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☎ +62 (0754) 41650; Website: <http://pps.fip.unp.ac.id/>; ✉ jk@konselor.org / info@konselor.org

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Christian S. Ugwuanyi

University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

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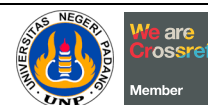
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Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to:

Christian S. Ugwuanyi. University of the Free State. Address: 205 Nelson Mandela Drive
Park West, Bloemfontein, South Africa. Email: ugwuanyics@ufs.ac.za

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Impacts of university lecturers demographic characteristics on their psychosocial work hazards



Christian S. Ugwuanyi[♦]

University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

Abstract: There are a number of psychological risks associated with work for the majority of workers, and lecturers in particular. Nigerian workplaces are known to present psychosocial dangers, however, no studies have examined how the lecture attributes may affect these risks. In order to determine whether demographic factors can affect psychological workplace risks of academics, researchers examined factors such as age, education, and location of the university. A sample of 185 lecturers from universities in southeast Nigeria participated in the study, which utilized a qualitative research strategy and an ex-post facto research design. The study's data were collected using an adapted Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire. A reliability index of 0.87 was calculated for the survey items. In order to analyze the data, we applied the statistical procedure called analysis of variance. While lecturers' ages and university location affected their psychosocial occupational hazards, their educational qualification did not play a significant role. As a result, lecturers are more likely to experience psychological workplace risks as they grow older. It is recommended that University authorities should consider the age of candidates when making their hiring decisions in order to avoid recruiting lecturers more likely to suffer psychological hazards.

Key Words: Demographics; Lecturers; Psychosocial work hazards; South Africa

INTRODUCTION

The term psychosocial hazards refer not only to physical hazards, but also to psychological and social challenges faced by workers in their everyday lives. Psychological risks and hazards are common among workers in their professional lives. Health problems and well-being issues may accompany stress, exhaustion, bullying, violence, hostility, harassment, and burnout. The probability of suffering health damage as a result of workplace hazards can be increased by several risk factors (such as alcohol and drug abuse and poor change management). Workplace bullying and violence, precarious work, and financial uncertainty have all contributed to the rise of psychosocial work risks (Cheng, 2018). There is a well-established link between psychosocial working conditions and workers' health (Liang et al., 2018), and work is one of the most common sources of psychosocial distress. Psychosocial conditions and work-related stress are contributing to the increase in burnout among workers (Misiak et al., 2020).

There is little research on health and safety concerns in the teaching profession, although teachers do have a number of such concerns (Ng et al., 2019). Psychosocial risks at work have a wide range of adverse effects on workers' health and quality of life (Kabito & Mekonnen, 2020). Azizah et al. (2016) found that readers in Malaysia are at risk for psychosocial work in 24.8% of cases. Psychosocial occupational risks are a concern for educators in Malaysia (Tai et al., 2019). A majority of the risk factors were similar to those discovered in prior studies, but some were not, such as the

[♦]**Corresponding author:** Christian S. Ugwuanyi. University of the Free State. Address: 205 Nelson Mandela Drive Park West, Bloemfontein, South Africa. Email: ugwuanyics@ufs.ac.za

level of education, and whether or not the school was public or private (Tai et al., 2019). Mohd Anuar et al. (2016) found that 72.9% of teachers in Putrajaya were exposed to psychological risks at work. The number of psychosocial work hazards associated with job overload was 67.72 percent in 2019, while resource shortage was the cause of 50.37 percent (Onigbogi & Banerjee, 2019). As per Kennedy (2018), verbal abuse at work is the most common psychosocial hazard. In spite of the fact that most psychosocial hazards have not increased over time at work (Wray & Kinman, 2020), they have steadily increased. Among most studies (Feijó et al., 2019), women are more likely to suffer from psycho-social hazards. The leadership styles of authoritarians and laissez-faires were positively correlated with psycho-social hazards. Support from colleagues and control over work can ease teachers' distress and anxiety caused by job stress (Ibrahim et al., 2021).

