

Effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on Bullying Behaviour among Senior Public Secondary School Students in Rivers State

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Abstract: The study investigated the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) on bullying behaviour among senior secondary school students in Rivers State, using the pre-test, post-test control group quasi-experimental research design. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were postulated to guide the study. The population consist of 145,894 senior secondary school students in Rivers State. A sample size of 320 SS1 students possessing bullying characteristics chosen from six schools in the three senatorial zones were used for the study. The subjects were distributed equally to two experimental conditions, one control and one experimental group for comparison. The experimental group received Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (CCT) while the control group received no treatment. The Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBQ) was used as the outcome measure. Its face and content validities were established by test experts and guidance and counselling experts while its reliability was established through the test-retest method using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation test which yielded a co-efficient value of 'r' 0.786. The face to face method was used for the administration of the instrument before and after treatment. Data collected was analysed using the paired sample t-test for the first hypothesis and the one-way ANCOVA for the second hypothesis using Minitab 19 statistical analysis software. All the two hypotheses were rejected. Based on the findings it was recommended amongst others that Counsellors should be taught the practical aspects of REBT in their training programmes and not just the theoretical aspects.

Key words: Bullying Behaviour, Guidance and counselling, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, Senior Secondary, and Students.

Introduction

Bullying is socially an undesirable behaviour with an increasing trend in public secondary schools, it is regarded as an act of indiscipline (Doug, 2016). Stakeholders in the business of education, government, school management and so on are looking for measures to end this undesirable behaviour among students (Alabi & Lami, 2015). Ugwu and Olatunbosun

(2016) said that when students engage in disastrous behaviours particularly bullying, the objectives of secondary education as a preparatory ground for desirable behaviour for useful living and step towards the attainment of higher education is jeopardised. This is because children who are constantly bullied develop phobia for school. Most often, they come up with many reasons why they should not be in school, this is not a good signal for the educational development of our society.

Bullying has several definitions but that of Olweus (2006) is considered more comprehensive by researchers. Olweus in Given (2009) defined bullying as 'aggression in which a more powerful individual or more powerful group intentionally inflicts negative acts repeatedly upon those who are less powerful. Bullying behaviour has been an age long issue in secondary schools where senior students bully junior students, school prefects bully both junior and senior students, some gangsters gang up to bully individuals and vice-versa. This issue has posed much concern to parents, teachers and even government who are continuously looking for a magic wade to stamp out this behaviour in schools. After a proper analysis of definitions given by some eminent scholars like Olweus in Given (2009), Ball (2008), Brank et al (2012), Alabi et al (2015) the researchers defined bullying as 'hurting someone physically or emotionally by words or actions on purpose, usually more than once and the person being hurt feels bad because of it and has difficulty stopping what is happening to him/her.

Okosun (2010) pointed out that acts of indiscipline had rendered schools unsafe for normal academic process. In response to this, stake holders in the business of education, scholars from diverse disciplines are putting in tremendous efforts to unravel the mystery behind bullying among secondary school students and a means of proffering solution to salvage the situation (Ugwu et al, 2016).

Bullying can also be done using modern day technologies, this is called cyber bullying and it includes, sending mean text messages, posting statements online that are unkind or not true. Sending or posting pictures that are not yours to share, making negative comments online about someone agreeing with someone who posts something hurtful (Whitaker, 2016). Bullying is never pleasant or acceptable no matter the form it takes, no one ever deserves to be bullied. Bullying can have a negative impact on everyone especially the victim if not stopped. It can cause serious mental and physical impact; it can isolate many of your human rights including, your right to be free from mental, emotional and physical violence, your right to education. This is because most students who are bullied are always afraid to go to school, they tend to dodge school under the guise of ill health and other excuses; bullying can deny your right to living in a safe environment (Rigby, 2003). Bullying can also lead to depression, anxiety, eating disorders, thoughts of suicide, and health issues like headaches, sleep problems, abdominal pains, and fatigue, academic issues like poor school attendance, low test scores and increased dropout rate (Juvonen and Graham, 2014).

