

# Cognitive Restructuring and Problem-Solving Therapies on Psychological Well-Being of In-School Adolescents from Father-Absent Families in Ekiti State

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## Abstract

Psychological well-being is vital to in-school adolescents to function well academically and in the society. This study, therefore, was designed to determine the effects of cognitive restructuring (CR) and problem-solving (PS) therapies on psychological well-being (PW) of in-school adolescents from father-absent families in Ekiti State, Nigeria. A pre-test, post-test, control group, experimental design was adopted. Three secondary schools were randomly selected from three local government areas in each senatorial district which constitute Ekiti State. A total of 166 participants were distributed into two experimental groups and a control group using a simple random sampling technique. Participants in the experimental groups 1 and 2 were exposed to ten (10) weeks training on Cognitive Restructuring (CR) and Problem Solving (PS) therapies respectively while the control group was exposed to a talk on communication skill. Instrument used was Ryff's Scale of Psychological Well-Being ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ). One hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data were subjected to simple percentages and Scheffe Post hoc. There was a significant main effect of treatment on psychological well-being ( $F_{[2;140]} = 7.60$ ; partial,  $\eta^2 = 0.20$ ) of in-school adolescents from father-absent families. Psychological well-being of participants exposed to CR increased more ( $\bar{x} = 164.46$ ) significantly than those exposed to PST ( $\bar{x} = 145.39$ ) and control ( $\bar{x} = 102.72$ ) groups. Based on the findings it was

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recommended that, school counselling and developmental psychologists should utilise these strategies to improve the psychological well-being of in-school adolescents.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Restructuring Therapy, Problem-solving Therapy, Psychological Well-being, In-school Adolescents, Father-absent,

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## Introduction

In recent times, an increase in the number of families with father-absent and husbands has been observed. However, the collapse of the primary family along with an escalation in the number of families controlled by women is trending globally as well as locally. The United Nations reported that there has been an alteration from extended families to nuclear families, as well as an increase in single-person households in the last fifty years (Eastwood, 2001). This arrangement of the family unit can impact negatively on the psychological well-being of adolescents. As a result of communal and political advancements that have taken place in recent years due to education, urbanisation, employment, non-marital child bearing and teenage pregnancies, the binuclear family practice in Nigeria, with its conventional devoted shared relations, has been altered. Most times, men are the ones who take jobs outside the home, or have to travel to another town while the care of the youngsters' rest on their mother. Without the contributory effort alongside emotional and physical support from the father, the children miss out on the opportunity of having a male exemplar treated as essential to the sustenance of the extended family system.

Pubescence is a phase of individual development where father influence is critical. Teenagers have been described as set of individuals in search of who they are in order to achieve a form of personality and purpose in their lives. Teens struggle to find a meaning of self. One of the challenges adolescents' face, which is crucial in the formation of their identity is living without a father or having no father-figure to look up to (O'Brien & Ritcher, 2011). Research revealed that early commencement of sexual intercourse among adolescents of both sexes is associated with been nurtured by a single-parent, that is, the instability of nurturing from both parents (Kaufman, 2006). The availability of the father is one of the leading protective determinants in checking early onset of sexual activities with girls. Ellis (2004) indicates that teenage girls who experienced the trauma of paternal deprivation had notably prior ages of menstruation than girls who enjoyed the protection of both parent's availability. Moreover, girls who begin menstruating prematurely tend to engage in diverse sexual behaviour and practices compared to girls who mature late (Ellis, 2004). Furthermore, research revealed that boys who lacks a father-substitute or who are not privileged to live with their biological father demonstrate apprehension about their gender status (Agbo, 2015). In addition, boys exhibit tremendous proportion of personality confusion, low feelings of self-worth, and inattentiveness to leisure and academic exercise. As adolescents mature, the boys may probably be incompetent in creating an affectionate friendship, and may stumble upon certain puzzles about their background. These may induce desolation, gloominess and acrimony which might make them prone to psychological and personal disturbances such as lawlessness, unruliness, high proportion of severe medical challenges and insanity (Agbo, 2015).

Blankenhorn cited in Jago (2006), emphasized the significance of fathers in adolescents' lives, by pointing out four ways by which children benefit from their father's participation: Firstly, it supplies a child with a father's physical support; secondly, it presents a child with a father's financial and material support; in addition, it provides a child with cultural and values; lastly, the day to day nurturing, love and emotional support that a child needs from both parents.

