

Effects of retirement on aged retirees in Benue State, Nigeria: Implication for counselling

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Abstract

This study assessed the effects of retirement on the physical, social, psychological and financial well being of aged retirees. The researcher used a questionnaire in a survey approach. A total number of 260 retirees randomly selected from the three geopoitical 3 Zones of Benue State were sampled. Their ages were from 60 years and above. The instrument used was Retiree's Problems Assessment Questionnaire (RPAQ). Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.01 level of significance. It was found that retirement has significant effects on the variables with, $X^2_{(10)} = 371.54$; $P < 0.01$, $X^2_{(14)} = 342.56$; $P < 0.01$, $X^2_{(14)} = 233.24$; $P < 0.01$, $X^2_{(13)} = 198.78$; $P < 0.01$ for physical, psychological, financial and social related problems of the retirees respectively. The implication for guidance counselors was analyzed stressing information and vocation service among others. It was therefore recommended that counseling services should be provided to help retirees overcome stress they suffer as retirees.

Key words: Effects, Retirement, Aged Retirees, Benue State, Implication for Counseling

INTRODUCTION

Retirement from work may exert a significant change in the life style of the retiree. This may come with elements of emotions related to physical, psychological, social and economic. Oniye (2001) defines retirement as a phenomenon characterized by separation, disengagement or withdrawal of the worker from paid employment which has the characteristic of an occupation over a period of time. Akinade (1993) opines that retirement is a final stage of life when one leaves an occupation which one had been involved in for a considerable length of one's working life. He adds that it is an inevitable stage of aging where the worker gradually disengages from the main 'stream of active work, social life and replaced by a younger person in most cases.

From the above explanations of retirement it implies that retirement, in general, is the terminal cessation, relaxation and changeover of remunerative employment to non-remunerative engagement. It therefore implies that such a person is likely to experience inability in economic pursuits, suffer social restraints and legally prescribed as retiree. Workers here refer to public servants who include the armed forces, and civil servants in the employment of Local, State and Federal Governments of a State, here, Nigeria.

Atulu (1999) outlined three types of retirement to include voluntary, compulsory

and forced retirement. He further explains that voluntary retirement occurs when the worker decides on his own volition to retire before the attainment of the stipulated retiring age or years of service. Compulsory retirement is when the worker has attained the maximum age or years of service. He pointed out that the chronological years for retirement for local, State and Federal Government of Nigeria is 55 years while the maximum years of service is 35. He added Nigerian Universities; professors retire at the age of 70 while others retire at the age 65. Atulu (1999) further explains forced retirement as when the worker is not consulted before he or she is made to withdraw from service driven by retirement, rationalization of workforce or on the basis of misconduct, which may attract retirement benefits or not. According to Elezua (1999) the moment retirement comes knocking at the door of a worker, it enters with challenges and expectations. These challenges and expectations may be related to physical, psychological, financial and social wellbeing of the retiree necessitating counselling services for adjustment.

Physically, changes in the body of the retired aging person can render him incapable of performing certain activities which could be useful to his conditions for better life style. Kinsella and Velkoff(2001) pointed out that physical aging involves loss of capacity and energy. They further asserted that some aging retiree~ people who

avoid or successfully manage disabling chronic conditions are It' It with ample physical resources to continue leading enjoyable lives despite their disabilities. This is likely that they are taken good care of by the significant ones as sons and daughters among others. Hoff (2007) opined that the retired aged person can only adjust physically if he or she can cope with the challenging conditions, situations or disappointments of life. The idea of adjusting to challenges of the retirement call for counseling services for such an adjustment to fully materialize.

Psychologically, most employees develop fear or anxiety when they are approaching retirement time or age. Due to the likely challenges and expectations, the worker becomes tense and afraid stemming from lack of planning and readiness for retirement. Oniye(2001) opined that instead of fear and anxiety the worker should focus right from the start, on retirement plan and life style. This implies that those who fail to prepare adequately for retirement may be faced with the feelings of fear, anxiety, guilt, anger, denial, fatigue and blurred future. There is therefore the, need to asses such retiree to cope and adjust to the new experiences. It requires emotional stability to respond to situations to be physically, economically, psychologically and socially balanced.

Socially the retiree disengages himself or herself from work and social networks and

activities such as clubs, committees and community of friends' previously engaged in. This condition generates -social stigma". Loneliness, idleness) financial blockage and health constraints due to inactivity. Nigeria Union of Pensioners (2003) admitted that retirement IS a complex phenomenon demanding serious planning. However, the experiences retirees have, to a large extent, are individualistic. It could be worse for those whose take home income is too small to save for retirement and meet immediate demands. They are bound to face certain problems as social stigma, economic difficulties, health constraints and aging. Hoff (2007) admits that choice of life-style allows the retiree the opportunity to synthesize their personal characteristics in line with their social -lives. The" retired aged person may lose many friends and other social networks due principally to financial stress. He therefore needs counseling to enable him or her to adjust to the retirement stress.

