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STEREOTYPE OF THE AGED AND PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT OF CAREGIVERS IN CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated the impact of stereotypes of aged and adjustment of caregivers in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. The research focused on five dependent variables: emotional, social, attitude, perception, and cultural adjustment of caregivers. Relevant literature was reviewed to guide the study, which utilized a survey research design. Data was collected through a comprehensive census sampling method from a sample of 111 established aged caregivers, including those from hospice care providers and a home for the aged. A 18-item questionnaire (SAACQ) was used to collect data, and five hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression at 0.05 level of significant. The findings indicate that stereotypes of aged do not significantly predict emotion and social adjustment. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government policies on the protection and rights of older persons should be formulated and strictly enforced to strengthen elder abuse prevention measures, implement robust measures to prevent and respond to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Government should improve access to healthcare and support services to ensure that older adults have equitable access to affordable healthcare and support services. Counsellors should develop active ageing initiatives and design a support programme for caregivers.
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Keywords; stereotype, aged, adjustment, caregivers.

Introduction

The aged caregivers' adjustment is an issue that calls for serious concern among family members, stakeholders, government and researcher; since it may result to stereotype of the aged, following the congenital phenomenon of ageing. As long as human beings live, it is natural that they will grow old. Ageing is a universal experience that it is obvious as well as in evitable. It is an obligatory aspect of human existence which reflects in the physical and biological changes that occurs in all human. Ageing is the accumulation of changes in a person over

time. It also involves a multidimensional process of physical, psychological and social changes. It is not a disease condition in itself, but a phase in life where there is retrogrades in biological process of growth and development, which lead to decreased power for survival and adjustment.

Ageing causes people to become weak, less active, frail and expose to more risk of contracting diseases. These factors tend to necessitate the need for adequate caregiving for the aged/elderly in the society. The aged caregiving is in fulfillment of the special need and requirement that are unique to senior citizens. It also covers such services as assisted living adult day care, nursing home, hospices care and home care.

In Nigeria, caring for the elderly person is the responsibility of the younger generation. The aged in the family and society are revered, respected and held in high veneration as a result were adequately cared for by the younger members of the society. This is because they are considered by them as reservoir of society's wisdom, culture, custom, norms and values as well as purveyors of society's moral. However, there is a decline in the elderly care system in Nigeria. But with modernization, the aged/elderly care is now a shared responsibility between the families, state government or charitable institution (Le-Dorze, Tremblay & Croteau, 2019).

Stereotyping is a common means of dealing with an unfamiliar class of object. Stereotyping generally may influence the perception, attitude and behaviour of people towards members of another group. They shape the expectation and reaction of people without giving them the opportunity to express positive opinions. Stereotype tends to generate negative perception of individual, groups and events. Such perceptions dispose the individuals to act and react in consistent way toward persons, group, object and issues. Consequently, scholars like Okoye (2005) argued that stereotyping can be harmful to both victim and other segments of the society. Okoye held that aged stereotype has damaging effect on both the Elderly and Youths as these stereotypes tend to dehumanize the elderly and distort the proper socialization of youths. In any given society; the way the elderly is perceived and regarded is reflected in the form of stereotype held about them.

In Nigeria, the perception about elderly in most communities has negatively drifted as youthful members of the society through socialization assimilate this negative perception about the aged. In most communities in Nigeria, the aged/elderly persons are stereotyped as being senile, conservative, abusive, accusative, forgetful and unable to recall most recent event. In some extreme cases, they are regarded as witches and wizard, thus, stigmatized and abandoned by their love ones. These stereotypes tend to have damaging effect on elderly person in the society especially when mysterious death of a younger family member occurs every year, due to sickness or accidents it is rather attributed to them. This of course is the usual pattern of attribution of events as a result of them believes in the supernatural causes of death, witchcraft, superstition as well as other negatives (Efiong, 2015) leading to older person being stigmatized and being and your stigmatized and abandoned by their love ones/caregivers. Stereotypic subjections tend to have damaging effects on the physical, social and mental health of the aged in the society. Bakas and Champion (2016) submitted that

the stereotyped older person can degenerate into "stereotype threat". A phenomenon whereby an older person's cognitive and motor skills drops drastically as a result of negative opinion. Stereotype threats deepen the anxiety and worries of the aged.