Behavioural Psychologist like Ivan Pavlon, Skinner, Eysenck and others believes that behaviour is learnt and because it is learnt, it can also be unlearned (Uwe, 2016). Akinade (2012) in line with this assertion says that behaviourist see psychological disorders as the

result of maladaptive learning which can also be unlearned. The researchers believes that bullying is a learnt behaviour which can be unlearned through counselling processes.

The researchers adopted the Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) as a counselling modality to help bullies to unlearn bullying behaviour. This therapy is geared towards helping clients to unlearn irrational beliefs which have led to maladaptive behaviours and adopt rational thinking patterns which will bring about desirable behaviours. REBT is the independent variable while bullying behaviour is the dependent variable.

The school is not a place to display deviant behaviours rather it is a place where knowledge, skills attitude and character are impacted in order to aid the intellectual and social development of the child (Lohman, 2014). A deliberate effort is implemented to cultivate character in learners at school, unfortunately, all manner of deviant behaviours are often displayed at school such as bullying. The school and all stake holders of education have been making concerted efforts at stamping out bullying behaviour among students rather there is persistence in the behaviour in all our institutions (Ugwu et al, 2016). This is indeed worrisome, the researchers finds it incumbent to apsply the counselling modalities of REBT to curb the menace of bullying in our secondary schools, and this is the background of the study.

1.1.1 Statement of the Problem

Students' involvement in bullying has attracted several attentions from researchers and education stakeholders such as parents, school management, teachers, Government and others. It is an issue of great concern, bullying behaviour does not only affect the victims but the perpetrators, their families, schools, and society at large. Increase in bullying behaviour has led to drop in test scores, because those bullied are most often afraid of school attendance and may not be emotionally stable to learn effectively to pass test and exams due to low school attendance, frustration, depression and other unpleasant activities that does not promote teaching and learning in schools. The school climate is negatively affected by bullying behaviour of students because students who are directly involved in bullying problem will not find the school environment conducive for learning due to aggression and hostility in the school environment.

Students involved in bullying behaviour have been reprimanded, flogged and punished because it is not a pleasant behaviour but the behaviour keep persisting in the school system Okosun (2010). Bullying is a significant problem in the school system that cannot be ignored or allowed to persist because it disrupts learning and drains a significant proportion of mental health and family resources (Ericson, 2001). Victims of bullying are unhappy, anxious, frustrated and may suffer physical injuries, low self-concept, and low-self-esteem and may find it difficult to concentrate on their studies because of the bullying they experience. They sometimes may stay away from school because of fear of the bullies. These situations may lead to health problems, poor academic performance, ultimately failure among victims (Mazur, Tabak, Zawadzka, 2017). On the other hand the bullies tend to experience depression, engage in suicidal tendencies and other unpleasant activities. If not corrected they are likely to act violently in their adult life and become maladjusted

individuals who will further breed maladjusted individuals as parents. Bullying behaviour may attract dislike and rejection from peers which may turn a bully to a recluse. This situation may make them suffer low academic achievement and risk-taking behaviour. Students who engage in bullying behaviour are at risk for criminal arrest, school dropout and physical violence.

Looking from the angle of the victim of bullying and the perpetrator no gains can be counted, both the bullied and the bully stand a risk of suffering school dropout, low test scores and other consequences. The problem is, can Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy a behaviour and cognitive restructuring therapy be used successfully to curb bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Nigeria, having been used successfully in advanced countries like America and others? Consequent upon this problem the researchers decided to investigate the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) on bullying behaviour among students in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This is the problem of this study.

1.1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviours Therapy on bullying behaviours among Senior secondary school students in River State and specifically,

1. To determine the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on bullying behaviour of senior secondary school students in Rivers state as indicated by their pre-test and post-test mean scores.
2. To determine the effects of the treatment (REBT) on bullying behaviour of students when the pre-test and post-test mean scores are compared to that of the control group.

1.1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study

- (1) What is the effect of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on bullying behaviour of students as measured by their Pre-test and Post-test mean scores?
- (2) What is the effect of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on bullying behaviour of students in Rivers State when the pretest and posttest mean scores are compared to that of the control group?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to give direction to the study.

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference in the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on bullying behaviour of student in Rivers State as indicated by their pretest and post-test mean scores.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant difference in the effects of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on bullying behavior of students in Rivers State when the pre-test and post-test mean scores are compared to that of the Control Group.