Psychosocial workplace hazards are significantly correlated with gender, education level, remuneration, job title, and length of service, according to Azizah et al. (2016). Kabito and Mekonnen (2010) found a significant correlation between psychological work hazards and high employment demand, poor job control, age, gender, and gender equality. In a study by Echo et al. (2019), the educational background and age of kindergarten teachers affected their psychological risks at work. Mohd Anuar et al. (2016) found significant associations between gender and psychological work hazards among teachers in Putrajaya. There has been a correlation between psychological job risks and age, male gender, unemployed fathers, lower school rankings, not living with both biological parents, perceived family discord, low self-esteem, and depression (Lee et al., 2021).

According to Gimeno Ruiz De Porras et al. (2017), there was an inverse correlation between work-related disorders and exposure to psychosocial factors (formal and informal). Although school level was not associated with reports of psychosocial work disorders, female principals reported higher levels than male administrators (Persson et al., 2021). Persson et al. (2021) found that male principals had a history of tiredness and psychosocial problems at work. Psychosocial factors at the workplace and workers' ages were strongly correlated (Xu et al., 2022). La Torre et al. (2018) found that workplace psychological risks vary by age, education level, and gender among Italians. Wireko-Gyebi and Ametepheh (2016) revealed that a person's marital status and workplace affect their work-related stress. The psychological occupational risks of Malaysian primary school teachers were significantly correlated with their age and gender, according to Alias et al. (2020). The gender of employees and their work exposure to psychosocial elements was not significantly associated in a study by Migliore et al. (2021). The relationship between high physical demands and relatively significant work-family conflict was found to be strongly correlated with an increase in psychosocial job hazards (Weale et al., 2021).

Analyses of the global issues affecting workers' psychological safety at work have been conducted adequately, as illustrated above. It remains to be noted, however, that most of the studies were conducted outside of Africa, making this study necessary for filling in any knowledge gaps. This study examined the types and strength of relationships between the psychosocial occupational hazards faced by Nigerian professors and their demographic characteristics.

METHOD

Because the conclusions of hypothesis testing formed the basis for the inferences, this study adhered to the paradigm of scientific research. To guide the examination, a quantitative research methodology was used in line with this scientific study paradigm. The study used an ex-post facto research approach in order to ascertain how professors' demographics influenced their psychological work hazards. Researchers like Ugwuanyi et al. (2020); Ugwuanyi, Okeke et al. (2020) in recent years have used comparable paradigms, methods, and research designs.

Participants

A total of 185 lecturers sampled from universities in southeast Nigeria took part in the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to sample the universities as well as the lecturers. The participants were sampled from faculties of Biological Sciences and Education at the University of

Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State (85); Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State (48) and Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State (52).

Materials

To determine the demographic traits of study participants, the researchers developed a demographic profile questionnaire. For this study, the demographic characteristics of the participants include age, education level, and university location. Kristensen et al. (2005) developed the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ) for use in the study. Psychosocial aspects such as stress, health and well-being as well as personality traits such as coherence and coping mechanisms are measured by a 30-item self-report questionnaire called the COPSOQ. To make the COPSOQ more appropriate for the current study, the researchers modified it to include only 28 items.

For face validity evaluation, the researchers' universities' colleges of education consulted with experts in educational psychology, measurement, and assessment. In light of the study's objectives, the experts assessed the measure's components. Researchers requested suggestions from them to assist them in their efforts. After the expert opinions were incorporated into the draft instrument, the final version was produced. The validity of the COPSOQ measure was then verified by conducting trials on 20 lecturers. Cronbach alpha was used to study the data from the Nigerian sample, and the reliability rating was 0.87.

