

PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH OF PUPILS IN ILORIN WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KWARA STATE

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Abstract

When it comes to one's life chances, poor mental health during childhood has been shown to be strongly associated with poor mental health in adulthood. Teachers in Kwara State's Ilorin West Local Government Area were quizzed about their knowledge of students' mental health as part of the study. The research method used in this study is a descriptive survey. The total number of participants in this study was 3,866. 200 people were randomly selected as part of an error in sampling. Teacher awareness of Pupil mental health questionnaire (TAPMHQ), was used to collect data from the respondents. Teachers from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education at Kwara State University, Malete tested the instrument and found it to be reliable. For the instrument's 0.73 reliability co-efficient, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the collection of the data. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean, and percentage, as well as inferential statistics such as t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Primary school teachers, among others, were found to be aware of the mental health of their students (mean 1.93). It was determined that the level of training and years of experience of teachers influenced their awareness of students' mental health. In addition, seminars and workshops for elementary school teachers were suggested as a means of enhancing their training and experience.

Key Words: Mental health, Teacher awareness, qualification, experience, and gender

Introduction

Personal well-being, closeness to one's family and friends, and service to one's community and society are all dependent on one's mental health. When children feel loved, trusted, understood, and safe, they are better able to cope with life's challenges and become well-rounded, healthy adults. Because children's emotional well-being is just as important

as their physical health, it is imperative that their mental health be safeguarded at both home and school.

An individual who is in good mental health is aware of his or her own abilities, able to deal with the stresses of everyday life, able to work effectively and productively, and able to give back to the community. Subjective well-being, self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential are all examples of what we mean when we talk about mental health (World Health Organization, 2014). A state of mental health is defined as a successful performance of mental functions, which results in productive activities, fulfilling relationships with others and the ability to adapt to change. Adaptability and resilience are also important components of mental health (Graham, 2011). mental well-being is a young person's ability to grow emotionally and intellectually, to maintain satisfying personal relationships, and to develop a sense of right and wrong as well as the ability to resolve and learn from problems. While achieving developmental and emotional milestones and mastering healthy social skills as well as knowing how to deal with problems are all part of a child's mental health (Mental Health Foundation, 2015).

Amy (2020) participated in a research project. Primary school teachers' awareness of their role in the prevention of child mental health issues has become increasingly relevant in light of rising mental health needs in children and young people and cuts in specialist provision. Teachers in primary schools are tasked with a wide range of educational and preventative duties related to their students' mental health because they work with an age group where early intervention is especially important. The study aims to gain a better understanding of the opportunities and barriers primary school teachers may face in their role as preventionists for children's mental health issues. According to these findings, primary school teachers in the UK face a number of challenges related to their role as educators, including dealing with the constraints and demands of the current educational system. People's dissatisfaction with current training on mental health issues, as well as a desire for more education on the subject, can be seen in the study's findings. According to the findings, primary school teachers' roles need to be clarified, and the feasibility of including mental health education and prevention in their already heavy workloads needs to be explored further.

Teacher Awareness of Children's Mental Health Problems was studied by Maria and Kiki (2010). In identifying children with mental health issues, teachers play a significant role. While teachers' views on children's mental health issues are rarely examined, this is not the case with students. Using vignettes depicting children with symptoms of common emotional and behavioural disorders, primary school teachers (N =

1. completed a questionnaire, after which they were asked a series of questions about recognising problems and seeking assistance. Teachers were found to be capable of identifying and grading the severity of problems in their classrooms. Based on the level of education and the number of years of experience, they were much more concerned about

a case study of a child exhibiting symptoms of a behavioural disorder than an emotional disorder.

Qualifications for teachers include academic and professional credentials that allow a person to teach at all educational levels. That includes the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities that are necessary for a successful teaching career. Teachers who are considered highly qualified by Darling (2007) have at least a bachelor's degree in their field of instruction and are fully certified in that field. Because of their education and experience, teachers should be able to adapt to the ever-changing needs of their students and help them develop the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful career path that will last a lifetime. The teacher education programme in Nigeria is currently categorised into three levels based on the training and certifications of the teachers. the three to five-year Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) programme, the bachelor's degree in education (B. Ed), the master's degree in education and the doctorate in education all take between three and five years to complete, as well as the post-graduate diploma in education (P.G.DE) (PGDE). When it comes to students' mental health, the education of primary school teachers matters.

On the basis of the most commonly reported literature on school children's behavioural issues, Achenbach (1991) made this conclusion. According to the findings, many school teachers are aware that students are experiencing behavioural difficulties. The findings also suggest that many school teachers are unaware of and never pay attention to certain mental health issues. As a result, educators with a higher level of education and training are more likely to pay attention to the psychological well-being of their students.

