

# Effect of Adlerian Therapy in the Management of Pre-Retirement Anxiety Among Federal Road Safety Officers in Edo State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the effectiveness of Adlerian therapy in managing pre-retirement anxiety among Federal Road Safety officers in Edo, Nigeria. Pre-retirement is a significant issue among officers as they are faced with both psychological challenges and uncertainties of the future when approaching the end of their career with the corps. The transition to retirement can be accompanied by anxiety, fear and apprehension about the future. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of AT in alleviating pre-retirement anxiety symptoms, enhancing coping strategies, improving overall psychological wellbeing among Federal Road Safety officers in Edo. The outcome result revealed the effectiveness of AT in managing pre-retirement anxiety of the officers. This study contributes to the development and implementation of evidenced-based interventions for managing pre-retirement anxiety among FRS officers and also aiming to promote a healthier and more supportive transition to retirement for its personnel.

This study seeks to provide valuable insights into the implementation of AT in addressing pre-retirement anxiety, filling the existing gap in research and offering guidance for future interventions targeting this occupational group.

**Keywords:** Adlerian therapy, Pre-retirement anxiety, Federal Road Safety officers, Nigeria

## INTRODUCTION

Retirement is the cessation of active service of an employee from a routine job at a pre-determined age and/or period of service by an organisation/institution. It is the end of performance of services rendered by an employee to his employer due to attainment of a determined age, years of service or illness. Policy makers in an organisation/institution statutorily determine the determined age. For instance, in Nigeria, retirement can come because of numbers of years already put in service which is 35 years while attaining the age of 60 years could be another yardstick in disengaging from service. In the same light, Petters and Asuquo (2008) referred to retirement as leaving a job at a specified period after putting in some number of years of one's productive years or after attaining a given age of 60 years in the public sectors of economy. Thus, retirement can be viewed as termination of a pattern of life or completion of a career. Retirement can be categorised into three; voluntary, compulsory, and mandatory (Garba and Mamman 2014).

Globally, retirement is widely perceived as a vital stage in human development. Individuals who engage in pre-retirement planning adapt well to retirement and are probably going to experience it as a vacation stage of experiencing a Rest and Relaxation (R and R) period of recovering from the anxieties and strains of work (Arogundade 2016). More importantly, retirement can also be recognised as transition from the world of work into a world of less rigorous work activity and rest, especially in respect of retirement due to old age or long years of service. However, the transition from work to retirement involves interruption in lifestyle (Luborsky and LeBlanc 2003). Apparently, the thought of retirement to most employees breeds negative emotions such as worry, fear, anxiety, disillusionment and apprehension.

Life makes more meaning when it is engaged productively. Work is an avenue of attaining initiative,

independence, and sense of identity, social integration and leadership skills among others. This explains the attachment and commitment of individuals to their work. However, retirement comes within these ambiances in a man's occupational development. When an individual detaches from work, he is likely to enter a state of diminution (Asiedu, Assoah, and Wilson 2018). Apparently, anything that will detach a devoted employee from his work can lead to negative feelings towards such a situation. Retirement can be considered as one of such situations.

Moreover, as an individual gets closer to retirement, he is likely to develop anxiety with some probing and provocative questions running through his mind. Also, live experiences gathered from their former colleagues and heart troubling reported cases both in the newspapers and social media as to the challenges faced by retirees in Nigeria may impact anxiety pre-retirees. For instance, Adewale in The Guardian Newspaper of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022 reported that "The Nigerian Labour Congress' (NLC) pensioners protest over ₦36 billion outstanding entitlements". Similarly, a recent report of 5<sup>th</sup> January 2023, in The Punch newspaper, captioned, "Edo pensioners protest unpaid gratuities, government promises payment". In some other reports, retirees slumped and died on the spot or were being rushed to the hospital while queuing to be screened for their benefits. Also, the deteriorating look of some retirees can send anxiety signals to the pre-retirees. The insensitivity of some governors to the plight of pensioners in Nigeria is worrisome. All these could incubate anxiety on pre-retirees.

Pre-retirement anxiety encompasses fears, worries, and apprehension exhibit by an individual about the future as a result of the cessation of active working life plus the attached remuneration. It involves fear that usually results from an unknown future and uncertainty of survival, especially such that may be facing loyal and uncompromising employee like Federal Road Safety Corps officers after the official security might have been withdrawn due to retirement. It also incorporates envisaged boredom due to inactivity and financial stress due to cessation of regular remuneration and unreliable pension managers in the system.

