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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 AND INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR ON THE WELLBEING OF UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA STAFF

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ABSTRACT

Research has shown that an individual's future happiness and orientation is backed up by the psychological wellbeing (PWB) of that individual. However, studies on PWB are sketchy and have not yielded conclusive results with regards to the nature of factors associated with it. This study examined the influence of the fear of COVID-19 and innovative work behaviour (IWB) on the PWB of lecturers of public university. We conducted a cross-sectional study comprising of two hundred and seventy (270) lecturers (148 males, and 122 females, mean age = 54yrs, SD = 4.71). Three instruments were used for data collection namely: Fear of COVID-19 Scale, Innovative Work Behaviour Scale, and Psychological Wellbeing Scale. To test the predictive factors of PWB, hierarchical multiple regression analysis with stepwise modeling was employed. The results revealed that the fear of COVID-19 significantly and negatively predicted PWB. However, IWB was found to be a significant positive predictor of PWB among the university lecturers. The findings have practical implications for policy formulation and program implementation by university authorities on how to boost the PWB of lecturers. Hence, psychological interventions and promotion of lecturers' ingenuity should be prioritized by university management bodies.

Key words: Fear of COVID-19, innovative work behaviour, psychological wellbeing,

Introduction

Human beings are unique species of evolution whose activities are mostly directed to making life more meaningful and satisfying, and the desire to be happy is seen as a primary and universal motivation for humans (Ho, Cheung, & Cheung, 2008). Over the years humans have sought ways to improve their quality of life and wellbeing as they encounter various problems that range from natural disaster occurrences (i.e. earthquake, flood, drought etc.), pandemic outbreaks (i.e. Covid-19, Ebola etc.) to self-inflicted human problems (i.e. terrorism, genocide, slave trade etc.) which has prompted a number of researchers and institutions around the world to develop human well-being indices for the purpose of assisting governments on coming up with new policies to enhance the life of the people.

Well-being has been defined as the combination of feeling good and functioning well; the experience of positive emotions such as happiness and contentment as well as the development of one's potential, having some control over one's life, having a sense of purpose, and experiencing positive relationships (Huppert, 2009). It is a sustainable condition that allows the individual or population to develop and thrive. The term subjective well-being is synonymous with positive mental health. The World Health

Organization (2001) defines positive mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community". This conceptualization of wellbeing goes beyond the absence of mental ill health, encompassing the perception that life is going well. Well-being has been linked to success at professional, personal, and interpersonal levels, with those individuals high in well-being exhibiting greater innovative behaviours and productivity in the workplace, more effective learning, increased creativity, more prosocial behaviors, and positive relationships (Diener, 2012; Oishi, Diener, & Lucas, 2007).

Every human desires a physically and mentally happy, prosperous, and healthy life. The psychological well-being expectation in this 21st century is the most defining aspect influencing a person's life quality (Argyle, 2001). Psychological well-being is a representation of an individual's psychological health based on positive psychological function (Bradburn, 1969). Many scholars have assumed that psychological well-being is a factor supporting someone's future happiness, which is stimulated by individual's learning in dealing with problem or environment (Mock et al., 2019), and affected by their experience and education (Ryff, 2014; Ryff & Heidrich, 1997).

In an attempt to understand psychological wellbeing, Ryff's theory was considered. In fact, Ryff pioneered the study of the psychological aspect of wellbeing. According to Ryff (1989, 2014; Ryff & Keyes, 1995), the optimal psychological functioning for the development and self-realization of the individual is very crucial. Ryff claims that happiness is a short term affective well-being (hedonic approach); in order to achieve sustainable well-being, one needs to shift from satisfaction with life to a sense of meaning in life, and being true to one's inner self (eudaimonic perspective). She emphasized that psychological wellbeing is positive psychology function of individual, which is characterized by self-acceptance, positive relationship, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.

