

# **Effects of Psycho-Educational Group Technique on Fighting Behaviours of Primary School Pupils in Awka South Local Government Area in Anambra State, Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT:** The study is on the effects of psycho-educational group technique on fighting behaviour of primary school pupils in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population for this study comprised 232 pupils with fighting behaviour in primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. The sample of the study was 50 primary five pupils with fighting behaviour. The researchers-developed questionnaire titled the Fighting Behaviour Detecting Instrument (FBDI) with 20 items was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using mean scores and t-test. Results showed that psycho-educational group technique is very effective in modifying fighting behaviour of primary school pupils. Results of the study also indicate that gender has no significant effect on fighting behaviour of primary school pupils after psycho-educational group treatment. Based on the findings and their implications, it was recommended, among others that school guidance counsellors should adopt the psycho-educational group technique in reducing fighting behaviour among primary school pupils under their care.

**Keywords:** Effect, psycho-educational, technique, fighting behaviour.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Fighting is a global problem and Nigeria is not left out. Fighting among pupils in schools has caused a lot of havoc in the society (Dwendle, 2007). According to Smith (2011) fighting is an undesirable behaviour in which pupils inflict injury upon another. The behaviour is carried out physically by hitting, kicking and pushing. The prevalence of pupils fighting in school, and of some 'hard' characters being persistently aggressive towards their peers, has been a growing concern in Nigeria and African countries (Nwigbo, 2006). In recent times the increase in fighting behaviours in primary schools has become a matter of concern to societies especially to counsellors and teachers. Okoye (2010) encourages the use of techniques in handling behaviours that are undesirable.

According to Umenze (2007), the essence of techniques in the counselling process cannot be over-emphasized. With adequate diagnosis, counsellors should be able to identify the client's problem. Counselling helps to identify the problem of the client and at the same time assist the client in resolving that problem. Counsellors use techniques and skills in resolving problems, such problems like fighting, bullying and aggressiveness. Fighting is very common in primary schools. The negative consequences of fighting in school are that pupils feel unsafe (Nwizugbe, 2001). He further observes that fighting in school results in pupils having fear spend time arguing which results in pupils missing school and have little time or energy for academic pursuits. Fighting is an anti-social behaviour which could lead a child to death (Gift, 2009). Worldwide, males tend to exhibit more acting out, aggressive behaviours than females. For example over 90% of all violent criminal offences are committed by men (London family Court Clinic, 1993). Uzoegbu and Ibegbu (2011) note that incidence of fighting among primary school is on the increase and advocate the use of counselling technique. They suggest that pupils should be encouraged into more positive activities within the school.

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The importance of counselling technique becomes critical in redirecting and modifying fighting behaviours of pupils in primary schools. Cling (2010) notes that counselling technique is useful in modifying, and reshaping human beings. In primary schools, teachers have done a lot to control the behaviours of pupils that fight in schools through the use of punishment; yet primary school pupils still fight (Nweze, 2002).

Bright (2009) opines that desirable attributes of counselling techniques are capable of modifying human behaviour. There is need to use counselling techniques to modify undesirable behaviour like fighting. Many counselling techniques are in existence, such as self instruction, systematic desensitization, modelling, extinction, thought-stopping, aversion, psycho-education, rational emotive, and assertive training.

American Psychiatric Association (2004) sees psycho-education as components of treatment where active communication of information, exchange of information among those afflicted, and treatments of general aspects of the illness are exposed to patients and their relatives. According to Lan (2007) psychoeducation group technique is a cognitive behaviour therapy in which information on the causes and treatment of an illness is given to the client. Bill, Collins and Swen (2001) observe that the psychological intervention by the therapist would be processed by the client's information – processing apparatus. This processing involves changes in the brain, reflected in a biochemical modification and simultaneously modification in the cognitive set. Rigby and Jonny (2012) observe that pupils that fight, when they receive the information on the negative consequences of their fighting behaviours through psycho-educational technique will begin to think on the consequences, this will make them to think twice.

