

EFFECT OF COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING ON AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NSUKKA EDUCATION ZONE OF ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of Cognitive Restructuring Technique on Aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. One research question was posed and one null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05alpha levels for the study. The study was carried out using quasi-experimental research design of a pre-test, post-test non-equivalent control group. The experimental group was treated using Cognitive Restructuring Technique (CRT) for six weeks while the control group was treated with conventional counselling for the same period of six weeks. The population of study comprised 65 SS1 and SS2 of the same school. SS1 numbered 35 and SS2 numbered 30, and 35 were sampled for the study. 18 from SS2 and 17 from SS1 the instrument for data collection was Aggressive Behaviour Scale (ABS), the instrument was developed by the researcher, validated by experts from the department. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of ABS was obtained using Cronbach alpha and the reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained for reduction of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students (ABS). Data were collected and subjected to analysis. Data were analysed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). It was revealed that CRT was significant in the reduction of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. Thus, CRT should be employed in counseling students who have aggressive behaviour.

Keywords: Cognitive restructuring, aggressive behaviour, secondary school students.

Introduction

Education is the medium by which an individual achieves success in his or her life, in the society and in the world, and it lays the foundation of personality (Kumar, 2017). According to the Mauritian Ministry of Education and Human Resources (2014), the secondary school provides an education that enables the fulfillment of the four pillars of the Delors Report, namely learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. It also provides the adolescent student with the necessary skills that allow him or her to adjust easily and smoothly to the rapid physical, emotional, mental and social changes (Garcia & Santiago, 2017). School institutions remain a preparatory ground to empower and certify the requirement for human development; however, the reality is that only a few students can harmoniously blend with their schoolmates without experiencing aggressive behaviour towards them in the school. Secondary school students tend to feel less safe and unsatisfied with school life in a school where a high level of aggressive behaviour is displayed. Dupper (2010) maintain that students misbehave because there are mismatches between their needs and the socio-environmental factors that are within their immediate environment. Student misbehaviour is not only the naughty behaviour of the student but also the behaviour that disturbs the effective teaching and learning process (Ghazi, Gulap, Muhammad & Khan, 2013) and that interrupts a saner and safer school environment (Schleicher, 2015).

Student misbehavior is a source of worry for all school stakeholders (Gutuza & Mapolisa, 2015; Marais & Meier, 2010; Ramjanally, 2015). It is a multifaceted and complex

school problem that is manifested in various forms (Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon 2014). The various common forms of student misbehaviour are late coming, bunking classes, drug and alcoholic abuse, bullying, love affairs, vandalism, assault on the school prefects, insult on educators, wearing the wrong school uniform, use of the mobile phone, smoking, writing or using foul language in class, work not done, class disruption and immoral acts (Gutuza & Mapolisa, 2015; Ghazi, Gulap, Muhammad & Khan, 2013; Ngwokabuenui, 2015; Jeeroburkhan, 2016). Student misbehaviour, however, is linked to academic performance and vice versa. The researcher noted that aggressive behaviour is the contributing factor to various misbehaviours among secondary school students.

In Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State, the researcher as a counsellor observed that most secondary school students have aggressive behaviour. On many occasions during school dismissal you notice a group of students and among are the two who are fighting and others are separating them, some on the way to stream or market, these are various ways of exhibiting aggressive behaviour on each other, this act could have a significant impact on them, affecting their mental health, academic achievement and overall socialization and adaptation. It is therefore imperative that appropriate steps should be taken to stem the menace of aggressive behaviour by secondary school students. For such students, and particularly the victims, the school is no longer a place of concentrated work and learning (Dupper, 2010). This may affect the quality of students' life in school and the overall outcome of schooling. Hence, aggressive behaviour poses a serious challenge to school counsellors and other educational stakeholders whose responsibility is to help the students resolve the conflicts within them, do away with maladaptive behaviours and learn the accepted ways of behaving in the society.

