The use of Social Skill Training in Fostering Pro-Social Behavior of Secondary School Adolescents in Gombe State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Pro-social behavior consists of actions which benefit other people or society as a whole, such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating, and volunteering. The purpose of this study was to examine the use of social skill training in fostering pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Pretest-posttest, control group quasi-experimental design with a 2x2 factorial matrix was used in the study. The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting participants from secondary schools in Gombe State. The respondents were measured with relevant adopted standardized scales (instruments) and the data obtained was analyzed using t-test statistical analysis. Two (2) research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

The results showed that there was significant difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents exposed to social skill training and those in the control group ($t= 65.81$; $p<0.05$) and that there was significant difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents with high self-esteem and those with low self-esteem ($t= 43.81$; $p<0.05$).

In view of these findings, the study stressed that counseling/educational psychologists should intensify their efforts to organize seminars/conferences on the implications of social skill training as effective interventions towards enhancing pro-social behavior and that researchers and stakeholders in education should not only focus on the students' achievement alone but also their pro-social behavior. This is because the improved self-esteem of the students has a lot of influence on pro-social behavior of secondary school students.

(Keywords: social skill training, pro-social behavior, self-esteem, secondary school adolescents)

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the transitional stage of development between childhood and full adulthood, representing the period of time during which a person is biologically adult but emotionally not at full maturity. The age range of adolescence varies by culture. In the United States, it is generally considered to begin around age 13, and ends around 24. By contrast, the World Health Organization (WHO) (2005) defines adolescence as the period of life between 10 and 20 years of age. In the African (and Nigerian) context it is relatively between 11 and 21 years.

The transition to adolescence is characterized as a time of dramatic change for youth. Adolescence is clearly a sensitive period for the onset of pro-social behavior. More than one-third of secondary school students involve in pro-social activities at least once a month and 17% involves in pro-social behavior almost every day.

Pro-social behavior consists of actions which benefit other people or society as a whole, such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating, and volunteering. It can also be referred to as a broad category of behaviors that includes any action that provides benefit to others like following rules in a game, being honest and cooperating with others in social situations (Muraina and Eduviere, 2015). These actions may be motivated by

empathy and by concern about the welfare and rights of others, as well as for egoistic or practical concerns. Pro-social behavior is a conducted or planned action to help other people, disregarding the helper's motives. It involves sincere assistance (altruism) which is entirely motivated by self-interest. Pro-social activities involve attention and assistance towards other people, or devotion (love, loyalty, service) which are given to other people without any expectation to get something in return (Afolabi, 2013; Myers, 1996).

Social skill training developed by Gresham (1998) is a training given to adolescents for them to be socially accepted and learn behavior to interact effectively with others and avoid or escape socially unacceptable behavior exhibited by others. The primary goal of social skill training is to teach students the requisite skills to enhance their educational experience and increase the likelihood of establishing satisfying relationships with peers, and subsequently improving pro-social behavior (McGinnis, 2012). There are several well-established social skill training curricula for various age groups and pro-social behavior. Social skill training is found to be learned social acceptable behavior that facilitate pro-social behavior and allow an individual to escape or avoid negative interactions (Gresham and Elliott, 2010).

Social skill training have strong ties to classroom learning; so much so that they have been conceptualized as academic enablers, or attitudes or behaviors that allow a student to participate in and benefit from academic instruction (Diperna and Elliott, 2012). In contrast, problem behaviors, especially externalizing problem behaviors such as bullying and aggression, have been conceptualized as academic disablers in that they are often related to lower levels of pro-social behavior and various academic deficits (Afolabi, 2013; Gresham, 2010). Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, and Zimbardo (2000) found further evidence for the link between social skill training and pro-social behavior.

Social skill training is goal-oriented behavior that is consistent with situational demands. Examples include listening, following directions, and paying attention to a task. Social skill training is the behavior that facilitates and maintains pro-social behavior (Hojnoski and Missall, 2010). Within pro-social behavior, a concentrated research focus has been dedicated to the effects of social skill training in young children. Social skills training include taking turns and engaging in cooperative play. Studies have found that social skill training

help to promote pro-social behavior in children (Afolabi, 2013; Muraina and Eduviere, 2015). A study found that social skill training predicted growth in pro-social behavior (McClelland, Acock, and Morrison, 2006).

