

The Influence of Parents' Socio-Economic Status on the Efficacy of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in Rehabilitating Sexually Abused Female Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Benin Metropolis

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of parents' socio-economic status on the efficacy of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) in rehabilitating sexually abused female adolescents in secondary schools in Benin Metropolis. To guide the study, a research question was raised and a corresponding hypothesis was formulated; a pre-test, post-test non-equivalent control group quasi experimental design was employed. Sample of seventy four (74) senior secondary students participated in the study. A seventy one (71) item questionnaire with thirty one (31) items on Sexual Experiences Questionnaire; Specific Experiences (SEQ:SE) and Forty (40) items for Psychological Disturbances Questionnaire (a combination inventory to measure psychological disturbances) was administered to the sample to collect data for the study. The internal consistency of the instrument had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.85 and 0.90 respectively. Data collected were analysed using t-test and the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed statistically no significant interaction effect of treatment by parents' socio-economic status on behavioural change of participants from psychological disturbances of sexual abuse at post-test in the experimental group; that Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) was effective for the rehabilitation of recipient towards sexual abuse and psychological disturbances. Based on the results, recommendations were made.

Keywords: Efficacy, Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy, parents socio-economic status, Sexual Abused and Female Adolescents.

Introduction

The need and interest of adolescents may sometimes predispose them to having conflicting thoughts and emotions which are likely to result in behavioural problems, irrational thoughts, low self-esteem, violence and abuses of various forms. These may prevent them from attaining set goals in academics and other aspects of their lives. Sexual abuse is perceived as a subcategory of gender-based violence; the general term used to capture

violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations associated with each gender along with the unequal power relationships between the genders (male and female) within the context of a specific society (Bloom 2008). It could be the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend and is unable to give informed consent to. According to Finkelhor, (2009), Sexual abuse is the misuse or wrong use of sexuality whether in words, suggestive

actions, touching such as very intimate body contact or actual sexual intercourse. The various categories of sexual abuse are non-contact (inappropriate sexual solicitations, remarks and comments), contact (sensitive body touches or fondling) and penetration sexual abuse (oral, anal or vaginal penetration) (Rickert, Wiemann, Vaughan & White, 2004). They are usually non-consensual activities and could occur in forms like forceful sexual solicitations, threats, exploitations, humiliations, assaults, molestations, incest, involuntary prostitutions, tortures, insertion of objects into genital openings, rape among others.

The primary targets of sexual abuses are women and adolescent girls, but not only are they at high risk as compared to what men endure; but suffer exacerbated consequences such as unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions resulting in death, traumatic fistula, risks of sexually transmitted infections and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (United Nations Population Fund, 2011). Non-consensual sex and other forms of sexual abuse are found in nearly all studied cultures, religion and race of the world (Krebs, Linquist, Warner, Fisher & Martin, 2004). In 2002, it was reported that about 150 million girls experienced sexual abuse with physical contact (WHO, 2006; Chris, 2015). While Domestic staffs like drivers, house keepers, guardians, classmates, parents and landlords have also been caught molesting minors and children of their tenants (Unicef, 2015; Duru, Ederiane and Akinbami, 2014). Sexual abusers could be acquaintances, family members, trusted individuals or strangers irrespective of their age, race, gender, profession, religion, income and ethnicity. Victims of sexual abuse could show negative behavioural, emotional, physical, psychological and social impacts and

symptoms which could vary from one individual to another. Some of the symptoms are withdrawal **from certain people**, display of **sexual behaviours that are inappropriate for their age**, anxiousness, clinginess, depression, aggressiveness, sleeping problems, bed wetting, absenting from school, and changes in eating habits, obsessive behaviour, and nightmares, among others.

