

Effects of Emotional Intelligence Training and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on Academic Cheating Potential and Study Habit Problems among Secondary School Students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

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Abstract: This study investigated the effects of emotional intelligence training and rational emotive behaviour therapy on academic cheating potential and study habit problems among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria. It adopted a pre-test post-test control group quasi-experimental design. A sample of 240 Senior Secondary Two students was randomly selected from six schools using multistage sampling technique. Instruments used for data collection included Examination Reaction Scale (ERS) and Study Habit Inventory (SHI). Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) were used to analyze the formulated hypotheses at the .05 level of significance. Results revealed that there was no significant effect of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, Emotional Intelligence Training, and control on participants' academic cheating potential and study habit problems ($F_{(4,418)} = 2.319$, $p > .05$). Nevertheless, there was a significant main effect of treatments on participants' academic cheating potential ($F_{(2,211)} = 4.460$; $p < .05$), and rational emotive behaviour therapy appeared to be a better strategy. Also, school type moderated the effect of treatments on the participants' academic cheating potential and study habit problems ($F_{(4,418)} = 5.586$; $p < .05$). Finally, it was recommended that governments' educational parastatals, school administrators, teachers, counsellors, and other educational stakeholders should fully embrace rational emotive behaviour therapy and emotional intelligence training to combat academic cheating behaviour and study habit problems among students.

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence training, rational emotive behaviour therapy, academic cheating potential, study habit problems, students.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education, which involves the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and character through learning has increasingly become a breeding ground of an endemic behavioural malady known as academic cheating. Cheating is commonly understood as an act of winning an advantage or profit in a dishonest way. It is a behaviour that inflicts indelible pains of regret and confusion on those who partake in it and creates attitude of mistrust among humans. Academic cheating comprises all forms of fraudulent actions or attempts by a student to use unauthorised or unacceptable means in any academic work (Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2003 cited in Theart, 2011). Commonly practised forms of academic cheating include bribing examination officials to leak examination question papers, smuggling academic materials into the examination hall, impersonation, writing notes on laps, handkerchiefs, etc. Academic cheating has become very pervasive and unselective in nature (Hassan, 2016) as it cuts across all levels of the educational system from primary school level through the secondary to tertiary institutions. For instance, more than half of teenagers in schools indicated that they have cheated on a test during the immediate recent year while 34 percent of same students have done it more than twice within same period (Novotney, 2011).

As expressed by Sonnie (2004), academic cheating is gradually and silently becoming an integral component of the nations' educational system. It is no longer news that academic cheating thrives these days among the highly recognized institutional bodies and syndicates. Many parents who are expected to be role models are heavily involved in aiding and abetting their children in academic cheating. Many school teachers, proprietors, and other stakeholders have turned academic cheating to a business venture. Causes for academic cheating include general moral decadence, undue emphasis on examination result and certificate,

quest for material wealth, poor teaching/learning habits, poor conditions under which examinations are conducted, greed of school heads and examiners, poor logistics for examinations, the desire to satisfy parents, poor study habits, unpreparedness of students for examinations, their lack of self-confidence, peer/group influence, financial benefits derived by vendors of examination papers, improper prosecution of culprit and insincerity in tackling the problem, incessant staff strikes that often disrupt the school programme, and unhealthy competition and agitation for academic promotion among faculty members.

Despite the stipulation of twenty-one years' imprisonment for those caught in academic misconduct by the Examination Malpractices and Miscellaneous Offences Act of Nigeria, incidence of academic cheating continues to rise. All deterrent efforts so far made to stem this malaise have proved ineffective.

Study habit has been described as the degree to which a learner identifies with learning activities such as attending classes, doing assignments or homework promptly, reading, taking tests or examinations, devoting time for private studies, and associating adequately with the teacher and peer group. It is the total behavioural patterns (ideational, verbal, psychomotor, emotional and neurophysiologic) that determines the purpose and enforces practices that the individual adopts in order to learn and achieve competence' (Olatoye, 2009). Good study habits are logically known to be determinants of good academic achievement while poor study habit problems such as rote learning often result to poor academic achievement. Developing good study habits is one of the most important factors that protect one from intentionally or unintentionally engaging in academic cheating.

There are three effective study habits that surprisingly are not being utilized by many students. These are re-reading, highlighting or underlining, and summarizing. Re-reading is time-intensive, highlighting is simpler to use and requires less time. Summarizing requires extensive training and is a veritable strategy to learners who have mastered the skill (Grohol, 2013).

Presently, many students lack self-awareness alongside the skills that are needed for successful educational and life attainment. There is no doubt that 21st century student needs better self-understanding judging from various life events that are constantly competing for their attention. In view of this fact, students need to be taught the measures of combating pervasive academic cheating which often emanates from study habit problems. It is on this basis that emotional intelligence training and rational emotive behaviour therapy are chosen as the two treatment packages that could effectively ameliorate the problems of academic cheating and study habit.