Theoretical Frame work

This study is anchored on the works of Albert Ellis the founder of Rational Emotive Therapy (RET); later he revised and expanded RET to Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) in 1993, during institute sponsored conference entitled “A meeting of the minds”. In that meeting Ellis announced that he will be changing the name of Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) to Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (Uwe, 2016).

Albert Ellis based his rational-emotive therapy on the basic assumption that human beings are both “inherently rational and irrational, sensible and crazy”. Also it is indicated that human beings are born with a potential for both rational and straight thinking and irrational, or cooked thinking, that people have genetic predisposition for self-preservation, show happiness, rational thinking and straight verbalizing growth and self-actualization (Alutu, 2007).

Ellis summarized some of the key basic assumption of human nature:

1. People conditioned themselves to feel disturbed rather than being conditioned by external sources.
2. People have the biological and cultural tendency to think crooked and to needlessly disturb themselves
3. Humans are unique in that they invent disturbing beliefs and keep themselves disturbed about this disturbance.
4. People have the capacity to change their cognitive, emotive and behavioural processes; they can choose to react differently from their usual pattern, refuse to allow themselves to become upset, and train themselves so that they can eventually remain minimally disturbed for the rest of their life.

Ellis also opined that human beings have inborn capacity toward growth and actualization, but rather controlled by their rational thinking, based on their faulty belief systems caused emotional disturbances to themselves (Uzoeshi, 2013).

Albert Ellis contends that psychological problems are interpersonal in origins: that is, meaning giving process is internal in the minds of people. Individual produce emotional problems within themselves by their faulty irrational beliefs. People originally learn irrational beliefs from significant others during growing up in early childhood. That is, humans create irrational dogmas and superstitions by themselves, resulting to emotional disturbances. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) contends that blame is the core of most emotional disturbances. The tendency for human to escalate their desires and preference of dogmatic, “absolutistic” “should” “ought”, and forceful command to self and others, generate emotional problems. There are five basic areas that outline internalized self-defeating belief systems that created emotional disturbances.

They are as follows:

1. I must love or approve from all the significant people in my life
2. I must perform important tasks competently and perfectly well
3. Because I strongly desire that people treat me considerably and fairly, they absolutely must do so!
4. If I don't get what I want, it's terrible, and I can't stand it.

5. It is easier to avoid facing life's difficulties and responsibilities than to undertake more rewarding form of self-discipline.

Anytime people use the words must, should, have to, ought to, they put themselves under great pressure leading to emotional disturbances. One of the primary goals of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) is to dispute irrational and self-defeating behaviours (Alutu, 2007)

The ABCDES of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT)

The basic tenet of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) is that emotional disturbances are the product of self-defeating irrational thinking "A stands for the activating event. Example, a young lady was engaged to a young medical doctor, but later in the relationship, the young doctor disappointed her, and got married to another lady-activating event. "B" represent how the individual (the young lady) thinks and feels about the broken engagement –belief system. The young lady could be saying, if she doesn't get married to the young medical doctor, her life is over. "C" is the emotional consequence the young lady developed clinical depression. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) contends that "A", which is the activating event does not cause "C" rather the young lady's belief about "A" largely cause "C", the emotional consequences the young lady developed clinical depression. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) contends that "A", which is the activating event does not cause "C" rather the young lady's belief about "A" largely causes "C", the emotional reaction. After ABC comes "D", disputing, the therapist /counsellor helps clients to challenge their irrational beliefs. By clients surrendering their irrational beliefs, they arrived at "E", which is considered an effective rational philosophy, replacing the old self-defeating behaviour. Once, the client reached effective philosophy, he or she has created a new set of feelings, that is, the young lady overcoming her depression moods.

The basic goal of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) focus on helping clients to be aware that they can live rational fulfilling lives. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) counsellors contend that when clients use such self-defeating words as must, ought to, have to and suppose to, they are making irrational demand on themselves. Counsellor focuses to minimize or eradicating client's emotional disturbances and self-defeating behaviors by learning a more realistic approach to life. Also, counselor focuses on helping clients realize that they can function more rational and productive lifestyle. In addition, counsellors help clients to relearn using irrational words, such as "must", "should", "ought", "have" and "need to". Counsellors encourage clients to be Moore tolerant of themselves and others.