Although there are divergent opinions about the influence of parents' socio-economic status on sexual abuse; the family's income, educational status, number of adults, housing unit type, electronic and internet exposure are factors which could expose individuals to being sexually abused. For example, the watching of movies in a co-tenant's or neighbour's apartments could lead to sexual abuse. Sexual abuse is usually committed in secrecy and offenders threaten victims with various punishment including rights, privilege or economic denial and death if disclosed (Moore, Awusabo, Madise, John-Langba & Kumi-Kyereme, 2007). Socio-economic status is relevant to all realms of behavioural and social science, including research, practice, education, and advocacy. Exposure to violence transcends socio-economic status, affecting all levels of income, education, housing and occupation. Some research documents increased exposure to and severities of violence among lower socio-economic groups; however, much of this research focused on associations between victims of sexual abuse and parent's socio-economic status. When viewed through a social class lens, privilege, power, and control are emphasized. Low income individuals reported rates of sexual abuse three times higher than high income individuals (Moore et al, 2007).

Poverty is among the root causes of sexual abuse and often has a daily presence in a victim's life. There is no single definition of poverty but the two most commonly used concepts are absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty refers to a state in which income is insufficient to provide the basic needs required to sustain life (that is, food and shelter). Relative poverty defines income or resources in relation to the average, and recognizes that human needs are socially derived and therefore vary according to social contexts and the ability (or inability) to participate in the social norms of one's society (Townsend 1979 Cited in Odu&Alokan 2011)

Sexual abuse could jeopardize a person's economic wellbeing, often leading to homelessness, unemployment, interrupted education, mental health, and other daily stressors and struggles. Living without one's basic needs met can increase a person's risk for sexual victimization causing a difficult situation. Studies show that poverty increases people's vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation in the workplace, schools, in prostitution, sex trafficking and drug trade. People with the lowest socio-economic status are at greater risk for sexual abuse (Jewkes, Sen & Garcia-Moreno, 2002).

Furthermore, an examination of parent's socio-economic status as a gradient or continuous variable reveals inequities in access to and distribution of resources. Family, domestic and sexual abuse could affects individuals across all socio-economic levels. Research suggests that there is a correlation between low socio-economic household status and increased risk of interpersonal violence (WHO 2004). Low parent's socio-economic status is a recurring factor in the incidence and prevalence of crime generally and the extent of abuses in the community. It can also be a

determining factor in the perpetration of family, domestic and sexual abuse. Low parent's socio-economic household status can place considerable strain on relationships and on communities, resulting in impaired functionality. An aspect of socio-economic disadvantage which may affect the likelihood of an individual's propensity to sexually abuse includes unemployment, homelessness, poverty and marital relationship status. These aspects may be used as an indicator of connectedness between individuals, their family and community. Isolation compounds problems of family, domestic and sexual abuse because it may reduce access to formal and informal support networks (Oluwatosin & Adediwura 2010).

According to Ikechebelu, Udigwe, Ezechukwu, Ndinechi, and Joe-Ikechebelu (2008), street hawking exposes young girls to all forms of hazards, including sexual abuse. This descriptive study examines the size of the problem and the consequences of sexual abuse on juvenile female adolescent street hawkers randomly selected from two urban towns in Anambra State of Nigeria. Data was collected with semi structured, interviewer administered questionnaires. The mean age of the female hawkers was 13 to 16years. Out of 186 respondents, 130 (69.9%) had been sexually abused with 32 (17.2%) having had penetrative sexual intercourse (28.1% were forced and 56.3% submitted willingly) while hawking. Majority (59.4%) of the sexual abusers were adult males. Other types of sexual abuse experienced include inappropriate touches (106 cases; 81.5%) and verbal abuses (121 cases; 93.1%). There was low awareness of the twin risks of pregnancy (43.1%) and sexually transmitted infections (54.3%)

following sexual abuse among the respondents.

There is also a strong relationship between sexual abuse and homelessness. Victims and survivors are often dependent on their abusers for basic economic and housing needs (Duru, Ederiane & Akinbami, 2014). This is particularly salient for children, teens, immigrants and refugees, migrant workers, victims of sex trafficking, sex workers, and victims of marital and intimate partner rape. Escaping sexual attacks often means becoming homeless. Once on the streets, individuals are at greater risk for sexual victimization and possible abuse.

