



Effects of Reality and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapies on Truancy Behavior among Secondary School Students in Omuma LGA in Rivers State

Ukoima, Nkalo Ruth^{1*}; Mina, Agnes Dick² & Sota, Voke Vivien³

**^{1,2,3}Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling
Faculty of Education,**

Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

***Corresponding Author's E-mail Address: ruth.ukoima@ust.edu.ng**

ABSTRACT

The study examined the combined effects of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on Truancy behavior among secondary school students in Omuma Local Government Area in Rivers State. The study made use of the quasi experimental design. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study consists of 568 students from four public secondary schools in Omuma Local Government Area. Multi sampling procedure was used to draw 81 truant students for the study. The instrument used for the study was truancy behavior questionnaire. The data was analysed using mean and standard deviation scores of the pre and post tests to answer the research questions while the independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses of 0.05 level of significance the findings showed that the treatment group improved positively on truancy behavior after treatment contrary to the control group which showed persistent truancy behavior. Based on the findings, recommendations were made: The techniques of rational emotive behavior therapy should be taught to counsellors at every level of their training, also that teachers should identify student with truancy behavior and refer to the school counsellor.

Keywords: Reality, Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, Truancy, Behavior and Counseling

INTRODUCTION

Truancy is any intentional, unjustified, unauthorized or illegal absence from school, it is a deliberate absence from school. Truancy has been described as the act of absenting oneself from school without the permission of one's parents or school authorities (Baker 2010). Folgman and Hebberts, (2015), reported that many students do not take school activities serious, they come late to school or stay away totally from school. Some students' attitude to school work can come under truancy behaviour or tendency to be truant, for example seeking permission for excessive number of times to be absent from school. A student may call the school authorities on phone feigning one reason or the other why he/she would not be in school and therefore proceed to be absent from class. Some students wear their school uniform from home pretending to be away to school, but hang on the way and not get to school. Some may attend few classes but not attend the other classes. It has been noticed that some students do not get to school after leaving home while some eventually get to school at their leisure time. On every street in Nigeria, school children are seen hawking, assisting parents and other masters in various forms of trade, serving as bus conductor or even drivers during school hours. Some are even engaged as provision thugs. Some students during school hours roam about begging for money, helping travelers to carry their load to earn some money, some students loiter around the streets without regard for their future. There is, therefore, a need to search for means of reducing truancy in school.

A number of factors such as place of residence and gender may be related to truancy. The reasons for truancy behaviour among students in the rural areas may be different from those in urban areas. In rural areas, some students may be involved in staying in the stream Fishing or roaming about from one village to another, going to farm to gather fruits and nuts to sell. The parents in rural areas may exercise their authority to get their children to go to the farm. In the rural areas children may be required to use co-operative effort in farm work. At times they may work on the farm of a parent and at another time they move to the farm of another parent because some parents may collect loan which they have to repay with interest. This could make the parents need the assistance of their children in farm work and thereby reduce the attendance of their children in class. On the other hand, students residing in the urban area may have the habit of watching films including sex film on the internet, playing games and searching for friends on Facebook, E-buddy, Mxit Nimbuzz, Twitter, BB Messenger, communicating on Whatsapp, engaging in internet fraud popularly known as 'Yahoo'.

Akinsola and Nwajei (2013), Opined that there are some factors that can make male students more truant than the female students, for example playing games, internet fraudulent activities, auto-theft and vandalism. These acts appear to be more common among male students than female students. On the other hand, females are more likely to take additional dress along with their school uniform in which they can disguise themselves whenever they want to visit their boyfriends. The decision to absent oneself from school may stem from ones thought about school, some of their thoughts may be negative or irrational. Truancy may appear to be response to frustration and anxiety associated with difficult lessons. A student who fails mathematics once may have distorted thought that he cannot pass the subject again. This may make him dislike the subject and the teacher, and thereby refuse to attend the class again until he turns to be truant, engaging in other unworthy activities. Some students may think that going to school is just a waste of time since; some rich people in the society may not have been educated.

Leach, Neutge & Zepk (2011), observed that students in secondary schools are not left out, the experience of being in secondary school brings with it several life challenges, as this is the period which spans the time between the onset of puberty and the onset of adulthood, known as the adolescent stage. Areas of change within this phase of life changes is physiological transformation due to the onset of puberty and psychosocial developments in terms of establishing self-identity and relationship with peers and cognitive development, in terms of their ability to think abstractly and to solve hypothetical problems. For some students, these changes may present particular problems for example, fulfilling social role expectation of the age group, such as completion of formal schooling and making important life decisions about future careers.

