

## **Perception of Counsellors' Status on the Suitability of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy as a Counselling Strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem Among Secondary School Students in Enugu State, Nigeria.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study investigated the perceptions of counsellor's status on the suitability of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of counsellor's status on the suitability of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. One research question was raised. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This was done with particular reference to the location of the schools of the respondents. The population of the study is 105 Guidance Counsellors. Of these 126 are guidance counsellors while 319 are teacher's counsellors currently serving in the 291 government owned secondary schools in Enugu State. Out of 105 copies of questionnaire developed by the researcher and distributed, 96 copies were returned signifying 91.43%. The 96 copies were used to collect the data for the study using self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher called Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy for Enhancing Self-Esteem Scale (REBT.ESES). The instrument was face validated by three (3) experts. Cronbach Alpha Reliability estimate was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. Data collected for this study were analyzed using mean, grand mean and standard deviation to answer the one research question. The result found out that Guidance counsellors perceive Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy as a counselling strategy suitable for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. Based on the findings, a recommendation that is in alignment with suggestion was made.

**Keywords: Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) and Self-Esteem.**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Counsellors are professional therapist that help clients in reaching 'their optimal level of psychosocial functioning through resolving negative patterns, prevention, rehabilitation, and improving quality of life' [1]. Counsellors work in varied settings like schools, hospitals, corporate settings and so forth, and their role also varies depending upon the setting in which they practice [1]. Part of a counsellor's training is becoming aware of their own needs so that they realize to what extent these needs can interfere with the counselling process. The counsellor

should constantly be checking themselves by querying whose needs are being met...their own or those of the client. It is not unethical that the counsellor's personal needs are met within their professional practice, but the meeting of these needs should be kept in perspective. Needs should not be met at the expense of clients. Clients must never be exploited. Rather, it is also the responsibility of the counsellors to help clients raise their self-esteem. The personal and professional qualities of counsellors are very important in raising

the self esteem of their clients [1]. A counsellor must be well equipped to assist their clients to raise their self esteem and live a happy and harmonious life. Counsellors who continually develop their self awareness skills are in touch with their values, thoughts and feelings. They are likely to have a clear perception of their own and their client's needs and accurately assess both. Such awareness can help them be honest with themselves and others. They are able to be more congruent and build trust simultaneously. Counsellors who possess this type of knowledge are most likely to communicate clearly accurately. Three other characteristics that make counsellors initially more influential are perceived expertness, attractiveness and trustworthiness. Expertness is the degree to which a counsellor is perceived as knowledgeable and informed about his or her specialty. Counsellors who display certificates and diplomas in their offices are usually perceived as more credible than those who do not and as a result, are likely to be effective. Students always go to a counsellor who appears to know their professional duty well. In that case, students consult them easily because they seem to help them simultaneously to raise their self-esteem [1]. Attractiveness is a function of perceived similarity between a client and counsellor. Counsellors can make themselves attractive by speaking in clear, simple, jargon free sentences and offering appropriate self disclosure. Many needs of the counsellor can interfere with the counselling process [1]. These include: the need for power and control, the need to persuade others, the need to be considered intelligent, the need to impose our own values on others, the need to be respected, the need to be caring and compassionate and the need to be loved. The values as presented could help counsellors in enhancing self-esteem among students if properly utilized. Of course, these needs must be detached from a healthy personal satisfaction in the counsellor's work. What is important is that counsellors do not enter the profession because they have a need for

power or to reinforce their own feelings. It is wrong to use others for their own psychological gratification and to keep the client in a dependent relationship. Therefore, counsellors should continually ask themselves where the relationship is going; whether towards progress and change for the client, or nowhere. Once a counsellor believes that the client is ready to move on, the relationship should be terminated but if the move is to better the student's personality such that the self-esteem of the student is raised may highly be recommended. Being trustworthy: honoring the trust placed in the practitioner (also referred to as fidelity): Being trustworthy is regarded as fundamental to understanding and resolving ethical issues. Practitioners who adopt this principle: act in accordance with the trust placed in them; strive to ensure that clients' expectations are ones that have reasonable prospects of being met; honour their agreements and promises; regard confidentiality as an obligation arising from the client's trust; restrict any disclosure of confidential information about clients to furthering the purposes for which it was originally disclosed. In this case, REBT is one of the building blocks that may help students and counsellors to be rational, logical and realistic in their reasoning so as to enhance their self-esteem. The end goal of REBT is that it erases irrationality among students. But in most cases, students with low self-esteem do not measure up with strategies exposed to them. In such a situation, how counsellors perceive these students as a result of low self-esteem becomes vital since the role of the counsellor here will be to help the student change their thought pattern through the use of Rational Emotive Therapy as the concept that emotion and behaviours result from cognitive processes. [2] who held that Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy as a strategy is an instrument for assisting students to develop a good sense of value. [2] also found out that Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy is a useful tool for encouraging students to use positive statements in place of negative thoughts.