In addition, findings from Agostin and Bain's (2007) study indicated that social skill training such as cooperation and self-control were predictive of pro-social behavior. Ladd and Price (2007) found that pro-social behaviors with peers during preschool tend to be stable behaviors that maintain over time with social skill training, while a longitudinal study by Kamps, Tankersley, and Ellis (2000) found that workers who received social skill intervention exhibited more pro-social behaviors and less inappropriate behavior than controls, even after two years. Given this evidence, interventions that target social skills training in young children seem to be a worthy investment for both research and practice.

Self-esteem as the moderating variable used in this study is the how the students think about themselves and satisfied with their ideal self and actual self. Most authorities believe that self-esteem is a central factor and a base to people social and emotional compatibility. Correlational studies have found that adolescents who have low self-esteem demonstrate low pro-social behavior (Gest, Graham-Bermann, and Hartup, 2001; Wentzel and McNamara, 1999). The study revealed self-esteem was a significant predictor of youth pro-social behavior (Afolabi, 2013). High self-esteem workers were related to more frequent volunteer work, and spent more time on extracurricular activities, as well as less likely to engage in risky behavior (Egbochuku, 2007).

Previous studies of adolescences have found self-esteem correspond to different levels of youths' happiness and pro-social behavior (Mahaarcha, 2010). Previous study by Gest, Graham-Bermann and Hartup (2001) found that pro-social behavior both self-reported volunteering and actual volunteering show that intrinsic self-esteem may better predict helping behavior than extrinsic self-esteem.

Little researches so far has specifically focused on experimental investigation of pro-social behavior using psychological interventions in Nigeria and the studies on the descriptive survey examined view variables such as emotional intelligence, gender, and religiosity (Afolabi, 2013; Muraina and Eduviere, 2015). In view of this, the present study concentrates on the use of social skill training in fostering pro-social behavior of

secondary school adolescents in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

To fully appreciate the need to research into secondary school adolescents' pro-social behavior, it is crucial to understand the prevalence and costs of such behavior. Adolescence has been found to be a developmental stage during which youth are most responsive to reward. This increased reward response can lead individuals to engage in increasing amounts of pro-social behavior during adolescence.

Without doubt, the problem of poor pro-social behavior in Nigeria is a grave one. Going by statistical data available on the frequency, intensity and diversity of aggressive behavior contrary to pro-social ones, it appears that some factors influence the pro-social behavior among adolescents. However, there are little researches on the experimental investigations of psychological interventions and self-esteem on pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents. Currently, there are minimal amounts of research about how the school psychologist can improve pro-social behavior in Nigeria. As such, the researchers intend to examine the use of social skill training in fostering pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the use of social skill training in fostering pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents in Gombe State, Nigeria. Specifically other purposes include to:

1. Find out the difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents exposed to social skill training and those in the control group.

2. Investigate the difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents with high self-esteem and those with low self-esteem.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents exposed to social skill training and those in the control group.

2. There is no difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents with high self-esteem and those with low self-esteem.

Scope of the Study

This study was carried out among secondary school adolescents in Gombe state, Nigeria. The study aimed at examining the use of social skill training on pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents in Gombe State, Nigeria. Also, the study examined the difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents exposed to social skill training and those in the control group and also based on the level of self-esteem.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted the pretest-posttest, control group quasi-experimental design with a 2X2 factorial matrix. In essence, the row consists of social skill training and the control. The row was crossed with self-esteem varied at two levels (High and Low).

Population

The population for the study comprised all students among secondary school adolescents in Gombe state, Nigeria. The population covered all secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Simple random sampling technique was used to select the participants for the study. The participants were selected from secondary schools in Gombe State, Nigeria. Two (2) Local Government Areas were selected in Gombe State, Nigeria.

In each randomly selected Local Government Areas, one (1) secondary school was selected randomly and thirty (30) secondary school students were selected in each secondary school through balloting. On the whole, sixty (60) students were drawn the schools in Gombe State. However, in the two selected schools, one school formed social skill training class and the remaining one served as control group.

