

Effect Of Cognitive Restructuring Strategy (CRS) On Parental Discriminatory Behaviour Against The Girl-Child Education Among Families In Nigeria

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Abstract: In Nigeria, it is regrettable to observe that there is still parental underestimation of the value of the girl - child. The girl - child is hardly opportune to have equal access to functional education like her boy - child counterpart. This could be disastrous for the development and empowerment of the girl - child in society. The study was therefore out to investigate the effect of Cognitive Restructuring Strategy (CRS) on parental discriminatory behaviour towards the girl - child in families. The study adopted the quasi experimental pretest - posttest and the control group design. Research instruments used were the self - constructed Questionnaire entitled "Parental Behaviour Questionnaire (PBQ)" and the adapted version of Utulu (2000) Questionnaire entitled "Female Perception of Traditional Practices Questionnaire (FPTPQ)". The population was all parents in Akure North Local Government Area (AKNLGA) of Ondo State, Nigeria. Through a purposive stratified random sampling technique, a total of 80 parents were selected. The two groups; the experimental and the control were assigned 40 parents respectively. The experimental group was exposed to CRS for 8 weeks, while the control group was given a placebo for the same period of time. The two hypotheses raised were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected were analyzed using t- test statistics. The results showed that parents in the experimental group improved significantly in the reduction of their discriminatory behaviour towards the girl -child unlike the parents in the control group. Based on the findings, conclusions were drawn and recommendations made. All categories of parents are to love and educate the girl - child to enhance her all round development if she is to contribute her quota to her family and the society at large.

Keywords: Effect of Cognitive Restructuring Strategy, Parental Discriminatory Behaviour, Education, Families.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian culture like any others in Africa, often rates the girl-child as inferior to the boy-child. This could probably be the reason why the family as the first agent of socialization for the child most times, show different perceptions towards the two sexes. For example, while the boy-child is usually described as brave, intelligent, decisive, adventurous, the girl-child is often seen as timid, shy, welcoming, warm, and being a care taker for other siblings in the home. To show the low value for the girl-child globally among other tribes of the world, the United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) (1994), and Maccoby (2002), observed that in

some parts of the world, when sex determination tests are carried out during pregnancies, they often resulted into a much higher rate of abortion of the female foetuses. When later in life the girl-child is to benefit from education, she is often denied equal access at the expense of the boy-child. Jegede and Taiwo (1996), Amao – Kehinde (2000), and Philips (2003) all buttressed this point by saying that gender discrimination has a lot to do with the benefits and privileges which customs attach to the boy-child but deny the girl-child.

Sadly it is observed too that, even both male and female parents often exhibit discriminatory behaviour towards the girl-child in the family. For example the study of Aruna (2005) which dealt with gender discriminatory behaviour of

parents in Nigeria, found that even though there were divergent cultural traits among the six Yoruba speaking states of Nigeria, they still share a lot of things in common. The girl-child therefore, often suffered the same fate of discrimination due to the common factors among the Yoruba states. More observations by Nyager (2005) and McAdoo (2000) showed that poor families who are found to concentrate more in the rural communities are worse in their discriminatory behaviour towards the girl-child's access to education; and use of social services.

As further observed by these scholars, the patriarch nature is reflected more in the rural environment. It is not strange too, that the presence of larger and extended families amongst the rural dwellers, resulting from the type of occupation they practice, contribute more to their level of poverty. According to McAdoo (2000) compared to their counterparts in the urban areas, parents in the rural areas are more likely to have greater number of children, find more in early marriage, and show preference for sons. Fehr (2003) also supported the view in his study, by observing that parents in rural areas made girls to suffer more inequalities because of their low income. Uba (1989) and Nwamuo (2005) reflecting on the assumption of the Behaviour Therapy however, concluded that people or women's discriminating or neurotic behaviour to the girl-child, could have resulted from the reinforcement being given to the wrong belief over the years in their environment.

Critically, one should see gender imbalance as an infringement on the basic right of the girl-child which needs to be discouraged. Education according to Izebor and Akindele (2007) is the corner stone of women empowerment, it affords them the access to opportunities to face challenges, change their traditional orientation towards issues and their lives in general. Therefore, regarding the benefits attached to the access to education by the girl-child, it is important to look into ways through which parents could be re-orientated to change the quality of their thoughts towards her. The cognitive Restructuring Strategy was thus considered in this study in order to achieve the set goal- CRS is one of the techniques of the Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) of Ellis (1962). It was used in the study to assist parents identify those qualities in them that are involved in the distortion of their thoughts.

