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# Application of Core Counseling Techniques Intervention on the Self-concept of Internally Displaced Children: Implication for Counseling

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## **Abstract:**

*This study investigated the effects of Empathy and Unconditional positive regard Counselling Techniques on the self-concept of the at risk Internally Displaced Children in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano State. One of the objectives is to determine the effect of Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR) counselling technique intervention on the self-concept of internally displaced children for juvenile delinquency prevention and effective academic reconstruction. Two objectives and corresponding research questions guided the study, and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study was conducted on a sample of 100 selected at risk Internally Displaced Children in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano State. Pre-test post-test control group, which is an aspect of quasi experimental Design, was adopted as the design for the study. The data collected was analyzed using mean scores, t-test for independent samples. The results of the study revealed that Empathy and unconditional positive regard techniques were effective in enhancing the self-concept of the at risk Internally Displaced Children in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs. It is recommended that counsellors and social workers should be trained in the use of the techniques in counselling for self-concept enhancement and reducing juvenile delinquency.*

**Keywords:** Counselling, self-concept, internally displaced children, empathy, orphans

## **1. Introduction**

Apparently, Boko Haram Insurgency has become a threat to peace and security in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria and other neighboring states where displaced persons who fled their communities from Boko Haram are taking refuge. And it constitutes a serious human crisis in many forms. Internally displaced persons are faced with several problems such as low self-concept and destitution due to Boko Haram displacement which if overlooked, will culminate to juvenile delinquency and crime. Hence the need for appropriate counselling intervention to enhance the self-concept of the adolescent in the IDPs' schools in Kano for juvenile delinquency prevention and effective academic reconstruction. It is obvious that delinquent behaviour is reaching alarming proportion worldwide, and this has become a serious problem among the adolescent and young population. It is also obvious that delinquent behaviour is a social problem that cannot be overlooked owing to its negative effect on both the delinquent youth themselves and the society in general, in that unrestricted delinquent child can encourage many more children to take to crime and in the end result to a gang of young and dangerous criminals. Also delinquents can create problems and disrupt peace in families, in school and in society, which can result to loss of lives and properties. It is dangerous to ignore the negative consequences of juvenile delinquency and growing maladaptive behavior among adolescents.

In view of the foregoing, Counselling psychologists have developed a variety of behavioral modification techniques to address different types of delinquent behaviours. This study adopts the therapeutic approach using the core counselling techniques of Empathy and Unconditional Positive Regard of the client, which is directed at identifying children with tendency toward delinquency as a result of their bitter experience during the Boko Haram displacement, with a view to enhancing the self-concept of internally displaced children for juvenile delinquency prevention and Effective Academic Reconstruction Among Internally Displaced Children In Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School Of IDPs In Kano. This is deemed important as positive self-concept is seen as a prerequisite to the development of healthy personality and is crucial to the attainment of personal development and satisfactory living. It is believed that the key element to successfully prevent juvenile delinquency is to enhance the self-concept of the at risk delinquents. And the significance of self-concept enhancement has been knowledge in educational policy statement of Nigeria listing the development of self-concept as one of the key goals of education (NPE, 2004) A number of writers believe that these challenging behaviours, better known as 'delinquency', stem from poor self-concept (Emler & Reicher, 1995). They maintain that high self-concept not only helps individuals feel better about themselves, but also reduces the risk of

vulnerability to negative influences. This may explain why adolescents who have received no assistance from significant people, such as parents/guardians and/or educators and counsellors perform poorly at school, lose interest in sporting and cultural activities and generally lack the enthusiasm possessed by happy and fulfilled children. According to Thomas (1991), self-concept and respect are interlinked. It seems that a person's self-concept is vital in determining the type of person one is moulded into.

