Effect of Social Skill Instruction Techniques on Self-Esteem Among Junior Secondary School Students in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Students' learning outcomes and performance are dependent on many factors from teacher-factors, method of instruction and environmental and management factors and most importantly learner-factors. Many students given their background have challenges interacting and experiencing themselves socially with unpalatable learning outcomes. In view of this problem, the current study explored the effects of social skill instruction technique on self-esteem among junior secondary school students in Anambra State. In the method section, non-randomized control group, pre-test, post-test quasi experimental design was adopted with Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) as statistical tool. Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) was used as instrument for data collection. Six co-education schools in Anambra State were sampled using multi-stage sampling technique to select 57 junior secondary II students with experimental group (14 males and 17 females) while control group was 27 (8 males and 18 females). After the treatment using social skill training technique (SST), the result indicated that using SST, the self-esteem of students was enhanced than the conventional. Gender was significant factor on the effect of SST on students' self-esteem. Thus, from the result, learn associated social skills can be improved in favour of better academic achievement. It is hence, recommended that, social skill training should be formally adopted for boosting students' social skill competence.

Key words: Co-education; Self-esteem; Social skill training; Socialization; Psychological wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

Socialization of children involves the acquisition of social skills and techniques (Ivar, 2016) as they interact with members of their immediate environment. In the process of socialization, norms, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours are shaped, such that the child will be able to adapt and interact favourably in the society in a desirable way and avoid undesirable social behaviour (Samadi, 2019). In the school, social skills are important to internally motivate the students. Therefore, care must be taken to ensure that children are properly socialized to imbibe skills needed to be successful in life and for effective social interaction (Bekomson et al., 2020).

For instance, skills such as interpersonal, problem solving and conflict resolution are some examples of skills students need in order to survive in today's world given the various challenges they may encounter both in school and outside the school. This supports the fact that many students are more at risk for social, emotional, and behavioural problems than before. This opinion is supported by Howard (2001) who asserted that many students are easily provoked, very aggressive, more attention seeking, more tired and pressured, less caring, and worldlier especially when compared with students some decades ago.

There are other serious consequences of social maladjustment in students such addiction to now popular social media addiction (Anierobi et al., 2021). leading to many delinquent behaviours including academic

procrastination, defiance and disobedient behaviours, less impacted by incentives, and more interested in immediate gratification, less motivated, exposed more to sex and drugs and less attentive. They lack self-confidence, have lower self-esteem and they are less-controlled, less concerned with adult approval and less able to solve problems on their own. Their behaviour can be very emotional and devastating, they are highly fragile, delicate apolitical, do not want to take on responsibility, have little ambition and are only interested in leisure. Description such as these naturally arouses legitimate concerns as regards their future of students and their academic performance and thus draws more attention to social skills as co-factors and determinants of learning environment and circumstances.

The attitudinal phenomenal changes as described above among students and its effect are seen in our schools and evidenced in high rate of cultism, examination malpractice poor academic performance, truancy and teenage pregnancy (Egbochukwu, et al., 2015). These are dangerous trends and they affect students' cognitive task accomplishment (Etodike et al., 2020). This is a worrisome trend especially among parents, teachers, government and other stakeholders. The reasons for these changes may be clustered into the following areas: deficit in social skills or lack of social skills techniques, lack of proper and ineffective parenting skills at home, lack of proper socialization, the economy and the impact of poverty in the country, the effect of the mass media including internet and high rate of students from abusive, dysfunctional or divorced families. Ikwuka et al. (2020) contended that techniques of instruction is instrumental to students' academic achievement and hence, makes social skill training technique a considerable factor of learning. All these support the fact that many students are exposed to difficult situations and challenging life circumstances at a very early age which affect their learning and academic achievement. There is need therefore to tailor and adopt instructional techniques which may help to address their challenges and improve the achievement (Ikwuka et al., 2020). Anierobi et al. (2021) emphasized the import of psychological capital in learning outcomes and this is in tandem with the current study because self-esteem is a psychological capital. In view of this, one begins to think of a way of helping to ameliorate the situation especially improving students with low self-esteem. This is because these groups of students are deemed to be at greater risk of poor academic performance (Etodike et al., 2017). Interestingly, research has demonstrated that one of the best ways to improve students' academic performance is to boost their self-esteem. This psychological construct is recognized as major factor in students learning and performance which can be enhanced through assertive training as a form of social skill training (Etodike et al., 2017).

