



## **Effects of Reality Therapy on Truancy Behaviour among Senior Secondary School Students in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area in Rivers State**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the effects of Reality therapy on truancy behaviour among Secondary School students in Opobo/Nkoro LGA of Rivers State. The study made use of the quasi experimental design. Two Research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study consists of 239 students from the four public secondary schools in Opobo/Nkoro LGA. Multisampling procedure was used to draw 81 truants for the study. The instrument used for the study was the SS2 register. The reliability was established through the test-retest method. The Pearson product moment correlation test was used to correlate the scores obtained from the two sets of scores and a coefficient value of 'r' 0.815 was obtained. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores of the pre-test and post-test to answer the research questions. While the independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that the treatment group improved positively on truancy behaviour after treatment contrary to the control group which showed persisted truancy behaviour. Based on the findings, the recommendations were made; the techniques of Reality Therapy should be taught to counselors at every level of their training. Also teachers should identify students with truancy behaviour in their schools and refer them to the school counselor for counseling.

**Keywords:** Reality therapy, truancy, behaviour and counseling.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Truancy is any intentional, unjustified, unauthorized or illegal absence from school, it is a deliberate absence from school. Truancy has been described as the act of absenting oneself from school without the permission of one's parents or school authorities (Baker 2010). Folgman and Hebberts, (2015), reported that many students do not take school activities serious, they come late to school or stay away totally from school. Some students' attitude to school work can come under truancy behaviour or tendency to be truant, for example seeking permission for excessive number of times to be absent from school. A student may call the school authorities on phone feigning one reason or the other why he/she would not be in school and therefore proceed to be absent from class. Some students wear their school uniform from home pretending to be away to school, but hang on the way and not get to school. Some may attend few classes but not attend the other classes. It has been noticed that some students do not get to school after leaving home while some eventually get to school at their leisure time. On every street in Nigeria, school children are seen hawking, assisting parents and other masters in various forms of trade, serving as bus conductor or even drivers during school hours. Some are even engaged as provision thugs. Some students during school hours roam about begging for money, helping travelers to carry their load to earn some money, some students loiter around the streets without regard for their future. There is, therefore, a need to search for means of reducing truancy in school.

A number of factors such as place of residence and gender may be related to truancy. The reasons for truancy behaviour among students in the rural areas may be different from those in urban areas. In rural areas, some students may be involved in staying in the stream Fishing or roaming about from one village to another, going to farm to gather fruits and nuts to sell. The parents in rural areas may exercise their authority to get their children to go to the farm. In the rural areas children may be required to use co-operative effort in farm work. At times they may work on the farm of a parent and at another time they move to the farm of another parent because some parents may collect loan which they have to repay with interest. This could make the parents need the assistance of their children in farm work and thereby reduce the attendance of their children in class. On the other hand, students residing in the urban area may have the habit of watching films including sex film on the internet, playing games and searching for friends on Facebook, E-buddy, Mxit Nimbuzz, Twitter, BB Messenger, communicating on Whatsapp, engaging in internet fraud popularly known as 'Yahoo'.

Akinsola and Nwajei (2013), Opined that there are some factors that can make male students more truant than the female students, for example playing games, internet fraudulent activities, auto-theft and vandalism. These acts appear to be more common among male students than female students. On the other hand, females are more likely to take additional dress along with their school uniform in which they can disguise themselves whenever they want to visit their boyfriends. The decision to absent oneself from school may stem from ones thought about school, some of their thoughts may be negative or irrational. Truancy may appear to be response to frustration and anxiety associated with difficult lessons.

A student who fails mathematics once may have distorted thought that he cannot pass the subject again. This may make him dislike the subject and the teacher, and thereby refuse to attend the class again until he turns to be truant, engaging in other unworthy activities. Some students may think that going to school is just a waste of time since; some rich people in the society may not have been educated.

Leach, Neutge and Zepk (2011), observed that students in secondary schools are not left out, the experience of being in secondary school brings with it several life challenges, as this is the period which spans the time between the onset of puberty and the onset of adulthood, known as the adolescent stage. Areas of change within this phase of life changes is physiological transformation due to the onset of puberty and psychosocial developments in terms of establishing self-identity and relationship with peers and cognitive development, in terms of their ability to think abstractly and to solve hypothetical problems. For some students, these changes may present particular problems for example, fulfilling social role expectation of the age group, such as completion of formal schooling and making important life decisions about future careers.