Retirement comes up at the most sensitive stage of an individual's vocational development. Thus, pre-retirement anxiety can oscillate from variant causes from fear of the unknown future to uncertainty of survival due to financial constraints. Some other causes are; change of status, accommodation and suitable location are some changes that a per-retiree may be anxious about. Some of the major causes of pre-retirement anxiety, according to Oluseyi and Olufemi (2015), are inadequate fund, challenges in managing mental and physical health, challenge of managing a new and lower social status, boredom, inactivity, cessation of social activities that are work related such as tours, conferences, seminars and workshops, inadequate planning for retirement, difficulty in time management, total dependence on present salary, problem of securing avoidable and suitable residential accommodation, ignorance of proper management of pension fund, attitude of friends and family, and the challenges of relegation of status and cessation of the benefits of enjoyment of the official amenities and stewards. FRS officers saddled with playing strategic and pivotal roles in the safety and sanity of the national road from traffic crashes are not exempted. However, they have their various retirement dates which can pitch their minds and as well creating tension owing to the fear of losing their prestigious job, the security the job offers as well as the pride the uniform brings when they are fully kitted.

Pre-retirement anxiety poses diverse challenges around officers' social life and wellbeing. It can degenerate to both physical and mental health issues. Some of such can include uncontrollable high blood pressure, palpitations, ulcer, rapid heart rate, depression especially when they remember they are getting close to retirement. According to Robert (2017), retirement may raise the risk of coronary events. On social ground, some employees on his getting close to retirement might start cutting down major financial responsibilities attached to him at home like children's school fees, clothing, house projects, housekeep allowance and some other social activities especially, as the breadwinner. Also, they are likely to withdraw from extended family functions and responsibilities. All these can breed peer and family rejection with certain emotional conflicts among loved ones. Occupationally, it can lead to negative work behaviour, counter-productive activities and unethical occupational actions from officers saddled with safety of national road network.

Adlerian therapy was engaged in the management of pre-retirement anxiety. Adlerian Therapy (AT) is a psycho-educational approach developed by Alfred Adler (1870-1937). It combines humanistic and goal approach in managing human behaviour. It emphasises the individual's strivings for success, connectedness

with others, and contributions to society as being hallmarks of mental health. This therapy holds the assumption that an individual must identify and work towards uncovering their mistaken beliefs, private logic, and lifestyle which are all offshoot of his upbringing (Milliren and Clemmer, 2006). AT is hinged on certain stages of training to bring the necessary changes clients. Every stage of Adlerian therapy incorporates encouragement. Thus, encouragement is a vital concept in AT. It is assumed in Adlerian's perspective that among anxious people are individuals who think more of themselves (Miller and Taylor, 2016). Once an individual assumes the point of view that life's difficulties must be avoided, such is inviting anxiety in, and once in, it will reinforce that point of view. This perspective of life could influence a Federal Road Safety officer, for instance, the thought of prestige and life at work that will be left behind to become like ordinary people they have dealt with while in uniform. They appear to see themselves as the prey of the profession which makes looking towards retirement become difficult. This is germane to the assumption of Adler that there are people whose first response to new thing is anxiety, no matter how insignificant the change is. He further opined that such people are so outdated with life and with their peers that every change of situation is accompanied by fear. Therefore, AT in establishing rapport between counsellor and clients helped the pre-retired individuals to feel understood and be accepted by the counsellor. As client/therapist relationship was established, clients were able to understand their feelings better, in which Adlerian therapy was engaged stage by stage in training the Federal Road Safety officers in managing their anxiety towards retirement and to chart a cognitive map in planning towards their future as a paradigm shift from their predecessors. Encouragement, which is a major concept in AT was adequately utilised in all the stages of training for effective results. Through training and re-orientation with encouragement, the officers' pre-retirement anxiety was adequately managed.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Retirement is a mixed grill, laced with ambience of excitement of a relaxed or reduced workload and anxiety of an unknown future. Anxiety is known as an expression of worry, fear and apprehension which can lead to cognitive distortions. The tendency of employees experiencing anxiety at the thought of retirement is contributed by the sense of diminution at the loss of the prestige accorded officers in form of respect and accolade received in discharge of their roles without carrying firearm. Also, the cessation of official tours, seminars and conferences coupled with the feeling of insecurity at the withdrawn of domestic servants at retirement. Moreover, the frightening news about retirees both in the print and socio-media with the depreciating look of some retirees. Their worries and fear are detrimental to their social, physical, and mental health which can also affect the quality of their services.