Self-esteem is linked to social skills and is important not just because of the way it relates directly to academic performance, but also because of the ways in which it constructs, promotes and supports students' ability to initiate positive social interactions with others and these positive interactions facilitate interpersonal relationship and learning in general (Omer & Gokmen, 2017). There is no question that students with better social skills have a significant advantage with regards to their academic performance and other school related activities (Anyamene et al., 2016). Students not only experience the rewards of positive relationships among their peers, but they do better in school, have a better self-image (positive self-esteem) and high self-efficacy, and in general, are much more resilient as they face life's inevitable challenges. This prompted the present researcher to undertake this study to teach students certain social skills techniques so as to observe the effect on their self-esteem.

In order to function successfully in social context therefore, students require a variety of social skills. One of the most important techniques that parents and teachers need to accomplish is to teach students how to get along with others. No matter how gifted a student is physically or mentally, his happiness and success in life depends on his or her ability to get along with people. Unfortunately, teachers often feel overwhelmed and desperate trying to deal with undesirable and inappropriate social behaviour of students. For many teachers, it seems like a never-ending battle, and that punishment is the only recourse to inappropriate social behaviours especially in motivating students towards task accomplishments (Etodike et al., 2020). But, there seems to be another way, and that is to teach students the skills they need in order to develop a satisfactory relationship and avoid undesirable behaviour. One way to achieve this is through social skills training instructional technique.

Social skills training therefore, represents a class of interventions that can be implemented with students as a technique of improving their social competence. It is a behaviourally-oriented techniques designed to facilitate students social interaction. These techniques provide information about how to perform a particular response and why such behaviours are important for successful social outcomes. According to Kavale et al. (2004) social skills training is a procedure that teaches students appropriate social skills using techniques such as instruction, modeling, practice and reinforcement as well as generalization and maintenance procedures. It focuses on providing direct instruction and practice opportunities to students on how to enact socially skilled behaviours. This involves interventions that enable students to acquire an adequate repertoire of basic social behaviours that have a strong impact on the impression made upon others and that increase the chance of successful outcomes from social situations. These basic skills like problem

solving, conflict resolution and communication skills have grevious social consequences for example, social media addiction later in life may be patterned from social life difficulties of younger age (Etodike & Ojiakor, 2018) and above how a student actually behaves in a social interaction which has a strong connection to the student's overall self-esteem.

Self-esteem here can be seen as the overall evaluation of oneself in relation to the image one pegs on self as defined by individual experiences and how one upholds self before others. It indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself or herself to be confident in his or her worth. Simply put, self-esteem according to Lawrence (2006) is essentially one's feeling of self-confidence and self-worth. These feelings about oneself emanate from the convictions that one is a capable, competent person having worth. Feeling 'capable' is having self-confidence and viewing oneself as able to cope effectively with life's challenges. Self-esteem may also be seen as having a high opinion or respect for oneself, and a standard by which a person judges her/himself (Babakhani, 2011). This positive evaluation of the self is a precondition for social wellbeing and happiness. This self-evaluation is the single most significant key to social behaviour, which affects the thinking processes, emotions, desires, values, and goals. The way a student evaluates him or herself will actually determine how he/she will behave in social context.