Counselling is very relevant in the contemporary world. In particular, school counseling occupies an important position in the society as it attempts to help student cope with various issues and developmental tasks. Counselling profession is dedicated to prevention, development, exploration, empowerment, change, reduction of truant and redemption in an increasingly complex and chaotic world (Adewuji, 2006). The essential nature of counseling process is that it evolves a set of techniques, strategies and methods used in assisting individuals (Akinade, Sokan & Osarenren, 2014) including students who are challenged with truancy behaviour.

Reality Therapy is a method of counseling and psychotherapy that was developed by William Glasser (1965). This approach has been successfully taught and practiced in many nations. In addition to other areas, Reality Therapy has been applied in schools, counseling and psycho-therapy (Glasser, 1990, 1993, 2002). (Wubbolding, 2010, Wubbolding & Brickelle, 2008).

Choice theory is the basis for Reality Therapy. According to choice theory all human beings are motivated by five genetic needs, they include survival, love and belonging, power of achievement, freedom or independence and fun that lives with individual all their lives (Glasser, 1998). Glasser believed that the need to love and belong is the primary need and also the most difficult need to satisfy because the involvement of another individual is required to meet this desire. Choice theory explains that everything we do is chosen and every behavior our best attempt to get what we want to satisfy our needs (Glasser).

The basic goal of Reality Therapy is to help clients learn better ways of fulfilling their needs. The procedures that lead to change are based on two specific assumptions (Glasser, 1992). The first assumption is that their present behaviour is not giving them what they want, the second assumption is that humans are motivated to change when they believed they can choose other behaviour that will get them closer to what they want.

Reality Therapy emphasizes the importance of the therapeutic relationship which is the foundation for effective counseling outcomes. Wubbolding and Brickell, (2008) counselors are able to develop positive relationship with clients when they possess the personal qualities of warmth, sincerity, congruence, understanding acceptance, concern, openness respect for the client and the willingness to be challenged by others (Corey 2009). These qualities allow school counselors to function as advocates who are able to instill a sense of hope in the students. When once the therapeutics relationship is been established the counselor assists students in gaining a deeper understanding of the sequences of their current behavior. Also at this point, students are helped to understand that they are not directly under the control of others, and that they have wide range of options to choose from Reality Therapy which provides the delivering system for helping individuals take more effective control of their lives.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Truancy poses a serious threat to learning in our schools, the school on the other hand do not seem to cope with this problem. This is because no sufficient attempts have been made to reduce or stop the problem. One thing that is clear, on the issue is that there is a growing tendency for school children to be involved in social vices, such as stealing, smoking, hawking on the streets e.t.c. This is because the home on longer performs its function of rearing and bringing up the child in an upright manner. Many parents are preoccupied with duties outside the homes that they have little or no time to keep watch over the action and behaviour of their children. However, truancy behaviour can be reduced using Reality Therapy, Therefore, the study is geared towards the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behaviour, among Senior Secondary School students in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area of Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to examine the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behavior among Secondary School Students in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area, Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to;

1. Find out the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behavior when the pre-test mean scores of experimental group is compared to the post-test mean scores of experimental group.
2. Determine the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behavior when the post-test mean scores of experimental group is compared to that of the control group.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised and answered to obtain the findings of the study:

1. What are the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behavior when the pre-test mean scores of experimental group is compared to the post-test mean scores?
2. What are the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behaviour when the post-test mean scores of experimental group is compared to the control group?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested significantly at 0.05 level:

1. There is no significant difference in the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behavior when the pre-test mean scores of experimental group is compared to the post-test mean scores.
2. There is no significant difference in the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behavior when the post-test mean scores of the Experimental Group is compared to the post-test mean scores of the Control Group.

### **Theoretical Review**

Reality/Choice Therapy by William Glasser: According to Ekanem (2016) William Glasser was trained in a traditional psychoanalytic procedure but became disenchanted with the approach during his work with female offenders at California. He believed that all human behavior was motivated by people's striving to

meet their basic needs. To him all people regardless of location or culture share the same essential needs. Some of these needs are physiological needs that maintain the organism. Apart from the traditional physiological needs, Glasser contended that there are two basic psychological needs, namely, the need to love and be loved, and the need to feel that one is worthwhile to oneself and to others. To Glasser “When a man acts in such a way that he gives and receives love, and feels worthwhile to himself and others, his behavior is right or moral” Glasser called these needs identity.