Furthermore, aged stereotype could result in the aged becoming doubtful of the rectitude of the caregivers, thereby become unyielding to counseling and aggressive on one hand, and the other hand could lead to discriminated abuse and abandonment by caregivers. Such dehumanizing experience may affect the emotional, mental, psychological and physical functioning of the aged. Consequently, leading to the aged loss of self-worth and begin to consider themselves as a social burden to their families and caregivers; they give up in life and just wait for death. This therefore call for the attention of caregivers to have adequate and proper emotional, social, attitude, psychological and cultural adjustment in order to effectively provide the needed assistance for the aged in the society (Haley, Roth, Hovater & Clay, 2015).

Caregiver emotional stress is common and is caused by the ongoing emotional and physical strain of caregiving which call for positive adjustment for effective service delivery (Ghada, Mourad-Rania & Zaki Rasmia, 2014). Adjustment involves action or changes in behaviour surrounding the cared for person to reduce time and labour (e.g. adjusting with their emotional, physical limitations, engaging them in activities, lowering expectations of them, avoiding confrontation, finding humour, overseeing health and treatments and modifying communication methods). Communicating with others and researching the emotional connection increase a sense of control (Williams, Morrison & Robinson, 2014).

Caregiver emotional health can be even more at risk when caregivers perceive that the patient's care needs exceed their caregiving capabilities (Penning & Wu, 2016). Caregivers reported comparing their relative's health through books and social media: communicating with schools and others in similar situations through online platforms or support groups and researching online about the cared for person's condition (Sun, 2014; Williams, Morrison & Robinson, 2014).

Although, emotion focused adjustment strategies were generally reported as most helpful and associated with more positive outcomes in caregivers. Figueiredo, Gabriel and Jácome (2014) found that greater use of emotional adjustment was associated with poorer mental health perception. Sander, High and Hannay (2017) report associations between greater use of emotion-focused adjustment and levels of psychological and emotional distress. Others specify emotion-focused adjustment techniques such as distraction and avoidance as being considered unhelpful by caregivers. Haley, Roth and Coleton (2016) reported that high levels of emotional adjustment and low levels of approach coping were associated with greater depression and decreased life satisfaction among caregivers.

Hawken, Turner-Cobb and Barnett (2018) systematic review assessed coping and emotional adjustment in caregivers of all ages to provide a synthesis of existing literature in the context of methodological approaches and underlying theory. Four databases were searched. Reference lists, citations and experts were consulted. In total, 27 studies (13 quantitative and 14 qualitative)

were included. Coping factors associated with adjustment (problem-versus emotion-focused coping and cognitive strategies) and psychosocial factors associated with physiological adjustment (trait anxiety, coping style and social support) were identified. Results raised methodological issues on emotion-focused adjustment.

Kazemi, Azimian, Mafi, Allen and Motalebi (2021) investigated the relationship between the severity of burden of care and coping strategies amongst a sample of Iranian caregivers of older stroke patients. A total of 110 caregivers of older patients who previously had a stroke participated in the descriptive and cross-sectional study. The Zarit Burden Interview and Lazarus coping strategies questionnaires were used for data collection. Questionnaires were completed by the caregivers, who were selected using convenience sampling. The collected data were analyzed using Pearson's correlations and independent t-tests. Majority of the caregivers sampled reported mild to moderate ($n = 74$, 67.3%) emotional burden. The most commonly used coping strategies reported were positive reappraisal and seeking social support. Results of the independent t-test showed that male caregivers used the positive reappraisal strategy ($t(110) = 2.76$; $p = 0.007$) and accepting responsibility ($t(110) = 2.26$; $p = 0.026$) significantly more than female caregivers. Pearson's correlations showed a significant positive correlation between caregiver burden and emotional-focused strategies, including escaping ($r = 0.245$, $p = 0.010$) and distancing ($r = 0.204$, $p = 0.032$).

