

EFFECTIVENESS OF VERBAL INFORMATION STRATEGY AND HAZARD EXPOSURE TECHNIQUE IN MODIFYING ADOLESCENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS DRUG ABUSE

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ABSTRACT

*The study tested the effectiveness of Verbal Information and Hazard Exposure Technique in modifying adolescents attitude towards Drug Abuse. A quasi – experimental design was used. Two treatment models and one control group were used, involving non-randomized control group, pre-test, post-test design. The sample comprised of (200) hundred adolescents from two boys and two girls secondary schools in Anambra State. The instrument used for the study was researchers made questionnaire on Adolescents Attitude Towards Drug Abuse (AATDA). Data obtained were analysed using *t* – test statistics. The findings showed that Hazard Exposure technique is more effective than Verbal Information Strategy in modifying adolescents attitude towards drug abuse. Based on the findings one of the recommendations was that Counsellors Association of Nigeria and Psychology Association of Nigeria should organize workshops and seminars on drug abuse using Hazard Exposure Technique in the society.*

Introduction

Drug and alcohol abuse has been part of human experience throughout history. Whichever way individuals abuse drugs, all they want to achieve, is altered state (Kalat, 1990). In Nigeria, drug abuse is not new either. As far back as 1974, Boroffka (1974) had identified adolescents and young adults as the group at risk in the abuse of drugs. Odejide and Akindele (1978), also observes the abuse of tranquilo – sedatives among Nigerian youths.

There has been an increased interest shown by the adolescent community world-wide in the abuse of licit and illicit drugs (Oyebode, 1993). In the United States of America, Shalada (1997), remarks that there was an expansion of drug abuse epidemic from the 1960's into the late 1970's. Also there was a subsequent turn around the decline which lasted for some years, and a resurgence in abuse since 1991.

She states that young people are being exposed to alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs as early as, even in elementary schools. In support of the above, Dowinko (1990) remarks that the flow of illicit drug in U.S. was so much that the law enforcement agencies found it difficult to control, even to primary school children.

In Nigeria for instance, the trend has changed too. Some years back, drug abuse was associated with undesirable elements such as gangsters, armed robbers, gamblers and prostitutes (Idowu, 1993), but in contemporary society, different groups of people especially the adolescents, show increased interest towards drug abuse. Experts like Ohaeri and Odejide (1993) Garba and Yakassai (1993), agree that drug abuse is a widespread phenomena among the adolescent population.

Researchers like Tarzi and Hedge (1990), Anshel (1992) and Umoh (1990) identified some factors responsible for adolescent drug abuse to include parental factors, personality make up, ignorance, sex, peer pressure, availability of the drugs and unemployment. In addition, Bruce (2000) and Yamagudi (1996), maintain that adolescents experiment with drugs in quest for new sensations and new experiences. They remark also that adolescents who regularly take alcohol, are more likely than others to try marijuana, and those who abuse marijuana, are more likely to try lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), heroin and amphetamine. Gambo (1992) observes that there are increased cases of admissions into mental health institutions for heroin and concaine abuse. This according to Ohaeri and Odejide (1993) is an indication that illicit drug consumption is constituting a serious health problem in Nigeria. In fact, the problem of drug abuse among adolescents may lead to some other problems in the family and society. It may lead to unproductive living, wasting away of human and material resources, unhappiness in the home, commitment of crime and premature death. All these things need to stop. Prevention we know is better than cure, so adolescents positive attitude towards drug abuse need to be modified, to save them from harmful effects of such abuse. Hence the study of the effectiveness of two counselling techniques in modifying adolescents attitude towards drug abuse in Anambra State. It is questionable how effective the techniques are in curbing the vice of drug abuse in the adolescent. Accordingly, the problem now is, how effective is Verbal Information Strategy and Hazard Exposure Technique in modifying adolescents attitude towards drug abuse? The purpose of the study was to test:

1. The effectiveness of verbal information strategy and hazard exposure technique in modifying adolescents' attitude towards drug abuse.

One research questions guided the study:

1. Which of the two techniques (VIS and HET) is more effective in modifying adolescents attitude towards drug abuse?

One null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study, tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean attitude change towards drug abuse of adolescents treated with VIS and those treated with HET.

Research Methodology

The study is quasi – experimental. The researchers used non – randomized control group, pre-test, post-test design.

Table 1: Three way Non-Randomized Quasi Experimental Design

Group	Pre-test	Independent Variable	Post-test
E	O ₁	X ₁	O ₂
E	O ₁	X ₁	O ₂
C	O ₁	-	O ₂

E represents the Experimental group, while
 C represents the control.