The concept of psychological well-being was derived from the belief that healthiness is more than just a freedom from physical sickness (Ryff, 1989; Ryff and Keyes, 1995). Psychological well-being is the primary goal of human characterized by the necessity to psychologically feel better and is related to individual's feeling about their daily activities and personal feeling disclosure (Reynolds, 2001; Duan, Guan, & Gan, 2016; Thomson, Lockyegianettr, Camic, and Chatterjee, 2018). One may be inclined to wonder if most people would still feel better and carry on with their activities seamlessly in the event of an unexpected breakout of pandemic such as Covid-19 which literally brought untold hardship to many families. However, the level of strain and stress people might have experienced is largely dependent on people's perception of the effect of the pandemic which in turn determines their psychological wellbeing at the time and going forward. Hence, this study investigates Covid-19 and innovative work behaviour as predictors of psychological wellbeing among the staff of university of Nigeria, Nsukka.

The academic staffs of universities in Nigeria are strong members of the universities' community. However, they are faced with plethora of challenges which include: poor staff development programme, poor motivation, poor research

funding, teaching of large class, inadequate infrastructural facilities, strike actions, insecurity, and poor computer literacy (Jacob, Jegede, & Musa, 2021). These challenges over time have negatively affected the wellbeing of these staff resulting in brain drain. Hence, it is expedient to investigate the psychological wellbeing of academic staff of universities especially as it relate to their innovative work behaviours and fear Covid-19.

An important factor which has played a key role in recent years in determining how we live and how we die and which has presumably affected the psychologically wellbeing of persons around the world is COVID-19 pandemic. The global community was suddenly caught up with the emergence of a dreaded coronavirus disease in 2019 known as COVID-19 pandemic. The experience generated a global pandemonium and threat to human existence and interactions. Coronavirus is among a group of viruses that can cause disease in both animals and humans. One of its components is severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). The new strain of coronavirus is called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus2 (SARS-CoV-2), which is the virus that caused coronavirus disease in the year, 2019. COVID-19 was first identified in the late quarter of 2019 in Wuhan, China but later spread across the globe (Kandola, 2020). The origin of the virus is still not clearly known but reports associated with it can be traced to south China. The new SARS-CoV-2 is most closely related to a group of SARS-CoVs found in humans, bats, pangolins and civets. Many health experts also believe that the new strain of coronavirus likely originated from bats or pangolins.

The transmission of coronavirus to humans was first seen in Wuhan, China. Since then, the virus has mostly spread through person-to-person contact. The virus is mostly spread through person-to-person contact and respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. To contain this highly infectious disease worldwide, various Governments had to enforce lockdown with varying degree of strictness, compelling people around the world to resort to social and physical distancing, quarantine/self-isolation, regular washing of hands, use of face mask and sanitizers etc. These efforts were in line with WHO recommendations and government directives meant to curb the wide spread of the virus. Also a number of vaccines were also produced for the treatment of the disease but its efficacy is still with mixed reports. However, greater percent of patients with COVID-19 recover without treatment by specialists. These people may experience mild, flu-like symptoms. They may also experience severe symptoms, such as trouble breathing (Kandola, 2020).

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and especially the lockdown had several negative impacts on individuals, families and businesses around the world and Nigeria was not left out. Production was stalled due to the lockdown. As a result of this disruption the entire supply chains were affected which ultimately stalled the economic growth of many countries across the globe (Ebrahim et al., 2020). For instance, millions of enterprises faced existential threats. Nearly half of the 3.3 billion global workforce risked losing their means of livelihood. The informal (private) sector workers were particularly vulnerable because, majority lacks social protection and access to quality healthcare and have lost access to productive assets. Without the means to earn income during the lockdown, many workers were unable to feed themselves and their families. Furthermore, the pandemic affected the entire food

production and supply chain restricting access to food availability. Also border closures, trade restrictions and confinement measures prevented farmers from accessing the markets, including buying inputs and selling their produce, as well as harvesting their crops, thus disrupting domestic and international food supply chains and reducing access to healthy, safe and diverse diets (Kandola, 2020). The pandemic also decimated jobs, and brought about huge financial loss to many companies and corporate organizations.

