

# Systematic Review On The Management Of Music Therapy: An Intervention On Emotionally Distressed Married Teachers In Nigeria

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## Abstract

Music therapy is a type of approach that is garnering momentum in health psychology and mental health counseling. This review aimed at exploring its intervention management relevance on distressed people. Empirical evidence from three previous researches informed our present discussion. Result of this review shows that music therapy is a clinically relevant approach for cushioning the effect of distress people. In the studies reviewed, significant improvements in the reduction of distress scores were reported among distressed people exposed to music therapy. However, the scope of the study with a randomized control studies are required to generalize the clinical relevance of music therapy among distressed people. The study found that proper management of music therapy can help is effective in the reduction of emotional distress. Individuals should manage their emotions through the use of controlled frequency music in order to calm their nerves. More active control groups with other Musical Therapy are required for effective comparison.

**Keywords:** Management, Music Therapy, Emotionally Distressed people

## Introduction

Management of emotion is very indispensable in the maintenance of human stability. Emotion is a complex reaction pattern, involving experiential, behavioral, and physiological elements, by which an individual attempts to deal with a personally significant matter or event (American Psychological Association, 2020)<sup>[1]</sup>. Emotion can be seen as a strong feeling as a result of one's interaction with oneself, others or environment. It is a strong feeling in the sense that it can affect behaviour and facial appearance. Emotion is fondly seen as a serious expression of feeling that stir up physical and psychological changes that affect thought and behavior (Cherry, 2019) <sup>[2]</sup>. Emotion can also affect perception, thought and decision. It cuts across feelings such as love, joy, disgust, anger, fear, sorrow or hatred depending on the prevailing circumstance. Emotion could be negative or positive depending whether it is pleasant or unpleasant. Emotion is negative when it causes pains, penury and mood distortion. Negative emotions are associated with anger, fear or hatred. On the other hand, emotion is positive when it is accompanied by a state of joy, happiness, or love. Emotion is suspected to have strong association with stressors.

A stressor is a causative source of stress. A stressor is that state(s) of art that inputs stress in an individual of group of individuals. The causative source of stress could be the workplace, the home, distance to work, employment status, marital status, financial status, health status among others. The two types of stress experienced by human beings are eustress and distress. Eustress is a type of stress that is initiated as a result of challenging but achievable and

satisfying or worthwhile activities (e.g., participating in research activities, participating in an athletic event, giving a speech) (American Psychology Association, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>). Eustress is preempted by the zeal and zest to get assigned responsibilities carried out efficiently and effectively for the sake of self actualization and satisfaction. Eustress is not target at devaluation of the body character and mechanism but quickens it for optimal function for the realization of goals and objectives. Eustress is a source provides the mainstream and sustainability in the actualization of set goals and objectives. Emphatically speaking, eustress is a positive stress that is directed to the activation of the nerves towards job accomplishment which eventually have a satisfactory end result.

