

Counsellors' Utilization of Systematic Desensitization as a Counselling Strategy for Restraining Disordered Behaviours among Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Nweke Okechukwu Fidelis

Department of Guidance and Counselling. The University of American,
Winchester Rd, Temecula, USA.

ABSTRACT

The study ascertained the extent to which counsellors' utilize systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consisted of 59 school guidance counsellors in the existing 31 public secondary schools in the area. The number is small and manageable so no sampling was done. The instrument used for data collection was a 7-item questionnaire. The instrument was validated by two experts from Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. Two from guidance and counselling and one from measurement and evaluation. Mean with standard deviation and t-test statistic were used for data analysis. The study revealed among others that school counsellors' utilize systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State to a great extent. The study concluded that guidance counsellors and teacher counsellors do not differ significantly in their opinions of the utilization of systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary schools students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. The study recommended among others that school authorities should introduce some kind of reward system every term to the students that portray exemplary behaviours

Keywords: Counselling Strategy, Disordered Behaviour and Systematic Desensitization

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, behaviour disorder is a disturbing fact especially when such behaviours adversely affect the academic performance of the students. Secondary school students displaying behavioural disorders may not see such acts as abnormal, in fact, in most cases; they are not bothered by it because they perceived it as normal and pleasing [1,2]. For them and their peers it is a way of life The implication is, if such is not restrained, it may continue at the detriment of not just the secondary school student academic

performance but their attainment in life and their contribution to the growth and development of their families, communities and their country [3].

However, various students that suffer behaviour disorder do often encounter challenges in school and outside school. As a result of their instability, students with behavioural disorder are less likely to excel in school and may drop out before entering higher institution [4]. As a result, of the severity and frequency of

these behaviours, students with behaviour disorder are less heard, occasionally listened to, less valued and less respected not only within their school but also within the environment where they live. Students showing behavioural disorder traits are most likely to develop unaccepted relationship at home and school vicinity [5]. Since they are rejected and seen as aliens within their school and society they engage in drug abuse as defense mechanism, engage in bullying the peers and juniors, smoking, promiscuity, aggressive and disruptive behaviour, stealing absconding from classes, not doing tests and assignments just to mention but a few thereby embrace all the listed anomalies as their comfort zone. Worse still is their utter disregard for constituted authorities and committing offences against the school rules and regulations which from observation has been rampant and on the increase. This does not include the frequent lack of respect for authority and the apparent lack of discipline among students and their tutors in schools [6].

Consequent upon the above fact, it is glaring that students with disordered behaviour lack the abilities to conform to standards of decency, repeated lying, and failure to sustain long relationships, low tolerance of boredom and complete lack of guilt or conscience. Yet, having assessed students, with behaviour disorder, it becomes necessary that these students require help which sought for

immediate action. Systematic desensitization as a strategy may be utilized to restrain disordered behaviours. [6], maintain that desensitization may be used to treat people with disordered behaviour from the point of view where anxiety reactions or other behavioural inhibitions result from formerly inappropriate stimuli that have acquired the capacity to elicit high intensity emotional reactions. Systematic desensitization also involves instructional plan with intentional and purposeful sequence from simple to complex in order to gradually effect behaviour change or mood. In the application of systematic desensitization in assisting clients on how to solve their problems, counsellors begin their treatments by relaxing them or teaching them to relax themselves. Thereafter, the counsellor and his client categorize the stimuli or anxiety provoking situations responsible for the client's problem in hierarchical order of difficulty. [5], remarked that the real process of systematic desensitization begins after categorization of stimuli by asking the client to develop a mental picture of the anxiety provoking scene while in a relaxed mood from one stage to another higher level. As the client pictures the stimulus at each stage in a relaxed form, he is gradually overcoming the situations and as it progresses, he will be free from his problem. The success story of systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy depends largely on

the ability of a client to visualize a scene vividly. A counsellor using this strategy is expected to apply relaxation, interpretation and explanation skills to work on the mind-sets of clients. He should also be engrossed in systematic planning of events, time management and patience. The counsellors' role here is to help the students change his or her thought pattern through the utilization of systematic desensitization therapy as the concept that emotions and behaviours result from cognitive processes [4]. The habitual truants that were made perfect may be rewarded and this may help solve lateness problems. Students who are involved in violence, rioting may be handled with punishments strategy. These students will either be suspended or expelled from school. Yet, [3] also noted that managing students' disordered behaviour in secondary schools requires a cooperative attitude of all stake holders in the education industry if tangible results are to be achieved.