Teaching Anxiety Symptoms: Teachers' Awareness and Skills. Lye Figueroa (2013). Teachers' awareness of students with mental-health needs, particularly those with anxiety issues, was the focus of the study. Additionally, this study examined whether teachers' training backgrounds, acquired degrees, stress levels, and years of teaching influenced their awareness and use of strategies in addressing students with behavioural and attitudinal issues and anxiety issues. According to one of the study's findings, teachers' educational backgrounds and teaching experience have no effect on identifying students who are experiencing anxiety. Students with behavioural and attitudinal issues, as well as those with anxiety issues, were also addressed using similar methods by teachers. Many teachers said they had to deal with anxious students.

Researchers found that teachers were most comfortable dealing with situations like divorce and moving that were familiar to them (Graham, 2011). Most teachers who took part in this research felt strongly about the importance of mental health education and were open to participating in programmes outside of the classroom that focused on mental health education. In addition, many teachers felt isolated when dealing with children with mental-health conditions because of the lack of available resources. They also discovered that high school teachers had little collaboration with SMH professionals. Teachers who have worked in the field for a long time are aware that their students are in need of mental health support on a daily basis, according to the findings of the study. Since new teachers were

not trained in how to understand and support students' mental health, it can be concluded that they are not aware of the importance of doing so. Individual items on the survey, such as questions about the actions teachers took to improve their mental health and the importance they place on school-based mental health supports, were correlated with years of teaching experience.

In 2021, a study on teachers' mental health awareness, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking skills was conducted by Nordy, Corazon, Cynthia, and Mark. Study participants were asked about their knowledge of mental health issues, their emotional intelligence, and their ability to think critically in relation to student achievement. Mental health awareness was found to be high, as well as emotional quotients and critical thinking abilities, according to the study results. Sex, age, and marital status had no effect on mental health awareness; however, educational attainment and length of service had a significant impact on the levels of mental health awareness that participants reported. In terms of emotional quotient, there were no significant differences when categorised by sex (male/female), age, marital status, or length of service; however, there were significant differences when categorised by educational attainment. Regardless of gender, age, marital status, educational attainment, or length of service, there were no significant differences in critical thinking skills. According to gender, age, marital status, education level, and length of service there were no significant differences in performance. Relationships between mental health awareness, emotional quotients, and critical thinking skills and performance were found.

Statement of the problem

When it comes to one's life chances, poor mental health during childhood has been shown to be strongly associated with poor mental health in adulthood. People with mental illness may have a negative impact on human capital accumulation by limiting their education and productivity, which may have long-term consequences for employment, income, and other outcomes. As a result, it has been found that many teachers and parents are unaware of the importance of mental health among primary school students, and some students are experiencing poor mental health as a result of home-related factors with respect to the parents or school-related factors with respect to the attitude of teachers or peers. There is a risk that teachers and parents are unaware of the prevalence of poor mental health in their students, resulting in a lack of intervention. Teens and young adults are often plagued by mental health issues. Therefore, researchers surveyed primary school teachers in the Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State about their knowledge of the mental health of their students.

Research Questions

The following research question was raised in this study;

2. What is the level of primary school teachers' awareness of pupils mental health in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were generated to guide this Study;

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in primary school teacher's awareness of pupil's mental health in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State based on gender.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in teachers' awareness of pupil's mental health in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State based on qualification

Research Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in primary school teachers' awareness of pupil's mental health in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State based on Years of working experience.

Methodology

The research method used in this study is a descriptive survey. In this study, the total population was 3,866. (Kwara State School Annual Census Report 2019). 200 people were randomly selected as part of an error in sampling. Teacher awareness of Pupil mental health questionnaire (TAPMHQ), was used to collect data from the respondents. Teachers from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education at Kwara State University, Malete tested the instrument and found it to be reliable. Teachers from outside the sample schools were given 25 copies of the instrument as part of the test-retest method, which was used to determine the instrument's accuracy and reliability. As a result, the instrument's reliability co-efficient was calculated as 0.73 using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the collection of the data. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean, and percentage, as well as inferential statistics such as t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Results

Research Question: What is the level of primary school teachers' awareness of pupil's mental health in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Table 1 : Mean scores, standard deviation, percentage, frequency counts showing primary school teachers' awareness of pupil's mental health in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State

