EFFECT OF COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING ON ATTITUDE TO LYING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract
This study is on the effect of cognitive restructuring on attitude to lying among secondary school students in Anambra state. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. Pre test, post test control quasi-experimental design was adopted. The population was 286 students who were identified by counsellors and class teachers to have positive attitude to lying in the 18 secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area in Anambra state. Two co-education secondary schools that had the highest number of students with positive attitude to lying were selected for the study. Purposive Sampling was used to select 64 students who scored above the norm of 75 in the instrument. Thirty-item researcher developed questionnaire, Lying Attitude Inventory (LAI) structured on a five-point scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to ' Strongly Disagree was used for data collection. Mean and ANCOVA were used to answer the research question and test the null hypothesis. Finding showed that cognitive restructuring significantly reduced positive attitude to lying among students. Therefore, it was recommended that counsellors, teachers and significant others in secondary schools should adopt cognitive restructuring technique in controlling attitude to lying among students.

Key words: Cognitive restructuring, Positive Attitude to lying, Secondary school, Students

Introduction

Most often, children lie in situations, circumstances or events, even when it is more convenient and necessary to tell the truth. This may have resulted from the fact that lying is seemly, generally acceptable by individuals, and has become a norm in the society.

Generally, lying is making false statement. It is an intentional untruthful declaration to someone in order to deceive or cheat. Lying is common among secondary

school children who use it in bid to distort real situations. According to Meibauer (2011), lying is a speech, an act of insincere assertion.

Some adults in the homes, schools, and political terrain and the society at large lie about things and situations as such, they model lies for children. In the home for instance, a visitor comes to see a parent, he is told that the parent is not at home. The parent has instructed the children to tell the visitor so, whereas the parent is in the house but does not want to see the visitor.

In the political terrain, it is often heard and read in the news media during election campaigns, that some politicians and power seekers forge the certificates which they present as evidence for qualifications to contest. Some claim to be what they are not, and they are allowed to contest, and they may eventually win the election which is often celebrated in glamour.. The children see, and hear all these. They register, encode, maintain, transform, store and recall all these. They believe that lies and deceptions are clever ways of getting whatever one desired. In support of this, Abodike (2010) opined that adults intentionally or unintentionally teach children how to tell lies. There is also an adage which states 'what parents do in moderation, children do in excess'. They lie to their siblings and friends. They also lie to their teachers in the school. They imbibe this vice and it becomes a way of living.

The causes of undesirable and maladaptive behaviour among students could be health problems, personal or family problems. In collaboration, Abodike (2010) noted that undesirable and maladaptive behaviours in our society are deeply rooted in educational, political, social, economic, religious, health concerns, undesirable experiences at school and psychological factors. In the school, for instance, some teachers come late to school, and they sign earlier times in the attendance register in order to exonerate themselves from punishment. These actions lure the eyewitnesses into planning and preparing their own lies, and often lead to dishonesty in the entire school system. However, the liar is caught up with the act someday.

Cognitive restructuring is a useful technique pioneered by Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck. It is a generic name for the method used to disperse maladaptive thought in their stead especially, rational emotive behaviour where clients are encouraged to eliminate an irrational or destructive belief and way of thinking, and adopt a more rational or constructive one. Adeusi (2013) describe cognitive restructuring as a set of techniques

for becoming more aware of our thoughts and for modifying them where they are distorted or are not useful. It uses reason and evidence to replace distorted thought patterns with more accurate, believable and functional ones. Cognitive restructuring simply refers to changing irrational or distorted thoughts and learning rational and useful thoughts.

Effect, is the result of the power of effectiveness, and effectiveness is the degree to which desired goals are achieved, and the extent to which targeted problems are solved. In the context of this study, the researcher sees effect as the result of an action, activity or exercise

Attitude is an expression of favour or disfavour towards a person, a place, a thing or an event. Basically, attitude has two dimensions, positive attitude and negative attitude. Positive attitude to lying is being optimistic about lying, and denying reality. On the other hand, negative attitude to lying is to judge lying wrong (Hurka, 2014), and thereby accepting reality. .

