

EFFECT OF COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTION ON AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE OF PUPILS WITH PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN ABUJA

Ojonugwa, D. Solomon, P.hD: Faculty of Education, Prince Abubakar
Audu University Anyigba, Nigeria;
E-mail: domsolly2009@yahoo.com

Muraina Kamilu Olanrewaju, Ph.D: Faculty of Education, Prince
Abubakar Audu University Anyigba, Nigeria;
E-mail: muraina_kamilu@yahoo.com

Abstract: *This study intervened in the problem behaviors of aggression and violence noticed in Nigerian primary schools in Abuja F.C.T with the use of Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI). The study employed quasi-experimental research design. The population of the study consists of all primary school pupils in Abuja FCT Nigeria. Two purposes, research questions and hypotheses guided this study. The sample size consists of 44 pupils, drawn from six primary schools purposively sampled from 40 schools in FCT. Aggression and Violence Questionnaire (AVQ) were the instrument used for data collection. Data were analyzed using means and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Findings indicate that Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) significantly affects aggression and violence positively leading to a change of behaviors. It is recommended that Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) should be employed in all primary schools in Nigeria and in the world as intervention and corrective mechanism to problem behaviors in the classroom to enhance teaching and learning in schools.*

Keywords: *Cognitive Behavioral Intervention; Aggression; Violence and Primary School.*

Introduction

The classroom conflict experienced by teachers in primary school cannot be over emphasized with the complex nature of our society where pupils from different homes with different background and behaviors gather in one class to learn. A classroom comprises of pupils with excellent and good behaviors, those with good with little character issues, those with averagely good

behaviors and pupils with problem behaviors such as aggression and violence in the classroom. According to Abdulmalik, Ani, Ajuwon & Omigbodun (2016) aggressive and violent behaviors among pupils “represents a wide spectrum that ranges from a major public health concern to difficulties with academic performance”, disruptive behaviors poor achievements, disciplinary problems, high headedness, and lack of respect for teachers. To Nnaebue and Nwokolo (2017), Pupils in schools suffer from injuries and traumatic experiences arising from violence and aggressive behaviors from other pupils and may or may not have the confidence to relate it to their teachers in school and their parents at home.

Aggression and violence in the classroom are rampant and has unprecedented consequences on the health and academic achievements of the pupils and that of other pupils in the same classroom. The exhibition of aggressive and violent behavior has become a rampant occurrence and one of the major problems associated with problem behaviors in the primary schools especially in this generation of child right act. Eziyi and Odoemelam (2005), faceted that aggressive and violent behaviors especially in the classroom are the most frustrating to the school and teachers which is considered normal among young pupils who may have not understood that aggressive and violent behaviors are wrong, affecting themselves and that of others in the school and in the classroom.

One notable consequence of aggression and violence is its capacity to obstruct teaching and learning and the intimidation tendencies it carries in school for both the pupil directly involved and other pupils who are indirectly involved (the classmates). Schools and other stakeholders should make frank effort to reduce aggression and violence in school using different means and interventions packages (Odekunle & Muraina, 2019). Complementing the above, Muraina and Umar (2018) posited that “it is appropriate for schools to attempt to reduce behaviors such as fighting, name-calling, bullying, and general intimidation that can create a negative school climate and lead to more serious violence”. They added that problem behaviors such as aggression and violence “even when not overtly violence, may inhibit learning and create interpersonal problems for those involved”. The above problems hitherto prompted the research action of researchers to conduct researchers that bring the problem of aggression and violence under control. Cognitive behavioral intervention is one of such intervention designed to bring aggression and violence under control in our classrooms.

Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) is a therapy designed by experts as intervention packages with the intention of changing “negative thoughts patterns” with destructive tendencies and emotional destabilization leading to disaffection, dissatisfactions, depression, anxiety and other psychological traumas and affect learning in schools and institutions. Very well-mind (2020) defines cognitive behavioral therapy as a type of psychotherapeutic treatment that help people to change their destructive thought patterns which are capable of influencing behaviors and emotions (Odekunle & Muraina, 2019). Very well-mind further added that cognitive behavioral therapy can be typified as follows; rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT), cognitive therapy, multimodal therapy and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Martin (2020) described cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) as “a short-term, goal-oriented psychotherapy treatment that takes a hand-on, practical approach to problem solving” basically, the focus of CBT is about “changing people’s attitudes and their behavior by focusing on the thoughts, images, beliefs and attitudes that are held (a person’s cognitive processes) and how these processes relate to the way a person behaves”.

