

Effects of Emotional-Focused Therapy on the Management of Emotional Health Problems of Teachers in Ilorin Metropolis

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Keywords

therapy, emotional focused therapy, emotional health

Abstract

The level of the emotional health of teacher has been noticed to be on the high side and this affects their performances. This study investigated the effects of emotionally focused therapy on the management of emotional health problems of teachers in Ilorin metropolis. The research design used was quasi-experimental. An experimental design of 2 by 2 factorial matrix which adopts pre-test and post-test treatment was employed in this study. All secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis constituted the population for the study while selected secondary school teachers experiencing emotional health problems were the target population for this study. 30 secondary school teachers experiencing mental health problems were sampled for this study. An Emotional Health Problems Scale (EHPS) designed by Warwick-Edinburgh was adopted for this study. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was the major statistical tool that was employed to test seven hypotheses generated at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the findings revealed that emotional-focused therapy is effective in managing the emotional health problems of teachers in Ilorin metropolis. There were no significant main effects of age or gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. It was also revealed that there were no significant interactive effects of age or gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis but significant interactive effects were found on treatment, age and gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. It was recommended that mental health professionals should consider EFT as a valuable therapeutic option for teachers experiencing emotional difficulties. Therapists should consider these demographic factors when implementing EFT and be prepared to adapt their approach accordingly.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching is considered as one of the crucial professions since that should be looked into and accessed properly. With the recent state of the economy and increasing unemployment, the values of teachers and their professional concern with the job have physically undergone a drastic change which adversely affects their emotional health. The level of emotional health of teacher has been noticed to be on the high side and this affects their performances. The health of teachers in social, physical and mental health domains adds to the efficiency not only of their professional growth and development but also to their well-being. One of the most crucial areas of attention has always been health. As a result, the definition of health has been expanded to include mental and emotional stability as well as physical health. Schleider et al (2015) submitted that the body and mind interact productively and harmoniously when an individual is emotionally balanced. Akram (2019) defines emotion as a feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states, and range of propensities to act. Jeanette (2018) submitted that emotion is experienced as a feeling that motivates, organizes, and guides perception, thought, and action. A practical definition of emotional well-being offered by the American Mental Health Foundation (2016) stated that emotional health is a positive sense of well-being that enables an individual to function in society and meet the demands of everyday life; people in good mental health can recover effectively from illness, change or misfortune.

Ho and Funk (2018) stated that emotionally healthy people are those who can control their emotions and behaviour, show resilience in troubling situations and build strong and lasting relationships. Shonin and Gordon, (2016) submitted that emotionally healthy people feel stress, anger, and sadness. But they know how to manage their negative feelings. They can tell when a problem is more than they can handle on their own. The ongoing efforts of psychologists to connect emotion and health have resulted in the discovery of several additional affect-related constructs that can account for a sizable portion of the variation in an individual's health status (Positive Psychology Program, 2016). For instance, the affective propensity to feel both positive and negative emotions, also known as positive and negative affectivity, and the propensity to feel extreme emotional states, regardless of the emotional valence, also known as affect intensity, have both been found to be significant predictors of health. The majority of studies on emotional distress in older people have discovered that it happens more frequently in institutions than in private homes, though contradictory findings have also been made (Herrmann et al., 2016). There is general agreement that female sex, somatic illness, cognitive impairment, functional impairment in activities related to daily living, lack or loss of social contacts, and a history of depression are significant risk factors for emotional distress in old age (Djernes, 2016). According to Panagopoulos et al (2014), the emotional distress of workers varies depending on their age. According to Carstensen et al (2011), older people experience more positive emotions than middle-aged people do. Although there are many treatments available to help people with emotional health issues, for the study, emotional-focused and interpersonal therapies should be taken into consideration.