The researchers are experts in group counselling. In group counselling there will be interaction among pupils, which can result in interpersonal relationship among pupils. Group therapy provides the opportunity for the individual male and female to understand their feelings and how they affect their behaviour towards others (Ndibe, 2006). The researchers used psycho-educational group approach in the treatment of fighting behaviour of pupils in primary schools. The study focuses on effects of psycho-educational group techniques on fighting behaviour of primary school pupils in Awka South Local Government Area in Anambra State, Nigeria.

The purpose of the study is to determine the effects of psycho-educational group technique on fighting behaviour of primary school pupils in Awka South Local Government Area.

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) To what extent does the fighting behaviour of pupils exposed to psycho-educational group treatment differ from control group.
- 2) To what extent does the fighting behaviour of pupils exposed to psycho-educational group technique depend on gender.

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

- 1) There is no significant difference in the fighting behaviour of pupils who received psycho-educational treatment and the control group.
- 2) There is no significant difference in fighting behaviour of male and female pupils who received psycho-educational treatment.

## II. METHOD

The design of the study is quasi-experimental. The design used was non-randomized control group, and pre-test post-test.

Table I

Research Design: Non-randomized control group pre-test post-test design.

Grouping	Pre-test	Research Condition	Post-test
Experimental	S <sub>1</sub>	X (Treatment)	S <sub>2</sub>
Control	S <sub>1</sub>	- (No treatment)	S <sub>2</sub>

S<sub>1</sub> stands for pre-test

X stands for treatment (psycho-education)

S<sub>2</sub> stands for post test for both experimental and control group.

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The population of the study comprised 232 pupils of primary five who were fond of fighting as observed by their guidance counsellors and head teachers. The researchers administered a questionnaire as pre-test to the pupils in order to make sure that they were involved in fighting. Pupils that scored 3.5 and above in pre-test were used. The instrument was a five point Likert scale type of questionnaire. The experimental group received 8 weeks of psycho-educational treatment, while the control group received the conventional counselling that was normally used in school. Purposive sampling was used to select 4 primary schools that have guidance counsellors, 2 schools were used as experimental with a total of 19 boys and 10 girls. Two other schools were used for control group, 12 were boys and 9 were girls. The instrument for this study was researchers-developed questionnaire titled The Fighting Behaviour Detecting Instrument (FBDI). The questionnaire was validated by two lecturers in Guidance and Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was done using test-retest reliability method. The reliability of the instrument was 0.94.

The researchers gave the psycho-educational which is the treatment. The pre-test was given to those pupils that are fond of fighting in their schools by their guidance counsellors who were instructed by the researchers. The pupils filled the questionnaire and their scores were scored. Psycho-educational treatment was given to the experimental group. After treatment by the researchers, the post-test was given to the respondents both in experimental and control group. The same questionnaire was given to control group and experimental. The items were renumbered and reshuffled.

The guidance counsellors were trained by the researchers that they should not fill the questionnaire for their pupils. The treatment was administered on the pupils with psycho-educational group techniques in their group counselling process by the researchers, while the control was counselled by their school counsellors (Researcher Assistant) using other ways, different from the technique. The counselling period for psycho-educational was one session per week, each session lasting at least 35 minutes, for eight weeks which was during the counselling period as agreed with the head teachers. At the end of the counselling periods, a post test was administered to the two groups. Three months later a durability test was given to the treatment groups to verify if the effects of the treatment were durable. The data collected for the study was analyzed and in answering the research questions, mean was used followed by the t-test used in testing the hypotheses.

### III. RESULTS

**Table 2**

Pretest and posttest mean scores and mean loss of pupils involved in fighting who received psycho-education and those in control group.

Source of variation	N	Pretest $\bar{X}$	Posttest $\bar{X}$	Loss Mean
Experimental	29	96.73	43.73	53.38
Control	21	81.61	69.24	12.37

Data in table 2 shows that with pre-test mean score 96.73 and post mean score of 43.73 with loss mean 53.38 for the pupils treated with psycho-educational as against pre-test mean score of 81.61 and posttest mean score of 69.24 with loss mean of 12.37 for the pupils in control group. Those in experimental group did better than those in control group.

