

Effects of Cognitive Restructuring on Social Adjustment of Maladjusted In-School Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Ogidi Education Zone of Anambra State

¹Egenti, Uju. P. (Ph.D) and ²Prof. R.C. Ebenebe

¹Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus,
Anambra State, Nigeria

(Formerly Anambra State University, Uli)

²Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Corresponding Author: Egenti, Uju. P. (Ph.D)

Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to examine the effects of cognitive restructuring on social adjustment of maladjusted in-school adolescents in secondary schools in Ogidi Education Zone in Anambra State. The researchers embarked on this study because of adjustment problems among students in the area of study. In recent time, most secondary schools in Anambra State have witnessed peer cruelty, substances abuse, aggression, loitering, fighting, bullying or threatening others, rioting, stealing, truancy, raping, smoking, lateness, violation of rules and regulation, destruction of school property, among other forms of maladjustment. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design. The population of the study comprised 211 maladjusted senior secondary two (SSII) students of the 2016/2017 in the 40 public secondary schools in Ogidi Education Zone. The sample size of this study consisted of 52 maladjusted SSII students sampled from the population of the study. Through purposive sampling technique, two schools out of 40 with highest population of maladjusted students were selected for both experimental and control groups. The instrument for data collection was School Adjustment Rating Scale (SARS). SARS was validated by experts. The reliability of the instrument was determined by trial-testing of the instrument on a representative sample of 10 SSII maladjusted students randomly selected in two public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone. The internal consistency of SARS was subjected to Cronbach Alpha statistical analysis, which yielded coefficient value of 0.79. The conduct of the study took place during the normal school lesson period. The study lasted for six weeks. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. This study found that there is a significant difference in the mean social adjustment scores of maladjusted adolescent students exposed to cognitive restructuring compared to conventional counselling. It was among others recommended that the use of academic based cognitive restructuring packages addressed to social challenges of the individual should be put in place to tackle the problem of academic maladjustment in adolescents. This study is likely to impact positively on the students, teachers, counsellors and the reading public.

Keywords: cognitive restructuring; social adjustment; maladjustment; in-school adolescents, and secondary school.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of facilitating, learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, value, belief and habits. It has formative effect in the mind, character and physical ability of an individual. Hence, it is a fundamental right of every individual for proper adjustment. The growth aspect in adolescent shows signs of maturation where by the primary sex that relates to reproduction and secondary sex organs will be seen in the life of adolescent. During the development of adolescent, her intellectual development is on the higher level than that of children. Children are only able to think logically about the concrete, the here and now. Adolescents

move beyond these limits. Adolescent can think in terms of what might be true, rather than just in terms of what they see is true. They are able to deal with abstractions, test hypothesis and see infinite possibilities. Adolescent are often characterized by egocentric behaviours and attitude. Adolescent are also developing socially and emotionally: perhaps the most important task of adolescent is the search for identify and in this search comes the struggle for independence. While adolescence can be a trying period for both the youth and parents, in most homes it becomes a battle ground because both parents and the adolescent did not understand themselves and this lead to maladjustment of most adolescent.

Adolescents undergo many period of developmental transition between childhood and adulthood. It involves changes in personality, physically, intellectual, social and emotional development. During this time of changes, adolescents are faced with many issues and decision. Some of the key issues that can have an impact on the adolescent development are: self-esteem, accepting one's muscles, female role, gaining emotional independence from right, peer pressure, sex, depression and suicide etc. unfortunately most parents/teachers did not know how to handle adolescents when undergoing these developmental task and out of confusion many will be maladjusted both in the school, at home and the environment where they found themselves.

Adjustment in school means the process of adopting to the role of being a student and to various aspects of the school environment. It is the capacity of a person to respond to activities in the school environment such as curriculum and extra-curricular activities. School adjustments in the view of Ladd (2000), refers to the degree to which a child becomes interested, engages comfortably, and achieved successfully in his school environment. Justifying the above assertion, Sarbjit (2013) saw school adjustment as that behaviour that permits an individual to meet effectively the demands of the role of being student in the various aspects and demands of the school environment.