Obviously, the instability of Nigeria's economy and unending inflation is worrisome. There are some personal concerns regarding challenges that come along with retirement such as the unreliability of pension managers, unpaid gratuity, boredom, and inactivity. The incessant transfer of the officers is an impediment in planning. The unreliability of the prompt payment of their gratuity and their survival in maintaining the social class they are used to could also be a concern. Retirement could also lead to reduced intensity of affiliation to social contact.

Consequently, the psychosocial and economical feedback of these problems are negative work attitude, counter-productive work behaviour (leading to increase in road crash), disappointment, disgust, displeasure, hurt, worry, anger, frustration, stress, also, feeling of injustice, depression, these could also lead to sudden physical and mental health challenges, such as incidence of high blood pressure, ulcer, palpitation, depression, and other anxiety prone mental health challenges like suicidal ideation and finally, sudden death. Past studies have shown that efforts have been made to explore pre-retirement and retirement anxiety, for instance: Abuo, Effiom and Odo-Simon (2020); Adejare, Dalhatu, Ayelabowo and Yusuf, (2019) and Arogundade (2016). Most of these studies are investigative and survey in nature. The efforts of these past research works are commendable; nevertheless, there is need for a study on specific psychological interventions.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of Adlerian therapies in managing pre-retirement anxiety among FRS officers in Edo State, Nigeria.

## Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant main effect of treatment in the management of pre-retirement anxiety among FRS officers in Edo State, Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design. The population of this study comprised all the Federal Road Safety Corps' Officers in Edo Zonal Command. It is very important to note that encouragement is very important process in all the stages of the therapy.

Data collected were analysed using inferential statistics. Inferential statistics included Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and Bonferroni post hoc (pairwise comparison) analysis where significant effect of treatment was noticeable. Each of the hypotheses was analysed at 0.05 level of significance using Statistical Product for Service and Solution (SPSS) version 26.

**Ethical Approval:** The researcher obtained an ethical approval from the Faculty of Sociology, University of Ibadan.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Section A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

Tables 4.1 reveals that out of 30 respondents 35.6% were below 55years of age while 64.4% were between 55 to 60years. 66.7% were males and 33.3% were females. This implies that most of the respondents with pre-retirement anxiety were between the ages of 55-60years. Also, most of them with pre-retirement anxiety were experiencing moderate social support.

### Demographic Distribution of the study participants

**Table 4.1:** Frequency Distribution showing the Gender of Participants in the Study

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	20	66.7
	Female	10	33.3
	Total	30	100.0

From table 4.0a, it showed that there are 30 participants with 20 (66.7%) males and 10(33.3%) females.

### Hypothesis Testing

There is no significant main effect of treatment in the management of pre-retirement anxiety among FRS officers in Edo State, Nigeria.

**Table 4.2:** Summary of the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of treatments on Pre-Retirement Anxiety among Federal Road Safety officers

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	520.574	1	520.574	9.590	.004	.255
Covariate	202.164	1	202.164	3.724	.064	.117

Treatment	603.616	2	301.808	5.560	.029	.166
Error	1519.886	28	54.282			
Total	77480.000	32				
Corrected Total	3060.000	32				
a. R Squared = .503 (Adjusted R Squared = .219)						

The results from Table 4.1 showed that there was significant main effect of treatments on pre-retirement anxiety among Federal Road Safety officers in Edo ( $F^2, 28 = 4.318, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.116$ ). This was in contrast to the pre-test difference among the three groups which was not significant as expected. Relying on the result, the mean difference of the participants exposed to the psychotherapy had better reduction than those that were not exposed to any treatment (that is, control group). This suggests that the hypothesis, which proposed no significant mean group difference, was invalid and stand rejected. Therefore, Adlerian therapy was efficacious in the management of pre-retirement anxiety among FRS officers in Edo. Accordingly, there was a significant main effect of treatments in managing pre-retirement anxiety among FRS officers in Edo.

<b>Table 4.2: Significant Differences in the Treatment</b>			
<b>Treatment</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Subset for alpha = 0.05</b>	
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Experimental Group (ADLERIAN)	16	36.1333	
Control Group	14		44.1333
Sig.		.056	.404
Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.			
a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 15.000.			
b. The group sizes are not equal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.			

From Table 4.2, the following observations were made:

- i. The mean score of Adlerian therapy statistically revealed its effectiveness in managing pre-retirement anxiety among FRS officers in Edo. The control group had the mean score of 44.13, while Adlerian therapy (AT) had a mean of 36.13.
- ii. Significant difference was observed between the mean of participants that received AT (36.13) and participants in the control group (44.13). This result also indicates that participants in AT outperformed their counterparts in control group in terms of alleviating pre-retirement anxiety among FRS officers in Edo.