Positive statements like, "I will be successful in my academics if I study harder" other than, "I cannot succeed because 'breaking through' is difficult". The above qualities of professional counsellors cannot be used to equate teachers counsellors whose responsibility is just to stand in for a professional especially where there are lack of professional counsellors. Because of lack of proficiency, trust and lack of attentiveness to their professional calling. School counsellors in the other way round, listen to students' concerns about academic, emotional or social problems, they also help students process their problems and plan goals and action. They mediate conflict between students and teachers. They improve parent/teacher relationships and assist with college applications, jobs and scholarships. These qualities enumerated above depicts the qualities of good counsellors but the way things are, teachers counsellors do not have the under listed qualities of guidance counsellors. These calls for a serious attention. In the first place, teachers counsellors are not professional but they want the impact of professional counsellors to have a bearing positive effect on students. Yet, a teacher counsellors cannot have similar impact guidance counsellors have on their students because they are professionally trained for their jobs unlike teachers who are not. That is why REBT is presented as a counselling strategy that counters self defeating thought especially those that can lead to self-low esteem. One of the propositions of REBT is that self-defeating thoughts result in unhealthy negative emotions [3]. Therefore, REBT counsellors aim to help clients cope with emotional upsets, attain self-realization, and experience healthy emotional and behavioural wellbeing that enhances self esteem [4]. Adhering to negative thoughts can adversely affect students performance. That is likely why REBT as a

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of Counsellors status on the suitability of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy as a

Ani counselling strategy ought to be used to handle low self esteem emanating from secondary school students anti-social behaviour. [5] opined that this therapy is based on changing students' perception towards self-esteem, developing one's potentials positively, and helping students to develop good sense of values. [2] also noted that Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy is a strategy is an instrument for assisting students to develop good sense of value. In all these stack realities, when self-esteem is not developed, the victim suffers from inferiority complex and this affects adversely his/her academic performance. The worries of all and sundry is that if the school system is not equipped with human resources to impart the culture of self-esteem in students, the nation will in no distant time be at risk of regression [4]. Incidentally, the argument has been that guidance counsellors have not come to grip on the strategy that enhance self-esteem among secondary school students. Guidance counsellors need to show their perception of the given counselling strategy as this will encourage all to be responsible for the educational, vocational and social developments of secondary school students in Enugu State to have confidence in them. This will go a long way in creating awareness that will eventually help the stakeholders to have good understanding of how the issue of low self-esteem can be tackled. Students' self-esteem however, comes under personal/social component of guidance and counselling. Since self-esteem affects all facets of individuals' lives, seeking to boost or enhance it in young people is a deserving task that this study has sought investigate the perceptions of Counsellors status on the suitability of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy as a Counselling Strategy as a counselling strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State.

Counselling Strategy as a counselling strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State. Specifically the study aims at;

1. investigating the perceptions of Counsellors status on the suitability of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy as a counselling strategy

for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State

### Research Questions

The following research question guided the study.

1. To what extent does the counsellors status perceive REBT

as a counselling strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State

### Methodology

The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design for this study because it permits the collection of original data and describes the condition as they exist in their natural setting. The population for the study comprised 126 practicing guidance counsellors and 392 teacher counsellors from all the 319 government owned secondary schools in Enugu State. (Source: Guidance and Counselling Unit, Education Services Department, Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB), Enugu. 2016/2017 Session, November, 2016). The total numbers of school counsellors therefore are 445 serving in 445 secondary schools (Educational Services Department, Guidance and Counselling Division P.P.SM.B Enugu, 2017). The sampling was not necessary because the population of the study is small and manageable. The instrument for data collection is a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher called Counsellors Perception Scale (CPS). It has one cluster with 5 items developed to assist the researcher provide clues that helped raise much needed data that were used to answer the one research question. The response format of the instrument is a 4 point scale of very great extent, great extent, little extent and very little extent. Each response option has a numerical value assigned to it as follows: Very great extent (VGE)-4 points; Great extent (GE)-3 points; Little Extent (LE)-2 points and Very little extent (VLE)-1 point. An introductory letter was attached to the instrument stating the purpose of the study for the