The researchers requested ethical authorization from the University of Nigeria's Faculty of Education, as well as permission to conduct the study in primary schools, in accordance with the university's ethical rules. This complies with the American Psychological Association's guidelines for conducting human-related research. Participants were given informed consent forms to fill out and sign before the data was collected

Procedures

Prior to gathering data, the researchers received gatekeeper letters from the several colleges that were used in the study and ethical approval for the project. The entire procedure was finished in around four weeks. The measures given to each participant were to be completed in 20 minutes. The tests were administered in-class, and the questionnaires were finished offline, claim the researchers. After completing the forms, they were able to pick up the finished copies right away.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were adopted in the analysis of data. Mean was utilized to analyze the data in order to provide answers to the study questions, while analysis of variance was performed to evaluate the hypotheses. In similar investigations, many researchers have used these statistical methodologies (Agboeze et al., 2021; Ugwuanyi et al., 2021; Ene et al., 2021).

Table 1. Analysis of age influence on psychosocial work hazards of lecturers

| Age of Teachers | n | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|----|--------|----------------|
| Below 30 years | 25 | 83.60 | 3.13 |
| 31-40 years | 87 | 93.55 | 1.92 |
| 41-50 years | 52 | 114.07 | 8.01 |
| 51 years and Above | 21 | 102.90 | 2.42 |

The mean psychosocial work hazards for participants under the age of 30 are ($M = 83.60$, $SD = 3.13$), the mean psychosocial work hazards for participants 31 to 40 years are ($M = 93.55$, $SD = 1.92$), the mean psychosocial work hazards for lecturers aged 41-50 years were ($M = 114.07$, $SD = 8.01$) while the mean psychosocial work hazards for lecturers aged 50+ were ($M = 102.90$, $SD = 2.42$).

Table 2. ANOVA for the age influence on psychosocial work hazards of lecturers

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Between Groups | 20651.716 | 3 | 6883.905 | 315.518 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 3949.019 | 181 | 21.818 | | |
| Total | 24600.735 | 184 | | | |

Table 2 revealed that there is a significant influence of age of lecturers on their psychosocial work hazards, $F(3, 181) = 315.518, p = .000$. Thus, the age of lecturers is a major determinant of their psychosocial work hazards. Table 3 showed that the mean difference between the age range of 41-50 and below 30 years contributed most to the significant influence of age.

Table Post-Hoc pairwise comparison test for the significant influence of age on psychosocial work hazards of lecturers

| (I) Age | (J) Age | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------|------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Less than 30 years | 31-40 years | -9.95172* | 1.05995 | .000 | -12.9429 | -6.9606 |
| | 41-50 years | -30.47692* | 1.13679 | .000 | -33.6849 | -27.2689 |
| | 51 years and above | -19.30476* | 1.38263 | .000 | -23.2065 | -15.4030 |
| 31-40 years | Less than 30 years | 9.95172* | 1.05995 | .000 | 6.9606 | 12.9429 |
| | 41-50 years | -20.52520* | .81875 | .000 | -22.8357 | -18.2147 |
| | 51 years and above | -9.35304* | 1.13566 | .000 | -12.5578 | -6.1482 |
| 41-50 years | Less than 30 years | 30.47692* | 1.13679 | .000 | 27.2689 | 33.6849 |
| | 31-40 years | 20.52520* | .81875 | .000 | 18.2147 | 22.8357 |
| | 51 years and above | 11.17216* | 1.20769 | .000 | 7.7641 | 14.5802 |
| 51 years and above | Less than 30 years | 19.30476* | 1.38263 | .000 | 15.4030 | 23.2065 |
| | 31-40 years | 9.35304* | 1.13566 | .000 | 6.1482 | 12.5578 |
| | 41-50 years | -11.17216* | 1.20769 | .000 | -14.5802 | -7.7641 |

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4. Analysis of the qualification influence on psychosocial work hazards lecturers

| Qualification of Teachers | n | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------------|----|--------|----------------|
| Bachelor's degree | 42 | 95.52 | 12.66 |
| Master's degree | 83 | 99.53 | 10.80 |
| PhD degree | 60 | 100.81 | 11.44 |

It is shown in Table 4 that participants with Bachelor's degrees had ($M = 95.52, SD = 12.66$) mean psychosocial work hazards, while those with Master's degrees had ($M = 99.53, SD = 10.80$) mean psychosocial work hazards, while those with Ph.D's had ($M = 100.81, SD = 11.44$).

