

The effectiveness of psycho education on psychological wellbeing of adolescents in Jos South LGA of Plateau State

Abstract

The study investigated the effectiveness of psycho-education on psychological wellbeing of adolescents in Jos South LGA of Plateau State. 48 adolescents were selected to participate in the study from two secondary schools through the simple random sampling technique. After the selection, the selected adolescents were divided into two groups (experimental and control group). The Design used in carrying out this study is the experimental design. The short form of the Adolescents Mental Health Continuum (MHC-SF) was used to measure psychological wellbeing of adolescents while psycho-education was given through 4 sessions of intensive training and activities targeted at improving adolescents' level of psychological wellbeing. T-test was utilized in comparing the treatment and control group on the dependent variables. The hypothesis compared the treatment group with the control group, and the result shows that the treatment group scored higher than the control group on psychological wellbeing. (Means: Treatment: (70.92{SD 43.22}, Control: (52.00{SD 77.77}), $p < 0.000$). Therefore, this study recommends that school authorities should encourage psycho-education as a special training for their students that will help improve their psychological functioning which will directly and positively influence their general wellbeing.

Keywords: psycho-education, psychological wellbeing, adolescents, positive psychology, human behavior, psychological growth

Volume 10 Issue 5 - 2019

Japhet A Makama,¹ Jurbe S Bisji,² Stephen J Umar,³ Aboh J Ogbale,⁴ Yakubu M Banje,⁵ Charity Takyum,⁶ Michael L Gideon,⁶ Ali Ishaku,⁷ Panmun Raymond⁸

¹Save the Children International, Nigeria

²Anchor Psychological Services, Nigeria

³Institute of Governance and Development Studies, Nasarawa State University, Nigeria

⁴Nigerian Army, Nigeria

⁵Department of Psychology, Plateau State University, Nigeria

⁶Department of Psychology, Nassarawa State University, Nigeria

⁷Department of Psychiatry, University of Abuja Teaching Hospital, Nigeria

⁸United Nations World Food Programme, Nigeria

Correspondence: Japhet Ayele Makama, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Nigeria, Email japhmakama@gmail.com

Received: August 13, 2019 | **Published:** October 10, 2019

Introduction

Psycho-education is a cost-effective interventional approach that emphasizes teaching stress-coping strategies such as goal setting, skills teaching, satisfactory goal achievement, assertiveness and communication skills.¹ These help to mitigate the development of poor mental wellbeing such as depression or anxiety.^{2,3} According to Colom and Lam², psycho-education focuses on the early identification of prodromal signs and possible predisposing and precipitating causes of these mental disorders. Patients' understanding of their conditions will facilitate compliance and encourage them to seek appropriate management. It also encourages individuals to explore their health beliefs and illness awareness, and enables them to understand the complex relationship between symptoms, personality, interpersonal factors and environment. Psychological well-being is commonly considered in positive psychology. Psychological well-being is defined as some combination of positive affective states such as happiness (the hedonic perspective) and functioning with optimal effectiveness in individual and social life (the eudaimonic perspective). "Psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively." By definition therefore, people with high Psychological Wellbeing report feeling happy, capable, well-supported, satisfied with life, and so on. The implication of psychological wellbeing includes better physical health, mediated possibly by brain activation patterns, neurochemical effects and genetic factors.⁴ Psychological wellbeing is a crucial psychological factor with respect to human behavior. It is a concept that encompasses well-rounded, balanced, and comprehensive experiences of life.

Psychoeducation is an approach to changing the behavior patterns, values, interpretation of events, and life outlook of individuals who may not be adjusting well to their environment(s) (e.g. home, school, and workplace). Mostly, the behaviours targeted to be changed in a psychoeducation sessions are behaviors that are inappropriate to the individual. Inappropriate behavior is viewed as a person's maladaptive attempt to cope with the demands of that environment. Appropriate behaviors are developed by helping the individual to recognize the need for change, and then helping that person to display better behavior choices. In essence, and often in practice, a "teacher" is helping a "student" to more accurately understand oneself (and others), the futility of the present pattern of behaving, and the need to adopt prosocial alternative responses.