To start with, a parent with distorted or illogical thoughts could have this to say to himself:

- ✓ "How I wish I have male children"
- ✓ "I feel worthless for having only female children".
- ✓ "Why should I even educate girls?"
- ✓ "Afterall, when they marry, they change their names and go to their husbands"

Ellis (2005, 2008) stated that CRS is to prevent client's irrational anger, depression, guilt feelings, inferiority, worthlessness, and other such emotions. It implies that CRS assists clients to learn more rational approach to viewing and evaluating themselves. Ellis was of the opinion that one can hardly understand oneself and others without knowing one's internal environment. This is to say that the way a person views the situation depends on what the person is saying to himself or herself.

Sartre (2008) describing how CRS therapists work, stated that the clients are learners in the therapy, who are assigned to

behavioural home work to give them the opportunity to challenge the effects of their irritational or distorted beliefs. The clients are involved in planning carefully, new positive actions that induce new rational behaviour. For example, parents after their exposure to CRS could now take a more logical or rational approach by being able to question such irrationality in their behaviour. A parent may be able to ask himself or herself the questions:

- ✓ "Why shouldn't I have female children?"
- ✓ "Am I the one who created them?"
- ✓ "Though it is not my making that I should have girls, even if there are assumed advantages in the society that favour boys over girls, I'm not a worthless person!"
- ✓ "Educating my girl-child like my boy-child does not make me stupid."
- ✓ "The fact that she will marry and change her name does not change her from being my child".
- ✓ "Being a girl-child cannot stop her from becoming a lawyer, a medical doctor, a governor, or even a president of a whole nation."
- ✓ "I therefore need to be happy as a parent in educating all my children regardless of their sexes".

According to McMullin (1986) and Nwamuo (2005), the preceding is the point where the parents are fully equipped with the knowledge, on how to make alternative interpretations to events in their daily living.

RESEARCH QUESTION

- ✓ Is there any difference in the discriminatory behaviour against the girl-child between the Cognitive Restructuring Strategy (CRS) group and the Control Group (CG) before and after treatment?

HYPOTHESES

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the discriminatory behaviour against the girl-child between male and female parents in the Cognitive Restructuring Strategy (CRS) group after treatment.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the discriminatory behaviour against the girl-child, between parents in rural and urban areas in the CRS group after treatment.

II. POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

The population for the study consisted of all parents from Akure North Local Government Area (LGA) of Ondo State, Nigeria. The sample was selected through a purposive stratified random sampling technique. A total of 80 parents were assigned to the two groups; experimental and the control group. In other words, the experimental and the control groups had 40 parents each. The experimental group was exposed to Cognitive Restructuring Strategy (CRS) for a period of 8 weeks, while the Control Group (CG) was given a placebo for the same period of time.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The research instrument entitled “Parental Behaviour Questionnaire (PBQ)” was constructed by the researcher. It consisted of two parts; A & B. Part A was to elicit information on the personal data of respondents, while part B was subdivided into seven sections, comprising thirty-five items altogether. The instrument was measured on a 4-point likert scale, on which the respondents were to choose one of the four alternatives provided to indicate their response to each item. The second research instrument was the adapted version of Utulu (2000), entitled “Female Perception of Traditional Practices Questionnaire (FPTPQ)” which served as the construct validity to the PBQ.

DATA ANALYSIS

The research question was analyzed using descriptive statistics, while the hypotheses were analyzed using t-test statistics. The two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

III. RESULTS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Is there any difference in the discriminatory behaviour against the girl-child between the Cognitive Restructuring Strategy (CRS) group and Control Group (CG) before and after treatment?

Variables	No	\bar{X}	SD
Pretest CRS	40	99.53	16.16
Pretest CG	40	97.70	13.88

Table 1: Paired comparison between the pretest of CRS group and the Control Group (CG) Before Treatment

Table 1 showed that the pretest mean scores for the CRS and the Control Group were 99.53 and 97.70 respectively.

Variables	No	\bar{X}	SD
Pretest CRS	40	99.53	16.16
Posttest CRS	40	52.18	11.78
Pretest CG	40	97.70	13.88
Posttest CG	40	92.70	13.27

Table 2: Paired comparison between CRS and CG showing their pretest and posttest mean scores

Data in Table 2 showed that while the mean scores for the Pretest of CRS was 99.53 the posttest mean score was 52.18. The data in the Table also showed that the pretest mean score for the CG was 97.20, while its posttest mean score was 97.70.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the discriminatory behaviour against the girl-child between male and female parents in the Cognitive Restructuring Strategy group after treatment.