School adjustment is reflected in the degree to which the child develops positive perception of school, feels comfortable in new classroom, and becomes involved in school and school-related activities. This implies that the degree to which the child participates in relationship and experiences that prepare and support him in dealing with the demand of school-related activities is important in determining the extent of adjustment that can be achieved. Peery and Weinstrem (2002) opined that students' adjustment in school occurs primarily in three domains: academic (academic and academic motivation), social (quality of peer and adult relationship) and emotional (externalized and internalized distress). The focus of this study is on social adjustment.

Social adjustment frequently involves coping with new standard and values, in the technical language of psychology, getting along with the members of the society as much as one can. Sax and Gilmartin (2000) defined social adjustment as successfully managing time effectively, developing close friendship with other students, and the frequency the student felt worried about meeting new people, isolated from school life, lonely or home sick. The process of adjustment to school life is a neutral phase in a maturation process of a maladjusted adolescent, and represents the transition from dependence to

interdependence (McBroon, 2007). Attending school provides a great opportunity for self-development, participation in leisure activities and guidance towards occupation after graduation. This process includes several components: making friends, inclusion in school life and social networking. All of these components are very demanding and require investment of time and energy. Zedner, (2004) suggested that social adjustment of students may be as important as academic and emotional factor in predicting persistence.

It is obvious that some adolescents do not benefit maximally from educational process for proper adjustment. References are being made in several quarters to factors such as: environmental circumstances surrounding them (poor family background, peer group influences, poor parental upbringing, and lack of management skills on the part of the teachers. (Lee & Leung, 2004). Exposure to rough activities in social networks, media networks, electronic and printed media such as violent movies, plays, internet, porn pictures among others have also been perceived to have contributed to the issue of maladjustment among the school adolescents in Nigeria, particularly in Ogidi Education Zone of Anambra State (Jeromel, 2013). This has been revealed by several reports from parents, teachers and significant others in the alarming rate of maladjustment. Some of the indicators are behaviours such as: leaving the classroom before the closing time, loitering around the school premises and high ways, restiveness, drug and substance abuse, use of foul languages, truancy, stealing, destruction of school property, among others (Serafica, 2008). These constitute reasons to be worried by parents and school authorities as the above mentioned problems worsen, with an increase rate of maladjustment among students in-school adolescent in the education zone.

Maladjustment is a failure to meet the demands of society, such as coping with problems and social relationship: usually reflected in emotional instability, it is a faulty, or a bad adjustment. A maladjustment person usually is a child who has been raised in a way that does not prepare them well for the demand of life which often leads to problems with behavior in the future. It is the ability to react successfully and satisfactorily to the demands of one's environment and/or the inability to adjust to the demand of interpersonal relationships and stresses of daily living (Jataline, 2010). The main causes of maladjustment include family problems, social problems, economic problems, psychological problems and personal problems.

Adolescents who are victims of social maladjustment develop fear of going to school, physical symptoms of illness, low level of self-esteem, high levels of

depression and diminished ability to learn in school (Juvonem & Wenized, 2002). An in-school adolescent who is unable to adjust satisfactorily to the school environment such that inhabits his ability to perform well in class activities and extra curriculum activities could be said to be maladjusted. A manifestation of social maladjustment problem may include: withdrawal, depression or self-injuries, obsessions, feelings of rejection in school, drug and substance abuse, destructive, uncooperative and violent behaviour (Kagee, 2002). The common characteristics of social maladjusted adolescent are reflected in the aspects of life such as family, school, learning environment and social settings. Such characteristics include inability to adjust to classroom or handle class tasks effectively, inability to adjust to the home environment, and inability to associate with peers in non-threatening manners, among others (Underwood, 2000).