There is an urgent need for psychoeducation as many of these adolescents in Plateau State especially who were born between 2001 and 2015 have experienced negative life events in one way or the other due to some major crises and terror acts that occurred during these years and may have affected their view to life and general mental wellbeing in significant ways. Thus, this study sought to investigate the effect of psychoeducation on psychological wellbeing among secondary school students in Jos, Plateau State.

Statement of the problem

Adolescents in the 21st century are faced with numerous challenges due to the fast pace of globalization and technological advancement and many are caught unawares with the resultant negative effects on their mental wellbeing. These is evident by the daily news of suicide among this category of people which may be associated poor mental

health such as depression, addiction, low emotional intelligence and other vices.^{3,6,11} To offer solution to these prevailing challenges, there is an urgent need to come up with intervention strategies in the form of psycho-education. Many experimental studies provide evidence that psychoeducation will significantly and positively influence the level psychological wellbeing of different categories of people^{1,3,5,6,7,8} but there is scanty information & research conducted using the adolescent population in Nigeria. Hence this study is aimed at investigating the role of psychoeducation on psychological wellbeing of adolescents in Nigeria.

Objectives of study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate & study the effect of psycho-education on the psychological wellbeing of adolescents.

Research question

What is the effect of psychoeducation on psychological wellbeing of adolescents?

Significance of study

The study will provide a technique of helping the adolescents to develop their level of psychological wellbeing which is highly essential in all areas of their life and especially for their academic progress and general life functioning. The study will also help relevant agencies from government to non-governmental organizations to come up with policies that will help the growing population to deal with distressing events and emotions that might arise as a result of the frequent insurgencies in the country. Finally, the study hopes to add the existing body of knowledge in Nigeria and the world at large.

Theoretical framework

The psychoeducation theory is based on positive psychology theory by Seligman & Csikszentmihaly⁹ which states that psychological wellbeing especially as it relates to happiness in the life of people promotes success across various arenas of human functioning. According to Erez & Isen,¹⁰ inducing positive emotional states in people through psychoeducation facilitates flexible, effective problem solving, decision making and evaluation of events. Therefore, positive emotions have a potentially adaptive and interactive nature and might moderate the relationship between life events such as stress or depression and the behaviours and attitudes of adolescents that lead to normal functioning.⁶ It is more important to focus on developing positive characteristics rather than on avoiding or diminishing negative ones such as depression after they have occurred.⁹ This theory is very important as the adolescents in this study will be exposed to psychoeducation trainings that are aimed to increase the effectiveness to solving daily life challenges and taking right decisions that will help improve their psychological wellbeing. Instead of concentrating on the negative, more concentration will be directed to positive. Positive behaviors should then be developed by helping the individual to recognize the need for change, and then helping that person to display better behavior choices. In essence, and often in practice, the psychoeducation theory connotes a “teacher” is helping a “student” to more accurately understand himself/herself (and others), the futility of the present pattern of behaving, and the need to adopt prosocial alternative responses.

Empirical review of relevant literature

Bada¹¹ examined the effectiveness of psycho-education training in the enhancement of the psychological well-being of spouse of

incarcerated males in Ibadan, Nigeria. Bada¹¹ used the pre-test and post-test quasi experimental research design and a total of 16 spouses of male inmates in Ibadan for the study. Result showed that psycho-education training (i.e. intervention) had significant effect on the psychological wellbeing of partners of prisoners.

Muriungi & Ndeti¹ investigated the effectiveness of psycho-education on depression, hopelessness, suicidality, anxiety and substance use among basic diploma students at Kenya Medical Training College and found that there was not significant reduction in symptom severity between the experimental and control group at 3 months ($p>0.05$) but that there was a significant difference at 6 months of intervention ($p<0.05$).

The study of Lubin, Loris, Burt and Johnson⁸ examined the effectiveness of a 16-week trauma-focused, cognitive behavioural group therapy, called Interactive Psycho educational Group Therapy (IPGT), in reducing primary symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in five groups (n=29) of traumatized women diagnosed with chronic PTSD. During each session, a brief psycho educational lecture was given, followed by an interactive discussion led by the therapist and then a wrap-up with an educational emphasis. Subjects were given booklets and homework at the end of each session. Besides that, the therapists used a blackboard to jot down important points in the lectures. The assessments were made at every 1-month interval during the treatment period, at termination and a follow up assessment after the 6 month period using a self-report and structured interview which measured PTSD and psychiatric symptoms. The result showed those depressive symptoms and all three clusters of PTSD symptoms such as re-experiencing, avoidance and hyper-arousal are significantly reduced. Meanwhile, the general psychiatric and dissocialize symptoms showed near-significant reduction at the end.