Aggressive behaviour has been defined in various ways by different researchers. According to Zirpoli, (2014) Aggressive behaviour is any form of conduct or actions by an individual, which is intended to cause pain, suffering and damage to another person. Also, Ogilive, (2011) saw aggressive behaviour as a form of actions characterized by an assault or attack by one person on another. Zirpoli, (2014) added that aggressive behaviour stem from different factors such as Students' biological make-up, family background, community, school and value systems. Okoro, Adunonye and Egwuasi (2015) observed that frequent exposure to aggressive people may involve any individual in aggressive episodes, and the presence of aggressive models increases the likelihood of imitation. Gasa (2011) also observed that the highest rates of aggressive behaviour are found in environments where aggressive models abound and where aggressive behaviour is regarded as a highly valued attribute. There are several ways in which aggressive behaviour can manifest in the lives of secondary school students. These manifestations include hyperactivity, impulsiveness, depression, suicidal ideation, verbal aggression, aberrant sexual behaviour, consistent class repetition, tardiness and absenteeism, vandalism and criminality (Mabitla, 2008). Similarly, Paul Cookey considered a behavioural disorder as one of the contributing factors to aggressive; such behaviour involves physical violence against students and teachers, abusive language, tantrums and emotional outbursts. Aggressive behaviour does not only disrupt classroom instructions, but also affects the physical and professional well-being of a teacher. Paul-Cookey and Iwuama added that aggressive behaviour is one of the major worldwide concerns in all segments of societies.

People frequently read or hear about gang battles, shooting, bombings or actually becoming victims of such actions. These events are some of the most extreme examples of the aggression that takes place every day. They also explained that aggressive behaviour among secondary school students refers to all forms of youth violent acts perpetrated within the school setting which affects the schooling process. In the secondary school setting, teachers and

principals have used different types of punitive measure, corporal punishment, rustication and expulsion from school and so many other types of punishment in order to see if the students can reduce their level of aggressive behaviour. All these measures are not effective because it does not restructure the faulty thinking of these students. Despite numerous efforts made by previous researchers in finding a lasting solution to the problem of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students, operationally aggressive behaviour involves all forms of maladaptive behaviour exhibited by students both out of school and in school. The problems no doubt still pose a serious challenge to guidance counsellors and other allied professionals. Something needs to be done to curtail this problem before it gets out of hand. There are a lot of counselling techniques that can be used to help reduce aggressive behaviours among secondary school students. Such counselling techniques include cognitive behavioural therapy, cognitive restructuring techniques, art therapy, talk therapy, bibliotherapy among others. It is based on the issue on ground that the researcher is thinking that cognitive restructuring technique will be effective in reducing aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State.

Cognitive restructuring technique is a psychotherapeutic processes of learning to identify and dispute irrational or maladaptive thought known as cognition distortion, such as all or nothing thinking, magical thinking, over generalization, magnification and emotional reasoning, which are commonly associated with many maladaptive behaviour such as mental disorder (Kalisch, Carter & Dorny,2008). Cognitive restructuring is a useful technique for understanding unhappy feelings and moods, and for challenging the sometimes-wrong automatic beliefs that can lie behind them. As such, it can be used to reframe the unnecessary negative thinking that one experiences from time to time. Bad moods are unpleasant; they can reduce the quality of performance and undermine one's relationships with others. Cognitive restructuring helps one to change the negative or distorted thinking that often lies behind these moods. As such, it helps one approach situations in a more positive frame of mind. Nwaolisa and Olisakin (2013) conducted a study titled effects of Cognitive Behaviour and Social Learning Therapies on Managing Adolescents' Aggression among secondary school students in Lagos Metropolis. Findings from the study indicated that there was the relative effectiveness of cognitive restructuring and modeling in alleviating aggressive behaviour in secondary schools. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that cognitive behaviour therapy and social learning therapy should be used to counsel adolescents on a continual basis. The findings that cognitive restructuring treatment had a more positive significant effect on psychological measures imply that people with traumatic experiences would benefit more from combined therapeutic procedures involving cognitive and behavioural orientations than treatment procedures involving only behavioural background.

