

EFFECT OF POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT AND SOCIAL SKILLS TECHNIQUES ON SULLENNESS BEHAVIOR AMONG STUDENTS IN DAURA ZONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the Effect of Social Skills Technique on Sullenness Behavior among Students in Daura Zonal Education Quality Assurance Katsina State, Nigeria. Four research objectives were formulated and guided the study, and four corresponding null hypotheses. A quasi-experimental design of pretest, posttest, control group was employed for this study. The population of the study was 595 senior secondary school students, out of which 144 were selected as a sample of the study that showed the symptoms of sullenness behavior drawn from three selected schools. Purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 30 students were 15 males and 15 females with high incidence of Sullenness Behavior as indicated by their scores on the Sullenness Behavior Questionnaire. All the hypotheses were tested and analyzed using t-test for independent sample at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument adopted for the study was Sullenness Behavior Questionnaire (SBQ). The results revealed that Social Skills Technique has significantly reduced Sullenness Behavior among students with a P-Value of $0.000 < 0.05$. The result of hypotheses three and four was retained at a p-value of $0.873 > 0.05$ and p-value $0.468 > 0.05$, Findings also revealed that there is no significant gender differences in the effectiveness of Social Skills Technique in reducing sullenness behavior between gender. It was recommended that psychologists, counselors, school principals and teachers should be trained in using social skills training technique in re-addressing sullenness behavior among secondary school students.

Keywords: Positive Reinforcement, Sullenness Behaviour, Social Skills Technique

Introduction

Sullenness is a behavior problem among some students in which they are angry and unwilling to smile or be pleasant to people. It is also a maladaptive behavior which include impulsivity, temper tantrums, defiance, physical aggression, stubbornness, and other items that require being able to talk such as lying, teasing, or saying embarrassing thing. Sullenness as a behavior problem is a major concern to educators and the society because of its negative impact on student's social life and cognitive functioning. Educators have described behavior problems such as Sullenness in students as a major concern in schools over the years, as many teachers feel ill-equipped to assist students who exhibit such behaviors. Sullenness is a phenomenon that affects the whole body of its victims because of its emotional nature. It affects the victims' thoughts, feelings, behavior and physical health. It also affects all areas of their life – home, work, school and social life.

Teachers feel ill-equipped to assist students with the sullen behavior problems exhibited in the classrooms. Sullen students seem to lack the basic skills and the capacity with which to express their feelings of frustrations and despondencies in appropriate ways and manners; such feelings are corked up within thereby causing some inner turmoil and conflicts and invariably they end up sinking into a sulk. These might cause a loss of psychological balance that may inhibit students' effective and full functioning. Sullen behavior problems from student youths are obviously seem to be confronting and

reflecting in homes, schools, and the society. In recent times, communities and societal violence, killings and suicidal ideations were seeming to be mostly perpetuated by youths.

Linus (2013), asserted that sullen students behave the way they do because they have experienced and often continue to experience some emotional turmoil associated with a dysfunctional family life. He further stressed that the route of individuals' behavior rests in the lessons learnt naturally during childhood. By this assertion it may then imply that sullenness among students cut across gender. Students whose parents are more controlling may likely become closed-off, sullen and irritable in their adolescent life. The anger, confusion, unfairness and frustrations as well as chumming and roiling feelings which they cannot expressed freely often spill out inform of Sullenness. There is no one cause of Sullenness but combination of factors some of which may be beyond the scope of schools, such factors as grief over the death of loved ones, family factors, poverty; lack of social support, parenting styles which may have their roots from home serving as triggers for students' emotional trauma. It might therefore be difficult for teachers to influence such factors alone but can seek the supports of teachers and behavior management experts towards minimizing such behaviors.

Social Skills Technique involves the ability to communicate with other people in a fashion that is both appropriate and effective. Appropriateness indicates that the social behavior does not violate social and relational norms. Socially skilled behaviors are instrumentally effective; that is, they allow the actor to successfully achieve his or her goals in social situations. Socially skilled behavioral performances are a complex amalgamation of declarative and procedural knowledge, motivation, ability to select among multiple behavioral response options, and at a most basic level, the ability to enact a particular social behavior. Social skills training as a primary therapy for psychological problems or as an adjunct to other techniques has a long history with an efficacious track record. A number of narrative and meta-analytic reviews show that social skills training is as effective in treating psychological problems as most other therapeutic techniques that are in vogue.

Spence and Donovan (1998) defined social competence as the ability to obtain successful outcomes from interactions with others. In contrast, Bierman and Welsh (2000) conceptualize social competence as an organizational construct that reflects the individuals' capacity to integrate behavioral, cognitive and affective skills to adapt flexibility to diverse social contexts and demands. Poor social skills and relationship difficulties with peers, family and teachers are associated with many forms of psychopathological problems such as sullenness, conduct disorder and other related emotional problems (Segrin, 2000).

