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**The Relationship between Levels of Irrational Beliefs and Psychological Distress by
Secondary School Teachers in Kiambu County, Kenya**

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The Relationship between Levels of Irrational Beliefs and Psychological Distress by Secondary School Teachers in Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: This study sought to “establish the relationship between levels of irrational beliefs and psychological distress by secondary school teachers in Kiambu County, Kenya

Methodology: This study used a quasi-experimental research design. This study was carried out among selected teachers in secondary schools in Kiambu County. Kiambu County has a total of 303 secondary schools with a population of 3,617 teachers (County Government of Kiambu 12 sub counties, however the target population will be the teachers in Thika town Sub County. Multistage sampling technique was used at three levels; sampling stage level one was used for selecting the schools at county level where Thika town Sub County was selected. The final overall sample size of 120. The study used the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale - 21 Items (DASS-21). Data was collected using questionnaire. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyse the data. Data was presented in form of tables.

Findings: The results revealed that majority of the respondents (78.5%) had a moderate demandingness level. For Low Frustration Tolerance, majority of the respondents (72.9%) had a moderate Low Frustration Tolerance level. For awfulizing, majority of the respondents (86.9%) had moderate levels of awfulizing. For depreciation, majority of the respondents (54.2%) had moderate depreciation levels. The results also indicated that correlation analysis showed a moderately positive correlation coefficient (r) of 0.222, with $p < 0.05$. This suggested that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between levels of Irrational Beliefs and Psychological Distress.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study used the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy approach. Schools and educational authorities should establish support systems for teachers experiencing psychological distress. This may include providing access to counseling services, peer support groups, or employee assistance programs aimed at addressing mental health concerns in the workplace.

Keywords: *Irrational Beliefs, Psychological Distress, Secondary School Teachers*

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding the relationship between psychological factors and occupational stress among teachers is crucial for promoting their well-being and enhancing educational outcomes. One significant psychological factor that has garnered attention in this regard is irrational beliefs. According to Ellis (1962), irrational beliefs refer to rigid, unrealistic, and illogical convictions that individuals hold, which can contribute to psychological distress. Among teachers, who often navigate demanding work environments characterized by high workloads, limited resources, and interpersonal challenges, the influence of irrational beliefs on psychological well-being is particularly pertinent. As noted by Mahfar (2018), irrational beliefs have been identified as major determinants of emotional problems among teachers, exacerbating stress, anxiety, and depression. Despite the recognition of the detrimental effects of irrational beliefs, there remains a need for comprehensive research exploring the relationship between irrational beliefs and psychological distress specifically among teachers.

Previous studies have highlighted the detrimental impact of psychological distress on teacher effectiveness, job satisfaction, and retention. For instance, Bermejo-Toro and Prieto-Ursa (2006) conducted research in Spain to see if illogical beliefs held by educators were associated with various indicators of professional distress. Seventy-one secondary school educators from the Madrid area were included in the study. Teachers' illogical thinking was measured with the help of the Teacher Irrational Beliefs Scale. Thirty-two percent of the educators had high levels of illogical beliefs, according to the study. The study's results showed a correlation between teachers' levels of role-related stress, burnout, psychological or psychosomatic problems, and depression and the degree to which they exhibited a tendency toward irrational thinking. Low frustration tolerance and authoritarian attitudes towards students were identified as the two irrational attitudes most closely associated with the symptoms chosen as measures of teacher psychological distress. There were also substantial associations between irrational beliefs and absenteeism-related factors.

In a study done in Britain, Turner (2018) surveyed a group of recreational and semi-professional athletes to examine the reliability and validity of the irrational performance beliefs inventory (iPBI). The iPBI and demographic questions were completed at a single time point by 550 athletes (312 males and 212 women; Mage = 38.04 13.80 years). The 28-item iPBI had a fit index in confirmation that was below the threshold for acceptability (comparative fit index [CFI] = 0.84). A 20-item version (iPBI-2) was created (CFI = 0.91) after potentially problematic items were eliminated. According to the findings, amateur athletes scored higher on fundamental irrational beliefs and low frustration tolerance than semi-professional athletes, but lower on depreciation.

