

The Impact of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on Niger Delta University Students' Irrational Thoughts and Feelings: A Panacea for Youth Restiveness and Militancy in the Niger Delta Area of Nigeria

Dr. Johnson Etaverho Maciver, Ph.D¹, Dr. Patrick Chukwumeka Igbojinwaekwu*, Ph.D²

¹Department of Educational Foundations, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

²Department Of Science Education, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

*Corresponding author: Dr Patrick Chukwumeka Igbojinwaekwu

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Abstract

This study focused on the efficacy of the rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in ameliorating the incidence of youth restiveness and militancy in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. This study adopted the quasi-experimental research design. The participants of the study were thirty-five year two students from an intact two hundred level (200L) class as the experimental group and another thirty from year three hundred level students of an intact class, as the control group, from Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State of Nigeria. The treatment in the study has two levels, pre-treatment and post-treatment. Validated and reliable instrument called 'Rational Emotive Inventory was used for data collection. This study has one research question and two null hypotheses to guide it. The mean, standard deviation and z-test statistics were used to analyse data in this study. The results of the study revealed a significant effect of the Rational Emotive Therapy on the experimental group, unlike the control group that received an inert treatment. From the study, the use of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in the Universities of the Niger Delia area was recommended to work on the mindset of the student's restiveness and militancy in this country.

Keywords: Impact, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy, Students, Restiveness, Irrational thoughts, Militancy.

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INTRODUCTION

Terms like militancy, terrorism, kidnapping or hostage takings which were initially alien to the Nigerian culture and ways of life of our people have become a common household phenomena, today. It is now a pride to hear our restive youths say that they are militants with heavy pays since the era of Yar- adua/Goodluck government when these youths were heavily paid amnesty [1]. Normally, these activities of the youths usually involve severe attacks, killings and maiming of innocent Nigerians coupled with bombing of government establishments, oil blocks, media houses, religious houses, banks, markets and private organizations with ignominy. Other awesome acts of terrorism and restiveness have come to include cultism, arms insurgency, hostage taking of notable expatriate workers, prominent Nigerian citizens, kidnapping, Oil bunkering and other forms of restiveness particularly in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria [1]. Worth mentioning are the incessant practices of bank robbery with incidents of massive killing of policemen and innocents citizens. These crimes which are products of these youths mindsets have come to include mass rape, ritual killings and awesome political assassinations which are

equally no news in our society today. Most heart throbbing is the fact that young teenagers of 14 and 17 years of age are today involved in Boko Haram Suicide bombings and killings in Borno, Adamawa, Kaduna, e.t.c in Mosques, churches, motor packs, banks and public places [2].

Mainly, as a result of unemployment, bad governance, poverty and excess energy. young ones are lured into violence and crimes called restiveness [3]. On the other hand, youth restiveness is seen by Ekoja and Adole (2008) as a form of gang delinquency through cultism. Often, organized body of youths, always, pushed by violence and disruption of lawful activities are called restive youths who by force demand desired results from constituted authority [3]. Infact, these involve peer motivated excitement of studentship and overly patriotic or nationalistic pursuits, bad governance, poverty, economic exploitation. poor educational opportunities, et-cetera.

Militancy is similar to terrorism. They are a state of breakdown of law and order in the society on the assumption that there is no justice and equality

provided by the government [3]. In the post independent era in Nigeria, militancy was not heard of. But in the 1990 to date, militancy cropped up in the Niger Delta and it became fashionable to be a militant youth like the Boko Haram terrorists in the North Eastern Nigeria [4].

In truism, the twin evils that are starring the Niger Delta youths in the face is restiveness and terrorism. There are several suggested ways of dealing with these unacceptable mannerisms in our society. Garth Sorenson's instructional model in teaching psychological principle to resolve behavioural problems is very effective and has been used severally [1]. In the same vein, Ibrahim in Maciver [3] suggests the use of psychotherapy in exchanging the feelings and behaviours of such youths through the Rational Emotive Therapy. The use of recreational facilities in schools as a panacea for youth restiveness was equally suggested by Elegbeleye [5] in one of his studies. Another useful suggested method was that youth restiveness could be curbed through the provision of the right information and libraries to create enlightenment among the youths so that they would become responsible citizens [1]. In addition, the use of vocational skills and counseling through cognitive restructuring, rewards, advocacy visits and mass media to ameliorate youth restiveness/militancy was suggested by Ekoja and Adole [6].

