BABCOCK UNIVERSITY
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COLLEGE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
2022/2023 PhD Thesis Abstract

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RT: Mobile-Phone Application and Didactic Intervention on Mental Health Literacy and Referral Practices among Religious Leaders in Selected LGAs in Ogun State, Nigeria

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AB: Mental Health Literacy (MHL) refers to the knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders which aid their recognition and management. Studies have shown that good MHL is associated with improved mental help-giving behaviours. Evidence from literatures have shown that although Religious Leaders (RLs) are the first point of contact for mental health needs, many struggle with the understanding of mental health related conditions, which limits appropriate direct and referral services and end up complicating situations. Studies have also shown the effectiveness of mobile-phone application and didactic interventions in improving MHL and Referral Practices (RP) among RLs. However, there is paucity of these interventions in Ogun State. Hence, this study assessed the effect of a mobile-phone application and didactic intervention on MHL and RP among RLs in selected LGAs in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Sequential embedded experimental mixed-method research design was adopted. The population of study was 8103. A sample size of 133 RLs was determined using Comparison of means formula. Voluntary sampling was used to recruit participants. The RLs were grouped per LGA into Experimental Group 1 (EG1) for didactic intervention (48), Experimental Group 2 (EG2) for mobile-phone application (40) and Control Group (CG) for senescence education (45). Also, a total of 43 RLs according to standard participated in five Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for one-hour per day. Data were collected using a FGD guide to identify relevant perspectives for the development of the intervention. A validated questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha internal consistency ranged from 0.80 to 0.82 was used

to collect data at baseline, immediate post-intervention and 12th week follow-up, while intervention was implemented for two hours for six weeks. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics at 5% level of significance. The qualitative data was analysed thematically.

At baseline, there was no significant difference in mean score of MHL for the EGs and CG: EG1(52.63 ± 20.26), EG2 (55.25 ± 23.67), CG (62.36 ± 25.36), $F(2, 130) = 2.17$, $p > 0.05$. However, there was a significant difference in mean score of RP in EG1 compared with EG2 and CG: EG1(0.35 ± 1.06), EG2 (0.05 ± 0.32), CG (0.00 ± 0.00), $F(2, 130) = 3.89$, $p < 0.05$. At immediate post-intervention, the mean score differences of MHL: EG1 (37.23), EG2 (37.23), CG (-0.36), $F(2, 129) = 34.85$ and RP: EG1(3.83), EG2 (1.24), CG (0.00), $F(2, 129) = (234.92)$ were significantly higher for the EGs. Similarly, at 12th week follow-up the mean score differences for MHL: EG1(34.14), EG2 (39.18), CG (-5.65), $F(2, 128) = 53.94$ and RP: EG1(3.86), EG2 (2.80), CG (0.00), $F(2, 128) = 169.59$ were significantly higher for the EGs. The themes that emerged from the qualitative findings were spiritual aetiology, disease-denial and mental disorder stigma.

Mobile-phone application and didactic interventions were effective in improving MHL, while didactic intervention was more effective in improving RP of RLs. The study recommended promotion of mobile-phone application and didactic interventions for the improvement of MHL and RP among RLs in Ogun State.

Keywords: Mental health app, Mental health literacy, Referral practices, Religious leaders, Training intervention

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