Popenoe cited in Liazoz (2015) opines that a father contributes significantly and exceptionally for his household. Horn and Sylvester (2002) claims that "fathers leave indelible marks in the lives of their children and family cannot be replaced or matched with any other alternative or substitute". The influence of a father to his offspring's well-being

cannot be satisfactorily changed by sophisticated arrangement, guaranteed child maintenance schedule, neither by purposeful coaching curriculum. Comparative psychologists as well as anthropologists, drawn conclusions from a cross-cultural study concerning the significance of fathers and their tasks in averting youthful offences and brutality.

Male adolescents who are denied of their fathers love from the beginning are expectedly to involve in constantly redeeming masculine practices. A society that is rift with crimes, violence and abuse can be linked to a society where the nurturing of children has been solely done by the mothers. Taking cognisance of the diverse nature of adolescent vulnerabilities from father-absent families and the risk they are exposed to and the dynamics of the relationship between them outlined above, this study therefore focused on adolescents from father-absent families; which in the context of this investigation is considered a very important aspect amenable to psychological intervention as contemporary behavioural research has shown (Aderanti & Hassan, 2011).

Several studies have established that adolescents whose fathers are absent suffered from psychological distress and maladaptive behaviours which in turn leads to psychological ill-health (Balogun, Bada & Adejuwon, 2013). Psychological well-being involves living a successful life that is, being cheerful, satisfied and performing efficiently. Psychological well-being does not demand a person to be cheerful always; the knowledge of heart-breaking emotions such as, dissatisfaction, sorrow, setbacks is a usual part of life, and an individual's capability to endure distressing emotions is needed for a continuing well-being. Psychological well-being is, however, reduced when distressing emotions are intense or elongated and damage an individual's capability to perform in his or her daily activities.

Researchers have been using well-being simultaneously with mental health where in a person recognise his or her own capabilities, can tackle usual strain of daily life, perform effectively and creatively, and can play a part in his or her society (WHO, 2001). Thus, the subjective well-being of adolescents nurtured in father-absent houses is compromised when they are denied of paternal involvement. Psychological well-being comprises of six components which are; milieu expertise, life goals, self-acceptance, definite interrelations, independence, and individual development. Emotional well-being often conceptualized as few combinations of specific emotive condition suchlike contentment and joy and performing excellently in one's civil and personal life (Winefield, Gill, Taylor & Pilkington, 2012).

Thus, considering the relevance of adolescent's psychological well-being from father-absent families, there is need for immediate psychological interventions that will ease the proper intensification of psychological well-being of in-school adolescents. Although, previous researchers have worked on the factors that can affect psychological well-being of adolescents, few studies have dwelt on appropriate intervention, to the utmost of the experimenter's awareness none has considered exploring cognitive restructuring and problem-solving therapies in enhancing psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families. These two therapies were considered appropriate because of their cognitive ability to modify behaviour and irrational thoughts that have their roots in past experiences and their capacity to enhance positive well-being in adolescents. Therefore, this study focused on effects of cognitive restructuring and problem-solving therapies in enhancing psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families.

Some methods employed in cognitive restructuring therapy are; recognising and classifying delusional thoughts, interrogation, recording inferences, subjective flaw recognition, probing the deposition (advantages or disadvantages), assimilating peculiar

interpretation/ correct approaches, guided imagery and listing rational alternatives (Huppert, 2009).

The aim of cognitive restructuring therapy is to extend an individual's discerning objectivity thereby recognizing a variation of consciousness. Invariably, mental adjustment avail client to scrutinize flawed styles in their reasoning-perception behaviour phases. The individual's target is to re-examine these styles and ruminate further on flexible options that would be applicable for him or her. Fundamentally, the intention is to permit the adolescents perceive that occasionally his reasoning may prompt alienated reactions. A pro-social orientation is achieved when an individual analyses and reform his inferences, sentiments and actions. The shifting in thinking if successful can encourage the adolescent to downplay possibilities of eventual misdemeanour (Baker & Scarth, 2002; Salman, Esere, Omotosho, Abdullahi, & Oniyangi, 2011; Khan, & Kalu, 2011).

In effect, cognitive restructuring therapy helps an individual to reform the thinking faculty to be more rational and focused. It is assumed that adolescents from father-absent families have habitual dysfunctional notions which are coherent with concealed presumptions and convictions evidenced in their weak relationship with people, poor self-esteem and poor academic performance. Thus, recognizing automatic dysfunctional thoughts and fundamental beliefs in these set of adolescents can allow for a more sensible response, thereby allowing for restructuring of the thought process.

