



Stress and Burnout Management Among Teachers in Enugu State, Nigeria: Intervention of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated intervention effects of cognitive behavioural therapy on stress and burnout management among teachers in Enugu State, Nigeria. The teachers' stress was measured with Resenberg Occupational Stress Scale (ROSS) with an internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.83. The ROSS has nine components of stress such as Student Behaviour, Administrators' Relation, Teacher Relation, Parent/Teacher Relation, Time Management, Intrapersonal Relation, Physical Symptom of Stress, Emotional Symptom of Stress and Stress Management Technique with 4 items in each of the components. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was used for data collection. The MBI has 25 items and was developed by Maslach and Jackson 1981. The internal consistency reliability of MBI was established through Cronbach alpha which gave coefficients of 0.87. The participants are 162 teachers identified with Stress and Burnout symptoms. The teachers were put in two groups- experimental and control groups. The experimental group that received CBT-treatment has 82 teachers while the control group has 80 teachers respectively. A therapist's guide to brief cognitive behavioral therapy Developed by Clerk in 2006 (42) was used as intervention by the study as the treatment. The assistants adhered to the outlines of Clerk in the intervention process that lasted for four weeks. A placebo on conventional counselling was given to the control group. The study revealed that CBT significantly increased stress and burnout management among teachers in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The school administrators should also avoid conflicting role assignment of responsibility to the teachers, involve the teachers in decision making, provide conducive teaching environment through the support of appropriate instructional materials and allow the teachers to enjoy their free periods without interferences.

Keywords: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Teachers' Stress and Burnout Management.

Introduction

The complexities associated with the teaching profession in the contemporary society seem to be associated with prolonged stress which could amount to burnout. Teaching profession has been implicated with stressful conditions (1). Teaching profession has been tagged as one of the professions that are bedeviled with high stress level (2). Teaching is one of the most stressful professions (3, 4, 5).

The teachers are constantly faced with the responsibility of addressing the needs of the students, professional training and development, subject content demand, provision of conducive learning environment and involvement in their school community relation result in job stress (6). Job stress is the reaction of the body to pressure that will necessitate changes in mental, emotional physical adjustments (7). These stressful conditions are linked to the state of distress (8). Previous studies suggested that psychological distress (PD) manifest in the forms of sadness, anxiety, self-consciousness, irritability and emotional vulnerability [9], worthlessness, restlessness, nervousness, hopelessness, sadness and helplessness [10].

It was further revealed that work stress leads to negative productivity among school teachers (2Umaru). Previous study has implicated teachers stress in the school system to work overload, irregular payment of salaries, poor time management, physical danger, delayed promotion and policy somersault (2). (10) opined that causes of work stress are inability to take decision in critical work issues, work hours, role conflict, multiple and contradicting supervision and role ambiguity. Occupational stress introduces a lot of complex emotional and psychological, cognitive, physical and behavioural changes in an employee (11).

Stress can make an employee to be upset, emotionally unstable, inability to make sound and justifiable decisions (3). Work stress can greatly reduce employees' live span as well as physical and mental health dispositions (12). Stress has a negative impact on a person's ability to associate others, develop feeling of anxiousness, alcoholism, sleeping disorder, attention deficit, and antisocial behaviours and work burnout (13). These consequences of stress are irrespective of the warning by (14) that stress is a harmful physical and emotional response to work challenges.

In the same vein, psychological stress and distress has been linked to burnout [15]. Burnout is conceived as extreme and prolonged impact of uncontrolled stress on administrators' emotional, physical, social and cognitive dimensions. Burnout can also be seen mental, physical, and emotional exhaustive state that can happen as a result of chronic workplace stress. Burnout can have serious effects on your health and relationships (16). A study found that 36% of teachers experienced burnout (17). In the same vein and in the line of teaching profession, it was found that 57.7% of lecturers experienced burnout (18). These prevalent rates of on burnout can impact negatively in the profession and life of the teaching staff members.

It was reported that burnout significantly relates with depersonalization, poor job performance and emotional exhaustion (19). It was revealed that teachers who experience burnout feel exhausted even after quality sleeping (20, 21). On the other hand, teachers who experience burnout finds it difficult to have quality sleep (22). Teachers' burnout can make them leave the teaching profession. It was reported in a global trend that 40% to 50% of the teachers leaving the teaching profession were implicated on their level of burnout (23). Teachers' job burnout is associated with absenteeism, reduced job commitment and poor students' academic achievement (24, 25). Teachers who experience burned out also deliver poor quality of instruction than others (26, 27). The presence of burnout, depersonalization and emotional exhaustion are factors of poor job performance (10). Stress and burnout are psychological variables and may require interventions.