Furthermore, cognitive behavioral intervention (CBI) according to Brock (2013) “is based on the belief that behavior is mediated by cognitive processes”. Brock further noted that pupils “are taught to examine their own thoughts and emotions, recognize when negative thoughts and emotions are escalating in intensity, and then use strategies to change their thinking and behavior”. These interventions in schools will be used on pupils with learning challenges especially those with problem behaviors (Muraina & Umar, 2018). To Brock, “these interventions tend to be used with learners who display problem behavior related to specific emotions or feelings, such as anger or anxiety”. Nicole (2001) faceted that “cognitive behavioral interventions (CBI) are based on the simple principle that thinking (an internal behavior) controls overt actions (external behavior). The implementation of cognitive behavioral intervention will assist offenders and children with problem behaviors to absorb new and relevant attitude and skills and “new ways of thinking that can lead to changes in their behavior and actions, and ultimately affect their conduct”. For Cognitive behavioral intervention to intervene on the concept of aggression and violence, their conceptual framework is necessary at this point.

Aggression may be defined as outburst of destructive behaviors as a result of painful stimulant on the senses of one and influence of psychological stress that is unfavorable and unpleasant to the person. Muraina and Umar (2018),

aggression is the feeling of discomfort and anger as a result painful action and words which may reflect on the countenance to the person involved which may not led to physical destruction of properties. Violence on the other hand is the act or use of “physical force” to inflict pain on someone physically and engaging in destructive activities leading to injuries on someone and destruction of properties and relationship. Good Therapy described violence “as the use of physical force with the intent to injure another person or destroy properties”. Aggression may or may not lead to destruction of life and properties but violence which involves the use of force leads to harm and injuries on people and destruction of properties (Muraina & Umar, 2018). In an attempt to overcome aggression and violence in schools and in the classrooms, some studies were carried out by some stakeholders and experts in educational areas, some studies carried out by some researchers are reviewed below.

The research work of Courtney (2010) on the effects that cognitive behavior modification intervention can have on a child with behavioral disabilities is one of this intervention designed to curb the issue of behavioral disabilities and behavioral problems in the classroom. Findings of the study indicated that cognitive-behavioral therapy used in conjunction with teacher-implemented contingencies was found to be more effective in reducing disruptive behavior. In a relative development, the work of Jellesma (2020) on cognitive behavior therapy in the school setting: A case study of a nine-year-old anxious boy with extreme blushing is one of such interventions on behavioral problems in the classroom. Findings of the study indicated that “the test anxiety and blushing decreased and on the achievement test three years later, performance was good”.

Furthermore, an intervention work on efficacy of cognitive behavioral therapy in curbing peer victimization among secondary school students in Niger State was conducted by Ozodinobi, Ogwuche & Yusuf (2019). The “findings from the study indicated among others that there was a significant difference in peer victimization by the control and experimental groups after the treatment”. In addition, the research work on effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral group therapy on coping strategies and in reducing anxiety, depression, and physical complaints in student victims of bullying was conducted by Moslem, Nour-Mohammad, Mohammad, SajadKhanjani, and Mohammad (2017). The findings of the study reported that cognitive-behavioral group therapy reduced anxiety, depression, and physical complaints among students. Classroom-based cognitive-behavioral intervention to prevent classroom-based

cognitive-behavioral intervention to prevent aggression: efficacy and social validity was another intervention-based research work carried out by Daunic, Smith, Brank & Penfield (2016). The result indicated “significant positive treatment effects on knowledge of problem-solving concepts and teacher ratings of aggression among pupils in schools.

Relatively, the research work on utilizing cognitive behavioral interventions to positively impact academic achievement in middle school students was conducted by Brett and Arline (2019) the results revealed that “practical examples and resources were provided to assist school counselors in implementing CBI interventions to help students control cognitive thought processes and positively impact academic achievement” CBI significantly corrected students cognitive thought processes and impacted positively on their academic achievement. The above review dealt significantly with some problem behaviors in our classrooms but non worked directly on the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggression and violence in primary school in the FCT, this study intends to fill this gap.