Counselling is very relevant in the contemporary world. In particular, school counseling occupies an important position in the society as it attempts to help student cope with various issues and developmental tasks. Counselling profession is dedicated to prevention, development, exploration, empowerment, change, reduction of truant and redemption in an increasingly complex and chaotic world (Adewuji, 2006). The essential nature of counseling process is that it evolves a set of techniques, strategies and methods used in assisting individuals (Akinade, Sokan and Osarenren, 2014) including students who are challenged with truancy behaviour.

Reality Therapy is a method of counseling and psychotherapy that was developed by William Glasser (1965). This approach has been successfully taught and practiced in many nations. In addition to other areas, Reality Therapy has been applied in schools, counseling and psycho-therapy (Glasser, 1990, 1993, 2002). (Wubbolding 2000, 2004; Wubbolding and Brickelle, 2008). Choice theory is the basis for Reality Therapy. According to choice theory all human beings are motivated by five genetic needs, they include survival, love and belonging, power of achievement, freedom or independence and fun that lives with individual all their lives (Glasser, 1998). Glasser believed that the need to love and belong is the primary need and also the most difficult need to satisfy because the involvement of another individual is required to meet this desire. Choice theory explains that everything we do is chosen and every behavior our best attempt to get what we want to satisfy our needs (Glasser). The basic goal of Reality Therapy is to help clients learn better ways of fulfilling their needs. The procedures that lead to change are based on two specific assumptions (Glasser, 1992). The first assumption is that their present behaviour is not giving them what they want, the second assumption is that humans are motivated to change when they believed they can choose other behaviour that will get them closer to what they want.

Reality Therapy emphasizes the importance of the therapeutic relationship which is the foundation for effective counseling outcomes. (Wubbolding and Brickell, 2008) counselors are able to develop positive relationship with clients when they possess the personal qualities of warmth, sincerity, congruence, understanding acceptance, concern, openness respect for the client and the willingness to be challenged by others (Corey 2009). These qualities allow school counselors to function as advocates who are able to instill a sense of hope in the students. When once the therapeutics relationship is been established the counselor assists students in gaining a deeper understanding of the sequences of their current behavior. Also at this point, students are helped to understand that they are not directly under the control of others, and that they have wide range of options to choose from Reality Therapy which provides the delivering system for helping individuals take more effective control of their lives.

According to Adewuyi (2006), Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, previously called Rational Therapy and later Rational Emotive Therapy, is an active-directive, philosophically and empirically based psychotherapy; The aim of which is to resolve emotional and behavior problems also disturbances and help people to leaves happier and more fulfilling lives Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy posits that people have erroneous beliefs about situations they are involved in, and that these beliefs course disturbance, but can be disputed with and changed. Rational Emotive Behavior therapy is a therapeutic system of both theory and practice; generally one of the goals is to help clients see the ways in which they have learned how they often needlessly upset themselves, teach them how to “un-upset” themselves and then how to empower themselves to leave happier and more Fulfilling lives. The emphasis in this therapy is generally to establish a successful collaborative therapeutic working alliance based on the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy educational model. Although Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy teachers that the therapist or counselor is better served by demonstrating unconditional acceptance or unconditional positive regard, the therapist is not necessarily always encouraged to build a warm and caring relationship with the client. The tasks of the therapist or counselor include understanding the clients concerns from his point of reference and work as a facilitator, teacher and encourager. In traditional Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, the client or student together with the therapist or counsellor, in a structured active-directive manner, often work through a set of target problems and establish a set of therapeutic goals. In these target problems, situational dysfunctional emotions, behavior and beliefs are assessed in regards to the client’s valves and goals.

According to Bana of Mahmood (2010), after working through these problems, the clients learn to generalize insights to other relevant situations. In many cases after going through a clients different target problems, the therapist is interested in examining possible core beliefs and more deep rooted philosophical evaluations and schemes that might accord. For a wider array of problematic emotions and behaviors Brabangard (2017), observed that Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy most of the time is used as a brief therapy in deeper and more complex problems longer therapy is promoted.