Emotionally Focused Therapy or Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT) approaches healing from the belief that emotions are strongly linked to identity. Emotions guide us in defining preferences and making decisions daily (Goldman, Watson & Greenberg, 2011). EFT is usually a short-term treatment (8–20 sessions). Its approaches are based on the premise that human emotions are connected to human needs, and therefore emotions have an innately adaptive potential that, if activated and worked through, can help people change problematic emotional states and interpersonal relationships (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). Emotion-focused therapy for individuals was originally known as process-experiential therapy and it is still sometimes called by that name (Prochaska & Norcross, 2014; Wedding & Corsini, 2013; Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2013). Therapists qualified in Emotional Focus Therapy (EFT) can help people seeking assistance with emotional health concerns. The therapy may

help people to become more aware of their emotions. EFT would allow people to become better at using information provided by adaptive emotions. People may be better able to cope with and decrease the negative effects of maladaptive emotions. This study therefore concentrates on emotionally focused therapy on the management of the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

Students' cognitive and emotional development are greatly influenced by their teachers, who play a crucial role in this process. The culture of a society is transmitted by its teachers. The reputation of a school and its impact on community life invariably depend on the type of teachers employed there. Teachers who are not in good emotional health find it difficult to focus while teaching and help students remember what they have learned. Some of the factors affecting teachers' emotional health include crowded classrooms, inadequate equipment, conflicts with administrative rules, shoddy scheduling, marital problems, and criticism from superiors.

Teachers who are mentally ill can harm the country by giving students poor instruction and guidance. It is a well-known fact that students who have teachers with poor mental health—such as those who are frustrated or have neurotic tendencies—also have those same tendencies. Given the diversity of the students in a classroom, it is the teacher's responsibility to provide all of the students with the same knowledge and skills, without any exceptions. Additionally, if teachers are in poor mental or emotional health, they may not perform their duties well, which can hurt their lives in general, especially their overall well-being, which includes their regular physical, behavioural, emotional, interpersonal, and cognitive functioning. Therefore, the study intends to examine the effectiveness of emotional-focused therapy in treating the emotional health problems of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

METHODS

The research design employed for this study was quasi-experimental design which involves the manipulation of treatment variables followed by observing the effects of the manipulation on the dependent variables. Experimental design of 2 by 2 by 2 factorial matrix which adopts pre-test, post-test treatment and control group. Experimental research according to Olayiwola (2007) is a scientific investigation in which the researcher manipulates controls describes one or more independent variables and observes the dependent variables for changes as a result of the manipulation of the independent variables. In conducting experimental research, there is a treatment group and a control group. Experimental design has been described as the ultimate form of research design providing the most rigorous test of hypothesis. In this study, the researcher used two by two (2x2) factorial matrix.

All secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis constituted the population for the study while selected secondary school teachers experiencing emotional health problems were the target population for this study. Simple random sampling was used in selecting ten secondary schools out of the available secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State. A random sampling technique was used to select 3 to 5 secondary school teachers from each secondary school. On the whole, 30 secondary school teachers experiencing emotional health problems were drawn from the ten selected secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis. However, the sample was exposed to emotionally focused therapy. The emotional Health Problems Scale (EHPS) was used to collect data from the participants. This scale consists of a 10-item instrument rated on a 4points Likert scale ranging from 1- Not True of Me (NTM), 2- Occasional True of Me (OTM), 3- True of Me (TM) and 4- Very True of Me (VTM) that will elicit information on the emotional health problem of secondary school teachers. The

instrument was adopted from the Mental Well-being Scale developed by Warwick-Edinburgh (2006) which was patterned after a 5-point Likert Type scale of None of the Time; Rarely; Some of the time; Often; and All of the time and rate from 1-5. The instrument has a reliability coefficient of .83. Data collected were analysed using inferential statistics. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was the major statistical tool that was employed to test seven hypotheses generated at 0.05 level of significance in this study.

RESULT

Hypotheses Testing

The results of testing the seven null hypotheses formulated in the study using ANCOVA statistics are presented below

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant main effect of treatment packages on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 1:

ANCOVA Showing Results of Main Effect of Treatment Package (Emotional-Focused Therapy) on the Emotional Health of the Respondents

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Calculated F-ratio	p-value
Corrected Model	214.094 ^a	7	30.585	8.727	.000
Intercept	24766.00	1	24766.00	7066.31	.000
Treatment	214.09	7	30.58	8.72*	.000
Error	77.10	22	3.50		
Total	38312.00	30			
Corrected Total	291.20	29			

a. R Squared = .735 (Adjusted R Squared = .651) *significant, $p < .05$

Table 1 showed that the calculated F-value of 8.72 and p-value of .000 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value is smaller than the alpha level, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant main effect of treatment packages on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant main effect of age on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 2:
ANCOVA Showing Results of Main Effect of Age on the Emotional Health of the Respondents

