

Effect of Solution Focused Brief Technique on Depression among Student-Victims of Armed Banditry in Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of solution focused brief on depression among student-victims of armed banditry in secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria. One hypothesis was formulated and tested. Quasi-experimental involving pre-test and post-test design was employed for the study. The population of this study was 113 SS II Students in Government Science Secondary School, Ikara, Kaduna State. 20 Students among those who scored 60-69 points on Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale were purposefully selected as the sample. They were exposed to solution focused brief counselling technique. The instrument used for data collection was an adapted Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS). Data were analysed using paired sample t-test to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The finding revealed that Solution-Focused Brief technique had significant effect on depression ($p=.000$) among secondary school student-victims of armed banditry in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Based on the finding of this study, it was concluded that solution focused brief counselling technique significantly reduced depression among secondary school student-victims of armed banditry. It was recommended, among others, that school counsellors and educational psychologists should employ solution focused counselling technique in reducing depression among student-victims of armed banditry in secondary schools.

Keywords: solution, focused, brief, students, banditry

Introduction

Globally, armed banditry and security challenges have become world phenomena that need to be tackled to create an enabling and conducive environment for the psychological well-being and development of its citizens. Armed banditry which has become part of the factors that lead to kidnapping or abduction for ransom is a common occurrence in various parts of the world such as Mexico, Colombia, Haiti, Brazil, Philippines, Sudan and South Africa (Timothy et al., 2019). Insecurity does not only pose threats to the lives and properties of citizens, but arrest the overall development of a nation. Thus, there is a strong link between security and development (Haruna, 2013). Although peace and stability have been the core objective of most nations in the world over the years, security challenges have continued to remain a major setback to achieving meaningful socio-economic development in most African countries including Nigeria.

Nigeria has continued to experienced armed banditry in most states, such as Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, Zamfara, Taraba, Adamawa, Katsina, Borno, among others. They have so far felt the consequential effects of these emerging security threats. Olufemi (2015) asserts that Nigerian governments have spent over 462 trillion naira on national security over the past five years. The governments' effort to bring the menace to a standstill to avoid total breakdown of law and order seems not to have yielded the desired positive

result especially in North-Central and North-Western States like Kaduna State where primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions keep experiencing attempt of kidnapping or abduction of students by armed bandits. Education deprivation in Kaduna State has been exacerbated by armed banditry due to the mass displacements in affected communities. However, the escalation of banditry contributed to a high number of out-of-school children in the state. Besides, insecurity in the state had a negative impact on young boys and girls, as school activities in vulnerable areas were disrupted. The few existing schools were unable to operate properly for fear of kidnapping of students or attacks and killing by bandits. Parents prevented their children from attending schools due to insecurity on major roads.

Insecurity has been identified as being an anathema to education patronage and development as schools and colleges become insecure, destroyed and abandoned; teachers are assassinated; scholars are threatened, and abductions of students for ransom prevail (Abdulrasheed et al., 2015). Consequently, students who witnessed attempt of kidnapping, gun-shooting, or abduction of either self, family member, friends, or classmates by armed bandits may develop feelings of depression which can result to development of social isolation, and self-withdrawal from class mate. The issues of depression should be of much concern to educational stakeholders because innocent students are at high risks of falling victims and may withdraw from school. As such, early intervention for the victims is needed in helping them manage the depressive symptoms which if not tackled, may lead to severe depressive illness.

Furthermore, students who have been traumatized remain in a state of fear and will be encompassed with difficulty in school environment and these difficulties may lead to social isolation, inability to relate well with classmates or may even find it difficult to concentrate on their academic activities. In schools today, many students are dying in silence as a result of exposure to various experiences of bandit attack which developed unwanted symptoms such as depression. This may lead to decline in social and emotional adjustment as well as academic adjustment. Many students sustain injuries from violence, death of friends or family members, and various forms of abuse, community crisis, wars, exposure to abduction or kidnapping from armed banditry which may result to killing of their friends and classmates. The problem students faced are all forms or indices of trauma in which students may exhibit a wide range of reactions such as depression which usually comes after the incidental events.

The feelings of sadness, worthlessness accompanied by pessimism and lack of energy to do routine work is called depression (Ryan & Eric, 2005). According to World Health Organization (WHO, 2010), "Depression is a common mental disorder that presents with depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy, and poor concentration". Depression varies from mild, moderate to severe. The mild and moderate forms of depression often go undetected as they require good listening and observation skills to assess them. Along with this, the comorbidity of symptoms with other disorders makes it even more difficult to identify them.