Rational emotive counsellors utilize several techniques in helping clients to change their self-defeating behaviours. Some of these methods are directive, confrontational, and philosophical and action oriented in scope. Counsellor uses teaching in disputing irrational and self-defeating thoughts and behaviours by guiding clients to be aware of the anatomy of an emotion that clients' feelings are a result thought and not the activating event, but rather self-talk directly or indirectly influences emotions.

Counsellors are very active, directive, and serve as teachers correcting client's irrational behaviours. Counsellors are bright, skilful, knowledgeable and empathetic in their relationship with clients. Counsellor's first task is to show clients that they have created many irrational "should", "ought" and "must". The counsellor assists clients to learn to redirect self-defeating irrational thinking to rational thinking (Eremie, 2005). The researchers are to teach, direct and correct bullying behaviour to an acceptable behaviour pattern.

Empirical Review

A quasi-experimental study conducted by Kennedy (2008) investigated the effects of individual counselling on the social adjustment of registered widows in Rivers State. The study utilized rational emotive behavior therapy and other approaches to counselling for the study. The study utilized the purposive sampling technique to draw out 60 widows who composed the sample. They were placed in 4 experimental conditions with 15 members in each group. The outcome measure was the adapted social adjustment scale. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the independent t-test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypotheses. Results indicated that the treatment factors Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy produced significant mean difference between the experimental and the control group and social adjustment increased after exposure to REBT counselling modalities. This means Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy was found to be effective in counselling.

In another study conducted by Eniola and Adebisi (2005) in a quasi-experimental study carried out among 48 visually impaired students in Federal college of education (special) Oyo utilizing Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy and Reality therapy in improving socialization problems using 3x2x2 factorial matrix. The results showed that Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy subjects socialized significantly better than all the subjects. The difference between the mean scores of group reality therapy and control did not reach significant level. Although the result showed that reality therapy subjects socialized better than the control group subjects, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy was found to be more effective than reality therapy in improving socialization of subjects.

Ker, Ekoja and Ekoja (2007) conducted an experimental study in Benue state university among graduate students for 2004/2005 academic session with a sample size of 60 students, made up of 39 males and 21 females with a mean age of 36years utilized Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy to improve voters' attitude. The results indicated that treatment factor Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy produced significant mean difference between the experimental and control groups in favour of former.

Eremie, Asodike and Kennedy (2020) conducted a quasi-experimental study among physically challenged undergraduate students in Rivers State to improve their self-concept utilizing REBT as the treatment factor. The Self-Concept Scale of V.B.C. Iwuji was adopted for the study before and after treatment. Results indicated that the treatment factors produced significant mean difference when compared to the control group.

The control group-maintained consistency in their demonstration of low self-concept while the experimental group did not.

In a related development, Fung, Gersteein, Chain and Hutchison (2013) conducted a study on the effectiveness of cognitive behavior therapy on reducing aggressive bullying behavior among Hong Kong secondary school students taking into cognizance the potential importance including content targeting types of aggression through a screening procedure 63 high risk proactive bullies were selected for the study in a population of 5,025 students and were randomly assigned to treatment groups. A significant MANOVA was discovered with 46 participants, proactive, reactive, verbal and physical bullying scores were compared before treatment and at four follow up assessment after treatment. Proactive, reactive and physical bullying decreased from pretest to one year follow up suggestion that cognitive behavior therapy was effective in reducing aggressive bullying behaviors of students.

Ezeribe (2019) investigated the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviours Therapy (REBT) on reducing bullying behaviours among senior secondary school students and the counselling implications. The study employed quasi-experimental research design. The population of the study consisted of 2000 senior secondary 3 (SS3) students. A sample size of one hundred and nine (109) students identified as bullies using Bullying Behaviour Observatory Scale (BBOS). The experimental group was treated with Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy for five (5) weeks while the control group received no treatment. The results revealed that Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) had significant effects in reducing bullying behaviour among secondary school students irrespective of gender.