Conorary, distress is one of the psychological disorders that affect the emotion of an individual. Distress is associated with behavioural and mental disorders. It is a psychological word that depicts sadness, anxiety, distraction or mental illness. It connotes extreme sadness, anxiety, distraction or mental illness. This implied that those who are distressed are most likely to frequently suffer from sadness, anxiety, distraction or mental illness. Psychological distress is a state of emotional suffering associated with stressors and demands that are difficult to cope with in daily life <sup>[3]</sup>. Distress has the qualities to sap one emotionally, physically and mentally. Marital distress is among the frequently experienced distress among married people. However, it was reported that marital distress is one of the most often occurring and devastating human problems (America Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 2019)<sup>[4]</sup>. It is beyond the normal minor marital misunderstandings to a more offensive, disgusting, distrusting, devaluating, dejecting, demoralizing and dissuasive comeuppance. Marital distress has powerful effects on the partners, often leading to great sadness, worry, a high level of tension, anxiety, and depression (America Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 2019)<sup>[4]</sup>. The adverse effect of distressed families to the children and society cannot be overemphasized. Implicitly, once marriages are distressed, a progressive dyadic decline begins that easily cascades downward, ultimately leading to the demise of the relationship (America Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 2019)<sup>[4]</sup>. Distressed couples find it difficult communicating effectively with their children as well as their spouse. Corroboratively, it was reported that over time, the breakdown in communication evolves into increased arguing, stonewalling, defensiveness, and contempt as well as substance abuse, gambling, the loss of a child, children with special needs, lack of financial resources, infidelity, infertility, loss of employment, and untreated mental illness. (America Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 2019)<sup>[4]</sup>. Consequently, psychological distress manifestations amount to marital challenges which lead to marital dysfunction (Goldfarb, Trudel, Boyer, & Pr´eville, 2007) <sup>[5]</sup>. Presence of psychological distress strengthens stressful life events mostly in the families (Davila, Bradbury, Cohan, & Tochluk, 1997<sup>[6]</sup>; Hammen, 1991) <sup>[7]</sup>. Communication deficiency, lateness to the house, childlessness, hostile environment, in-laws' attitude, lack of tolerance can lead to distress among married couples. Corroboratively, studies across Africa indicated that involuntary childlessness is usually a distressing experience and associated with marital instability, divorce, abandonment, stigmatization, ostracism and abuse (Gerrits, 1997<sup>[8]</sup>; Sundby, 1997<sup>[9]</sup>; Yebei, 2000<sup>[10]</sup>, Dyeret Dyer SJ, Abrahams N, Hoffman M & Van Der Spuy, 2002a)<sup>[10]</sup>. Psychological distress can impute bronchia problem, heart attack, chronic headache, increased blood pressure, stroke, memory deactivation, low productivity, fatigue, insomnia, anoxia, anorexia, negative emotions, irritability, attention deficiency. However, the lack of effective care for and difficulty in identifying psychological distress is frustrating for patients and health professionals alike <sup>[11]</sup>. Series of arguments have been channeled on the efficacy of the use of music as a therapy to cushion the effect of distress. Listening to music reduces stress and anxiety (Portland Music Therapy, 2020) <sup>[12]</sup>. The application of music in the reduction of extermination or reduction of disorder is known as Music Therapy.

However, Music Therapy is the clinical and result oriented use of music interventions to actualize the effective handling disorder(s). Music can revitalize the mind and soul. Music therapy is a clinical approach where clinical professional use to heal people with internal conflicts. It has the potential to handle physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual issues thereby giving the victims tranquility. Music therapy is recognized as an effective treatment for a number of mental health, emotional and physical health conditions (Portland Music Therapy, 2020) <sup>[12]</sup>. Music therapy is a type of expressive therapy that involves a large variety of music-related programmes, which include improvising, singing, playing musical instruments, moving, and listening to music. Music therapy has been shown to have positive physical, social, and psychological effects (Portland Music Therapy, 2020) <sup>[12]</sup>. List of music therapies are writing song lyrics, learning music-assisted relaxation techniques, progressive muscle relaxation, drumming, listening to live

or recorded music, deep breathing, singing of familiar songs with live or recorded accompaniment (PositivePsychology.com, 2019) <sup>[13]</sup>. Furthermore, music therapy cuts across, improvising music on instruments of voice, creating art with music, playing instruments, learning to play piano or guitar, dancing, writing choreography for music, discussing one's emotional reaction or meaning attached to a particular song or improvisation (PositivePsychology.com, 2019) <sup>[13]</sup>. Music intrigues one and attracts attention which helps the listener to forget stressful situations and conditions thereby recuperate broken hearts, body and soul.