## DISCUSSION

The result revealed there is a significant main effect of treatment in the management of pre-retirement anxiety among FRS officers in Edo. That is, there is a significant difference in the mean score among the officers that trained in Adlerian therapy to the comparison group. Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected. It is therefore inferred that Adlerian therapy is effective in the management of pre-retirement anxiety of the officers who participated in the training.

The difference can be described in terms of the efficacy of the intervention and its delivery method. This result can be attributed to the goal of AT, which is reorientation and re-education, garnished with encouragement at



each stage. Anxiety cannot be pinned to a particular source. Thus, it takes reorientation and re-education with constant encouragement which was implemented at every stage of the training that could have gradually eased off the infiltration of anxiety on participants. In other words, the officers were able to imbibe attitudinal skills that transform their orientation and coupled with encouragement which can enhance their resilience and build a change in basic assumptions in perception of retirement.

Another possible explanation for the result of the study in AT, which involves encouragement at every stage of the training may induce obsessively ruminating on negative aspects of retirement and reinforces responsibility, innovation, and creativity towards the future in line with the goal of Alfred Adler for Adlerian therapy. It is important to note that to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has been conducted to manage pre-retirement anxiety with AT in Edo, although there were similar studies related to the variables that can be used to substantiate the findings of the study.

The outcome of this study collaborates with the work of Mollanorouzi, Issazdeghan and Soleimani (2018). The study results indicated that AT could reduce the state and trait of anxiety in the experimental group compared to control group. In the same vein, AT has been found effective in reducing the state of anxiety of maladaptive perfectionist children (Ashby Kottman, and Martin 2004).

Generally, from various studies, it can be inferred that both AT is effective just as other CBT in managing pre-retirement anxiety, although AT recorded a significant positive outcome after the participants are left for some period after the training.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study investigated the effectiveness of AT in the management of pre-retirement anxiety among FRS officers in Edo, Nigeria. The anxiety incurred by officers in getting set for their retirement is raised by the economic situation and the nature of their assignment which incurred psychological distress and resorted to anxiety. The fact that retirement and aging are siamese twins, not easily separated, heightened negatively on the psychological wellbeing and health of pre-retirees.

Pre-retirement anxiety, which can aggravate to physical and psychological ill health such as, palpation, sorrow, sadness, stomach aches, headaches, depression, and invariably suicide ideation if not detected or early treated, jeopardizes the rest and relaxation as presumed aftermath of retirement for an officer. This also may end up tampering with the quality of life, physical and mental health of an officer.

This study is anchored on crisis theory of retirement. The theory explains different types of crisis, namely; developmental, situational, and existential crisis. Developmental crisis occurs as individuals attain natural milestones in life that may create stress due to transition. Retirement is one of the milestones that an individual is likely to undergo with stress as undertone. Retirement and aging unavoidably go together. Aging most of the time synergizes with health issues and challenges, the stress of aging and the vacuum of remuneration and inactivity that retirement synergizes aggravate into anxiety and stress in an individual.

Pre-retirement anxiety can be regarded as a developmental crisis. It is a career developmental milestone with aging undertone, which if not well managed can develop into stress and decrease life satisfaction. This can also degenerate into strains in life such as physical and mental health problems. Thus, pre-retirement anxiety can be considered as a developmental crisis that creates life strains throughout post-retirement period. There is a remedy, since anxiety is a psychological phenomenal which can manifest in mental and physical health, psychological intervention is apt in treating such.

Therefore, this study implemented AT in the management of pre-retirement anxiety among the officers of FRS. The results revealed AT as an effective intervention in the management of Pre-retirement anxiety.

## Recommendations

Wholesome retirement transitional package should be adopted with effective counselling intervention processes and strategies. Tactical contributions from professionals and stakeholders individually and

collectively should be ascertained. Aside from this, counselling centres are to be established in all sectors and headquarters of government and private organisations. It is also important for government and private institutions to employ the services of qualified therapists in helping their staff to allay their pre-retirement anxiety by providing pre and post retirement counselling. Additionally, life skills inform of bridge career or business acumen should be developed and practiced to a reasonable extent prior to retirement. Finally, reliable mortgage that will ensure accommodation for staff before their retirement should be in place by their employers. These premises put in place would reliably tame the beast of pre-retirement anxiety in the pre-retirees in the society.

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