Effect of Assertive Training on Social Anxiety Among Senior Secondary School of Giwa Educational Zona Kaduna State.

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of assertive training on social anxiety among senior Secondary school students in Giwa Educational Zone Kaduna state, Nigeria Pre-test post-test quasi experimental-treatment design was used. A sample of forty students was selected purposefully from three co-educational secondary schools out of a population of one hundred and forty-five (145) students with social anxiety disorder in five (5) secondary schools. The treatment group was exposed to assertive training for six weeks. The instruments used (severity measure for social disorder (social phobia) - child age 11-17 years) and (adult), were validated by experts for data collection. Two objective were formulated to guide the study and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance using t-test. The findings revealed that there was significant effect of assertive training on anxiety among secondary school students. and that there was no significant differential effect of assertive training on account of the students' gender. It was recommended that assertive training should be adopted by school counsellors and psychologists to reduce the level of social anxiety disorder among secondary school students irrespective of their gender. Assertive training technique should be used for the treatment of both male and female students with social anxiety disorder.

Key Words: Assertive Training, Social Anxiety among Senior Secondary School Students

Introduction

Social anxiety is characterized by a significant amount of fear in one or more social situations causing considerable distress and impaired ability to function in at least some parts of daily life (Acarturk, De-Graaf, Van, Have & Cuijpers, 2008). It could be refers to clear and consistent fear of social or

performance situations and this is due to the belief that the person in this positions will look embarrassing or contemptuous (Daryoush, Masume, Mohammad, Mohsen & Zahra, 2014). According to Hofmann, Litz, and Weathers,(2003) Social anxiety is a mental disorder which interferes with educational and vocational performance as well as daily life and is common amongst secondary school students.

Dombeck, (2006) believes that there are essentially three different ways that people can relate to one another. They can be: aggressive, passive or assertive. Most people come to assertiveness training already understanding what aggression and passivity mean, but they do not understand assertiveness at all, at first. Aggression is about dominance. A person is aggressive when they impose their will onto another person and force them to submit, in effect invading that person's personal space and boundary. Violence may be used in this effort, but it is not a necessary component of aggression. Passivity, on the other hand is about submission. Passivity occurs when a person submits to another person's dominance play, putting their own wishes and desires aside so as to pay attention to fulfilling the wishes and desires of their dominant partner. may not like being dominated (most people don't), but it seems like the smart thing to do at the time (perhaps to avoid the threat of violence or other coercion). Aggression is about domination and invasion; it is fundamentally disrespectful of relationship partner's personal boundaries. Passivity is about submission and being invaded; it is fundamentally disrespectful of one's own personal boundaries. In contrast to these two fundamentally disrespectful positions, assertiveness is about finding a middle way between aggression and passivity that best respects the personal boundaries of all relationship partners. Assertive people defend themselves when someone else attempts to dominate them, using any necessary method (including force) to repel the invasion attempt. According to Mountain State Centers for Independent Living Skills Development Class: (Source)Personal Development Document, Many people are concerned that if they assert themselves others will think of their behaviour as aggressive. But there is a difference between being assertive and aggressive. Assertive people state their opinions, while still being respectful of others. Aggressive people attack or ignore others' opinions in favour of their own. Passive people do not state their opinions at all.

According to Williams (2000) all people have basic human rights that give us dignity as individuals. By not allowing your rights to be violated you are not being selfish but are maintaining your self-respect. As well as being aware of your own rights, if you respect other people's rights you have the foundation for assertive communication.

Williams (2000) believes that Assertiveness is an attitude towards yourself and others that is helpful and honest. In assertiveness you ask for what you want directly and openly. Appropriately, respecting your own opinions and rights and expecting others to do the same confidently without undue anxiety. You do not violate people's rights or expect other people to magically know what you want. You do not freeze with anxiety and avoid difficult issues. The result is improved self-confidence in you and mutual respect from others.