Depression is a condition that affects mood, behaviour, thought and attitude of the victim. Depression is a strong state of unhappiness, loss of concentration, inactivity, and total

disengagement of assigned responsibility (Caleb, 2018). Depression is an emotional state that is accompanied with poor self-worth, self-concept, self-efficacy, low self-worth and a state of dissatisfaction with self, environment and others (Amaeze, 2017). Depression is a body condition that manifests sleeplessness, aggression, dehumanization, depersonalization, trauma and mood swings (anxiety, bipolar, panic and psychoneurosis) (Amaeze, 2017). Depression is a very bad emotional condition or mood that can alter relations and instantly create enmity and instant quarrelling among people working together or sharing the same goals and objectives (Caleb, 2018). Depression reduces the quality of life of any person (American Psychiatric Association, 2020). It was reported that depression and its tendencies are not favourable to their victims because it leads to sorrowfulness, sadness, loss of hope, lack of trust, low-self- image, low self-efficacy, depersonalization, pessimism and irritability (American Psychiatric Association, 2020). The tendencies of being depressed cannot be easily differentiated from a depressed personality. Lack of management of manifests depressive tendencies leads to depression and depressive moods (Iremeka et al., 2021).

Depression is more than just sadness. People with depression may experience a lack of interest and pleasure in daily activities, significant weight loss or gain, insomnia or excessive sleeping, lack of energy, inability to concentrate, feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt and recurrent thoughts of death or suicide. Depression is the most common mental disorder. Fortunately, depression is treatable (Rashmi, 2021). Symptoms can also change over time; such as someone who is initially withdrawn and sad becoming very frustrated and irritable as a result of decreased sleep and the inability to accomplish simple tasks or make decisions. When depression is severe, people may even experience symptoms, such as hallucinations and delusions. According to Madhukar (2004), physical symptoms are common in depression, vague aches and pain are often the presenting symptoms of depression. Depression involves either staying away from places or people that remind them of the trauma, isolating from other people, or feeling numb. Realizing this gap, the researcher sought to provide psychological support by exploring the effect of solution-focused brief counselling techniques on depression among student-victims of armed banditry.

It is therefore, important and indeed crucial that secondary school students who are faced with depression deserve attention in order to have a positive living within the school environment so that their psychological well-being may be stable. In the light of the need for effective depression approaches, solution-focused brief counselling techniques may be considered.

Solution-focused brief counselling technique (SFBCT), often referred simply to as brief intervention, is a type of therapy based on social constructionist philosophy. It focuses on what clients want to achieve through technique rather than on historical problem(s) that made them seek help (Guterman, 2006). Solution-Focused Brief Counselling Technique (SFBCT) for Trauma has been applied to clients managing a variety of different forms of trauma. SFBCT, which aims to help people experiencing difficulty find tools they can use immediately to manage symptoms and cope with challenges, is grounded in the belief that although individuals may already have the skills to create change in their lives, they often need help identifying and developing those skills (Froerer et al., 2018). It is the belief of the researcher that application of SFBCT will be useful in reducing

depression symptoms among secondary school students. Increasing rate of banditry which is manifested by widespread kidnapping of students at all levels of education has crippled teaching and learning in the state, and created phobia in the minds of students. The current scenario has affected the lives of victims of the armed banditry and their families and vicariously affects the psychological wellbeing and mental health of other students in the state. This negative psychological wellbeing as a result of armed banditry is manifested by symptoms which include depression as they exhibit flashback, re-occurring thoughts of the traumatic experiences, nightmare, social withdrawal and day dreaming which may trigger depressive mood tendencies.

A careful observation by the researcher revealed that schools in Kaduna State had experienced several attacks, attempts of kidnapping or abduction of students by armed bandits. Examples include Government Secondary School Marmara in Chikun; Government Science Secondary School, Ikara; Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation, Afaka, Igabi; Bethel Baptist High School and UBE Primary School in Rama village of Birnin-Gwari all in Kaduna State. The State has been a flashpoint of kidnapping or abduction, gun-shooting from armed bandits since the year 2000. Armed banditry has disrupted the academic and social activities among secondary school students in Kaduna State; it has disorganized the normal school calendar which made students to be left at home. Many youths who are secondary school students are also affected and this has made them vulnerable to psychological trauma due to armed banditry situation in the state like that of 121 Bethel Baptist High School Students Kaduna State that were abducted on July 5, 2021. Concerted efforts by government, non-governmental organizations, philanthropists and concerned individuals were put in place to reinvigorate and resuscitate the victims of the banditry. However, the researcher also observed that the efforts were more of medical than psychological; many victims suffer from depression which may in turn affect their wellbeing and adjustment in school. Students who experienced armed bandit attack such as attempt of abduction or kidnapping and gun-shooting may develop symptoms of depression. As a result of this, students may resort to unwanted behaviour which is also contrary to the way students can cope within the school premises and this also affects their academic activities. Individual students may exhibit different behavioural patterns due to personal experiences, and this also influences their psychological well-being and emotional stability as well as their relationship with other classmates.

