
Supporting Educators: Exploring the Role of Counseling Services in Enhancing Teachers' Emotional Wellbeing in Selected Schools in Kumasi Metro

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Abstract: *This study, which is based on a post-positivist perspective, uses statistical methods to investigate the relationship between counseling support networks and teachers' emotional well-being. The major research goal was to evaluate the influence of counseling services on teachers' emotional well-being and to determine the incidence of emotional distress and burnout among teachers. A descriptive survey approach was used to obtain data from 140 teachers selected from the Krejcie and Morgan table. A cross-sectional survey was used to assess teachers' emotional states as well as the impact of counseling services at a given moment. Convenience sampling enabled a diversified sample by gender, age, experience, and teaching location. A standardized questionnaire was used to collect data on demographics, emotional well-being, burnout, and the impact of counseling networks. The findings revealed an alarming degree of emotional suffering among teachers, with 75% having poor emotional well-being and 70% feeling burnout. The study demonstrated a substantial positive association ($r = 0.78, p < 0.01$) between access to counseling services and enhanced emotional well-being. These findings highlight the crucial need for schools to prioritize emotional support for teachers, stressing counseling's positive role in improving educators' well-being and overall effectiveness in the classroom.*

Keywords: *Emotional Wellbeing, Counseling, Educators.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the increasing attention to student emotional wellbeing, the well-being of teachers often remains neglected in policy discussions (Dixon, J., 2023). Concerns about teacher stress, its impact on students, and teacher shortages continue to be significant issues. A literature review was conducted to explore definitions and understandings of well-being and emotional wellbeing specific to teachers (Dixon, J., 2023).

Integrating the emotional well-being of students, faculty, and the community may tremendously benefit instructors (Dixon, 2023). Emotional well-being is more than just the absence of clinical illnesses like depression and anxiety; it also encompasses positive qualities like life satisfaction as well as the lack of stress and burnout. Research suggests that burnout, psychological discomfort, and poor self-confidence among teachers might significantly affect their performance and job retention (García-Carmona et al., 2019; Thomson & Hillman, 2020). Chronic stress in teachers can cause serious health problems and increased turnover rates (Thomson & Hillman, 2020; Travers, 2017). According to Professor Hilal Lashuel, continuous stress can lead to health problems and reduced effectiveness (2020). Effective assistance for educators necessitates a broad approach and resources. Research frequently misses the unique demands of classroom instructors (Iancu et al., 2018; Klingbeil & Renshaw, 2018). High stress levels are associated with burnout and turnover, making it critical to address these concerns for both individual teachers and the school system (Puhakka et al., 2021; Gearhart et al., 2022; McCallum et al., 2017; Yu et al., 2022). Research on teacher stress has evolved since the 1970s, emphasizing the importance of tailored assistance (Kyriaco & Sutcliffe, 1977, as quoted in Kyriaco, 2001). Effective emotional well-being programs should focus on social connections, job demands, and personal management skills (Acton & Glasgow, 2015). Exploring how counseling services might promote teachers' emotional well-being, particularly in private basic schools, is critical for improving their overall effectiveness and retention. Despite increased focus on student emotional well-being, teacher well-being is sometimes overlooked in policy debates (Dixon, J., 2023). Concerns regarding teacher stress, its influence on children, and teacher shortages remain serious challenges. The purpose of the study was to investigate the variables that contribute to teacher stress and burnout, their effects on professional performance and well-being, and potential treatments like counseling to address these concerns.

2. RELATED WORKS

Teacher Burnout and Stress: A Critical Examination

Friganović et al. (2019) define burnout as a sustained response to emotional and relational stress, resulting in emotional weariness, depersonalization, and impaired personal accomplishment. This leads to physical and mental exhaustion, strained relationships, and feelings of professional inadequacy. Maslach et al. (1993, 1996) identified three major components of burnout: emotional weariness, depersonalization (bad attitudes toward customers or organizations), and decreased personal achievement (poor self-evaluation of job performance). Burnout is strongly associated with work-related stress and has an influence on emotional well-being (Awa et al., 2010). The teaching profession is especially susceptible due to increased duties, competition, and standardized evaluations (Zhang et al., 2023). Teachers

experience severe stress and burnout, similar to the ICD-10 diagnostic criteria, resulting in professional cynicism and decreased effectiveness (Carroll et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022; Golonka et al., 2019). Burnout was a global problem in education prior to the pandemic and has since exacerbated (García-Arroyo et al., 2019). Emotional engagement in student performance, along with societal and political demands, exacerbates teacher stress (Hallowell, 2010). A mismatch between resources and expectations worsens burnout (Baka, 2015). Burned-out teachers are less motivated and have more well-being difficulties than other professionals. Chronic stress, while initially a natural reaction, can eventually become pathological (Seo et al., 2017). Teachers have some of the lowest psychological well-being of any profession (Johnson et al., 2005). Burnout can cause despair and anxiety, with escalating social expectations, digitization, special needs schooling, and changing employment circumstances all reduce job satisfaction and mental health (Ormiston et al., 2022; Agyapong et al., 2022).

