

Perception of Counselors' Gender on the Suitability of Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy for Curbing Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the perception of counselors' gender on the suitability of Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT) for curbing examination malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the extent to which male counselors and female counselors perceive REBT strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study raised one research question and one hypothesis and adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 126 Guidance counselors and 319 teacher counsellors. Data were collected from the 445 secondary school counsellors currently serving in the 445 government owned secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. All the 445 copies of the instrument were distributed and retrieved. Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the entire instrument. Data collected were used to analyze the research question using mean, grand mean and standard deviation and t-test statistic was used to test the hypothesis. The findings showed that male and female counselors perceived Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) as suitable strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent. The finding of the hypothesis also showed that there is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of male counsellors' and female counsellors on the suitability of REBT as strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. Hence, recommendation was made based on the findings.

Keywords: Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy, Examination Malpractice and Guidance counselors

INTRODUCTION

A Counsellor is a person who engages himself/herself in personal, educational, and vocational counselling with clients throughout the lifespan, in the particular circumstances of clients' lives. Guidance Counsellor help clients in resolving negative patterns, prevention, rehabilitation, and improving quality of life' [1]. Guidance Counsellors work in varied settings like schools, hospitals, corporate settings and so forth, and their role also varies depending upon the setting in which they practice [2].

Part of a counsellor's training is becoming aware of their own needs so that they realize to what extent these needs can interfere with the counselling process. The counsellor should constantly be checking themselves by querying whose needs are being met...their own or those

of the client. It is not unethical that the counsellor's personal needs are met within their professional practice, but the meeting of these needs should be kept in perspective. Needs should not be met at the expense of clients'. Clients must never be exploited.

It is the duty of the professional counsellor to confront their own prejudices and vulnerabilities and so increase the self-awareness of their own problems by working through them. By taking this route the counsellor will be less likely to project them onto their clients'. If during the counsellor's sessions, old issues that were never fully resolved are brought back to the fore then it is the duty of the guidance counsellor is to seek the counsel of a therapist in order that they can resolve them. The personal

and professional qualities of guidance counsellors are very important in facilitating any helping relationship [3]. A counsellor must be well equipped to assist individuals to make adjustments and live a happy and harmonious life. The adjustment can be in terms of school and curriculum, vocation and personality. For effective counseling, the counsellor must be equipped with two kinds of data. First he must have data relating to the counsellee's background aptitudes, achievements, interests, plans etc. Further, he must have the skill to interpret this data. Secondly, the guidance counsellor must have information about the areas in which the counsellee may seek his assistance. These areas may be educational or personal. With these two kinds of information he assists the counsellee to match his individual patterns of potentiality with appropriate opportunity. As the process of counselling develops, both the counsellor and counsellee must arrive at a common ground. Professional Guidance Counsellor's who continually develop their self awareness skills are in touch with their values, thoughts and feelings. They are likely to have a clear perception of their own and their client's needs and accurately assess both. Such awareness can help them be honest with themselves and others. They are able to be more congruent and build trust simultaneously. Guidance Counsellors who possess this type of knowledge are most likely to communicate clearly accurately. From all indications the study has a gender perspective because female professional counsellors seem to have a firm ability to attend to their client needs using Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy than their male counterpart. This means that gender is a variable to be considered in the topic under investigation. Gender in this context means the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological sex, sex-based social structures, or gender identity. In this context, male and female school counsellors are referred to. Female

counsellors seem to give special attention to male students who are victims of examination malpractice than female students who come for counselling. The aim is to avoid being gossiped. Contrary to this view, there is a possibility that even if she pays attention to female students she might be seen as a lesbian. As such the result of the counselling session seems not to tally with the goal of the counselling session. Instead of the result to yield good result among victim of examination malpractice it leads to distrust, anger, and lack of confidence. The male counsellor likewise maybe uncomfortable in a counselling session with a female counsellor because he may be afraid of been called a names. Worst still, female guidance counsellors bear more consequence than their males counterparts. [4] in his studies stated that male counsellors have the propensity to use good strategy to curb examination malpractice. [5] remarked that girls are more sensitive in terms of integrity than their male counterparts. They dread social vices as they believe it may hinder prospective suitors from coming to them. This aspect of social life does not really matter to their male counterparts. The idea of course is fast fading as in recent years females according to [6], have really gotten involved in some social vices like child abuse, child trafficking, cultism, robbery and examination malpractice. Female involvement in these vices may not necessarily be gender stereotyped, she asserted. [7] believes that female counsellors will rather favour female students than their male counterparts in an examination. This attitude of female counsellors is that of trying to protect the interest of females socially not necessarily the individual involved in the act. The after matt of the act is that of more shame to the female folks. The female counsellors take into consideration the situation of the female offender than that of a male offender[8] assert that examination malpractice affects students' integrity irrespective of sex. Engaging in it will deprive them a position of respect in the society and the world at large. However, female student

