



# EFFECT OF SOLUTION-FOCUSED THERAPY ON EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT AND SELF-ESTEEM OF JUNIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS EXPOSED TO CONFLICT IN GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The researcher was motivated by the conflicts that junior secondary school students are exposed to. Consequently, this study investigated the effect of solution-focused therapy on emotional adjustment and self-esteem of junior secondary school exposed to conflicts in Gombe State. Two research questions were posed and two hypotheses were equally tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study was carried out using true experimental design which consisted of pre-test and post-test control group design. The experimental group was treated with solution-focused therapy while the control group was treated with conventional counselling. The population of the study consisted of 60 junior secondary school students exposed to conflicts. The sample of the study was comprised of 30 students from each aim which was drawn through sampling technic. The instrument for data collection is Pscho-social Adjustment Scale (PAS) for junior secondary schools exposed to conflicts and Academic Achievement Test (AAT). Data relating to research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were analysed using T-test. Findings of the study revealed that solution-focused therapy were effective in emotional adjustment and self-esteem of students exposed to conflicts. Based on the finding the following recommendations were made among which are the study recommended that the Federal Ministry of Education, the State and Local Government should facilitate the implementation of entrepreneurship and civic education curriculum for junior secondary schools and all areas prone to crises for a permanent resolution of crises and behaviour control in those areas throughout the country.*

## INTRODUCTION

Psycho-social adjustment refers to a person's adaptation within a social environment to satisfy emerging needs. It includes an individual's emotional well-being, loneliness, depression and dissatisfaction with social life. It enables change of ways of life according to the demands of life situations and gives humans the strength and ability to bring about the necessary changes in the conditions of the environment. Psycho-social adjustment process is affected and modified by an individual's experiences and covers four basic aspects namely; emotional adjustment, self-esteem adjustment, personality adjustment and relationship (social) adjustment.

Emotional adjustment involves feeling, thinking, and understanding of one's own emotions and others. It includes the maintenance of equilibrium in the human feeling component in the face of internal and external stressors facilitated by cognitive processes of acceptance and adaptation. It also involves adjusting ones' emotion in any given situation, and the ability to deal successfully with other people.

Emotional adjustment is the maintenance of emotional equilibrium in the face of internal and external stressors. This is facilitated by cognitive processes of acceptance and adaptation. Adjustment is a process that helps a person to lead a happy and contented life while maintaining a balance between his needs and his capacity to fulfill them. It enables him to change his way of life according to the demands of the situation and gives him the strength and ability to bring about the necessary changes in the conditions of his environment. Emotional development is one of the major aspects of human development. Man's emotional make-up has always been linked with his physical, mental, intellectual, social, moral and aesthetic development, ever since the development of psychology as a behavioral science. The adjustment process is affected and modified by the individual's experiences and thus learning plays a significant part in the aiding adjustment.

Emotional adjustment referred to the adjusting ones in any given situation. Emotion influences every stage of one's life. Thus emotional adjustment can easily be defined as the ability of an individual to deal successfully with other people. Our reactions are life's situations will greatly be deepened on our emotional adjustment. Emotional adjustment involves feeling, thinking, understanding of emotions of one's own and others. Every individual from the time he or she steps out of the family and goes to



school makes a long series of adjustments between the whole unique personality and the environment. The ardent desire of each boy and girl to become a person having a healthy physique, a growing intellectual ability, a greater degree of emotional poise, and increased participation in social groups, such characteristics enhance one's personality. Even parents, teachers, and other significant members of the society to which person belong will encourage this desire.

Self-esteem is the other aspect of psycho-social adjustment. It is having confidence in one's capacity to achieve values. It is the subjective and enduring sense of realistic self-approval. It reflects how an individual views and values the self at the most fundamental levels of psychological experiences. Self-esteem is the evaluation, which an individual makes and customarily maintains with regards to him/herself. It is affective component of the self, that is a person's positive and negative self-evaluations about him/herself. It is a relatively permanent positive or negative feeling about self that may become more or less positive and negative as individuals encounter and interpret success and failure in their daily lives (Branden, 2020).

