

EFFECTS OF RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY IN IMPROVING POOR STUDY HABIT AMONG STUDENTS IN OBIO-AKPO, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

Awujo, C.G¹ & Margaret, G. Kennedy²

¹Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance And Counselling, University of Port Harcourt, Choba, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

²Rivers State University, International Secondary School Nkpolu, Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt Margaretkenedy240@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study determined the 'Effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo local government area of Rivers State, Nigeria'. Cohort quasi-experimental design was adopted, with three null hypotheses guiding the study. The population of the study consists of 4,761 ss3 students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpo LGA for 2017/2018 academic session. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 75 students from 3 schools identified with poor study habit. Three groups were formed, one experimental and two control groups. One group received REBT, the 2nd Placebo and the 3rd no treatment. The instrument for data collection was Students Study Behaviour Inventory (SSBI). Its face and content validity were ensured by test and guidance and counselling experts. Test-retest method of reliability using PPMC yielded a coefficient of $r = .78$. Data was analyzed with mean, standard deviation and independent t-test. Results revealed that REBT had significant effect in improving poor study habit among students in the experimental group while the placebo had no effect on study habit of students, the control group did not show any improvement when compared to the REBT experimental group. Based on the findings it was recommended that REBT should be adopted by school counsellors to tackle poor study habit among students. Obio-Akpo LGA should liaise with the state government to ensure the employment of counsellors in all her public schools to cater for students' needs.

KEY WORDS: Academic Performance, Placebo, Poor Study Habit, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Study habits are the systematic ways students go about their studies in order to achieve excellent academic performance. Study habit could be poor or good. We are concerned about poor study habit in this study. Poor study habit is the major cause of

poor academic performance among secondary school students as revealed by several researchers like; (Alutu 2011 & Olubor 2011, Ossai 2004). Bakare in Kennedy (2008) revealed that many students fail to perform well in their academics not because they do not possess the mental ability to do so but just because they fail to use the most

effective study methods. Becoming sound academically begins with imbibing good study habits. Effective study habit is needed by students to perform maximally in academics. Students are rather looking for easy ways of improving their academic performance by cheating during exams or influencing their scores through unscrupulous means. If students can sit down to study effectively their performances can improve, good study habit contributes to high academic performance while poor study habits lead to poor academic performance.

Iyamu and Aluede (2014) noted that good study habits do not only help students to be academically oriented. It also enhances students' academic achievement. This is the major reason why counselling is needed to effectively help students to acquire good study habit that will enable them to acquire knowledge, retain and produce them when needed.

Nulthana and Yenagi (2009) see effective study habit as a pre-requisite for academic success. Students' academic performance is a central issue in education; it is used as a criterion to judge an individual's overall potentialities and capabilities, they are regularly measured by examination results. Students who have trouble in school subjects lack good study habits.

A lot of students spend quality time engaging in unprofitable ventures instead of engaging in their studies, they are often distracted by activities such as; viewing television, being on the internet, partying, chatting on phone, procrastinating, lack ability to organize learning materials, enjoying music and so on. They wait until the eleventh hour to start an assignment or cram to write a test or an exam. Students with poor study habit are easily

distracted and also lack motivation to study. They exhibit the following characteristics: Studying without a study plan, waiting to study at the last hour, failing to ask teachers for clarification when lessons are not clear, not having up to date notes, keeping disorganized note, studying to pass exams instead of studying to understand by cramming and so on. Poor study habit is the dependent variable the researchers are interested in.

The independent variable of the study is Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT). It is a counselling modality that believes amongst others that man is both rational and irrational when he is rational he/she is effective, happy and competent. Irrationality in man causes him/her emotional problems like guilt, anxiety, anger, depression, ineffectiveness and hatred. Man is responsible for his/her own actions, feelings, thinking and has the ability to intervene between environmental input and emotional output (Uzoeshi, 2013). Based on the tenants of REBT, the researchers believe that, poor study habit can be modified with this counselling modality for maximum academic performance. Poor study habit constitutes a significant threat to excellent academic performance. Good academic performance is the essence of schooling. It is not clear if REBT can be used successfully to modify poor study habit locally here in Obio-Akpo LGA of Rivers State as it has been used successfully in different parts of Nigeria. It is against this background that this study is conceived.