It is also imperative to note that human beings tend to behave in ways that conform to how they feel they should be and how they think others perceive them. Self-concept, which consists of beliefs and evaluations the individual has about himself is considered as the main determinant of behaviour, and this important aspect of personality could either be positive or negative. Hence, a positive self-concept is essential for personal happiness, school achievement and effective functioning. It has also been observed that psychologist and educationists are becoming more aware of the fact that an individual's self-concept, or his attitude to and perception of himself, are intimately related to how he learns and behave. Evidence also suggest that low performance in school work, poor motivation, misbehaviour and academic disengagement, underachievement in school, and delinquency are due in part to negative self-attitudes and perceptions (Burns,1982). Hence the need for counsellors to develop a counselling package that will help the at risk Internally Displaced Children in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano to form clear and realistic positive picture of themselves and their potentials. This would pave way for setting and achieving realistic goals after the traumatic Boko Haram Displacement they suffered.

### 1.1. Justification of the Research

Eastman, (2004) observed that development of positive self-concept is an important psychological need that should be met in order to bring up a competent, respectable self-reliant individual. And it is believed that only a child with a positive view of himself and his abilities can benefit from, and contribute to school experiences (Ireogbu, 1987). Therefore Self-concept is a crucial factor in the learning process and overall development of the individual.

It is in view of foregoing, and the increasing incidences of this juvenile delinquency in Nigeria and its consequences and the challenges of rehabilitating the children in the IDPs camps and preventing them from falling in into juvenile delinquency, and for juvenile delinquency prevention and effective academic reconstruction among the at risk Internally Displaced Children In Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School Of IDPs In Kano and the country at large that the researcher deems it necessary to carry out this study with a view to explore the effect of core counseling conditions intervention on the self-concept of internally displaced children for juvenile delinquency prevention and effective academic reconstruction, with a view to making them useful to themselves and the society.

### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- To determine the effect of Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR) counselling technique intervention on the self-concept of internally displaced children for juvenile delinquency prevention and effective academic reconstruction.
- To determine the effect of empathy counselling technique intervention on the self-concept of internally displaced children for juvenile delinquency prevention and effective academic reconstruction.
- To determine the differential effect of the two counseling techniques (Empathy and UPR) intervention on the self-concept of internally displaced children based on gender for juvenile delinquency prevention and effective academic reconstruction.

### 1.3. Research Questions

- What is the effect of Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR) counselling technique intervention on the self-concept of internally displaced children in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs in Hotoro, Kano state.
- What is the effect of Empathy counselling technique intervention on the self-concept of internally displaced children in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs in Hotoro, Kano state.
- What is the differential effect of the two counseling techniques (Empathy and UPR) intervention on the self-concept of internally displaced children based on gender in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs in Hotoro, Kano state.

### 1.4. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been formulated to guide the study:-

- There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean self -concept scores of internally displaced children of Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs exposed to Empathy and those in the control group.
- There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean self -concept scores of internally displaced children of Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs exposed to Unconditional positive regard and those in the control group.
- There is no significant gender difference between the pre-test and post-test mean self -concept scores of internally displaced children of Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs exposed to Unconditional positive regard and those expose to Empathy.

## 2. Literature Review

Self-concept enhancement is widely acknowledged as a means to facilitate desirable behavior outcomes in a diversity of settings. High levels of self-concept have been associated with many benefits, such as higher levels of general happiness (Swann, 1996); improved social interaction (Gurney, 1986); coping skills (Shirk, 1988) and academic achievement (Marsh & Yeung, 1997; Delugach, Bracken, Bracken & Shicke, 1992). Indeed, self-concept is considered to be critical for healthy personal development and social adjustment in children (Harter, 1990). Conversely, low levels of self-concept have been associated with a wide variety of negative behaviours, such as academic failure, violence, depression, and suicide (Branden, 1994, Marsh and Craven, 1997).

It is suggested that if self-concept is positive and normal, the individual will possess normal mental health. Conversely, if self-concept is negative and abnormal, the individual may behave abnormally in his or her environment. According to Gross (1992), the consensus appears to be that self-concept is largely acquired. This point is very pertinent for the at risk Internally Displaced Children in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano with a view to helping them form clear and realistic positive picture of themselves and their potentials after the traumatic Boko Haram Displacement they suffered, and for those who are involved in their upbringing, particularly teachers and counsellors. By implication; the at risk Internally Displaced Children In Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano self-concept can be changed over time using the techniques in question.