Agrawal (2020) carried out a study on Self-Esteem, Adjustment, Psychological Well-Being and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Varanasi district, India. Adolescents try to get used to rapid changes and developments of 21<sup>st</sup> century, in this course they often ignore their own psychological well-being and don't understand the reason behind the fluctuation of their academic achievement. The psychological wellbeing of adolescents has been shown to be related to many individual factors. The study attempts to assess the relationship of self-esteem and adjustment with psychological well-being and academic achievement of secondary school students. A significant positive relationship among self-esteem, psychological well-being and academic achievement was determined. Adjustment level of students were found to be significantly positive correlated with academic achievement level and well-being of the students.

Nigeria is among the nations of the world that are currently bedeviled by insecurity and conflicts of varying degrees. Conflicts are sentiments that produce clashes among different groups of people. Conflicts are situations where the peace, stability and cordiality which existed between groups are threatened based on issues relating to their ethnicity. It is a situation in which the relationship between members of one ethnic or multi ethnic and multi-religious society is characterized by lack of cordiality and mutual understanding, driven by confrontation (Agu, Amujuri & Okwo, 2012). The number of people who have been affected either by environmental or conflict induced factors are estimated to be over half a million among which are junior secondary students.

Junior secondary students exposed to conflicts are learners who are in their first three years of secondary school who are affected by conflicts in Gombe state. They are generally affected by armed conflicts, violence, violations of human rights and human-made disasters. In conflict situations, junior secondary students' needs are immense and the means to satisfy these needs within the conflict area are limited. In Nigeria, conflicts arising from the activities of Boko Haram in the North East, kidnapping, armed banditry and Fulani herdsmen have resulted to threats to students' lives. Students exposed to conflicts are at significant risk of impairment in psycho-social functioning and academic failure leading to low academic achievement and therefore the need for intervention. Common interventions provided to individuals exposed to conflict include; Given the prevalence of psycho-social challenges among students exposed to conflict, there is an urgent need to provide interventions (Allport, 2011). There are a variety of interventions for psycho-social challenges and poor academic achievement for students exposed to conflicts. These include the universal interventions and indicated interventions for students with psycho-social challenges and poor academic achievement. Common interventions are delivered by teachers or paraprofessionals, to help students with conflict related psychological problem. Some of these interventions include Psychological First Aid (PFA) Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) and Trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT). These interventions have been found to yield minimal results as they may lack confidentiality in addressing the psycho-social and academic achievement challenges of the students. Students will have to discuss their psycho-social and academic achievement challenges with a variety of people, which negates confidentiality. Also, Students have phobia for health-care personnel and they lack the boldness to discuss their psycho-social and academic achievement challenges with these health-care professionals.

Solution-focused counselling assumes that people are healthy and competent and have the ability to brainstorm solutions to enhance their lives. This counselling model also assumes that students are competent and that the role of the school counsellor is to help students recognize the competencies they possess. As Jasmine is a healthily functioning student who possesses many strengths, such as intelligence and motivation, she can use these strengths to her advantage when she is reminded to do so by the school counsellor.

This study provided Solution-Focused therapy as intervention for students exposed to conflicts to determine its effects on emotional adjustment and self-esteem. Solution-Focused Therapy (SFT) is a counselling programme that is designed to assist students who are exposed to conflict to overcome the trauma of conflict and improve their academic achievements. As the name suggests, Solution-Focused Therapy emphasizes the strengths people bring and how these can be applied to change the process of living. The assumption is that individuals possess the necessary resources to resolve their own problems. Proof of these resources is found by eliciting and exploring times at which the problem does not exert its negative influence and/or at which the student has coped successfully (de Shazer, 1994). Solution-Focused Therapy (SFT) is a postmodern therapeutic system which focuses on helping students create solutions in a straight-forward manner within a limited amount of time. It is based on the assumptions that, students have the necessary strengths and resources to change and that counselling is most effective when focusing on constructing solutions unique to each student. Because of its positive impact, Solution-Focused Therapy (SFT) can be used for the psycho-social adjustment of junior secondary students who are exposed to conflicts.



