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ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINANTS AFFECTING HEALTHY AGEING AMONG RETIRED CIVIL SERVANTS IN BENUE STATE

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ABSTRACT:
Healthy ageing is the ability of ability of older adults to stay active and more aware in having control over their lives so as to maintain good physical and mental health in old age. The continued increase in the proportion of the aged persons is projected to continue to occur more in the developing countries than their developed counterparts in the future decades. Nigeria being the most populous African country is not left out in the expected increase in the elderly population. Though Nigeria population aged 65 years and above fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to decrease slightly through 2016 - 2020. This study therefore, was set to investigate environmental determinants of healthy ageing among civil servants in Benue State. This ex-post facto study was carried out on older civil servants working in the Benue State Civil Service. A total 241 older civil servants (both male and females) of aged ≥ 50, years were included in this study. Total Population Sampling technique was used in the study. Environmental Determinant of Health Ageing Questionnaire (EDHAQ) was used to elicit data from older civil servants in Makurdi. Inferential statistics of t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the data at 0.05 level of significance. Male and female older civil servants in Benue State civil service did not differ significantly in their physical wellbeing[Mean difference = 8.81, p =0.103]. Marital status had a significant effect on the physical wellbeing of older civil servants in Benue State [f(2,155) = 0.169, p = 0.011]. Male and female older civil servants in Benue State civil service did not differ significantly in their psychological wellbeing [Mean Difference = 4.48, p=0.221]. Marital status had a significant effect on the psychological wellbeing of older civil servants in Benue State [f(2,155) = 0.120, p = 0.040]. Gender does not affect physical and psychological wellbeing and hence, it is not a determinant of healthy ageing among older persons. Marital status on the other hand affects the physical and psychological wellbeing and so it is a determinant of healthy ageing among older persons.

Keyword: *Healthy ageing; Environment; Determinants; Civil servants; Benue State.*

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Introduction

In many African countries, especially Nigeria, developmental efforts and government policies are carried out within the purview of the civil services. The civil service is an institution saddled with the responsibility of designing, formulating and implementing public policy and discharging various government functions and effectiveness of a nation's civil service is dependent on its civil servants. Civil servants are a set of people who shoulder important and sensitive responsibilities as well as implement government policies.

The civil service remains the hallmark for policy implementation as it is in most countries of the world. For Nigeria to succeed, its civil servants must be healthy to withstand the demanding challenges of the civil services. Despite commendable global announcement in disease management and health promotion strategies, maintaining health ageing among retired civil servants and their families has perennially posed a challenge to the health sector in Nigeria. Hence Owolabi (2007) Asserted that civil servants of 60 years and above, experience musculoskeletal, dental, ocular and cardio vascular disorders, poor dental hygiene, anemia and thyroid goiters prevalently in rules areas, while hypertension and diabetes were more common in urban areas. These health challenges make the provision of effective health care services readily available to older people. Therefore, the maintenance of a reliable health system in developing nations is vital for healthy ageing among retired civil servants.

The continued increase in the proportion of the aged persons is projected to continue to occur more in the developing countries than their developed counterparts in the future decades. This might be due to the fact that the developing countries are in the second stage of demographic transition, where low birth rate balances low death rate (Abegunde & Owoaje, 2013). They further limited that, the population of aged persons in developing countries such as Nigeria has brought about an unprecedented burden on the health sector of the economy. This is necessitated by the fact that, it is the health sector that is burdened with their care, as well as managing their respective processes of ageing.

Nigeria being the most populous African country is not left out in the expected increase in the elderly population. In world ranking, Nigeria occupies the 24th position among countries with the highest proportion of ageing population (WHO, 2011). Due to technological advancements in medicine, water hygiene and sanitation measures, like other African nations, Nigeria reports a significant increase in surgical for persons over age 60 (Mudiare, 2013). This could explain the clamour for an upward shift in the retirement age in the Nigeria civil service, because the ageing/elderly population appears to continue feeling adequately capable and energized for lengthen service to their country. Indeed, university workers in Nigeria now retire at an age of 65and 70 years

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for non-academic and academic staff respectively due to this clamour unlike 60 and 65 years as was obtainable before 2012.

The world health organization (2011) defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and a not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The concept of health entails a sound and efficient mind. Health means that both the body and mind are working harmoniously. Health can also be regarded as a dynamic balance in which an individual or group of has the capacity to cope with all circumstances of living at an optimum level (Bass, 2006). While everybody desires to grow old, maintaining a healthy body and soul is very critical. The belief is that adequate health information services could to a large extent increase life expectancy and healthy ageing. The ageing of human is a physiological and dynamic process occurring with time. It starts in the fourth decade of life and leads to death. The process of human ageing is complex and individualized, occurs in the biological, psychological-ageing characterized by progressive age-changes in metabolism and physicochemical properties of cells, leading to unpaired self-regulations, regeneration and to structural changes and functional tissues and organs. Most importantly, biological ageing changes occur with age in the human body in respond to the mood, attitude, to the environment, physical conditions and social activity.