Statement of the Problem

Several research findings have revealed that poor study habit is the bane of poor academic performance among students (Dimkpa, 2018,

Eremie 2017, Iyamu and Aluede 2014, Awabil, Kolo, Bello and Oligba, 2013 & Acido, 2010). Poor study habit has been a great concern to parents, teachers and all education stake holders, they have been looking for a lasting solution that will imbibe in students' good study habit for improved academic performance. Poor study habit can be modified through counselling, it is expected that REBT tenants can be used to improve poor study behaviour of students to a good learning outcome as several studies conducted locally by researchers have found it useful in salvaging poor study habits in different parts of Nigeria. It is not certain if REBT which aims at getting the client to internalize the rational philosophy of life just the way the client has internalized a set of irrational behaviour towards study will have any positive effect on students in Obio-Akpo LGA. It becomes therefore, incumbent on the researchers to see how REBT can be used locally here in Obio- Akpoto help students improve their study habits. This study therefore sort to investigate the effects of REBT in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo local government area of Rivers state, this is the foundational problem of this study.

Empirical Review

Many psychologist, educationist and researchers have carried out different research works at different times and places on study habit and REBT respectively among students at various levels. Some of these works are cited below;

Iyamu and Aluede (2014) examined societal values and poor study habits as predisposing factors in senior secondary school students' involvement in examination crime in Edo State. The population consists of all the

students in senior secondary 2 and 3 in public secondary schools in Edo State. A stratified sampling technique was employed to select 1,000 students in ss1 and ss2 in public schools in the state. The study revealed that study habits and societal values have been found to be a significant influence on students' attitude towards examination crime. This is an indication that a lot of students indulge in unprofitable task at the expense of their study. Based on the finding it was recommended among others that during counselling positive thinking as the right attitude to life as advocated by Albert Ellis Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy should be instilled in students. The aim is to get the client internalize the rational philosophy of life just the way the client had internalized a set of irrational behaviour.

Awabil, Kolo, Bello and Oligba (2013) investigated the effects of study habit and self-reward skills counselling on study behaviour of university students in Ghana. The Population comprised of all first-year undergraduate students in public universities in Ghana. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to draw sixty (60) students for the study out of the one hundred and thirty-two eligible students who obtained 101 and above on the study behaviour inventory. Result revealed that significant difference exists between each of the experimental groups and control group on study behaviour post-test. This implies that study and self-reward skills counselling did record positive effects on participants' study behaviour after treatment.

Olta and Odoemela as cited in Kennedy (2008) conducted an experimental; study among twenty-eight (28) physically handicapped secondary school students' in Afikpo Urban North Local Government Area of Ebonyi State utilizing REBT/CCA to improve

self-concept. The result revealed that the experimental groups with individual and combined treatment factors had an improved self-concept over the control group which had no counselling. Again, Eniola and Adebisi (2005) conducted an experimental study among (48) forty-eight visually impaired students in Federal College of Education (special) Oyo utilizing REBT and Reality therapy in improving socialization problems, using 3x2x2 factorial matrix. The results revealed that REBT subjects socialised significantly better than all other subjects, the difference between the mean scores of group reality therapy and control did not reach significant level.

Ker, Ekoja and Ekoja (2007) also conducted an experimental study in Benue State University for 2004/2005 session post graduate students using a sample size of (60) sixty students, made up of 39 males and 21 females with a mean age of 36 years utilized REBT to improve voters attitude. The results showed that the treatment factor REBT produced significant mean difference between the experimental and control groups in favour of the former. The control group maintained consistency in their demonstration of apathy, greed/selfishness and non-cooperation while the experimental group did not.

