

GROUP MODELING AND REINFORCEMENT AS TECHNIQUES FOR CONTROLLING MALE DROPOUT FROM SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study aimed at finding out how group modeling and reinforcement could be used as techniques for controlling male dropout from secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. A ten-item structured questionnaire titled Group Modeling and Reinforcement Technique (GMRT) developed by the researcher and validated by experts was the instrument used for data collection. All the 47 counsellors practicing presently in the state found during the CASSON meeting (Anambra Chapter) constituted the population for the study. There was no sampling since the population could be managed. Data was analysed using mean and standard deviation. Results indicate that modeling and reinforcement motivate the male students a lot. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that school authorities should provide conducive atmosphere for learning in which the adolescent boys can easily adapt to and complete their education. Also seminars, conferences should be organized for guidance counsellors on the use of group modeling and reinforcement in controlling male dropout of secondary school students in Anambra State.

Education is a process for transmitting, preserving and improving the culture of a people. It is a process through which men become morally good members of their society. Education helps man to realize his potentialities and use them to improve himself and his society. The purpose of education includes acquisition of knowledge, understanding and physical skills, inculcation of values, virtue or character training (Ocho, 2005:2). The importance of education in the development and progress of any nation cannot be over-stressed. This is because education holds the key to mental emancipation and development of ideas. Nigeria appreciates the key role that education can play in moving the country towards the attainment of its social and economic goals. Consequently, she has put in place a very comprehensive National Policy on Education and has embarked on educational development programmes.

It is very sad that despite the obvious benefits of education to national development, the huge sum of money spent each year by government and other

agencies towards the development of education of the child and to improve the quality of life of the populace, incidence of students' dropout from school has been on the increase. The tendency of boys to drop out from school, a relatively recent phenomenon in Nigeria has assumed alarming proportions in Anambra State. Aggravated by a myriad of reasons among which are the erroneous perception that education no longer ensures employment and self reliance, widespread poverty as well as the over-emphasis on acquisition of wealth by fair and foul means (CASSAD, 2004).

However, a survey of the Nigerian educational scene reveals a series of disparities. Gaps are observed between male and female enrolments and between admission figures and available teaching resources (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). The trend of male drop out in secondary schools in Anambra State appears to be on the increase. This could be attributed to the commercial nature of the area. This ugly trend of drop in male enrolment has resulted to wastage of materials and human resources. Stressing this issue of wastage, Kasimi in Oforma (2011) asserted that there was a huge waste in talents and resources caused by dropouts and that this contributed heavily to increased cost of education. In view of the interest which government has for education, she introduced some radical changes and programmes such as the Universal Free Primary Education (UPE) launched in 1990 and recent Universal Basic Education (UBE) which was introduced by the federal government and which took effect from September 2005. All these genuine efforts by the government towards improving the standard of education may not be completely attained if the youths, purported leaders of tomorrow, continue to dropout of school. It seems obvious therefore that something needs to be done to reverse this ugly trend. At this point, one may ask this pertinent question about how group modeling and reinforcement as techniques could be used for controlling male dropout of secondary schools. Modeling which is called observational learning or imitation is a behaviourally-based procedure that involves the use of live or symbolic models to demonstrate a particular behaviour, thought or attitude that a client may want to acquire or change. Modeling is a learning from observing and imitating role models. The technique has been used to eliminate unwanted behaviours, reduce excessive fears, facilitate learning of social behaviours and many more. Modeling may be used either to strengthen or to weaken previously learned behaviour (Adamu, 2010). Modeling has been effectively used to treat individuals with anxiety disorders, specific phobias, attention deficit, eating disorders, etc. It has been used successfully in helping individuals acquire social skills as public speaking or assertiveness. It has been shown to be effective in group programmes.