respondents' easy reference. The instrument was validated by three experts (one in measurement and evaluation and 2 others in Guidance Counselling Departments) with the estimated overall reliability coefficient of 0.73 for the cluster using Cronbach Alpha Reliability tool. Finally the researcher and the research assistants were able to retrieve 445 signifying 100% return of dully filled copies of the administered instrument. One research question formulated that guided the study was answered using mean, grand mean and standard deviation. The mean rating of the numerical values assigned to the response options were added and divided by the number of the response options. This formed the basis for the cut-off point. Thus:

$$\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$$

From this, the researcher made the required inferences based on the data that were analyzed for the study. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as great extent while any item whose mean score is below 2.50 was interpreted to mean 'little extent'. For the hypothesis, the decision rule is that if t-calculated is equal to or greater than the t-critical value at the chosen confidence level (.05) and degree of freedom (n1+n2-2) the null hypothesis of no significant difference will be rejected. If on the other hand, the calculated t-value is less than that of the t-critical from the table value, the null hypothesis will not be rejected.

### Data Analysis and Results

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do the counsellors status perceive REBT as a counselling strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu

**Table 1: Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) Rating with Standard Deviation of the extent to which Teacher Counsellors and Guidance Counsellors perceive Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) as suitable Strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State.**

S/N	Items	Guidance Counsellors N=126			Teacher Counsellors N=319			Overall Decision
		$\bar{X}_1$	$SD_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$SD_2$	$\bar{X}_3$	$SD_3$	
1.	Changing student's perception towards self-esteem	3.39	0.55	3.42	0.72	3.41	0.64	GE
2.	Giving Information to students on the evils of negative self-talk	3.19	0.91	2.55	1.10	2.87	1.01	GE
3.	Actively teaching students to be of good Behaviour	3.45	0.71	3.35	0.71	3.40	0.71	GE
4.	Attacking the negative emotions of students relating to examination	3.50	0.66	3.56	0.58	3.53	0.62	GE
5.	Emphasizing doing rather than Certification	3.59	0.64	3.32	0.71	3.46	0.68	GE
6.	Using paradoxical intention to assist students Internalizing the evil of examination malpractice	3.19	0.80	2.47	0.56	2.83	0.68	GE
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.39</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>GE</b>

Table 1 indicated that of the 6 items on the extent to which guidance counsellors' and teachers counsellors perceive Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) as suitable strategy for enhancing self-esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State, the respondents agreed with all the items (1, 2, 3 4, 5 and 6) with recorded mean scores of (3.41, 2.87, 3.40, 3.53, 3.46 and 2.83) indicated to a great extent. The standard deviation for all the items raised is 0.72 which is small signifying that the responses are

#### Discussion of the Findings

The result in Table 1 showed that showed that Guidance and teachers perceive Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy as a suitable counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. The

findings are in line with those of [2] who held that Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy as a strategy is an instrument for assisting students to develop good sense of value. [2], also found out that Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy is a useful

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tool for encouraging students to use positive statements in place of negative thoughts. Positive statements like, "I will be successful in my academics if I study harder" other than, "I cannot succeed

The study concludes that Guidance and teachers perceive Rational Emotive Behavioural therapy as a suitable

#### Educational Implication of the Findings

The findings of this study have far reaching implication for Academically-at-risk learners would also learn to think logically and scientifically about their thoughts and emotions in turn, would be prepared to face the challenges that lie

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Schools should plan their time table to create room for counsellors to use

#### REFERENCES

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Ani because 'breaking through' is difficult". This finding is at variance with that of [6] who found out among others that guidance counsellors have a sense of self-esteem more than teacher counsellor.

#### CONCLUSION

counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State to a great extent.

ahead of them in a rational and self-helping manner. They will believe in their ability to succeed, develop positive attitude to school and learning, reduce anxiety and improve on their academic achievement.

REBT to assist students develop strong self-esteem toward their education.

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