Eremie, (2017) conducted a study on study habits of senior secondary school students and academic performance in Rivers state with a population of 1500 students and a sample of 150 students in a survey design. Results revealed that there was a significant difference on the responses of male and female students regarding time management, motivational level interest, class attendance and note taking behaviour.

Similarly, Acido, (2010) investigated high school students' reasoning skills and their study

habit and attitude towards learning. Results revealed that students who scored above average in reasoning skills take their studies seriously and also study regularly but students with poor study habits performed poorly in English language and Mathematics.

Dimkpa (2018) investigated the effects of counselling on poor study habit among students in Port Harcourt city local government area of Rivers state using a population of 4073 SS2 students and a sample of 72 students in a pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental study. Results revealed that the treatment factor counselling brought about improvement in study habit while no significant improvement was noticed among the control group members who received a placebo. From the reviewed literature it is evident that poor study habit improved with intervention strategies and that poor study habit is the main reason for poor academic performance.

Aims/Objectives

The aim of the study is to ascertain the Effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) in improving poor study habit among secondary school students in Obio-Akpo local government area of Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically the study is determined to achieve the following objectives,

1. To ascertain the effects of REBT in improving poor study habit among secondary school students in Obio-Akpo local government area when the experimental group is compare to the control group without Placebo?
2. To investigate the effects of Placebo in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo local government area when the control group with placebo

- is compared to the group without placebo?
3. To find out the effect of REBT in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo local government area when the Experimental group is compared to the control group with placebo?

Hypotheses

To guide the study, the following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 confidence level.

1. There is no significant difference on the effects of REBT in improving poor study habit among secondary school students in Obio-Akpo local government area when the experimental group is compared to the control group without Placebo.
2. There is no significant difference on the effects of Placebo in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo local government area when the control group with placebo is compared to the group without placebo.
3. There is no significant difference on the effects of REBT in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo local government area of Rivers when the Experimental group is compared to the control group with Placebo.

METHODOLOGY

Population

The target population of this study consist of all the SS3 students in public secondary schools in Obio-Akpo LGA numbering 4,761 students for 2017/2018 academic session (source: LGA education board)

Sample

Sample sizes of 75 students were selected

through a simple random sampling method. Students in three schools were selected randomly for the study out of the 14 public schools in Obio-Akpo LGA.

Instrument

The instrument employed to obtain data for the study was developed by the researchers and named 'Students Study Behaviour Inventory' (SSBI) with 20 items on a scale of 4 points ranging from 1-4, aimed at eliciting information on students' study behaviour. Its face and content validities were ensured by test experts and guidance and counseling experts from the three universities in Rivers State. Its reliability was determined through the test-retest method for a measure of stability. Twenty (20) students outside the sampled schools responded to the instrument, after three weeks' interval of the first administration a retest was given. The initial and retest scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation test and it yielded a value of 'r' 0.78 which was adjudged good for utilization.

Design

This study adopted the quasi-experimental research design. Specifically, the study utilized the Cohort quasi-experimental design. This design is aimed at comparison of posttest scores of two or more cohorts (Kpolovie,2010). Cohort design is used to investigate the effect of treatment condition on a dependent variable by obtaining posttest scores from one cohort and comparing them with posttest scores of a cohort control group. The researchers are convinced that this present study 'Effects of REBT in improving Poor Study Habit among Students in Obio-Akpo Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria' was most appropriate with the use of Cohort quasi experimental design.