Research Instruments

Self-Esteem Scale (SES): The self-esteem scale (SES) developed by Rosenberg (2003) was used as a measure of self-esteem among distance learning students. It consists of 10 items with a 4-point scores in which respondents rate their esteem from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Examples of the items in the scale include: *At times I think I am not good at all; I take a positive view of myself; I take a positive view of myself and I wish I could have more respect for myself.*

The internal consistency reliability coefficient of the instrument according to Rosenberg was .91. Participants respond to items by indicating their choice of responses. However, the adapted version of the instrument was re-validated by the researcher and Cronbach alpha of .84 was obtained in a pilot study which involved an administration of the instrument to a selected sample of thirty (30) secondary school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Pro-social Behavior Scale: Pro-social behavior scale constructed by Afolabi (2013) was adopted to measure pro-social behavior of respondents. The scale has Fifteen (15) items. Sample items include: *I enjoy helping others, I feel fulfilled whenever I have helped somebody in need of assistance, etc.* The scale has coefficient alpha of 0.81, test re-test reliability of 0.77 and a split half reliability of 0.72 among secondary school students. However, the adapted version of the instrument was re-validated by the researcher and Cronbach alpha of .78 was obtained in a pilot study which involved an administration of the instrument to a selected sample of thirty (30) secondary school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Inclusion Criteria: The following criteria were used in selecting the participants for the study:

i. Participants should be bonafide students of the schools selected in Gombe State.

ii. Participants with consent form from the principals of selected school

iii. Participants willing to participate in the treatment programme

iv. Participants within the age range of 10-20 years

Exclusion Criteria: Participants' non readiness to sign consent form.

Procedure for Data Collection: The study was carried out in four phases: pre-sessional activities, pre-test, treatment and post-test. At the pre-session, activities include the screening, recruitment and assignment of participants to the experimental and control group. Advertisement was made to request for participants in selected secondary schools. A preliminary meeting was organized to familiarize with the interested participants and to solicit their willingness to participate in the study. At the pre-test stage pro-social behavior scale were administered to the participants. Participants in the experimental group only were exposed to five (5) sessions of treatment. Each session spanned for an average of 60 minutes (an Hour). Though the control group was not treated, they were exposed to a lecture titled *"Education for All".* The post-test was administered following the conclusion of the program.

The synopsis of treatment packages are given below:

Experimental Group 1 (Social Skill Training)

1st Week: General orientation and administration of the instrument to obtain pre-test scores.

2nd Week: discussion of social skill as the key skill that develops students' ability to relate with others and ready to help other people in solving their personal issues and problems.

3rd Week: Helping as the key skills to interaction. Students will be able to support others students in the school.

4th Week: Training in the need to develop positive thinking about other people rather treating everybody as enemy.

5th Week: Summary, rehearsal and role play of previous sessions and administration of post-test measures.

Control Group

Session 1: Introduction and pre-treatment
Session 2: Education for all
Session 3: Posttest and conclusion

Control of Extraneous Variables

Extraneous variables are those factors or attributes that may affect the outcome of the experimental study aside from the social skill training to be employed. The study guided against effects of such variables through the following; appropriate randomization of participants into the two intervention groups and the control group; adherence to inclusion criteria; effective use of the 2x2 factorial matrix design and the t-test statistical tool that was used equally takes care of likely extraneous variables.

DATA ANALYSIS

T-test statistical analysis was employed to analyze the data in this study. T-test was used so as to establish the difference in the pro-social behavior of participant in treatment group and control as well as self-esteem level.

Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents the results and discussion of findings. The study examined the use of social skill training in fostering pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents in Gombe State, Nigeria. Two (2) null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented below:

Hypothesis One: There is no difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents exposed to social skill training and those in the control group.

Table 1 above showed that there was significant difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents exposed to social skill training and those in the control group (t= 65.81; p<0.05). The mean value of the table further revealed that the students in social skill training group had higher pro-social behavior than their counterpart in the control group. This further means that the treatment has significant influence on pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents.

Hypothesis Two: There is no difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents with high self-esteem and those with low self-esteem.