From the above liming, it is an established fact that counseling is the most appropriate technique of ameliorating youth restiveness, terrorism and militancy in Nigeria and, elsewhere in the world. Despite the fact that these suggestions and more have been there over the years, yet militancy, terrorism in North west and general restiveness of Nigerian youths persist on daily counts and highly frequent. Be that as it may, these menace or cankerworms of militancy, terrorism and restiveness must be curbed or abrogated before they eat too deep into the fabrics of our society, Nigeria. It is against this background that the researchers intend to proffer a possible psychology (counseling remedy) to the incessant cases of militancy, restiveness and terrorism in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Thus, the application of Rational Emotive Therapy by Albert Ellis in the Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria as a proactive remediation to these canker worms mentioned above.

Albert Ellis — Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy

In 1955, Albert Ellis developed the Rational Emotive Therapy and has since then given birth to other cognitive- behavioural therapies variously designed for persons who are in need of a scientific present-focused and active treatment for coping with the difficulties of their lives [3]. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy unfolds the simple principles that one is responsible for his own emotions and actions, and that man's irrational thinking is responsible for man's harmful emotions and

dysfunctional behaviours, that is why man is both rational and irrational. Again, it emphasized the fact that man can learn more realistic views and will experience a deeper acceptance of himself and greater satisfactions in life by developing a reality based perspectives in life. The theory truly is based on the relationship among thinking, feeling and action as expressed by an individual with self-control procedures and cautious mannerisms.

This model described how an individual can acquire rational or irrational belief and posits that the existence of a fact is A, while B is one's self analysis of the fact (A) and C is the consequence of his analysis of B as perceived by him (the ABC model of Ellis). Ellis, from the model presented eleven irrational beliefs or Opinions that man can display in the principle such as;

- One needs someone stronger than oneself on which to rely instead of standing on ones own two feet.
- One must be thoroughly competent, intelligent and achieving in all respects instead of looking at someone as an imperfect being.
- One must be loved and or approved and treated reasonably by everyone for everything he does.
- Certain acts are wrong, wicked and that people that perform them should be severely dealt with.
- It is easier to avoid than face life difficulties and self responsibilities instead of looking directly at the problem.
- Unhappiness is externally caused and not forced on one by outside people and events.
- One past experiences and events determine his present behaviours and it strongly affected, must indefinitely have similar effects.
- One has no control over his emotions and cannot help feeling certain things instead of accepting the control we can have over our lives.
- If something once affected one's life, it should always affect it instead of learning from experience.
- It is important to our existence what other people do instead of realizing people deficiencies are their own problems.
- If something is fearsome or dangerous, one must be terribly concerned about it instead of facing it head on.

As a result of the aforementioned irrational thoughts and beliefs which result in man's consistent demands (must) for self approval, such situations in turn cause man to have or suffer from anxiety, depression, lack of assertiveness and demand for fair treatment conditionally. This gives rise to man's violence, hostility and resentment. As a result of these fall outs from man's irrational thoughts and beliefs, the

following counseling were opined by Ellis, which must be aimed at:

- Teaching clients how to re-think, challenge and contradict faulty internalized thoughts.
- Helping clients to understanding how self talks are causing and maintaining certain distances and unhappiness in their lives.
- Encouraging clients to perceive their situations as the cause of their emotional disturbances and stress.
- Helping clients to be healed of their unreason by reason.
- Encouraging clients to bring into focus the logical and irrational ideas to enable them readjust their thinking in a logical manner which is positive.

These objectives above could be achieved by the counselors through rapport which is sincere, warm relationship, contradiction and finally insight-interpretative techniques so as to teach the clients to ameliorate these problems self inflicted by them. As professional counselors, the use of denial, persuasion or cajoling can be very effective. Coaxively, these trained professionals can pet the clients to engage in some activities that will dissolve the former belief systems. Infact, these therapy has to do with the teaching of the clients on how to reverbitalize sentences in a more logical and self-helping manners and how to rethink. Finally, Rational Emotive Therapy as model is deductive, directive and re-educative approach of counseling that emphasizes cognition and restoration of morality to clients by teaching the most appropriate and positive approach to life [7]. Niger Delta University students and youths, elsewhere, in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria will think more rationally and take wise decisions before going into illegalities if Rational Emotive Therapy is taught to these adolescents in the area.

Research Question

One research question was formulated to guide this study as shown below:

1. What is the effectiveness of Rational Emotive Behaviours Therapy in resolving youth restiveness, militancy and terrorism in Niger Delta University?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were posted to further guide this study as shown below:

- There is no significant effect of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on University students irrational thoughts and feelings.
- There is no significant difference between the responses of Experimental and Control groups when treated with Rational Emotive Therapy.

METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

The research design of this study is the quasi-experimental with intact lecture group at the Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria with political science 300 and 200 levels students of Guidance and counseling options in Educational Foundations Department. Out of a population of 151 students in 200 level as an experimental group 35 students were used for the study. The 300 level students of 30 formed the control group. To elicit data for the study, a simple questionnaire called “Rational Emotive Inventory (REI)” was constructed, validated and used for this research. Again the used scale (instrument) was constructed using item-statements that were adapted from the eleven irrational statements of Albert Ellis with four response categories as strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Which were weighted as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively for this study. Cronbach Alpha statistic was used to determine the reliability coefficient of REI as 0.61 and was judged as good enough for this study.