Some secondary school students particularly in Ikara Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria were victims of armed banditry attacks or attempts at abduction or kidnapping and gun-shooting, which pose fear and trauma in them. The traumatic experience may bring about emotional instability as well as depression among the students. Some of the students may become anxious and depressed due to the rate of kidnapping and gun-shooting from armed bandits, as they cannot cope with the threat they find themselves.

Despite widespread recognition of effects of depression on psychological wellbeing of victims of armed banditry, research on effective depression techniques and strategies appear to be scarce. In light of need for effective depression cessation approach, solution-focused brief and problem-solving counselling technique may be considered. Due to the detrimental effect of depression on the lives of secondary school students, due to traumatic events, it has become a matter of concern to counsellors, psychologists, school administrators, parents and teachers. Therefore, it is in accordance with the above

observations that the main thrust of this study is on the effect of Solution-Focused Brief counselling technique on depression among students-victims of armed banditry in secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

The study reviewed a number of related empirical studies to guide the experiment. Javanmiri et al. (2013) conducted a study on the effect of solution-focused technique in decreasing depression among teenage girls in Sahnah, Iran. The research was a quasi-experimental design in which pretest-posttest design with a control group was used. The population were all teenage girls in Sahnah; 20 girls were drawn from the population through stratified random sampling and then randomly assigned to two groups: one experimental and one control. Data were collected through Beck's Depression Questionnaire (BDI). Independent variable was solution-focused therapy in which experimental group was provided with 8-hour group counselling (8 sessions which took one hour). Control group was provided with irrelevant teachings (teaching and study skills) to eliminate the effect of subjects. After the sessions were wound up, BDI questionnaire was administered again on both groups. The t-test showed that the difference between averages of groups in Beck's depression scale on alpha level=0.05 is not significant.

In other words, no significant difference in Beck's depression scale was found between the two groups during the pre-test level; the results of t-test showed that the difference between averages of groups in Beck's depression scale in alpha level of 0.001 is statistically significant. In other words, in the post-test level, there is a significant difference between the groups. The Leoon test was used to show the consistency of variances in both groups. Results showed that the Leoon test was not meaningful; hence the theory of equality of variances was observed ($P > 0.05$), solution-focused grouped counselling has positive effects on reducing depression symptoms in teenage girls. In other words, after reduction of pre-test scores, there is a significant effect of elements between variants ($F(1, 18) = 32/824, P < 0.001$). The results of t-test showed that the difference between averages of groups in Beck's depression scale in alpha level=0.001 is significant. The results proved the permanence of treatment effects, and the average of reduced scores means solution-focused grouped consultation has positive effects on reducing depression symptoms in teenage girls. In other words, after reduction of pre-test scores, there is a significant effect of elements between variants of groups ($F(1, 18) = 32/824, P < 0.001$). The results showed that solution-focused group counselling is effective in decreasing depression among teenage girls and its significance level is at $\alpha = 0.001$. In addition, the findings obtained through posttest indicated how stable the effect of therapy is. Solution-focused group counselling has significantly led to decreasing depression in teenage girls.

Reddy et al. (2015) examined the effectiveness of Solution-Focused Brief Counselling on Adolescent Girl with Moderate Depression in India. A randomized experimental design study compared a single session of SFBC with a single session of Interpersonal Psychotherapy for depression in the treatment of 40 depressed female college students. This study demonstrated that single session SFBC was effective in reducing depressed mood. In a study, SFBC with 10 clients with depression was applied. Nine of the subjects showed clinically significant improvement. In addition, in a randomized controlled study, the SFBC was compared with cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and was found that SFBC performed slightly worse than CBT. The study was carried out with a 19-year-old girl, studying SSLC (10th Standard) who was diagnosed with moderate depression. She had

difficulty in attention, concentration, memory, irritability and sad mood, poor academic performance, guilt feelings, lethargic, anhedonia, decreased sleep, and decreased appetite. The social worker had 6 sessions of solution focused therapy for depression. There was considerable improvement in her symptoms and in scholastic performance.

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant effect of solution focused brief technique on depression among student-victims of armed banditry in secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The population of the study comprises of all SS II students in Government Science Secondary School, Ikara Local Government Area of Kaduna State with a total of 113 students. 20 students were identified with depression in the Local Government Area. The school is a boarding school and a boys' school. This selection is based on the premise that boarding school system makes it feasible for an experiment to be conducted and any change observed could be attributed to effect of the treatment rather than extraneous variable since students do not go out of the school, and have no contact with other external factors that may disrupt the treatment administered. The other reason for using the school is that armed bandits had once attacked the school but was not successful. A sample of 20 students who were identified with moderate level of depression was purposively selected in the school. The selection of students with moderate level of depression was based on the researcher's assumption that mild depression, do not constitute too much problem and could be adjusted by reinforcement from the environment while severe or extreme depression may require clinical attention. Thus, students with moderate level of depression symptoms were considered fit for this study.