Figure: 1 Diagrammatic representation of cohort quasi experimental design

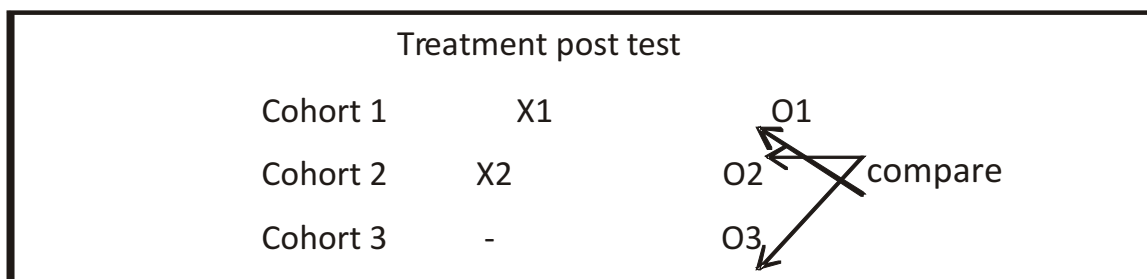


TABLE 1: TREATMENT SCHEDULE AS IMPLEMENTED

Grouping	Treatment Days	Time	No. of Sessions	No. of Clients Involved
Experimental Group	Wednesday and Fridays; one day for each School	2:00pm – 3:00pm (1 hour Per Week)	6	25
Control Group with Placebo	Placebo same days above for each School	1:00pm – 2:00pm (1 hour Per Week)	6	25
Control group without placebo	-		-	25

Basic ingredients essential to ensure a group's productivity were well established such as building a good rapport, trust and acceptance, empathy and caring, hope for success, commitment to change/intimacy, self-disclosure

Data Analysis

Data obtained were analyzed with mean and standard deviation which were eventually used to test the null hypotheses using independent samples t-test.

Experimental procedure

The experimental procedure adopted in this study was divided into three stages.

Stage 1 – placement of subjects into experimental and control groups

The researchers randomly placed students into experimental and control groups based on their respective schools. One school received REBT which is the experimental group, the second group received a Placebo, and the third group is the control group without placebo.

Stage 2 – Administration of REBT and Placebo to experimental group and control groups.

The researchers used REBT counselling procedures on the experimental group. The researchers helped the clients to be rational and logical in their thinking. They were thought a simple way of reorganizing their perceptions, thinking and behaviour to achieve better goals

in their academics. They were thought different study techniques. Counselling was done in stages for four weeks. The control group with Placebo also received placebo for four weeks. They were thought how to remain focused to achieve their set goals.

Stage 3 – Administration and scoring of post-test

The researchers administered the SSBI to students to determine their study pattern after treatment. Responses of students on each item

on SSBI were Scored and analysed with mean, standard deviation and independent samples t-test for comparison.

Result

Hypothesis 1: there is no significant difference on the effects of REBT in improving poor study habit among secondary school students in Obio-Akpo LGA when the experimental group is compared with the control group without placebo.

Table 2: Comparison of the effects of REBT experimental group and control group without placebo using post-test mean scores.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Diff	Df	p	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
REBT Experimental Group	25	70	10.2	38	48	.05	16.7	2.009	Reject H ₀
Control Group without Placebo	25	32	5.1						

Table 2 revealed that the post-test mean score of students in REBT experimental group was 70 with a standard deviation of 10.2 while their counterparts in the control group without placebo had post-test mean score of 32 and standard deviation of 5.2. The mean difference shows 38 which indicated the gains of counselling. Furthermore, when this mean difference was subjected to the independent samples t-test, it was observed that the calculated t-test value of 16.7 was significant at 0.05 level with a df of 48 and t-crit of 2.009 hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The

rejection of null hypothesis indicates that REBT was very effective in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo LGA.

Hypothesis 2: there is no significant difference on the effects of placebo in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo LGA when the placebo group is compared to the control group without placebo.