Positive attitude to lying means accepting lying and denying reality, while negative attitude to lying indicates rejecting lying and accepting reality. Positive attitude to lying among students may result from faulty thinking such as 'one can escape punishment and achieve desires by lying'. This distorted thinking can be replaced with a more rational one thus, 'one can escape punishment and achieve desires by telling the truth'

The cognitive restructuring method used in this study is patterned after Abodike and Ebenebe (2016) therapeutic method, which has the following procedure;

-Familiarizing, sensitising and creating awareness on the detrimental consequences of lying

-Learning to challenge the thinking, 'lying is easy and clever means to escape punishment and achieve desires'.

-Replacing the faulty thinking with the rational one, 'one can escape punishment and achieve desires by telling the truth' (Abodike & Ebenebe, 2016).

Positive attitude to lying among students has been noted by researchers. For instance Abodike (2010) and Chinwuba (2010) observed the incidence of lying among

students, and that these students lie and don't seem to need encouragement and motivation, but they just lie.

Attempts by school teachers, parents and guardians to stop lying among children using admonitions and punitive measures, have proved abortive because they have been found to be ineffective. Also, previous studies on lying focused directly on lying as an act. Whereas, this study is specifically on attitude to lying. Its concern is on how to change positive attitude to lying among students to negative attitude. So put in question form, the problem of this study is how will cognitive restructuring affect students' attitude to lying in Anambra State? It was guided by the following research question and null hypothesis:

-What is the effect of cognitive restructuring on the students' attitude to lying of secondary school students when compared with those treated with conventional counselling using their pre test and post test mean scores?

- The effect of cognitive restructuring on secondary school students' attitude to lying in Anambra state will not be significant when compared with those who received conventional counselling using their mean scores.

Method

The study adopted .pre test post test control quasi experimental. The population was 429 students. Purposive sampling was usedto select 64 students from twocoeducational schools that had the highest number of students with positive attitude to lying. There were 32 students in the experimental group and also 32 students in the control group. The instrument used for data collection was Lying Attitude Inventory (LAI), developed by the researcher. This instrument has 2 parts, A and B. Part A solicited information on the bio-data of the students, while part B contained 30 items that has fifteen positive and fifteen negative statements. The participants were required to indicate their level of agreement with each statement choosing from a four-point scale of strongly agree, (SA, 4 points), Agree, (A, 3 points), Disagree, (D, 2 points), and strongly disagree, (SD, 1 point).

For the first fifteen items, the highest score was sixty (positive attitude) while the lowest was fifteen (negative attitude), and for the last fifteen items the highest score was sixty (negative attitude) while the lowest was fifteen (positive attitude).To get the total score for each subject, the values in the direct score items and those in the reversed score items were added up.

. The face and content validity of the instrument were established by three experts, two in the Department of Guidance and Counselling and one in Measurement and Evaluation, from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. A trial test was done using 20 participants. The scores obtained were used to establish the reliability measure of the instrument. Split half was done and using Cronbach Alpha statistics, and a reliability coefficient of r= 0.92 was obtained..This was considered adequate for the study.

The cognitive restructuring method used for the experimental group was as follows:

1. Sensitisation and awareness creation on the detrimental consequences of lying.

Incorporation of new facts (cognitive contents) to change the cognitive structure thus;

-Lying is being false, dishonest, deceptive, immoral and evil

-lying is living negatively and this separates one from reality

-Lying leads to destruction of trust from others, and loss of integrity.

-Lying causes stress, tension and anxiety

-Lying causes inconsistency and instability in daily living

-Lying distorts wholesome personality development-

-Lying destroys life and results in untimely death.

2. Challenging the thought and belief that' lying is an easy way to escape punishment and **achieve desires in life'.**

Cognitive challenge and refutation, thus;

-Can J reject this thought?

Ans: Yes I can

-Can I accept this thought?

Ans: Yes I can

-Can Isupport this thought?

Ans: No I cannot

-What evidence exists for the falseness of this thought and belief?

Ans: The incidences of Ananias and Sapphira, two judges wholied against Susanna and a harlot that claimed the living baby before king Solomon. All these evidences are in the holy Bible.

-Does any evidence exist for the truthfulness of this thought and belief?

Ans: No, however, one may achieve one's desires, immediately, by lying. Nevertheless such achievements carry with them tension and anxiety, and they neither last nor stand the test of time

-What worst thing could actually happen to me if I fail to get what I think I must get immediately?

Ans: Nothing at all, but disappointment which is very normal in life. Moreover, with hardwork, perseverance, commitment and dedication, one can get whatever one desires in life, through honest means.