In the family for instance, a social maladjusted adolescent can be rebellious against parents, staying out late or even absconding from home. At school, such a person would be seen violating school rules and regulations, despite counselling: fighting and disrupting classes, openly challenging school authorities, and insulting teachers by mimicking, sighting, sighting calling them names, cajoling teachers, among others. In school setting too, other unacceptable behaviour exhibited by social maladjusted students include poor self-control, temper tantrums, use of foul languages, pilfering or vandalism, and truancy (Newman & Newman, 2001). These inappropriate behaviours are often not acceptable by their colleagues and peers.

From the highlighted characteristics of social maladjusted adolescents, one could ask: what are the factors that cause social maladjustment? Social maladjustment can be caused by a number of interactive factors which originate from unsatisfied psychological needs such as love, status, recognition, sense of achievement, and security (Ophelia, 2004). Buttressing further, Ophelia stated that unsatisfied basic needs drive the adolescent to seek these needs through inappropriate or unjustified means. It is to help such adolescent readjust that they need educational counselling services.

Adjustment problems among adolescents are usually transient in nature and may be improved through education and counselling. The major aim of educating maladjusted adolescents is to help them adjust and integrate into their immediate environment and society (Ophelia, 2004). Effort has been made by Anambra State Government and non-governmental organisations to improve the living standard of adolescents in schools by establishing Guidance and Counselling Department in secondary schools in education sector to offer psychological and

counselling services to such students. Despite these efforts by the government and other non-governmental organisations to help these maladjusted to adjust well, maladjustment persists. Many school counsellors and teachers have tried to minimize the problems of social maladjustment in schools by employing various measures such as rehearsal, modeling, among others. Thus, the maladjusted persons need to be exposed to training or therapy that will equip them with counselling and psychological skills to cope with the challenges and feeling of frustration in life. Cognitive restructuring is a technique used in mental health treatment for people that frequently experience intrusive thoughts; such thoughts that often impair functioning and interpersonal relationship. In general, these thoughts can range anywhere from moderately irrational or unreasonable/incomplete all the way to psychotic or magical thinking. Cognitive restructuring means any rehabilitation process that redirects the thinking of an offender into more socially acceptable directions and that is generally acceptable by rehabilitation professionals. Female adolescents have mostly been reported to suffer more hardship and vulnerability such that expose them to more serious distress leading to higher feeling of incompetence and inadequacy in performance.

According to Okeke (2002) cognitive restructuring is a counselling techniques used to assist an individual to reduce negative emotional reactions. The emphasis during therapy is to help a client modify his distort perception of the world caused by negative mind set. Cognitive restructuring techniques aim at modifying distorted thinking patterns and negative self-talks that arise from internalized wrong belief.

Anigbogu (2008) stated that cognitive restructuring uses the skill of suggestions, persuasion, confrontation, philosophical discussion, homework and assignments, supportive techniques and didactic teaching to change the behaviours of the client. Cognitive restructuring is a useful tool for understanding and turning around negative thinking. It helps to put unhappy, negative thoughts “under the microscope”, challenging them and in many cases, rescripting the negative thinking that lies behind them. The feelings of guilt, hopelessness and seeing oneself as the worst on earth could be changed using cognitive restructuring. The technique focuses on interaction of thoughts, feelings and thoughts. The present researcher who has witnessed the irrational thinking pattern and illogical expression of some students that made them to be maladjusted is moved to engage in this study to ascertain whether cognitive restructuring will be effective in solving the social maladjustment problems in Ogidi Education Zone of Anambra State.

Research Question

One research question guided the study:

1. What are the mean social adjustment scores of maladjusted adolescent students exposed to cognitive restructuring as compared to conventional counselling?

Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean social adjustment scores of maladjusted adolescent students exposed to cognitive restructuring compared to conventional counselling.