are more remorseful than male student when caught cheating as a result, they attract the sympathy of teachers, counsellors and invigilators. The female counsellors may want to counsel female offenders separately stressing the fact that female students should live up to expectations. Counselling according to [9] is a professional advice about a problem. Strategy on the other hand is a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose. Every counselling strategy is meant to help individuals who have problems irrespective of sex. The counsellor is concerned about what the problem is and what strategy is suitable for the particular problem in question. In the case of examination malpractice, a counsellor is interested in finding out the cheat and spending time to help him get out of the inappropriate behaviour than worry about the person's sex. Guidance Counsellors' choice of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) as a strategy seems to be the most suitable strategy to conquer the undesirable behaviour which urging the individual to learn a new desirable behaviour is the counsellor's sole responsibility. As such the need to understand what Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) is becomes vital. Rational Emotive Therapy by [4] is employed as a counselling strategy to assist in effecting a change from illogical thinking to logical thinking such as, "I may not be able to pass English Language; it is very difficult," to logical thinking such as, "If I improve my study habit, there is no subject that will be too difficult for me to pass". In the context of giving students information on the evil of examination malpractice, [5] noted that progressive students and those with high self-esteem are taught to stay out of this terrible mess. A defaulter faces a blank future and most times such activities impair future prospects. This will help in changing students' perception towards cheating in an examination. Following [1] Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) is a form of re-education in which individuals are taught to replace irrational ideas with rational ones. By establishing a good rapport through empathy,

counsellors ought to engage in actively teaching students to be of a good behaviour. This kind of reassurance will help the client relax before examination. [8] remarked that fear of failure in examination induces students to cheat in Examination. This is likely why [2] remarked that negative talks on the part of students must be attacked and discouraged during counselling. [8] also emphasized doing rather than certification. In the same light, [1], noted that using paradoxical intention to assist students internalize the evil of examination malpractice is significant because paradoxical intention can be used to alter a dysfunctional tendency in a child. In Enugu State, the issue of examination malpractice is on the increase. Each year record students' participation in examination malpractice from observation, in Enugu State according to Post Primary School Management Board, [3], counsellors are posted to schools irrespective of sex. The sex difference here gives Counsellors of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy the necessity to employ a strategy that would curb students undesirable behaviour since they engage in examination malpractice. The counsellors by implication are also affected because they are afraid of being called names since culture does not permit certain exposure in most rural areas in Enugu State. It is on this premise that the researcher examined the perception of counsellors' gender on the suitability of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) for curbing examination malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Examination malpractice with its disadvantages is affecting all the facets of the society negatively. Yet, every effort by the government to fight this menacing situation is being discouraged by perpetrators of examination malpractice by the day. At examination centers, different styles of examination malpractice are recorded. Some candidates who sit for examination are not always formally registered. Most often than not, unauthorized materials are

found present alongside candidate scripts. Some other times, results are altered and used by persons other than the candidates. School counsellors adopt REBT strategy to curb the menace yet students continued to resist.

In spite of the resistant nature of perpetrators of examination malpractice against various strategies and procedures adapted to curb examination malpractice in the past, there has been a greater percentage of determination on the part of stakeholders in education industry to fight back. Institutions embark on seizing answer sheets from culprits. Some are suspended indefinitely from retaking. Some schools are shut down while some

The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design for this study because it permits the collection of original data and describes the condition as they exist in their natural setting. The population for the study comprised 126 practicing guidance counsellors and 392 teacher counsellors from all the 319 government owned secondary schools in Enugu State. (Source: Guidance and Counselling Unit, Education Services Department, Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB), Enugu. 2016/2017 Session, November, 2016). The total numbers of school counsellors therefore are 445 serving in 445 secondary schools (Educational Services Department, Guidance and Counselling Division P.P.SM.B Enugu, 2017). The population is not sample because the population of the study is small.

The instrument for data collection is a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher called Counsellors Perception Scale (CPS). It has one cluster with 5 items developed to assist the researcher provide clues that helped raise much needed data that were used to answer the one research question. 1 research hypothesis was tested using t-test statistic. The response format of the instrument is a 4 point scale of very great extent, great extent, little extent and very little extent. Each response option has a numerical value assigned to it as follows:

METHODOLOGY

Ani principals are suspended if found guilty. Some adopt very serious invigilation strategies including searching the students before assigning them to seats. This study is looking at Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) strategy and how both male counsellors and female counsellors perceive them as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State. It is against this background that the researcher examined the perception of counsellors' gender on the suitability of systematic desensitization for curbing examination malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Very great extent (VGE)-4 points; Great extent (GE)-3 points; Little Extent (LE)-2 points and Very little extent (VLE)-1 point. An introductory letter was attached to the instrument stating the purpose of the study for the respondents' easy reference. The instrument was validated by three experts (one in measurement and evaluation and 2 others in Guidance Counselling Departments) with the estimated overall reliability coefficient of 0.97 for the cluster using Cronbach Alpha Reliability tool. Finally the researcher and the research assistants were able to retrieve 445 signifying 100% return of dully filled copies of the administered instrument. One research question formulated that guided the study was answered using mean, grand mean and standard deviation; t-test statistic was used to analyze the one research hypothesis. The mean rating of the numerical values assigned to the response options will be added and divided by the number of the response options. This formed the basis for the cut-off point. Thus:

$$\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$$

From this, the researcher made the required inferences based on the data that were analyzed for the study. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as great extent while any item whose mean score is below 2.50 was interpreted to mean 'little extent'. For the

hypothesis, the decision rule is that if t-calculated is equal to or greater than the t-critical value at the chosen confidence level (.05) and degree of freedom (n1+n2-2) the null hypothesis of no significant difference will be rejected. If on the other hand, the calculated t-value is less than that of the t-critical from the table value, the null hypothesis will not be rejected.

Data Analysis and Results

This chapter presents the results of the study in accordance with the research

questions and hypothesis that guided the study. The analyzed data were presented in Table 1-2.

Research Question 1:

To what extent do male counsellors and female counsellors perceive Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean (X̄) Rating with Standard Deviation of the extent to which Counsellors' perceive Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy as Suitable for Curbing Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	Guidance Counsellors N=126		Teacher Counsellors N=319		Overall		Decision
		X ₁	SD ₁	X ₂	SD ₂	X ₃	SD ₃	
1.	Giving information to students on the evils of examination malpractice	3.39	0.55	3.42	0.72	3.41	0.64	GE
2.	Changing students perception towards cheating in examination	3.19	0.91	2.55	1.10	2.87	1.01	GE
3.	Actively teaching students to be of good Behaviour	3.45	0.71	3.35	0.71	3.40	0.71	GE
4.	Attacking the negative emotions of students relating to examination	3.50	0.66	3.56	0.58	3.53	0.62	GE
5.	Emphasizing doing rather than certification	3.59	0.64	3.32	0.71	3.46	0.68	GE
6.	Using paradoxical intention to assist students Internalizing the evil of examination malpractice	3.19	0.80	2.47	0.56	2.83	0.68	GE
Grand Mean		3.39	0.71	3.11	0.73	3.25	0.72	GE

Table 1 indicated that of the 6 items on the extent to which counsellors' perceive Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) as suitable strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria, the respondents agreed with all the items (1, 2, 3 4, 5 and 6) with recorded mean scores of (3.41, 2.87, 3.40, 3.53, 3.46 and 2.83) indicated to a great extent. The standard deviation for all the items raised is 0.72 which is small signifying that the

responses are closely clustered around the mean. The Table also shows that the respondents' grand mean score for the overall items raised is (3.25). Following the guideline for the interpretation of the respondents data, the answers to research question one showed that counsellors perceived Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) as suitable strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of Male Counsellors' and Female Counsellors on the suitability of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) as strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Mean (\bar{x}) Rating with Standard Deviation of the Extent to which Male Counsellors' and Female Counsellors perceive Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) as a Strategy Suitability for curbing Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Counsellors Status	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Guidance Counsellors'	126	3.39	0.60	445	0.06	± 1.96	Reject Ho ₁
Teachers Counsellors	319	3.11	0.75				

Significant at P < .05, df = 443, critical t-value = ± 1.96

The t-test analysis of the 6ata in Table 2 revealed that the t-calculated value (0.01) is less than the critical t-value of ± 1.96 at degree of freedom (df) 443 and at 0.5 level of confidence. This implies that the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected as there is no significant

difference in the mean perception scores of male Counsellors' and female Counsellors on the suitability of Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) as strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

For the discussion of the findings inherent in this study, research question and hypotheses that are related were treated together. The first research question sought to find out the extent to which male counsellors and female counsellors perceive REBT strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The result in Table 1 showed that male counsellors and female counsellors perceive REBT strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent. The first hypothesis ascertained if there is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of male Counsellors' and female Counsellors on the suitability

of REBT as strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The analysis of the t-test comparison according to Table 2 showed that there is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of male Counsellors' and female Counsellors on the suitability of REBT as strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The finding is at variance with that of [7] who found that female counsellors are more concerned about curbing examination malpractice in their places of primary assignments. She also found that female counsellors enforce examination ethics better than their male counterparts.

CONCLUSION

The analysis and interpretations done and the information from related literature indicated that counsellors perceived

Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) as suitable strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary

schools in Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent.

Educational Implication of the Finding
The finding of the study has far-reaching implications for the Nigerian educational system in general and for the growth and development of guidance and counselling in Enugu State, Nigeria. School counsellors perception of REBT as

RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve this mission this, a recommendation is made based on the findings of this study.

1. This study strongly advocates that seminars should be organized for

Ani suitable for curbing examination malpractice may affect the way and manner they handle some of their clients. Counsellors that cope easily through REBT strategy irrespective of the negative tag of been a womanizer or a prostitute are encouraged more and more because it maximized their learning ability.

school counsellors to enable them utilize REBT as counselling strategy suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State

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