In a study conducted by Manesh, Fallahzadeh, Panah, Koochehbiuki, Arabi, & Sahami, (2015) to determine the effectiveness of assertiveness training on decreasing social anxiety of health volunteers in Yazd Health Center,90 subjects were selected by simple random sampling, and then randomly assigned to three groups (experimental, control and placebo) and pre-test was conducted on them.

Results indicated that social anxiety scores in the intervention and control groups decreased more than in the placebo group. Result of present study indicates the importance of assertiveness skill training on the social anxiety.

Hackmann, Surawy and Clark (1998) used a semi-structured interview to explore the frequency and content of spontaneously occurring images during episodes of social anxiety. They compared 30 individuals with social phobia with 24 non-clinical controls who were matched for age, sex and educational level. The participants with social phobia gave significantly higher frequency ratings than controls for spontaneously occurring images (77% compared with 47%; 2=5.7, p<.01). Significantly more individuals with social phobia than controls were judged to have a clear image (66.6% for the social phobia group, 29.2% for the non-clinical group; 2=4.1, p<.05), the socially phobic participants were more likely to see in an observer perspective (t=4.9, p<.001) and their images were more likely to be perceived as negative compared with the control group (t=4.0, p<.001). Most of the participants acknowledged that, with hind sight, the image/ impression they had when socially anxious was at least somewhat distorted from reality. Hackmann, Surawy and Clark (1998) conclude that negative self-images contribute to the maintenance of social phobia, so treatment should focus on decreasing the frequency and negative content of such images.

Kirst (2011) described assertiveness as a learned fundamental interpersonal communication skill that helps individuals to meet the social demands of society. Based on this, he carried out a study to explore the relationship between assertiveness and the five factors of personality (extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness), self-esteem, social anxiety, and shyness to update past research findings. He found out that there is direct relationships between assertiveness and self-esteem, extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness as well as inverse relationships to neuroticism, shyness, and fear of disapproval. No significant relationship was found between assertiveness and agreeableness.

Objective of the study:

i.   To determine the effect of assertive training on social anxiety among secondary school
 students.

ii. To determine the differential effect of assertive training on social anxiety between male and
     female secondary school students.

Hypothesis

i.   There is no significant effect of the assertive training on social anxiety among secondary school
     students.
ii. There is no significant differential effect of assertive training on social anxiety between male and
     female secondary school students.

Methodology

The design adopted for this study is Quasi-Experimental design involving pre-test post-test on treatment group. The pre-test and post-test were administered to the treatment group in order to test the

effect of assertive training on social anxiety disorder. The population of this study is made up of 145 secondary school students diagnosed with social anxiety from five secondary schools in Giwa Educational Zone. The sample of this study is made up of forty (40) secondary school students in SS 2 identified with social anxiety. The sample was chosen through purposive sampling from three out of the five schools used as population. Forty (40) students were chosen for the purpose of the study.

The schools used for the research are co-educational schools. This is for the purpose of giving equal opportunity for both girls and boys to participate in the assertive training exercise. A sample of eight (8) students with social anxiety disorder has been selected from the first school, twelve (12) students from the second school and twenty (20) students from the third making a total of forty (40) students with social anxiety disorder. Twenty (20) were used for the treatment group and twenty (20) for the control group. The twenty (20) students used for the treatment groups were selected from Yusuf Aboki Secondary School (Y.A.S.S Government Secondary School (GSS) Kwangila and from) Shika. Eight students from Yusuf Aboki Secondary School (Y.A.S.S) Shika and twelve students from (GSS) Kwangila. The twenty (20) students selected from Aboki Secondary School (Y.A.S.S were used as the control group. This is in order to give opportunity for two schools to participate in the assertive training exercise. It was recommended that the curriculum of assertiveness training should be conducted in a small group (3-10 participants), in a series of 6 to 12 sessions, at the rate of 2 or 3 sessions per week for 45 to 90 minutes each (Cecen-Erogul & Zengel, 2009;) as cited in (Mousa, Imam & Sharaf, 2011).