Reality Therapy views identity as a single basic requirement of all mankind. This means that we must see ourselves as somehow being different from everything else, that no matter where we go, we will not find another person who thinks, looks, acts and talks exactly as we do. The theory emphasizes the subjective manner in which an individual perceived and reach to his world from an internal locus of control. To Glasser, behavior is purposeful and specific behaviors are always generated from the discrepancy of closing the gap between what we want and what we perceive we are getting. To him, behavior comes from inside. The techniques in Reality Therapy was used by the researcher to counsel students with truancy behavior under experimental group 1. It is the treatment therapy for experimental group 1.

### **Personality Development**

Personality development is seen as a function of how well individuals learn to meet their needs. The degree to which they are capable of meeting their needs determines whether they function appropriately or not. “Those who can meet their needs are termed responsible and those who cannot irresponsible”. Responsible behavior leads to the satisfaction of personal needs without depriving others of their ability to fulfill their needs. Responsible behavior leads to “success identity” while “irresponsible one leads to failure identity”.

In Glasser’s view people are not endowed with the natural ability to satisfy needs but must be learned. These learning processes begin early. Those who develop success identity do so through a loving relationship with responsible parents. Responsible parents establish an involvement with their children through love, teaching, discipline and modeling. The prime prerequisite for the involvement is that the child feels loved for what he is. Glasser believed that children will not accept discipline and learn better ways of life unless they feel the parents care enough to show them the responsible way to behave. Secondly, the child has a sense of worth when he accepts responsibility for his actions. Self- worth comes from being able to carry out task to a successful conclusion.

Only through interactions with responsible parents and siblings that children can learn to love, and have a sense of worth and to behave responsibly. When such a growth environment is created, children will be able to satisfy their need and develop success identity. Such people will be able to govern their lives using the three R’s of reality therapy: Right, Responsible and accepted standard or nor against which behavior can be compared.

Responsibility is the ability to satisfy personal needs without interfering with other individuals desires to meet their own needs. It is the ability to meet personal needs within the given social and cultural context. This means that if people disagree with the status quo they work to change it within the prescribed system. Reality implies that people must understand that there is real world and that they must fulfill their needs within that framework. Personality in Glasser view is formed as the individual strives to meet both physiological and psychological needs. In order to learn what is right to behave responsibly and to understand and face reality.

### **Basic Assumptions of Reality Therapy**

Reality Therapy is based on the premises of choice which opined that we are self- determining beings. We are responsible for how we act, think, feel and our physiological states because we choose our behavior. The major assumption is that all behavior is aimed at satisfying the needs for, loved, survival belonging, power freedom and fun. When our acting and thinking are changed we indirectly influence our feelings as well as our physiological state. Choice therapy teaches ways to satisfy our wants and needs more effectively. Individuals who are behaving in appropriately are doing so because they have been unable to satisfy their needs. People generally lose touch with reality if they fail to meet their needs. Such people

are unable to operate on the basis of Right, Responsibility, and Reality. A maladaptive behavior occurs because of lack of involvement with others in which the individual have never learned to act responsibly.

**Goals of Counseling**

The goal of the Reality Therapy is to teach or train an individual in a short time on what he should have learned during normal growth. It is to teach the client through involvement on how he can meet needs, using the three Rs of Right, Responsibility and Reality as a guide. The Reality counselors focuses on changing the behavior of the client, which is labeled as either responsible or irresponsible. The goal of the Reality approach is to help the individual find a better way to meet his needs for love, power, freedom and belonging. Other goals include personal growth, improvement enchanted lifestyle, and better decision marking.

**Therapeutic Relationship**

The therapeutic relationship in Reality Therapy involves the therapist initiation the therapeutic process and creating an atmosphere of a supportive warm and challenging relationship. The therapist accepts and helps the clients fulfill their needs. These conditions have to be communicated to client. Throughout the process, both concern and involvement are demonstrated. The counselors avoid criticism and infuse clients’ excuses for not following the agreed plains.

The Reality Therapist believes in the individual ability to learn how to meet his needs. Loving relationship promotes successful personal identity. When a growth environment is created people are encouraged to satisfy their needs and as such success identity develops. In other to meet one’s needs, the individual has to learn what right, behavior is responsibly and how to face reality.