The study of Manne et al.⁷ assessed the effect of a six-week psycho educational group intervention on the distress, coping, personal growth and marital communication of wives of men diagnosed with prostate cancer. The topics of sessions were related to health and psychological information. The study found that there were no differences with regards to the wives' psychological distress, but it showed some improvement in adaptive coping which is an indication of psychological growth.

Donker et al.¹² revealed that brief passive psycho-educational interventions for depression and psychological distress can reduce symptoms. Brief passive psycho-education interventions are easy to implement, can be applied immediately and are not expensive. This brief passive psycho-educational interventions can be in the form of psychological first aid, i.e. the first approach aimed at helping the client reduce psychological distress before the major intervention. Interventionist may offer a first-step intervention for those experiencing psychological distress or depression and might serve as an initial intervention in primary care or community models. The findings suggest importance of quality of psycho-education.

Duran & Barlas¹³ in their study “Effectiveness of psych-education intervention on subjective wellbeing and self-compassion of individuals with mental disabilities” identified significant increase in parents' subjective well-being and self-compassion levels after eight session of psycho-education.

Research hypotheses

There will be a significant effect of psycho-education on psychological wellbeing of adolescents.

Methodology

Participants

The study population was adolescents from two Secondary Schools in Jos South LGA of Plateau state. The sample of the study consists of 48 adolescents with 24 participants from each school. The adolescents who participated in the study were selected through the simple random sampling technique. After the selection, the selected adolescents were divided into two groups (experimental and control group) through the hat and draw method. The age range of the participants was between 14 and 20 years with a mean age of 16 years. 24 of the participants were males and 24 were females. Also, 24 were Muslims while 24 were Christians.

Research design

The Design used in carrying out this study is the experimental design. The independent variable is psycho-education and the dependent variable is psychological wellbeing. Two groups of participants were used for the research; the treatment group and the control group.

Instruments

The demographic scale includes information on the participant's biodata such as sex, age, religious affiliation and class.

The Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF),¹⁴ was adopted to measure adolescents psychological wellbeing. The 14-item MHC-SF was administered, as it measures various levels of mental health and has three sub-scales:

- a. Emotional Well-Being (EWB), defined in terms of positive affect and satisfaction with life;
- b. Social Well-Being (SWB), described in terms of social acceptance, social-actualization, social contribution, social coherence and social integration; and
- c. Psychological Well-Being (PWB), described in terms of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. Respondents rate the frequency of each statement occurring in the past month on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "never" (0) to "almost every day" (5). Scores on the scale as a whole may also be used to categorize an individual as languishing, moderate mentally healthy, or flourishing. Keyes et al.¹⁴ validated a Setswana version of this scale for a Setswana-speaking population in Africa and found sufficient reliability ($\alpha=0.72$), as well as good construct, convergent and discriminant validity for this scale in an African context. The Cronbach alpha reliability index in the current study was 0.78 by Rugira et al.¹⁵ among Tanzanian Undergraduates.

Procedure

The consent of the school authorities to use their students for the research was sought for which the school approved. The students' consents to participate in the study was also sought which they willingly gave. The adolescents were then randomly assigned into the treatment and control groups through the hat and draw method. While the treatment group was taken to the school hall where they received the psycho-education treatment on different aspects psychological wellbeing, the control group received no training. The participants were assured of confidentiality of all information they provided and

also, were given the opportunity to withdraw at any time they felt not interested to continue.

The psycho-education was divided into 4 sessions for a period of 1 month. The first week dealt with pre-test and brief introduction of the researcher's purpose. The participants consent was sought which they gave with their confidentiality guaranteed. The two classes (treatment and control groups) were also divided). The second week, clients were taught the basics of psychological wellbeing (meaning of mental health and common mental health challenges, they gave their experiences and were taken through the mental health continuum lessons). The third week dealt ways to psychological wellbeing and the final day used the art of happiness lesson to cap the training. The posted was given afterward as the two groups were thereafter debriefed.