Another psychological strategy currently employed by behavioural scientists is Problem-Solving Therapy. Problem-solving therapy (PST) is an experimental observable mediation with emphasises on teaching modifying cogent opinions and prowess. The target of this practical method to experimental mediation is to alleviate and forestall psychosis as well as improve emotional contentment by helping persons to perform adequately the daily course challenges. D'Zurilla and Goldfried (1971) were the first to experiment with PST. Subsequently, the PST was later modified and updated the application and concept of PST (D'Zurilla & Nezu 2007; Nezu, Nezu, Friedman, Faddis & Houts, 1998).

Problem-solving therapy refers to an experimental mediation which trains a person to efficiently tackle the adverse reactions of unfavourable circumstances that could happen in life. For illustration, continuing family challenges, bankruptcy, and disappointment in relationships, frequently managing gridlock, stressed communication with colleagues or supervisors culminates into severe stress. When an arduous problem such as outlined above occurs, it either creates psychological setbacks or aggravate current therapeutic problem. PST can be helpful, either as an exclusive mediation or in composite with additional methods. Problem-solving therapy can also be useful to individuals with complex problems, such as a search for identity (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 2007).

Based on the above evidence, this study therefore seeks to determine an efficacious approach of enhancing the psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families using Cognitive Restructuring and Problem-Solving Therapies. Hence, in context and content, this study experimentally, determines the implementation of Cognitive Restructuring and Problem-Solving Therapies on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families in Ekiti State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The traditional nuclear family which is the ideal family structure with its attendant benefits on the psycho-social development of children is considerably being threatened by the emergence of single parent households. The present-day families have been indelibly modified' by startling spread in the predominance of children born outside marriage,

dissolution of matrimony, incarceration, abandonment and job transfer. However; the disintegration of the nuclear families and an escalation in the figure of homes controlled by women is a continuing trend globally as well as locally. This structure of the family unit can impact negatively on the emotional health of juveniles.

Psychological well-being is vital to in-school adolescents to function well academically and in the society. However, adolescents from father-absent families suffer psychological well-being thus leading to academic and social maladjustment. Children solely raised by mothers without a father-figure usually become delinquents and suffer from maladaptive behaviour. Previous studies on psychological well-being among adolescents largely focused more on stressor agents and adolescents from intact families with little emphasis on adolescents from father-absent families and therapeutic interventions to enhance their psychological well-being. This study, therefore, was designed to determine the effects of Cognitive Restructuring (CR) and Problem-Solving (PS) therapies on Psychological Well-being (PW) of in-school adolescents from father-absent families in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The broad direction of the research is to investigate the effects of Cognitive Restructuring and Problem-Solving Therapies on the psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families in Ekiti State.

### **Research Hypothesis**

For this study one hypothesis was raised and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There will be no significant main effect of treatment on academic self-efficacy of in-school adolescents from father-absent families.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a pre-test, post-test, control group experimental design. The population for this study comprised all in-school adolescents in Ekiti State, Nigeria. There are sixteen local government areas with 188 secondary schools in Ekiti State. The total population of in-school adolescents in Ekiti state is 87, 594 (Ministry of Education, Ekiti State, 2016). These local governments were divided into three senatorial districts which were used in this study. The research adopted multi-stage sampling technique to select a senior secondary school each from the three senatorial districts in Ekiti, namely; Ekiti-North, Ekiti-South and Ekiti-Central. At the first stage one local government was randomly selected from each of the senatorial district. The next stage was the selection of a senior secondary school from each of the local government selected. The participants were male and female in-school adolescents in Senior Secondary School who had a score of 70 and above in the father-absent involvement scale. The total number of 166 participants was used for this study.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

The study enrolled 166 participants with the following criteria:

1. Participants were adolescents in public senior secondary schools in the selected local government areas.
  - Participants were between the age range of 12 and 21 years.
  - Participants were both male and female.
  - Participants who had a score of 70 and above in the Father Absent Involvement Scale.
  - It included those who accepted to be photographed during the course of therapeutic sessions or accepted to participate behind the camera

### **Instruments**

This study was carried out using the quantitative data generation instrument. The following instruments were used for this study;

- The Father-absent Involvement Scale
- Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being

### **The Father-Absent Involvement Scale**

The father-absent involvement scale (FIS) has 20 items which are designed to measure adolescent and adult children's retrospective perceptions of their fathers' involvement (Finley and Schwartz, 2004). Questions were answered on a 5-point Likert scale and a total score ranging from 20 to 100 is obtained after the administration of the scale. The reliability of Cronbach's alpha .90-.97 was established.