S/N	STATEMENTS	Highly aware	Aware	Not aware	Mean
1	Mental health is a complete state of physical, mental, and social wellbeing	84(42.0)	61(30.5)	55(27.5)	2.15
2	Mental health is completely different from psychological experience	77(38.5)	74(37.0)	49(24.5)	2.14
3	Mental health is characterized by experiencing and exhibiting different thoughts, behaviors and feelings	76(38.0)	64(32.0)	60(30.0)	2.08
4	Good mental health lies in the improvement of resilience skill, emotional experience and social interaction	73(36.5)	56(28.0)	71(35.5)	2.01
5	Poor mental health can lead to Emotional disorder such as anxiety and depression	72(36.0)	59(29.5)	69(34.5)	2.02
6	State of mental health informs action and reaction to things happening in the environment	50(25.0)	70(35.0)	80(40.0)	1.85
7	Hunger, poverty, and helplessness impact individual state of mental health	43(21.5)	72(36.0)	85(42.5)	1.79
8	State of mental health is affected when problem is particularly severe and persistent over time	45(22.5)	89(44.5)	66(33.0)	1.90
9	Most suicide thoughts are caused by poor state of mental health	44(22.0)	93(46.5)	63(31.5)	1.91
10	It is very important for individuals to always seek for mental health support	42(21.0)	103(51.5)	55(27.5)	1.94
11	Mental health problem could cause individual to lose his or her sanity	64(32.0)	19(9.5)	117(58.5)	1.74
12	Mental health is associated with risk factor which include low self-esteem, physical illness, career challenges etc.	59(29.5)	19(9.5)	122(61.0)	1.69
13	Mental health is associated with protective factor which includes affection, faith and spirituality, successful experience and sense of achievement	51(25.5)	40(20.0)	109(54.5)	1.71
14	The state of individual mental health informs healthy living	86(43.0)	53.26.5	61(30.5)	2.13
	Weighted Mean				1.93

Decision rule: Not Aware=00-1.49, Aware=1.50-2.49, Highly Aware =2.50-3.00 Note:
The figures in parentheses are in percentages

First-grade teachers' awareness of students' mental health is depicted in Table 1. The following items were mentioned as being familiar to the teachers: Good mental health is

characterised by the development of resilience skills, emotional experience, and social interaction (Mean=2.01), while poor mental health can lead to Emotional disorders such as anxiety and depression (Mean=2.14). Individuals' mental health is impacted by a variety of factors, including poverty, hunger, and helplessness (Mean=1.79), the severity and persistence of a problem (Mean=1.90), the prevalence of suicidal thoughts (Mean=1.91), the importance of seeking help for mental health issues (Mean=1.94), the risk of losing one's sanity (Mean=1.74), and the need for mental healing (Mean=1.74). Primary school teachers are now more aware of their students' mental health in light of the results. Primary school teachers in Kwara State's Ilorin West Local Government Area are aware of their students' mental health, as evidenced by the weighted mean (1.93).

Test of Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in primary school teacher's awareness of pupil's mental health in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State based on gender.

Table Two: Summary of independent sample t-test showing significant difference in primary school teacher's awareness of pupil's mental health based on gender

Gender	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.	Remark
Male	83	28.39	11.101	1.530	198	.128	Not Significant
Female	117	26.05	10.280				

Primary school teachers' awareness of students' mental health varies significantly by gender, as shown in Table 2. Teachers in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria, were not significantly more aware of their students' mental health based on gender ($t = 1.530$; $df = 198$; $P > .05$). Analysis of variance results, shown in Table 3, show that F was 10.409 ($F_{2,197} = 10.409$) and observed probability was $.000$, which is less than the fixed probability of 0.05 ($P < 0.05$). In other words, the null hypothesis that teachers in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State are equally knowledgeable about mental health issues was found to be false. This meant that in the Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, teachers' awareness of students' mental health varied significantly based on their qualifications ($F_{2,197} = 10.409$, $p < 0.05$). According to the findings, teachers' awareness of mental health in Kwara State's Ilorin West Local Government Area differed significantly based on their qualifications ($p < 0.05$). As a result, the hypothesis is not rejected.

because the significant level (.128) is greater than 0.05 in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State's primary school teachers' awareness of students' mental health.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in teachers' awareness of mental health in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State based on qualification

Table Three: Showing the summary of Analysis Variance (ANOVA) on significant difference in teachers' awareness of mental health in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State based on qualification

Source	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Decision
Between Groups	2162.941	2	1081.470			
Within Groups	20466.979	197	103.893	10.409	.000	rejected
Total	22629.920	199				

Analysis of variance results, shown in Table 3, show that F was 10.409($F_{2,197}=10.409$) and observed probability was .000, which is less than the fixed probability of 0.05 ($P < 0.05$). In other words, the null hypothesis that teachers in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State are equally knowledgeable about mental health issues was found to be false. This meant that in the Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, teachers' awareness of students' mental health varied significantly based on their qualifications ($F_{2,197}=10.409$, $p < 0.05$). According to the findings, teachers' awareness of mental health in Kwara State's Ilorin West Local Government Area differed significantly based on their qualifications.

