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# The Effect of Psychological Counseling using Art Therapy on Improving Worker's Job Efficiency

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** There is little emphasis on alternative forms of communication in psychotherapy, thus leaving a gap in research on the impact and effects of alternatives such as using artistic expressions. The current research, therefore, seeks to address the gap by investigating the effect of psychological counseling using Art Therapy on improving workers' job efficiency. **Research design, data and methodology:** The present author collected topic related to prior studies in terms of psychological counseling, art therapy, and employee job efficiency. And then, the author conducted clear procedure of the screening to eliminate inappropriate previous works including conference papers and dissertations so that this research could obtain only journal articles and books which have been proven by high degree of reliability and validity. **Results:** This research has concluded that psychological counselling using art therapy is pertinent to improving the worker's job efficiency in various ways, addressing properly mental health issues ranging from small to complicated or acute issues, thus promoting the well-being of employees to work at their optimum or best possible conditions. **Conclusions:** Psychological counseling using art therapy improves self-confidence, esteem, and awareness. Further, it enhances their social skills, expression capability, and general work ability. Elsewhere it improves coping with pain and reduces stress and depression.

**Keywords :** Art Therapy, Psychological Counseling, Job Efficiency, Human Resource Management

**JEL Classification Code:** D91, Q15, Z11

## 1. Introduction

The recent increase in the cases of mental health issues in the country and beyond has come with unintended consequences. One of the areas worst hit due to the above has been employee delivery to various places of work. Poor employee concentration, low input at work, low output quality, and adverse attitudes emanate from the various

mental health issues that employees suffer from. Sufficing to note that mental health issues also affect the health and well-being of the victims and their dependents or related personnel. Due to such dire effects, stakeholders have constantly brainstormed on the best psychotherapy approach that would significantly address mental health issues, if not eradicate them, to improve employee productivity at work.

Art therapy has been identified as one of the ideal psychotherapy approaches to dealing with mental issues.

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Specifically, it is reputable for its effectiveness in improving employees' job efficiency. All psychotherapy approaches have a common denominator of communication between the therapist and the patient in providing help to the latter. However, art therapy stands out due to its unique capabilities and implications on the final result or intended objectives.

Chiang et al. (2019) define art therapy as a psychotherapy approach where the therapist uses artistic expressions as the main form the client can use to understand and express their emotions and various factors that affect their emotions ways. It is a unique approach that thoroughly interacts with one's mind, physical body, thoughts, and spirit in unique ways in addition to verbal expressions (Klein et al., 2020). Essentially, it allows an individual to various utile types of opportunities, such as sensory and perceptual, which facilitate different reception and expression modes of communication. Ultimately one can surmount the challenges or limits of verbal articulation.

Greater visual and symbolic expression abilities are characterized by using art therapy. Mere verbal articulation often limits individuals from speaking clearly about what they feel. Sometimes they could lack the correct language, formulas, or expressions. Therefore, art therapy addresses the above by empowering a person using the above-explained rationale and, ultimately, enabling a clear and detailed expression of oneself (Moula, 2020). Due to the above, art therapy is quite popular and preferred as the psychotherapy of choice by many people over others.

Many factors affect the effectiveness of any given psychotherapy approach. They include a patient's characteristics, the therapist's comfortability, objectives, and the treatment structure one uses. The patient characteristics are defined by a set of things such as personality and willingness to cooperate through adequate communication. Clients or patients with limitations in communication often are potential clients for art therapy (Soares et al., 2019). It allows them to express themselves using others forms, such as artistic communication. Other factors include the environment of treatment and the nature of the problem (Kaimal et al., 2019). The above dynamics influence the choice of a psychotherapy approach that best addresses each unique situation or dynamics of a patient.

Psychotherapy treatments often aim to achieve certain objectives. They include reducing pain, improving life quality, and enhancing the ability of patients to deal with various issues and pains (that result in mental health issues) through early detection and mitigation. Elsewhere the treatments aim to reduce stress or depression and stimulate better mental working abilities and conditions of the patients. The above refers to a criterion of selecting the most ideal psychotherapy approach. Most researchers have researched general psychotherapy approaches, such as the traditional verbal communications therapy typical for psychologists.

There is little emphasis on alternative forms of communication in psychotherapy, thus leaving a gap in research on the impact and effects of alternatives such as using artistic expressions. This paper, therefore, seeks to address the gap by investigating the effect of psychological counseling using Art Therapy on improving workers' job efficiency. Essentially, the research aims to describe Art therapy and its impact on improving employees' job efficiency. Art therapy enables a detailed and accurate understanding and analysis of the client's emotions and expressions, thus facilitating correct counseling and mitigating mental health challenges.