Existing Support and Intervention Mechanisms for Teachers' Emotional Wellbeing

Well-being is influenced by social, psychological, and biological aspects that influence health and sickness (Klapp et al., 2023). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines emotional well-being as the capacity to reach one's full potential, manage daily stress, work successfully, and contribute to society, highlighting that it extends beyond the absence of sickness (WHO, 2014). Antonovsky's salutogenic model broadens this perspective, viewing health as the ability to retain coherence and function in the face of personal and environmental change (Antonovsky, 1987). Teachers' well-being entails matching professional demands with available resources, which include psychological, physical, social, and environmental variables (Benevene et al., 2020). It includes both subjective components like happiness and life satisfaction, as well as objective variables like health, social relationships, and achievements (Forgeard et al., 2011). Research suggests that teacher well-being is connected with work satisfaction, positive emotions, motivation, and resilience, and negative stress and burnout (Burić et al., 2019; Hascher & Waber, 2021). Emotional support involves addressing emotional problems and providing encouragement to foster positive feelings among teachers, including those in special and mainstream education (Zhang et al., 2020). Ju et al. (2015) categorized teachers' social support into three criteria. Principals or administrators can offer support by implementing policies for special and mainstream education, problem-solving strategies, and showing respect for the teaching profession. Professional staff and coworkers can share opinions, assist each other, and offer practical help. Family members can provide solutions for work-related dissatisfaction and emotional support (Rueger et al., 2016).

Mindfulness and Mindfulness-Based Interventions with CBT or Yoga

According to various studies (Carroll et al., 2022; Dave et al., 2020; Fabbro et al., 2020; Song et al., 2020), mindfulness is a highly effective intervention for reducing stress and burnout in teachers. Significant reductions have been observed in the emotional fatigue subscale and Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) scores. The Compassionate Mind Training (CMT) program spans 12 weeks (Maratos et al., 2019), while Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) includes eight weekly 2.5-hour sessions plus a 7- or full-day retreat (Hwang et al., 2019; Bonde et al., 2022). Despite the effectiveness of mindfulness-based therapies, they can be time-consuming. Teachers practicing yoga report reduced anxiety, making it a beneficial

complement to mindfulness-based therapies (Hwang et al., 2019). Cognitive Behavioral Counseling (CBT)-based interventions have also shown statistically significant improvements in emotional tiredness, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and stress as measured by the MBI-ES subscales (Ghasemi et al., 2022; Hepburn et al., 2021). Yoga combined with CBT (Y-CBT) incorporates exercises related to posture and physical activity, enhancing the overall effectiveness of these interventions.

Rational Emotive Occupational Health Coaching (REOHC)

Similar to CBT, Rational Emotive Occupational Health Coaching (REOHC) emphasizes positive self-esteem and rational thought. It is a 12-week stress management program that lasts for two hours each week, and it has mostly been used by teachers of students with special needs, including those with autism (Ogba et al., 2020, Onuigbo et al., 2018, Ugwoke et al., 2018).

Inquiry-Based Stress Reduction (IBSR) Intervention

For 12 weeks, participants in this cognitive-reframing program will engage in weekly individual sessions with a facilitator lasting one hour each, in addition to 3.5 hours of group meetings each week (Schneider-Levi et al., 2020). According to the findings of one research, teachers in the intervention group outperformed controls in terms of improvements in emotional tiredness ($p = 0.01$) and personal accomplishment ($p = 0.04$). This is in contrast to the findings published by Zadok-Gurman et al., who claimed that there was no change in the intervention and control groups' personal accomplishment scores (Zadok-Gurman et al., 2021)

Role of Counseling Services in Addressing Educators' Emotional Wellbeing.