The study was conducted in Nnewi educational zone of Anambra state. The choice of this area is made due to the fact that there are so many adolescents roaming the streets in this area. The population of the study comprises all the SS II students in six out of 48 state public secondary schools in Nnewi educational zone. The sample of the study comprises 200 SS II students. SS II students were used because they were adolescents, who have been well adjusted in the school environment. The design of the study is non-randomized type, so the researchers carefully selected 4 schools (2 boys and 2 girls schools) out of the 6 selected schools, as treatment group, while the remaining two schools (1 boy and 1 girl school) were used as control group. A total of 400 questionnaires were given out to students and 200 out of 315 students who showed high attitude towards drug abuse were used for the study. The students who scored 2.51 and above as having positive attitude towards drug abuse. Questionnaire titled Adolescent Attitude Towards Drug Abuse (AATDA) was used. The questionnaire has two sections A and B. Section A has personal information while section B is on adolescents attitude towards drug abuse. The instrument was validated by 3 experts in guidance and counselling and measurement and evaluation of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability was done using Chrombach Alpha to get the internal consistency of 0.78. This was considered high enough for this study (Nworgu, 1991). In administration of the questionnaire, the researchers employed the services of the guidance counsellors in the selected schools for data collection. They administered the questionnaires according to the researchers instructions. The questionnaire were administered to the selected subjects before the treatment (pre-

test). After the treatment, the same questionnaire were administered to the same groups (post-test). The tests were given to both the treatment and control groups.

Experimental Procedure

After the pre-test, the researcher made treatment models were given to the respondents. After the treatment, students were given copies of the models to study.

Procedure

Counselling skills used: Rapport, reflection, observation, questioning, advising, clarification and teaching.

Treatment

Giving drug abuse information 40 minutes per lesson, and it was done thrice before administering the post-test. The first treatment was information giving, while the second was audio – visual (film show). This was done in two stages.

Results

Table 1: t – test comparison of the post-test scores in Treatment models 1 and 2 (VIS and HET) adolescents

Post-test of Treatment	No of Subject	\bar{X}	SD	Cal-t	Crit-t	
Method 1 (VIS)	100	27.68	4.88			
Method 2 (HET)	100	25.04	3.25	4.50	1.96	p>0.05

(P> 0.05, N = 200)

Table 1 above revealed that HET as a counselling technique is more effective than VIS in modifying adolescents attitude towards drug abuse. This is because HET has the lesser mean of 25.04 and standard deviation of 3.25 than VIS with mean score of 27.68 and standard deviation of 4.88 using the adjusted means. Also, in the same table 1 at 5 percent level of significance, the calculated t of 4.50 is greater than the critical t 1.96. This shows that there is significant difference between the mean scores of post-tests of HET and VIS. This indicates that the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2: t – test comparison of the changes in the mean scores of the attitudes of Adolescent Treated with VIS and HET

Post-test of Treatment	N	\bar{x}	SD	Cal-t	Crit-t	P>0.05
Method 1	100	27.68	4.88	4.50	1.96	0.05
Method 2	100	25.04	3.25			

From table 2 above it was observed that at 5 percent level of significance the calculated t 4.50 is greater than the critical t 1.96. It is therefore concluded that there is a significant difference in the change in attitudes of adolescents treated with VIS and those treated with HET.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed that HET is more effective than VIS in modifying adolescents attitude towards drug abuse. There is also significant difference between the effectiveness of the two strategies in modifying attitude. This could be the reason why Nwankwo (1998) said that hazards on films will draw the facts home to viewers. It means that people are more likely to be persuaded by someone who has special knowledge, or experience with the issue at hand. It also true now that the adage which says that seeing is believing is real and could be said to be the fundamental principle behind the introduction of hazard exposure technique in this study. This is because face-to-face communication is the most effective way of changing attitude.

The findings also revealed that the two psychological techniques VIS and HET are based on the basic principles of the theories of attitude change which include the fact that since attitudes are learnt, they could be unlearned through the processes of teaching and learning interaction and mere communication (Onyeneje, 1995). There is no doubt that since attitudes are acquired in the process of growth or social interaction and other social experiences, it could equally be modified. They are learned and so they can be unlearned as shown in the findings of this study. The findings of the study which include that there is a significant change in the attitudes of adolescents towards drug abuse after HET and VIS application agree with Onyeneje (1995) and Nwankwo (1998) who suggested that attitude as underlying learned predispositions could be changed by any technique that is known to increase or decrease learning. In addition, the findings of this study support the earlier findings of Gilberts (1994) which include that informational approaches result in attitude change in an incongrent direction. They also agree with Justin (1996) findings when stated through value clarification, the effective components of the subjects are modelled while through the information based method, the cognitive components are modelled. Hence, the verbal information strategy and Hazard exposure technique information package are seen as capable of affecting both the cognitive and effective components of the adolescents for good.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Hazard Exposure Technique is more effective than Verbal Information Strategy in modifying adolescents attitude towards drug abuse. The two strategies used could comfortably be used on adolescents. therefore, the strategies if adopted appropriately by guidance counsellors, psychologists and social workers would most likely minimize the reported incidence of drug abuse among adolescents in the society.

The authors therefore recommended that:

1. Social workers and psychologists should make use of any of the two strategies in assisting the youths in the society.
2. Counselling Association of Nigeria and Psychology Association of Nigeria should organise workshops and seminars on drug abuse using Hazard Exposure technique in the society. These seminars and workshops could be school based so that a good number of children and adolescents could be reached. This will in no small measure help in changing the attitude of the children and adolescents towards drug abuse.
3. School base drug campaign and programme should be organised by the government once in a term. The programme should cut across primary and secondary schools.

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