Significance of the Study

This study will benefit students, teachers and counsellors. The findings of the study will help the students to adjust socially. This will help to improve their performance in school. From the findings of this study the teachers will understand better way they can handle students with social adjustment problems in schools. In the same manner, counsellors whose duty is to treat students with adjustment problems will start applying the cognitive restructuring in the treatment of socially maladjusted adolescent students in their schools.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ogidi Education Zone in Anambra State. The zone shares boundaries with Awka to the west, Nnewi to the east, Otuocha to the south, and Onitsha zone to the north. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design. According to Nworgu (2006) quasi-experimental research design is a type of design where two groups of class, such as experimental and control groups are used respectively in a study. The population of the study comprised 211 maladjusted senior secondary two (SSII) students of the 2016/2017 in the 40 public secondary schools in Ogidi Education Zone. (Source: Counsellors' log books in all 40 public secondary schools in Ogidi Education Zone). The sample size of this study consisted of 52 maladjusted SSII students sampled from the population of the study. The selected maladjusted students were those names that appeared more than twice in the counsellor's log book. Through purposive sampling technique, two schools out of 40 with highest population of maladjusted students were selected for both experimental and control groups. The two schools were used due to the experimental nature of the study. One of the selected secondary schools with a population of 26 maladjusted students was used as an experimental group while the other secondary school with a population of 26 maladjusted students was used as a control group. One of the selected secondary schools with a population of 26 maladjusted students was used with the students constituting the experimental

group of cognitive restructuring while another secondary school with a population of 26 maladjusted students was used as control group.

The instrument for data collection was School Adjustment Rating Scale (SARS). SARS consisted of two sections A and B. Section A sought information on the personal data of the respondents, whereas Section B which is on social adjustment contained 17 items that sought information on how students relate to their school administration, teachers, students and the community at large. The items used a structured four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The range scores were weighted as 4, 3, 2, and 1 for SA – SD respectively.

The validity of the instrument was determined using two experts in Guidance and Counselling and one expert in measurement and Evaluation, all in the Department of Educational Foundations, Chukwumeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University.

The reliability of the instrument (SARS) was determined by trial-testing of the instrument on a representative sample of 10 SSII maladjusted students randomly selected in two public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone which is outside the area of the study. The researchers went to the schools on the third week of second term. On arrival, the researchers met the principals who called on the school counsellors on the purpose of the study. The researcher gave out the instrument of maladjusted students' activity to the counsellors who conducted the trial testing on maladjusted SSII students. The internal consistency of SARS was subjected to Cronbach Alpha statistical analysis, which yielded coefficient value of 0.79.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

The conduct of the study took place during the normal school lesson period. The normal time table of the schools was followed. Counsellors in each of the two schools assisted in teaching the topics selected for the study. The study lasted for six weeks. On the first day, before the experiment commenced, subjects in both treatments and control groups were given the questionnaire on School Adjustment Rating Scale as pre-test. Therefore, the proper teaching on cognitive restructuring prepared teaching package commenced. The experimental group was taught with cognitive restructuring package while the control group was taught with the conventional method. At the end of the treatment, the researcher re-administered the School Adjustment Rating Scale as a post-test to the subjects in the two groups. (The items on the instrument were reshuffled, that is changing the positions of items. Each statement was the same as it was before using them as post-test before the actual instrument)

CONTROL OF EXTRANEIOUS VARIABLES

The following measures were adopted to control extraneous variables:

Hawthorne Effect: To minimize this, each of the trained research assistants posed as a new guidance counselor posted to the school to assist them with their educational, social and personal problems. This was meant to enable the students open up to the research assistants and relate well with them as school counsellors.

Non-equivalence of groups: Since intact classes were used in order to minimize the effect of non-randomization of the subject, the use of ANCOVA helped to remove or drastically reduce the effects of intervening variables. It also helped to remove the differences in the initial status of the experimental and the control groups.

Pre-test Sensitization: The use of the same items for both the pre-test could result to students performing better in the post-test as a result of pre-test sensitization. To control this, the researchers reshuffled the items for the post-tests to make these look different from the ones used for pre-test; withdrew all the items of instrument from the students and counsellors after the pre-testing, and ensured that the time between the pre-testing and post-testing was not less than 6 weeks.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The results are presented according to the research question and null hypothesis.