## 3. Methodology

Pre-test Post-test control group design which is an aspect of quasi experimental research design was used in the study. This involves a pretest of participants before the introduction of treatment followed by a post-test after the introduction of the treatment (Kerlinger, 1970; Akinade, 2010).

The target population of this study comprises of all the at-risk adolescent population in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano. Equally the sample size of this study was drawn from the pupils of Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of Kano state identified through the research scale to have shown some elements of being at risk of infantile felony due to negative self-concept they presumably acquire as a result of displacement and trauma by Boko Haram Crisis in their region.

### Procedures for Data Collection

The procedure for collecting data for this study was divided into three phases:

- Pre-treatment, treatment and post- treatment phases.

### The Pre-Treatment Session

- This session formed the introductory session before treatment.
- The researcher presents an introductory letter to the Officers in charge of the Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano in order to gain access to the respondents. The letter contains an explanation regarding the nature and purpose of the study.
- The administration of the At-Risk Juvenile Delinquent Self-Concept Scale (ARJDSCS) was done in the normal free time after lunch and zuhur prayer. A total of one hundred individuals (100) were assigned to two experimental and one control groups respectively. All the groups were exposed to a pre-testing condition and the scores were kept for analysis along with the post test scores at the end of the study.

### 3.1. The Treatment Session

The treatment session involved basically the provision of counselling service using the counselling techniques of Empathy and Unconditional Positive Regard on the pupils of Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School for orphaned children. The treatment sessions was conducted for a period of nine (9) weeks consecutively. Clients were treated in group counselling in a thirty minutes (30) counselling session for a period of nine weeks.

### 3.2. Post-Treatment Session

The treatment was evaluated by re-administering the 2<sup>nd</sup> version of the instrument (ARJDSCS) on the respondents to determine the effect of the treatments. All the samples selected for the study were post-tested by re-administering the ARJDSCS. Results of the pre-test and that of post-test compared for difference. The extent of the difference determines the effects of the treatments.

### 3.3. Instrumentation

The researcher uses At-Risk Juvenile Delinquents' Self Concept Scale (ARJDSCS) to collect data for the study. The At-Risk Juvenile Delinquents' Self Concept Scale was adapted by the researcher from the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) to measure the self-concept of the respondents and was translated in to the respondent's native language (Hausa and Kanuri) as the respondents are predominantly Hausa and Kanuri by tribe.

### 3.4. Scaling and Scoring the Instrument

A four - point Likert scale was used to measure the subjects' responses. Respondents to the At Risk Juvenile Delinquents' Self Concept Scale (ARJDSCS) can score a maximum of one twenty (120) points on the scale. This indicates positive self-concept. The least score of a respondent on the scale is thirty (30) which indicate negative or low self-concept.

The range of the scale is ninety (90) the midpoint of the range is forty five (45). The cut-off point is forty-five to one twenty (45-120). These scores were obtained by the summation of the measurement of the multifaceted aspects of the

self-concept of the respondents' scores respectively. Out of thirty items the instrument contained, items 5,7,8,9,12,13,14,18,19,22,23,25,,27,28,29,and 30 are negative and were scored in a reverse direction on the scale while the rest were scored in an obverse direction.

### 3.5. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by experts in the area of Counselling psychology. The reliability of the instrument was achieved in a pilot study conducted on 20 non respondents' samples in the population of the study and the use of Item Response Theory model (IRT).

### 3.6. Administration of the Instrument

The At Risk Juvenile Delinquents' Self Concept Scale (ARJDSCS) was administered on the subjects in this experiment on pre-test and post-test basis.

### 3.7. Procedure for Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the research questions and t-test for difference was used in testing hypotheses 1 & 2. In testing hypothesis 3, analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used as ANOVA is a prudent method for simultaneously comparing means for more than two groups.

## 4. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical procedures were used in analyzing the research questions. In testing the hypotheses of the study, Independent T-Test was used to analyse the data.

## 5. Data Presentation

The data collected for the study cover the following: distribution of subjects into groups, distribution of subjects in to two treatment groups, distribution. It is therefore presented in tables below.