Economically the retired 'aged or aging person may have the problem 'of financial stress Kasala (2004) observed that many retirees, use their retirement saving or benefits for other things as purchasing a home or funding a child's education other, than the management of retirement demands. Kasala (2004) was right to point to the fact that having a large amount of money *is* not an automatic care for financial stress; it may create another form of it. This means that the major source of financial

stress could be how to spend what you have but not how much or little that amount of money is.

There exists a number of factors that are held important in determining the effects of retirement on retirees lives. Such factors include reduced income and may lead to physical, financial, psychological and social problems. This is more so when the retired person solely depends, on pension and or such other income that cannot meet his/her basic needs or are not even readily available; it could exert adverse effects on the retired aged person. This adverse effect could include deprivation, ill health, and hunger, feelings of uselessness, hopelessness and possible premature death. Thus the problem of this study is rooted in the effects of¹ retirement on the physical, psychological, economic and social life of the retiree in Benue State.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- i. Retirement will have no significant effects on the physical state of the retirees in Benue State.
- ii. Retirement will have no significant effects on the psychological state of retirees in Benue State.
- iii. Retirement will have no significant effects on the financial state of retirees in Benue State.
- iv. Retirement will have no significant effects on the social wellbeing of

retirees in Benue State.

METHOD

Design

The study employed a cross sectional survey design. The population of this study was all retired aged people 60 and above in Benue State.

Participants

The sample of the study consisted of 260 retirees drawn from the three geopolitical zones of Benue State. The sample was made up of 135 retired aged men and 125 retired aged women. The sample was obtained using stratified random sampling technique. The sample obtained was at the period retirees were called for validation exercise which was conducted zone by zone on separate periods. The validation exercise ascertains the number of retirees still living.

Instrument

The instrument for data collection was Retiree Problems Assessment Questionnaire (RPAQ). It was a self designed questionnaire. The RPAQ was divided into sections. Section A assessed the bio-data of participants, section B consisted of measures of physical, psychological, and social well-being experiences of the retirees. Responses were based on a 4-point likert scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Sample statements include; "I am ageing faster than when I was in paid service", "I always feel rejected", "I used

my retirement benefits to purchase a house”, “I belong to many clubs and associations reflecting the above factors”.

Cronbach's Alpha value of .994 was obtained which supported the reliability of the instrument

The instrument was validated by three experts in Education at the Department of Educational Foundations, Benue State University. The comments of experts helped to produce the final copy. The instrument was trial tested in Nassarawa State on 35 retirees who were not participants in this study for reliability.

Data Analysis

Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses of the study.

RESULTS

The results of the findings are presented in tables,1, 2, 3 and 4.

Table 1: Chi-Square test showing Effects of Retirement on the Physical Well-being of Retirees in Benue State.

Items	N	Observe N	Expected N
I am ageing faster Than when I was in Paid service	250	.40	22.7
I cannot farm again	250	37	22.7
I am always sick	250	43	22.7
I hardly move as I used to do	250	22	22.7
I am still strange after After retirement	250	8	22.7
Total	-	250	

Chi-Square = 371.54 df-10, Asymp. Sig, P = .001.

Table 1 reveals Chi-Square value of 371.54; df = 10 and P = .000, P < 0.05. This implies that the null hypothesis which states that there will be no significant effects of

retirement on the physical state of retirees in Benue State is rejected. That is, there is a significant effect of retirement on the physical state of retirees in Benue State.

Table 2: Chi-Square Test showing the Effects of Retirement on the Psychological well-being of Retirees in Benue State.

Items	N	Observe N	Expected N
I always feel rejected	250	20	16.7
I always angry at any unpleasant	250	29	16.7
I feel I do not belong to this world	250	35	16.7
I feel I am denied in the society	250	54	16.7
I always have a feeling of fatigue	250	112	16.7
Total	250		

Chi-Square = 342.56; df = 14, Asymp. Sig = .000

Table 2 shows that the chi-square values is 34256, df = 14 Asymp sig; P = .001 and P < 0.05. This implies that the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant effect of retirement on the psychological state of the retirees in Benue State is rejected. That is, there is significant effect of retirement on the psychological state of retirees in Benue State.

Table 3: Chi-Square test showing the effect of Retirement on the Financial State of Retirees.

Items	N	Observe N	Expected N
I could not save any monies Before retirement	250	28	16.7
I used my retirement benefits To purchase a home	250	47	16.7
I have been using my retirement Benefits to fund my children's Education and feeding	250	37	16.7
My problem is how to spend Pension allowances effectively	250	35	16.7
I can hardly enjoy my Retirement	250	105	16.7
Total	250		

Chi-Square value = 233.24, df = 14, Asymp. Sig. P = .000

Table 3 reveals chi-square value of 233.24 with df = 14, P = .001, P < 0.05. This implies that the null hypothesis which states that there will be no significant effect of retirement on the financial state of retirees in Benue State is rejected. The result implies that retirement has significant effect on the financial state of retirees in Benue State.

Table 4: Chi-square showing the Effect of Retirement on the Social State of Retirees in Benue State.