Variables	Gender	No	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	t-cri
CRS	Male	20	19.80	12.870	38	1.2021	2.021
	Female	20	75.30	14.914			

Not significant at $p > 0.05$

Table 3: T-test comparison on the Discriminatory Behaviour Between Male and Female Parents within CRS Group after Treatment

Data in Table 3 showed that the calculated t-value of 1.2021 was less than the critical t-value of 2.021 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the hypothesis of no difference which stated that there would not be a significant difference in the discriminatory behaviour against the girl-child between male and female parents in the CRS group, was not rejected.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the discriminatory behaviour against the girl-child between Parents in the rural and urban areas in the Cognitive Restructuring Strategy group after treatment.

Variables		No	\bar{X}	Df	t-cal	t-cri
CRS	Rural	40	72.55	78	6.99	2.0
	Urban	40	52.18			

*Significant $P < 0.05$

Table 4: T-test comparison on the significant difference between parents in rural and urban areas in CRS groups after treatment

Data in Table 4 showed that the posttest mean score for parents in the rural area who received treatment in the CRS group was 72.55, while the parents who were treated with CRS in the urban area had a posttest mean score of 52.18. Also, data in the Table showed that the calculated t-value of 6.99 was greater than the critical t-value of 2.0 at 0.05 level of significance; hence the hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected.

IV. DISCUSSION

The result in Tables 2 and 3 showed the response to the only research question raised. Result in Tables 2 and 3 showed that at the commencement of the experiment, the discriminatory behaviour of parents against the girl-child in both the experimental and control groups was almost at the same level. This showed the homogeneity in the parental discriminatory behaviour against the girl-child at the beginning of the experiment. This finding was in line with that of Aruna (2005) whose study on gender discriminatory behaviour of parents in Nigeria, found that even though, there were divergent cultural traits among the Yoruba speaking states of Nigeria, they still share a lot of things in common. This was the reason why the girl-child often suffers the same fate in the identified states. The drastic change in the discriminatory behaviour of parents in the CRS group was due to the efficiency of the treatment. While the minimal difference in the discriminatory behaviour of parents in the control Group was due to test-wisness, since they were not exposed to any treatment. This confirmed the statement of Ellis (2005, 2008) that CRS is to prevent clients irritational anger, depression, feeling of worthlessness, and other such emotions.

Table 2 Hypothesis one, which sought to know whether there would be a significant difference in the discriminatory behaviour against the girl-child between male and female parents in the CRS group after treatment was not rejected. This implies that both male and female parents in the CRS group still exhibited discriminatory behaviour towards the girl-child even after being exposed to treatment. The Finding however showed further that the posttest mean score of the

female parents (75.30) was a bit higher than those of the male parents (69.80). This finding was in line with the observations of Uba (1989) and Nwamuo (2005) who in agreement with the assumption of Behaviour Therapy stated that, people and particularly, women discriminatory or neurotic behaviour towards the girl-child could be traced to the approval or reinforcement being given to such wrong belief over the years in the parental environment. Hence, it could be said that the lower valuation of women and girls in Nigerian Society have eaten deep into women's and girl's sub-conscious minds to the extent that they tend to agree that they are indeed inferior to their men or boys counterparts.

Hypothesis two which stated that there would be no significant difference in the discrimination behaviour against the girl-child between the parents in the rural and urban areas, was rejected. The finding showed the mean posttest scores for rural and urban parents as 72.55 and 52.18 respectively. This means that the efficacy of the CRS treatment was greater on the urban parents than the rural ones. The finding was in agreement with Nyager (2005) and McAdoo (2000). Nyager (2005) observed that in Nigeria, poor families are found concentrating more in the rural areas, and exhibiting stronger patriarchal nature. McAdoo (2002) in agreement with Nyager (2005) also stated that, besides the fact that patriarchal nature is more reflected in the rural areas, it is also much more common with the rural dwellers to have larger and extended families, resulting from the type of occupation they practice. Therefore, compared to their counterparts in the urban, those in the rural environments are more likely to have greater number of children, find more in early marriage, and show more preference for sons (McAdoo 2000). Finally, Fehr (2003) sharing a similar view with the other scholars, stated that, girls in rural areas suffered inequalities more, because of parental low income.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

There is need for gender training to give the right orientation to parents, to let them know the differences between sex and gender roles. The reduction in the level of discrimination in both male and female, confirms the potency of CRS on all the parents (Though male parents were found to be slightly better than female parents). This implies that the counsellor, either school or marriage counsellor, can make use of CRS to work on parents, dwelling more on the female parents, for better orientation. Parents need to be well-equipped with relevant information to broaden their minds, making use of some of the techniques of CRS. Nigerian government should make adequate provision for the rural dwellers. They should be empowered to bridge the gap between them and their counterparts in the urban areas; so that their children especially the girls would have a better access to education.

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