Studies across the globe have shown that the use of Music Therapy has a positive effect upon distress levels, anxiety and sleep patterns of people (Hernández-Ruiz, 2005<sup>[14]</sup>, Robb, 1996<sup>[15]</sup>). Moreso, Music therapy in a counseling setting especially using various song-writing techniques (fill-in-the-blank scripts, group song writing, improvisational song writing, discharge song writing) were found to help reduce the level of traumatic and distress levels and experiences (Whipple & Lindsey<sup>[16]</sup>,1999, Robb, 1996<sup>[15]</sup>). On the contrary, Teague's (2006<sup>[17]</sup>) revealed that MT only provided a marginally significant decrease in anxiety associated with distress. Music therapy is the application of therapeutic skills of music and musical notes (structured and audible sounds) by music therapists to support, sustain, and reinstate emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical wellbeing (Canadian Association for Music Therapy, 2006<sup>[18]</sup>). Musical therapy is effective for treating persons with anxiety and emotional distress (Daykin, Bunt, McClean, 2006<sup>[19]</sup>)

It is worthy to note that a distressed patient's ultimate goal is to get rid such disorder and enjoy a blissful and splendid life. Based on this backdrop, the main objective of this systematic review was to explore the clinical utility of music therapy for psychological distressed people.

## Methods

In course of this review, the researchers searched for studies published on music therapy on distressed couples using Google Scholar and PubMed. Both open access and pay-per-view peer-reviewed articles were searched for inclusion in this review. The researchers synthesized information from only three articles which focused on music therapy and distressed people. The term "music therapy and distressed couples" was mainly used for the literature search.

## Results

**Table 1:** Report of studies on music therapy for distressed people

Studies	Country	Year	Title	Design	Number of sessions attended	Control group attention	Experimental group treatment	No of participant	Group allocation	Results reported
Ezebe et al	Nigeria	2018	Effect of music therapy combined with cognitive restructuring therapy on emotional distress in a sample	pretest–posttest control group design	84 days continuous listening to music	Ordinary interaction	Music intervention	140 for experimental and 140 for control of married couples in southeast Nigeria.	Simple randomization with computer generated random numbers	Significant reduction in distress score

			of Nigerian married couples							
Alex	India	20 14	The effect of music intervention on psychological distress of cardiovascular patients and cancer patients	-	25 days continuous listening to music	Ordinary interaction	Music intervention with seven songs based on Indian ragas	30 for the experimental group and 30 for the control group	Purposive sampling	Significant reduction in distress level of participants
Miner	United States	20 15	Music Therapy as Treatment for the Psychological Distress of Victims of Intimate Partner Violence: Comparing Expressive and Receptive Music Interventions	-	42 days exposure to music therapy	Nil	Expressive and receptive music intervention	13 participants	Manual Simple randomization	distress scores significantly decreased from the pretest

Table 1 indicates that three studies so far within the researchers purview have tested the efficacy of music therapy on psychological distressed people across three countries of the world which they all reported significant improvements in depression scores among the couples.<sup>[20,21,22]</sup> The three studies were mainly on music therapy. The first study in table 1 which was done in Nigeria used intervention group with 120 (n=120) participants that received music therapy for 84 days while the waitlisted control group is 120(n=120) participants<sup>[20]</sup>. Similarly, the second study in table 1 which was done in India used intervention group with 300 (n=30) participants that received music therapy for 25 days while the control group is 30(n=30) participants<sup>[21]</sup>. Finally, the third study in table 1 which was done in United State used intervention group with 13 (n=13) participants that received music therapy for 42days while the control group is 13(n=13) participants<sup>[22]</sup>.