Table 2: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects in Control and Experimental Groups

Source	Type III sum of square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	.419	2	.210	2.094	.134
Intercept	7.064	1	7.064	70.556	.000
SA pre	.035	1	.035.350	.557	
Group	.3901	1.390	4.891	.045	
Error	4.906	49	.100		
Total	312.34652				
Corrected Total	5.326	51			

a. R Square = .179 (Adjusted R Squared = .141)

Source: SPSS Ver. 23

A one-way between groups analysis of covariant was conducted to compare the difference the mean social adjustment scores of maladjusted adolescent students exposed to cognitive restructuring compared to conventional counselling. The independent variable was the type of intervention (conventional, cognitive restructuring), and the dependent variable consisted of scores of the test administered after the intervention was completed. The pre-test scores were used as covariates in this analysis. The results shoes a significant difference between the mean social adjustment scores of maladjusted adolescent students

Analysis of Research Question

What are the mean social adjustment scores of maladjusted adolescent students exposed to cognitive restructuring as compared to conventional counselling?

Table1: Social Adjustment Scores of Students in Control and Experimental Groups

	Contr/Exper	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Social Adjustment {pre-test}	Control Group	2 6	2.355 2	.45397	.0890 3
	Experimental Group	2 6	2.337 1	.32157	.0630 6
Social Adjustment {pre-test}	Control Group	2 6	2.343 9	.26915	.0527 8
	Experimental Group	2 6	2.515 8	.35384	.0693 9

Source: SPSS Ver. 23

The table shows that before the intervention, the control group ranked slightly higher than the experimental group on the social adjustment scale. However, after the treatment, the experimental group ranked higher than the control group (mean -.17195), showing that the mean social adjustment scores of maladjusted adolescent students exposed to cognitive restructuring outperformed that of those exposed to conventional counselling. The statistic value is -1.972, df 50, and Sig. value $\leq .05$.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Analysis of Covariance was employed as the method of testing the hypothesis.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the mean social adjustment scores of maladjusted adolescent students exposed to cognitive restructuring compared to conventional counselling.

exposed to cognitive restructuring compared to conventional counselling (F(1, 49) = 4.891, P = .045).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study found that there is a significant difference in the mean social adjustment scores of maladjusted adolescent students exposed to cognitive restructuring compared to conventional counselling. After the treatment, the mean of the experimental group ranked higher than that of the control group showing improvement after the intervention.

The finding of this study is quite instructive. First, it shows that maladjustment occurs as a result of the

inability to cope with any task-related area, this phenomenon accounts for one prime cause of academic, social and emotional disorders witnessed in adolescents in secondary schools. The root cause of its dominance seems to be rooted in the psychological composition within the individual. Second, it shows that such techniques like role model rehearsal, bibliography, among others may not be as effective in handling/dealing of this problem. More recent techniques suggested the use of cognitive restructuring, a psychotherapeutic process of learning, which focus on interaction between thoughts, emotions and environment, seek to modify the individual's thought pattern of belief system on a subject matter. The technique has demonstrated considerable success in psychiatric problems, and related challenges.

Ikwunemelu (2016) showed evidence that maladjusted adolescent students exposed to cognitive restructuring and assertive training group had significant better social adjustments than those in the conventional group. Also, Omeje, Anyanwu, and Oyibo (2016) whom studied the effect of cognitive restructuring on school adjustment of maladjusted in-school adolescents, show a significant difference in the mean academic adjustment of maladjusted adolescent students exposed to cognitive restructuring and those of conventional counselling.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the effects of cognitive restructuring on social adjustment of maladjusted in-school adolescents in Ogidi Education Zone of Anambra State. The conclusion is that cognitive restructuring has significant effect on the social adjustment of socially maladjusted students.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study examined only the effects of cognitive restructuring on social adjustment of maladjusted in-school adolescents. The findings cannot be applied to students with other forms of maladjusted like academic maladjustment or emotional maladjustment. The limitations however did not invalidate the findings of the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. In secondary schools, cognitive restructuring packages should be used to tackle maladjustment and deviant behaviours.
2. The use of academic based cognitive restructuring packages addressed to social challenges of the individual should be put in place to tackle the problem of academic maladjustment in adolescents.
3. Also experts should evaluate whether students need to be changed from the