Groups	Frequency	Percentage
Experimental	50	50.0%
Control	50	50.0%
Total	100	100%

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents into Groups

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents into groups. The experimental group consisted of thirty (50) respondents representing 50% and the control group also consisted of thirty (50) respondents representing 50%.

## 6. Hypothesis Testing/ Result and Discussion

Pre-test & post-test self-concept mean scores of experimental group (Empathy) and the control group.

	Treatments	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	Empathy	50	40.4000	6.10386
	Control	50	42.4000	6.32230
Post-test	Empathy	50	50.8667	7.01902
	Control	50	41.9333	6.63827

Table 2

From the mean scores and the standard deviation in the pre-test and that of post-test it is clear that the mean scores and the standard deviation of the experimental group is higher, hence the treatment of empathy is found to be effective in enhancing the self-concept of the respondents.

Pre-test & Post-test self-concept mean scores of experimental group (UPR) and the control group

	Treatments	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	UPR	50	40.6667	5.24631
	Control	50	41.8667	4.20657
Post-test	UPR	50	56.4667	8.04334
	Control	50	42.6000	4.06729

Table 3

From the mean scores and the standard deviation in the pre-test and that of post-test it is clear that the mean scores and the standard deviation of the experimental group is higher, hence UPR treatment is effective in enhancing the self-concept of the respondents.

Hypothesis one was accepted as it was discovered that The null hypothesis which says that, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of experimental group (UPR, Empathy) and control group on the pre-test scores of the children in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano is therefore accepted, meaning no significant

difference exists between experimental (UPR, Empathy) and control group in the pre-test scores on JDSCS among the respondents prior to the treatment.

Hypothesis two was rejected as it was discovered that the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of experimental groups (UPR) and the control group in the post-test scores on At Risk Juvenile Delinquents' Self Concept Scale (ARJDSCS) is therefore rejected, meaning there is significant difference between experimental (UPR) and control group on the post-test scores after treatment.

## 7. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

From the analysis of the result obtained, the findings of the study reveal that:

Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR) and Empathy are effective in enhancing the self-concept of the children in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano as the means scores of the treatment groups was found to be higher than the means scores of the control groups with the P-value of .001, .000,  $\alpha = 0.05$  level of significance.

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the therapeutic use of Empathy and Unconditional Positive Regard would help the children in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kanoto improve their self-concept which will in turn lead to their proper re-integration and rehabilitation rather than been isolated and stereotyped, which will eventually make them to lose their self-esteem and confidence.

Base on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- Counsellors should be trained on the use of techniques of Empathy and Unconditional positive regard in counselling for reducing juvenile delinquency and self-concept enhancement.
- Seminars and conferences should be organised in training counsellors and social workers on the use of the techniques in question for self-concept enhancement and reducing juvenile delinquency.
- It is recommended that the Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano and in the other IDPs camps should be supplied with trained counsellors who received professional guidance and counselling training on the use of the new techniques in question for counselling the at risk juveniles for juvenile delinquency prevention. This will help in facilitating effective rehabilitation and eventual reintegration of the children in the society. Social workers and counsellors should use the techniques effectively in helping the children to form positive view of their selves and develop positive concept of their selves so that they can live a rewarding life.

## 8. Implications for Counselling Practice

### 8.1. Result (Expected Output)

It is a well-known fact that, Positive self-concept is a basic component of achievement and self-actualization. The study provided empirical data on how creating and applying therapeutic techniques necessary for change can improve the self-concept of young children in the IDPs camp and beyond, for juvenile delinquency prevention, effective academic reconstruction and reintegration in the society. The study also provided opportunity, by the development of Counselling package for the young at risk Internally Displaced Children in Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano and in the IDPs camps and else were to develop positive self-concept so that they can live a useful and rewarding life.

The use of the counselling package would facilitate counselling for self-concept enhancement. The research also has important implication for social policy, as enhancing self-concept is having, in that placing children in the Borno Orphans Model Boarding Primary School of IDPs In Kano and in the IDPs without an effort to enhance their self-concept will lead to continuously lower their self-concept and create a long lasting stigmatization as suggested by labelling theory.

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