According to Rachman (2014), through the therapeutic process, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy employs a wide array of forceful, active and disputing, methodologies. He also noted that central through these methods and techniques is the intent to help the client or student challenge, dispute and question their destructive and self-defeating cognition, emotions and behaviours. The methods and techniques incorporate cognitive-philosophic, emotion-evocative-dramatic, and behavioral methods for disputation of the clients’ irrational and self-defeating constructs and help the client come up with more rational and self-constructive ones. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy seeks to acknowledge that understanding and insight are not enough; in order clients or students to significantly change, they need to pinpoint their irrational and self-defeating construct and work forcefully and actively change them to be more functional and self-helping ones. Baker (2010) asserts that Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy is used with non-chemical problems and problems of living through counseling, consultations and coaching settings dealing with problems including relationships. Social skills, career changes, stress management, assertiveness training brief, problems with aging, money, weight control etc.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered to obtain the findings of the study:

1. What are the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on truancy behavior when the pre-test mean scores of experimental group is compared to the post-test mean scores?

2. What are the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on truancy behavior when the post-test mean scores of experimental group is compared to that of the control Group?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested significantly at 0.05 level:

1. There is no significant difference in the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on truancy behaviour when the pre-test mean scores of experimental group is compared to the post-test mean scores.
2. There is no significant difference in the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on truancy behavior when the post-test mean scores of experimental Group is compared to the post-test mean scores of the control group.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted the quasi experimental design for the study. This design is defined by Kpolovid (2010) as a study which uses strategies that are appropriate for acceptance to estimate situations of true experiment in a circumstance that do not permit the regulations and management of all relevant variables. The population of the study consists of 568 SS2 students’ from four public secondary schools in Omuma Local Government Area. The sampling technique used for the study is multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument used for the study was truancy behavior questionnaire. The data gathered from the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores of the pre-test and post-test while the null hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What are the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on truancy behavior when the pre-test means scores of Experimental group 3 are compared to that of the post-test mean scores?*

To answer this research question, the pre-test and post-test mean scores and standard deviation of the experimental group 3(RT and REBT) were extracted and presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Pre-test, Post-test Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Experimental Group (Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy)

Group	Test Type	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Experimental Group (RT and REBT)	Pre-test	28	71	7.89	52
	Post-Test	28	19	3.37	

Table 1 showed that experimental group exposed to the combination of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy had 28 subjects, with a pre-test mean score of 71 indicating truancy behavior with a standard deviation of 7.89 while the post-test mean score shows a mean score of 20 indicating absence of truancy behavior with a standard deviation of 3.37. This simply means that the combination of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy had a tremendous effect on truancy behavior. The mean difference of 52 between the pre-test mean scores and post-test mean scores of the experimental group shows the gains of the combination of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy counselling techniques. Based on this revelation the answer to research question 1 is that: The combination of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy is very effective in improving truancy behavior of students judging from the pre-test and post-test mean scores compared.

Research Question 2: *What are the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on truancy behavior when the post-test means scores of Experimental group is compared to that of the control group?*

To answer this research question, the post-test means scores and standard deviation of the experimental group (RT and REBT) and that of the control group were extracted and presented on Table 2.

Table 2. Post-test Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Group (Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy)

Group	Test Type	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Experimental Group(RT/REBT)	Post-test	28	19	3.37	45
Control group	Post-Test	47	64	7.62	

Table 2 showed that experimental group exposed to the combination of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy had 28 subjects, while the control group had 47 subjects. The experimental group had a post-test mean score of 19 on the truancy questionnaire with a standard deviation of 3.37 indicating absence of truancy behavior while the control group had a post-test mean score of 64 with a standard deviation of 7.62 indicating truancy behavior; this simply means that Reality Therapy had a tremendous effect on truancy behavior. The mean difference of 45 between the post-test mean scores of experimental group and that of the control group shows the gains of the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy counselling techniques. Based on this revelation the answer to research question 2 therefore is that: The combination of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy is very effective in improving truancy behavior among students in the experimental group judging from the post-test mean scores of experimental group compared to that of the control group.

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant difference in the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on truancy behavior when the Pre-test mean scores of experimental group (Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) is compared to the Post-test mean scores.

This hypothesis was tested using the independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis is presented on Table 3 below.

Table 3: t-test Comparison on the Significant Difference between the Pre-test Mean Scores of Experimental Group 3 (RT and REBT) and Post-test Mean Scores.

Group	N	Mean	Mean Diff.	SD	Df	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
RT and REBT Experimental Group	28		52		26	0.5	32.07	2.056	Reject H ₀₅
Pre-test		71		7.89					
Post-test		19		3.37					

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-test value of 32.07 is much higher than the critical value of 2.056 at 0.05 level of significance which is 2.056 with a degree of freedom of 26, this analogy calls for the rejection of H₀₁ (null hypothesis 1) and the acceptance of H_{a1}, {alternate hypothesis 1}. This therefore suggests that the pre-test mean scores of experimental group and the post-test mean scores is statistically significant. Which means there is a significant statistical difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of students in experimental group (Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy).