One of such psychological interventions is the use of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Cognitive Behavioural is a therapeutic technique that helps people know and handle unjustified or irrational beliefs through cognitive restructuring (28). The goal is to replace negative thoughts with rational and realistic ones. Recording of thoughts, Selection of thought, use of different perspectives and establishment of different response are some of the key techniques in CBT. All techniques are summarized cognitive restructuring and reframing which deals with the use of statement to handle psychological challenges perceptively. In the year 1960, the Psychiatrist Aaron T. Beck originated the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for handling of issues related to cognition and behaviour. CBT is based on three aspects of cognition which includes automatic thoughts, cognitive distortion and underlying beliefs of schema (29, 30, 31, 32). In this regard, automatic thoughts are usually sudden and unprocessed and interpretation analysis of events. Automatic thought can affect mood and emotional dispositions because it is devoid of proper interpretation of actions. On the other hand, cognitive distortion is very significant as it helps heightened automatic thoughts and processes. Cognitive distortions function with dichotomous thinking, overgeneralization, selective abstraction, selective abstraction, mind reading, future telling, minimization, catastrophizing, emotional reasoning and attribution (29, 30, 31, 32). Underlying belief shapes life experiences through perception and interpretation. The core beliefs are based on the central issues about life level of belief as well as dysfunctional beliefs like lack of involvement, inadequacy and bad perception of life(29, 30, 31, 32).

The efficacy of CBT has been proven in different contexts. One of such is in the study by (33) who reported that CBT can serve as occupational coaching intervention for those who have psychological coping challenges. Furthermore, (34, 35, 36, 37) CBT coaching is necessary for emotional issues. The study by (38) revealed that CBT in a form of coaching can increase has the ability to control administrators' burnout levels. More so, (39) reported emotional coaching can address behavioural challenges among workers.

Methodology

The teachers stress was measured with Resenberg Occupational Stress Scale (ROSS) (40). The ROSS is a 36-item instrument with response options of Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4) and Very Often (5) respectively. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of ROSS is 0.83. The instrument has nine components of stress such as Student Behaviour, Administrators' Relation, Teacher Relation, Parent/Teacher Relation, Time Management, Intrapersonal Relation, Physical Symptom of Stress, Emotional Symptom of Stress and Stress Management Technique with 4 items in each of the components.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was used for data collection. The MBI measure has 25 items and developed by Maslach and Jackson 1981 (41). This scale was solely designed to elicit information on burnout signs and symptoms of workers experiencing burnout. The MBI has four subscales of Depersonalization 5-items, Emotional Exhaustion with 9-items, Involvement with 3-items and Personal Accomplishment 8-items respectively. The internal consistency reliability was established through Cronbach alpha which gave coefficients

of 0.87 for MBI. The reliability indices of Depersonalization, Emotional Exhaustion, Involvement and Personal Accomplishment are 0.70, 0.78, 0.71 and 0.72 respectively. The MBI was structured in four response options of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

The participants are 162 teachers identified with Stress and Burnout symptoms. The teachers were put in two groups- experimental and control groups. The experimental group that received CBT-treatment has 82 teachers while the control group has 80 teachers respectively.

The Rational Emotive Cognitive Treatment was administered to the experimental group while the control group received no treatment. English Language was used to administer CBT-Treatment to the experimental group through the help of Rational Emotive Cognitive Health Coaches and Industrial Counselling-Psychologists. These therapists had first degree and postgraduate qualifications (M.Sc/M.Ed or Ph.D) as their qualifications. These therapists were exposed CBT with for one week to be family with the treatment.

A therapist's guide to brief cognitive behavioral therapy Developed by Clerk in 2006 (42) was used as intervention by the study as the treatment. The assistants adhered to the outlines of Clerk in the intervention process that lasted for four weeks. A placebo on conventional counselling was given to the control group.

Data analysis

After the administration of the pretest, posttest and follow-up measures, the data obtained were screened and cleaned for missing values. Thereafter, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 22 was used to conduct the statistical analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to t-test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: mean and standard deviation scores of the effect of CBT on stress management

Groups	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean loss	Mean loss difference
		$\bar{x}$	Std. Deviation	$\bar{x}$	Std. Deviation		
Experimental	82	71.22	4.57	54.41	13.49	16.81	11.21
Control	80	63.74	7.63	58.14	5.92	5.60	