Research indicates that it might be difficult for educators with mental illnesses to get the professional assistance and accommodations they need (Price et al., 2017). For a teacher to effectively carry out his job, emotional wellbeing is a crucial component of his existence. Teachers' emotional wellbeing suffers as a result of the immense workload they bear in carrying out their responsibilities. Numerous research (Acosta, 2019; Larson, 2018) have demonstrated significant levels of everyday stress among teachers, as well as the existence of depressive symptoms in them (Cabezas, 2021; Johansson, 2022). According to other studies (Affandi et al., 2020; Braun et al., 2020), teachers' life satisfaction is poor in their day-to-day activities. Numerous previous studies have emphasized how crucial it is to look for an intervention to improve the value of advice and counseling for teachers in order to develop their personality and professional quality. (Demir, 2015; Natesan, 2016; Wijaya, 2019). According to the study, teachers with any one of the three emotional wellbeing profiles could get any one of three therapies (Aziz & Mangestuti, 2023). First, the significance of providing guidance to educators who exhibit low psychological well-being (Aziz & Mangestuti, 2023). Second, offering teachers who are experiencing a lot of psychological suffering counseling (Aziz & Mangestuti, 2023). Third, offering direction and counseling to educators who exhibit high psychological distress but low psychological well-being. These three suggestions offer a way to improve the emotional wellbeing of educators (Aziz & Mangestuti, 2023). Teachers with a high level of mental illness should have counseling, while teachers with a low level of mental illness should receive advice.



Teachers' Attitudes towards Seeking Counseling Support

Attitudes influence how individuals respond to events and make sense of their world and decisions (Carol, 2006). An attitude is a psychological inclination demonstrated by evaluating a particular entity with varying degrees of favor or disapproval (Chaiken & Eagly, 1993). Interest in understanding perspectives on obtaining psychological assistance has grown. Despite an increase in the use of psychological services, a significant portion of the population still avoids seeking treatment for emotional wellbeing issues. This reluctance is often attributed to stigma (Jorm et al., 1997; Gulliver et al., 2010), hesitancy to disclose a diagnosis (Hinson & Swanson, 1993), and anticipated costs (Vogel & Wester, 2003). Attitudes involve liking or disliking something or a situation without necessarily having a compelling reason. These attitudes are influenced by a combination of factors, including an individual's motivation, personality, beliefs, values, and actions. Cultural background and personal reasons also play significant roles (Pichens, 2005). Counseling is designed to assist clients with issues related to emotional distress or maladaptive behavior (Richard, 2012). According to Shertzer and Stone (1981), counseling is a social service based on the belief that every individual deserves personalized support and respect. The professional field of guidance and counseling offers a range of activities and services to help people better understand themselves, their problems, their educational environment, and the outside world (Lunenburg, 2010). Counseling and guidance are comprehensive programs designed to meet individuals' needs and consider how different living contexts impact them. These services aim to help people understand themselves, their issues, and their surroundings, enabling them to make informed life decisions (UNESCO, 2004). Numerous studies have highlighted the positive attitudes of educators towards counseling services (Valine & Hatcher, 1982; Quarto, 1999; Ahmed, 2003). Research has also explored how teachers and students perceive counseling services, showing generally favorable views (Felecia, 2011; Joshua & Florence, 2014). Additionally, individuals who have previously sought professional assistance tend to have more positive attitudes toward counseling than those who have not (Halgin et al., 1987; Lin & Parikh, 1999).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study, based on a post-positivist paradigm, is statistically sound, conforming to theories that stress deterministic correlations and using simplified approaches to aid analysis. The study used a descriptive survey methodology to collect data from 140 teachers chosen using the Krejcie and Morgan table, which is a generally acknowledged method for choosing adequate sample sizes in educational research. A cross-sectional survey approach was used to obtain a snapshot of teachers' emotional well-being and the influence of counseling services at a certain moment in time. Convenience sampling was chosen because it is practical and allows for the inclusion of a broad sample of teachers based on gender, age, experience, and teaching location. A standardized questionnaire with four sections was utilized to collect information on demographics, emotional well-being, burnout, and the influence of counseling support networks. The questionnaire's face validity ensured that the items were relevant and appropriate to the respondents. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, assured of confidentiality, and given adequate time to complete the survey at their own speed. The

association between counseling support networks and teachers' emotional well-being was examined using Pearson correlation and linear regression.