The negative impacts of the pandemic made individuals and families to resort to negative coping strategies, such as distress sale of valuable assets (i.e. lands), securing of predatory loans, child labour etc. The fear of the spread hampered various social, religious and political activities such as weddings, burial and funeral ceremonies, physical meetings, political gatherings, church activities etc. which in no small measure affected the social, spiritual and economic life of many. The pandemic also affected the physical health of several people occasioned by healthcare challenges as those who fell sick could not be properly attended to by healthcare professionals due to the risk/fear of contracting the disease and poor implementation of good health safety measures (Luo, 2019). Reports by researchers (Luo, 2019; Kandola, 2020) revealed that the pandemic ignited fear in the minds of people resulting in increased psychological trauma.

The psychosocial effects of the pandemic are pervasive and of significant societal concern (Armour, McGlinchey, Butter, McAloney-Kocaman, & McPherson, 2020). Indeed, it is likely that COVID-19 will not only affect the mental health of the population presently, as the pandemic spreads, but that the impact may last long into the future. We would expect that many individuals will experience a rise in mental distress symptoms, such as anxiety and depression, during these unprecedented times when populations have been required to drastically change their day to day way of life. Previous research on SARS, MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus) and H1N1 (Swine) flu, have given insight into the psychological impact of the outbreak of an infectious respiratory disease and the measures taken to curb its spread (Armour et al., 2020). A high degree of psychological distress was reported during such pandemics, particularly among healthcare workers, quarantined individuals, and SARS survivors and their family members (Brooks et al. 2020; Gardner and Moallef 2015; Maunder 2004; Tsang et al. 2004). Moreover, recent research from the initial phases of the COVID-19 outbreak in China has suggested that there has been a significant impact on the psychological wellbeing of the general population (Qiu et al. 2020; Wang et al. 2020).

Another important factor which may greatly impact the psychological wellbeing of lecturers in public universities is innovative work behaviour. Employees' propensity to innovate can be conceived as complex behaviour consisting of idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization with the aim of meeting organizational goals in novel ways (Kanter, 1988; Scott & Bruce, 1998). Individuals, alone or in groups, undertake innovative activities with the intention to derive anticipated benefits from innovative change. Innovative work behaviour (IWB) is typically seen to encompass a broad set of behaviours related to the generation of ideas, creating support for them, and helping their implementation (Scott & Bruce, 1998; Jansen, 2000). Farr and Ford (1990) asserts that innovative work

behaviour is seen as an individual's behaviour that aims to achieve the initiation and intentional introduction (within a work role, group or organization) of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedures. Creativity is central to innovativeness, but the concepts are not synonymous. Innovation can be seen as a successful and intentional implementation of creativity, which is more subjective and context specific by its nature (Miron, Erez & Naveh, 2004). Creativity as such may be limited to idea generation alone, but by definition, innovation produces benefits for the people involved in the innovative process (Anderson et al., 2004). Therefore, employee innovativeness requires creativity, but creativity does not always lead to an innovation.

Today's work environment is so competitive and requires continuous changes & innovations, especially in a technologically driven work environment where significant amount of knowledge and skills are needed to meet up with the demands of the present time (Trapitsin et al., 2018). Higher-order skills are increasingly integral at the workplace and require individuals to be creative and solve real-world problems by introducing innovative ideas. One of the main purposes of education today is to produce comprehensive graduates that can compete globally and be prepared to meet the challenges raised by Industrial Revolution (Baharuddin et al., 2019; Lambriex-Schmitz, Van der Klink, Beausaert, Bijker & Segers, 2020). Therefore, educators need to constantly redesign, improve, and foresee change and react more efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, there is a continuing debate on the maintenance of the education standard with regard to the enhancement of teaching methods, tests, and effects on teaching skills among educators (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2018).