The Father-absent Involvement Scale was used to screen participants into this study. The items are twenty-seven (27) in number with 4 scale response formats ranging from strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree. The items are both negatively and positively worded. Being a scale that measure father-absent which is a negative construct, negative worded items are scored strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). The responses were summed together. Those that scored above 70 are the ones whose fathers are not involved in their affairs; hence they were for this study. The reliability of Cronbach alpha of .92 was obtained after administering the instruments in a pilot study to a selected sample of fifty (50) students in Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. Hence, the Father-absent Involvement Scale was used in selecting participants into the study. Some of this scale include 'I have never seen my father physically; my father doesn't pay my school fees'.

### **Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being**

The Ryff inventory was comprises of 25 questions in different statements in the six territories of psychological well-being which are self-rule, natural dominance, self-awareness, positive relations with others, reason throughout everyday life and self-acknowledgment. The respondents evaluated everything on a reaction organization of 1 to 6 where 1 indicates solid contradiction and 6 indicates solid understanding. Reactions are summed up for every one of the six classifications (about portion of the reactions are conversely scored). For each arrangement, a high score indicates that the respondent has an expert of that zone in his or her life. Then again, a low score exhibits that the respondent fights to feel great with that particular thought.

A few things of the scale include: I believe I am accountable for the circumstance in which I live. I am not interested in exercises that will extend my viewpoints. The instrument was anyway re-approved and Cronbach alpha estimation of .84 was obtained subsequent to administering the instruments in a pilot concentrate to a chose test of fifty (50) students in Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

The researcher visited and obtained permission from the respective school authority and afterwards explained the purpose and benefit of the study to both the school authorities and participant. Having received their consent, the researcher then screened the respondents with father-absent involvement scale. Those that scored above 70 were used for the study. The researcher held an average of forty (40) minutes training session on cognitive restructuring and problem –solving techniques for the two experimental groups respectively for a period of 10 weeks while the control group was given a talk on communication. However, the same pre-test and post-test instrument (Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being) was administered for the three groups. After each training session, the participants were given snack as a way of incentive.

## Control Group

The control group in this study was composed essentially of subjects screened as the other subjects in the experimental treatment conditions. However, subjects in the control were seen on only three therapeutic points namely; in sessions one, seventh and tenth. They received pre- and post- treatment assessment as the treatment groups. They were informed immediately after the pre-treatment assessment that their training programme would commence at the seventh session. The major difference between the control group and the experimental groups was that no treatment was given to the participants in the control group. They were given only educational counselling on communication, and were not introduced to any specific treatment session. The necessity of this group is to assess non-specific therapeutic factors accruing from the environment and other spontaneous effects of the therapist-client expectation and assessment procedure.

## Method of Data Analysis

The data for the three groups (Cognitive Restructuring Therapy, Problem-Solving Therapy and the Control Group) were analysed using simple percentages and Scheffe Post-hoc analysis to determine the direction of differences for significant results.

## Results

### Analysis of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Early(Below14 Years)	12	7.2	7.2
Middle (14-16 Years)	134	80.7	88.0
Late (17-21 Years)	20	12.0	100.0
Total	166	100.0	

Table 1 showed that 7.2% of the respondents were below 14 years, 80.7% between 14-16 years and 12.0% were between 17-21 years of age.

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	76	45.8	45.8
Female	90	54.2	100.0
Total	166	100.0	

Table 2 revealed that 45.8% of the respondents were Males while only 54.2% were Females.

### Table 3: Scheffe Post-hoc Pair wise Analysis showing the significant differences among various Treatment Groups and the Control Group in Psychological Well-being

Experiment/Control	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Control	50	102.72		
Problem Solving Therapy	59		145.39	
Cognitive Restructuring Therapy	57			164.46
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

From the table 3, it revealed that experimental group I (Cognitive restructuring therapy) ( $\bar{x} = 164.46$ ) has the highest mean than the experimental group II (Problem solving therapy) ( $\bar{x} = 145.39$ ) and control group ( $\bar{x} = 102.72$ ). By implication, cognitive restructuring therapy is more potent in enhancing psychological well-being of the students than problem solving therapy. The coefficient of determination (Adjusted  $R^2 = .302$ ) overall indicates that the differences that exist in the group account for 30.2% in the variation of students' psychological well-being.

### Discussion

Hypothesis one was rejected because the result presented in table 3 revealed that there were significant main effects of treatment on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families in Ekiti State. This implies that cognitive restructuring and problem-solving therapies was effective in enhancing psychological well-being of in-school adolescents. Although both treatments were effective, table 4.6 clearly showed the marginal differences between the interventions. It was indicated that the group treated with cognitive restructuring therapy was more effective in enhancing psychological well-being than those treated with problem solving therapy. This could be as a result of the nature of cognitive restructuring techniques packages which is cognitive and the gains well harnessed and utilized by the participants.