Methodology

1.1.4 Research Design

The study utilized the pretest, posttest control group quasi-experimental design. This design allows for results gotten from experimental and control groups to be genuinely compared using pretest and post-test as well as experimental and control groups; that were not constituted by random assignment of the subjects. The utmost condition that require the use of quasi-experimental research according to Kpolovie (2010:91) is when full randomization cannot be functional to control all known and unknown extraneous variables required for true experimentation.

The researchers are convinced that this present study was most appropriate with the use of quasi experimental research because students were not randomly assigned to experimental conditions but were treated in their intact schools.

The study was conducted in Rivers State of Nigeria one of the 36 states of the federation.

1.1.5 Population for the Study

The target population of this study consist of all the senior secondary one school students in Rivers State of Nigeria for 2019/2020 academic session. As at the time of this study, the

total number of students in SS 1 in Rivers State stands at 49,094 (forty-nine thousand and ninety-four students (Source: Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The simple random sampling technique which ensures that every member is given an equal and undisrupted chance of been selected was used to select six schools from the three senatorial zones of the state for the study, two schools from each zone. The adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire was administered to all the SS1 students in the selected schools and 320 students who possess the characteristics of bullying behaviour were identified and used for the study. Students in three schools were assigned to the treatment group and three were assigned to the control group.

1.1.6 Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument employed to obtain data for the study was adapted from a standardized bullying questionnaire developed by Olweus to measure the degree of bullying behavior among students. It was adapted and renamed 'Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire' (AOBQ) to make it suitable for local use with 18 self-report items in relation to bullying behaviour on a scale of 1-5 . The original instrument developed by Olweus was not used as it was in its original form, this therefore calls for validation and reliability processes.

1.1.7 Validity of the Instrument

Face and content validities were ensured to determine the validity of Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBQ), the following method was adopted.

Face Validity of Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBQ)

To establish the face validity of Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBQ) three copies were given to three experts in the field of Educational psychology/guidance and counselling from the University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University in Rivers State, to study the instrument and indicate what it appears to measure superficially. The experts confirmed that the instrument is a true measure of bullying behavior which means the instrument has good face validity and was accepted by the researchers as meeting its superficial value after effecting the corrections and suggestions made.

Content Validity of Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBS)

Content validity of Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBQ) was determined in two phases. In phase one three copies of the instrument was given to three other experts from the departments of Educational psychology/guidance and counselling in the three universities in Rivers state.

At the second phase, improved copies of the Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBQ) which went through the first phase was also given to other experts in the same field in the three universities in Rivers state to indicate the degree of suitability or relevance of the items of the instrument to measure bullying behavior of students. This was done to confirm the judgment of the earlier three all their corrections and criticism were taken into cognizance in the final draft

1.1.8 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability of Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBQ) was determined through the test- re-test method for a measure of stability. Twenty (25) students outside the sampled schools responded to the instrument, after one month's interval of the first administration a re-test was given to the same students. The initial and re-test scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation test and it yielded a value of 'r' 0.746 thus the reliability of Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBQ) was established.

1.1.9 Administration of Instrument

With the help of research assistants, a pre-test was given to all the students in SS1 in the selected six schools, totalling 1,107 students. From the pre-test, 320 students were identified to show significant bullying behaviours. These students were put into 2 groups in each school. Groups I constituted the experimental group while group 2 was the control group in each school. Group I was given the Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) while group 2 which was the control group had no treatment.

Table 1: Group Representation

SN	Group	Treatment	Pre-test	Post-test	Number
1.	I	REBT	X	X	157
2.	II	Control	X	X	163

Methods of Data Analysis

All the research questions were answered using mean and standard deviations. Hypothesis I was analysed using the paired sample t-test while hypothesis 2 was analysed with one-way ANCOVA at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis was carried out using Minitab 19 statistical analysis software.

Experimental Procedure

The experimental procedure was divided into three stages.

Stage 1 – Pre-test Administration

The researcher administered the Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBQ) to every member of the population selected for the study in SS 1 in the six selected schools in their respective schools to determine those fit for the study.

Stage 2 – Scoring of the Pre-test

The researcher scored the responses of students on each item on Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBQ) to determine students with bullying behaviour. Thirty-one out of 90 points on the Adapted Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (AOBQ) was the cut off for bullying behaviour thus students with 31 points and above were identified as students with bullying behaviour.

