Assessment of sociodemographic and psychological well-being of Primary School Teachers

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Assessment of sociodemographic and psychological well-being of Primary School Teachers
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Abstract

Background: Teaching is very stressful and demanding, and it intensifies psychological-related disturbances compared to other occupations. Most teachers in Nigeria are battling emotional distress, burnout, depression, and anxiety due to excess workload, and has affected their psychological well being. This study assessed the sociodemographic and psychological well-being of primary school teachers in Enugu State Nigeria.

Method: This is a cross-sectional design. The psychological well-being of the 254 primary school teachers was assessed using psychological wellbeing scale and a sociodemographic information inventory was also used to ascertain their personal information. The data collected were analyzed using chi-square, mean, standard deviation, and bivariate correlation statistics.

Results: The results showed that the majority of primary school teachers experience unhealthy psychological well-being irrespective of age, gender, working status, qualification, and years of
teaching experience. These teachers’ sociodemographic variables are significantly correlated with psychological well-being. Only location is not significantly correlated with psychological well-being.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, this study concluded that primary school teachers’ psychological well-being is not positive and healthy and significantly related to their sociodemographic.

**Keywords:** Sociodemographic; Gender; Working status; Psychological well-being; Primary School; Teachers.

**Introduction**

The workload in teaching is very stressful, accompanied by other psychological-related issues compared to other occupational areas.\(^1\) Among them are emotional distress, burnout, depression, and anxiety.\(^2-3\) In the Nigerian context, the story gets severe as teachers especially in primary schools are disregarded, bonded into frustration and attrition.\(^4\) A recent study conducted in Nigeria on teachers’ psychological wellbeing found that a high number of teaching staff in Nigeria are experiencing serious psychological distress.\(^5\) Another study also reported a 32.9% prevalence of psychological problems in teachers in Enugu state Nigeria.\(^6\) Instead of regarding teachers as critical stakeholders, pillars of development, and valuable assets to national development\(^7-8\) teachers in Nigeria are lured to face ill health, psychological exhaustion.\(^9-10\) This is to say that if the emotional state of teachers is stabilized, there may be quality outputs.\(^1\) Hence, it is disturbing, that a good number of studies showed that teachers’ experiences of fatigue led to low productivity in teaching\(^9-10\) and poor standards in the Nigerian educational system.\(^1\) Some demographic variables (gender, educational qualification, work experience, work status) have been
identified as possible predictors of the poor psychological well-being of teachers.\textsuperscript{11-12} However, it is worth noting that there is no existing theoretical support regarding that.\textsuperscript{1}

Theoretically, Carol Ryff's Psychological Well-Being model provides a powerful framework for analyzing and organizing one's life, as well as for generating ideas for how to live better. According to Ryff, people should have a positive attitude about themselves, acknowledge and accept many elements of themselves, including both good and terrible attributes, and feel positive about their prior lives. Having such feelings could people have better psychological well-being. For the Ryff, you are unsatisfied with yourself; you are disappointed by events in your former life; you are concerned by certain personal characteristics; and you yearn to be someone other than who you are. You have a sense of self-improvement; you view yourself as evolving and expanding; you are open to new experiences; you have a sense of realizing your potential; you see yourself and your behavior improving with time; you are changing in ways that indicate increased self-knowledge and efficacy. You have a sense of personal stagnation; you don't feel like you're getting better or expanding; you're bored and uninterested in life; and you can't seem to acquire new attitudes or habits. You have life goals and a sense of purpose; you believe your present and past lives have meaning; you have beliefs that give life meaning; and you have ambitions and objectives for living. You lack a sense of purpose in life; you have few goals or objectives; you lack a sense of direction; you cannot perceive the purpose of your previous life; and you lack the outlook or beliefs that give life significance. You have warm, gratifying, and trusting connections with people; you care about others' well-being; you are capable of strong empathy, tenderness, and closeness; and you understand how human relationships work. You have few intimate, trustworthy relationships with others; it is difficult for you to be warm, open, and caring about others; you feel
lonely and dissatisfied in interpersonal relationships; and you are unwilling to make compromises in order to maintain vital ties with others. These characteristics show how happy an individual could be in the workplaces.