Alan (2018) carried out a Study of Intake and Assessment in Solution-focused Therapy in United Kingdom. The purpose of this study was to compare clients' assessment of two different counselling intake procedures used by clinicians. This study compared a Solution-focused Therapy (SFBT) intake intervention with an intake intervention constructed from the Structured Clinical Interview for the DSM-IV Axis I Disorders (SCID-I). The SCID-I is one of the most widely used diagnostic interviews and reflects a "gold standard" in formulating accurate diagnoses. The SFBT intake intervention developed for this study stands in stark contrast to the SCID-I and its primary objective, evaluation of the problem. SFBT is a strength-based model that maintains a positive and future-oriented focus. This model is deliberate in its focus on initiating and maintaining discussions of strengths, resources, and solutions as opposed to problems. Many mental health agencies believe that a comprehensive psychological intake interview or assessment, in which information is gleaned from a broad array of areas is essential in determining the client's appropriateness for counseling and planning a successful course for treatment. However, little attention has been given to the intake interview or assessment, as well as different intake procedures and their impact as experienced by the client. Client assessments of the SFBT and the SCID-I intake intervention were examined with regard to counsellor attractiveness, expertness, trustworthiness, and total effectiveness; session depth, smoothness, positivity, and arousal; outcome optimism and goal clarity; and client's current level of distress. The sample consisted of 30 clients, which included 16 female and 14 male participants. An equal number of participants received the SFT and SCID-I intake intervention. This study employed a mean comparison design in which participants' outcome scores on the two intakes were assessed. Participants were randomly assigned to either treatment A (SFT intake) or treatment B (SCID-I intake). A series of t tests was conducted on each of the dependent variables based upon the mean scores from the participants within the SFBT and SCID intake groups. Results revealed no statistically significant differences between the two intake assessments, thus suggesting that the SFBT intake intervention was comparable to the SCID-I intake intervention in regard to the selected outcome variables.

Hinchey (2015) also conducted a study on the Implementation of Solution-focused Therapy (SFT) with At-Risk Youth in an Alternative School Environment in USA. Research indicates the potential utility of schools as sites for service delivery of mental health interventions. The application of solution-focused therapy (SFBT) within the school domain is reflected in the child psychotherapy literature. Findings on the use of SFBT in school settings suggest that it may be well suited to school contexts given its time-efficient, goal-directed, and strengths-based behavioral approach. The primary purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of SFBT with at-risk youth in an alternative school setting. The researcher utilized a multiple case study design to examine the impact of a 6-session SFBT intervention on adolescent behavioral outcomes. Six students were randomized to one of three baseline conditions and received the SFBT intervention following baseline data collection. Data were obtained from multiple raters at baseline, posttest, and 6-week follow-up. In addition, students completed self-reported ratings at the beginning of each SFBT intervention session. Data were evaluated using non-regression approaches and visual analyses. Preliminary results indicated that four out of six students exhibited reliable change (6-point increase in post-ORS mean scores), and four out of the six students demonstrated clinically significant change (baseline ORS mean scores below the adolescent clinical cutoff of <28). Results also indicated a decrease in total problem behaviour scores at posttest for all informants on a normed assessment of emotional and behavioural functioning. Follow-up data were collected for four out of six students, and results suggested that this decrease in ratings was maintained or decreased further across all raters for three out of the four student participants. Overall, preliminary results indicated the potential utility of SFT with at-risk youth in an alternative school environment. Strengths and limitations of the current study, as well as additional research aims (e.g., impact of therapist alliance, fidelity monitoring in SFT) and future research areas are also presented.