**METHODOLOGY**

The researcher adopted the quasi experimental design for the study. This design is defined for the study. This design is defined by Kpolovid (2010) as a study which uses strategies that are appropriate for acceptance to estimate situations of true experiment in a circumstance that do not permit the regulations and management of all relevant variables. The population of the study consists of 239 SS2 students from four public secondary schools in Opobo/Nkoro Local Government Area. The sampling technique used for the study is multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument used for the study is SS2 class registers. The data gathered from the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation scores of the pre-test and post-test while the null hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

**RESULTS**

Data presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings.

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data collection for the study, the interpretation of results as well as the findings that emerged from the analysis of the data.

**Data Presentation**

**Table 1: Characteristics of the Study**

<b>Groups involved in the Study</b>	<b>Treatment Assigned to the Group</b>	<b>Number of Clients Assigned for Treatment</b>
<b>Experimental group</b>	Reality Therapy	34
<b>Control Group</b>	Number Assigned treatment	
<b>Total Group</b>	1 treatment group	47
	1 control group	81

**Research Question 1:** *What are the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behavior when the pre-test mean scores of Experimental group is compared to the post-test mean scores?*

To answer this research question, the pre-test and post-test mean scores and standard deviation of experimental group were extracted and presented on Table 2.

**Table 2: Pre-test, Post-test Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Experimental Group**

Group	Test Type	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Experimental Group1(RT)	Pre-test	48	68	7.89	47
	Post-test	48	21	3.62	

Table 2 showed that experimental group 1 exposed to Reality Therapy had 48 respondents, with a pre-test mean score of 68 indicating truancy behavior with a standard deviation of 7.89 while the post-test mean score shows 21 indicating absence of truancy behavior with a standard deviation of 3.62, this simply means that Reality Therapy had a tremendous effect on truancy behavior. The mean difference of 47 between the pre-test and post-test mean scores shows the gains of Reality Therapy counselling techniques. Based on this revelation the answer to research question 1 is: Reality Therapy is very effective in improving truancy behavior among students judging from the pre-test and post-test mean scores compared.

**Research Question 2:** *What are the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behavior when the post-test mean scores of Experimental group is compared to that of the control group?*

To answer this research question, the post-test mean scores and standard deviation of the experimental group and that of the control group were extracted and presented on Table 3.

**Table 3: Post-test Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Group 1 (Reality Therapy)**

Group	Test Type	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Experimental Group1(RT)	Post-test	48	21	3.62	43
Control group	Post-test	47	64	7.62	

Table 3 showed that experimental group 1 exposed to Reality Therapy had 48 subjects, while the control group had 47 subjects. The experimental group had a post-test mean score of 21 on the truancy questionnaire indicating absence of truancy behavior with a standard deviation of 3.62 while the control group had a post-test mean score of 64 indicating truancy behavior with a standard deviation of 7.62 this simply means that Reality Therapy had a tremendous effect on truancy behavior. The mean difference of 43 between the post-test of experimental group 1 and that of the control group shows the gains of Reality therapy counselling techniques. Based on this revelation the answer to research question 2 is: Reality Therapy is very effective in improving truancy behavior judging from the post-test mean scores of experimental group 1 compared to that of the control group post-test mean scores.

### Hypotheses Testing

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behavior when the Pre-test mean scores of experimental group is compared to the Post-test mean scores.

This hypothesis was tested using the independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis is presented on Table 4 below.

**Table 4: t-test Comparison on the Significant Difference between the Pre-test Mean Scores of the Experimental Group and Post-test Mean Scores of the Experimental Group**

Group	N	Mean	Mean Diff.	SD	Df	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
RT Experimental Group 1	48		47		46	0.5	36	1.960	Reject H <sub>01</sub>
Pre-test		68		7.89					
Post-test		21		3.62					

Table 4 showed that the calculated t-test value of 36 is much higher than the critical value of t at 0.05 level of significance which is 1.960 with a degree of freedom of 46, this analogy calls for the rejection of  $H_{01}$  (null hypothesis 1) and the acceptance of  $H_{a1}$ , {alternate hypothesis 1) This therefore suggests that the pre-test mean scores of experimental group 1 and the post-test mean scores is statistically significant. Which means there is a significant statistical difference between the pre-test and post-test mean scores of students in experimental group.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the effects of Reality Therapy on truancy behavior when the Post-test mean scores of experimental group 1 are compared to the post-test mean scores of the control group.

