Effect of Cognitive Restructuring in Reducing Aggressive Behaviour of Secondary School Students in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe State

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Abstract: - This paper examined the effect of Cognitive Restructuring Technique in reducing Aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Gombe State. Two research questions were posed and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05alpha levels. The study was carried out using quasi-experimental research design of pre-test, post-test and control non randomised group. The Experimental group was treated using Cognitive Restructuring (CR) for eight weeks while the control group was treated with conventional counselling for the same period of eight weeks. The population of students with aggressive behaviour was 245 in Gombe Local Government of Gombe State. A sample of 81 students with very high aggressive behaviour was selected from three schools through purposive sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) which was developed and validated by Buss and Perry in 1992, but was revalidated in Nigeria. The reliability coefficient of 0.80 as reported by Onukwufor (2013) was adopted for this study. Data was collected and subjected to analysis. Data relating to research questions were answered using statistical mean while data relating to hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). Findings from the study revealed that among others that Cognitive Restructuring Technique was effective in reducing secondary school students' aggressive behaviour. The findings further revealed among others that the difference in the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique in reducing aggressive behaviour of secondary school students is significant. Based on the findings, it was recommended that cognitive restructuring technique is an effective therapeutic technique for modifying the aggressive behaviour of secondary school students. The practicing counsellors and therapist should adopt the use of the technique in counselling and in administering therapy on aggressive behaviour of secondary school students to treat and modify their aggressive behaviour.

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In Nigeria and all over the world, school institutions remain a preparatory ground to empower and certify the requirement for human development; however, the reality is that only few students can harmoniously blend with their school mates without experiencing aggressive behaviour towards them in the school. In Gombe State, some secondary school students have aggressive behaviour; this act could have a significant impact on them, affecting their mental health, academic achievement and overall socialization and adaptation. No matter the reasons that may be adduced for this maladaptive behaviour, it is a social menace that should not be tolerated in any sphere of life. It is therefore imperative that appropriate steps should be taken urgently and decisively to stem the menace of aggressive behaviour by secondary school students.

Secondary school students tend to feel less safe and unsatisfied with school life in a school where high level of aggressive behaviour is displayed. For such students, and particularly the victims, the school is no longer a place of concentrated work and learning. 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 characterised 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-ups, family background, community, school and value systems. If a student is unstable due to any of the above factors, he or she may suddenly be disturbed and exhibit destructive behaviours. 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 environment 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 and

Iwuama (2011) observed that aggressive behaviour among secondary school students are considered a behavioural disorder; such behaviour involves physical violence against students and teachers, abusive language, tantrums and emotional outbursts. Aggressive behaviour do not only disrupts 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, shootings, 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 measures such as, 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, the problems no doubt still poses 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. This has necessitated this study that sought to determine the effect of Cognitive restructuring technique in reducing aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe 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 modelling 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 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. Counselling is therefore expected to help in managing disciplinary problems in schools.The present researcher who has witnessed the irrational thinking pattern and illogical expression of some students that made them to be maladjusted was moved to engage in this study to ascertain whether cognitive restructuring would be effective in reducing aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Gombe State.

Statement of the Problem

Many rapid and turbulent changes in contemporary living have brought secondary school students face to face

with problems and decisions and conditions over which students and their parents have little or no control and which have made growing up today vastly different from that of ancient times. Within the school system, various attempts have been made by school personnel in dealing with students that exhibit aggressive behaviours. Some of the corrective measures used include corporal punishment, rustication and expulsion from school, excessive punishment, among others, which have not yielded the desired result. Given the obvious devastating effect of aggressive behaviour in the school community, there is need to use psychological techniques in handling aggressive behaviour in schools. Many people have attempted solutions to the problem of aggressive behaviour and still, the issue is increasing in some alarming dimensions. Despite numerous effort made by previous researchers in founding a lasting solution to the problem of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students, the problems no doubt still poses serious challenges to guidance counsellors in seeing that an effective solution to the problem is realised. This has necessitated this study that intended to determine the effect of Cognitive Restructuring technique in reducing aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe state.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of cognitive restructuring technique in reducing aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Gombe State. Specifically, the study sought to find out the:

1. Effect of cognitive restructuring technique on the secondary school students' aggression when compared with those treated with conventional counselling using their pre-test and post-test scores.

2. Differences in the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique on male and female secondary school students' aggression using their pre-test and post-test scores.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on the secondary school students' aggression when compared with those treated with conventional counselling using their pre-test and post-test scores?

2. What are the differences in the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique on the male and female secondary school students' aggression using their pre-test and post-test scores?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 statistical level of significance:

1. The effect of cognitive restructuring technique on the aggressive behaviour scores of secondary school students will not be significant when compared with those treated with conventional counselling using their post-test mean scores.

2. The effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique on the aggressive behaviour scores of male and female secondary school students will not differ significantly using their post-test mean scores.

