

Effects of Cognitive Restructuring Technique on Lateness to School among Secondary School Students in Gombe, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of Cognitive Restructuring Technique on Lateness among secondary school students in Gombe State, Nigeria. One research question guided the study and one hypothesis was formulated. The study was carried out using quasi-experimental design. The population of students with lateness behaviour was one hundred and sixty-five (165) latecomers. A sample of ninety (90) students with very high late coming were selected from the two schools used for the study. An observation guide was adopted by the researchers for data collection. Pre-test and post-test were given to both groups. Observation guide was used in answering the research question and ANOVA was used in testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that Cognitive Restructuring was effective in modifying lateness behaviour and reducing the magnitude of times of lateness among secondary school students. Based on the findings, recommendations were made including that Cognitive restructuring should be adopted by school counsellors as an effective treatment technique on students' lateness behaviour in school setting.

Key Words: Effects, Cognitive Restructuring Technique, Lateness, Students, Gombe, Nigeria.

Introduction

Within the school system, especially the day schools, lateness to school has been an age old problem. School administrators, teachers, parents and other stakeholders have shown sincere concern about it. A lot of measures have been adopted to curb its occurrence. Students have been punished, flogged, sanctioned, talked to, yet it has persisted. In fact, because of its attendant effect, persistent lateness to school has been identified by educationists as one of the key factors responsible for poor performance among secondary school students (Mitchell, 2014 & Wolfgang 2003). Stakeholders in education like parents, teachers, administrators and governments are continuously searching for that magic solution to the problem of lateness that will make students imbibe the attitude of being punctual to school.

Lateness can occur occasionally but when it becomes regular, it becomes a problem that cannot be overlooked. If lateness to school at the secondary school level is left unchecked, it will thwart the goals of secondary education as stipulated by Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). In specific terms, section 3, No.32 (e) of this policy states that secondary education shall inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence. Lateness to school will not in any way encourage the actualization of this specific objective. This is why Chujor and Kennedy (2014) and Igbo and Ihejiene (2014) asserted that success of the school in carrying out its primary charge of educating and socializing students is contingent on students attending school punctually and regularly.

Lateness to school relates simply to the failure to be present at appropriate times for school activities/lesson which leads to certain deficiencies in the attainment of the goals and objectives of the school. Daily observations show that many students in different parts of Nigeria come late to school habitually, be it private, public or mission secondary schools. Between the hours of 9.00am and 10.00am, secondary schools students are seen coming to school which had started by 7.30am or 7.45am. This problem is considered serious enough in the sense that teachers who ought to be in the class teaching between these hours of 9.00am and 10.00am are busy monitoring the latecomers. It is also observed that lateness to school by these secondary schools students is increasing at a tremendous rate all through the country. Iffih (2014) and Santillano (2010) equally noted that the rate at which students go late to school is on the increase.

This is true especially in this area of study, where students are seen at this early time they supposed to be in the school taking their father's cattle, sheep and goat to the field before going home to start preparing to go to school. This could be because most of the students around this area of the study do not like going to school. What they like doing is getting married at their tender ages with the help of their parents and then attending their Islamic schools. In all, some of them are being forced to go to school that is why at such odd times they will be seen coming to school not being mindful of the time and because of this habitual lateness behaviour, they perform poorly in their academics. For example, it is in this area of the study that a student will graduate from secondary school without knowing how to communicate effectively in English.

Despite the punitive measures, which the school authority uses to check lateness among secondary school students, these students still come late to school. This is worrisome, and one stands to reason that punishment does not help in solving problem behaviour among students but rather leads to an increase in undesirable behaviour like aggression. Punitive measures such as tongue-lashing, prolonged torture, ridiculing and flogging, no doubt inflict pains on the late comers. Moreover, they tend to cause more psychological, social, moral and personal problems than bring about the desired results. Verbal punishment for instance could make a late-coming student lose confidence since it is ego-deflating. This inhibits the student's attainment of his or her goals. Against this backdrop, it is thus important to find out non-punitive measures to control lateness among secondary school students. Hence the choice of cognitive restructuring to allow for full participation of the late comers.