Innovative behaviour among lecturers is highly important for further development of a knowledgeable society and for educational institutions (Thurlings, Evers & Vermeulen, 2015). Yet, some studies argue that the teaching profession has not kept up with the pace of the changing environment and teachers lack innovativeness (Izzati, 2018; Guerriero, 2017). Referring to the World Economic Forum (2016), rapidly changing labour markets involve the development of knowledge and skills that are often lacking in educational programmes. The need for innovativeness in education highly depends on how teachers bring innovativeness into practice especially on the techniques adopted in classroom teachings. On the other hand, it is a challenge to push public institution employees to make breakthroughs in creating innovations (Usman & Mat, 2017). Public sector institutions are often considered unable to innovate, a common preconception that stems from the assumption that public institutions are bureaucratic and typically steep that they cannot breach the rules and regulations. Since there is a growing literature on innovative work behaviour, few studies have concentrated on educators in public educational institutions and many educational innovations have not produce the desired changes (Lambriex-Schmitz et al., 2020).

There are numerous definitions of innovation in education. The most common definition describes innovation as a combination of views formed from three components of Innovative Work Behaviour, which include: (1) generation of idea (2) idea promotion (3) realisation of idea in teaching and learning (Bawuro, Shamsuddin, Wahab & Chidozie, 2019). This definition aligns with few studies (De

Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Janssen, 2000; Shahab & Imran, 2018) which elaborated that behaviours should be aimed at initiating and applying new and useful ideas, methods, products or procedures. Previous studies suggested that the dimensions of innovative work behaviour consist of 1) idea generation which is based on brainstorming and problem-solving, 2) idea promotion (idea champion) which mainly involves ideas sharing on formal platforms and 3) idea realisation (implementation) which involves the application of ideas and converting them into reality (Akram et al., 2016; Kaur & Gupta, 2016; Woods, Mustafa, Anderson, Sayer, et al., 2018; Baharuddin, Masrek & Shuhidan, 2019).

In educational institutions, idea generation means formulating new ideas in teaching & learning. idea promotion are correlated with conditions where teachers are obligated to produce new teaching and learning ideas (Bawuro, Danjuma & Wajiga, 2018). Thus, educators need specific knowledge and skills, or the right approach to encourage ideas that can be used to plan and implement positive changes in classes. Lastly, idea implementation refers to the invention process to realize the initial idea. Therefore, Bawuro, Danjuma & Wajiga (2018) suggest the follow-up process which is also known as an education model, where ideas can exist in the form of teaching experience that is an additional role in the work's conduct, particularly in teaching and learning.

Previous studies noted that teaching is widely recognised as one of the most stressful professions, (McIntyre, McIntyre & Francis, 2017). For instance, lecturers in Nigeria are required to spend time on educational activities such as preparing lecture notes, teaching classrooms, marking and grading assignments and exams, supervising students' projects/thesis/dissertations and exams, regular research exercises and publications, and attending of workshops/conferences. In addition to these workloads, lecturers in Nigeria public universities according to Jacob, Jegede, and Musa (2021) are also bedeviled with issues of poor staff development programme, poor motivation, poor research funding, teaching of large class, inadequate infrastructural facilities, incessant strike actions, and insecurity, all of which are capable of affecting the psychological wellbeing of the lecturers.

Furthermore, the quality of teaching and learning activities may be affected by lecturers' physical (illness) and mental health (stress) challenges due to occupational hazards at the workplace (Tai et al., 2019). Lecturers with high levels of stress at the beginning of the school year have been observed to use fewer effective teaching strategies, which is likely to impact student academic outcomes (McLean, Abry, Taylor & Connor, 2018). A look at Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB) among educators may provide valuable perspectives on the factors that contribute to improvement in classrooms' teaching, and how innovative behaviour can be harnessed in educational institutions to improve the quality of graduates that come out of Nigeria Universities every year equipping them with the requisite knowledge/skills needed to compete globally.