Considering the dangers which low social skills and psychological capital portends and the consequences on students' academic performance, there is strong contention that social skill training of students using social skill techniques appears to be an option too desirable to overlook. In view of this, the current study deems it expedient to evaluate the effect of social skill training on self-esteem of junior secondary school students guided with the following research questions:

• What are the pretest and posttest mean self-esteem scores of students who received social skills training (SST) and those who did not receive SST?

• What are the pretest and posttest mean self-esteem scores of male and female students who received SST and those who did not receive SST?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha levels:

• There is no significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of students who received social skill training (SST) and those who did not receive SST.

• There is no significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores of male and female students who received SST and those who did not receive SST.

• There is no interaction effect of social skill training and gender on students' mean scores in self-esteem.

METHOD

The design of the study was quasi experimental research design which made use of nonrandomized control group design with pretest and posttest measures on both experimental and control groups. Participant of the study were 30 students for experimental group and 27 students for the control totaling 57 students of JSS 2 class. The method of selecting the sample for the study was Multi-stage sampling method which involved the selection of one education zone, local government area and co-educational schools (mixed schools of boys and girls) from the local government selected. The researcher purposively selected two schools that are separated well enough by location and have the same characteristics such as the gender. Research instruments were administered on students in both schools to identify 57 students that consists the sample for the study. They were assigned into two experimental groups. Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) was adopted as instrument for data collection. ISE was developed by Hudson (1982) to measure the level of self-esteem/self-concept. ISE is a 25-item inventory, and they are written on a 5-point scale of rarely or none of the time, a little of the time, some of the time, a good part of the time, most or all of the time which are rated 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively for disagree strongly, disagree moderately, neither agree nor disagree, agree moderately, agree strongly. It was adapted for Nigerian sample after several years of research by re-standardizing it in order to enhance its suitability and relevance for Nigerians (Onighaiye, 1996). However, the researcher ascertained its reliability among the sample and a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .70 was obtained.

In the procedure for the experiment, pretest questions using index of self-esteem was administered to students in the experimental and control groups and their initial group's self-esteem mean scores was recorded prior to the intervention and training with the experimental group. The training was focused on prerequisite, interpersonal, conflict resolution and problem-solving skills. The intervention took the form of modeling, role playing, practice activities and reinforcements on the experimental group through direct or explicit instructions. Posttest was given to both groups at the end of the training. The training will last for eight (8) weeks; one session per week and approximately 40-45 minutes training sessions using an intact class for the training with the help of a trained research assistant who is also a teacher for the intact classes who coordinated the activities. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to analyze the data collected after the posttest.

RESULT

Table 1
Mean self-esteem scores of students who received social skills training (SST) and those who did not receive SST

Source of variance	N	Pre-test mean	SD	Post-test mean	SD	Mean gains
Experimental group	30	28.48	8.08	45.52	7.16	17.04
Control group	27	42.11	11.7	42.29	6.80	0.18

Data in Table 1 reveal that the pre-test mean self-esteem scores of students with social skill training (experimental group) as 28.48 while that of students without social skill training (control group) was 42.11. At the end of social skill training, the post-test mean self-esteem scores of the experimental group who had social skill training increased to 45.52 whereas that of the control who did not have social skill training marginally increased to 42.29. This indicates that the experimental group gained 17.04 post-test mean on self-esteem whereas the control group only gained 0.18 post-test mean on self-esteem. This shows that social skill training (SST) which was used for the experimental group accounted for improved self-esteem than those who did not receive any training as in the control group. Thus, SST was effective in improving self-esteem than using no social teaching method among secondary school students in Anambra State.

Table 2
Mean self-esteem scores of male and female students who received SST and those who did not receive SST

Source of variance	N	Pre-test mean	SD	Post-test mean	SD	Mean gain
Male	25	33.76	13.27	44.60	8.86	10.84
Female mean difference	32	36.28 2.52	11.17	43.40 1.20	5.47	7.12

Data in Table 2 reveal that the pre-test mean self-esteem scores of male students as 33.76 while that of female students was 36.28. At the end of social skill training, the post-test mean self-esteem scores of males increased to 44.35 whereas that of the females also increased to 43.40. This indicates that males gained 10.84 in the post-test mean on self-esteem while females also gained 5.47 in the post-test mean on self-esteem. This shows that social skill training (SST) which was used as treatment accounted for improved self-esteem. Thus, SST was effective in improving self-esteem in both male and female secondary school students in Anambra State.