This finding supports those of Aderanti and Hassan (2011) who prior revealed that cognitive restructuring therapy is successful in the treatment of emotional well-being while Obalowo, (2004) additionally settled its adequacy in wellbeing well-being. Aderanti and Hassan (2011) likewise asserted that, cognitive restructuring therapy is more powerful on females than on guys' psychological well-being. According to Aderanti and Hassan (2011), the viability of cognitive restructuring therapy in treating individual well-being isn't astonishment, on the grounds that cognitive components play an essential and well-archived job in delinquent conduct since the manner in which individuals think controlling affects their activities.

The findings also support Bandura and Locke (2003) whose earlier study confirmed the contribution of cognitive restructuring therapy as established in various studies which ascertained that psychological well-being and self-efficacy could be facilitated. Bandura (1996) also confirmed that teenagers who have low psychological well-being are more vulnerable and prone to low cognitive training goals, feelings of futility and depression as well as engaging in antisocial and problem behaviours. The influence of cognitive restructuring therapy upon psychological well-being has been repeatedly verified in some experimental studies such as Schunk and Swartz (1993) which reports that increases in psychological well-being was accompanied by increases in performance and Pajares and Kranzler (1995) who report that with general mental ability could be controlled by psychological well-being.

This study likewise found that problem-solving treatment is compelling in enhancing psychological well-being of in-school adolescents. This finding is in line with the findings of Chang, D'Zurilla and Sanna (2004) who found that problem solving is powerful in reducing the negative effect of weight on well-being. According to their examination, problem solving is likewise compelling in enhancing positive functioning. Generous help for these presumptions has been given in the previous three decades by various observational examinations. According to Nezu (2004) problem-solving treatment was observed to be similarly compelling as other psychosocial medications and essentially more powerful than no treatment, treatment not surprisingly, and consideration fake treatment medicines.

To find plausible explanation to the findings of this study, the researcher is of the opinion that cognitive restructuring therapy was very effective because cognitive restructuring therapy has the ability to replace one's present negative thoughts with healthier and valuable/useful thoughts with better ways of behaviour which will also reflect on their self-perception.

Likewise, problem-solving therapy was also effective in enhancing psychological well-being of in-school adolescents just as Ryan and Eric (2005) affirmed that problem-solving therapy help to promote psychological well-being and dispute irrational or maladaptive thoughts. Furthermore, one of the core cognitive restructuring is self-awareness which could strongly affect mental well-being. Also, one of the initial outcomes of cognitive restructuring is enabling positive attitudes, values, expectations and beliefs towards the self and society. Its knowledge can lead to change through the clarification of one's thoughts which often influence behaviour (Salman, Esere, Omotosho, Abdullahi & Oniyangi, 2011).

### **Conclusion from Findings**

This study focused on enhancing psychological well-being of in-school adolescents through the effect of cognitive restructuring and problem-solving therapies in Ekiti State. Socio-economic status and resilience were the moderating variables. The participants of this study had training sessions especially the experimental groups while the control was exposed to a training session. The following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of this study:

- Cognitive restructuring and problem-solving therapies were effective in enhancing psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families.
- Although, the two treatments were effective in enhancing psychological well-being and of in-school adolescents from father-absent families, cognitive restructuring therapy was more effective than problem-solving therapy in enhancing psychological well-being of in-school adolescents.

### **Implications of the findings**

The results of this study imply that the psychological well-being of in-school adolescents can be enhanced irrespective of whether fathers are absent or not, with the application of cognitive restructuring and problem-solving therapies. Thus, in cases and or instances where secondary in-school adolescents are academically underperformed and are confronted with similarly related educational conditions of underachievement, and or validate, the applied psychotherapies can have their benefits harnessed to mediate the learners' capacities for academic success and emotional wellness.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are given based on the findings of this study:

- In order to enhance psychological well-being of in-school adolescents, the tools of cognitive restructuring and problem-solving therapies can be utilised as their effectiveness has been established in this study.
- Counselling unit of various secondary schools should utilise these interventions in helping students with psychological well-being challenges.
- School counsellor can organise academic seminars and workshops for students and parents on ways to facilitate psychological well-being.
- The effectiveness of cognitive restructuring and problem-solving therapies in enhancing psychological well-being can be incorporated into senior secondary school curriculum by the policy makers.

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