Table Four: Summary of Bonferroni's Post Hoc pairwise Comparison of Teacher Qualifications

Qualification	Mean Score	M.Ed	B.Sc/Ed	NCE
NCE	25.26			*
B.Sc/Ed	27.74		*	
M.Ed	42.00	*		

According to table 4, there is a significant difference between the educational qualifications NCE, B.Sc/Ed and M.Ed, which explains the significant difference found in table 3. Teachers in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State, with M. Ed. degrees

(Mean = 42.00) were found to have a significant impact on students' mental health awareness.

Research Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in primary school teachers' awareness, mental health pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State based on Years of working experience.

Table Five: Showing the summary of Analysis Variance (ANOVA) on significant difference in teachers' awareness of mental health of pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State based on experience

Source	Sum of Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Decision	Square
Between Groups	1306.715	2	653.358			
Within Groups	21323.205	197	108.240	6.036	.003	rejected
Total	22629.920	199				

$F_{2,197}=6.036$, and the observed probability of .003 is less than the fixed probability value of 0.05 ($P<0.05$), according to the results of the analysis of variance in Table 5. There was no significant difference in teachers' awareness of mental health in Kwara State's Ilorin West Local Government Area, according to the null hypothesis. There were significant differences between teachers' awareness of students' mental health in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State ($F_{2,197}=6.036$, $p<0.05$), according to this study ($F_{2,197}$). Results show that teachers in Kwara State's Ilorin West Local Government Area are significantly less aware of mental health issues than would be expected based on previous experience.

Table Six: Summary of Bonferroni's Post Hoc pairwise Comparison of Teacher Qualifications

Experience	Mean Score	11-15years above	6-10years	1-5years
1-5years	24.90			*
6-10years	26.58		*	
11-15years above	30.50	*		

As shown in Table 6, there is a significant difference among the following years of experience: 1-5years, 6-10years and 11-15years over. Ilorin West Local Government Area,

Kwara State, teachers with 11-15 years of experience (Mean = 30.50) have a significant impact on the awareness of the mental health of students.

Discussion of Findings

Primary school teachers were aware of their students' mental health, according to the findings of this study (mean 1.93). A study conducted by Maria and Kiki in 2010 found that teachers were aware of children's mental health issues. While teachers' views on children's mental health issues are rarely examined, this is not the case with students. Teachers were found to be capable of identifying and grading the severity of problems in their classrooms. It was based on their educational qualifications and years of experience that they were more concerned about a child's behavioural disorder symptoms than an emotional disorder vignette. Educators have lost interest in mental health issues among their students because they know how important it is for them to spot those who need help.

Second, this study found that primary school teachers in Kwara State's Ilorin West Local Government Area were not significantly different in their awareness of their students' mental health based on gender ($t = 1.530$; $df = 198$; $P > 0.05$). Teachers' mental health awareness, emotional quotient, and critical thinking abilities are all linked to their performance, as researchers Nordy, Corazon, Cynthia, and Mark (2021) discovered. Study participants were asked about their knowledge of mental health issues, their emotional intelligence, and their ability to think critically in relation to student achievement. Findings from this study revealed no significant differences in performance or mental health awareness between men and women of any age or marital status, according to one of the findings.

As a result of this study, it was found that teachers in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State were significantly more aware of their students' mental health based on their qualifications ($F_{2,197} = 10.409$, $P = 0.01$). Darling (2007) hypothesised that primary school teachers' awareness of mental health issues among their students was influenced by their academic qualifications. According to Achenbach (1991), school children's behavioural problems have been documented in literatures. According to the findings, many school teachers are aware that their students are experiencing behavioural difficulties. The findings also suggest that many school teachers are unaware of and never pay attention to certain mental health issues. Furthermore, teachers with a higher level of education and training are more aware of the psychological well-being of their students than teachers with a lower level of education and training.

The study's fourth finding revealed that teachers in the Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State were significantly different in their awareness of students' mental health ($F_{2,197} = 6.036$, $p < 0.05$). Teachers are an underutilised resource for mental health services, according to Graham (2011). Teachers who have been in service for a long time are aware that their students need mental health support on a daily basis. It was found that new teachers are unaware of the need to support their students' mental

health because the training programme designed for them did not include how to understand and support their students' mental health.

Conclusion

We deduced from the results of this study that teachers have a responsibility to be aware of their students' mental health and to offer solutions for their improvement. Teachers' awareness of mental health issues among their students was heavily influenced by their training and experience, but this influence did not take into account the gender of the teachers.

Recommendations

1. For primary school teachers, it was recommended that they attend seminars and workshops to learn more about mental health and other issues that can affect students' social, emotional, and other abilities.
2. Teachers should be encouraged to participate in on-the-job training in order to gain additional education and training.

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