Table 5. ANOVA of the qualification influence on psychosocial work hazards of lecturers

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 728.601 | 2 | 364.300 | 2.777 | .065 |
| Within Groups | 23872.134 | 182 | 131.166 | | |
| Total | 24600.735 | 184 | | | |

Table 5 revealed that there is no significant influence of qualification of lecturers on their psychosocial work hazards, $F(2, 181) = 2.581, p = .056$. Thus, the qualification of lecturers is not a significant determinant of their psychosocial work hazards.

Table 6. Analysis of location influence on psychosocial work hazards lecturers

| University | n | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|--------|----------------|
| University of Nigeria, Nsukka | 85 | 90.63 | 5.12 |
| Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka | 48 | 101.97 | 11.32 |
| Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike | 52 | 110.05 | 8.44 |
| Total | 185 | 99.03 | 11.56 |

Among the lecturers at University of Nigeria, Nsukka, the mean psychosocial work hazards were ($M = 90.63$, $SD = 5.12$), whereas lecturers at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka had an average psychosocial work risk of ($M = 101.96$, $SD = 11.32$), while lecturers at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike had an average psychosocial work risk of ($M = 110.05$, $SD = 8.44$). In addition, Figure 1 clearly shows that lecturers at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike are the most exposed to psychological work hazards, followed by those at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, and the least exposed to these risks are those at University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

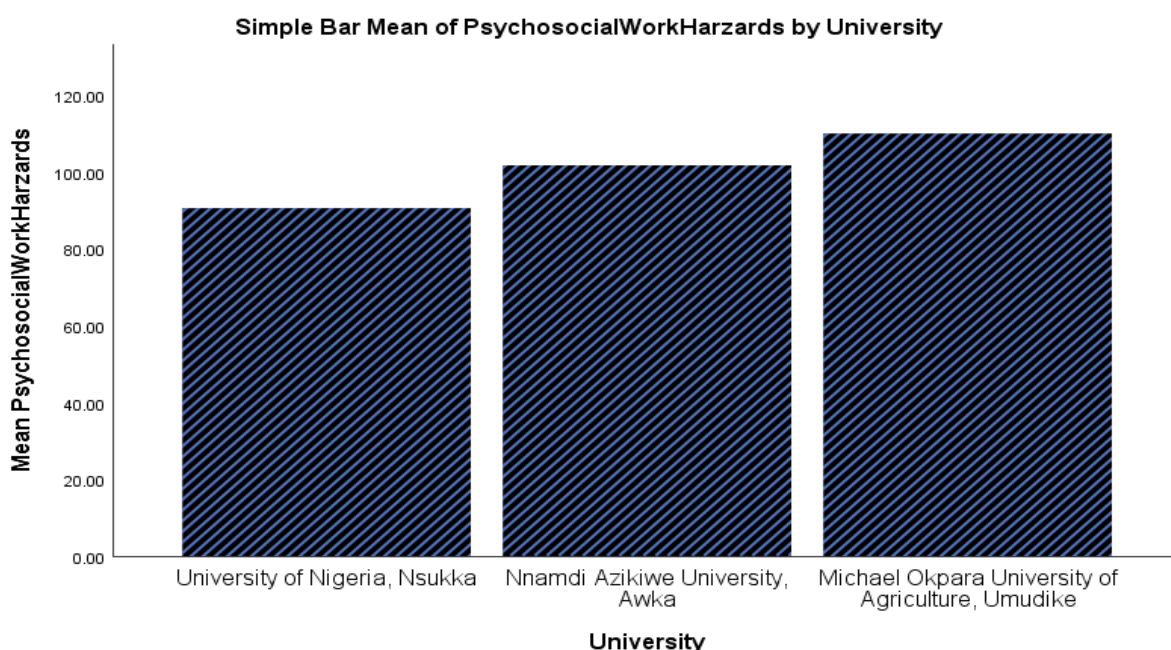


Figure 1 Bar chart representation of the influence of location of university on lecturers' psychosocial work hazards