The instrument used in this study was Zung's Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS) (Zung, 1965). The adapted Self-Rating Depression Scale was designed to assess the level of depression for individuals diagnosed with depressive disorder. The Self-Rating Depression Scale, is a short self-administer survey to quantify the depressed status of individuals. There are 20 items on the scale that rate the four common characteristics of depression: the pervasive effect, the physiological equivalents, other disturbances, and psychomotor activities. There were ten positively worded and ten negatively worded questions. Each question is scored on a scale of 1-4 (a little of the time, some of the time, good part of the time, most of the time). The scores range from 25-100; 25-49 is Normal Range, 50-59 is Mildly Depressed, 60-69 means Moderately Depressed, 70 and above indicates Severely Depressed. The researcher targeted those students with moderate depression symptoms based on the assumption that moderate depression could be treated within the psychological technique. Due to little modification, the instrument was validated by experts. Thus, content validation was established. Originally, SDS has a reliability index of 0.73. A pilot testing at Government Science Secondary School, Kufaina, Zaria, Kaduna State also confirmed a reliability index of .581 and .783 through split half method.

This research was carried out using quasi-experimental design, in form of pre-test, posttest design. The quasi-experimental design involves the manipulation of one or more independent variable, but there is no random assignment of subjects to conditions (Kolo, 2003). This is because the study covered fewer participants under controlled condition. The

study took account of a pre-post-design with treatment groups. The experimental group was exposed to Solution Focused Brief Counselling Technique (SFBCT).

This is experimental research design. Participants were reached through the respective school authority. Participants completed a Self-Rating Depression Scale adapted from Zung (1965). The research was carried out in three phases as follows: Pre-test (administering self-rating depression before the treatment), Treatment (Participants were exposed to solution focused brief counselling technique for a period of eight weeks) and Post-test phase (administering self-rating depression scale to participants after the treatment). The data collected using the research instruments were organized and analysed. Thus, the data obtained by the researcher were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Paired sample t-test was used to test hypothesis 1 at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Presentation of results

The data collected was analyzed using paired t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis tested was:

Ho1. There is no significant effect of solution focused brief counselling technique on depression among student-victims of armed banditry in secondary schools in, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Paired sample t-test on the effect of solution focused brief counselling technique on depression among student-victims of armed banditry in secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Treatment	Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	P
SFBT	Pre-test	20	33.15	9.18	19	4.742	.000
	Post-test	20	20.85	6.87			

Table 1 shows the pretest mean score of 33.15 and standard deviation of 9.18. After the treatment, the mean score reduced to 20.85 and the standard deviation was 6.87 with the degree of freedom and the t-value of 19 and 4.742 respectively. The table also shows a p-value of .000. From the table, the p-value of .000 was found to be less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Participants' level of depression reduced to 20.85 from 33.15 as a result of the intervention. This implies that there is a significant effect of Solution Focused Brief Counselling Technique on depression. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of solution focused brief technique on depression among student-victims of armed banditry in secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria was rejected.

Discussion of the findings

The findings from this study indicated that Solution Focused Brief counselling technique is effective in reducing depression among student-victims of armed banditry in secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The finding from hypothesis one revealed that Solution Focused Brief Technique was effective in reducing depression among victims of armed banditry in secondary school students in Kaduna State, Nigeria. This finding is in line with research conducted by Javanmiri et al. (2013) who conducted a study on the effect of solution-focused technique in decreasing depression among teenage girls in Sahnah, Iran. The study revealed that solution focused brief technique led to significant decrease in

depression in teenage girls. The result in their study indicated decrease in depression for all the participants. Like the current study, their findings were consistent. They are similar in terms of population but differ in location. Reddy et al. (2015) also examined the effectiveness of Solution-Focused Brief Counselling on adolescent girl with moderate depression in India. Their result of study showed that Solution Focused Brief Technique was effective in reducing depression. Their study is similar to the current study in the use of solution focused brief technique and design. However, their study differs in used of subject (only teenage girls participated in their study and their study demonstrated single session of SFBC which was found effective in reducing depressed mood but the current study utilizes several sessions.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that counselling intervention using Solution Focused Brief Counselling Technique reduced depression among student-victims of armed banditry in secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. School counsellors and psychologists are encouraged to employ solution focused brief technique in reducing depression among student-victims of armed banditry in secondary schools.
2. Seminars and workshops should be organized for teachers and parents on how they could understand and handle depression in their students and help them in coping with the school environment.
3. Seminar and workshop should be organized for government and non-governmental organizations on the importance of employing psychological interventions such as solution focused brief counselling technique on student-victims of armed banditry in secondary schools.

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