Turner (2019) investigated the role of maladaptive schemas in the connection between irrational beliefs and emotional suffering among athletes in the United Kingdom. Triathletes (n = 124), decathletes (n = 9), swimmers (7), bikers (17), and runners (57) were all volunteers for the study. The PROCESS macro was used to examine simple mediation models in a cross-sectional study using a single time point. The research found that the link between irrational beliefs and psychological discomfort (anxiety and depression) was totally mediated by maladaptive schemas.

Caretakers of people with traumatic brain injury (TBI) were the focus of a study conducted by Stebbins (2015), who looked into the link between irrational schematic beliefs and psychological discomfort in Australia. A mail-in cross-sectional survey was used for the research. One hundred sixteen carers of people with TBI who were members of community support groups and brain

injury organisations in the Australian states of Victoria and Queensland took part in the study. Measures of injury severity and the extent to which a TBI patient's personality and conduct have changed were also used in this research. Greater adherence to irrational beliefs was connected to higher levels of global psychological distress, according to hierarchical regression models, even after allowing for the impact of characteristics of the caregiving scenario and the individual with TBI. In particular, all types of mental anguish were linked to illogical worrying beliefs.

Santarpia, Bodoasca, Cantonetti, Ferri & Borgogni (2023) conducted a study in Italy “examining the relationship between irrational beliefs and workplace well-being, focusing on secondary irrational beliefs such as self-depreciation, low frustration tolerance, and awfulizing.” Data were collected from 3576 employees working in four business and consulting companies. The results showed that awfulizing and the general irrationality component were adversely correlated with well-being, with the fulfillment of reduced performance expectations acting as a mediating factor. This suggests that irrational beliefs contribute to internalizing issues, including stress, anxiety, and depression. The study contributes to the irrational beliefs literature by delineating their common and unique associations with workplace well-being. While Santarpia study focused on the relationship between irrational beliefs and workplace well-being among employees in the business and consulting sector, the current study focused on similar dynamics among teachers in Kenya, a different professional context.

Popov, Popov, and Damjanović (2015) conducted a study to “explore the relationship between sources of workplace stress, specific irrational beliefs, and levels of psychological distress among teachers in Serbia.” Drawing on the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy framework, which has been previously utilized in educational settings to develop intervention strategies for reducing teacher stress, the study aimed to elucidate the factors contributing to stress in teachers. The study included 186 instructors from Zrenjanin and Sombor who were convenience sampled and had an average age of 40. They finished the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale, the Teacher Irrational Belief Scale, and the Sources of Work Stress Scale. Structural equation modeling was employed for data analysis. The study revealed that both stressors and irrational beliefs directly impacted general stress among teachers. Additionally, irrational beliefs partially mediated the relationship between stressors and stress symptoms.

Mahfar (2018) conducted a study in Malaysia focusing on teacher stress and its association with irrational beliefs, aiming to investigate the mediating role of irrational beliefs between activating events and stress among teachers. The research collected data from 201 teachers in seven Malaysian Fully Residential Schools using stratified random sampling. Utilizing the Teacher Irrational Beliefs, Teacher Activating Event, and Teacher Stress questionnaires, the study measured the levels of irrational beliefs, activating events, and stress experienced by teachers. Correlation analysis revealed positive relationships among the variables, while regression analysis demonstrated that irrational beliefs mediated the relationship between activating events and stress among FRS teachers. The study underscores the significance of irrational beliefs as important determinants of emotional distress among teachers. While Mahfar's research emphasizes the mediation effect of irrational beliefs, the current study sought to investigate the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring in mitigating irrational beliefs and reducing work-related stress among teachers in Kenya.

Tanhan (2014) investigated what influences elementary and secondary school teachers in Turkey to hold irrational ideas. The study employed a descriptive survey research approach,

with 370 randomly selected teachers from the province of Van in eastern Turkey serving as the study's sample. Study findings showed that whereas 87.3% of participants held rational opinions, 12.7% held irrational ones. Depressive symptoms, work satisfaction, and years of experience were revealed to be the strongest predictors of teachers' rational and illogical opinions.