The ANCOVA analysis in Table 3 reveals that the mean difference of self-esteem scores of students who received social skill training (SST) and those who did not receive SST was ascertained at $F(1, 57) = 8.14$, $p < .05$. The p-value ($p \leq .006$) is less than 0.05 and adjusted R^2 indicated that the observed difference contributed .129 (12.9%) explanation of the effects of social training on students' self-esteem. Thus, null hypothesis 1 was not

confirmed. This implies that social skill training affected students' self-esteem since there is a significant mean difference between self-esteem scores of students who received social skill training (SST) and those who did not receive social skill training.

Table 3
ANCOVA on mean self-esteem scores of students who received social skill training (SST) and those who did not receive SST
Dependent Variable: Self-Esteem Posttest

Source	Type II sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Corrected model	453.118a	2	226.559	5.135	.009
Intercept	9567.302	1	9567.302	216.836	.000
Self-esteem pretest	55.382	1	55.382	.054	.060
Social skill training	359.274	1	359.274	8.143	.006
Error	2382.601	54	44.122		
Total	112836.000	57			
Corrected total	2835.719	56			

a. R Squared = .160 (Adjusted R Squared = .129)

Table 4
ANCOVA on mean self-esteem scores of male and female students who received social skill training (SST) and those who did not receive SST.
Dependent Variable: Self-Esteem Posttest

Source	Type II sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Corrected model	454.844a	3	151.615	3.375	.025
Intercept	5726.701	1	5726.701	127.481	.000
Self-esteem pretest	2.498	1	2.498	.847	.067
Gender	394.726	1	394.726	9.382	.004
Social skill training	330.603	1	330.603	7.359	.009
Error	2380.875	53	44.922		
Total	112836.000	57			
Corrected total	2835.719	56			

a. R Squared = .160 (Adjusted R Squared = .113)

Data analysis in Table 4 reveals that the mean self-esteem scores of male and female students who received social skill training (SST) and those who did not receive SST was ascertained at $F(1, 57) = 9.38$, $p < .05$. The p-value ($p \leq .004$) is less than 0.05 and adjusted R^2 indicated that the observed difference of male and female students who received social skill training (SST) and those who did not receive SST contributed .160 (16.0%) understanding of the effects of gender on students' self-esteem. Thus, null hypothesis 2 was rejected. This implies that gender affected the self-esteem scores of male and female students who received social skill training (SST) and those who did not receive SST.

Table 5
Interaction effect of social skill training type and gender on students' self-esteem scores
Dependent Variable: Self-Esteem Posttest

Source	Type I sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Corrected model	513.525[a]	4	128.381	2.875	.032
Intercept	110000.281	1	110000.281	2463.194	.000
Self-esteem pretest	93.844	1	93.844	2.101	.153
Social skill training	359.274	1	359.274	8.045	.006
Gender	375.366	1	375.366	9.175	.004
Social skill training* gender	557.041	1	557.041	11.277	.002
Error	2322.194	52	44.658		
Total	112836.000	57			
Corrected total	2835.719	56			

a. R Squared = .181 (Adjusted R Squared = .118)

Data analysis in Table 5 reveals the interaction effect of social skill training type and gender on students' self-esteem scores at $F(1, 57) = 11.3$, $p > .05$. The p-value ($p > .002$) is less than 0.05 and adjusted R^2 indicated that the observed interaction contributed .181 (18.1%) understanding of the combined effects of social skill training and gender on students' self-esteem. Thus, null hypothesis 3 was not confirmed. This implies that social skill training and gender significantly affected self-esteem since there were significant differences in self-esteem scores among students who received different types of social skill training across males and females.