Furthermore, social adjustment of caregivers is another aspect they (caregivers) can cope with stereotype of the aged. social adjustment is defined as achieving developmentally appropriate goals in terms of relationships and roles. Nonetheless, some studies have reported positive social adjustment among aged caregivers. Despite the importance of social adjustment for aged caregivers, prior studies have reported inconsistent results; this is in part due to the absence of clear conceptual definitions care giving in relation to the aged stereotype (Hocking, McCurdy, Turner, Kazak, Noll & Phillips, 2015; Schulte, Brinkman, Li, Fay-McClymont, Srivastava & Ness, 2018). However, very few of these studies examine factors associated with positive social adjustment among caregivers, so little is known about the personal and social characteristics of persons who are able to adjust and adapt to the caregiver role (Sander, High, Hannay & Sherer, 2017).

Furthermore, caring for dependent older adults involves many demands that are managed through investments in physical and social adaptations to their living environment and assistance from health care professionals, but little has been done to address the interpersonal tensions that affect the psychosocial environment in which caregiving occurs. Following the interpersonal difficulties reported by caregivers, Pinto, Barham and Del Prette(2016) point to the fact that, in addition to dealing with problems that affect daily routines, mobilizing others to get involved in caring for older family members can be an exceptionally difficult task, which leads to the question of how to improve the situation.

Often, significant tensions arise in social relationships with other people who are part of the caregiver's life, generating a negative emotional environment (Pinto, Barham, & Albuquerque, 2013; Pinto et al.,

2016). Thus, although taking care of a frail older relative is socially expected and valued; those who are caregivers systematically report poorer physical and mental health when compared to people of the same age and sex who do not care for older individuals (Tomomitsu, Perracini, & Neri, 2014). Caregivers must construct social adjustment strategies that can help them deal with the changing demands and needs not only of the person they care for, but that also reflect changes in their own abilities and in the needs of other people who are involved in their lives (Li, Cooper, Bradley, Shulman & Ryan, 2012).

Su-Mi, Lee, Kim, Sanghee and Lyu (2019) sought to identify the attributes of social adjustment among the aged caregiving using concept analysis and to propose a definition of the concept. In accordance with the hybrid model of concept analysis, the study employed a three-phase circular process comprising theoretical, fieldwork and final analysis phases. A thorough literature review was conducted using MEDLINE, Embase and Korean databases, followed by qualitative fieldwork with seven (7) participants. The results derived from the theoretical and fieldwork phases were integrated into the final analysis phase. Result revealed three attributes of social adjustment were found in caregivers of the aged: having harmonious relationships with friends, fulfilling their present roles and planning for and expecting future roles. The social adjustment of caregivers is considered to be the conquering of difficulties arising from the continuum of service delivery to the aged to reduce stereotype among them (the aged). The researchers concluded that social adjustment of caregivers of the aged is crucial for integrating them into the society.

Ingrid, Wilde-Larsson, Nordstrom and Inger (2015) investigated formal caregivers' social adjustment of care for older people; associating factors. A total of 70 nursing assistants, 163 enrolled nurses and 198 registered nurses from 14 communities in central Sweden participated in the study. They filled out the following questionnaires: a modified version of Quality from the Patient's Perspective, Creative Climate Questionnaire, Stress of Conscience Questionnaire, items regarding education and competence, Health Index and Sense of coherence questionnaire. The overall response rate was 57 % (n = 431). The result revealed quality of social adjustment and care respondents showed the highest mean value in the dimension medical-technical competence and physical technical conditions and lower values in the dimensions; identity-oriented approach, socio-cultural atmosphere and in the context specific dimension. The caregivers estimated their competence and health rather high, had lower average values in sense of coherence and organizational climate and low values in stress of conscience. The researchers concluded that the quality of care might be intertwined and showed that formal caregivers' working conditions are of great importance for quality of care and social adjustment.