Cognitive restructuring is a technique in cognitive behavioural therapy developed by Aaron Beck in the 1960s and aims at removing one's "faulty thinking" and irrational counter-factual beliefs with more accurate and beneficial ones. Chujor and Kennedy (2014) state that, it is a process by which the individual is made to avoid crooked and irrational thinking and thinks straight. The therapy restructures the already structured irrational thoughts, beliefs and philosophies, which an individual has already acquired by redressing and changing them at the mental level of the person concerned to ensure his happiness and efficiency at school or workplace (Onyije & Ojedapo, 2010 and Okun, 2011).

Cognitive restructuring is also based on rational emotive behaviour therapy propounded by Albert Ellis who focused more on thoughts. Ellis (1962) stated that human beings made themselves victim of irrational thinking and could virtually destroy themselves through irrational and muddled thinking. Beck (1976) stated that cognitive restructuring involved a process of re-orientating one's thought processes to reality, requiring one's mind to think truthfully, factually and logically. Cognitive restructuring also known as

cognitive reframing is a technique that can help people identify, challenge and alter anxiety provoking thoughts patterns and beliefs (Chen & Weikert, 2008). According to Chen and Weikert, irrational thoughts and their accompanying behaviour play a big part in the onset of anxiety. In this study cognitive restructuring means the process of learning to dispel faulty thinking patterns and replace them with more beneficial ones.

Cognitive restructuring is a useful technique for understanding unhappy feelings and moods, and for challenging the sometimes-wrong automatic beliefs that can lie behind them. As such, it can be used to reframe the unnecessary negative thinking that one experiences from time to time. Bad moods are unpleasant, they can reduce the quality of performance, and undermine ones relationships with others. Cognitive restructuring helps one to change the negative or distorted thinking that often lies behind these moods. As such, it helps one approach situations in a more positive frame of mind.

Cognitive restructuring technique attempts to teach a client how to reduce negative emotional reactions by getting him to interpret situations with greater accuracy. The major task facing the therapist engaged in cognitive restructuring is how to modify the client's distorted perception of the world. An accurate interpretation of the realities of life can arise from the nature of the mental set which a person brings to his experience. If the dominant disposition is negative, reaction to human events will also follow such a line. The opposite is the case if the disposition is positive. It is assumed by therapists that one's interpretation of reality determines his emotional responses to it (Chujor & Kennedy, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Lateness to school has been labelled as one of the major problems negatively affecting the future of students. It is a form of behaviour that is of great concern to school administrators, teachers, counsellors and parents. It is not just a school's problem or a problem of a particular state or country; it is an age long problem cutting across schools with a universal character.

Lateness to school is detrimental to the students' educational and psychological wellbeing which can make them fail in their academic work. Students who come to school late involve themselves in examination malpractices as a result of their belief that they cannot pass on their own. Lateness to school has become a serious problem to the students with the resultant of most of them resorting to social vices such as prostitution, school dropout, arm robbery, keeping malice, cheating, telling lies, missing class lessons and kidnapping which could jeopardise their educational attainment. As a result of this, lateness to school has been viewed by many as a problem to student educational achievement. Onyia (2010) has used cognitive technique in handling lateness to school among secondary school students in Enugu State. Therefore, it is hoped that the technique will be effective in handling lateness among secondary school students.

This has necessitated this study, that intend to determine the effects of counselling technique of cognitive restructuring on lateness among secondary school students in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of cognitive restructuring technique on lateness among secondary school students in Gombe State. Specifically, the study was determined to find out:

1. The pre-treatment and post-treatment times of lateness of students treated with cognitive restructuring technique and those treated with conventional counselling.

Research Question

One research question guided the study:

1. What are the differences in the pre-treatment and post-treatment times of lateness of students treated with cognitive restructuring technique and those treated with conventional counselling?

Hypothesis

One hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 statistical level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the differences in the pre-treatment and post-treatment times of lateness of students treated with cognitive restructuring technique and those treated with conventional counselling.

Method

Research Design

The study adopted the quasi-experimental research design. This design is suitable for adoption to approximate conditions of true experiment in situations that do not permit the control and manipulation of all relevant variables (Kpolovie, 2010). Harrington and Harrington (2006) described a quasi- experimental study that determines the effect of a treatment paradigm on a non- randomised sample. There were two groups of latecomers from public schools; one group served as treatment group while one group served as a control group. The two groups were tagged Experimental group 1, and Control group. Participants in group 1 were treated with cognitive restructuring technique while control group received conventional counselling.