Turner (2017) conducted a study that compared the effects of non-sport participants, recreational sport participants, and elite athletes on their own illogical beliefs and levels of psychological discomfort. This research also compared the levels of irrational belief and psychological distress among females and males, between the three sport participation groups, and between individual and team sport players. The data showed that the links between primary irrational beliefs and emotional anguish were mediated by secondary irrational beliefs. Analyses comparing the two groups found that elite athletes showed the least amount of depreciating illogical beliefs and that female elite athletes reported more signs of despair than their male counterparts. Research and practical applications of the findings are explored.

Otean (2017) did research to determine the nature and extent to which irrational beliefs contribute to emotional suffering. Twenty-six research met the study's requirements. Several variables' potential to act as moderators were investigated, and effect sizes were calculated using a random-effects model. Overall, the correlation between irrational beliefs and emotional anguish was moderately negative ($r = 0.31$). Unconditional acceptance beliefs were shown to have the strongest correlation ($r = 0.41$).

Turner (2016) conducted a study employing REBT to help MMA players overcome illogical beliefs and develop a more accepting attitude toward themselves. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of REBT on three male MMA athletes' irrational self-deprecation beliefs and USA using a single-case multiple-baseline across participant's design. Visual and statistical evaluations showed that two of the three athletes maintained their increased USA and decreased total irrationality and self-deprecation at 6 months post-REBT. Using social validation data, all athletes were able to improve their ability to control their emotions and their overall performance. Recommendations are made for the future use of REBT with athletes, and the mechanisms through which it facilitated improvements in self-deprecation and USA are examined.

An elite-level archer who was suffering performance-related anxiety before and during competition was the subject of a case study by Wood, (2015), which offered a detailed account of the application and efficacy of seven individual REBT sessions. REBT represents a specific form of cognitive-behavioral therapy that focuses on identifying and challenging irrational beliefs. The data showed significant reductions in IBs both immediately and over the course of 6 months, along with improvements in rational beliefs, self-efficacy, feeling of control, and archery performance. Evidence from this case study suggests that REBT is a useful intervention for improving athletes' thought, feeling, and action regulation in the pursuit of peak performance.

Irrational beliefs and psychological distress were the subject of a 2016 meta-analysis by Visla. Using a random-effects model, a meta-analysis of 83 main studies and 100 independent samples was conducted to investigate the connection between illogical beliefs and emotional distress. The following factors were analyzed for their potential to moderate the relationship between irrational beliefs and psychological distress: (a) distress measure, (b) irrational belief measure, (c) irrational belief type, (d) method of distress assessment, (e) nature of irrational beliefs, (f) time lag between irrational beliefs and distress assessment, (g) nature of stressful events, (h) sample characteristics (i.e. age, gender, income, Irrational beliefs were found to have a positive correlation with a

number of other forms of emotional suffering, including the aforementioned universal discomfort ($r = 0.38$) as well as anxiety, sadness, wrath, and guilt. illogical belief measure and kind, stressful event, age, educational and clinical status, and author's standing as a developer/validator were all found to significantly moderate the link between illogical belief intensity and discomfort. After accounting for a number of confounding factors, the study found a moderate correlation between illogical beliefs and emotional distress.

Umija, Aloka, and Wachanga (2021) conducted a study to “investigate the relationship between irrational beliefs and stress levels among double orphaned students in public secondary schools in Kenya.” Adopting the Rational Emotive Behavior Theory as the theoretical framework, the researchers employed a cross-sectional correlation research design. A sample of 350 double orphaned students was selected from secondary schools using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using the Irrational Belief Inventory and the Perceived Stress Scale. The study found weak positive correlations between demandingness, awfulizing, irrational belief for low frustration tolerance, irrational belief of worthlessness, and stress levels among orphaned students. These results imply that the illogical ideas held by orphaned learners lead to increased stress. Researchers suggested that in order to assist orphaned pupils in refuting their illogical views, school counselors could use therapeutic strategies including positive self-talk.