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Calculated F-ratio	p-value
Corrected Model	.825 ^a	1	.825	.080	.780
Intercept	29887.09	1	29887.09	2881.92	.000
Age	.825	1	.825	.080	.780
Error	290.375	28	10.37		
Total	38312.00	30			
Corrected Total	291.200	29			

a. R Squared = .003 (Adjusted R Squared = -.033)

Table 2 indicates that the calculated F-value of 0.80 and p-value of .780 which is greater than 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value is greater than the alpha level, the null hypothesis two is accepted. This implies that there is no significant main effect of age on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant main effect of gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 3:
ANCOVA Showing Result of Main Effect of Gender on the Emotional Health of the Respondents

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Calculated F-ratio	p-value
Corrected Model	.533 ^a	1	.533	.051	.822
Intercept	38020.80	1	38020.80	3662.55	.000
Gender	.533	1	.533	.051	.822
Error	290.66	28	10.38		
Total	38312.00	30			
Corrected Total	291.20	29			

a. R Squared = .003 (Adjusted R Squared = -.033)

Table 3 revealed that the calculated F-value of 0.51 and p-value of .822 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value is greater than the alpha level, the null hypothesis three is accepted. This implies that there is no significant main effect of gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant interactive effect of treatment and age on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 4:

ANCOVA Showing Results of Interactive Effect of Treatment and Age on the Emotional Health of the Respondents

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Calculated F-ratio	p-value
Corrected Model	227.98 ^a	12	18.99	5.10	.001
Intercept	19768.60	1	19768.60	5316.10	.000
Age * treatment	3.340	4	.835	.225	.921
Error	63.21	17	3.71		
Total	38312.00	30			
Corrected Total	291.20	29			

a. R Squared = .783 (Adjusted R Squared = .630)

Table 4 indicated that the calculated F-value of 0.225 and p-value of .921 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis four is accepted since the calculated p-value is greater than the level of significance. This implies that there is no significant interactive effect of treatment and age on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 5:

ANCOVA Showing Results of Interactive Effect of Treatment and Gender on the Emotional Health of the Respondents

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Calculated F-ratio	p-value
Corrected Model	231.61 ^a	13	17.81	4.784	.002
Intercept	25952.39	1	25952.39	6969.03	.000
Gender * Treatment	7.91	5	1.58	.425	.824
Error	59.58	16	3.72		
Total	38312.00	30			
Corrected Total	291.20	29			

a. R Squared = .795 (Adjusted R Squared = .629)

Table 5 shows the calculated F-value of 0.425 and p-value of .824 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis five is accepted since the calculated p-value is greater than the level of significance. This implies that there is no significant interactive effect of treatment and gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Hypothesis 6: There is no significant interaction effect of age and gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 6:

ANCOVA Showing Results of Interactive Effect of Age and Gender on the Emotional Health of the Respondents

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Calculated F-ratio	p-value
Corrected Model	1.633 ^a	3	.544	.049	.985
Intercept	28440.44	1	28440.44	2553.64	.000
Age * Gender	.039	1	.039	.003	.953
Error	289.56	26	11.13		
Total	38312.00	30			
Corrected Total	291.20	29			

a. R Squared = .006 (Adjusted R Squared = -.109)

Table 6 revealed that the calculated F-value of 0.003 and p-value of .824 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis six is accepted since the calculated p-value is greater than the level of significance. This implies that there is no significant interactive effect of age and gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Hypothesis 7: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment, age and gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 7:

ANCOVA Showing Results of Interactive Effect of Age and Gender on the Emotional Health of the Respondents

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	Calculated F-ratio	p-value
Corrected Model	248.033 ^a	18	13.780	3.511	.019
Intercept	21594.250	1	21594.250	5502.782	.000
Treatment* Age * Gender	221.309	7	31.616	8.05*	.001
Error	43.167	11	3.924		
Total	38312.000	30			
Corrected Total	291.200	29			