Figure 1: Research Aim of This Study

## 2. Literature Review

McDonald et al. (2019) define art therapy as an approach of psychotherapy where a therapist uses artistic expression as the main and most significant form of communication of feelings and expressions by the client. They explain that clients are given significant opportunities or space to convey their expressions and feelings using artistic works besides verbal communication. Examples of such artistic works include drawings, writings, and paintings. Malchiodi (2020), on the other hand, defines art therapy as the incorporation of creatively thought techniques for expressing oneself through mainly visual media. The writers also add that the approach allows individuals to express themselves through other means, such as music, drama, or dances. Dunphy et al. (2019) explain the above as additional techniques that allow one to express themselves other than verbal means.

Schouten et al. (2019) describe art therapy as a detailed approach allowing multiple elements to effectively treat various patients' mental health issues. Per the writers, it allows verbal expression, creativity, and interaction between the critical aspects, such as the body and the mind, to allow a patient to recover holistically. Bush (2019) describes the wider approach of art therapy as critical in providing alternative forms of expression, especially where limitations of verbal communication exist. Besides, it avails a broader array of opportunities in lic and kinesthetic areas, leading areas.

Fish (2019) researched the elements and functionality of

art therapy in solving emerging mental issues. They described a combination of visual and artistic or symbolic modes of expression as important in empowering people to express their feelings and emotions freely. Besides, it helps explore one's inherent conflicts that often trigger distress and solve such issues.

King (2021) explored how art therapy works and its effectiveness in treating traumas. The writer outlined the steps most therapies follow when using the approach. Firstly, they set the goal of using art therapy with a given patient. Secondly, they interact with patients to tell them the details of the approach and convince them why it is ideal. Thirdly, the therapists choose mediums of artistic expression as guided by dynamics such as the nature of the patient and the situation they are going through. Examples of mediums are drawings, paintings, and sculptures. Then the therapists guide the patients in expressing their feelings using the arts through questions, seeking clarifications, and constant interactions. The therapist then discusses the artwork results and the client's feelings from analyzing the expression. They prescribe the correct approach to solving the client's issues through counseling elsewhere.

Feniger-Schaal and Orkibi (2020), in similar research, explained the above and the following additional activities or steps when using art therapy in psychotherapy. The writers generally divide the steps into pre-art, art, and post-art. The pre-art entails all the steps before the actual art drawing. For instance, assessment of the client and taking the client's history for better assessment. The art stage refers to the therapist allowing the therapist to make the desired artwork, such as paints or drawings. On the other hand, the post-art stage refers to analyzing the artwork to inform the course of action to help the patient. Yildiz (2021), in a review of the above work, adds that the primary modalities of the therapy in the above three stages include visual, drama, dances, and various forms of expressive writing.

Gussak (2019) concurs with the writers by explaining that most people often feel like receiving help; however, they often cannot express themselves using verbal articulation compared to other forms. Therefore, the writer describes the artwork as a form of "figurative" expression that clients can use to fully express their conflicts, woes, or emotions without feeling intimidated or shy. It, therefore, is only a confident and less stigmatizing alternative and an explicit manner through which one can express oneself. It, therefore, breaks any imaginary and natural barriers to traditional talk therapy.

In nearly similar research, Ahn and Park (2022) reveals the numerous implications of using art therapy. The writers add to the above findings that art therapy provides a creative and relaxing approach to helping mental health patients. Creativity and relaxation of the mind provide an opportunity for an interaction between the mind, body, and an

individual's spirit. Further, a combination of a person's kinesthetics, sensory, and other systems yields the highest and best form of expression of one's emotions, conflicts, and triggers of certain feelings. It thus enables a therapist to use the best possible post-art stage approach that best addresses a client's issues.

Gilroy and Lee (2019) researched the benefits of art therapy. In their findings, they explained that art therapy helps clients deal even with strong emotions. The reduced stigma and lack of a need to be confident enough to express themselves offer an alternative to the explicit expression of oneself. They can therefore express strong emotions, sources of conflicts, and stressors without fear and in a relaxing setting. They are emotions that they otherwise could not have easily expressed. It enables one to overcome such emotions by sharing and getting the correct solutions or interventions from a therapist. Overcoming

Perryman et al. (2019) also explained the implications of art therapy in stimulating mental functioning and reducing stress and depression. The approach offers a relaxing, engaging, and creative approach to clients expressing themselves. They, therefore, can speak out about problems that disturb them. Sharing such problems effectively not only provides a solution but also helps relieve them of their burden. The above helps to stimulate the brain into normal functioning. Kim and Jung (2022) adds that the above helps reduce effects such as depressive and stressful episodes.

