



Emotional Regulation and Analytical Thinking as Correlates of Clinical Psychologist Therapeutic Counselling Competence in Lagos State

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Abstract

This study investigated emotional regulation and analytical thinking as correlates of clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence in Lagos State. Correlational research design was adopted for this study. One research question and two hypotheses were raised to guide the study. Also, 50 clinical psychologists practicing in Lagos State were purposively selected for the study and three validated scales were used to collect valuable data for the study. Collected data were analyzed using Multiple Regression and Pearson Product Moment Correlation and at 0.05 level of significance. The outcome of the study findings shows that positive relationship exists among emotional regulation, analytical thinking and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence. Emotional regulation correlates significantly with clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence; $r(48) = .523, p < .05$. Likewise, analytical thinking correlates significantly with clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence; $r(48) = .659, p < .05$. Therefore, it was recommended that clinical psychologist should endeavour to develop competence that would enable them to understand the application of ethical theoretical principles and professional guidelines in undertaking professional tasks in an effective and appropriate manner.

Keywords: Analytical thinking, Clinical psychologist, Competence, Counseling, Emotional regulation, Therapeutic.

1. Introduction

Clinical psychologists' are important professional mental and behavioural health management care practitioners that specialize in helping people develop needed capacity to manage, cope and overcome their behavioural and mental disorders challenges. Clinical Psychologists do provide clinical and counselling services through which they assess and treat emotional, mental and behavioural disorders. They skillfully integrate scientific counselling psychological principles and techniques in treating human problems in other to modify and enhance positive change. This disposition requires Clinical Psychologists to showcase competence as they provide evidence-based psychological treatments to varied clients in need of behavioural modification utilizing different therapeutic techniques (American Psychological Association, 2025). Clinical Psychologists are professionally skilled at discovery the source of mental health and behavioural issues and their competence on these require them to be less anxious and self-efficacious in applying different therapeutic techniques (American Psychological Association, 2025).

Snoek, Anarte-Ortiz, Anderbro, Cyranka, Hendrieckx, Hermanns, Indelicate, McGuire, Mocan, Nefs,

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Polonsky, Stewart and Vallis (2024) affirmed that clinical psychologists are specialists in the treatment and management of behavioural and mental disorders, their use of causal neurobiological, socio-psychological procedures, enable them employ appropriate analytic apparatuses to attain effective psycho-therapeutic gain. Clinical psychologists need to be vastly proficient in their diagnostic handlings of mental and psycho-socio-emotional problems via the application of enriched bio-psycho-social classical methods. This because therapeutic treatment more often than not is focused on particular issue of concern based on specific mental health challenge of the person in need of psycho-emotional support (Snoek net al., 2024).

Understanding mental health challenges of clients is a required competence that would facilitate successful professional practice of a clinical psychologist. Their ability to have comprehensive knowledge of mental health disorders, neurocognitive issues and psychological abnormalities of mental behavioural health disorders problems in people with mental and behavioural health disorders would positively impact on their professional functioning (Snoek net al., 2024). However, Wampold and Owen (2021) posit that it is of note that in actual clinical practice, clinical psychologists differ when it comes to therapeutic positive accomplishment and this contingent is determined clinical psychologists' competence. Finsrud et al. (2022) stated that professionalism and expressed competence of clinical psychologist is often

dependent on their behavioural dispositions and attitude towards challenges. Research efforts to assess clinical proficiencies as a measure to guarantee harmless and proper clinical exercise is documented in research (Gonsalvez, Deane, Terry, Nasstasia & Shires, 2021) using different frameworks. However, experimental evidence of competence as a factor in enhancing clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence in Nigeria is lacking. Therefore, to address this research gap, this study investigated *emotional regulation and analytical thinking* as correlates of clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence in Lagos State.

Koddebusch and Hermann (2018) averred that competence can be ascribed as a person ability and capability demonstrated and understand the application of ethical theoretical principles and professional guidelines in undertaking professional responsibilities effectively in an appropriate way in accordance to professional normative ethical demands. Mills, Middleton, Schafer, Fitzpatrick, Short and Cieza (2020) stated that competency is the ability to showcase requisite attitudinal disposition, skills and knowledge for a specific field: attitudinal disposition of an individual is associated with their disposed beliefs, their observed professional work behaviour and performance of tasks. Skills are specific expressed motor or cognitive abilities that enhances clinicians' productivity. Mills et al. (2020) noted that clinical Psychologists who exhibit capability often provide therapeutic healing effectively to positively enhance the general wellbeing of their clients.