Umija, Aloka, and Wachanga (2021) shed light on the relationship between irrational beliefs and stress levels among orphaned students in Kenyan secondary schools. While their study contributes vital insights into the psychological well-being of this vulnerable population, it differs significantly from the current study on work-related stress among teachers. One notable difference lies in the target population; while Umija et al. focus on orphaned students, the current study specifically examined teachers. Consequently, the stressors and coping mechanisms explored in their study may not directly translate to the experiences of teachers facing work-related stress. Moreover, while their study underscores the impact of irrational beliefs on stress among orphaned students, the current study aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring as an intervention strategy to alleviate work-related stress among teachers.

The literature reviewed in this section provides key insights into the relationship between irrational beliefs and psychological distress among teachers. Ellis (1962) laid the foundation for understanding how irrational beliefs contribute to emotional disturbance, a notion further explored by subsequent studies. Kyriacou (2001) highlighted the pervasive nature of teacher stress and the need for further research in this area. Mahfar (2018) demonstrated the mediating role of irrational beliefs in the relationship between activating events and stress among teachers. Popov et al. (2015) explored the specific irrational beliefs contributing to general stress among teachers in Serbia. Santarpia et al. (2023) expanded our understanding by examining common and unique associations between irrational beliefs and well-being in the workplace. Additionally, Umija et al. (2021) shed light on the relationship between irrational beliefs and stress levels among orphaned students in Kenya. Despite these contributions, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the specific impact of irrational beliefs on psychological distress among teachers in Kenya, which the current study sought to address. Furthermore, the existing studies primarily focus on general populations or specific subgroups, neglecting the unique context of teachers and the challenges they face in educational settings. Therefore, further research was warranted to establish the relationship between irrational

beliefs and psychological distress among teachers in Kenya, ultimately informing targeted interventions to support teacher well-being.

Statement of the Problem

The teaching profession is inherently fraught with numerous sources of stress, leaving teachers particularly susceptible to psychological distress. Research (Katula & Orodho, 2014; Gaturu, 2018) indicates that a significant proportion of Kenyan teachers grapple with psychological distress, highlighting the pervasive nature of stress within this profession. This stress can stem from various factors, such as heavy workloads, challenging classroom dynamics, administrative pressures, and inadequate resources. Moreover, the constant need to adapt to educational reforms and meet diverse student needs further compounds the psychological distress experienced by teachers. Stress among educators has been linked to substance abuse, increased rates of teacher turnover, and subpar work performance, all of which trickle down into student achievement (Muiga, 2016).

Many Kenyan educators are struggling emotionally, as seen by alarming rates of substance abuse, mental illness, and suicide (Chebet, 2018). TSC's main goal in Kenya is to help rehabilitate school personnel who are struggling with substance abuse. School-based psychosocial programs for teachers experiencing less severe forms of mental distress are still in short supply. Despite the fact that many Kenyan educators experience psychological distress but lack access to professional counselling services, concerns about mental health were not front and center in this intervention (Kagwe, Ngigi, & Mutisya, 2018). To what extent cognitive restructuring can be employed to help alleviate teachers' emotional suffering is the focus of this research. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to determine whether or not cognitive restructuring is effective in reducing teachers' levels of stress caused by their jobs in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), a type of psychotherapy that emphasizes the importance of thoughts in influencing feelings and actions, will serve as the theoretical foundation for this investigation. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy operates under the premise that dysfunctional emotions and behaviours originate in one's thoughts, which in turn stem from one's social and environmental experiences. The purpose of therapy was to help patients recognize their dysfunctional thought patterns and replace them with more helpful ones. As a result of adopting these fresh perspectives, people's actions and emotions will change for the better.

An organized, brief, and present-focused treatment for depression was created by Beck (1970). Cognitive therapy was developed by psychologist Aaron Beck when he noticed that his depressed patients had unique ways of thinking. Based on this, Beck created a model of depression that depicts a cognitive triangle defined by a pessimistic outlook on life, a lack of hope for the future, and an inability to accept positive reinforcement. Beck argued that most mental illnesses share certain characteristics, including a tendency toward systemic distortions in the way information is processed. Paranoid thinking, for instance, is a biased assumption that others are prejudiced, abusive, or critical, while anxiety disorders are defined by a persistent fear of bodily or psychological harm.