Shoesmith et al. (2021) explained the advantages of using art therapy. They explained that it improves a person's self-confidence and awareness. Art therapy offers an alternative to express painful experiences that otherwise can't be expressed verbally. In a study on 53 breast cancer women drawn from California between 2018 and 2019, the researchers revealed a significant reduction in negative emotions and an improvement in positive emotions due to using art therapy. The prior study (Braus & Morton, 2020), in clinical research on 129 participants undergoing hemodialysis drawn from Nebraska, revealed that art therapy significantly reduced the stress and depression of the participants. All the studies above are attributed to increased touch with emotions and a quality interplay between various aspects, such as sensory and kinesthetics.

**Table 2:** The Results of Literature Review

Key Content	Past Literature List
*Evidence based on prior studies are attributed to increased touch with emotions and a quality interplay between various aspects.	McDonald et al. (2019); Dunphy et al. (2019); Schouten et al. (2019); Fish (2019); King (2021); Feniger-Schaal and Orkibi (2020); Yildiz (2021); Gussak (2019); Ahn and Park (2022); Gilroy and Lee (2019); Perryman et al. (2019); Kim and Jung (2022); Shoesmith et al. (2021); Braus and Morton (2020)

### 3. Research Findings

#### 3.1. Overview

The present author collected topic related to prior studies in terms of psychological counseling, art therapy, and employee job efficiency. And then, the author conducted clear procedure of the screening to eliminate inappropriate previous works including conference papers and dissertations so that this research could obtain only journal articles and books which have been proven by high degree of reliability and validity (Nguyen et al., 2022; Richard & Kang, 2018; Han & Kang, 2020).

Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy that uses artistic expression to express one's emotions, thoughts, or conflicts that contribute to their mental instabilities or issues (Jiggetts, 2021). Artistic expression is used alongside normal verbal articulation as part of the due steps done in a psychotherapy approach. Art therapy uses artistic expressions such as the clients' making drawings, paintings, and molding to express themselves (Braus & Morton, 2020). The art therapy approach has existed for years and has proved effective in dealing with several mental health issues owing to its versatility and ease of application.

One notable area in which art therapy is improving workers' job efficiency. The framework of art therapy is anchored on the proposition that it primarily works by mitigating and preventing the mental health issues of employees, which in turn improves their concentration, input, and ultimate output of work. It, therefore, is used to address properly mental health issues ranging from small to complicated or acute issues, thus promoting the well-being of employees to work at their optimum or best possible conditions (Chan & Gan, 2022).

#### 3.2. Main Steps When Using Art Therapy

Most therapists follow the following main steps when using art therapy in psychotherapy. Firstly, they assess the client to understand them and their history better. Additionally, it allows them to gauge the need and possibly how effective the art therapy approach can work with their patients (Stegemann et al., 2019). Secondly, they explain the approach, its benefits to the patients, and how it works. Equally, they assure the patients that the approach addresses their fears and concerns. Third, the therapist provides the necessary materials and allows the client to express themselves artistically, i.e., through art. The above is often done concurrently while engaging or talking with the patient to improve the rapport and make the setting more cordial for the client to reveal the most details with the highest accuracy possible (Fazio-Griffith & Marino, 2020). Elsewhere the therapists evaluate the artwork and decide on the correct

mitigation approach to use depending on analysis, such as psychological counseling, which is patient to this topic or research. However, Spinelli et al. (2020) explain that it is important to distinguish between art therapy and expressive therapies. The latter entails broader forms of expression, such as drama and dances, whereas art therapy primarily involves using artworks such as drawing and painting to express oneself.

#### 3.3. The Effects of Psychological Counselling Using Art Therapy on Improving Workers' Job Efficiency

##### 3.2.1. It Overcomes Verbal Articulation Barriers Leading to Better Interventions

Psychological Counselling using Art therapy is pertinent to improving the worker's job efficiency in various ways. Lean et al. (2019) explain that art therapy provides an option that overcomes the barriers of verbal articulation and thus is explicit. Verbal communication has limitations, such as a lack of confidence to talk, shyness, lost ideas during expression, and difficulties in word choice and language. The above hinders clarity of verbal articulation leading to poor expression of oneself (Gramaglia et al., 2019).