Research Method

A total of two hundred and seventy (270) academic staffs of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka campus participated in this study. Convenience sampling technique was adopted in recruiting the participants from nine faculties (social sciences, education, arts, biological sciences, engineering, Agricultural sciences, VTE,

pharmacy, and physical sciences) of the university. The demographic composition of the sampled participants revealed the following: Of the 270 respondents, 148 (54.8%) were males while 122 (45.2%) were females. The participants' age ranged between 20 to 65 years with a mean age of 54.02 and SD of 4.71. Thirty four (12.6%) of the participants had Degree/HND, 27 (10.0%) had PGD/PGDE, 174 (64.4%) had Masters, 35 (13.0%) had Ph. D. The researchers administered a total of three hundred and twenty (320) questionnaires to the academic staffs, out of which 292 copies were returned, representing a return rate of 91.25%. Out of the 292 questionnaires returned, 22 copies were discarded due to improper completion, leaving a total of 270 copies used for data analyses. Three sets of instruments were used for data collection namely: Fear of COVID-19 Scale (Ahurso, et al., 2020), Innovative Work Behaviour Scale (Janssen, 2000) and Psychological Wellbeing Scale (Ryff, & Keyes, 1995). The Fear of COVID-19 Scale developed by Ahurso, et al. (2020) was used to measure the fear of COVID-19. It is a one-dimensional scale comprising of seven items scored on a 5-point Likert-type response structure, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items include: i) "I am most afraid of coronavirus-19" ii) "I am afraid of losing my life because of coronavirus-19". Scores of the items were summed up yielding a total score that varies between 7 and 35, with higher scores indicating higher levels of fear of COVID-19. Ahurso, et al. (2020) obtained an internal consistency reliability estimate of .82 for the instrument. Innovative work behaviour was assessed using a nine-item Innovative Work Behaviour Scale developed by Janssen (2000). The scale is made up of three dimensions consisting of three items each, namely: idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization. These nine items measured the extent to which an employee engages in innovative work behaviours, using a 5-point likert scale response format ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Sample items include: i) how often did you create new ideas for difficult issues ii) "How often did you mobilize support for innovative ideas? iii) How often did you evaluate the utility of innovative ideas? Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.95 was gotten for the self-rated measure, while 0.96 was obtained for the leader-rated measure (Janssen, 2000). Ryff, and Keyes (1995) psychological Wellbeing Scale was used to assess the psychological wellbeing of the academic staffs. It is 18-item scale comprising of six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Respondents were expected to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement about themselves using a 7-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree). Sample items include: i) "I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think" .ii) "The demands of everyday life often get me down", iii) "I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions". Nine items were reverse scored. Cross-sectional design was adopted in this survey study. Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted for the demographic, COVID-19, innovative work behaviour and psychological wellbeing variables. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to check the predictive impacts of COVID 19 and innovative work behaviour on Psychological wellbeing. Specifically, hierarchical multiple regression analysis enabled us to determine the unique contribution of each of the predictors.

Presentation of Results

The mean, standard deviation, and inter-correlations among the study variables are presented in Table 1. Table 2 contains the results of the hierarchical multiple regression of the predictor (COVID 19 and Innovative wellbeing) and outcome (psychological wellbeing) variables.

Table 1: Means, standard deviation and inter-correlations among the study variables

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Age	54.02	4.71	-					
2 Gender	1.45	.50	-.12*	-				
3 Experience	1.61	.65	.05	-.01	-			
4 Education	3.78	.83	.03	.11	.07	-		
5 COVID 19	19.22	5.68	-.11	.10	.03	.06	-	
6 IWB	31.81	7.35	-.03	.05	-.10	-.003	.05	-
7 PWB	89.44	16.56	-.02	-.04	-.06	.03	-.20**	.12*

Note: *p < .05(two-tailed), **p < .01 (two-tailed), N = 270; IWB: Innovative Work Behaviour; PWB: Psychological Wellbeing.
Coding of Demographic Variables:
Gender: Male = 1, Female = 2; Age: 20-40 = 1, 41-60 = 2, 61 and above = 3; Experience: 1-10 = 1, 11-20 = 2, 21-30 = 3, 31 and above; Education: NCE/OND = 1, DEGREE/HND = 2, PGD/PGDE = 3, Masters = 4, Ph.D and Above = 5.