At the end of the training, to test the effectiveness of the interventions, a post test was administered through the use of the Adolescents Mental Health Continuum (MHC-SF). Both the treatment group and control groups were administered the same questionnaires which took them about 10 minutes to fill. The effectiveness of psychological wellbeing among the adolescents was then assessed by comparing the results of the treatment group with that of the control group.

An extract from the mental health training manual which was adapted from the TIME TO CHANGE MENTAL HEALTH LESSONS (a UK based mental health NGO- a nationwide movement to get people talking about mental health) is presented below:

8 Ways to psychological wellbeing

1. Talking being open with people you trust about how you are feeling.
2. Exercising looking after your body, playing sport, eating healthy.
3. Calming trying meditation, good sleep habits like turning your phone off early.
4. Learning a new skill, a great way to gain confidence.
5. Relating spending time with the people you care about.
6. Contributing helping others or contributing to causes you believe in.
7. Creating expressing yourself creatively e.g. music, art, drama, and writing.
8. Congratulating being kind to yourself, or listing the qualities you value in myself or simply put, saying words of positive affirmation.

The art of happiness^{16,17,18}

- i. Students were taught some basic principles of maintaining a happy mood which is highly essential for high psychological wellbeing, the summary is presented below:
- ii. Communicating (assertiveness)
- iii. Caring
- iv. Exercise
- v. Getting in the flow
- vi. Spiritual Engagement

- vii. Strengths and virtues
- viii. Positive thinking: Gratitude, savoring and optimism

Communicating

1. People who have one or more close friendships appear to be happier.
2. What seems to make a significant difference is cooperation in activities and sharing of personal feelings (successive disclosure).

Caring

1. People who volunteer or simply care for others on a consistent basis seem to be happier and less depressed.

Exercise

1. Regular exercise is associated with improved mental well-being and a lower incidence of depression

Getting in the flow

1. If we are deeply involved in trying to reach a goal, or an activity that is challenging but well suited to our skills, we experience a joyful state called “flow.”

Strengths and virtues

1. Positive psychologists like Martin Seligman argue that the happiest people are those that have discovered their unique strengths and virtues
2. More empirical evidence needed
3. Philosophical parallels are plentiful, especially in classical world: Socrates, Aristotle, Mencius

Spiritual Engagement

1. Participation in spiritual activities
2. Significant increase in happiness independent from social component
3. Possible reasons: The question of meaning and purpose

Positive Thinking

1. Positive Thinking: Optimism, Savoring, and Gratitude
2. Mindfulness

Method of statistical analyses

The T-test was utilized in comparing the treatment and control group on the dependent variables.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the demographic variables. There were 24 (50.0%) males and females respectively. Majority of the participants were 20 years and above by 16, and 15, years. There was an equal distribution of participants on religious affiliation, 24 (50.0) Christians and 24 (50.0%) Muslim.

Table 1 Frequency distribution for demographic variables

Demographic Factors	Frequency	Percent %
Gender		
Male	24	50.0
Female	24	50.0
Total	48	100.0
Age		
14 Years	2	4.17
15 Years	8	16.67
16 Years	18	37.50
18 & >	20	41.67
Total	48	100.0
Religion		
Islam	24	50.0
Christianity	24	50.0
Total	48	100.0

Inferential statistics

Hypothesis

By comparing the treatment group and control group, the result from Table 2 shows that there was a significant effect of psycho-education on psychological wellbeing ($p < 0.0001$). The treatment group scored higher than the control group on psychological wellbeing.