Also, outcome of research conducted by Hui et al. (2023) stated that clinical competence creatively incorporate values, knowledge and professionalism during professional practice of psychologist while managing behavioural and mental health crises. Professional capability is highly essential for clinical psychologist to render beneficial care to behaviourally distressed individual. Clinical competency includes *emotion regulation*, analytical thinking, which often help to enhances effective functioning during clinical practice. Furthermore, Hui, et al (2023) affirmed that surge in professional therapeutic capability enhances clients' contentment and their strong commitment to positive behavioural change.

The experience and expression of emotional regulation involves a multidimensional and dynamic process. It could be consciously done in the like of a person deciding to be calm in the face of a stressful experience or unconsciously done by taking a deep breath and automatically feeling relieved (McRae & Gross, 2020). This indicates that and individuals state of emotional balance is basically determined by their ability to regulate their emotions positively. Iwakabe et al. (2023) affirmed that when people are able to regulate their emotions, they tend to effectively manage and overcome their daily challenges and maintain a sound mental health. A key factor that impacts on clinical

psychologist therapeutic counselling competence is their ability to regulate their emotions (Iwakabe et al., 2023).

Larsson, Andersson and Zetterqvist (2019) posited that expressed poor emotional regulation by clinical psychologist during therapeutic clinical counselling sessions have been identified as an underlying factor that could impact negatively on the mental health of clients. The implication of emotional regulation on clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence has consistently attracted global concern in the treatment outcome of psychopathological disorders (Nauphal, Curreri & Sauer-Zavala, 2021). Emotional regulation of an individual is substantially appraised on their ability to manage their emotional experience and that of other people effectively. Emotional regulation is proven to effective influence behavioural conduct of diverse professionals in helping professions (Lang, 2024).

For years, psychological scientists profoundly agreed that the use of analytical thinking is essential in the practice and development of clinical psychology because a critical aspect that is interlinked with decision making during clinical psychological sessions is the level of a clinical psychologist ability to think analytically (Panda, 2020). Thus, analytical thinking enhances therapist's intellectual ability and therapeutic competence (Koddebusch & Hermann, 2018). This is in view of the fact that analytical thinking facilitates creative and result oriented therapeutic sessions (Brodowicz, 2025).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Clinical psychologist inability to self-regulate emotions and engage in sound analytical thinking could make them to be ineffective in utilizing and applying effective problem-solving tools and engaging in intelligent decision-making. When this occurs, concern clinical Psychologist would express poor competence in resolving behavioural and mental health problems during clinical therapeutic sessions. This development could reflect in lack of ability to help clients self-rediscover their life space and overcome their predicament. This makes investigating *emotional regulation and analytical thinking* as correlates of clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence in Lagos State germane.

1.2 Objective

Empirically, this study examined if *emotional regulation and analytical thinking* correlates with clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence in Lagos State.

1.3 Research Question

1. What relationship exists between *emotional regulation*, analytical thinking and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence in Lagos State?

1.4 Hypothesis

1. Emotional regulation will not correlate with clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence
2. There is no significant relationship between analytical thinking and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence

2. Methodology

Correlational research design was adopted for this study. Also, 50 clinical psychologists practicing in Lagos State were purposively selected for the study.

2.1 Instruments

Clinical Psychologist Therapeutic Counselling Competence Scale is a researcher self-made scale used to measure clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence. It has 7 items. For example it has items such as during assessment and when carrying out interventions I have the ability to draw on knowledge of common mental health problems and their presentation; during assessment and when carrying out interventions I have the ability to draw on knowledge of the ways in which mental health problems can impact on functioning, etc. It is a 4-point Likert rating response pattern questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.85 gotten through a test-re-test method.

Clinical Psychologist Emotional Regulation Scale is a researcher self-made scale used to measure clinical psychologist level of emotional regulation during therapeutic counselling sessions. It is a 7-item scale with a response pattern ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Test-re-test method was used to establish the scale reliability coefficient of 0.85.

Clinical Psychologist Analytical Thinking Scale is a researcher self-made scale used to measure clinical psychologist level of emotional regulation during therapeutic counselling sessions. It is a 7-item scale with a response pattern ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Test-re-test method was used to establish the scale reliability coefficient of 0.83.

2.2 Method of Data Administration

Researcher personally contacted clinical psychologist used for the study at their offices discussed the essence of the study with them and got their consent. The essence of the study was explained to them after which questionnaires were administered and collected back for analysis.

2.3 Method of Data Analyses

Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple regression was used to analyze collected data at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

3. Research Findings

Research Question One: What relationship exist between emotional regulation, analytical thinking and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling

competence in Lagos State?