Stage 3 – Placement of Subjects into Experimental and Control Groups

The researchers separated students with bullying behaviour disorder that is those who scored 31 points and above from the other students who scored below 31 points. Those who scored 31 points and below were exempted from the study while those with bullying behaviour were placed into experimental and control group through ballot system thus, two (2) groups were formed in each school, one treatment group and one control group were formed for the experiment, students were treated in their respective schools.

Treatment Procedure will be divided into Three Phases as follows;

Phase 1 – Pre-treatment phase. At this stage base line data for judgement was collected from both experimental and control groups through the outcome measure.

Phase 2 – Treatment Phase. The researchers commenced treatment (counselling sessions) one hour once a week for six weeks in their respective schools while the control group received no treatment for purpose of comparison.

Phase 3 – Post Treatment Phase. After treatment the researchers waited for two weeks to elapse before administering the post-test to both the experimental and control group for comparison.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the effect of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on bullying behaviour of students as measured by their Pre-test and Post-test mean scores?

Table 2: Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores/Standard Deviation of Experimental Group (REBT)

Treatment Method	Group	N	Mean	Difference	Std. Dev
REBT	Pre Test	157	53.34	25.85	6.09
	Post Test	157	27.49		4.80

Table 2 shows the pretest and post-test mean scores of the experimental group (REBT). The table shows that the pretest mean score was 53.34 with a standard deviation of 6.09 while the posttest mean score was 27.49 with a standard deviation of 4.80, leading to a mean difference of 25.85. This suggests that REBT had an effect on bullying behavior of students there is an obvious decline in bullying behaviors of students as indicated by the pretest and posttest mean scores after exposure to REBT counselling modalities. The answer to research question 1 therefore is: REBT is very effective in the treatment of bullying behaviour.

Research Question 2: What is the effect of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on bullying behaviour of students in Rivers State when the pretest and posttest mean scores are compared to that of the control group?

Table 3: Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores of experimental Group (REBT) and Control Group

Groups	N	Pre Test Mean	Std. Dev	Post Test Mean	Std. Dev	Mean Difference
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Experimental Group (REBT)	157	53.34	6.09	27.49	4.80	25.85
Control Group	163	53.84	6.10	54.18	6.29	0.34

Table 3 shows the pretest and post-test mean scores of the experimental group (REBT) and the control group. The table shows that the pretest mean score for the experimental group was 53.34 with a standard deviation of 6.09 while the posttest mean score was 27.49 with a standard deviation 4.80, leading to a mean difference of 25.85, while for the control group the pretest mean score was 53.84 with a standard deviation of 6.10 while the posttest mean score was 54.18 with a standard deviation 6.29, leading to a mean difference of 0.34. This result shows that the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy was effective in treating bullying behaviours of students with proofs of a decline in bullying behaviour after exposure to REBT counselling techniques while the control group showed a consistent increase in bullying behaviour. The answer to research question 2 therefore is: REBT is shown to have tremendous effects on bullying behaviour when compared to the control group.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on bullying behavior of student in Rivers State as indicated by their pretest and post-test mean scores.

Table 4: T-test table of Pre-test and Post Test mean Scores for Experimental Group (REBT)

Treatment Method	Groups	Df	T- value	P value
Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy	Pre-test	155	45.90	0.00*
	Post-test			

The mean difference is significant at 0.05*

Following table 4 a paired sample t-test was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference in the effect of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on bullying behaviors of students in Rivers State as indicated by their pretest and post-test mean scores, the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result of table 4 was $t(155) = -49.90, p = 0.00$. This result is significant as the p value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This suggests that there is a significant difference in the effect of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on bullying behaviors of students in Rivers State as indicated by their pretest and post-test mean scores. Hence the null hypothesis was **rejected**.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the effects of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on bullying behavior of students in Rivers State when the pre-test and post-test mean scores are compared to that of the Control Group.