Nwadinigwe&Azuka-Obieke (2012) citing Salovey and Mayer, (1990) defines emotional intelligence (EI) as a type of aptitude that involves the ability to monitor one's feelings and that of others, and as well being able to discriminate among the two entities. It as well serves as an element of gathering information that guide one's behaviour. Emotional intelligence is an important skill that makes it possible for a person to be sensitive towards emotions.

Emotional intelligence skills enable people to reduce negative stress in their life, build healthy relationships, communicate effectively, and develop emotional health. These same skills and competencies are critical to academic achievement (Nwadinigwe&Azuka-Obieke, 2012). Although emotional intelligence skills had proved to have a positive influence on retention and students' academic achievement, findings on their influence on study habit problems and potential for academic cheating has not been conclusive. Hence, there arises the need for further probing the possibility of emotional intelligence training averting potential for academic cheating and study habit problems.

The rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT) is the second treatment package in this study. Rational emotive behaviour therapy is the original form of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) created by Albert Ellis in the late 1950's. This therapy is based on the assumption that cognition, emotion, and behaviour are not separate human functions but are, instead, intrinsically integrated and holistic. REBT emphasizes behavioural change and self-regulation along with the examination and possible modification of thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and expectations (Webb & Myrick, 2003). Researchers have shown that REBT can be successfully used in altering negative behaviours such as examination anxiety and fear associated with speech, feeling of inferiority, low self-esteem, and many more among adolescents (Badejo& Gandonu, 2010). However, the effectiveness of this therapy in inhibiting academic cheating potentials and study habit problems particularly in Nigeria has not been investigated among secondary students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the effects of emotional intelligence training and rational emotive therapy on the participants' potential for academic cheating and study habit problem.
2. There is no significant difference in the effect of emotional intelligence training and rational emotive behaviour therapy on participants' potential for academic cheating.
3. There is no significant difference in the effect of emotional intelligence training and rational emotive behaviour therapy on participants' study habit problem.

Method

This study adopted the pre-test, post-test and control group quasi-experimental research design. This involved treatment packages and three levels of treatment, namely, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT), Emotional Intelligence Training (EIT), and a Control Group.

Population

The population of this study consisted of all the 53,182 Senior Secondary School Two (SSS2) students in both the public and the private secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Participants

A sample of 240 students was chosen from the population through the multistage sampling technique. Ogun State is divided into three strata, which are its senatorial districts (Ogun East, Ogun Central, and Ogun West). A local government area was then chosen from each of the three senatorial districts through simple random sampling. This was followed by the choice of two secondary schools from each local government area also through simple random sampling technique. Forty students were then randomly chosen from each of the schools.

Instruments

The instruments used for data collection were: (1) Demographic Data Inventory (DDI), (2) Examination Reaction Scale (ERS), and (2) Study Habit Inventory (SHI). Further information is given on each of these scales below:

Demographic Data Inventory (DDI)

The Demographic Data Inventory (DDI) was developed by the researchers and designed to gather data on the demographic characteristics of the participants such as gender, age, school type, socio-economic status, and religious affiliation.

Examination Reaction Scale (ERS)

The Examination Reaction Scale (ERS) was developed by Hassan (2004) to measure academic cheating potentials. It consists of 24 items formatted as a 4-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. The developer reported a Cronbach's alpha of .79 and a test-retest reliability coefficient of .84 for the scale. This indicated that the instrument has high internal consistency reliability and stability coefficients. The ERS also demonstrated high degree of construct validity by showing expected negative correlations with measures of academic preparedness.

Study Habit Inventory (SHI)

Study Habit Inventory (SHI) by Bakare (1977) to measure different aspects of study habits of secondary school students. The SHI consists of eight sub-scales, namely, homework and assignments, time allocation, reading and note taking, study period procedures, concentration, written work, examinations, and teacher consultation. The developer reported coefficients of stability ranging from 0.73 to 0.84 and Cronbach's alpha of between 0.78 and 0.85 for the sub-scales of the scale. Factor analysis and significant inter-group differences between high and low achieving students have been used to confirm the construct validity of the SHI.

Procedure

The researchers personally administered the instruments on the participants after meeting and obtaining permission from the authority in each school. The participants were given direction on how to complete the instruments and implored to give frank and sincere responses to the items. The instruments were then distributed and later collected. A 100% return rate was achieved.

Method of Data Analysis

Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 alpha level using IBM SPSS Version 20 software package.

II. RESULTS

Hypothesis One

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the effects of emotional intelligence training and rational emotive behaviour therapy on the participants' potential for academic cheating and study habit problem.