Such poor expression is punctuated with elements such as distorted ideas from the intent, limited information divulged, sugar-coated information, or generally altered type and quantity of information. It offers minimal to no relief to the patients because they feel that they have not shared their problems the way they intended to get relief. Additionally, they could fear the stigma of expressing everything bare as they think about them (Moon & Nolan, 2019).

Art therapy provides an alternative where one can confidently express and overcome strong emotions without shyness and other barriers, albeit through artwork. It enables a therapist to accurately diagnose the client's problems, causes, and effects. In turn, the therapist can prescribe the correct action to solve the client's problems (Talasaz et al., 2021). They can then offer counseling that addresses the causes of problems in the best way possible while remaining conscious of things such as fears or unnecessary provocation of pains due to the detailed expression by the client. The above improve self-expression and acute pains or mental health conditions (Capodanno et al., 2019). It improves concentration at work, improving the quality of input and output.

##### 3.2.2. More Opportunities, Imparts Skills, and Promotes an Interplay of Critical Personal Elements

Art therapy is integrative. It fully integrates and allows an interplay between a person's mind, physical body, and even spirit, uniquely from verbal articulation (Klein et al., 2020). Therefore, it provides more options, such as sensory, symbolic, and perception modes of expressing oneself. The

above help reveal a client's unconscious part and better cathartic releases during psychotherapy. Besides, it increases the touch with one's emotions leading to better revelation (Willis et al., 2019). Essentially it enhances an individual's cognitive and sensory-motor aspects during the communication of their feelings and emotions. Therefore, it helps in strengthening a person's social skills and self-expression abilities and techniques. Further, it helps a person gain skills in working in stressful and depressing environments after receiving detailed counseling from the therapist (Lusebrink & Hinz, 2021). The above, in turn, leads to better productivity because such employees cannot be easily affected or can be minimally affected by stressful or depressing conditions or work or events in their lives.

### 3.2.3. Addresses Age Related Psychological Issues, Not Age Bound, and Fosters Better Expression Capabilities

Art therapy provides a psychotherapy approach that deals with pertinent issues that affect one's mental well-being. It enables a person to express their emotions and thoughts freely and in a relaxing manner. Besides, the detailed expression enables a therapist to use the most ideal approach in counseling a person using tailor-made solutions depending on each unique challenge (Andersson et al., 2020). Counseling provides employees with the required freedom of thought and control of their minds. They learn to manage various emotional and physical pains besides improving their self-esteem, worth, and awareness (D'Silva et al., 2022). Improving the latter leads to more confidence at work and better interpersonal skills. They can communicate better and coordinate well, in addition to overcoming several challenges at work without necessarily being affected mentally. The above finally leads to improved output in quality and quantity (Bakri & Sabran, 2022).

Art therapy also better addresses various age-related issues. It offers tailor-made solutions and applies to all people of various ages. Any person can draw an artwork and thus is not age specific. The above approach can address various issues, such as medical-related mental health issues of workers. For example, it helps a worker with chronic issues to overcome fears and mental health disturbances emanating from their conditions. For example, it spurs the creative brain part of an individual and manages stress, thus restoring the normalcy and identity of workers suffering from issues such as mild dementia. It, therefore, helps reduce the severity and effects of such conditions, thus leading to relation and attention and work, leading to improved output at work.

### 3.2.4. Ease Of Use and Understanding

Art therapy provides a psychotherapy approach that deals with pertinent issues that affect one's mental well-being. It enables a person to express their emotions and thoughts

freely and in a relaxing manner. Besides, the detailed expression enables a therapist to use the most ideal approach in counseling a person using tailor-made solutions depending on each unique challenge (Andersson et al., 2020). Counseling provides employees with the required freedom of thought and control of their minds. They learn to manage various emotional and physical pains besides improving their self-esteem, worth, and awareness (D'Silva et al., 2022). Improving the latter leads to more confidence at work and better interpersonal skills. They can communicate better and coordinate well, in addition to overcoming several challenges at work without necessarily being affected mentally. The above finally leads to improved output in quality and quantity (Bakri & Sabran, 2022).