Table 1: Diagrammatic representation of the experimental design

Group	Pre-test	Research condition	Post-test
Experimental (1)	01	x1 (treatment)	02
Control (2)	01	x (Neutral interaction)	02

Key:

C = Control

E1 = Experimental group I – Cognitive restructuring

O1 = Pre-test measure

O2 = Post-test measure

Instrument = Observation guide

Treatment Group = Experimental Group I

Area of the study

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

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of 165 latecomers in junior and senior secondary schools identified in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe State. The population is gotten from the records kept on late comers by teachers on duty and counsellors' records in the two schools, as at first term of 2015 academic session. From the seventeen secondary schools in the local government, two secondary schools were identified as having the highest number of latecomers hence were used for this study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of this study was 90 secondary school students who were identified as latecomers. The sample comprised of all junior and senior secondary school students identified as latecomers from the two (2) selected public secondary schools. A purposive sampling technique was used in identifying the two schools because they have the highest number of students who were latecomers. The two (2) secondary schools with the highest number of students who are latecomers serve as experimental group and control having 45 latecomers each.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instruments for the collection of data for the study were documentary evidence and observation guide developed by C. A. Nwankwo and used by Onyia (2010). The documentary evidence on lateness enabled the researcher to identify latecomers, while the observation guide was used for identifying magnitude of lateness among secondary school students. The observation guide contains five days of the week and thirty numbers, representing the four-five latecomers. It also has the magnitude or degree of lateness using time intervals which are as follows: -

Very Mild Lateness (V.M.L.) - 7.35am – 8.05am
Mild Lateness (M.L.) - 8.06am – 8.35am
Severe Lateness (S.L.) - 8.36am – 9.05am
Very Severe Lateness (V.S.L.) - 9.06am – 9.35am

Validation of the Instrument

A copy of the instrument together with the purpose of the study, research question and hypothesis was given to two experts in Department of Guidance and Counselling and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation in the faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. They were requested to assess whether the instrument is capable of meeting the purpose of the study. Corrections and suggestions of the validators guided the researchers in producing the final instrument that was used in data collection for this study.

Reliability of Instrument

It is an instrument developed by C. A. Nwankwo and used by Onyia (2010). The instrument has no reliability test because it is an observation guide (see Appendix B, pg 114). The already validated observation guide for lateness was used in this study.

Method of Data Collection

The method of data collection was the documentary evidence and the observation guide adopted by the researchers. Before the commencement of the study, the researchers asked the research assistants on duty in each of the schools to keep record of latecomers for one term.

The documentary evidence was used to identify the number of times of lateness in a week while the observation guide was used to identify the magnitude of lateness. From the records, most frequent latecomers were selected for the study, thirty from each school. During the pre-test, the research assistants filled the prepared observation guide for the researchers, day by day for twenty (20) days. The same thing was done during the post-test. Also the researcher decided to use the number of times each latecomer was late in a week as well as the magnitude of lateness to determine the reward to be given to the subjects. At the end of the twenty days pre-test and that of the post-test, the researchers collected all the records from the research assistants and did the tallying.

Method of Data Analysis

The data that was collected for this study was put in table. The points collected from the observation guide were compiled, analysed and presented in a tabular form for each student and this determined the number of times of lateness or magnitude of lateness and the data used to provide answers to the research question. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis for the study to enable the researchers test the significant at 0.05 statistical level.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the differences in the pre-treatment and post-treatment times of lateness of students treated with cognitive restructuring technique and those treated with conventional counselling?

Table 1: the pre-treatment and post-treatment times of lateness of students treated with cognitive restructuring technique and those with conventional counselling

Source of variation	Cognitive Restructuring Technique				Conventional Counselling		
	No. Lateness 7.35-8.05	8.05-8.35	8.35-9.05	9.05-9.35	No Lateness 7.35-		
8.05 8.05-8.35 8.35-9.05 9.05-9.35							
Pretreatment Times of Lateness	0	249	284	60	7		1
68 295 211 25							
Post-treatment Times of Lateness	101	427	70	2	0		0
122 301 169 8							

Table 1 indicates that the students treated with cognitive restructuring technique who have been coming late to school, came early 101 times, came between 7.35-8.05 for 427 times, 8.05-8.35 for 70 times, between 8.35-9.05 came late 2 times and 0 time between 9.05-9.35 after treatment as against their pre-treatment latecomer of times of 0, 249, 384, 60, 7 respectively.