Statement of the Problem

The greatest challenge of the class teachers of twenty first century is the growing rate of problem behaviors in the classroom. The trend of children upbringing in this century is generating classroom conflict between the school, the teachers and pupils in the school environment. Different parenting style of different homes is creating serious academic conflict in our classroom. The above is generating problem behaviors such as destructive and aggressive, restlessness, lack of respect for teachers, refusal to adhere to instruction from the teachers leading to indiscipline in our classrooms especially in primary schools.

To make the more complex is the attitude of school management and school owners with the school policies that prevent the teachers from administration of discipline in school. These policies are giving pupils ground to misbehave knowing well that the teachers cannot met any punishment on them because of their parental and management coverage from been given serious punishment. The child right act domesticated in some of our countries has also placed the teachers on a tight Conner and have prevented teachers from proper administration of discipline in our schools especially in private schools creating room for problem behaviors. It is in view of the above this study seeks to determine the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggressive and violent behaviors in schools in Abuja.

Purpose of the Study

The following objectives were formulated to guide this study;

To determine the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggressive behaviors of pupils with problem behaviors in primary schools in Abuja

To determine the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on violent behaviors of pupils with problem behavior in primary schools in Abuja F.C.T

Hypothesis

Cognitive behavioral intervention has no significant effect on aggressive behavior of pupils with problem behavior in primary schools in Abuja

Cognitive behavioral intervention has no significant effect on violent behaviors of pupils with problem behavior in primary school in Abuja

Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design to determine the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggression and violence of pupils with problem behavior in primary school in Abuja “It is non-randomized pre-test, post-test, non-equivalent experimental and control group design with experimental group receiving treatment”. Quasi-experimental design establishes cause and effect relationship. It is most powerful and valid design which can be used to identify confidently the cause of any given effect. The sample size consists of 44 pupils identified with aggression and violence. The sample size was drawn from six primary schools purposively sampled from 40 schools in FCT for the study. Aggression and Violence Questionnaire (AVQ) were the instrument used for data collection. The researchers administered the Aggression and Violence Questionnaire (AVQ) at baseline to all pupils in two groups. Cluster mean of 2.50 on the (AVQ) was used as a benchmark for inclusion into the study. Thus, pupils with cluster mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as to have experienced aggression and violence over the past two weeks and included in the study whereas pupils with a mean score below this set benchmark was excluded.

The eligible participants were randomly assigned to the control and treatment group respectively. After pre-testing both groups using the Aggression and Violence Questionnaire (AVQ), the intervention package was delivered to the treatment group but withheld from the control group. Treatment was guided by CBI intervention package developed by the researchers. The package

served as a guide for delivering the treatment intervention which aimed to dispute aggression and violence capable of leading them to cheerfulness. The intervention program lasted for 4 weeks (3 sessions per week at 50 minutes each). The pupils in the control group only received the usual advisory talk during the same period. Post-test was administered to both groups.

Aggression and Violence Questionnaire (AVQ) developed by Buss and Perry, (1992) was the instrument used for data collection. It is a version of aggression questionnaire used as tool for aggression and violence. The 29 item Aggression scale consists of 4 factors, Physical Aggression (PA), Verbal Aggression (VA), Anger (A) and Hostility (H). The total score for Aggression is the sum of the factor scores. The developer identifies a cut-off score of 3 as the optional cut point for screening purposes. The researchers streamline the 29 items to the level of primary school pupils in line with their age level and used for data collection. Cognitive behavioral intervention (CBI) manual, the intervention manual for overcoming aggression and violence for primary school pupils with problem behaviors was based on the technique and descriptions in (CBI) manuals (Nicole, 2001; Sofronoff, Attwood, Hinton, & Levin, 2006) which include quotes to aid in disputing participant dysfunctional emotions. The manual incorporated many positive aspects of African cultural beliefs. The participants were taught to see the dangers of aggression and violence on pupils learning and health through the use of direct teaching with the aids of projectors, cognitive behavioral exercises, assignments, role playing, modeling, supportive and bibliotherapeutic techniques of (CBI). Homework, assignments were given to participants at the end of each session. The researcher used Gbagi and pidgin English as the intervention language.