Given these reasons, much attention has been to the psychology of teachers due to its importance.\textsuperscript{13} This seems to have led to the deeper development of psychological wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing is not only optimal psychological functioning but also the presence of psychological disturbances or ill health.\textsuperscript{1}

Past studies highlighted the need for more studies to be conducted in the field of psychological wellbeing as there is limited literature on the well-being of schoolteachers.\textsuperscript{14} The existing literature only focused on the psychological well-being of teachers at other levels of education or rather regular schoolteachers\textsuperscript{15-16} and there seems to be a dearth of studies on the psychological well-being of primary school teachers in Nigeria.\textsuperscript{14} Given the above worrisome state of psychological well-being of teachers in developing regions, we assessed the sociodemographic and psychological well-being of primary school teachers in Enugu State Nigeria. To achieve the aforementioned aim, we hypothesized that a significant correlation exists between the sociodemographic and psychological well-being of primary school teachers.

Methods

Design

This is a cross-sectional study.
Study Location

The Enugu state of Nigeria was where this study was conducted particularly in the Enugu North Senatorial zone. In this area of study, there are public and private primary schools. Public primary schools were used and we did not include private-owned schools as they may not have a specific system of operation.

Information about Approval of the Study

Approval to conduct this study was obtained from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Enugu State Universal Basic Education, and the school headmasters. This was followed by the completion of informed consent by the primary school teachers who were recruited after satisfying the inclusion criteria as specified in this study. The inclusion criteria include:

1. Must be a primary school teacher
2. Must have been trained in Teacher Education Institutes
3. Must be teaching within the study setting
4. Must be a confirmed staff

Some teachers were excluded based on the following reasons:

1. Contract teachers who were Parent-Teacher Association-Teachers
2. Teachers that were receiving medical attention and based that they were not around.

It was open to the participants that they could withdraw from the study if they wish to.
Participants

We enrolled primary school teachers as participants. A total of 254 teachers that were officially recruited by the Government of Enugu State of Nigeria to teach in primary schools responded to the measurements tool in this study. A convenient sampling method was adopted in selecting the participants and study locations. This method was used for easy accessibility and proximity of the location. The participants were teachers from regular and special schools with primary sections. Of all the 300 teachers, 254 teachers i.e., 84.67% response rate participated in the study. The participants were from urban 121(47.6%) and rural 133(52.4%) settings of the Nsukka Senatorial zone of Enugu State. For the age of the participants, 25(9.8%) participants are below 25 years, 87(34.3%) were within 26-35 years, 84(33.1%) were within 36-54 years, and 58(22.8%) were 55 and above years. Most of the participants were female, 177(69.7%) and 77(30.3%) were males. Some of the participants, 66 (26.0%) were single, most of them married, 171(67.3%), few of them were separated, 16(6.3), and only one divorced participant, 1(.4%). For work status, 33(13.0%) participants were at lower cadre, 167(65.4%) participants were at middle cadre, 54(21.3) participants were at upper cadre. Whereas the 107(42.1%) participants’ experience was below 10 years, 105(41.3%) had 10 to 20 years of experience, 35(14.2%) had 21 to 30 years of experience, and 6(2.4%) had 31 to 40 years of experience. In terms of educational qualifications, 115(45.3%) participants had obtained their Bachelor degrees, 54(21.3%) participants had master’s degrees, 61(24.0%) participants had PhD, and 24(9.4%) participants had other educational qualifications.
Study Measures

Psychological wellbeing: The present study used 24 items from the shortened version of Ryff’s psychological wellbeing scale. These items sought to measure the six dimensions of personal growth, autonomy, environmental mastery, self-acceptance, purpose in life, and personal relations. To test the proposed six-factor structure, a principal component analysis with varimax rotation was computed. Three factors were extracted each with an eigenvalue greater than 1, and these factors related to positive self-evaluation, self-contentment, and sense of competence. This structure differed from the predicted six-dimensional structure reported in Ryff’s psychological wellbeing scale. Given that the aim of this study was not to test the validity of the six dimensions but to obtain an overall measure of a teacher’s sense of psychological wellbeing, it was decided to compute an overall psychological wellbeing score. The combined psychological wellbeing scale had 28 items, after excluding two items referring to the dimensions of autonomy (‘it is difficult for me to voice my opinions on controversial matters’) and self-acceptance (‘my attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves) revealed a satisfactory internal consistency with α = 0.76.