The instrument used for this study is Severity Measure for Social Anxiety Disorder (Social Phobia-Child Age 11-17). This instrument is made up of ten objective questions. Based on the instrument filled by the students, those with high scores were selected for treatment since high scores indicated the presence of social anxiety disorder. The treatment was administered separately for the two schools. The entire treatment sessions lasted for six weeks for the two schools. The gender status of the students as presented in the table above showed that while twenty-two (22) subjects representing 55% are males, and eighteen (18) subjects representing 45% are female student.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant effect of the assertive training on social anxiety among male secondary school students.

Table 1: t test statistics on the effect of assertive training on social anxiety among secondary school students

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-calculated	P
pre-test	40	17.7000	4.97326			
				18	1.332	0.001
Post-test	40	15.3500	2.52817			

Calculated p> 0.05, calculated t< 1.96 at df 18

Table 2. above indicated that pre-test have mean score of 17.7000 and SD of 4.97326 respectively, while the post-test have mean score of 15.3500 and SD of 2.52817 respectively. The calculated p value of 0.001 was found to be less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance just as the calculated t value of 1.332 was found to be lower than the t-critical value of 1.96 at df 18. Results of the Independent t test statistics revealed that there is significant effect of assertive training on social anxiety disorder. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of the assertive training on social anxiety among secondary school students is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant effect of the assertive training on social anxiety among female secondary school students.

Table 2: Independent t test statistics on the differential effect of assertive training on social anxiety among male and female secondary school students

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-calculated	P
Male	10	17.7000	4.97326			
				18	1.332	0.199
Female	10	15.3500	2.52817			

Calculated p> 0.05, calculated t< 1.96 at df 18

Table 2. above indicated that male respondents have mean score of 17.7000 and SD of 4.97326 respectively, while the female have mean score of 15.3500 and SD of 2.52817 respectively. The calculated p value of 0.199 was found to be higher than the 0.05 alpha level of significance just as the calculated t value of 1.332 was found to be lower than the t-critical value of 1.96 at df 18. Results of the Independent t test statistics above revealed that There is no significant differential effect of assertive training on anxiety among female secondary school student exposed to assertive training. This shows that the assertive training is effective for both male and female students. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of the assertive training on social anxiety among male secondary school students is hereby retained.

Discussion of Results

The purpose of this research is to investigate the differential effect of assertive training on social anxiety disorder between the male and female senior secondary school students in Giwa, Educational zone, Kaduna state, Nigeria. The result of the pre-test and post-test were used to compare the improvement of the subjects' social anxiety level. These were analysed according to the hypothesis developed for the study.

The result of the study revealed no significant differential effect of assertive training between the male and female students, meaning that there is no significant differential effect of assertive

training on both gender. This is an indication that Assertive training is not gender biased. This finding is in line with the study of Deb, Strodl, and Sun (2015) which reveals that Nearly two-thirds (63.5%) of the students reported stress due to academic pressure-with no significant differences across gender, age, grade, and several other personal factors.

This finding disagrees with the earlier findings by Deb, Chatterjee, and Walsh, (2010) which showed that anxiety was prevalent in the sample with 20.1% of boys and 17.9% of girls found to be suffering from high anxiety. More boys were anxious than girls. This also disagrees with the earlier finding of *Xu, Schneier, Heimberg, Princisvalle, Liebowitz, Wang, and Blanco*, (2012) which states that Social anxiety disorder occurs more often in females than males.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that assertive training has effect on anxiety among secondary students and that there is no significant difference in the effect of assertive training on anxiety among the students in relation to gender.

Recommendations

1.   Counsellors/Psychologist's should be encouraged to use Assertive training in handling Anxiety among   Secondary School Students.

2.   Seminars, Workshops and Conference should be organised on the new techniques in addressing   Social Anxiety irrespectively of gender, they should be given equal opportunity to explore in the use of new counselling techniques.

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