particular secondary school, more especially where environmental or particular personalities are associated to the cause of maladjustment.

REFERENCES

- Anagbogu, M.A. (2008). *Foundation of Guidance and Counselling for Colleges and Universities*. Enugu Academic Publishing Company
- Ikwunemelu, Z.O (2016). *Effect of cognitive restructuring and assertive training on school adjustment*. An unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Jatelin, S.H. (2010). *The case of Teaching Maladjusted Students in the Classroom*. *Review on Educational Research*, 1:132-146.
- Jeromel. C.R. (2013). *Cognitive Behaviour Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder*. Nueva York: Guilford Press.
- Juvonem, J. & Wentzel, S. (2002). *Peer harassment. Psychology adjustment and school functioning in early adolescent*. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92 (2): 349-359.
- Kagee, S.A. (2002). *Internal displacement: psychology effect*. Retrieved from <http://www.sinac.za/psychologyskagee@sun.ac.za>
- Ladd, L.N. (2000). *Classroom peer acceptance, friendship and victimization: Distinct rational system that contribute uniquely to children school adjustment*. *Child Development*. 68 (6): 1181-1197.
- Lee, S., Leung, R., Tabora, S., &Flaskerud, M.S. (2006). *Effective of assertive training on levels of stress and assertiveness experienced by adolescents in Taiwan*. Books Cole.
- Mc Broon, P.C. (2007). *Academic and social adjustment of first-generation University students*. *Virginia Journal of Social Policy*, 6:612-651.
- Newman, B.M. & Newman, P.P. (2001). *Adolescence development*. Merill: Publish Company.
- Okeke B.A. (2002). *Techniques and Practicum in guidance and Counselling*, Enugu. Snapp Press.
- Omeje, J.C., ANYANWU, J.I. &Oyibo, .Z.I. (2016). *The effect of cognitive restructuring on school adjustment of maladjusted in-school adolescents in Onitsha Urban Education Zone of Nigeria*. *The Social Sciences*, 11, (6), 979-984.

- Ophelia, C. (2004). Special needs of maladjusted. (Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services) Social welfare Development of HKSAR of Government Children. Retrieved from: <https://cd.edh/la-guides/Maladjusted/%3Dema-2.htm>.
- Peery, C & Weinstrem, E. (2002). Socioeconomic inequalities in adolescent health: A time-series analysis of 34 countries participating in the Health Behaviour in School-aged. Retrieved from: <http://www.researchgate.net/profile/FrankJSlgar/publications>.
- Sarbjit, K.A. (2003). Adjustment and reconciliation of personal and environmental demands. Retrieved from: <http://www.britanica.com/EBchecked/topic/6023/adjustment>.
- Sax, L.J., Keup, S.K., & Bryant, A.N. (2000). Designing an assessment for first year college year: Results from the 1999-2000 YFCY pilot study report for the policy center for the first year college. Brevard College Higher Education Research Institution Graduate School of Education and Information. Studies University of California, Los Angeles.
- Serafica, L.A. (2008). Historical perspective. In Handbook of Adolescent Psychology. Oxford: Pergamum Press.
- Underworld, R. (2000). Report of the committee on Maladjustment children. Retrieved from: <http://www.mmiweb.org.uk/hull/site/pt/downloads/incusion.pdf>.
- Zedner, K.R. (2004). Does being good make the grade? Social behaviour and academic competence in middle school. Journal of Educational Psychology, 85(2):357-364.