The total period for treatment was twelve weeks. There were two groups. Group A, which was the 200 level students had 35 members. This was the experimental group. While group B, which was the control group (the 300 level students) had 30 members. Out of the twelve weeks, eleven weeks were used for the treatment and one week for a general summary. Within the eleven weeks, the eleven irrational statements of Albert Ellis were discussed every Friday during the meeting. This group argued, disputed, explained and put in the right perspective to enable the participants become aware of the fact that the unacceptable behaviours they often display are as a result of their internalized illogical thoughts and feelings [4]. When the treatment process started, the researchers provided the participants with rapport and warmth which resulted in active participations by the members.

On Wednesdays, for the eleven weeks the control group had contacts, but their topical issue of discussion was “Human Trafficking”. It was identified as a “security challenge in Nigeria”. It was strictly ensured that the treatment group do not relate with the control group by the researchers who were in charge of the two programmes.

The participants in both the experimental and control groups were made to react or fill the questionnaires (REI) which were retrieved from them, immediately. Obtained results were weighted and kept as pre-treatment scores or results. To obtain the post-treatment scores or results, the same instrument were administered after reshuffling the items to avoid easy recall and blockage of extraneous variables. After these, the two results (pre-and post-results) were used for data analysis.

The mean, standard deviation and z-test statistics were employed during the data analysis. The mean and Standard Deviation was used to answer the only research, question. The null hypotheses, using the z-test statistics, were tested at 0.05 probability level of significance. Scores that was higher than 2.5 show irrational thoughts (restiveness, militancy and terrorism). The scores lower than 2.5 show evidence of rational thoughts in the individuals. Tables 1-3 show the analyzed data and results.

DATE ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data collected for this study were analysed according to the stated research question and null hypotheses, in order, to give answer to the research question and subject the null hypotheses to test.

Research Question 1

What is the effectiveness of Rational Emotive Behaviours Therapy in resolving youth restiveness, militancy and terrorism in Niger Delta University, Nigeria?

The answer to research question 1 is as shown in Table-1.

Table-1: Responses of control and experimental groups on irrational statements after treatment

S/N	Statement	Control Group		Experimental Group	
		Mean	S/D	Mean	S/D
1	One must be concerned with what other people do instead of realizing their deficiencies as theirs	3.63	0.50	2.15	0.97
2	One must be seriously devastated by past experiences and face similar effects in future as consequences	3.47	0.45	2.25	0.20
3	One must be approved, trusted reasonably and loving by everyone or else he is nobody whatever he does	3.85	0.69	2.01	0.85
4	Unhappiness is caused and forced by external people	3.17	0.57	2.36	0.65
5	The wicked must be severally punished for their wrong acts	3.66	0.45	2.06	0.20
6	One must rely on a stronger person instead of standing alone on his two feet	3.30	0.72	1.73	0.70
7	It makes no sense being concerned and facing a fearsome or dangerous something	3.69	0.70	2.23	0.49
8	One must avoid life difficulties and self responsibilities completely	3.63	0.32	2.14	0.80
9	Nobody has control over his emotions and cannot therefore control his life	3.56	0.47	2.15	0.89
10	One must be thoroughly competent, intelligent and achieving in life	3.46	0.65	2.23	0.50
11	It is of no use learning from what one had in the past	3.04	0.56	2.17	0.42

Table-1 shows that participants who were treated with the Rational Emotive Therapy scored below mean 2.5 in all of the eleven irrational statements of the scale. But participants under the control group had high scores above mean 2.5.

Item 3, for instance, had mean score of 3.85, but on the experimental group it was only 2.01 mean score. Irrationally, this statement had it that one must be approved, loved and treated reasonably by everyone. This negative notion gives rise to violence and resentment, so as, to earn it by the youth.

Another item of note is number 5 which says that the wicked must be severely punished for their wrong acts. On the contrary, on the treated or experimental group, the mean was just 2.06 while the control group had 3.66. This is a wide difference from the views of the groups.

In addition, item 6 which says that one must rely on a stronger person instead of standing alone on his two feet had 3.30 (control group) and 1.73 (experimental group). This shows a sharp mark of rejection by the latter group. Finally, in item 4, the mean scores were 3.17 as against 2.36 showing another rejection that unhappiness is caused and forced by people externally by the experimental group. This opinion or irrational thoughts can easily stir up terrorism, restiveness or militancy among the youth.

- **Ho₁**: There is no significant effect of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on University student's irrational thoughts and feelings.