While the students treated with conventional counselling technique who have been coming to school, came early on 0 time, came between 7.35-8.05 122 times, between 8.05-8.35 301 times, between 8.35-9.05 169 times and 8 times between 9.05-9.35 after treatment as against their pre-treatment late coming times of 1, 68, 295, 211 and 25 respectively.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant differences in the differences in the pre-treatment and post-treatment times of lateness of students treated with cognitive restructuring technique and those of the conventional counselling.

Table 2: ANCOVA on the pre-treatment and post-treatment times of lateness of students treated with cognitive restructuring technique and those treated with conventional counselling

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	Cal.F	Crit.F	Remark
Corrected Model	531.314	2	265.657			
Intercept	45.320	1	45.320			
Time of lateness p1	134.564	1	134.564			
Treatment Models	188.807	1	188.807	628.47	3.84	S
Error	359.606	1197	.300			
Total	3700.000	1200				
Corrected Total	890.920	1199				

In table 2 it was observed that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 1199df denominator, the calculated F 628.47 is greater than the critical F 3.84. Therefore the first null hypothesis is rejected. So, the effect of cognitive restructuring technique in reducing secondary school students' times of lateness to school is significant when compared with those in control group.

Discussion of Findings

Effect of cognitive restructuring technique in modifying lateness behaviour among secondary school students

Findings from the data analysed in this study showed that cognitive restructuring technique is effective in modifying lateness behaviour among secondary school students. Specifically, the findings indicated that, the students in experimental group 1 possessed lateness behaviour before the commencement of the study as measured by their scores on the pre test. The findings also indicated that the magnitude of times of lateness between experimental group 1 which is cognitive restructuring and control group was significant in the post test. This indicates that secondary school students in the treatment group 1 (cognitive restructuring technique) have better understanding of the effects of lateness as a result of cognitive treatment received.

Studies revealed that cognitive restructuring has been found to be very effective in the treatment of all forms of antisocial behaviours. Aderanti & Hassan (2011) reported that cognitive restructuring is effective in the treatment of rebelliousness and disorderliness while Obalowo, (2004) and Nwaoba (2013) established its effectiveness in treating stealing. According to Aderanti and Hassan (2011), the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring in treating rebelliousness is not a surprise, because cognitive factors play an important and well documented role in delinquent behaviour since the way people think has a controlling effect on their actions. According to psychology Wiki (2015), cognitive restructuring is effective in the treatment of anger (a major construct in conduct disorder).

But, in contrast, the finding is not in accord to the study of Bassey, Peter and Omazagba (2014) that investigated the effectiveness of mentoring and cognitive restructuring in the modification of adolescent aggression among selected Senior Secondary School students in Lagos State, Nigeria. Findings revealed that mentoring was more efficacious than cognitive restructuring in the modification of aggressiveness in adolescent students. The relative effectiveness of cognitive restructuring in reducing lateness behaviour seen here may have to do with the nature of the process involved in the treatment because it has been observed that the students understood it.

One reason for the reduction in students' lateness to school in experimental group 1 (cognitive restructuring) over those in control group might be due to the thought, feelings, beliefs and perception changing process in cognitive restructuring. Since the students are very much aware of how their beliefs, feelings, thoughts, perception and actions affect their academic performance within the few weeks of training. Ultimately, the goal of this technique is to help students recognise that sometimes their thoughts

lead to feelings and actions which are antisocial on which lateness to school is one of them. By examining and changing their thoughts, feelings and actions are altered in a pro-social direction (Yahaya, 2014).

Conclusion

Findings from the study, showed that the effects of cognitive restructuring technique on secondary school students' times of lateness to school is significant when compared with those in the control group.

Recommendations

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

1. Cognitive restructuring technique should be adopted by school counsellors and other allied professionals as an effective treatment techniques on secondary school students' lateness behaviour and other anti social behaviour in school setting.
2. The school management should organise a workshop and seminar by inviting the Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A) in order to sensitise them on lateness behaviour of their children. Through the workshop and seminar, parents will be taught the interpersonal relationship skills inherent in cognitive restructuring and shaping techniques such as unconditional positive regard, reinforcement, motivation, shaping, encouragement, time management and stop thought techniques among others.

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