In a bid to changing adolescent students' attitude towards this menace in our educational settings, the field of Counselling Psychology adopts counselling therapies and skills. One of such therapies or skills to be used in this study is Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT). Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy ('REBT') was propounded by Albert Ellis in 1955; it views human beings as 'responsibly hedonistic' in the sense that they strive to remain alive and to achieve some degree of happiness (Ellis, 2001). However, it also holds that humans are prone to adopting irrational beliefs and behaviours which stand in the way of their achieving set goals and purposes. Often, these irrational attitudes or philosophies take the form of extreme or dogmatic 'must', 'should', or 'ought to'; they contrast with rational and flexible desires, wishes, preferences and wants (Ellis, 1994). From evidence in literature, REBT has been experimentally proven to be effective for changing irrational beliefs and associated behaviours, changing wrong values and curbing examination malpractice behaviour.

Adomeh (2006), Chima and Nnodun, (2006) and Oliha and Audu

(2010) have found that REBT is efficacious in the rehabilitation of behavioural problems among secondary school students. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy has yielded positive results in the rehabilitation of sexually abused female adolescents (Rieckert & Andre, 2000). Gonzalel, Nelson, Gutkin, Saunders, Galloway and Craig (2004) in their study lend credence to the fact that REBT has a significantly positive effect on changing irrational beliefs in adolescents and children. However, to the best of the knowledge of the researcher, there is a dearth in literature as regards studies which seeks to examine the impact of parents' socioeconomic status on the efficacy of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy In rehabilitating Sexually Abused Female Adolescent in Secondary Schools in Benin Metropolis, Edo State of Nigeria; a gap this study intends to fill.

Significance of the Study

The rate of sexual abuse among female adolescents of secondary school is on the high, which sometimes predispose them to having conflicting thoughts and emotions which are likely to result in behavioural problems, irrational thoughts, low self-esteem, violence and abuses of various forms. This could have reprisal adverse effect on the performance of victims; thus becoming a concern to stakeholders in education. Hence, the aim of this study is to examine the influence of parent's socio-economic status (such as employment, housing and education) on Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy In rehabilitating Sexually Abused Female Adolescent in Secondary Schools in Benin Metropolis, Edo State of Nigeria.

Research Question

Is there an interaction effect of treatment by parent socio-economic status (PSES) on the post-test mean

score of the sexually abused female adolescents?

Hypothesis

There is no interaction effect of treatment by parent socio-economic status (PSES) on the post-test mean score of the sexually abused female adolescents.

Methodology

The study adopted quasi experimental design with pre-test, post-test and non-equivalent control group. The study consisted of independent variables which are Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy and the Control; while the dependent variable is rehabilitated Sexually

Abused Female Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Benin Metropolis.

Participants

The targeted population of this study consists of all twenty thousand four hundred and twenty (20,420) mixed public senior secondary school students in SS2 in Benin Metropolis. The Benin Metropolis is made up of three Local Government Areas namely; Egor, Ikpoba-Okha and Oredo. This group is considered appropriate for this study because, it is believed that students of this class are mainly adolescent who could be more vulnerable to sexual abuse.

Table 1: Distribution Table of Mixed Public Senior Secondary Schools in, Benin Metropolis. Edo State

LGA	Government schools	Mixed	Total Enrolment	Male	Female
Egor	10		6,089	2,932	3,166
Ikpoba-Okha	16		10,332	4,959	5,373
Oredo	5		3,999	1,840	2,159
Total	31		20,420	9,722	10,698

Source: Statistics Department Ministry of Education Iyaro, Benin City (2017).

The samples for this study consist of all the students in SSII class, drawn from two (2) selected mixed public senior secondary schools in Benin Metropolis. The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to draw samples in four stages. Stage one, schools in the three local government areas in Benin metropolis were selected for adequate coverage. At stage two, random sampling was used to select a mixed public senior secondary school from each local government area; making a total of three schools in the Metropolis. At the third stage, two mixed schools were selected purposively from the three earlier selected schools. At the fourth stage, the participants for the experimental group were identified

sexually abused female adolescents having psychological challenges.