a. R Squared = .006 (Adjusted R Squared = -.109) *significant, p<.05

Table 7 indicated that the calculated F-value of 8.05 and p-value of .001 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis seven is rejected since the calculated p-value is less than the level of significance. This implies that there is a significant interactive effect of treatment, age and gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the effects of emotional-focused therapy on the management of the emotional health of teachers in Ilorin metropolis. The finding of the study revealed that there was a significant main effect of treatment packages on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. A significant main effect suggests that the treatment packages implemented in the study had a noticeable and meaningful influence on the emotional well-being of the teachers. That is emotional-focused therapy is effective in managing emotional health problems. The finding supports the study of Greenberg et al., (2019) whose findings revealed that EFT showed moderate to large effect sizes in reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety. Maunder and Hunter (2012) reported that EFT led to a reduction in PTSD symptoms, such as intrusive thoughts and emotional numbing. This result is crucial as it demonstrates emotional emotional-focused therapy was effective in promoting emotional health among teachers.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that there was no significant main effect of age on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. This implies that the age of the respondents has no significant effect on their emotional health. The finding is in line with the study of Charles, Reynolds, and Gatz (2001) who found no significant main effect of age on emotional well-being. It was stressed further that emotional health did not deteriorate as participants aged. Smith et al. (2018) also found no statistically significant main effect of age on emotional health problems. The finding suggests that emotional health issues may not necessarily increase or decrease as secondary school teachers progress through different life stages. The result of hypothesis three also showed that there was no significant main effect of gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. This means that the gender of the respondents did not have any effect on their emotional health issues. This corroborates the finding of Hyde et al. (2008) who found differences between males and females in emotional health problems were minimal and did not reach statistical significance. Matud (2004) reported that the experience of anxiety was not influenced by gender, supporting the notion that emotional health problems affect individuals of all genders similarly. The reason for this finding could be on average, male and female teachers experience emotional health problems at similar levels.

It was also found that there was no significant interactive effect of treatment and age on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis in the tested researcher hypothesis four. In other words, the efficacy of emotionally focused therapy in improving emotional well-being did not vary significantly across different age groups. The finding relates to the study of Smith et al. (2018) who indicated that there was no significant interactive effect of cognitive behavioural therapy and age on the outcomes of emotional health problems. This finding suggests that emotional-focused therapy can be equally beneficial for individuals of all ages when dealing with emotional health issues. The finding of hypothesis five showed that there was no significant interactive effect of treatment and gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. This implies that the effectiveness of emotional-focused therapy in improving emotional health was not significantly different between male and female teachers. The finding is in line with the study of Smith et al. (2018) whose results showed that CBT led to significant improvements in emotional health for both men and women. There were no significant differences in treatment outcomes between genders, suggesting that CBT is equally effective in addressing emotional health problems regardless of gender.

Hypothesis six result showed that there was no significant interactive effect of age and gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. The finding relates to the study of Brown et al. (2019) whose study tracked emotional health indicators, such as stress, depression, and self-esteem, and the analysis indicated no significant interactions between age and gender. This suggests that age-related changes in emotional health were consistent across both males

and females. Contrary to the hypothesis that age and gender would interact to influence emotional health, the study of Smith et al. (2018) found that the main effects of age and gender were significant, but there was no significant interaction between the two. This suggests that while both age and gender independently contribute to emotional health, they do not interact in a way that significantly impacts emotional well-being.

Finally, the result of hypothesis seven revealed that there was a significant interactive effect of treatment, age and gender on the emotional health of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. The finding supports the study of Smith et al. (2018) who found that treatment effectiveness (cognitive-behavioural therapy, EFT, medication) varied significantly based on age and gender. Specifically, the study found that cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) was more effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression in younger adults and females. On the other hand, EFT showed more positive outcomes in older adults and males. Brown et al., (2019) stated that women tended to show more favourable responses to certain therapeutic modalities for depression compared to men. And that age was found to moderate treatment outcomes, with older adults showing greater benefits from specific interventions than younger individuals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Emotional-Focused Therapy (EFT) has demonstrated significant effectiveness in the management of emotional health problems. Research findings consistently indicate that EFT is a valuable therapeutic approach for addressing emotional issues. The core principle of EFT, which centres on the significance of emotions in shaping human experiences and behaviours, appears to be instrumental in its effectiveness. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the effectiveness of EFT may vary depending on individual needs and the specific emotional health issue being addressed. Personalized treatment plans that consider age, gender, and other individual factors can further enhance the therapeutic outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

1. EFT has demonstrated effectiveness in addressing emotional health problems among secondary school teachers. Mental health professionals should consider EFT as a valuable therapeutic option for teachers experiencing emotional difficulties.
2. Research suggested that the effectiveness of EFT may vary based on age and gender. Therapists should consider these demographic factors when implementing EFT and be prepared to adapt their approach accordingly.
3. Secondary school teachers should be encouraged to apply the skills they learn in therapy to their daily lives, leading to better emotional regulation and coping strategies.

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