4. RESULTS

140 teachers were chosen for the study using convenience selection; the sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table. There were 43 female teachers and 97 male teachers among the participants. The distribution of teachers' ages was as follows: 70 teachers, or 50%, were in the 25–34 age range, 35 teachers, or 25%, were in the 35–44 age range, and 35 teachers, or 25%, were in the 45–54 age range. In terms of teaching levels, 84 teachers, or 60% of the total, worked in elementary schools, 21 teachers in senior high schools, and 35 teachers in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) facilities. Seventy-eight teachers, or the majority, had between six and ten years of experience in the classroom. Furthermore, 15% of the teachers (21 of them) had 0–5 years of experience. Regarding school settings, 119 teachers, or 85% of the total, worked in urban schools; 21 teachers, or 15% of the total, worked in suburban regions; 105 teachers, or 75% of the total, worked in private schools; and 35 teachers, or 25% of the total, worked in public schools. Important information on the teachers' emotional health was found in the study. The survey included 140 teachers, with 105 (75%) working in private schools and 35 (25%) in public school. The key findings on teachers' emotional well-being were as follows: Overall Emotional Wellbeing: A large 105 teachers (75%) expressed low overall emotional well-being in the last several months. Wellbeing Assessment: 14 teachers (10%) evaluated their wellbeing as terrible, with 11 teachers (8%) rating it as really low. Emotional issues: Emotional issues were widespread, with 119 teachers (85%) reporting that they frequently faced these obstacles while carrying out their teaching obligations. However, 21 teachers (15%) said that they seldom encountered such challenges. Burnout was a major concern, impacting 98 teachers (70%). 112 teachers (80%) reported experiencing symptoms on a regular basis. Despite these problems, 112 teachers (80%) said that their schools offered sporadic help for maintaining their emotional well-being, whereas 28 teachers (20%) reported that they got no support. These findings emphasize the frequency of emotional problems and a lack of effective teacher support networks, emphasizing the need of schools prioritizing emotional well-being efforts. The effect of counseling on teachers' emotional well-being was also investigated in this study. The findings showed that counseling has a statistically significant favorable effect on enhancing emotional wellness. The results of the regression analysis showed a high positive association (β) between improved emotional wellness among teachers and access to counseling services, with a value of 0.65 ($p < 0.01$). Furthermore, there was a significant association ($r = 0.78$) between the increase in emotional wellness and the availability of counseling. In general, all educators concurred that attending to their mental health is critical to the system's overall efficacy. The results highlight the critical need for schools to provide teachers' emotional assistance top priority in order to improve their wellbeing and, in turn, their effectiveness in the classroom.



5. DISCUSSIONS

The study's findings point to a worrying pattern in teachers' emotional well-being. With a greater frequency among female teachers, an overwhelming 73% of the participants ranked their overall emotional health as unsatisfactory. This figure emphasizes the emotional toll that teachers bear, particularly in light of the important role that they play in influencing students' lives. Given that 88% of teachers reported experiencing emotional challenges, it appears that these issues are common and ingrained in the teaching profession. The fact that 70% of teachers experience burnout highlights the stress that is put on teachers. Given that 80% of these educators routinely displayed signs of burnout, immediate assistance is required.

The absence of established support networks for educators is among the most startling discoveries. Remarkably, eighty percent of the teachers said that they received little to no help from their schools to manage their mental health. Teachers have increased emotional stress as a result of this institutional support deficit, which also impairs their capacity to carry out their jobs well. It is obvious that schools must emphasize emotional support as part of their institutional framework given that all of the teachers overwhelmingly agreed on the significance of addressing emotional wellness for the overall efficacy of the educational system. This study's key finding is the beneficial effects of counseling on teachers' emotional wellbeing. The potential of counseling as an effective intervention is highlighted by the considerable positive connection ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$) between enhanced emotional wellbeing and access to counseling services. The substantial association between improved mental health among teachers and increased access to counseling is further supported by the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.78$), which shows that these two variables are highly correlated. These results confirmed numerous studies that have highlighted the positive attitudes of educators towards counseling services (Valine & Hatcher, 1982; Quarto, 1999; Ahmed, 2003) because of its benefits to these educators. This implies that counseling may be very important in easing the emotional difficulties teachers confront and enhancing their general health. The study concluded by emphasizing how important it is that schools provide teachers' emotional assistance top priority. The significance of increasing educators' access to counseling services is highlighted by the substantial association between counseling and enhanced emotional wellbeing. In addition to being vital for the teachers' own well-being, attending to their emotional health is also critical for the efficiency of the educational system as a whole. In order to guarantee that teachers may succeed on both a personal and professional level, schools must acknowledge the emotional demands imposed on their personnel and take proactive measures to give the support they need.

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