Matrix Table shows the positive relationship exists between emotional regulation, analytical thinking and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence. The table shows that analytical thinking has the highest correlation with clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence ($r=.659, p<0.05$) followed by emotional regulation ($r=.523, p<0.05$).

Ho1: Emotional regulation will not correlate with clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence

Table 2 shows that emotional regulation positively correlates with clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence; $r(48) = .523, p<.05$. This value of the mean 56.23 and standard deviation 9.13 attest to this. The hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between analytical thinking and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence

The result above indicates that significant relationship exists between analytical thinking positively and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence; $r(48) = .659, p<.05$. This value of the mean 64.48 and standard deviation 11.06 attest to this. The hypothesis is therefore rejected.

4. Discussion of Research Outcome

The study found that positive relationship exists between emotional regulation, analytical thinking and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence. Table 1 shows that analytical thinking has the highest correlation with clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence ($r=.659, p<0.05$) followed by emotional regulation ($r=.523, p<0.05$). This development indicates that analytical thinking and emotional regulation are vital factors that can impact on clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence. This supports the assertion that understanding mental health challenges of clients is a required competence that would facilitate successful professional practice of a clinical psychologist. Their ability to have comprehensive knowledge of mental health disorders, neurocognitive issues and psychological abnormalities of mental behavioural health disorders problems in people with mental and behavioural health disorders would positively impact on their professional functioning (Snoek et al., 2024). It was equally found that emotional regulation positively correlates with clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence; $r(48) = .523, p<.05$. This value of the mean 56.23 and standard deviation 9.13 attest to this. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. It invariably suggests the fact that for clinical psychologist to express competence they have to have the capacity to self-regulate their emotions and be emotionally stable during therapeutic sessions. This is because experience and expression of emotional regulation involves a multidimensional and

Table 1: Emotional regulation, analytical thinking (independent variables) and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence (dependent variable): Matrix Table showing relationship that exists between variables

Variables	N	Mean	Std Dev	1	2	3
Clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence	50	72.51	13.68	1.000		
Emotional Regulation	50	56.23	9.13	.523	1.000	
Analytical Thinking	50	61.48	11.06	.659	.524	1.000

Table 2: Showing correlation between emotional regulation and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence using PPMC

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	Df	P
Clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence	50	72.51	13.68	.523	298	Sig
Emotional regulation	50	56.23	9.13			

Table 3: Showing correlation between analytical thinking and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence using PPMC

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	Df	P
clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence	50	72.51	13.68	.659	298	Sig
Analytical thinking	50	61.48	11.06			

dynamic process. It could be consciously done in the like of a person deciding to be calm in the face of a stressful experience or unconsciously done by taking a deep breath and automatically feeling relieved (McRae & Gross, 2020). This indicates that and individuals state of emotional balance is basically determined by their ability to regulate their emotions positively. Ability to regulate emotions stands as a key factor that impacts on clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence (Iwakabe et al., 2023). Larsson, Andersson and Zetterqvist (2019) posited that expressed poor emotional regulation by clinical psychologist during therapeutic clinical counselling sessions have been identified as an underlying factor that could impact negatively on the mental health of clients.

Furthermore, this study found that significant relationship exists between analytical thinking positively and clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence; $r(48) = .659, p < .05$. This value of the mean 64.48 and standard deviation 11.06 attest to this. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This corroborates the fact that the use of analytical thinking is essential in the practice and development of clinical psychology because a critical aspect that is interlinked with decision making during clinical psychological sessions is the level of a clinical psychologist ability to think analytically (Panda, 2020). Thus, analytical thinking enhances therapist's intellectual ability and therapeutic competence (Koddebusch & Hermann,

2018). This is in view of the fact that analytical thinking facilitates creative and result oriented therapeutic sessions (Brodowicz, 2025).

5. Conclusion

Emotional regulation and analytical thinking are significant factors that enhance clinical psychologist therapeutic counselling competence so it is necessary they develop these capacities to ensure high efficiency, productivity and valuable mental health care delivery that address the needs of their clients.

6. Recommendations

1. Clinical psychologist should endeavour to develop competence that would enable them to understand the application of ethical theoretical principles and professional guidelines in undertaking professional tasks in an effective and appropriate manner.
2. Clinical psychologist should ensure they develop the capacity to regulate their emotions as a means to help them maintain balance and improve their daily productive function.
3. Clinical psychologist should ensure they develop the capacity to think analytically as a measure to help them apply rationality in solving a problem in a competent manner.

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