Meanwhile, the researcher is of the opinion that using the status of the counsellor as a variable, the status of the counsellor may be applied since there is no organized training for teachers counsellors in the state, their performances will have some short

comings as these teachers are appointed to help in the implementation of the guidance programmes in secondary school in the state. In respect to counsellors status, [4] noted in his study that counsellor (Guidance counsellors/teacher counsellors) being a member of staff of the school shares in their responsibilities, contributing their specialized skills, knowledge and experiences in these dimensions. Among the supposed roles they perform in the school setting which ultimately help in the reduction of students' disorder behaviour, include: counselling services, orientation services, information services, diagnostic services, test and measurement services, curriculum planning services, educational and vocational services, continuous assessment, consultation services, placement and follow up services, community services, and referral services. To this end, since the utilization of the services is not feasible the objective of this study is empirically poised to examine the counsellors' utilization of systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu education zone of Enugu state bearing in mind the counsellors' status as a variable.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which counsellors' utilize systematic

desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours

among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

Specifically the study was designed to;

1. Ascertain the extent to which school counsellors' utilize systematic

desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent do school counsellors' utilize systematic desensitization as a

counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State?

HYPOTHESIS

The following research hypothesis guided the study and was tested at .05 level of significance.

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of guidance counsellors and teacher

counsellors' utilization of systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The area of the study was Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. The population for the study consisted of 59 school counsellors in the existing 31 government owned secondary schools in the area. Of these 37 are guidance counsellors while 20 are teachers counsellors. The population is small so no sampling was done. The instrument used for data collection was a 7 items self structured questionnaire developed by the researcher called Systematic Desensitization Scale (SDS). The instrument had a 4-point response scale with response category of Very great

extent (VGE)---4 points; Great extent (GE)-----3 points; Little Extent (LE)---2 points and Very little extent (VLE)—1 point. The instrument was validated by three experts; two from Guidance and counselling and one from measurement and evaluation, all from Faculty of Education, Enugu State university of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate and it yielded a reliability coefficient of .85 for cluster 1 and .73 for cluster 2. The coefficient for the entire instrument stood at .73. The study was carried out in all the

31 secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. Fifty nine copies of the questionnaire were distributed but fifty seven copies were retrieved from the respondents representing 96.61 percent return rate. Data collected were analyzed using mean with standard deviation and t-test statistic. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as great extent while any mean below 2.50 was regarded as little extent. The one null hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance using t-test statistic. If the calculated t-value was

less than the critical table value of ± 1.96 for the required degree of freedom of 55, the null hypothesis was not rejected but if the calculated t-value was equal to or greater than the critical, t-value, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question 1: To what extent do school counsellors' utilize systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State?

Table1: Mean \bar{X} Rating with Standard Deviation of the Extent to which School Counsellors' Utilize Systematic Desensitization as a Counselling Strategy for Restraining Disordered Behaviours among Secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State							
		Guidance Counsellors		Teacher Counsellors		Overall	
		N=37		N=22			
S/N	Items	\bar{X}_1	SD_1	\bar{X}_2	SD_2	\bar{X}_3	SD_3
Decision							
1.	Chatting up students thereby diverting their attention from fearful situations	2.89	1.27	3.00	1.19	2.95	1.23
	GE						
2.	To treat disordered behaviour especially where anxiety reactions result to high intensity emotional reactions	3.16	0.89	3.36	0.95	3.26	
	0.92 GE						
3.	By relaxing them or teaching them to relax themselves	2.91	0.98	2.55	1.29	2.73	
	1.13 GE						
4.	Encouraging students to be assertive.	3.41	1.03	3.27	0.88	3.34	
	0.95 GE						
5.	Helping students to build self-confidence	2.37	1.21	2.09	1.15	2.23	
	1.18 LE						
6.	Helping students to build self-esteem	3.10	1.19	2.68	1.29	2.89	
	1.24 GE						
7.	Students should be engrossed in systematic						

planning of events, time management and practice	3.13	1.13	3.09	0.92	3.11
1.03 GE					
Grand Mean	2.51	1.10	2.86	1.09	2.93
1.09 GE					

Table 1 indicates that of the 7 items of the extent to which school counsellors' utilize systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, the respondents agreed with 6 items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7) as they recorded mean scores of (2.95, 3.26, 2.73, 3.34, 2.89 and 3.11) which are above the cut-off point of 2.50. They however disagreed with 1of the items (5) with a mean score of (2.23). The standard deviation for all the items raised is 1.09 which is small signifying that the responses are loosely clustered around the mean. The Table also shows that the respondents grand mean score for the

overall items raised is (2.93). Going by the guideline for the interpretation of the respondents data, the answers to research question one is that school counsellors' utilize systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State to a great extent.

