Table 1 shows that special education lecturers aged less than 26-35 years had mean psychosocial work hazards of ( $M = 87.18, SD = 51.86$ ), special education lecturers aged 36-54 years had mean psychosocial work hazards of ( $M = 116.40, SD = 41.66$ ), special education lecturers aged 46 years and above had mean psychosocial work hazards of ( $M = 99.50, SD = 40.16$ ).

Table 2: Analysis of Variance of the Influence of Age on Special Education Lecturers' Psychosocial Work Hazards

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4493.149	2	2246.575	1.132	.335
Within Groups	63493.536	32	1984.173		
Total	67986.686	34			

Table 2 shows that the age of special education lecturers has no significant influence on their psychological job hazards,  $F(2, 32) = 1.132, p = .225$ . As a result, the age of special education lecturers does not influence their psychological job risks.

Table 3: Mean Analysis of the Influence of Location on Special Education Lecturers' Psychosocial Work Hazards

Location of Teachers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Urban	32	100.03	41.72
Rural	3	105.00	83.51
Total	35	100.45	44.71

Table 3 shows that special education lecturers located in the urban schools had mean psychosocial work hazards of ( $M = 100.03, SD = 41.72$ ) while special education lecturers located in the rural schools had mean psychosocial work hazards of ( $M = 105.00, SD = 83.51$ ). The standard deviations of 41.72 and 83.51 for the urban and rural special education lecturers respectively indicate that the rural teachers had higher variations in their individual psychosocial work hazards scores than those of the urban teachers.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance of the Influence of Location on Special Education Lecturers' Psychosocial Work Hazards

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	67.717	1	67.717	.033	.857
Within Groups	67918.969	33	2058.151		
Total	67986.686	34			

Table 4 shows that the location of special education lecturers has no significant influence on their psychological job hazards,  $F(2, 32) = .033, p = .857$ . Thus, the location of special education lecturers does not influence their psychological job risks.

#### IV. Discussion

This research sought to explore the influence of school location and age of special education lecturers on their psychosocial work hazards. It was revealed that school location and age had no significant influence on special education lecturers' psychosocial work hazards. This implies that the school location and age of special education lecturers are not major determinants of their psychosocial work hazards. Multiple subsequent studies have found that demographic factors such as gender, marital status, years of teaching experience, and employment position had no impact on psychosocial occupational hazards, corroborating these findings. Women who have little work–family conflict, for example, have fewer psychological workplace dangers than men (Weale et al., 2021). Female principals reported more indicators of suspected psychosocial work disorder than male principals, despite the fact that school level was not linked to reports of psychosocial work disorder (Persson et al., 2021).

In contrast to these findings, Xu et al. (2022) discovered that the characteristics of workplace psychosocial factors had a strong relationship with worker age, corroborating these findings. Kindergarten teachers' age has an impact on the psychosocial risks they face at work (echo et al., 2019). Italian workers' age is a good predictor of their psychological hazards at work (La Torre et al., 2018). According to Alias et al., the age of primary school teachers in Malaysia has a significant relationship with psychological occupational hazards (2020). Psychosocial work dangers were significantly influenced by age, high job demand, and inadequate workplace control (Kabito & Mekonnen, 2020). The age of workers was found to have a high relationship with their risk of psychological workplace risks (Lee et al., 2021).

The work experience of male principals was linked to tiredness symptoms of psychosocial work disorder (Persson et al., 2021). Workplace and marital status influence work-related stress (Wireko-Gyebi & Ametepoh, 2016). The educational degrees of teachers were discovered to be strongly linked to psychosocial occupational hazards (Azizah et al., 2016). The educational levels of Italian workers are key determinants of their work-related psychological risks (La Torre et al., 2018). There are various irregularities in the nature of the relationships between teachers' demographic traits and psychosocial occupational hazards, according to the data. This situation demands more empirical research into the topic. As a result, the researcher suggests that future researchers duplicate this work in the same or a different context in order to compare the results to existing discoveries. This will help to understand the nature of the relationships between teacher demographic profiles and psychosocial workplace hazards.

#### V. Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the findings of this study, special education lecturers' school location and age have little bearing on their psychosocial dangers at work. The researcher concluded that the school location and age of special education lecturers are not key variables in their psychological occupational hazards based on the findings of this study. In other words, special education lecturers' age or school location have little bearing on how they deal with psychosocial dangers at work.

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