Items	N	Observe N	Expected N
I belong to many clubs And associations	250	50	17.9
I am socially stigmatized	250	37	17.9
I am not loved by anybody	250	53	17.9
I belong to no club or committee of friends.	250	30	17.9
My family makes a jest of me the poor one	250	80	17.9
Total	250		

Chi-Square Value= 198.78 df = 13 Asymp Sig.; P = .000

Table 4 reveals Chi-Square value of 198.78 with df of 13 Asymp Sign. P = .001, P < 0.05. This implies that the null hypothesis which states that there will be no significant effect of retirement on the social status of retirees in Benue State is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this paper was to examine the effects of retirement on the physical, psychological, financial and social status of retirees in Benue State. Its implications for counseling were the major focus. The results of the findings indicate that retirement has a significant effect on the variables considered. On the physical aspect, the findings agree with those of Kinsella and Velkoff (2001) and that of Hoff (2007) who concluded that the retirees experience changes in the body rendering him or her incapable of performing key activities necessary for a better living. Those who happen to manage this condition

well are likely to have help from their significant ones. This may be because the retirement benefits are not enough to enable them take good care of themselves. Most worrisome is that pension of the retirees is not paid for months and could be his or her only source of survival.

Psychologically, it was found that retirement has a significant effect on the retiree. This finding agrees with those of Oniye (2001). He concluded that the retirees should focus right from the beginning on planning for retirement and change of life style. When a job is given to one, one should begin to think that one day you must leave it. Kasala (2004) disagrees with this finding. He asserted that it is not the amount of money one has that matters but how one spends it. That is, he posits that adjustment of life style is more important than developing fear and anxiety. Also, the finding showed that retirement has a significant effect on retiree's social life.

This finding too agrees with those of Hoff (2007) and the Nigeria Union of Pensioners (2003). They concluded that problems faced by retirees are social stigma and economic difficulties. This is because retirees lack the financial capacity to move along with the society.

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Financially, the finding showed that there is a significant effect on retirees. The finding agrees with the findings of Kasala (2004) who found that most retirees suffer from financial stress. Having discussed the findings of this study it is at this pertinent to discuss the implications for guidance counselling.

Implications for Counselling

The guidance counsellor is a trained expert in helping people to solve their problems of various dimensions. The guidance counsellor therefore has the expert knowledge to help retirees manage their problems well.

The implication is that the retirees might experience physical abnormal aging,

dwindling body capacity to carry out certain activities, financial stress and social stigma. The situation may generate in the retiree feelings of anger, denial, fatigue and loss of hope for the future existence. The retiree must be assisted to cope with the new experiences.

The counsellor needs to help retirees to ensure proper management of issues which border an accommodation, feelings among others. Thus, different forms of workshops, seminars, sensitization symposia with selected resource persons in different fields as business, education, health among others. All could be achieved through services like;

1. **Vocation Services:** This would assist the retirees to find career alternatives, develop leisure interest where they can utilize their knowledge and skills and be gainfully employed.
2. **Information Services:** The retirees need information on various issues related to retirement. Such information may include retirement policies, when and how to retire, how gratuity and pension are computed. The information may include how to merge services before retirement, training for other skills and what to do after retirement.
3. **Planning, Placement and Follow up Services:** The counsellor can assist the retirees plan their life styles to

meet realistic situations and live effectively. Follow-up must be carried out to ascertain to effectiveness of the planning and placement service.

4. **Referral Service:** This service calls for referring retirees in need to specialists for appropriate advice or treatment. For example, medical doctors to the healthiness of the aging retirees' blood pressure, ulcer among others.

From the above discussions the role of the counsellor to retirees is very important and necessary and should be pursued with vigor to help retirees overcome the problems associated with retirement.

Recommendations

1. To avoid negative effects of physical stress the retirees should plan well for their retirement by investing in other ventures while in the service for a sustainable life-style. Retirees should focus on alternative roots of income to supplement retirement benefits.
2. Instead of developing fear, anger and fatigue when retired they should be guided by counsellors and use their retirement benefits wisely.
3. In respect of the financial stress, retirees should be counselled on the importance of planning, investing and saving for retirement. This is done at pre-retirement period using

vocation information and planning, placement and follow up services.

4. The retirees will definitely benefit more when they engage in clubs that will assist them in times of need as welfare clubs or associations and committee of friends.
5. The government should take into cognizance the good services the retirees rendered while in service and reciprocate them with prompt payment of their retirement benefits. This is likely to reduce the financial, physical, social and psychological stress they undergo.

Conclusion

Considering the poor economic state of Benue State in particular and Nigeria in general which in turn negatively affects her citizens and especially retirees there is need for retirees to plan well for their retirement. This is more important because there is a legal provision for retirement by age or number of years of services. This means that one must retire which ever holds. Form the findings of this study retirees suffer financial, psychological, social and physical stress resulting in poor health among others. There is the need for help to overcome stress stemming form retirement. The guidance counsellors by nature of their training and expert knowledge to help people solve their problems should help retirees overcome their retirement problems.

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