There are many different forms of CBT, yet they all share common features. As its name implies, CBT is founded on the cognitive model. Thus, internal rather than external stimuli are

the source of emotions and actions. This paves the way for the optimistic presumption of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) that the individual can change his or her feelings and behaviors, even in the face of intractable events. In addition, CBT has a finite lifespan. CBT typically consists of 16 sessions, regardless of the presenting issue, whereas psychoanalysis might endure for years (Turner & Swearer, 2010). Even though it is not the primary focus of treatment, a strong therapeutic relationship between therapist and client is an important component of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Warmth, empathy, care, genuine regard, and a willingness to work together are all qualities that contribute to a successful therapeutic partnership. The primary goal of cognitive behavioral therapy is to help the client become his or her own therapist by recognizing and correcting harmful habits of thinking. Collaboration and participation are also stressed in cognitive behavioral therapy. In this model, the therapist and patient work together. The client has an active role in the therapeutic process, providing feedback on session themes and assigned homework. Cognitive therapy, as described by Beck (1970), instructs patients to recognize, evaluate, and correct irrational thinking. In the spirit of collaborative empiricism, the therapist guides the client in determining whether the client's beliefs are supported by evidence or not. Socratic questioning is used by cognitive behavioral therapists to get insight into their clients' issues and prompt introspection on the part of their patients.

CBT is grounded in an instructional model and emphasizes teamwork and action. The goal of therapy is to provide the patient with the skills necessary to prevent future relapses. Based on the assumption that dysfunctional patterns of behavior and emotional response may be taught, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) encourages patients to replace their old ways of thinking with more healthy ones. CBT is problem-oriented and aims to help patients achieve their set goals. Cognitive therapy, an offshoot of psychoanalysis, argues that the thoughts contributing to a patient's misery are not hidden away in the subconscious. Therefore, CBT focuses on the here and now, on alleviating symptoms, rather than doing in-depth analyses of the client's developmental history.

In this study, CBT informed the understanding of how irrational beliefs held by teachers may exacerbate work-related stressors, leading to heightened levels of psychological distress. By identifying and challenging these irrational beliefs through cognitive restructuring techniques, the study aimed to disrupt the negative thought-emotion-behavior cycle and promote adaptive coping strategies among teachers. Additionally, CBT principles guided the development and implementation of cognitive restructuring interventions, emphasizing the importance of addressing cognitive distortions to improve mental well-being. Overall, CBT provided a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing work-related psychological distress among teachers, highlighting the interconnectedness of cognitive processes and emotional experiences within the context of the study.

In conclusion, the CBT theory formed the basis on which variables in the present study were observed. This approach also facilitated in focusing on cognitive restructuring method to help alleviate secondary school teachers' psychological distress. And therefore gave the framework upon which the key variables were measured.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature review on psychological distress among teachers, cognitive restructuring, its influence on irrational beliefs, and the relationship between irrational beliefs and psychological distress provides valuable insights into the prevalence of psychological distress, therapeutic

interventions, and their impact on individuals' well-being across various contexts. Regarding psychological distress among teachers, the reviewed studies highlight widespread concerns globally, emphasizing factors such as job dissatisfaction, stressors, and socio-demographic variables like age and income. However, gaps exist in understanding the underlying mechanisms driving distress and designing targeted interventions to address teachers' diverse needs effectively.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quasi-experimental research design. This study was carried out among selected teachers in secondary schools in Kiambu County. Kiambu County has a total of 303 secondary schools with a population of 3,617 teachers (County Government of Kiambu 12 sub counties, however the target population will be the teachers in Thika town Sub County. Multistage sampling technique was used at three levels; sampling stage level one was used for selecting the schools at county level where Thika town Sub County was selected. The final overall sample size of 120. The study used the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale - 21 Items (DASS-21). Data was collected using questionnaire. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used to analyse the data. Data was presented in form of tables.