**Table 3**

Pretest, posttest mean scores and mean loss of male and female students exposed to psycho-education.

Source of Variation	N	Pretest	Posttest	Mean/Loss
Male	19	97.37	46.93	50.64
Female	10	93.12	45.42	47.70

The data in table 3 indicates that with pretest mean score of 97.37 and posttest mean score of 46.93 the male pupils who are fond of fighting had mean loss of 50.64 while pretest mean score of 93.13 and posttest 45.42, the females had mean loss of 47.70. The males therefore did slightly better.

**Table 4**

t-test comparison of the means of the treatment and control groups based on FBDI

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t	P
Treatment	29	37.38	8.37	49	16.32	1.98	0.05
Control	21	65.51	7.34				

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Table 4 shows that the t-test at 5 percent and 49 degree of freedom revealed that there was significant difference between the post-test mean scores of the treatment and control group.

**Table 5**

t-test comparison of means of male and female children fighters after psycho-education treatment based on FBFI

Gender	N	X	SD	Df	Cal.t	Crit.t	P
Male	19	48.67	7.16	28	0.702	2.01	0.05
Female	10	47.23	10.12				

In table 5 it was observed that t-test at 5 percent level of significance and 28 degrees of freedom showed that there was no significant different in the fighting behaviour of male and female pupils who received psycho-education treatment as measured by their mean scores in FBFI. Therefore, gender has no effect on the fighting behaviour of male and female pupils after psycho-education was accepted.

## IV. FINDINGS

The findings from table 2 showed that those who received psycho-education treatment differed with great mean loss of 53.38 as against the control group 12.37 mean loss. The difference in the mean scores of the post-test observed showed that psycho-educational group exposure is effective in modifying fighting behaviour of primary school pupils. This in line with Cling (2010) who noted that counselling techniques are useful in modifying and reshaping human beings. Through psycho-educational group technique, the child fighter realized the consequences of their fighting behaviour and tried to reduce their fighting behaviour.

The findings in table 3 showed a mean scores loss of 50.64 for male and 47.70 for females. The result showed a slight difference in the mean loss. The second null hypotheses was tested with the t-test indicated that there was no significant difference in fighting behaviour of male and female pupils of primary schools. In the words of Ndibe (2006) Group therapy provides the opportunity for individual male and female understand their feeling and how they affect their behaviour towards others. The result is in line with Rigby and Jonny (2012) who observed that pupils that fight when they receive the information on the negative consequences of their fighting behaviours through psycho-educational technique will begin to think on the consequences

## V. CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study the following conclusion have been made:

Psycho-educational group technique is effective in modifying fighting behaviour in primary school pupils. There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group after treatment and the post-test mean scores of the control group. Gender did not have a significant effect on the reduction of fighting behaviour of primary school pupils after psycho-educational group work.

## VI. IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY

The findings of this study have numerous implications arising, and having known that fighting in primary school pupils is reduced by psycho-education group therapy. The major implication of this finding is that guidance counsellors should use the technique in handling fighting.

The study revealed that psycho-educational group techniques are effective in reducing fighting in primary school pupils. The implication of the finding is that counsellors, and psychologists who use psycho-education group technique should go on to use it which goes to show that the intervention of the techniques could aid adequate preparation for the pupils in their school.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Every primary school in the country should have a well-equipped counselling unit to be manned by professional counsellors. The aim is to enable these counsellors effectively diagnose and treat pupils that fight and other



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maladaptive behaviours in the school. Counsellors in primary school should use psycho-education group technique in order to exhibit symptoms of fighting among pupils.

School guidance counsellors who organize group counselling workshops should organize enlightenment seminars/workshops for teachers and parents on psycho-educational group technique in modifying fighting behaviours of pupils. This will help to bring peaceful atmosphere in classrooms, in the homes and the society.

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