Table 7. ANOVA of the location influence on psychosocial work hazards lecturers

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| Between Groups | 12731.235 | 2 | 6365.617 | 97.607 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 11869.500 | 182 | 65.217 | | |
| Total | 24600.735 | 184 | | | |

Table 7 revealed that there is no significant influence of location of university on lecturers' psychosocial work hazards, $F(3,141) = 97.607$, $p = .000$. Thus, the location of university is a significant determinant of lecturers' psychosocial work hazards. Besides, Table 8 showed that the mean difference between the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike and those of the lecturers at the University of Nigeria Nsukka contributed most to the significant influence of location of university.

Table 8. Post-Hoc pairwise comparison test for the significant influence of location of university on lecturers' psychosocial work hazards

| (I) University | (J) University | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|---|---|-----------------------|------------|------|
| University of Nigeria, Nsukka | Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka | -11.34387* | 1.45806 | .000 |
| | Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike | -19.42240* | 1.42177 | .000 |
| Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka | University of Nigeria, Nsukka | 11.34387* | 1.45806 | .000 |
| | Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike | of-8.07853* | 1.61643 | .000 |
| Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike | of University of Nigeria, Nsukka | 19.42240* | 1.42177 | .000 |
| | Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka | 8.07853* | 1.61643 | .000 |

This research sought to explore the demographic determinants of lecturers in universities in southeast Nigeria. It was revealed that while the age of lecturers, as well as the location of university, had significant impacts on their psychosocial work hazards, while qualification of lecturers had no significant impact on their psychosocial work hazards. This implies that the age of lecturers is a significant determinant of their psychosocial work hazards.

It has been demonstrated that workplace psychosocial aspects are significantly correlated with workers' ages (Xu et al., 2022). Depending on their age, kindergarten teachers face varying psychological risks at work (Echo et al., 2019). The age of Italian employees is one of the most important predictors of psychological hazards at work, according to La Torre et al. (2018). Among Malaysian primary school teachers, psychological job hazards are significantly related to their age, according to Alias et al. (2020). In addition to high job demands, poor workplace control, and age significantly impacted psychosocial work dangers (Kabito & Mekonnen, 2020). A strong correlation was found between psychological occupational risks and the ages of workers (Lee et al., 2021)

Psychosocial occupational dangers were not associated with gender, marital status, teaching experience, or employment status. It is supported by a study that found no relationship between gender and workplace exposure to psychosocial components (Migliore et al., 2021). Psychosocial job hazards are largely independent of gender, marital status, years of teaching experience, and working position, according to research conducted over the past decade. There is a reduction in psychosocial job hazards for women with low work-family conflict compared with men (Wale et al., 2021). Psychosocial work hazards were reported more frequently by female principals than by male principals (Persson et al., 2021). Nevertheless, Persson et al. (2021) determined that male principal's work experience was associated with exhaustion symptoms. Stress at work is influenced by work environment and marital status (Wireko-Gyebi & Ametephe, 2016). Psychosocial job hazards were strongly correlated with teachers' educational levels (Azizah et al., 2016). Psychological risks associated with work are influenced largely by the educational levels of Italian workers (La Torre et al., 2018).

Research on teacher demographics and psychosocial occupational risks has produced inconsistent results. There is a need for more empirical research on this topic in light of this situation. This work should be replicated in a similar or different context in order to compare results with most recent discoveries. This will make it easier to understand how teacher demographic characteristics affect psychosocial workplace risks.

According to the literature, lecturers' demographic characteristics (age and location of university) influence their psychosocial hazards at work. Based on the outcomes of this study, the researchers concluded that the age of lecturers and the location of the university are major factors that determine their psychological job hazards. In other words, the age of lecturers as well as the location of university impacts how they deal with psychosocial hazards at work. According to the researchers, while selecting academic staff of universities, the university authorities should consider the lecturers' demographics to avoid employing lecturers who are more prone to psychosocial work hazards

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