II. METHOD

Research Design

The study adopted the quasi-experimental research design of pretest posttest and control non randomized group. This design is suitable for adoption to approximate conditions of true experiment in situations that do not permit the control and manipulation of all relevant variables (Kpolovie, 2010). 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.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe State. Gombe State is located in the North-eastern part of Nigeria. This State was chosen for the study because of the high rate of aggressive behaviour among the secondary school students irrespective of the punitive measures taken to stop them from being aggressive.

Population of the Study

The population of the study was 245 students. These are senior secondary school students (SS2) that were identified with aggressive behaviour in all the nine co-educational secondary schools in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe State. The choice of co-educational public secondary schools was considered appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to ascertain the effect of the techniques on male and female that are interacting and staying in the same school setting.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study was 81 secondary school students with high aggressive behaviour scores. This comprised all the Senior Secondary two (SS2) students that were identified with aggressive behaviour from two schools that have the highest number of students with aggressive behaviour. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the two schools because the students were identified as having high aggressive behaviour.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument that was used for this study on aggressive behaviour of students was: "Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) developed by Buss and

Perry (1992). The Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ) is a 29-item self-report measure that includes four subscales: physical aggression (9 items), verbal aggression (5 items), anger (7 items), and hostility (8 items) (Buss & Perry, 1992). In order to measure aggressive personality traits, participants were given the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire. The instrument has been used in over 400 studies (example, Ezeokana, Nwosu & Okoye 2014, Onukwufor, 2013, Sidney-Agbo, 2016) and it is one of the most popular measures of aggressive behaviour in education and social science research. This questionnaire comprised of 29 self-report items and is based on five point scale ranging from extremely uncharacteristic of me to extremely characteristics of me but was later modified to four point scale by Onukwufor, (2013) from extremely uncharacteristic of me (EU) which is 1 point, uncharacteristic of me (U), 2 point, characteristics of me (C), 3 points, and extremely characteristics of me (EC), 4 points. For every positive statement, it would be 4+3+2+1 which was added to get the total score while for reversed or every negative response, it would be 1+2+3+4. The researcher adopted the instrument.

Validation of the instrument

The instrument, Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ), was adopted, it was not subjected to validation because it has been revalidated in Nigeria by Ezeokana, Obi-Nwosu and Okoye (2014), Onukwufor (2013) and Sidney-Agbo (2016). This current study therefore adopted the BPAQ and did not have to do any further validation.

Reliability of the instrument

The Buss-Perry Aggression questionnaire was found to have internal consistency for the four subscales and total score range from .72 to .89. The internal consistency coefficients are as follows; Physical Aggressionα=0.85, Verbal Aggressionα=0.72, Anger α=0.83 and Hostilityα=0.77, with the overall internal consistency being

α=0.89. Test-retest reliability for the subscales and the total score range fromα= 0.72 to α=0.80 (Buss-Perry, 1992).

For Nigerian sample, this researcher adopted the internal consistency reliability coefficients of 0.80 for the Buss-Perry Aggression questionnaire as determined by Onukwufor (2013). The reason for the adoption is because the study was conducted among students in setting akin to that of the current study.

Method of Data Collection

All the identified SS2 students from all the nine public co-educational secondary schools in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe state were given Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire scale BPAQ to complete. The researcher and six well trained research assistants went round the secondary schools to distribute copies of the questionnaire. Each participant was met in their individual classes and was given the instrument BPAQ to respond to the items. The researcher gave an introduction of the instrument on how to complete the questionnaire to the students. The nature of the students' response and the purpose for which it served were clearly explained to the students. The researcher, with the help of research assistants, properly assisted and guided the students on how to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaire sheets were collected from the students immediately they were through responding to the items and handed over to the researcher for determination of the statistical difference between the experimental and control groups scales scores.

III. RESULT

Research Question 1

1. What is the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on the secondary school students' aggression when compared with those treated with conventional counselling using their pretest and posttest scores?

Table 1: Pretest and Posttest aggression mean scores of students treated with cognitive restructuring technique and those treated with conventional counselling (Norm = 70.27)

Source of Variation	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Difference	Mean Remark
Cognitive restructuring	27	97.74	51.26	46.48	Effective
Control	27	87.44	80.93	6.51	

In table 1, it was observed that the students treated with cognitive restructuring technique had pretest mean score of 97.74 and posttest mean score of 51.26 with lost mean of 46.48 in their aggressive behaviour, while those in the control group who received conventional counselling had pretest mean score of 87.44 and posttest mean score of 80.93 with lost mean 6.51. With posttest mean score of 51.26 which is below the norm of 70.27, cognitive restructuring technique is

effective in reducing aggression among secondary school students.

Research Question 2

What are the differences in the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique on the male and female secondary school students' aggression using their pretest and posttest scores?