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant difference in the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on truancy behavior when the Post-test mean scores of experimental group 3 are compared to the Post-test mean scores of the control group.

This hypothesis was tested using the independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis is presented on Table 4 below.

Table 4: t-test Comparison on the significant difference between the Post-test Mean Scores of Experimental Group (Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) and the post-test Mean Scores of the Control Group.

Group	N	Post-Test Mean	Mean Diff.	SD	Df	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
RT and REBT Experimental Group	28	19	45	3.37	73				Reject H ₀₂
						0.5	35.13	1.990	
Control group	47	64		7.62					

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-test value of 35.13 is much higher than the critical value of 1.990 at 0.05 level of significance which is 1.990 with a degree of freedom of 73, this analogy calls for the rejection of H₀₂ (null hypothesis 2) and the acceptance of H_{a2}, {alternate hypothesis 2} This therefore suggests that the post-test mean scores of experimental group and the post-test mean scores of the control group are statistically significant, which means there is a significant statistical difference between the post-test mean scores of experimental group and the control group.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Combined Effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on Truancy Behavior among Secondary School Students in Rivers State

The finding of the study on table 1 shows the effectiveness of the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy on truancy behavior among secondary school students in Rivers State. The pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental group was compared (those exposed to the combination of Rational Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy). The students in experimental group had a pre-test mean score of 71 and a standard deviation of 7.89 indicating high level of truancy behavior before exposure to the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy. After exposure to the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy there was a drop in the post-test mean score which is 19 and a standard deviation of 3.37 indicating absence of truancy behavior. This mean difference was further subjected to the independent t-test statistics shown on table 4.13 and the result was found to be statistically significant with proofs. The calculated t-test value of 32.07 was found to be higher than the table value of t-test which was 2.056 with a degree of freedom of 26, on this basis, the hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected. This result goes a long way to prove that a significant difference exists between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of experimental group.

Again, the results of the 2nd finding on table 2 affirms this finding where the post-test mean scores of the experimental group were compared to the post-test mean score of the control group. The control group has a post-test mean score of 64 and a standard deviation of 7.62 indicating high level of truancy against the post-test mean score of 19 and a standard deviation of 3.37 indicating absence of truancy behavior. The mean difference between the post-test mean scores of the control group and experimental group were further subjected to the independent t-test statistics and the result was found to be significantly statistically with proofs. The calculated t-test value of 35.18 was higher than the critical value of t-test which is 1.990 with a degree of freedom of 73. On this basis, the hypothesis of no significant difference between the post-test mean

scores of the control group and experimental group was rejected. This goes a long way to prove that a significant difference exists between the control group and experimental group.

The result of this finding agrees with that of Safyanu, Muhammad and Muazu (2019) who investigated the effectiveness of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in the treatment of truancy behavior among secondary school students of Government College Birnin- Kudu, Jigawa State, Nigeria. The results showed that both Reality and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapies are effective in the treatment of truancy behavior among students of Government College Birnin-Kudu.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the study, the researcher drew the following conclusions;

1. Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy when combined as a therapeutic approach can redirect truancy behavior to a positive behavior and can effectively retain healthy behavior patterns.
2. All the three counselling approaches adopted in this study were found to be effective in bringing about behavior change positively. As against truancy behavior none was found to be non-effective although the combined effects of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy showed more promise than the others, they were all effective in bringing about behavior change.
3. The control group showed no improvement as revealed by the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the group. This simply indicates that the gains of the treatment factors are quite enormous.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made as follows

1. The techniques of Reality Therapy, Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy and the combination of both should be taught to counsellors at every level of their training, they should not be 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. Teachers should meticulously observe students with truancy behavior in secondary schools and refer them for counselling.
3. Counsellors should be acquainted with the counselling modalities of Reality Therapy, Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy and the combination of both through self-development programmes.
4. Based on the effectiveness of counselling on mal-adaptive behavior of students all secondary schools in the State should have functional counsellors to effectively cater for the needs of students.
5. Professional counselling bodies like the Association of Professional Counsellors in Nigeria (APROCON), Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should continuously train their members on the practical techniques of Reality Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy and other counselling modalities to enable them use them effectively for their job.

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