Social skills among others involve cooperation, effective communication, effective listening, empathy, healthy interpersonal relationships, and self-control. Thus, it was against these backgrounds that the researcher found it relevant to research into the, Effects of Positive Reinforcement and Social Skills Techniques on Sullenness among Students in Daura Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina, Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

Sullen students seem to lack the basic skills and the capacity with which to express their feelings of frustrations and despondencies in appropriate ways and manners; such feelings can potentially impact students' cognitive development particularly in areas such as; academic performance, working

memory and self-regulation. Sullen behavior problems from student youths are obviously seen to be confronting and reflecting in homes, schools, and the society.

Observation shows that some secondary school students tend to face a lot of emotional physiological and psychological problems arising from sullen behavior. Sullenness in students is a matter of concern to educators and the society because of its potential impairment on effective functioning of the affected individual. Sullen behaviors are indicative of underlying feelings of insecurity and fears and instead of the victim ascertaining his/her rights; a sullen student is likely to become cold, withdrawn and resentful, as well as sad and close off emotionally. He/she becomes so rigid and unresponsive which in turn causes victims to feel defensive and tense. This kind of behavior can easily spiral into a long-term standoff that brews, fosters and grows into something far more destructive than it ever should have been.

It was found that teachers are feeling ill-equipped to assist students with sullen behavior problems exhibited in the classroom. It was observed that Sullenness behavior has been affecting some Katsina State students to the significant degree and now it is one among the most common behavior health disorders of today's school age children. Sequel to this phenomenon and the downfall of learning situation, the parents, school authorities and all the stakeholders involved in making several attempts in reducing sullen behaviors of some students through using some behavior modification techniques to reduce difficulties and unnecessary hardship in student's competence due to suffering from sullenness.

Therefore, if sullen behavior among some students is not curtailed it breeds less ambitious students. It deters parents from realizing the impacts of parental care and support they offer finance and moral supports. It also disallowed the government from achieving its developmental plans, goals and objectives, and subsequently the public at large may not benefit from the services they deserve. It was against this background the researcher found it necessary to investigate whether Positive Reinforcement and Social Skills Techniques can reduce the level of sullenness behavior Among Students in Daura Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria.

In a study of Shakari, Afsanehsadat, and Eskandari (2015), on determining the effects of Social Skills training on Self-Assertiveness and Academic Self-Efficacy of Dyslexic Students in Iran. The results revealed that there was significant difference between the two groups based on Assertiveness scores (P -value $< 0/001$). Social Skills can significantly increase these aspects of Self-Assertiveness in students with Dyslexics. The outcome of this study demonstrates the ubiquitous nature of Social Skills Training to manage diverse emotional and anti- social behaviour problems.

Omer Gokel and Gokmen Dagli (2017), Investigated the effects of the social skill training program on the social skill levels of young people in the age of military service in Cyprus. Result revealed that, there were significant differences found between the pre-test scores of the test group before the execution of social skill training program and post-test scores after the execution of social skill training program. In the light of the data, it was concluded that the social skill training program has a positive impact on the social skill level of participants. Jimoh, Yunusa Abejide (2021) investigated the effect of social skills training and values clarification counselling techniques on aggressive behaviours of senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that values clarification counselling technique had a significant effect on hostile, emotional and relational aggressive behaviours of students ($t=11.00$, $p=.000$; $t=6.15$, $p=.000$ and $t=7.54$, $p=.000$)

respectively. It was concluded that social skills training and values clarification counselling techniques had significant affect on aggressive behaviours.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were;

To find out the effectiveness of Social Skills Training Technique in reducing Sullenness among Senior Secondary School Students in Daura Zonal Education Quality Assurance.

To find out the differential effectiveness of Social Skills Training Technique on Sullenness among male and female Senior Secondary School Students in Daura Zonal Education Quality Assurance.

Hypotheses

In line with the research questions the following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the effect of social skills training technique in reducing Sullenness Behavior among Students in Daura Zonal Education Quality Assurance.

Ho2: There are no significant difference in the effect of Social Skills Technique on Sullenness of male and female among Students in Daura Zonal Education Quality Assurance.

Methodology

The research design adopt for this study was quasi – experimental research design that takes the form of pre-test, post-test control group. The population of this study consists of all the senior secondary (SSII) students in public schools in Daura Zonal Education Quality Assurance with total number of 595. A target population was 144 students as a sample of the study from three selected public senior secondary schools that shows the symptoms of sullenness behavior out of which a sample size of 30 students were used for the study. The instrument for collection of the required data for this study was Sullenness Behavior Questionnaire (SBQ) adapted from Angold and Costello in Turner (2014).