Chike (2016) conducted a study on impact of insecurity of school environment on attendance and the learning in public secondary schools in Orumba South L.G.A Anambra State. The aim of the study was to find out the impact of school environment on attendance and learning in public secondary schools in Orumba South Local Government Area of Anambra. The study was conducted using descriptive survey, four research questions were formulated for the study. The sample of the study was made up of 208 teachers, who were selected from both junior and senior secondary schools in Orumba South L.G.A, Anambra State. Data from the study were analyzed using mean scores. Findings from the study showed that cultism, kidnapping, homosexuality, lesbianism, smoking of hard drugs, ethnic violence and sexual harassments were the common types of insecurity prevalent in public secondary school environment in Orumba South L.G.A Anambra State. Fear of kidnap, cult activities, rape, ethnic/political violence, sexual harassment, homosexuality and lesbianism are some ways insecurity of school environment affect school attendance. Also irregularity and effectiveness in teaching and learning, poor performance in examination, production of half baked graduates and non coverage of syllabus are some of the impacts of insecurity of school environment on learning. The study recommended the need for government to develop a curriculum to continuously abreast students on the dangers of insecurity and violence, and the need for government to develop a network for monitoring of all schools to ensure safety.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Junior secondary students in some North Eastern States of the country, namely Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Yobe States have been exposed to continuous conflict, which have become a thing of concern to educators in recent times. This is because of the adverse effect of conflict on the academic achievement of junior secondary students in conflict prone areas especially in the north eastern part of Nigeria (WHO, 2011), in which Gombe State, is located. The researcher observed that junior secondary students



exposed to continuous conflict may need psycho-social adjustment to boost their academic achievement. Conflict affects the physical, mental and emotional strength of students thus impinging on the psycho-social adjustment as well as the academic success of the affected junior secondary students.

The researcher has noticed psycho-social adjustment deficit among junior secondary students exposed to conflict such as feeling overwhelmed, poverty, homesickness, not resolving relationship issues, bullying, violence, drugs, sex and pregnancy, poor results, staying focus in class, poor sleep habits, personality adjustment problems, emotional issues, low self-esteem and the inability to get appropriate help. Junior secondary students exposed to conflict have fear of passing Junior Secondary Certificate Examination (JSCE) and gaining admission into senior secondary school. This fear can lead to low self-esteem, poor personality adjustment, relationship and emotional maladjustment. The problem of this study is embedded in the question, how will junior secondary students exposed to conflict adequately adjust psycho-socially and have high academic achievement using solution-focused therapy in Gombe State?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of solution-focused therapy on emotional adjustment and self-esteem of Junior Secondary Students exposed to conflict in Gombe State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. Determine the effect of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy on emotional adjustment junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in Gombe State.
2. Examine the effect of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy on self-esteem of junior secondary school students exposed to conflicts in Gombe State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the study: -

1. What is the effect of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy on emotional adjustment junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in Gombe State.?
2. What is the effect of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy on self-esteem of junior secondary school students exposed to conflicts in Gombe State.?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the emotional adjustment mean scores of junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in experimental and control groups.
2. There is no significant difference between the self-esteem mean scores of junior secondary school students exposed to conflicts in experimental and control groups.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The research design employed for this study was the true experimental design which consists of pretest and post-test control group design. The design is to assess the effects of Solution Focused Therapy on Emotional Adjustment and Self-esteem on junior secondary students exposed to conflicts. The design is made up of two groups from one population and assigned to the groups at random. One group was given treatment as the experimental group while the control group was not given treatment. This design is ideal only when the experimental group is given treatment and the control group is not given treatment at all (Ugodulunwa, 2020).

The population is made up of all the 39 public junior secondary schools in Biliri Local Government Area of Gombe State with the total population of 2,906 JSS II students made up of 1,608 boys and 1,298 girls (Gombe State Ministry of Education, 2020). The Biliri Local Government Area of Gombe State is the one of the Local Government Areas in the State that is exposed to conflict. In Biliri Local Government Area there is the frequency of occurrence of ethnic conflict in the State. This ethnic conflict usually occurs at least twice in a year. It normally affects the school calendar termly. The choice of public junior secondary was due to their homogenous nature in the sense that they are under the same management which is the Gombe State Ministry of Education and run the same school calendar. The choice of junior secondary students was because they have at least spent six years in primary school and have experienced conflict at one time or the other. Therefore, solution-focused therapy will be applied only on junior secondary students (JSII) exposed to conflict.

The sample for the study was comprised of junior secondary students exposed to conflict from School A in Biliri Local Government Area of Gombe State. The junior secondary students exposed to conflict was drawn from JSSII class which is divided into two arms (30 in each arm).