Table 5: One way ANCOVA Results for Experimental Group 1 and Control Group

Analysis of Covariance					
Source	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-Value	P-Value
Pre Test	1	9.6	9.6	0.89	0.35
Treatment Method	1	26582.3	26582.3	2456.41	0.00
Error	317	3430.4	10.8		
Lack-of-Fit	34	334.1	9.8	0.90	0.64
Pure Error	283	3096.4	10.9		
Total	319	30031.9			

a. R Squared = 0.886 (Adjusted R Squared= 0.885)

Following table 5 the observed difference was further subjected to an ANCOVA analysis to test for the significant effect of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on bullying behaviors of students in Rivers State as determined by the comparison with the control group. The result of the ANCOVA analysis showed in table 5 was $f(1, 317) = 2456.41, p = 0.00$. This result is significant as the p value of 0.00 is less than the 0.05 level of significance. This suggests that there was a significant effect of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on bullying behaviors of students in Rivers State as determined by the comparison with the control group. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the findings of this study is based on the results emanating from the research questions and test of hypotheses and its place in existing literature and previous studies.

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on bullying behaviours among senior public secondary school students in River State. The study has shown that Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy is effective in the treatment of bullying behaviour. The study utilized the pretest, posttest control group quasi-experimental design. This design allows for results gotten from experimental and control groups to be genuinely compared using pre-test and post-test as well as experimental and control groups; that were not constituted by random assignment of the subjects.

The first finding is reflected on table two answering research question 1 and table 4 testing corresponding hypothesis 1 revealed that REBT is an effective therapy in the treatment of bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour was found to decline among members of the experimental group after exposure to REBT counselling modalities. This finding was in line with the findings of Kennedy (2008) who investigated the effects of individual counselling on the social adjustment of registered widows in Rivers State utilizing rational emotive behavior therapy and other approaches to counselling for the study. Results indicated that the treatment factor Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy produced significant mean difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental group. The finding of this study is also consistent with the findings of Eniola and Adebisi (2005) who

carried out a quasi-experimental study among 48 visually impaired students in Federal college of education (special) Oyo utilizing Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy and Reality therapy in improving socialization problems using 3x2x2 factorial matrix. The results showed that Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy subjects socialized significantly better than all the subjects. The difference between the mean scores of group reality therapy and control did not reach significant level. Although the result showed that reality therapy subjects socialized better than the control group subjects, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy was found to be more effective than reality therapy in improving socialization of subjects.

The second finding reflected on table 3 answering research question 2 and table 5 testing hypothesis 2 revealed that REBT therapy is very effective in the treatment of bullying behaviour when the control group was compared to the experimental group, a decline in bullying behaviour was found among members of the experimental group after REBT treatment while the control group displayed consistency in the display of bullying behaviour at post-test. This finding corroborates that of Ker, Ekoja and Ekoja (2007), Eremie, Asodike and Kennedy (2020), Fung, Gersteein, Chain and Hutchison (2013, Ezeribe (2019), Eniola and Adebisi (2005), Kennedy , (2008) all found significant differences between the experimental and control group revealing the effects of REBT on different life issues including bullying behaviour.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it was concluded as follows;

- (1) REBT had significant effect in reducing bullying behaviour among senior public secondary school students. This was evident in the significant drop in the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group. This simply shows the gains of REBT in the treatment of bullying behaviour.
- (2) The effectiveness of REBT was further revealed when the experimental group was compared against the control group and a sharp reduction in bullying behaviour was found among members of the experimental group while the control group exhibited consistent bullying behaviour in their post-test mean score.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The techniques of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy should be taught in counsellors' training programs not merely taught through theoretical processes but practically, in work-shops and professional conferences to make counsellors more effective in the discharge of their duties.
2. Since it was found that Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy is an effective tool in reducing bullying behaviour among students in River state, adequate conditions and provisions should be made and facilitated in secondary schools to make counselling functional through the employment of guidance counsellors to treat symptoms of bullying rather than resorting to curative means when the situation may have deteriorated.

Limitation of the Study

This research was not without limitations despite the success it recorded. In course of carrying out this study, the researchers encountered the following limitations which may/may not have affected the generalization of the study. First, the counselling process generally needs a serene environment and some schools employed for the study do not have counselling laboratories due to the absence of professional counsellors and as such counselling took place in classrooms, occasionally students come in to distract the counselling process. This was a major limitation.

Secondly, assembling the students for counselling encounter was another major limitation. Gathering the students during the first three weeks was a major challenge; this made the counselling session to commence behind schedule. Nevertheless these challenges notwithstanding the study met its objectives.

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