Table 2 Data Summary and t-test to assess effect of psycho education on psychological wellbeing

	Mean	SD	T	df	P
Treatment	70.92	43.22	-5	46	<.0001
Control	52	77.77			

Discussion

This study investigated the effect of psychoeducation on psychological wellbeing of adolescents in two secondary schools in Jos South LGA of Plateau State. Psychoeducation was found to play significant role to increase psychological wellbeing of the secondary school students. The different psychoeducational strategies applied and the teaching procedure and exercises which practically engaged the participants were effective in improving the psychological wellbeing of the students. In line with this study, several studies reported the value of psychoeducational interventions as an effective means of improving psychological well-being.^{1,2,3,5,6,7,8,11-13} An individual’s positive state of mind which is positively connected with different emotions such as hope, optimism, happiness, a sense of personal satisfaction and lots of other affective functions. This study has shown that adolescents that were trained became more life, communicates better and develop better management skills unlike those that did not receive the training. According to, people that are trained to have good psychological wellbeing have higher physical health, are happier, optimistic and have positive view with high emotional stability.⁵

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that psychoeducation is an important exercise through which psychological wellbeing of students can be achieved. The need for psychological wellbeing especially among students is essential for their optimal academic and social functioning. Therefore, this study recommends that school authorities should consider special trainings for their students that will help improve their psychological functioning which will directly and positively influence their academic performance. Students in schools should also undergo psychological assessment to ascertain their level of mental wellbeing and those found with any form of challenge should be treated accordingly.

Limitations of study

The researchers observed some few limitations in the course of the study. The participants were not consistent in the four sessions. Because of their age which is mostly driven by youthful exuberance, the possibility for social desirability and level of comprehension could influence the findings. The number of participant may be small and as such, affect the result of the study (Appendix A & B).

Funding details

None.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

References

1. Muriungi SK, Ndeti DM. Effectiveness of psycho-education on depression, hopelessness, suicidality, anxiety and substance use among basic diploma students at Kenya Medical Training College. *South African Journal of Psychology*. 2013;9(2):41–50.
2. Colom F, Lam D. Psychoeducation: Improving outcomes in bipolar disorder. *Eur Psychiatry*. 2005;20(5-6):359–364.
3. Christensen H, Griffiths KM, Mackinnon AJ, et al. Online randomized controlled trial of brief and full cognitive behaviour therapy for depression. *Psychological Medicine*. 2006;36(12):1737–1746.
4. Deci EL, Ryan RM. Hedonia, eudaimonia and wellbeing: An introduction. *Journal of Happiness Studies*. 2008;9(1):1–11.
5. Okati M, Farnam A. The Effectiveness of Emotional Intelligence Training on Psychological Wellbeing of Veterans and Martyrs Children. *Research Journal of Applied Sciences*. 2016;11(7):488–495.
6. Salami, SO, Ogundokun MO. Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as predictors of academic performance. *Perspectives in Education*. 2009;25(3):175–185.
7. Manne S, Babb J, Pinover W, et al. Psychoeducational group intervention for wives of men with prostate cancer. *Psychooncology*. 2013;13(1):37–46.
8. Lubin H, Johnson DR. Interactive psychoeducational group therapy in the treatment of authority problems in combat-related posttraumatic stress disorder. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*. 2000;50(3):277–297.
9. Seligman MEP, Csikszentmihalyi M. Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*. 2000;55(1):5–14.
10. Erez A, Isen AM. The influence of positive affect on the components of expectancy motivation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 2002;87(6):1055–1067.
11. Bada BV. The Effectiveness of Psycho-Education on the Psychological Well-Being of Spouses of Incarcerated Males in Ibadan, Nigeria. *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues*. 2013;16(2):178–186.
12. Donker T, Griffiths KM, Cuijpers P, et al. Psychoeducation for depression, anxiety and psychological distress: a meta-analysis. *BMC Medicine*. 2009;7:9.
13. Duran S, Barlas GÜ. Effectiveness of psychoeducation intervention on subjective well being and self compassion of individuals with mental disabilities. *International Journal Resources in Medical Sciences*. 2016;4(1):181–188.
14. Keyes CLM. The mental Health Continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of health and social research*. 2002;43(2):207–222.
15. Rugira J, Nienaber AW, Wissing MP. Evaluating the effect of a psychosocial well-being programme for students at a Tanzanian University. *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues*. 2015;18(2):77–98.
16. Myers DG, Diener E. The Pursuit of Happiness: New Research Uncovers some Anti-intuitive Insights into How Many People are Happy and Why. *Scientific American*. 1996;18(2):70–72.
17. Diener E. Subjective Wellbeing: The Science of happiness and proposal for a National Index. *American Psychologist*. 2000;55(1):34–43.
18. Diener E, Diener C. Most People are Happy. *Psychological Science*. 1996;7(3):181–185.