Health ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for physical, social and mental health to enable people to take an active part in society without discrimination to enjoy an independent good quality of life. Healthy ageing is also described as the ability of ability of older adults to stay active and more aware in having control over their lives so as to maintain good physical and mental health in old age. Healthy ageing is a term which is often used interchangeably with terms such as active ageing (WHO 2002), successful ageing (Bowling & Dieppe, 2005), positive ageing (Bowling, 2008) and Productive ageing (Bowling & Lliff, 2006). Although there is no universal definition of healthy ageing, there is general acceptance that it involves more than just physical or functional health. Healthy ageing is a lifelong process of optimizing opportunities for improving and preserving health and physical, social and mental wellbeing, independence quality of life and enhancing successful life course transitions (Health Canada, 2002).

Healthy ageing, therefore means, that few people die in all ages, and the surviving number reached old age in good health, continues to enjoy living, and contributes to the happiness of others (Ezema & Ugwanyi, 2014). They further maintained that healthy ageing has to do with a gradual but a steady movement toward ageing devoid of acute health challenges. It is developmental task that proposes ways of meeting the needs of the elderly healthy ageing is not really waiting for people to get old before giving health care. It rather involves getting old and being active so as to counter balance the

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physical losses that are associated with ageing.

In 2020, population aged 65 years and above for Nigeria was 2.7381%. It is estimated that there will be continued increase in the proportion of the aged persons in developing countries, but the recent trend in population of aged persons in Nigeria seems to deviate from this estimate. Though Nigeria population aged 65 years and above fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to decrease slightly through 2.7495% in 2016 ending at 2.7381% in 2020. This means that there are 5,644,308.03 elder people in Nigeria. With the recent global improvements in health sciences and technology, it is expected that there will be great improvements in the health of aged people and hence an accompanied increase in lifespan. The recent decrease in the percentage of aged people calls for an investigation of other factors aside from health that could possibly affect healthy ageing. This study therefore, was set to investigate environmental determinants of healthy ageing among civil servants in Benue State. Specifically, the study would determine the extent to which older civil servants in Benue State experience:

1. Physical wellbeing based on their gender.
2. Physical wellbeing based on their marital status.
3. Psychological wellbeing based on their gender.
4. Psychological wellbeing based on their marital status.

Material and Methods

This ex-post facto study was carried out on older civil servants working in the Benue State Civil Service. A total 241 older civil servants (both male and females) of aged ≥ 50, years were included in this study.

Study Design: An ex-post factor study

Study Location: Benue State secretariat, Makurdi.

Sample size: 241 older civil servants.

Sample size calculation: Total Population Sampling technique was used in the study. Total population sampling is a type of purposive sampling where the whole population of interest is studied. Total population sampling is done when the target group is small and set apart by an unusual and well-defined characteristic.

Procedure: With the letter of introduction from the head of department, the researcher administered the Environmental Determinant of Health Ageing Questionnaire (EDHAQ) to older civil servants in Makurdi. The researcher employed the services of three research assistants to assist in the distribution and collection of the instrument to the respondents. The research assistants will be trained on the purpose of the study, courteousness to the senior citizens participating in the study and how to politely administer the questionnaire to them.

Two hundred and forty one questionnaire were distributed, 197 were returned, out of which 188 were-completely and correctly filled and were used for this analysis.

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Statistical analysis: Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) was used to answer the research questions and determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' views. In determining the extent biological and social environmental determinants affect healthy ageing, if the difference in the aggregate mean score older civil servants in a group and their mean score in the other group is within 0 - 15, it indicated a very low extent, if 16 - 25 indicates low extent, 26-35 indicates high extent and above 35 indicates very high extent. Inferential statistics of t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) will be used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected was analysed using SPSS version 23.0.

Presentation of Results

Extent of Physical Wellbeing among Older Civil Servants based on Gender

Table 1: Summary of t-test Analysis on the extent to which Gender affects Physical Wellbeing of Older Civil Servants.

Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	p-value	Decision
Male	53	64.57	12.81	156	0.103	Not Sig.
Female	105	56.60	10.01			

Data in Table 1 show that the physical wellbeing mean score of older male civil servants is 69.57 with a standard deviation of 8.81 while older female civil servants is 46.60 with a standard deviation of 10.01. On the whole, the difference between the physical wellbeing mean score of male civil servants is greater than their female counterparts in Benue State by 12.97. Since the p-value of 0.103 is greater than the level of significance 0.05, it means that male and female older civil servants in Benue State civil service did not differ significantly in their physical wellbeing.