This hypothesis was tested using the independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis is presented on Table 4.7 below.

**Table 5: t-test Comparison on the Significant Difference between the Post-test Mean Scores of Experimental Group and the Post-test Mean Scores of the Control Group**

Group	N	Post-Test Mean	Mean Diff.	SD	Df	P	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
RT Experimental Group 1	48	21	43	3.62	93				Reject $H_{02}$
						0.5	36	1.960	
Control group	47	64		7.62					

Table 5 shows that the calculated t-test value of 36 is much higher than the critical value of t at 0.05 level of significance which is 1.960 with a degree of freedom of 93, this analogy calls for the rejection of  $H_{02}$  (null hypothesis 2) and the acceptance of  $H_{a2}$ , {alternate hypothesis 2) This therefore suggests that the post-test mean scores of experimental group 1 and the post-test mean scores is of the control group are statistically significant. Which means there is a significant statistical difference between the post-test mean scores of experimental group 1 and the control group.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Effects of Reality Therapy (RT) on Truancy Behavior among Secondary School Students in Rivers State

The 1st finding indicated on table 4.2 revealed that Reality Therapy has a tremendous effect on truancy behavior among students in Rivers state. The pre-test and post-test mean scores of group 1 were compared to ascertain the results of this finding. That is, those exposed to Reality Therapy. The mean score of students in group 1 before exposure to Reality Therapy was 68 with a standard deviation of 7.89 indicating high level of truancy. After exposure to Reality Therapy they had a post-test mean score of 21 with a standard deviation of 3.62 indicating low level of truancy behavior. This simply indicates that Reality Therapy has a positive effect on truancy behavior. when these mean differences of the pre-test and post-test were further subjected to the t-test statistics that tested hypothesis 1 as indicated on table 4.9 the mean differences were found to be statistically significant with proofs. The calculated t-test value of 31.57 was much higher than the table value of t which is 2.021 with a degree of freedom of 32. Statistically speaking this result goes a long way to prove that Reality Therapy is effective on truancy behavior.

The 2<sup>th</sup> finding of this study on table 4.3 also affirms this finding when the post-test mean scores of experimental group 1 were further compared to that of the control group. The control group had a post-test mean score of 64 and a standard deviation of 7.62 indicating a high level of truancy behavior compared to the post-test mean score of 21 obtained by the experimental group 1 indicating low truancy

level. When the post-test mean scores of experimental group 2 and the control group were further subjected to the independent t-test statistics as indicated on table 4.10 the result was found to be statistically significant with proofs. The calculated t-test value of 33.78 was much higher than the critical value of t-test which was 1.990 with a degree of freedom of 79 on this basis the hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected, which means there is a significant difference between experimental group 1 and the control group.

The result of these findings corroborates that of Ojewola (2016) who investigated the efficacy of Reality Therapy procedure in reducing indiscipline among in-school adolescents. The study adopted the pre-test, post-test quasi experimental design, the result revealed that Reality Therapy proved effective in reducing indiscipline behavior among the respondents. In the same vein the results of this study also agree with that of Adam, Usman, and Msheliza (2017) who examined the effects of Reality Therapy group counselling intervention in reducing truancy behaviour among junior secondary school students in Toro Local Government Area in Bauchi State. Findings indicated that only those in the treatment group were able to reduce truancy behavior. The result is not surprising but expected because counselling intervention strategies are known to improve behavior problems.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the results of the study, the research drew conclusions;

Reality Therapy is an effective tool in remedying truancy behavior to a desirable one and can also be used to redirect students' irrational behavior to a rational one here and now.

The counselling approach adopted in this study was found to be effective in bringing about behavior change positively on truancy behavior. The control group showed no improvement as revealed by the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the group. This simply indicates that the gains of the treatment factors are quite enormous.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made as follows:

1. The techniques of Reality Therapy should be taught to counsellors at every level of their training, they should not be merely taught through theoretical processes but practically, in work-shops and professional conferences to make counsellors more effective in the discharge of their duties.
2. Truancy behavior is a common problem in public secondary schools across the state, other researchers can conduct same study using Reality Therapy.
3. Teachers should meticulously observe students with truancy behavior in secondary schools and refer them for counselling.

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