Statement of the problem

It has been observed that the aged/elderly people in Calabar, Cross River State experience different degrees of negative stereotypes. Most people are worried about caregivers' adjustment challenges as a result of the way the aged are being perceived negatively by some members of the society, due to the general phenomenon associated

with aging. The damaging effect of this stereotype on the aged population and the entire society is becoming alarming. The sad reality of aged people in the society is loneliness of once vibrant young citizens who had toiled all their lives to make sure their children grow up to become respectable people in the society found themselves being alone or abandoned by their love ones/caregivers. It is also observed that most families/caregivers experience fatigue and increasing responsibilities during the caring of older people. Caregivers in aged homes in Nigeria encounter unsuitable care conditions such as lack of systems offering health services, lack of formal support and professional caregivers/manpower resulting to the negative stereotyping of the aged members of the society resulting to caregivers' adjustment problems.

Despite the effort by researchers, caregivers, government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the area of establishing caregivers' centers, campaign for social protection programmes for the aged and the improvement of healthcare services, the problem still persist. Therefore, the researcher investigated the influence of stereotype of the aged on the adjustment of caregivers in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of stereotype of the aged on the adjustment of caregivers in Calabar municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. Determine the influence of stereotype of the aged on caregivers' emotional adjustment in Calabar.
2. Examine the influence of stereotype of aged on caregivers' social adjustment in Calabar.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. To what extent does stereotype of the aged influence caregivers' emotional adjustment in Calabar?
2. To what extent does stereotype of the aged influence caregivers' social adjustment in Calabar?

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study.

1. There is no significant influence of stereotype of the aged on caregivers' emotional adjustment in Calabar
2. There is no significant influence of stereotype of the aged on caregivers' social adjustment in Calabar.

Method

This study investigated the influence of stereotype of the aged on the adjustment of caregivers in Calabar municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. The Survey research design was adopted to guide this research. The population of the study comprised all 32 caregivers in established aged home and hospices services providers in University of Calabar Teaching hospital Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. The census or complete enumeration sampling techniques was used in gathering data from the entire target population of 32 caregivers. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire tagged "Stereotype of the Aged and Adjustment of Caregivers Questionnaire (SAACQ). Face and content validity was established by using one expert in Guidance and Counselling and two from Measurement

and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education who vetted the items developed. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability method with co-efficient of .77 and .78. Simple linear regression analysis was used for data analysis at .05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis one

Stereotype of the aged does not significantly predict caregivers' emotional adjustment. Simple linear regression analysis was carried out in testing this hypothesis. Simple linear regression analysis was carried out in testing this hypothesis.

TABLE 1
Simple linear regression analysis of caregivers' emotional adjustment on stereotype of the aged

R	=.024		Adjusted R-squared		= -.009
R-squared (R^2)	=.001		Std. Error of estimate		= 3.14658
Source of variation	Sum of square	Df	Mean Square	F-value	P-value
Regression	.610	1	.610	.062	.804
Error	1089.104	110	9.901		
Total	1089.714	111			
Variable	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t-value	p-value
	β	Std. error	βeta		
Constant stereotype of the aged	15.833	.820		19.310	.000
	-.013	.053	-.024	-.248	.804

From Table 1, the p-value (.804) associated with the computed f-value (.062) is greater than the chosen level of significance (.05). Thus, the null hypothesis was retained. This means that stereotype of the aged does not significantly predict caregivers' emotional adjustment. The results also show that the regression constant contributed significantly to the prediction of caregivers' emotional adjustment ($p<.05$) while the predictor variable (stereotype of the aged) did not ($p>.05$). The R-squared (R^2) of .001 indicates that 0.1% of the variation in the dependent variable was accounted for by stereotype of the aged.