## Discussion

Music Therapy is a clinically relevant result-oriented intervention approach for addressing psychological distress. In course of the review, a significant reduction effect was recorded in the posttest mean scores from the pre-test mean scores of distressed people exposed to Music Therapy than their counterparts who received treatment as usual in the control group. The result of this study is suggesting that Music Therapy is clinically significant in reducing distress among people. In agreement to the findings of this study was that the use of Music Therapy has a positive effect upon distress levels, anxiety and sleep patterns of people (Hernández-Ruiz, 2005<sup>[14]</sup>, Robb, 1996<sup>[15]</sup>). Corroboratively, Music therapy in a counseling setting especially using various song-writing techniques (fill-in-the-blank scripts, group song writing, improvisational song writing, discharge song writing) were found to help reduce the level of traumatic and distress levels and experiences (Whipple & Lindsey<sup>[16]</sup>, 1999, Robb, 1996<sup>[15]</sup>). Essentially, Music Therapy is found to be associated with relaxation of muscles which consequently leads to stress reduction. Correspondently, Musical therapy is effective for treating persons with anxiety and emotional distress (Daykin, Bunt, McClean, 2006<sup>[19]</sup>) The number of participants in the three studies differed significantly from each other. This called for a study that can make use an approximate number of participants within the same session for treatment in order to ascertain the level of distress reduction across the globe. Two of the studies were unable to make use of randomized sampling technique which can inherently affect the final result of the study. There is need for probabilistic sampling technique mostly randomization in other to properly categorize the participants into their various groups. Music Therapy is found to help the distressed people develop coping strategies and coping skills to improve their tolerance and distress management. Future studies using Music Therapy would also be more relevant if they aim at improving emotional intelligence, social competence and marital stability among married people. The researchers used made good attempt by using both rock and classical music on distressed people which can have significant effect on chronic pain reduction, coping with stress and eventually increase relaxation. Thus, it is possible that when properly adapted to Music Therapy, similar significant improvements would be recorded among people with burnout.

In the application of Music Therapy to people with psychological distress patients, effort should be made to ascertain the cause of the psychological distress before remediation if not the disorder will still crop up. The causes of psychological distress among these people were not properly highlighted in the past three studies. There should be a particular approved standard for treatment sessions instead the variations recorded in the past three studies. Future studies should also enroll larger number of distressed people in order to get a representative number of people that are distressed for the operational functionality of the home and society at large. A mixture of more than two groups including waiting-list, other forms of Music Therapy group, and second control groups could be done in future studies to increase the clinical utility of Music Therapy among psychological distressed people. When developing a Music Therapy treatment package, the steps recommended for the use of Music Therapy should be totally and stringently properly adhered to by future researchers. The psychometric properties such as validity, reliability and usability of the treatment packages should be properly carried out to measure what they are meant to measure. The research assistants apart from the music therapists should be properly briefed before the study on the relevance of the study on the reduction of distress among the people that can have detrimental consequences of suicidal mission, divorce, physical, emotional and spiritual abuse and assault. The music therapist should be experts in music and counseling who can harmonize and synchronize the music melodies to the tone of exterminating a distressing condition of the participants.

The three authors from three countries carried out their studies through a face-to-face group orientation which is a commendable format of handling with distressed people in order to know their level of association in the programme<sup>[20,21,22]</sup>. It is also expedient for future researchers to carry out internet and web-based Music Therapy with a sample across the globe to ascertain how efficacious this therapy could be outside face-to-face approach. Music Therapy could also be delivered through the organization of cultural festivals within a particular community with emphasis with distressed people therein. Similarly, therapeutic distress reduction through music can be achieved in religious organizations by a means of organization of music baguette for a chosen church population. The use of close circuit television (CCTV) should be constantly and consistently used to follow the behavioural responses of the

participants at the tone of every musical instrument. But, recommendation was further made on follow-up practices of these people in their families and the society at large.

## Conclusion

Based on the review carried out so far, music therapy is efficaciously effective and efficient in the reduction of psychological distress among people more than those who were never exposed to music therapy by professional music therapist. But, there is limited evidence on what the control groups were exposed to. Moreso, most of the systems of sampling of participants were more of non-probabilistic sampling technique. A well-controlled and managed music related therapy should be used to manage every form of emotional and psychological distress of people.

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