FINDINGS

The irrational performance beliefs inventory (iPBI) was used to measure irrational beliefs (Demandingness, Low Frustration Tolerance, Awfulizing and Depreciation) among secondary school teachers. The levels of irrational beliefs were categorized in three different categories which included Low, Moderate and High depending on the scores.

Table 1: Overall Level of Irrational beliefs for Teachers in Kiambu County

		Group		Total	Percentage
		Control	Treatment		
Demandingness scale	Moderate	37	47	84	78.5%
	High	17	6	23	21.5%
	Total	54	53	107	100.0%
LFT scale	Low	5	2	7	6.5%
	Moderate	30	48	78	72.9%
	High	19	3	22	20.6%
	Total	54	53	107	100.0%
Awfulizing scale	Low	2	9	11	10.3%
	Moderate	49	44	93	86.9%
	High	3	0	3	2.8%
	Total	54	53	107	100.0%
Depreciation scale	Low	16	33	49	45.8%
	Moderate	38	20	58	54.2%
	Total	54	53	107	100.0%

From the results, majority of the respondents (78.5%) had moderate levels of demandingness while 21.5% had high levels of demandingness. Additionally, majority of the respondents (72.9%) had moderate levels of low frustration tolerance while 6.5% had low levels of low frustration tolerance. Moreover, majority of the respondents (86.9%) had moderate levels of awfulizing while 2.8% had high levels of awfulizing. Additionally, majority of the respondents (54.2%) had moderate levels of depreciation, while 45.8% had low levels of depreciation.

These results showed that levels of irrational beliefs among secondary school teachers were moderate and hence the prevalence of irrational beliefs raised a concern. These results were in line

with those of Bermejo-Toro and Prieto-Ursúa (2006) who explored the association between teachers' irrational beliefs and different indicators of teacher distress in Spain and the study revealed that 32 percent of the teachers scored high on illogical views. The results of the study showed that the more teachers showed a tendency toward irrational thinking, the higher their scores in role-related stress, burnout, psychiatric disorders, and despair. The results also conquer with those of Tanhan (2014) who investigated what influences elementary and secondary school teachers in Turkey to hold irrational ideas. Study findings showed that whereas 87.3% of participants held rational opinions, 12.7% held irrational ones. Depressive symptoms, work satisfaction, and years of experience were revealed to be the strongest predictors of teachers' rational and illogical opinions.

A cross-tabulation analysis of demandingness levels with various demographic characteristics, including gender, age, and years of employment was carried out. Table 2 outlines the distribution of individuals across different levels of demandingness (Low, Moderate, High) based on these demographic factors.

Table 2: Cross Tabulation of Demandingness with Demographic Characteristics

		Low	Moderate	High	Total	Percentage
Gender	Female	0	47	13	60	56.10%
	Male	0	37	10	47	43.90%
	Total	0	84	23	107	100.00%
Age	Between 18 and 35 years	0	4	2	6	5.60%
	36 to 45 years	0	30	8	38	35.50%
	46 to 55 years	0	40	9	49	
	Over 55 years	0	10	4	14	13.10%
Total	0	84	23	107	100.00%	
Years of employment	Less than 1 year	0	6	2	8	7.50%
	2 to 5 years	0	21	5	26	24.30%
	6 to 10 years	0	36	9	45	42.10%
	Over 10 years	0	21	7	28	26.20%
	Total	0	84	23	107	100.00%

The results show a higher percentage of female teachers (56.10%) with demandingness compared to male teachers (43.90%). The majority of teachers with demandingness also fall within the age range of 36 to 55 years old, comprising 87.60% of the total sample. Within this age range, there is a gradual increase in demandingness from younger to older teachers. This could be due to various factors such as accumulated experience, increased responsibilities, and possibly changes in personal circumstances over time.

The highest proportion of teachers fall within the 6 to 10 years of employment category (42.10%), followed closely by over 10 years of employment (26.20%). Similar to the age distribution, there is a trend of increasing demandingness with longer years of employment. This suggests that as teachers gain more experience and tenure, they may become more demanding, possibly due to increased confidence, higher expectations, or burnout from prolonged exposure to the challenges of teaching.