Table 4: Pretest and Posttest aggression mean scores of male and female students treated with cognitive restructuring technique (Norm = 70.27)

Source of Variation	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Lost Mean	Remark
Male	**17**	101.18	53.94	47.24	**More Effective**
Female	**10**	91.90	46.70	45.2	

Table 2 indicates that the male students treated with cognitive restructuring technique had pretest mean score of 101.18 and posttest mean score of 53.94 with lost mean of 47.24 in their aggressive behaviour, while the female students treated with cognitive restructuring technique had pretest mean score of 91.90 and posttest mean score of 46.70 with lost mean of 45.2. With lost mean score of 47.24 for males which is greater than lost mean score of 45.2 for female, cognitive restructuring technique is more effective in reducing male secondary school students' aggression.

Testing the Null Hypotheses

Ho1

The effect of cognitive restructuring technique on the aggressive behaviour scores of secondary school students will not be significant when compared with those treated with conventional counselling using their posttest mean scores.

Table 3: ANCOVA on the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on the aggressive behaviour of students when compared with those who received conventional counselling

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	Cal. F	Pvalue	$P \leq 0.05$
Corrected Model	11955.032	2	5977.516			
Intercept	1251.230	1	1251.230			
Aggression1	73.532	1	73.532 1			
Treatment Model	9493.343	1	9493.343	**66.38**	0.000	S
Error	7293.505	51	143.010			
Total	255133.000	54				
Corrected Total	19248.537	53				

Table 3 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 53df denominator, the calculated F is 66.38 with p-value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the first null hypothesis is rejected. So, the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on the aggressive behaviour of secondary school students is significant.

Ho2

The effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique on the aggressive behaviour scores of male and female secondary school students will not differ significantly using their posttest mean scores.

Table 4: ANCOVA on the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique on the aggressive behaviour of male and female students

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	Cal. F	Pvalue	$P \leq 0.05$
Corrected Model	730.181	2	365.090			
Intercept	1872.555	1	1872.555			
Aggression1	400.037	1	400.037			
Gender	641.482	1	641.482	**3.18**	0.087	NS
Error	4835.005	24	201.459			
Total	76508.000	27				
Corrected Total	5565.185	26				

Table 4 reveals that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 26 df denominator, the calculated F is 3.18 with p-value of 0.09 which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the fourth null hypothesis is accepted. So, the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique on the aggressive behaviour

of male and female secondary school students do not differ significantly.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The Effect of Cognitive Restructuring Technique in reducing Aggressive Behaviour of Secondary School Students

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 aggressive behaviour of secondary school students is significant. What this implies is that the effect of CRT on aggressive behaviour of secondary school students is substantial. This finding of the 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.

Moreover, their study revealed that the difference in the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique on aggressive behaviour of male and female secondary school students is significant. This means that the treatment, using cognitive restructuring technique, does not have similar effects on both male and female secondary school students; but in this present study cognitive restructuring was more effective in male than in female, even though the difference was not statistically significant. This is not surprising, since male are known to differ in personality characteristics and are more aggressive than the female. There is evidence that males are quicker to aggression and more likely than females to express their aggression physically (Okoro, Adunonye & Egwuasi, 2015). The findings of this study thereby asserted that male secondary school students have opportunity to overcome their aggressive behaviour through cognitive restructuring technique.

Findings from the study equally revealed that cognitive restructuring technique do not differ in its effectiveness on aggressive behaviour of secondary school students. What this implies is that, though cognitive restructuring reduced the aggressive behaviour of secondary school students it does not differ in its effectiveness. This is because the technique has post-test mean score below the norm of 70.27 and a very narrow difference between their lost mean.

The reason for this finding could be anchored on the notion that the technique taught the participants how to think rational and positive thoughts in aggressive or hostile situations. Moreover, through the learning of cognitive restructuring and behavioural rehearsal techniques, the participants were able to substitute disorganised thoughts which may have hitherto lead to aggressive response, with a sequence of useful thoughts for dealing with their aggressive behaviour. The cognitive restructuring technique therefore was implemented to provide aggressive secondary school students with technique in pro-social behaviours of cognitive restructuring technique in which they were deficient and that were necessary for successful peer interaction to curtail aggressive conducts.

Furthermore, the findings from the study revealed no significant difference in the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique on aggressive behaviour of secondary school students. This means that though cognitive restructuring technique proved to be effective on aggressive behaviour of the participants as indicated in the lost mean score, the difference is not substantial.

V. 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. More so, the difference in the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring technique on aggressive male and female secondary school students is not significant.

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. More so, through this inclusive treatment programme, the problem of aggressive behaviour

will be tackled in all angles, both in schools and outside the school settings.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby 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 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

3. Classroom such as small group discussions, peer relationship training or after school sessions as may be arranged and spearheaded by the school counsellor.

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