The Instrument

The research instruments for data collection for the study is a standardized questionnaire, adapted from Mazzeo, Bergman, Buchanan, Drasgow and Fitzgerald (1988 & 1995); Sexual Experiences Questionnaire; Specific Experiences (SEQ:SE) and Psychological Disturbances Questionnaire (a combination inventory to measure psychological disturbances). This instrument consists of three sections; A, B and C. Section A of the instrument consists of respondents' demographic information which includes name, age, gender and parents' socioeconomic status. While

section B consists of thirty one (31) items that will be used to obtain information on sexual experiences and section C is made up of forty (40) items which will measure psychological disturbances. The respondents were required to indicate the extent to which these items help on a five-point Likert scale from very often: 5 points, often: 4 points, rarely: 3 points, once: 2 point to never: 1.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined by using Cronbach's Alpha statistics yielding an index of 0.85 for Sexual Experiences Questionnaire; Specific Experiences (SEQ:SE) and 0.90 for Psychological Disturbances. The obtained coefficients signify that these instruments are reliable.

Procedure

The participants were pre-tested with the instrument to collect

Results

Hypothesis: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment by parent socio-economic status (PSES) on the post-test mean score of the sexually abused female adolescents.

baseline scores. Thereafter, identified students who have been sexually abused with psychological disturbances were assigned to the two treatment groups – Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy and the control. Each group had two sessions a week for a period of six weeks, during which participants in group counselling sessions learnt coping skills and were encouraged to practice in everyday situations what they learnt in the group therapies. Each session lasted forty-five minutes. A convenient time and venue was chosen. Confidentiality among members regarding group procedures was emphasised and members were encouraged not to be absent from sessions. At the end of the treatment period, the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire; Specific Experiences (SEQ: SE) was re-administered on the participants. Data collected were collated and analysed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Table 5: ANOVA of Treatment by PSES Interaction Effect

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	Hypothesis	279401.152	1	279401.152	462.495	.000
	Error	28098.814	46	604.117		
Groups	Hypothesis	12521.829	1	12521.829	17.737	.000
	Error	14275.303	20	705.986		
PSES	Hypothesis	12535.850	24	522.327	.776	.717
	Error	9615.096	14	673.286		
groups * PSES	Hypothesis	7883.632	12	656.969	.714	.728
	Error	33140.867	36	920.580		

Table 2 showed the result for hypothesis treatment by PSES interaction effect; from the table, the computed F-value = .714 significant at

p-value = .728. When the p-value when compared with alpha (α) = .05 the p-value is greater, therefore the hypothesis that says "There is no

significant interaction effect of treatment by parent socio-economic status (PSES) on the post-test mean score of the sexually abused female adolescents” is accepted. This implies that PSES of the participants do not influence the treatment; it is equally effective for all participants irrespective of the socio-economic status of their parents.

Discussion

The results of the study reveal at the post-test that Parent Socio-economic Status of the participants do not influence the treatment; it is equally effective for all participants irrespective of the socio-economic status of their parents. This agrees with the findings of [Yahaya, Soares, Antonio](#) and [Macassa](#) (2012). Although Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, and Hamby (2010) asserted that low socioeconomic status, low educational attainment, and unemployment negatively influence parents’ ability to protect and care for their children, which in turn negatively influences child rearing and increases psychological damage from child sexual abuse. This does not influence treatment especially in group counselling.

Conclusion

From the result of the study, it can be concluded that there is no significant impact of parents’ socio-economic status on the treatment and Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) is an effective method for rehabilitating sexually abused female adolescent students in secondary school, Benin Metropolis.

Recommendations

The study has shown that sexual abuse is inimical to the achievement of the objectives of Education and found to be prevalent in schools especially among secondary school adolescent, can be reduced using Rational Emotive

Behavioural Therapy (REBT). Counsellors in schools should therefore regularly employ this method to help students who show signs or symptoms of sexual abuse and psychological disturbances irrespective of their parents’ socioeconomic status. Counsellors in training should therefore be effectively trained in the use of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT). It is also recommended that further studies be carried out using REBT to its effectiveness in the reduction of test anxiety using a larger sample.

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