Table 3: Comparison of placebo group and control group without placebo using post-test mean scores

Group	N	Mean	SD	Diff	df	p	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Control Group with placebo	25	35	5.5	3	48	.05	2	2.009	Reject H ₀
Control Group without Placebo	25	32	5.1						

Table 3 revealed that the post-test mean score of the control group with placebo was 35 with a standard deviation of 5.5 while that of the control group without placebo shows a post-test mean score of 32 with a standard deviation of 5.1 and a mean difference of 3. The gains of placebo were not found to be significant. In addition this mean difference was subjected to the independent t-test and the calculated t-test value of 2 was not found to be significant at 0.05 ($P > 0.05$) with a df of 48 and a critical

value of 2.009 which call for the acceptance of H₀. The acceptance of H₀ indicates that placebo do not have any significant effect on poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo LGA.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference on the effects of REBT in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo LGA when the Experimental group is compared to the control group with placebo.

Table 4: comparison of REBT and Placebo group using post-test mean scores

Group	N	Mean	SD	Diff	df	p	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
REBTEXperimental Group	25	70	10.2	35	48	.05	15.2	2.009	Reject H ₀
Control Group with Placebo	25	35	5.5						

Table 4 revealed that the mean score of students in the experimental group on poor study habit was 70 with a standard deviation of 10.2 while that of the control group with placebo was 35 and a standard deviation of 5.5 with a mean score difference of 35, the mean score differences shows the gains of REBT counselling technique in improving poor study

habit. When the mean difference was further subjected to the independent samples t-test, it was observed that, the t-test value obtained 15.2 was significant at 0.05 level with a degree of freedom of 48 and t-test critical value of 2.009 hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that REBT is effective in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo L.G.A.

Discussion

The first finding indicated that REBT was very effective in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo Local Government Area of Rivers State when the REBT experimental group was compared to the control group without placebo. This finding is not surprising but expected because Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy REBT has been found to be effective in bringing about positive changes in the lives of individuals. The findings of Otta and Odoemela in Kennedy (2008) Eniola and Adebisi (2005) Ker, Ekoja and Ekoja (2007) and Dimkpa (2018) found REBT to be effective in bringing about positive changes in the lives of individuals all these studies are in positive connotation with the findings of the study. The plausible reason for this outcome was that, REBT was able to realign students' negative way of thinking and behaving towards their studies to a more positive and rewarding ways. This is so because a lot of students indulge in unprofitable task at the expense of their studies which have not been beneficial to their academic performance. The internalization of the tenants of REBT turned their fortune around for good.

The second finding that placebo do not have significant effect in improving poor study habit among students who received placebo and those without placebo was quiet revealing, despite the fact that students were given a placebo on how to remain focused to achieve positive results in life a significant improvement was not evident on this group. This finding corroborates with the findings of Dimkpa (2018) who found no significant effect of placebo in improving poor study habit among students in Port Harcourt city Local Government Area of Rivers State. The placebo

given to distract members of the experimental group did not show any improvement on study habit among students in Obio-Akpo LGA when compared to the group without placebo. The plausible reason for this outcome was that, REBT philosophy of life was not instilled in both the control group with placebo and the group without placebo.

The third finding showed that REBT has significant effect in improving poor study habit among students in the experimental group compared to the control group that received placebo. This result is indeed expected and not surprising because REBT aims at redirecting individuals with negative attitude and behaviour to a positive pattern that will enable them grow. The plausible reason for this outcome was that poor study habit has been modified with REBT counselling tenants which have translated poor study habit to good learning outcomes. This finding agrees with that of Awail, Kolo, Bello and Oligba (2013) who used counselling intervention strategies to effect an improvement on study habit among university students in Ghana. The results of Awabiletal., (2013) showed significant difference between the control group and the experimental group in favour of the experimental group.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the results of the study, it is concluded that REBT counselling techniques are very effective in improving poor study habit among students in Obio-Akpo LGA. The students who received placebo and the control group without placebo did not show any improvement in their study habit. It is therefore recommended that;

1. REBT should be adopted by school counsellors to tackle poor study habit among students, seminars, orientation and

- campaigns against poor study habit should be carried out regularly
2. Obio-Akpo LGA authority should liaise with the state government to employ counsellors for all her public schools to cater for students' needs.
 3. Teachers should refer students with poor study habit to the counsellor for necessary action.

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