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of guidance counsellors and teacher counsellors' utilization of systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of the Mean Rating of Guidance Counsellors and Teacher Counsellors Utilization of Systematic Desensitization as a Counselling Strategy for Restraining Disordered Behaviours among Secondary School Students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Status	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Guidance Counsellors	37	2.51	1.10	55	1.21	±1.96	NS Do not reject Ho ₁
Teacher Counsellors	20	2.86	1.09				

Significant at P< .05, df = 55, critical t-value = ±1.96

The t-test analysis of the data in table 2 revealed that the t-calculated value (1.21) is less than the critical t-value of ±1.96 at degree of freedom (df) of 55 and at.05

level of confidence. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected as guidance counsellors and teacher counsellors' utilized systematic desensitization as a

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The result in Table 1 indicates that that school counsellors' utilize systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State to a great extent. This finding affirms the findings of [4] who held that counsellors providing students with clear rules of pro-social behaviour go a long way in preventing issues from arising. This is consistent with the finding of [2] who held that an appropriate method must be designed to reward good behaviour and punish or repress bad behaviour. The above findings is in line with [5] who held that systematic desensitization as a technique is used to assist individuals who have debilitating anxiety or phobia over some events and situations to overcome such problems in the presence of the stimuli that provoke them. The findings of [3,4,5] also maintained that desensitization is used to treat disordered behaviour from behavioural point of view where anxiety reactions or other behavioural inhibitions result from formerly inappropriate stimuli that have acquired the capacity to elicit high intensity emotional reactions. From experience the researcher also discovered

that systematic desensitization involves instructional plan with intentional and purposeful sequence from simple to complex in order to gradually effect behaviour change or mood. Yet, [5] also noted that managing students' disordered behaviour in secondary schools requires a cooperative attitude of all stake holders in the education industry if tangible results are to be achieved.

The analysis of the t-test comparison according to Table 2 showed that the t-calculated value (1.21) is less than the critical t-value of ± 1.96 at degree of freedom (df) of 55 and at .05 level of confidence. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected as guidance counsellors and teacher counsellors' utilized systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. The foregoing result is at variance with the findings of Odoemelum (2001) who found that counsellor (Guidance/teacher counsellors) being a member of staff of the school shares in their responsibilities, contributing their specialized skills, knowledge and experiences in these dimensions

CONCLUSION

Conclusively from the above analysis and interpretations done and the information from related literature, it implies that

1. School counsellors' utilize systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State to a great extent.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of guidance counsellors and teacher counsellors' utilization of systematic desensitization as a counselling strategy for restraining disordered behaviours among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS

The finding of this study have implications for students, parents, teachers in Enugu Education zone since disordered students often threaten their teachers, school authorities and even parents at home. Most students who are involved do not benefit from schooling because of their demonstrations and destruction of school properties. It affects their academic performance because they are often into one problem or the other losing most vital class lessons.

Truant students have poor relationship with their parents. This is because most reasonable parent's withdraw their love and care on their children who exhibit truancy and also most traunt children do not like coming closer to their parents because of fear of being reprimanded.

Teachers in the process of teaching and learning should recognize the fact that most learners who are exhibiting truancy or other social menace are out of their senses. They should make learning very

much interesting through using computer and other instructional materials. By implication, teaching and learning should be tailored towards exposing and discouraging disordered acts or conducts.

Government should ensure the availability of guidance counsellors in all the educational levels. This will help in directing students' attention positively and handling issues of personal social problems of students. Counsellors should also help in organizing orientation programmes and other activities geared towards helping students to live a positive life in and outside the school setting. Government should provide enough recreational facilities in schools across the nation such as table tennis, volley ball. This will help students to channel their energy into meaningful events. Government should ensure that monitoring teams discharge their duties effectively. As this will help in cross examination of activities of teachers and students for optional result in the system.

RECOMMENDATION

To achieve this mission the following recommendations was made based on the finding of this study.

School authorities should introduce some kind of reward system every term to the students that portray exemplary behaviours. Such students should be rewarded

heftily to reinforce their behaviour. A deliberate category for instance called the most recently improved student should be introduced specifically for the disordered students and most troublesome students.

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