According to Egenti and Ebenebe (2018), cognitive restructuring is a counselling technique used to assist an individual to reduce negative emotional reactions. The emphasis during therapy is to help a client modify his distorted perception of the world caused by a negative mind set. Cognitive restructuring techniques aim at modifying distorted thinking patterns and negative self-talks that arise from internalized wrong belief. Anagbogu (2008) stated that cognitive restructuring uses the skill of suggestions, persuasion, confrontation, philosophical discussion, homework and assignments, supportive techniques and didactic teaching to change the behaviours of the client. Cognitive restructuring is a useful tool for understanding and turning around negative thinking. It helps to put unhappy, negative thoughts under the microscope, challenging them and in many cases, re-scripting the negative thinking that lies behind them. The feelings of guilt, hopelessness and seeing oneself as the worst on earth could be changed using cognitive restructuring. The technique focuses on interaction of

thoughts, feelings and emotions. Nwaoba (2013) also conducted a study on efficacy of Cognitive Behaviour Modification Strategy in curbing Aggression among secondary school students in Umuahia, Abia State. Findings from the study indicated that cognitive behaviour modification strategy was effective in enhancing students' desire and readiness to curb aggression in secondary schools. Based on the above findings, it implies that counselling as a service concerned with helping the human being to develop into appropriate personalities that has the capacity to help secondary school students to achieve new critical and rational level of reasoning and functioning. Guidance counsellors are therefore expected to help in managing disciplinary problems in schools. The present researcher who has witnessed were students engage in quarreling and unpleasant exchange of words coupled with irrational thinking pattern and illogical expression of some students that made them to be maladjusted was moved to engage in this study to investigate whether cognitive restructuring would be effective in reducing aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. In the context of this study, cognitive restructuring technique is a counselling therapy that proffers lasting solution to almost all maladaptive behaviours which results to better behaviours.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of cognitive restructuring technique in reducing aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Investigate the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on the reduction of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students.

Research Question

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on reduction of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on aggressive behaviour among secondary school students based on gender.

Method

The study adopted a pretest posttest and control non-equivalent control group quasi-experimental research design. Nworgu (2015) stated that a quasi-experimental research design could be used in a school setting where it is not always possible to use pure experimental design which was considered as disruption of school activities. This study was carried out in Nsukka education zone. The sample comprised of 35 SS1 and 30 SS2, giving total of 65 participants. The experimental group was exposed to cognitive restructuring technique while the control group was exposed to conventional counselling by the c school counsellor. The instrument for data collection is questionnaire titled "Aggressive Behaviour Scale", (ABS), the instrument was developed by the researcher and validated by experts in the faculty of Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of ABS was determined using Cronbach alpha and reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained for reduction of aggressive behaviour among secondary students scale (ABS). The answered questionnaire collected after administrating the research instruments was analyzed in line with the research

question. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while analysis of covariance was used to test the null hypothesis.

Research Question: What is the effect of Cognitive Restructuring on Aggressive Behaviour among Secondary School Students Exposed to Treatment and those not E exposed to It.?

Table 1: Mean response and standard deviation of effect of cognitive restructuring technique on aggressive behaviour among secondary school students

Group	Pre-test			Post-test		
	n	M	SD	M	SD	Adjusted Mean
Treatment	35	72.54	5.42	37.85	4.80	37.85
Control	30	72.43	5.46	62.16	5.34	62.16

Cognitive restructuring technique (CRT)

The data Table 1 show the students who were exposed to CRT had pretest and posttest mean aggressive behaviour scores of ($M = 72.54$, $SD = 5.42$) and ($M = 37.85$, $SD = 4.80$), while those who were not exposed to CRT had mean aggressive behaviour scores of ($M = 72.43$, $SD = 5.46$) and ($M = 62.16$, $SD = 5.34$) at the pretest and posttest measures. Besides, the adjusted mean scores of 37.85 and 62.16 for the two groups respectively, indicate that the students who were exposed to CRT had more reduced aggressive behaviour than their counterparts who were not so exposed.