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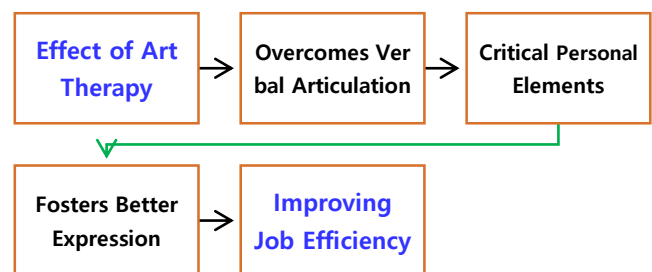


Figure 2: Summary of the Findings

## 4. Implications

Considering The findings herein have many implications for multiple stakeholders. Firstly, it helps therapists learn the correct approaches in different case scenarios. The discussion reveals that effective verbal articulation is not preserved for all people. Some people can easily and adequately articulate themselves, while others cannot. It worsens when someone is in a bad state of mind, such as



during depression or stress (Klepper et al., 2020). Therapists, therefore, cannot rely on mere verbal articulation for workers to properly express their feelings, emotions, and thoughts. It is incumbent upon such therapists to use their knowledge and experience of assessment to analyze workers and determine how suitable it is to use traditional verbal therapies. The findings, therefore, call upon therapists to be open-minded in evaluating patients and use it as a better option (Bourne et al., 2021).

Employers can use the research findings to improve their workers' job efficiency. Mental health issues often affect an individual's output quality at work. Notably, stress, depression, and undue pressure at work are issues that lead to poor mental health. Employers can use the information to initial findings and evaluations of their employees. They can organize sessions where every employee can be evaluated using the technique and many more to determine their mental well-being (Ye et al., 2020). If any issues are found, such as the highlighted ones, employees can be put on treatment or the correct intervention until they return to the correct state of mind. It will help improve their concentration, attentiveness, motivation at work, moods, and input, thus guaranteeing high-quality output. The above would thus improve work or business and outputs such as profits to a significant extent.

Policymakers and government agencies are other pertinent stakeholders who can use the findings to benefit others. Policymakers and reviewers can use the findings in policy-making, especially in the health sector. For instance, policies on correct treatment plans can strongly recommend using art therapy, thus giving emphasis, priority, and prevalence of use in public and private health centers. Most therapists could use traditional approaches hence the need to review policies as in the above. It would help to improve the quality of psychotherapy sessions and general mental health outcomes in such facilities (Bussolari & Packman, 2019).

Conversely, the government can use the findings in advisory and recommendations on psychotherapy treatment plans. The findings, for instance, on dementia and art therapy, can be used in national policies and advisories to hospitals on enhancing dementia patients' treatment. A further implication is broadening the application scope to include non-workers and those in old age (Tan et al., 2020). Such interventions can lead to better outcomes in handling and managing dementia cases.

Elsewhere researchers and scholars can use the findings as a basis for further research and advancement of findings on the topic. For instance, they can use it to compare the effectiveness of the artistic expression of one's emotions when combined with other audio elements (Eholie et al., 2019). Besides, they can research the approach's shortcomings or improve on it. It would help in realizing an even more robust approach towards better dealing with

workers' mental health issues and, in turn, can significantly improve job efficiency and outcomes at work.

## 5. Limitations and Conclusions

The paper did not conduct primary research in the field, such as an experiment, to collect first-hand data for analysis and conclusion-making. It, therefore, implies that the findings of the paper could be prone to the limitations or errors of the primary researchers. The research only relied on peer-reviewed and reputable scholarly academic sources to curb the limitation. Besides, they were accessed from accredited sources and libraries further to enhance the integrity of the research and findings. It further improves the reliability of the application of the findings.

Elsewhere the research was affected by various time constraints. Allocated data collection and analysis time proved limited due to the detailed nature of the research paper steps. However, the research compensated for the above by allocating additional time to cover activities that required more time.

Psychological counseling using Art therapy is one of the most effective approaches to improving workers' job efficiency. The approach methodology centers on clients expressing their emotions and feelings using artistic works. Examples of such artistic expression include drawings, paintings, and modeling of various artworks.

Art therapy provides a better option for a client to express their emotions without the impact of normal challenges of verbal articulation, such as confidence issues, shyness, or fear of stigmatization. Further, it offers a relaxed and comfortable environment for self-expression. Additionally, it enables the coordination of one's body, mind, and soul to reveal even the most unconscious details about one's feelings and emotions. Therefore, it presents the best way to derive the explicit details of workers' emotions and feelings. A therapist can then analyze such details to have the most accurate picture of a client's problem. Then they can begin counseling individuals by hitting the correct target, which helps mitigate various mental health issues.

Psychological counseling using art therapy improves self-confidence, esteem, and awareness. Further, it enhances their social skills, expression capability, and general work ability. Elsewhere it improves coping with pain and reduces stress and depression. The above input increases the employees' resilience, concentration, attentiveness, ability to face stressors and depressors, and general input and contribution at work. In turn, it helps to realize quality and quantity output and thus the required job efficiency.

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