Ho₁ was subjected to z-test analysis as shown in Table-2

Table-2: Z-test analysis of pre-test and post-test results of experimental group

Test	N	Mean	SD	Z-cal	Z-val	Decision
Pre-test	35	3.46	0.29	11.63	1.93	Significant
Post-test	35	2.13	0.14			

Table-2 shows that the z-calculated of 11.63 is greater than the critical z-value of 1.94 at 0.05 probability level of significance on a 2-tailed test. This shows that the null-hypothesis 1 (H_{01}) was rejected showing that Rational Emotive Therapy is a good counseling techniques that can ameliorate youth restiveness, terrorism and militancy in the universities, especially in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

- H_{02} : there is no significant difference between the responses of experimental and control groups when treated with Rational Emotive Therapy.

H_{02} was subjected to z-test analysis as shown in Table-3.

Table-3: Z-test analysis of the responses of experimental and control groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	Z-cal	Z-val	Decision
Experimental	35	2.13	0.14	12.4	1.94	Significant
Control	30	3.50	0.21			

From Table-3 the z-calculated which is 12.4 is greater than the critical value of 1.94 and 0.05 probability level of significance on a 2-tailed test. This again shows a rejection of the null hypothesis 2 (H_{02}) which states that there is no significant difference between the responses of experimental and control groups when treated with Rational Emotive Therapy. Again, this shows that from the experimental group, the participants have imbibed the principles of the Rational Emotive Therapy as a technique of ameliorating terrorism, restiveness and militancy in the Universities and the Niger Delta environs. Infact, from the rational responses of the participants of the experimental group, it is Cristal clear that Rational Emotive Therapy counseling techniques should be used by professional counselors in the Universities to curb the ills of terrorism, youth restiveness and militancy in Nigeria, especially, in the Niger Delta areas.

DISCUSSION

The Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy by Albert Ellis has been suggested by many experts such as Ekoja and Adole [6], Akume [8], Ibrahim in Maciver [3], etc to be of effective quality in ameliorating youths maladaptive behaviour. This counseling service teaches the counselees the way they perceived occurrences is the root cause of their emotional disturbances. The therapy helps their feelings and thinking to come alive rationally, logically and finally reforms their emotions. Obviously, after the experimental group's treatment that their illogical thoughts and feelings push them into actions and behaviours unacceptable in the society, they came to the realization and reacted to the statements logically and rationally. From table 1 it is clear that rational emotive therapy is an effective counseling technique in curbing youth restiveness, terrorism and militancy in the universities. Again from the z-test results in the tables 2 and 3, it is also a truism that the therapy is very effective. This finding corroborates Akurne [8], Ibrahim in Maciver [3] and Elegbeleye [5] findings that group counseling, such as in this study, professional counselors can assist in curbing and ameliorating these kind of youthful restiveness, terrorism and militancy. Infact, Rational Emotive Therapy if applied appropriately helps in teaching the client on how to re-think and re-verbalize his sentences

in a more logical and self-helping way [4]. This study and its findings has challenged many professional counselors to be up and doing to work on the mindset of students, so as, to curb the rampant youth restiveness, terrorism and militancy in the Niger Delta of Nigeria and other environments. This therapy involves dialogue which has worked in many conflict situations in Nigeria and if consistently used by counselors in the upper secondary schools and lower university levels of our education system, the aforementioned problems can be curbed or ameliorated.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the Niger Delta, in particular, and Nigeria, in general, youth restiveness, terrorism and militancy have wreck havoc in high magnitude. It is obvious that Nigeria security agents are trying their best, but mere common sense suggests that other means such as is penned down in this study should be employed to help curb these ills. It is observed that most of these youths are trained and employed by mischief makers to achieve their economic and political ambitions in this country, hence the steady growth of these maladaptive youths. From this study, it is observed that the therapy is one of the best techniques that can curb and ameliorate these evils in this country (Nigeria). Thus, from the study, the following recommendations were made.

- Every university (Public or private) should have counseling and human development unit or center manned by professional counselors
- The government should legislate on (1) above to ensure that all universities in this country have such centres
- Several rural communities exist in the Niger Delta environments that need counseling centres in these communities wherein group counseling techniques like this therapy in this study can be taught to our teeming youths, market squares ,town halls and churches can be used as centres after due publicity.
- As a matter of regular usage, professional counselors should use the rational emotive behaviour therapy in treating most of the youth social problems in the universities
- Semester time tables in the universities should be prepared to include one time slot for counseling a

week in which programmes like rational emotive behaviour therapy and others can be handled by professional counselors regularly.

- Mal-adaptive behaviors by students once noticed by any lecturer should be referred to the counseling and human development centre regularly to be attended to by counselors.

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