Table 2 above showed that there was significant difference in the pro-social behaviour of secondary school adolescents with high self-esteem and those with low self-esteem (t= 43.81; p<0.05). The mean value of the table further revealed that the students with high self-esteem had higher pro-social behavior than their counterpart with low self-esteem. This further means that self-esteem has significant influence on pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents.

Table 1: Pro-social Behavior of Students Exposed to Social Skill Training and those in the Control Group.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	DF	T	p	Remark
Social Skill	29	21.75	6.11	1.64	58	65.81	.001	S
Control Group	30	9.72	2.10	.71				

Table 2: Difference in the Pro-social Behavior of Secondary School Adolescents with High and Low Self-Esteem.

Self-Esteem	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	DF	T	p	Remark
High Esteem	27	10.67	4.58	1.85	58	43.81	.002	S
Low Esteem	32	7.98	3.41	1.07				

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the first research hypothesis showed that there was significant difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents exposed to social skill training and those in the control group. The mean value of the table further revealed that the students in social skill training had higher pro-social behavior than their counterpart in the control group. This further means that the treatment has significant influence on pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents. This is in line with the study of McClelland, Acock and Morrison (2006) who found that social skill training predicted growth in pro-social behavior.

There are several well-established social skill training curricula for various age groups and pro-social behavior. Social skill training is found to be learned social acceptable behavior that facilitate pro-social behavior and allow an individual to escape or avoid negative interactions (Gresham and Elliott, 2010). Social skill training have strong ties to classroom learning; so much so that they have been conceptualized as academic enablers, or attitudes or behaviors that allow a student to participate in and benefit from academic instruction (Diperna and Elliott, 2012). In contrast, problem behaviors, especially externalizing problem behaviors such as bullying and aggression, have been conceptualized as academic disablers in that they are often related to lower levels of pro-social behavior and various academic deficits (Afolabi, 2013; Gresham, 2010).

The result of the second research hypothesis revealed that there was significant difference in the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents with high self-esteem and those with low self-esteem. The mean value of the table further revealed that the students with high self-esteem had higher pro-social behavior than their counterpart with low self-esteem. This further means that self-esteem has significant influence on pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents. This is consistent with the study of Gest, Graham-Bermann and Hartup (2001) who found that pro-social behavior both self-reported volunteering and actual volunteering show that intrinsic self-esteem may better predict helping behavior than extrinsic self-esteem. The study revealed self-esteem was a significant predictor of youth pro-social behavior (Afolabi, 2013). High self-esteem workers were related to more frequent volunteer work, and spent more time on

extracurricular activities, as well as less likely to engage in risky behavior (Egbochuku, 2007). Previous studies of adolescences have found self-esteem correspond to different levels of youths' happiness and pro-social behavior (Mahaarcha, 2010).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Counseling/Educational psychologists should intensify their effort to organize seminars/conferences on the implications of social skill training as effective interventions towards enhancing pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents in the school.

2. The researchers and stakeholders in education should not only focus on the students' achievement alone but also their pro-social behavior. This is because the improved self-esteem of the students has a lot of influence on pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents.

3. Teachers and other stakeholders in the school system are to be trained on how to improve students' self-esteem and social skill. This will serve as collaborative efforts to assist the students in overcoming the challenges of low self-esteem and social skill which will in turn enhance the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents in the school.

4. The home (parents/guardians) and school (school management) should work as a team towards improving students' self-esteem and social skill which invariably contributes to enhanced pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents in the school.

5. The students in the school should be encouraged and trained on the effective usage of these interventions (social skill training). This will make the students to adopt effective attitude towards enhancing their pro-social behavior.

CONCLUSION

Base on the findings of this study, persistent low pro-social behavior of Nigerian university undergraduates need not to continue indefinitely. There is hope that with the improvement of self-esteem and social skill, the situation can be

changed for the better. The study discovered that self-esteem and social skill training influence the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents. By and large, self-esteem and social skill has a great influence on the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents. By and large, it was also concluded from this study that self-esteem and social skill have a great impact on the pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents. This means that low self-esteem and social skill definitely have a negative effect on pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents. By implication, pro-social behavior of secondary school adolescents can be improved drastically through an improved self-esteem and social skill in the school system.

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