Hypothesis two

There is not significant predictive influence of stereotype of the aged-on caregivers' social adjustment. Simple linear

regression techniques were applied in testing this hypothesis.

TABLE 2

Simple linear regression analysis of caregivers' social adjustment on stereotype of the aged

R	=.094		Adjusted R-squared		= -.000
R-squared (R^2)	=.009		Std. Error of estimate		= 3.01776
Source of variation	Sum of square	Df	Mean Square	F-value	P-value
Regression	.9.023	1	9.023	.991	.322
Error	1001.753	110	9.107		
Total	1010.777	111			
Variable	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t-value	p-value
	β	Std. error	βeta		
Constant stereotype of the aged	15.685	.786		19.946	.000
	-.051	.051	-.094	-.995	.322

The results in Table 8 show that the p-value (.322) associated with the computed f-value (.991) is greater than the chosen level of significance (.05). Thus, the null hypothesis was retained. This means that stereotype of the aged does not significantly predict caregivers' social adjustment. The R-squared (R^2) value of .009 indicates that 0.9% of variation in caregivers' social adjustment was accounted for by stereotype of the aged.

Discussion of findings

The result of the findings first hypothesis revealed that stereotypes of the aged does not significantly predict caregivers' emotional adjustment. However, the regression constant, contributed significantly to the prediction of caregivers' emotional adjustment ($p < .05$). Despite the generally accepted belief that emotional support improves caregivers' adjustment in general and subjective burden in particular. Results from other researchers have shown the predictability of the dependent variable (adjustment of caregivers'). For instance, Sigh and Marion (2018) revealed significant difference in emotional adjustment of caregivers of urban and rural area. Similarly, Akende and Ikediashi (2018) investigated the level of emotional adjustment of caregivers in Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. The result indicated that caregivers have levels of emotional adjustment. Though, there was no significant difference on bases of gender, significant difference was found between urban and sub-urban in their level of

emotional adjustment. This implies that emotional adjustment of caregivers can be influenced.

Furthermore, the result of the finding of the second hypothesis revealed that stereotype of the aged does not significantly predict caregivers' social adjustment. Though this result is in variance with Su-Mi, Lee, Kim, Sanghee and Lyu (2019) whose research, sought to identify the attributes of social adjustment among the aged caregiving. The researchers concluded that social adjustment of caregivers of aged is crucial for integrating them into the society. In view of the above, many caregivers of older adult report distressing interpersonal difficulties. Training in social skills could be valid strategy for helping these people.

Similarly, Azman, Jamir-Singh and Sulaiman (2017), submitted in an article published in November, 2016, that caregivers who used social skills more, felt less burdened and that social adjustment skills can strengthen the interpersonal relationships of caregivers, contributing to better psychosocial adjustment. Following the above submissions amongst other, establishing the impact social adjustment as the predicator of aged caregivers' effectiveness. However, the limiting impact of stereotype could have played a major role in the outcome of this findings, that indicates that caregivers' interactions and relationships with older adults may not be strongly influenced by negative stereotypes. Other factors such as social factors, such as changing societal views, such as societies becoming more aware of ageism and it negative impacts, individuals, including caregivers, may be actively challenging and resisting age-related stereotypes.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of each of the null hypothesis that directed the study Stereotype of the aged and adjustment of caregivers, the following conclusions were adopted. Despite the generally accepted belief that emotional and social support improves caregivers' adjustment, stereotypes of the aged does not significantly predict caregivers' emotional adjustment and there is no significant predictive influence of stereotypes of the aged-on caregivers' social adjustment.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the findings and conclusions reached, the following are recommended;

1. Government policies on the protection and rights of older persons should be formulated and strictly enforced to strengthen elder abuse prevention measures, implement robust measures to prevent and respond to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation
2. Government should improve access to healthcare and support services to ensure that older adults have equitable access to affordable healthcare and support services.
3. Counsellors should develop active ageing initiatives and design a support programme for caregivers.

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