Extent of Physical Wellbeing among Older Civil Servants based on Marital Status

Table 2: Summary of ANOVA on the extent to which Marital Status affects Physical Wellbeing of Older Civil Servants.

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Inference
Between Groups	152.05	2	12.73	.169	.011	Significant
Within Groups	352.14	155	19.03			
Total	439.01	157				

Table 2 presents the summary of ANOVA on the extent to which marital status affects physical wellbeing of older civil servants in Benue State. The results showed

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that marital status had a significant effect on the physical wellbeing of older civil servants in Benue State [f(2,155) = 0.169, p = 0.011]. Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, it means that marital status affects the physical wellbeing of older civil servants in Benue State.

Extent of Psychological Wellbeing among Older Civil Servants based on Gender

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis on the extent to which Gender affects Psychological Wellbeing of Older Civil Servants.

Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	p-value	Decision
Male	53	61.34	14.17	156	0.221	Not Sig.
Female	105	56.86	13.51			

Data in Table 3 show that the psychological wellbeing mean score of older male civil servants is 61.34 with a standard deviation of 14.17 while older female civil servants is 56.86 with a standard deviation of 13.86. On the whole, the difference between the physical wellbeing mean score of male civil servants is greater than their female counterparts in Benue State by 4.48. Since the p-value of 0.221 is greater than the level of significance 0.05, it means that male and female older civil servants in Benue State civil service did not differ significantly in their psychological wellbeing.

Extent of Psychological Wellbeing among Older Civil Servants based on Marital Status

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA on the extent to which Marital Status affects Psychological Wellbeing of Older Civil Servants.

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Inference
Between Groups	143.06	2	11.96	.120	.040	Significant
Within Groups	920.56	155	32.04			
Total	1063.62	157				

Table 4 presents the summary of ANOVA on the extent to which marital status affects psychological wellbeing of older civil servants in Benue State. The results showed that marital status had a significant effect on the psychological wellbeing of older civil servants in Benue State [f(2,155) = 0.120, p = 0.040]. Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, it means that marital status affects the psychological wellbeing of older civil servants in Benue State.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that gender affects to a low extent the physical

and psychological wellbeing of older male and female civil servants in Benue State. It means that, gender is not a very strong determinant of health ageing. This could be why the study revealed that, the physical and psychological wellbeing mean score of male civil servants is just slightly greater than their female counterparts in Benue State. This is in agreement with the study of Wanga (2010) who reported that sex is a determinant elderly healthy ageing status and females have a higher chance of living with a chronic illness in old age compared to their male counterparts. The findings of this study agreed with that of Lahariya, Khandekar and Pradhan (2012) which reported that, elderly males and women experienced different quality of life. However, the difference was not significant. Findings of the study are also in congruence with that of Ojukwu (2016) who showed that there is no significant difference in the perception of aged male and female on their physical and psychological wellbeing. This discovery indicates that males and females civil servants have the same unique health care needs in old age. The outcome of this discovery is in tandem with Gureje, Kola, Afolabi and Ollev (2008) who reported that gender status does not significantly affect the physical and psychological wellbeing of elderly persons. This means that being male or female civil servant is unrelated to healthy ageing.

The outcome of the study shows that marital status affects to a high extent the physical and psychological wellbeing of older civil servants in Benue State. This finding is in consonance with Netuveli and Blane (2008) who reported that marital status was indeed associated with health and survival outcomes in old age. The finding that marital status was an important determinant of healthy ageing among the elderly workers agreed with reports of Smith and Goldman (2007) that the risk factors for individuals' health status differ in terms of associations with social networks. The study also showed that the physical and psychological wellbeing mean score of civil servants (single was greater than other civil servants (married and separated/widowed/divorced) in Benue State. This finding aligned with Wairiuko (2014) who reported that elderly single persons enjoy physical and psychological wellbeing more than married and separated/widowed/divorced persons on the premise that married and separated/widowed/divorced may have family responsibilities and often make their healthcare secondary need. On the other hand, this finding disagrees with that o Munsawaengsub (2010) who reported that elderly married persons experienced good physical and psychological wellbeing more than elderly single persons. The difference could as a result of lifestyle variations in the study populations.

Conclusion

Ageing is inevitable and a natural process of human race. It is a process that is responsive to environmental influences. The physical and psychological wellbeing are

associated with healthy ageing. Gender does not affect physical and psychological wellbeing and hence, it is not a determinant of healthy ageing among older persons. Marital status on the other hand affects the physical and psychological wellbeing and so it is a determinant of healthy ageing among older persons.

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