Ho: There is no significant effect of cognitive restructuring technique on aggressive behaviour among secondary school students.

Table 2: ANCOVA result of the effect of cognitive restructuring on aggressive behaviour among secondary school students.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	9547.128 ^a	2	4773.564	183.657	.000	.856
Intercept	943.558	1	943.558	36.302	.000	.369
Pretest	.965	1	.965	.037	.848	.001
Treatment	9543.218	1	9543.218	367.164	.000	.856
Error	1611.488	62	25.992			
Total	167714.000	65				
Corrected Total	11158.615	64				

*Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

The data in Table 2 show that there is a significant effect of cognitive restructuring technique on aggressive behaviour among secondary school students, $F(1, 62) = 367.164$, $p = .000$. Since the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Moreover, the effect size of .856 implies that 85.6% reduction in the aggressive behaviour of students is attributed to their exposure to CRT. Therefore, the researchers concluded that cognitive restructuring technique significantly reduced aggressive behaviour among secondary school students.

Discussion of the Results

The Effect of Cognitive Restructuring Technique in reducing Aggressive Behaviour of Secondary School Students was sought for this study. The findings from this study showed that cognitive restructuring technique (CRT) was effective in reducing aggressive behaviour of secondary school students. Specifically, this means that cognitive restructuring was able to have reasonable impact on the aggressive behaviour of secondary school students, enough to control their aggressive behaviour which could have resulted in both physical and psychological harm to themselves and others in their school environment and outside school environment. The finding is in agreement with Nwaolisa and Olisakin (2013) whose study was on effects of cognitive behaviour and social learning therapies on managing adolescents' aggression, which findings showed that cognitive restructuring treatment had a more positive significant effect on psychological measures. In addition, the findings of this study reveal that the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on the aggressive behaviour of secondary school students is significant. What this implies is that the effect of CRT on aggressive behaviour in secondary school students is substantial. This finding shows with other study is consistent with Nwaoba (2013) whose study investigated the efficacy of cognitive behaviour modification strategy in curbing aggression and it was observed that it was effective in enhancing students' desire and readiness to curb aggression in secondary schools. This implies that counselling, as a service concerned with helping human beings to develop into appropriate personalities, has the capacity to help secondary school students to achieve new critical and rational level of reasoning and functioning. Counselling is therefore expected to help in managing disciplinary problems in schools.

Conclusion

The study investigated the effect of cognitive restructuring technique in reducing aggressive behaviour among secondary school students. This study confirmed previous research studies that demonstrated the positive effects of the technique for various behaviour exhibited by the students with aggressive behaviour. The following conclusion has been drawn from the study: That cognitive restructuring technique has significant effect on aggressive behaviour of secondary school students and do not differ in its effectiveness in reducing the aggressive behaviour among secondary school students. Nonetheless, there is significant difference in the effects of the treatment technique in which cognitive restructuring technique was effective in treating students with aggressive behaviour. Based on the findings of the study, one can conclude also that schools can intervene effectively in the lives of aggressive students through effective utilization of cognitive restructuring technique.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Cognitive restructuring technique is an effective therapeutic technique for treating aggressive behaviour of secondary school students. Therefore, practicing counsellors and therapists should adopt the use of this technique in counselling among secondary school students to modify and treat aggressive behaviour.
2. There is a need for this technique to be incorporated into regular school counselling curricular. Moreover, high-risk students need to be engaged to participate in special training activities that take place outside of the classroom such as small group discussions, peer relationship training or after school sessions as maybe arranged and spearheaded by the school counsellor.

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