DISCUSSION

From the result, the experimental group who received social skill training (SST) had a mean gain greater than the control group who did not receive social skill training; an indication that higher self esteem was achieved with social skill training than without it. The finding is supported by the findings by Mbakwe and Enwere (2021) which explored the effect of assertiveness training and cognitive restructuring on self-esteem among secondary school adolescents and found that students taught using assertive training and cognitive restructuring (experimental group) had higher mean self-esteem scores than those taught using conventional counseling method. The finding which used one type of social skill training and situated in Anambra State of Nigeria, is therefore concurrent with the current study which is focused in social skills training and also carried out in Anambra State in South-Eastern part of Nigeria. Consider also the findings of Rusmana et al (2020) whose results showed that students who were given group-counselling interventions with assertive

training technique were better than those in the control group was in supportive of the recent study. Given these similarities, it is therefore evident that assertive training technique which is a type of social skill training helps to restore students' awareness of their rights to have a happy and esteemed life. These are theoretically upheld by Social cognitive learning theory by Bandura (2008) which emphasized that social skill training which can be used for social cognitive learning help in enhancing the self to function optimally in a group. Furthermore, Obineli and Ezioko's (2019) upheld the findings as consistent with Bandura's theoretical underpinnings; so, also Etodike et al. (2017) and Anyamene, et al. (2016).

As regards genders effects of social skill training on self-esteem of junior secondary schools; the result indicated that there is a mean difference on the self-esteem scores of male and female students who received social skill training which showed that males in the experimental group had a mean difference higher than females in the experimental group which also received social skill training. The result has implications and one of them is that although social skill training had positive and significant effects on both male and female students' self-esteem; its effect on males where more pronounced. Mbakwe and Enwere (2021) concurred with this in their finding on gender differences on the effect of assertiveness training and cognitive restructuring on self-esteem among secondary school adolescents in Anambra State. Likewise Rusmana et al (2020) who found that assertive training technique helps restore both male and female students' awareness of their rights to have a happy and esteemed life. Obineli and Ezioko's (2019) findings are equally synonymous with the current position of this finding. Furthermore gender differences were also ascertained by Lawal (2016) on the effectiveness of social skills training technique on bullying behaviour and self-esteem.

The findings from the result also indicated significant interaction effects between social skill training and gender on students' self-esteem. This implies that social skills as discriminated by males and females scores significantly affected students' self-esteem between male and female students who received social skill training. This interaction effect is upheld by the empirical findings of Chaurasia and Meerambika's (2016) on gender differences in self esteem among young adults after training and that of Magee and Upenieks (2019) which found that genders differences exist in the self-esteem scores of bot adults and adolescents. The findings imply that males significantly differ in self-esteem from females, although sometimes females rather than males have higher self-esteem than their counterparts and vice versa.

Implications of the Study
Poor self-esteem is the leading cause of most social delinquent behaviour among adolescents and to a large

extent affects their academic performance. Adolescents with low self-esteem may be unable to ask questions in the class especially regarding topics which are poorly understood by him or her. Without social skill training to boost positive and strong internal motivators such as self-esteem, students with low self-esteem may never find a motivating drive to study and accomplish their academic goals.

Limitations of the Study

Most group trainings have the limitation of not carrying everyone along due to the diversities of the needs of the students. During the training sections of this study, there were committed efforts to ascertain participants' challenges prior to the training and thus, the training emphasized along those social challenges.

CONCLUSION

With more parents being engaged in work and business and having less time to inculcated social discipline and skills on their children; students with esteem problems will be on the increase, and therefore calls for the need to utilize social skill trainings to suffice for their lack. This may be structured into the curriculum or may be improvised as an extra-curriculum activity with the goals of enhancing students' behaviour and academic performance generally.

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