Sociodemographic Information Inventory (SII) is a checklist that ascertained the sociodemographic data of the participants with regards to gender, location, marital status, years of experience, and educational qualifications. This was constructed by the researchers of the present study. The sociodemographic components cover the scope of participants’ personal data the present study was limited to.
Research Procedure

The data were personally collected by the researchers. It took place at the various primary schools in the study setting. During the data collection, participants were issued copies of instruments for completion. The completion of the questionnaires lasted for 90 minutes, 45 minutes per questionnaire. We ensured that data were collected shortly after working hours and it lasted for two months.

Data Analysis

Shortly after the data collection, data were entered in IBM SPSS Statistics. The data were analyzed using frequency distributions and percentages statistical methods to understand the sociodemographics characteristics of the participants. A bivariate correlation analysis was employed to test the correlation the relationships among variables.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the level of psychological well-being according sociodemographic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>n/%</th>
<th>PWS total Score (M±SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 25</td>
<td>25(9.8%)</td>
<td>100.01±6.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>87(34.3%)</td>
<td>104.88±27.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-54</td>
<td>84(33.1%)</td>
<td>107.38±18.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 and Above</td>
<td>58(22.8%)</td>
<td>109.46±15.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Cadre</td>
<td>33(13.0%)</td>
<td>107.09±25.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Cadre</td>
<td>167(65.7%)</td>
<td>105.65±21.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Cadre</td>
<td>54(21.3%)</td>
<td>107.68±15.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 shows that 25(9.8%) primary school teachers, below 25 years experiences unhealthy psychological well-being. Also, 87 (34.3%) teachers within the age range of 26-35, 84(33.1%) were within the age range of 36-54, 58(22.8%) within the age range of 46 and above experience unhealthy psychological well-being. This further indicates that a higher (33.1%) number of primary school teachers were within the age range of 26-35 years. In terms of working status, 33(13.0%) participants in a lower cadre, 167(65.7%) participants in a middle cadre, and 54(21.3%) participants in a higher cadre experience unhealthy psychological well-being. Regarding the educational qualification, 115(45.3%) participants with Bachelor's degree, 54(21.3%) with Master's degree, 61 (24.0%) with PhD, and 24 (9.4%) participants with other different qualifications experience unhealthy psychological well-being. It also demonstrates that 107(42.1%) teachers below 10 years, 105(41.3%) within a range of 10 to 20, 36(14.2%) with a range of 21 to 30, and 6(2.4%) within a range of 31 to 40 teaching experiences had experience unhealthy psychological well-being. The majority of primary school teachers who had 10 to 20
teaching experiences rated psychological well-being as high. Table 1 also shows that 177(69.7%) of female respondents perceived psychological well-being as very high. On the other hand, only 77(30.3%) of males. Regarding location, 133(52.4%) teachers in rural locations rated psychological well-being as high and 121(47.6%) those in urban rated it low.

**Table 2:** Bivariate analysis of the relationship among psychological well-being and sociodemographic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Working Status</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>PWS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>PearsonCorrelation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.296**</td>
<td>-.339**</td>
<td>.162**</td>
<td>.542**</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>-.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.(2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>.534</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Status</td>
<td>PearsonCorrelation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>.210**</td>
<td>.436**</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.(2-tailed)</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.665</td>
<td>.798</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
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<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>PearsonCorrelation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.091</td>
<td>-.193**</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>-.094</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.775</td>
<td>.704</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>254</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>PearsonCorrelation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.210**</td>
<td>-.211**</td>
<td>-.370**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.052</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.145</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.410</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>254</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>PearsonCorrelation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.145*</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.325</td>
<td>.995</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
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<td>254</td>
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<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>PearsonCorrelation</td>
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<td>.143</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td>.254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>254</td>
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<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>254</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>PearsonCorrelation</td>
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<td>.210**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**
The results in Table 2 shows that the psychological well-being of the primary school teachers has a significant positive association with age ($r=.127^*, p>.044$), working status ($r=.016, p>.798$), years of experience ($r=.000, p>.995$), and gender ($r=.079, p>.212$). Only location is not significantly correlated with psychological well-being, $r=.210^{**}, p>.001$. On the other hand, Table 2 shows that the educational qualification and marital status of the primary school teachers has a significant negative correlation with psychological well-being ($r=-.094, p>.136; r=-.052, p>.410$). This indicates the increase in age, years of experience (teaching experience), and gender, the increase in the psychological well-being of the primary school teachers.