Table 1 shows that teachers with stress who were exposed to CBT(experimental group) had mean and standard deviation scores of ($\bar{x}$ = 71.23, SD = 4.57) at the pretest and mean and standard deviation scores of ($\bar{x}$ = 54.41, SD = 13.49) at the posttest. Similarly, teachers with stress who were not exposed to CBT (control group) had mean and standard deviation score of ($\bar{x}$ = 63.74, SD = 7.63) at the pretest and mean and standard deviation scores of ($\bar{x}$ = 58.14, SD = 5.92) at the posttest. Thus, the mean loss scores of 16.81 and 5.60 indicate that the teachers with stress who were exposed to CBT had their stress reduced than their counterparts who were not so exposed.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance of the effect of CBT on stress management

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	773.29 ^a	2	386.65	3.56	.03	.04
Intercept	2641.04	1	2641.04	24.28	.00	.13
Pretest	212.06	1	212.06	1.95	.17	.01
Groups	773.20	1	773.20	7.11	.01	.04
Error	17295.33	159	108.78			
Total	530703.00	162				
Corrected Total	18068.62	161				

Table 2 reveals that there is a significant difference in the mean stress score of teachers who were exposed to CBT and those not exposed in favour of the teachers exposed to CBT, $F(1, 159) = 7.11$, $p = .01$. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected since the associated probability value of .01 is less than the .05 level of significance. This means that CBT has a significant effect on teachers' stress management.

Table 3: mean and standard deviation scores of the effect of CBT on burnout management

Groups	N	Pretest		Posttest		Mean loss	Mean loss difference
		$\bar{x}$	Std. Deviation	$\bar{x}$	Std. Deviation		
Experimental	82	90.61	4.94	24.21	2.28	66.40	61.99
Control	80	73.35	3.55	68.94	7.40	4.41	

Table 3 shows that teachers with burnout who were exposed to CBT(experimental group) had mean and standard deviation scores of ($\bar{x}$ = 90.61, SD = 4.94) at the pretest and mean and standard deviation scores of ($\bar{x}$ = 24.21, SD = 2.28) at the posttest. Similarly, teachers with burnout who were not exposed to CBT (control group) had mean and standard deviation score of ($\bar{x}$ = 73.35, SD = 3.55) at the pretest as well as mean and standard deviation scores of ($\bar{x}$ = 68.94, SD = 7.40) at the posttest. Thus, the mean loss scores of 66.40 and 4.41 indicate that the teachers with burnout who were exposed to CBT had their burnout reduced than their counterparts who were not so exposed.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance of the effect of CBT on burnout management

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Corrected Model	81030.94 ^a	2	40515.47	1359.39	.00	.95	
Intercept	759.32	1	759.32	25.48	.00	.14	
pretestburnout	11.32	1	11.32	.38	.54	.00	
Groups	16777.17	1	16777.17	562.92	.00	.78	
Error	4738.83	159	29.80				
Total	432992.00	162					
Corrected Total	85769.78	161					

Table 4 reveals that there is a significant difference in the mean burnout score of teachers who were exposed to CBT and those not exposed in favour of the teachers exposed to CBT, $F(1, 159) = 562.92$, $p = .00$. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected since the associated probability value of .00 is less than the .05 level of significance. This means that CBT has a significant effect on teachers' burnout management.

Discussion

The study revealed that CBT significantly increased stress and burnout management among teachers in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The finding of this study is in agreement with that of (33) who reported that CBT can serve as occupational coaching intervention for those who have psychological coping challenges. Furthermore, the finding of this study collaborated that of (34, 35, 36, 37,) which showed the efficacy of CBT in coaching form in handling emotional issues.

The finding of this study has also supported that of (38) which revealed that CBT in a form of coaching can enhance administrators' burnout management. More so, and in tandem with the finding of this study was (38) who reported that emotional coaching can address behavioural challenges among workers. In the same vein, cognitive and behavioural coaching are proven to reduce work stress and burnout among electronic workers (39). These findings are also supported by recent similar studies like (43-55)

Limitations and suggestion for further studies

This study could not use students and school administrators in the educational sector as the population. Efforts should be made to integrate the teachers and students in the population of the study in order to expose them on the sources of teachers' stress and burnout in the school system.

Conclusions

The study has shown that CBT is effective in the management of teachers' stress and burnout in the school system. This implied that the application of CBT can enhance the management of teachers' stress and burnout in the school system. These findings would serve as a working document for the school counselors and psychologists as they will judiciously and effectively make use of it in the management of emotional related factors such as teachers' stress and burnout management in the school. The school administrators should also avoid conflicting role assignment of responsibility to the teachers, involve the teachers in decision making, provide conducive teaching environment through the support of appropriate instructional materials and allow the teachers to enjoy their free periods without interferences.

Conflict of Interest

The researchers declared that there was no existence of conflict of interest.

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