A cross-tabulation analysis of Low Frustration Tolerance levels with various demographic characteristics, including gender, age, and years of employment was carried out. Table 3 outlines the distribution of individuals across different levels of Low Frustration Tolerance (Low, Moderate, High) based on these demographic factors.

Table 3: Cross Tabulation of Low Frustration Tolerance with Demographic Characteristics

		Low	Moderate	High	Total	Percentage
Gender	Female	4	42	14	60	56.10%
	Male	3	36	8	47	43.90%
	Total	7	78	22	107	100.00%
Age	Between 18 and 35 years	0	4	2	6	5.60%
	36 to 45 years	3	27	8	38	35.50%
	46 to 55 years	4	36	9	49	45.80%
	Over 55 years	0	11	3	14	13.10%
LFT	Total	7	78	22	107	100.00%
Years of employment	Less than 1 year	0	8	0	8	7.50%
	2 to 5 years	2	23	1	26	24.30%
	6 to 10 years	7	37	1	45	42.10%
	Over 10 years	2	25	1	28	26.20%
	Total	11	93	3	107	100.00%

Female teachers exhibit a slightly higher prevalence of low frustration tolerance compared to male teachers, with 56.10% of females falling into the low category compared to 43.90% of males. This distribution could be influenced by various factors including societal expectations, coping mechanisms, and differences in emotional expression between genders.

Teachers aged between 46 and 55 years old demonstrate the highest prevalence of low frustration tolerance, with 45.80% falling into the low category. There is a trend of increasing low frustration tolerance with age, suggesting that older teachers may struggle more with handling frustration compared to younger counterparts. Factors such as accumulated stress, personal experiences, and changes in resilience over time could contribute to this pattern.

Teachers with 6 to 10 years of employment exhibit the highest prevalence of low frustration tolerance, with 42.10% falling into the low category. There is a notable decrease in low frustration tolerance among teachers with less than 1 year of employment, which could potentially be attributed to initial enthusiasm in their teaching careers. The increase in low frustration tolerance among teachers with 6 to 10 years of employment could be influenced by factors such as burnout, increased workload, and challenges associated with mid-career teaching.

A cross-tabulation analysis of Awfulizing levels with various demographic characteristics, including gender, age, and years of employment was carried out. Table 4 outlines the

distribution of individuals across different levels of Awfulizing (Low, Moderate, High) based on these demographic factors.

Table 4: Cross Tabulation of Awfulizing with Demographic Characteristics

		Low	Moderate	High	Total	Percentage
Gender	Female	6	52	2	60	56.10%
	Male	5	41	1	47	43.90%
	Total	11	93	3	107	100.00%
Age	Between 18 and 35 years	0	6	0	6	5.60%
	36 to 45 years	5	32	1	38	35.50%
	46 to 55 years	5	43	1	49	45.80%
	Over 55 years	1	12	1	14	13.10%
	Total	11	93	3	107	100.00%
Years of employment	Less than 1 year	0	8	0	8	7.50%
	2 to 5 years	2	23	1	26	24.30%
	6 to 10 years	7	37	1	45	42.10%
	Over 10 years	2	25	1	28	26.20%
	Total	11	93	3	107	100.00%

From the results, the distribution of awfulizing appears relatively similar between genders, with slightly more cases reported among females (56.10%) compared to males (43.90%). The data also suggests that mid-career teachers, particularly those in the 36 to 55 age range, may experience higher levels of awfulizing. Mid-career teachers may experience increased job demands, burnout, and pressure to meet academic standards or deal with challenging student behaviors. They may also have accumulated more experience witnessing various challenges in the education system, contributing to their tendency to interpret situations more negatively.

Additionally, the data indicates that teachers in the mid-range of their careers, rather than new or long-tenured teachers, may experience heightened levels of awfulizing. This finding could be related to the mid-career phase, where teachers may face a combination of heightened job demands, responsibilities, and potentially stagnant career progression. They may also have developed a critical eye towards educational issues but lack the experience or authority to address them effectively, leading to increased levels of awfulizing.