The demographic characteristics of the study participants in Table 1 revealed that the average age of the participants was 54.02 (SD = 4.71). More than half of the sample had masters as their highest level of education with majority of them having between 1-20 years of work experience.

The result of the correlational analysis in Table 1 revealed that fear of COVID 19 (r = -.20, p< .01) had significant negative correlation with PWB. While IWB (r = .12, p< .01) was positively and significantly associated with PWB.

Table 2: Hierarchical Multiple Regressions for the predictions of Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) by Fear of COVID 19 and Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB)

	Step 1			**Step 2**			**Step 3**		
Predictors	***B***	**β**	***t***	***B***	**β**	***t***	***B***	**β**	***t***
Age	-.56	-.02	-.34	-1.10	-.04	-.64	-1.05	-.04	-.65
Gender	-1.62	-.05	-.79	-1.08	-.03	-.53	-1.28	-.04	-.63
Experience	-1.57	-.06	-1.01	-1.41	-.06	-.92	-1.08	-.04	-.71
Education	.84	.04	.68	1.03	.05	.84	1.03	.05	.86
COVID 19				-.57	-.20	-3.24**	-.59	-.20	-3.35**
IWB							.28	.13	2.10*

Note: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001, IWB = Innovative Work Behaviour

Table 2 above shows the prediction of PWB by fear of COVID 19 and IWB. The demographic variables (age, gender, experience and education) were included in the regression model as covariates; which collectively accounted for 0.7% variation in

PWB. However, none of the demographic variables significantly predicted PWB.

Fear of COVID 19 entered in step 2 of the equation significantly and negatively predicted PWB (β = -.20, $p < .01$). The variance in PWB explained on account of the fear of COVID 19 was 3.8% [$R^2\Delta$ = .038; $F\Delta$ (1, 264) = 10.49, $p < .01$].

The inclusion of IWB in the third and final step of the equation significantly and positively predicted PWB (β = .13, $p <$ .05). The variance in PWB explained on account of IWB was 1.6% [$R^2\Delta$ = .016; $F\Delta$ (1, 263) = 4.39, $p < .05$].

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to examine the impacts of Fear of COVID 19 and Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB) on Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) of University lecturers. The results of these study revealed that none of the demographic variables (age, gender, education, and experience) significantly predicted psychological wellbeing. Consistent with this study Kermen et al. (2016) and Tekir (2022) found that the difference in gender did not significantly predict the psychological wellbeing of the participants.

The results further showed that the fear of COVID-19 negatively and significantly predicted PWB. This finding implies that, as the fear of COVID-19 increases, psychological wellbeing of lecturers' decreases. This finding is consistent with existing studies linking COVID-19 to psychological wellbeing (Dale et al., 2021; Fancourt et al., 2022; Patel et al., 2022; Pierce et al., 2021; Vahratian et al., 2021). These studies indicated that psychological distress increased and people experienced worse mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ergu¨l-Topc et al. (2021) found out that as the level of COVID-19 anxiety increased, psychological wellbeing decreased. Anxiety according to Sakaoğlu et al. (2020) is a complex emotional state and a fundamental human feeling expressed as an adaptive mechanism through which people deal with danger. The fear and anxiety that greeted COVID-19 pandemic was unprecedented as people were literally afraid for their life and observed preventive measures to guide against contracting the disease that may subsequently lead to their deaths. Howbeit, when this fear gets to an uncontrollably elevated level, it threatens/reduces the psychological wellbeing of people (Aydın et al., 2021). Also, viewing the outcome from another perspective, age is considered as a risk factor for COVID-19 infection. Several studies in the literature revealed that people that are advanced in age are at higher risk of contracting the virus during the breakout of the pandemic (Arisoy & Cay, 2021). Accordingly, Arisoy and Cay (2021) in their study on the fear of COVID-19 among aged persons, reported a significant and moderate positive association between the age of the study participants and the fear of COVID-19, and they noted that the fear of COVID-19 increases with increase in age. That is, the elderly were afraid of contracting the virus more than any other population group most likely because of the high risk associated with older age. In the present study, the average age of the participants is 54.02 ± 4.71, which is moderately high and suggestive of the negative and significant relationship between the fear of COVID-19 and psychological wellbeing. In other words, the fear of COVID-19 linked with advanced age is associated with low psychological wellbeing. Consequently, the reasons why there is a significant negative relationship between the fear of COVID-19 and psychological wellbeing in this study