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to assess the psychological well-being of primary school teachers in Enugu State Nigeria. The results showed that the majority of primary school teachers experience unhealthy psychological well-being irrespective of age, gender, working status, and years of teaching experience. The result also showed that age has a significant positive association with the psychological well-being of primary school teachers. Only location is not significantly correlated with psychological well-being. It further showed that the educational qualification and marital status of the primary school teachers have a significant negative correlation with psychological well-being.

As the result indicated that the majority of primary school teachers experience unhealthy psychological well-being regardless of their age, gender, educational qualifications, working status, and years of teaching experience. This result agreed with a past study that demonstrated that teachers well-being is known to be frequent negative public health issues (stress and burnout).
facing teachers. In line with the finding of the present study, past study also found psychological well-being in primary school teachers regardless of the level of experience. It is therefore confirmed that teachers in most primary schools feel distressed in course of delivering their teaching responsibilities, thereby, affecting their work balance. Like the present study, Gray et al., stated that teachers do not enjoy occupational wellness and satisfaction as they are faced with serious work-related stress. Given that the psychological well-being is not positive to the health of the teachers, previous studies constantly reported that they are highly vulnerable to amplified psychological disturbances. Teachers could not show positive psychological well-being as the conditions in the workplace do not permit them to establish a warm psychological relationship, thereby disrupting their occupational growth. For example, if the school climate is harsh, perhaps it leads organizational misbehaviours among teachers. Experiencing positive psychological well-being increases commitment and turnover among teachers.

As admitted by the primary school teachers in this study, a Spanish study showed that teaching is a demanding task and teachers were delivering the tasks in difficult working conditions. In line with our findings, past studies showed that teachers with negative psychological mental health may find it more difficult to deliver duties entrusted to them, and it increases poor teacher-student relationships.

Considering the results of the present study as related to the sociodemographic factors of the teachers, past empirical evidence demonstrated that age, gender, years of teaching experience, and working status moderate the psychological well-being of teachers. Similarly, Hascher and Waber reported that teachers’ competence negatively predicts the well-being of younger and older teachers.
In terms of gender, a past study showed that gender does not significantly relate to psychological well-being.\(^{29}\) Showing that the psychological well-being of the teachers is the same regardless of their gender. Similarly, the outcomes of the current study support Amran and Khairiah,\(^{30}\) which showed a significant relationship between gender and general well-being. The significant correlation extends to other symptoms of psychological well-being such as depression and anxiety.\(^{31-32}\)

Confirming the findings of the present study, Matud, López-Curbelo, and Fortes\(^{33}\) highlighted that a critical examination is required on gender-related studies that showed a significant difference between psychological well-being and gender.

**Conclusion**

This study concluded that the majority of primary school teachers experience unhealthy psychological well-being irrespective of age, gender, working status, qualification, and years of teaching experience. These teachers’ sociodemographic variables are significantly correlated with psychological well-being. Only location is not significantly correlated with psychological well-being.

**Practice implications**

The outcomes of the present study have far-reaching practice implications for experts in school counselling, occupational health, and education. As the results indicated, practicing school counsellors should be aware that teachers at the primary level appear to be dissatisfied leading to poor psychological functioning. These unhealthy conditions have been demonstrated in their
perception of a teaching job. Given this, counsellors should seek effective occupational health therapy to cushion the advert effects of their negative psychological functioning that have affected their well-being.

Experts in the field of occupational health should also advocate for a paradigm shift in policies related to teachers’ satisfaction. In doing that, there should be a balance between hedonistic and eudemonic aspects of the psychological well-being of the teachers. It is possible, therefore, that if teachers’ well-being is taken care of, there would be increased turnover, presentism, productivity, and commitment.

Teachers’ psychological experience counts in terms of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships in the school. Therefore, psychologists in the field of education should look deep to know some psychoeducational measures and interventions that could be used to assist teachers with negative psychological well-being. If a teacher is not happy within himself, it could affect other things he does in the workplace.

Limitations

There are some methodological limitations noted in the course of carrying out this study. The specific dimensions of psychological well-being were not measured. If these were done, it would have explored the specific dimensions where teachers are dissatisfied. Besides, we could not demonstrate how teachers’ psychological well-being correlates with the pupils’ academic performance and how could affect the mental well-being of the pupils. Therefore, we implore future studies not to concede to these limitations.
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