Modeling when used alone has been shown to be effective for short-term learning. It is however, insufficient for long-lasting behaviour change if the target behaviour does not produce rewards that sustain it. Hence, modeling works well when it is combined with reinforcement. Reinforcement according to Umezulike and Eneasator (2010) can be defined as rewarding models performance or client's performance of the newly acquired skill in practice or in real life situation. Reinforcement can be material or non-material. Material reinforcement comes in the form of tokens like pencils, pens, rulers, story books, sweets, while non-reinforcement include things like praises and gestures.

Students and even adults learn by watching others or models that can be live or imaginary especially when reinforcement is applied which strengthens the tendency for the response to be repeated. It is for the above reason that the researcher is motivated into finding out the extent to which group modeling and reinforcement could be used in controlling male drop out from secondary school.

The Problem

Education which is the right of every child, is a mirage in the lives of some Nigeria boys because some of them are forced to drop out directly or indirectly due to widespread poverty as well as over-emphasis on acquisition of wealth. The regression in basic education is reflected in the fact that the net enrolment rate for boys is very low, with a high drop out rate. Poverty has been known to force most parents to withdraw their children from school. UNICEF (2004) report indicates that 121 million children are out of school for various other reasons and 65 million of them are boys. With the educational rights of 65 million boys unmet, something should be done to ensure that they complete their education. The same report indicates that Nigeria is one of the 25 developing countries of the world with low enrolment rates for boys. This is a problem that requires emergency action if the nation is to advance technologically, considering the multiplier and intergenerational benefits derivable in the education of the male. It is the aim of this study, therefore to find out how group modeling together with reinforcement could be used to control this incidence of drop out from school among boys in Anambra State. To guide this investigation, two research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent would the use of group modeling technique control male dropout?
2. To what extent would the use of reinforcement technique control male dropout?

Method

The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The design is ideal for use in this study because the study involved collecting and describing data obtained from a population in order to find out how group modeling and reinforcement could be used in controlling male drop out of secondary school. The study was carried out in Anambra State using 247 professional counsellors found at St. John of God Secondary School, Awka during their first CASSON meeting of the year on 26th February, 2015. The total population for the study then comprised 247 counsellors out of 288 counsellors in the Post-Primary School Service Commission, Awka. There was no sampling due to the manageable size of the counsellors present. The instrument used in collecting data for this study was a questionnaire titled Group Modeling and Reinforcement Technique (GMRT). It comprised two sections mainly A and B. Both sections contained statements that were related to the use of group modeling and reinforcement in controlling male drop out and they were listed on Likert 4 scale of very large extent, large extent, low extent and very low extent. The respondents were expected to tick in appropriate column the extent of their agreement with the statement.

The instrument was face validated by 2 experts from the Department of Psychology and Department of Guidance and Counselling, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The instrument was directly administered to the respondents at their first general meeting in Awka. They were given one hour to complete the questionnaire and ask questions. The researcher waited and collected the filled questionnaire soon after completion. The collected data were analyzed using mean scores. For decision-making, items scoring 2.50 and above were accepted while those below 2.50 were rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent would the use of group modeling technique control male dropout?

Table 1: Mean And Standard Deviation of Respondents on The Extent to Which The Use of Group Modeling Technique Can Control Male Dropout.

S/N	Items	Very large extent	Large extent	Low extent	Very low extent	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Successful male models could be brought to school to ginger up students	159	68	13	7	3.53	0.19	Agreed
2.	Successful male models could be beamed on TV to narrate their success stories.	131	92	18	6	3.41	0.18	Agreed
3.	Male students could be counselled in groups to share their experience of schooling.	140	101	4	2	3.53	0.19	Agreed
4.	Giving group assignments/projects to students to enable them learn to help and encourage each other.	99	108	30	10	3.20	0.17	Agreed
5.	Intelligent male students could be used in making oral speech and moderating current news in the morning assembly to encourage other students.	162	74	8	3	3.60	0.20	Agreed

N = 247

From table 1, all the items 1-5 were agreed upon by the respondents as factors which show that to a large extent, the use of group modeling technique would control male dropout. Hence, such group modeling techniques as successful male models being brought to school to ginger up students, successful male models beamed on Television to narrate their success stories, male students counselled in groups to share their experience of schooling, among others, would to a large extent control male dropout.