Control of Extraneous Variable

To ensure that the outcome of this study was not affected by variables other than the treatment variable.

The participants were assigned to treatment and control groups randomly. Participants were asked to throw coin to the air with the awareness that one face is for treatment and the other is for control. This balloting with replacement gave each participant equal chance to be include in either treatment or control group.

To control “Hawthorne effect” the researchers explained to the respondents that they were trained educational psychologist with the intention to help the

respondents to be cheerful to overcome their aggression and violent emotions and thoughts.

To eliminate fear and sensitivity to the experiment and thought manipulations, participants were made to see reward for participation. Igbo, J.N. and Ojonugwa, D.S (2018).

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 probability level. The partial squared (n_p^2) was used to determine the effect of the treatment. 0.20 was adopted to interpret the magnitude of the effect as modest effect, 0.41-0.8 as moderate effect, and 0.81 and above as strong effect.

Results

Table 1: ANCOVA results for the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggression and violence by treatment conditions

Group		N	Mean	SD	df	F
Control	pretest	11	11.50	3.09		
	posttest	11			16.60	
						1.25
	sig.					2.78
	(n_p^2)					.00
						.99
Treatment	pretest	11	15.17	6.98		
	Posttest	11	48.18	7.88		

As shown in table 1, the result of data analysis revealed that participant in control group had pretest mean of 11.50 with standard deviation of 3.09 while participant in experimental group had pretest mean of 15.17 with standard deviation of 6.98. As indicated above, the control group had posttest mean of

16.60 with standard deviation of 3.69, while the experimental group had a posttest mean of 48.18 with a standard deviation of 7.88. The researcher found a significant and strong effect of cognitive behavioral intervention (CBI) on the aggression and violence of primary school pupils with problem behaviors in the treatment group compared to those in the control group. $F(1,25) = 2.78$, $p = .00$, $(n_p^2) = .99$. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant effect of cognitive behavioral intervention (CBI) on the aggression and violence in the treatment group compared to those in the control group was rejected.

Discussion

The study explored the effect of cognitive behavioral intervention on aggression and violence of pupils with problem behavior in primary school in Abuja the findings were supported by Agbaria (2010) who worked on cognitive behavioral intervention in dealing with school violence among Arab Palestinian adolescents in Israel. Agbaria (2010) reported effectiveness of cognitive behavioral intervention in dealing with violent behavior, with an improvement in most areas tested in the test group, compared to the control group. The finding of this study is also in line with that of Lee (2019) who worked on the use of cognitive behavioral therapy for school refusal behavior in educational psychology practice. Lee reported that cognitive behavioral therapy for school impacted positively of the refusal behaviors of pupils in primary school. In a related development, The finding of this study is in line with the work of Mohammad, Morteza, Leila, Roya, Marjan, & Ajami (2016) on cognitive behavioral therapy for Treatment of Adult Obesity. The study reported that “behavioral therapy along with diet and exercise should be used to improve the effectiveness of traditional methods”. According to the researchers, “cognitive-behavioral therapy of obesity is based on the cause and nature of obesity as this intervention is effective for treating obesity with a focus on sustainable change in lifestyle.

Furthermore, the result of this study is also in agreement with Gorman, Kassinove and Sukhodolsky (2004) who worked on cognitive behavioral therapy for anger in children and adolescents: a meta-analysis. Gorman, Kassinove and Sukhodolsky reported that cognitive behavioral therapy corrected anger in children and adolescents. The result of this study is also in line with the work on Tachelle, Garry and Karla (2014) who worked on interdisciplinary collaboration: cognitive behavioral interventions in special education and school psychology.

Conclusion

The study indicated obviously the presence of aggressive and violent pupils in our classrooms. This study examined the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) on aggression and violence with pupils with problem behaviors in primary schools in Abuja Nigerian Federal Capital Territory. A before and after analysis of using 44 revealed that Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) corrected the aggression and violent behaviors of pupils with problem behaviors in the classrooms.

Recommendations

The government and school authorities should involve more guidance counselors and educational psychologist to intervene in correcting problem behaviors in schools.

Classrooms and learning environments that are capable of increasing the positive emotions should be provided by schools and the government.

The government and stakeholders should provide avenue at intervals for intervention research work to correct problem behaviors in schools.

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