Results

H01: There is no significant effect of Social Skills Training Technique in reducing Sullenness among Senior Secondary School Students in Daura Zonal Education Quality Assurance.

To test this hypothesis, post-test of Sullenness of Social Skills Training Technique in treatment group were computed and comparatively analyzed with that of control group.

Table 1: Results of Independent t-test on the effectiveness of social skills training Technique on the pre-test and post-test mean scores on Sullenness of SS2 Students.

Variables	N	Mean	Std	Std Error	Df	t-value	p-value	Decision
Social Skills Tech.	10	17.0	3.6	1.14	18	-12.26	.000	Sig.
Control Group	10	52.3	8.2	2.58				

Table 1 above the showed that, the calculated mean of 17.0 is less than the scores of control group of 52.3. The standard deviation of SST result showed the 3.6 compared with the score of 8.2 for control group value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance while the t-calculated value of -12.260, at Df 18. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that, there is no significant effect of social skills training technique on sullenness among senior Secondary School Students in Daura Zonal Education Quality Assurance was rejected. The reason is that the reduction in the mean score of social

skills training technique indicated a statistically significant effect of treatment in curbing the level of sullenness behavior among the participants.

H02: There are no significant differential effects of Social Skills Training Technique on Sullenness of male and female participants among Senior Secondary School Students in Daura Zonal Education Quality Assurance.

Table 2 : Independent Samples t-Test of Post-Test Scores on the Effectiveness of Social Skills Training Technique on Sullenness Between Male and Female Participants

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t	p	Decision
Social Skills Training Technique	Male	5	18.00	4.472	2.000	8	.716	.468	Accepted
	Female	5	16.00	3.807	1.702				

Interpretation

Table 2 presents the results of the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference in the post-test scores of male and female participants exposed to Social Skills Training Technique (SST) for the reduction of sullenness behavior. The results show that male participants had a mean score of 18.00 (SD = 4.472), while female participants had a mean score of 16.00 (SD = 3.807). Although the male participants recorded a slightly higher mean score than their female counterparts, the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant, $t(8) = .716$, $p = .468$.

Since the calculated p-value (.468) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the effectiveness of Social Skills Training Technique between male and female participants.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Social Skills Training Technique is equally effective in reducing sullenness behavior among both male and female participants

Summary of the Findings

The following were the findings of the study:

Social Skills Technique has significant effect in reducing Sullenness behaviour among Senior Secondary School Students.

2. Social Skills Technique is effective in reducing Sullenness behavior of male and female among Senior Secondary School Students alike.

Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis one revealed significant effect existed which implies social skills training Technique treatment has reduced sullenness among students. The result of a lower post-test mean score confirmed the reduction in the sullenness among students exposed to social skills training Technique treatment. The findings of this hypothesis is in agreement with Shakari, Afsanehsadat, and Eskandari (2015), who determined the effects of Social Skills training on Self-Assertiveness and Academic Self-Efficacy of Dyslexic Students in Iran. The outcomes of this study demonstrate the ubiquitous nature of Social Skills Training to manage diverse emotional and anti- social behaviour problems. The finding is also supported by Omer Gokel and Gokmen Dagli (2017), who investigated the effects of the social skill training program on the social skill levels of young people in the age of military service in Cyprus. In the light of the data, it was concluded that the social skill training program has a positive impact on the social skill level of participants.

Findings from hypothesis two revealed that, there is no significant differential effectiveness observed between male and female students exposed to social skills training treatment. Findings of this study

also revealed that social skills training technique was found to be effective in reducing sullenness among male and female students. Hence the null hypothesis was retained and accepted. This implies that social skills training is not gender sensitive. The findings of Lady Championz (2022) supported the findings of hypothesis four, who revealed that, there is no significant differential effect of social skills training technique observed in the reduction of sullenness between male and female Secondary School Students. The findings of Omer and Gokmen also supported the hypothesis four, in the light of the data, it was concluded that the Social Skills Technique has appositve on the social skill level of participants.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of this research study, it was concluded that Social Skill Technique was effective in reducing the level of sullenness behavior among the students. It was equally the conclusion of this study that Social Skill Techniques have no differential effect among male and female students with sullenness behaviour among secondary school students. It was recommended that:

The School administrators, teachers, psychologists should use Social Skills Technique to manage sullenness behavior among Secondary School students.

Social Skills Technique could be used in managing sullenness behavior among Secondary School Students on either male or female since it is not gender sensitive.

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