Research Question 2: To what extent would the use of reinforcement technique control male dropout?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents On The Extent To Which The Use Of Reinforcement Technique Can Control Male Dropout

S/N	Items	Very large extent	Large extent	Low extent	Very low extent	— X	SD	Decision
6.	Offering of scholarships by the schools, PTA, individuals or government to successful male students.	180	63	4	0	3.71	0.21	Agreed
7.	Offering incentives/aids which promises employment or support for further education to students to devote effort to school work.	155	82	7	3	3.57	0.20	Agreed
8.	Giving oral praise to successful male students.	148	79	14	6	3.47	0.19	Agreed
9.	Giving of prizes like books and non-book materials to deserving male students on prize-giving day to help ginger others up.	101	130	9	7	3.32	0.18	Agreed
10.	Clapping for a successful student in the classroom or open assembly.	100	132	10	5	3.32	0.18	Agreed

N = 247

From table 2, all the items 6-10 were agreed upon by respondents that to a large extent the use of reinforcement techniques can control male dropout. The answer to research question 2 is that such reinforcement techniques as offering of scholarship by the schools, PTA, individuals or government to successful male students, offering incentives/aids which promise employment or support for further education to students to devote effort to school work, among others, can control male dropout.

Discussion

Results on table 1 reveal a generally higher positive responses on all the items showing that the proffered group modeling strategies such as successful male models being brought to school to ginger others, beaming successful male models on T.V., using intelligent male students in making oral speech and moderating news in the assembly could all be used to control male drop out from school. These findings agree with Bandura quoted in Essurian (1990) who discovered that “People are easily aroused by emotional expressions of others and that observers can acquire lasting attitudes, emotional reactions and behavioural proclivities towards persons, places or things that have been associated with modeled emotional experiences.”

This study also confirmed the view of Umezulike and Eneasator (2010) who held that modeling has potentials for shaping human behaviours, and that the use of live and film models is a vicarious form of learning in which an individual who needs behaviour change is exposed to the sensory experience of another person. This finding is not surprising because ordinarily one should know that sharing experiences in group promotes growth in learning.

The result obtained from table 2 in the opinions of the respondents also showed that the use of reinforcement like giving oral praise, clapping for successful students in the classroom, offering of scholarship by the school, PTA, individuals or government to successful students, and offering incentives and aids which promise employment or support for further education could be used to control male drop out. The finding agrees with the opinion of Okeke (2003) that reinforcement creates desirable consequences that will strengthen or facilitate certain behaviour. Akinade (2004) also supports the above statement that reinforcement produces satisfaction or increases the probability of a learned act. This finding is not surprising because reinforcement even in the natural setting increases motivation for further actions.

Conclusion

The study focused on group modeling and reinforcement as techniques for controlling male drop out of secondary school in Anambra State. The results of the study imply that successful male model could be used to motivate other males and thereby control male drop out. Similarly, reinforcement whether material or non-material creates desirable consequences that will strengthen certain behaviours.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. School authorities should provide conducive atmosphere for learning in which the adolescent boys can easily adapt to and complete their education.
2. Curriculum planners should be counselled on the need to be gender friendly in planning school curriculum to incorporate skill acquisition and entrepreneurial studies.
3. Seminars, conferences should be organized for guidance counsellors on the use of group modeling and reinforcement in controlling male drop out.
4. Adolescent boys who are not doing well academically should be identified by counsellors and remedial classes organized for them.
5. There is need for personal-social counselling either in group or individual basis where all concerned are counselled.
6. Counsellors should enlighten parents and the general public through jingles in televisions and radios on the multiplier benefits derivable from educating the

boys. Society should review their value orientation and de-emphasis acquisition of wealth by all means.

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