Table 1: Multivariate Analysis of Covariance of the Effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, Emotional Intelligence Training and Control on Participants' Potential for Academic Cheating and Study Habit Problem

| | Value | F | Hypothesis df | Error df | Sig. |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------|----------|------|
| Pillai's trace | .043 | 2.296 | 4.000 | 422.000 | .058 |
| Wilks' lambda | .957 | 2.308 ^b | 4.000 | 420.000 | .057 |
| Hotelling's trace | .044 | 2.319 | 4.000 | 418.000 | .056 |
| Roy's largest root | .043 | 4.546 ^c | 2.000 | 211.000 | .012 |

Each F tests the multivariate effect of group. These tests are based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

a Exact statistic

b The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

The Hotelling's Trace in the results in Table 4.4 revealed no significant treatment effects of rational emotive behaviour therapy and emotional intelligence on participants' potential for academic cheating and study habit problem ($F_{(4,418)} = 2.319$; $p > .05$). Also, no significant effects were observed for gender ($F_{(2,210)} = .274$; $p > .05$) and school type ($F_{(2,210)} = .359$; $p > .05$). Again, the result indicated no significant two-way interaction effect of gender and treatment (rational emotive behaviour therapy, emotional intelligence and control) on participants' potential for academic cheating and study habit problem ($F_{(4,418)} = 1.430$; $p > .05$). However, there was a significant interaction effect of school type and treatment (rational emotive behaviour therapy, emotional intelligence and control) on participants' potential for academic cheating and study habit problem ($F_{(4,418)} = 5.586$; $p < .05$). No significant two-way interaction effect of gender and school type on participants' potential for academic cheating and study habit problem ($F_{(2,210)} = 2.603$; $p > .05$) was found. In addition, the result revealed no three-way interaction effect of treatment (rational emotive behaviour therapy, emotional intelligence and control) and gender and school type on participants' potential for academic cheating and study habit problem ($F_{(4,418)} = .440$; $p > .05$).

Hypothesis Two

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the effect of Emotional Intelligence Training and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on participants' potential for academic cheating.

Table 2: Analysis of Covariance for the Effect of Emotional Intelligence Training and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on Potential for Academic Cheating

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Contrast | 204.424 | 2 | 102.212 | 1.675 | .213 |
| Error | 14463.496 | 237 | 61.027 | | |

The F tests the effect of group. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

Table 2 revealed non-significant results ($F_{(2, 237)} = 1.675$, $p > .05$). The null hypothesis of nodifference in the effect of Emotional Intelligence Training and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on participants' potential for academic cheating was therefore upheld.

Hypothesis Three

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the effect of Emotional Intelligence Training and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on participants' study habit problem.

Table 3: Analysis of Covariance for the Effect of Emotional Intelligence Training and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on Study Habit Problem

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Contrast | 504.965 | 2 | 252.483 | 1.776 | .207 |
| Error | 33691.426 | 237 | 142.158 | | |

The F tests the effect of group. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

Table 3 revealed non-significant results ($F_{(2, 237)} = 1.776, p > .05$). The null hypothesis of no significant difference in the effect of emotional intelligence training and rational emotive behaviour therapy on participants' potential for academic cheating was therefore upheld.

III. DISCUSSION

Previous studies have neglected to examine the effects of Emotional Intelligence Training and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on academic cheating potential and study habit problems among secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria. The finding of a non-significant difference in the effects of emotional intelligence training and rational emotive behaviour therapy on the participants' potential for academic cheating and study habit problem also indicated that the therapies were ineffective in solving the combined problems of academic cheating and study habit. This result contradicted the researcher's expectation that REBT would be significantly more effective than emotional intelligence training in decreasing potential for academic cheating and study habit problems. It follows therefore that a combination of both therapeutic interventions will help in solving the problem of academic cheating and poor study habit among secondary school students. Secondly, the finding of no significant difference in the effect of emotional intelligence training and rational emotive behaviour therapy on participants' potential for academic cheating indicated that both therapies are similarly efficacious in their effects on academic cheating potentials and study habit problems among the participants. A combination of both therapies would logically help in inhibiting academic cheating potentials and study habit deficiency among the population of this study. Finally, the finding of no significant difference in the effect of emotional intelligence training and rational emotive behaviour therapy on participants' study habit problem also implies that the two therapies were equally effective in ameliorating academic cheating and study habit problems. The combination of the two therapies could significantly reverse the problems of academic cheating and study habit that are so prevalent among students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that extended or longer emotional intelligence and rational emotive behaviour therapeutic intervention periods than the six-week duration used for the treatments in this study should be used in order to more significantly and effectively solve the potential for academic cheating and study habit problems. This longer intervention period is crucial because of the addictive and strongly rooted nature of academic cheating and study habit problems which have often been acquired or learned over a relatively long period of time and are therefore not easy to do away with within a short time. Counsellors, educational psychologists, and other help related professionals in the educational system should be further trained through seminars and workshops in order to be more familiar with current trends in emotional intelligence training and rational emotive behaviour therapy. They should massively utilize the two psychotherapies right from the basic educational level in order to nip the twin problems of academic cheating potentials and study habit problems in the bud. Parents should also be exposed to the basic knowledge of both rational emotive behaviour therapy and emotional intelligence training particularly as related to academic cheating and study habit problems through Parent-Teachers' Association meetings to enable the parents to be informed and prepared to help curb these two great enemies of true and holistic education right from home.

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