A cross-tabulation analysis of Depreciation levels with various demographic characteristics, including gender, age, and years of employment was carried out. Table 5 outlines the distribution of individuals across different levels of Awfulizing (Low, Moderate, High) based on these demographic factors.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation of Depreciation with Demographic Characteristics

		Low	Moderate	High	Total	Percentage
Gender	Female	28	32	0	60	56.10%
	Male	21	26	0	47	43.90%
Total		49	58	0	107	100.00%
Age	Between 18 and 35 years	4	2	0	6	5.60%
	36 to 45 years	17	21	0	38	35.50%
	46 to 55 years	22	27	0	49	45.80%
	Over 55 years	6	8	0	14	13.10%
	Total	49	58	0	107	100.00%
Years of employment	Less than 1 year	5	3	0	8	7.50%
	2 to 5 years	11	15	0	26	24.30%
	6 to 10 years	20	25	0	45	42.10%
	Over 10 years	13	15	0	28	26.20%
Total	49	58	0	107	100.00%	

From the results, the distribution of depreciation appears relatively similar between genders, with slightly more cases reported among females (56.10%) compared to males (43.90%). Teachers aged between 36 and 55 years seem to exhibit higher levels of depreciation compared to other age groups, with the majority falling into the moderate category. Mid-career teachers may experience increased pressure and stress related to professional responsibilities, expectations, and potential burnout. They may also face challenges related to career advancement, navigating administrative demands, and adapting to changes within the education system, all of which could contribute to feelings of depreciation.

Teachers with 6 to 10 years of employment experience show the highest proportion of moderate depreciation. This finding aligns with the mid-career phase, where teachers may face a combination of challenges such as increased workload, job demands, and potentially stagnant career growth. Additionally, mid-career teachers may experience a period of reassessment and reflection on their career trajectory, which could lead to feelings of depreciation if expectations are not met or if they face setbacks.

Relationship between Levels of Irrational Beliefs and Psychological Distress

To investigate the relationship between levels of irrational beliefs and psychological distress exhibited by secondary school teachers in Kiambu County, correlational analysis was employed. Specifically, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was employed to quantify the strength and direction of the relationship between these two variables. This would help to determine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between levels of irrational beliefs and psychological distress. The results were presented below;

Table 1: Correlation between Irrational Beliefs and Psychological Distress

		IBIS_SCORE	DASS21_SCORE
IBIS_SCORE	Pearson Correlation	1	.222**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	227	227
DASS21_SCORE	Pearson Correlation	.222**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	227	227

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A positive correlation coefficient of 0.222, with $p < 0.05$, suggested that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between levels of Irrational Beliefs and Psychological Distress. In other words, as levels of Irrational Beliefs increase, Psychological Distress tends to increase as well, and vice versa. This correlation is moderately positive, indicating that there is a noticeable but not extremely strong association between these variables.

These results were in agreement with those of Stebbins (2015) who examined the link between unreasonable schematic ideas and careers' psychological suffering (TBI) and found out that there was an association between psychological distress in general and unreasonable thoughts about Worrying in particular. Also, Bermejo-Toro and Prieto-Ursúa (2006) who explored the association between teachers' irrational beliefs and different indicators of teacher distress in Spain concluded that Irrational beliefs have a strong connection with absenteeism characteristics which were indicator of teacher distress.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Irrational beliefs had a significant influence on psychological distress among secondary school teachers in Kenya. The results of the correlation analysis showed a moderately positive correlation coefficient (r) of 0.222, with $p < 0.05$. This suggested that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between levels of irrational beliefs and psychological distress.

Recommendations

There should be regular monitoring and evaluation of teachers' mental health and well-being within school settings. This can involve implementing surveys or assessments to gauge levels of psychological distress over time and to track the effectiveness of interventions such as cognitive restructuring. Schools and educational authorities should establish support systems for teachers experiencing psychological distress. This may include providing access to counseling services, peer support groups, or employee assistance programs aimed at addressing mental health concerns in the workplace. Educational policymakers should consider incorporating mental health support mechanisms into existing policies and guidelines for secondary school teachers. This may involve revising workplace policies to prioritize mental health and well-being, as well as allocating resources for the implementation of mental health programs in schools.

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