includes: the fear and anxiety of contracting the deadly virus, especially by persons who are advanced in age.

The result of the present study further revealed that innovative work behaviour positively and significantly predicted psychological wellbeing among lecturers. This outcome implies that as lecturers innovative work behaviour increases, their psychological wellbeing also increases. This outcome is congruent with a number of previous research findings (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2010; Shipton et al., 2006) who also reported a significant positive relationship between innovative work behaviour and psychological wellbeing. The reason for this outcome may be due to positive features of innovative work behaviour which is comprised of wide range of behaviours associated with idea generation, providing supports for the idea, and ensuring their implementation. Lecturers who seek to come up with new and interesting ways of presenting their lectures and conducting academic researches to ensure that students appreciate and comprehend the various courses they teach as well as improving the students' academic performance will probably be more be satisfied with their profession and have high psychological wellbeing.

The results of this study have practical implications for the educational sector which could prove effective for the formulation of policies and programmes aimed at improving the psychological wellbeing of educators. Hence, universities should come up with programmes that give special attention to lecturers that are at high risk of emotional and psychological trauma, specifically lecturers that are advanced in age. Accordingly, Holmes et al. (2020) and Marques et al. (2020) drew the attention of the public to the mental health needs growth following COVID-19 disaster and proposed proactive measures to reduce the mental health need curve before capacity of accessible services are overwhelmed by mental health demand. This presupposes that psychological distress imposed on individuals by the fear of COVID-19 is unprecedented. Hence, psycho-education on surviving strategies as well as counseling and sufficient physical healthcare should be provided for lecturers especially for the aged ones to promote psychological resilience especially in times of crises. To encourage and enhance lecturers' innovative work behaviour, the government as well as universities governing bodies should provide stimulating environment to inspire new ideas generation and resourceful endeavors among the lecturers, and allow them to have certain level of autonomy over their duties and to improve their teaching and research skills, which will go a long way to impact positively on their psychological wellbeing.

The study has contributed to knowledge, in that it's one of the few researches that have examined the link between the fear of COVID-19, innovative work behaviour and psychological wellbeing. However, there are some limitations to the current study. First, the study was cross-sectional in nature, and data were collected using self-report measures, consequently, no experimental approach was adopted to investigate causal relationships making it impossible to avoid social desirability bias. Second, the study only covered participants (lecturers) from one University in one geopolitical zone of the country which may limit the generalization of the outcome of the study to the entire population of lecturers in the country considering the peculiarities of each zone. Therefore, reproducing this research in multiple contexts with larger sample size could prove its general applicability. Finally, feature research can

incorporate variables like gender and age as a mediating or moderating factor, as previous studies have shown that these variables play key role in establishing the psychological wellbeing of individuals.

Conclusion

This study highlighted the factors that significantly predicted psychological wellbeing among lecturers of tertiary institution. The fear of COVID-19 was found to be a significant negative predictor of psychological wellbeing; whereas, innovative work behaviour significantly and positively predicted psychological wellbeing. The probable reasons for these outcomes have been identified and addressed. The results could prove helpful to university authorities in developing programs and policies that can help boost the psychological wellbeing of lecturers by clearly spelling out suitable and relevant steps needed to protect against declinable mental state of lecturers especially during crises. And such programs/policies should also be directed at encouraging innovative work behavior among lecturers which was found to be relevant in boosting their psychological wellbeing.

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