3. Replacement with the thought and belief that 'one can escape punishment and achieve desires in life by telling the truth'.

Introduction of facts into the cognitive structure, thus;

-Truth is life and once there is life, there is hope.

-Hope founded on truth could lead to attainment of life desires.

-The incidences of a prostitute who actually owned the living baby, the thief on the cross and the beautiful Susanna, lied against by two judges, all in the holy Bible among others are evidences that one can achieve one's desires by telling the truth.

-The harlot who owned the living baby, the thief on the cross, and the beautiful Susanna achieved their desires by telling the truth.

-Similar experiences occurred and will continue to occur in life, where truth had prevailed and will continue to prevail. This is because truth is authority and authority is never the truth. Above all, truth stands the test of time.

-Therefore, one can escape punishment and achieve desires by telling the truth and being true.

The control group was given conventional counselling exposing them to the origin, meaning and consequences of lying. The date collected were analysed using mean scores to answer the research question and ANCOVA to test the hypothesis.

Results

Table 1: **Pretest and Posttest Attitude to Lying Mean Scores of Students Treated with Cognitive Restructuring Technique and those Treated with Conventional Counselling**

Source of Variation	N	Pretest Mean	Post test Mean	Lost Mean	Remark
Cognitive Restru.Tech.	32	77.44	31.59	45.85	Effective
Control	32	76.94	61.93	15.01	

Table 1 indicates that the students treated with cognitive restructuring technique had pretest mean score of 77.44 and posttest mean score of 31.59 with lost mean 45.85 in their attitude to lying, while those in the control group who received conventional counselling had pretest mean score of 76.94 and posttest mean score of 61.93 with lost mean 15.01.The post test mean scores for the two groups are below the baseline which is 75. However, in comparism, the mean loss for cognitive restructuring is far greater than the mean loss for control group who received conventional counselling. Therefore, cognitive restructuring technique is effective in reducing secondary students' attitude to lying.

Table 2: ANCOVA on the Attitude to Lying Posttest Mean Scores of Students Treated with Cognitive Restructuring Technique and those who received Conventional Counselling

Source of variation	**SS**	**df**	**MS**	**Cal. F**	**Pvalue**	**P ≤ 0.05**
Corrected Model	14798.272	2	7399.136			
Intercept	3.258	1	3.258			
PRETEST	66.381	1	66.381			
METHOD	14797.680	1	14797.680	408.59	0.000	S
Error	2209.212	61	36.217			
Total	156977.000	64				

Corrected Total	17007.484	63

Table 2 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 61df denominator, the calculated F is 408.59 with Pvalue of 0.00 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. So, the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on secondary school students' attitude to lying is significant..

Discussion

Effect of cognitive restructuring on the students' attitude to lying

In this study, cognitive restructuring, significantly reduced the students' attitude to lying, in contrast with the null hypothesis. It was found that there was a significant difference in the post test mean scores of cognitive restructuring and control group in their mean loss scores on Lying Attitude Inventory. This is because it greatly reduced the students' attitude to lying far below the norm of 75, when compared with the mean loss for those who received conventional counselling. This implies that cognitive restructuring treatment was effective on the students' attitude t lying.

This finding is similar to the finding of Akbari, Mikael and Zare (2010) and Ghamari, Kiani and Rafeie (2015). The results of these studies variously showed that cognitive restructuring is an effective therapy for modifying some undesirable behaviours hinged on internalized wrong beliefs. Negative thoughts and beliefs contribute to undesirable behaviour which impinges on wholesome personality development. By changing these thoughts and beliefs, students can behave in a more desirable manner. The change in the post test mean lying attitude score of the students in the experimental group indicates that the treatment had positive impact on them. Therefore, the use of cognitive restructuring in modifying attitude to lying among secondary school students is a veritable method to control attitude to lying among students in our secondary schools.

Conclusion

This study revealed that cognitive restructuring is an effective counselling technique to reverse positive attitude to lying among secondary school students. Therefore, cognitive restructuring should be adopted in secondary schools in order to reverse positive attitude to lying among them, to negative attitude.

Recommendation

Guidance counsellors, teachers and significant others in secondary schools, should adopt cognitive restructuring technique as a means of controlling attitude to lying among their students. The technique is quite simple and easy to learn and use. This will help to manage this behavioural challenge among students.

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