The researcher will make use of the purposive and simple random sampling techniques. In order to select the school that will be used in the study, the purposive sampling method will be adopted because of the needed population and the requirement of a serving counsellor. The simple random sampling method will be used for the junior secondary students exposed to conflict. This is to ensure that the different groups of the population are represented in the study. This will be done by writing figure (1) in forty



folded papers and (0) for the rest. The papers will be folded and put in a receptacle which will be mixed thoroughly after which the junior secondary students exposed to conflict of the selected class will be asked to pick, the junior secondary students exposed to conflict who picked figure (1) will be part of the respondents and those who picked (0) will not be part of the group. This will be done for the two arms of the class of which one will be used as experimental group while the other will be the control group. This procedure according to Awotunde and Ugodulunwa (2004) will give each member of the population an equal opportunity of being selected, hence reducing bias.

**Instrument for Data Collection**

The data for this study was collected using two (2) instruments. The first instrument is titled, Psycho-Social Adjustment Scale (PAS) for junior secondary students exposed to conflict, while the second instrument is titled Academic Achievement Test (AAT) for junior secondary students exposed to conflict. The two instruments was developed by the researcher.

**Reliability**

In this study, the test-retest reliability (measure of stability) will be established for the instruments. This will be done via a pilot test. The pilot test sample will consist of 100 junior secondary students who will be drawn from one school in Kaltungo Local Government Area of Gombe State. However, the pilot test sample will not be part of the main sample for the study but will possess similar characteristics as the main sample. The researcher will administer the instruments to the pilot test sample in two occasions with a gap of 21 days between the two administrations. The data that will be obtained will be correlated using the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis to obtain the measure of the reliability coefficients of the two instruments. The acceptable value is between 0.72 and not more than 1.0 according to Ugodulunwa (2020). Hence going by this criterion if the reliability obtained is less than 0.72 for the instruments, the researcher will have to review the instrument.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Data obtained in this study was analyzed using two different statistical tools namely: descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and standard deviation was used in answering research questions, this is because the mean and standard deviation summarized the data collated and considered every score in a distribution while the hypotheses was analysed using T-test. The criterion for acceptance or rejection of a hypothesis was by comparing of the observed (calculated value). If the observed value is less than the p-value, the null hypotheses will be rejected but will be retained if otherwise. All statistical decisions regarding the hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**Research Question One:**

*What is the effect of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy on emotional adjustment junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in Gombe State?*

**Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' Perception of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Effect on Emotional Adjustment**

S/n	Items	Group	Response Categories						Total	Mean	Decision	
			VHE (6)	HE (5)	ME (4)	LE (3)	VLE (2)	U (1)				
1.	I get frightened even in the classroom	Exp.	11	2	3	4	5	7	32	3.66	ME	
		Control	16	9	6	1	0	0	32	5.25		
2.	I don't always feel happy due to conflict	Exp.	11	8	3	5	4	1	32	4.44	ME	
		Control	9	19	2	2	0	0	32	5.09		
3.	I live in perpetual fear all the time	Exp.	4	1	8	8	5	6	32	3.16	LE	
		Control	6	9	17	0	0	0	32	4.66		
4.	I am not always going to school of being attacked	Exp.	4	4	5	3	7	9	32	3.00	LE	
		Control	4	6	22	0	0	0	32	4.44		
5.	My nights are always nightmarish	Exp.	11	0	8	1	5	7	32	3.69	ME	
		Control	20	6	3	3	0	0	32	5.34		
				Sectional Mean of experimental group						32	3.59	ME
				Sectional Mean of control group						32	4.96	HE

Source: Field Survey, 2023



**Result Interpretation**

Table 1 above presents the item by item summary statistics of experimental and control group mean score of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Effect on Emotional Adjustment among the junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in Gombe State. The result of the experimental and the control group indicated that the mean score of all the items were higher than the 6 – Likert scale measurement mean benchmark of 3.5, except for items 3 and 4 for experimental group. The sectional mean scores of experimental and control group were also higher than the 6 – Likert scale measurement mean benchmark of 3.5. The result also indicates that *mean score = 3.59*, for experimental group implies that Solution-Focused Brief Therapy has a medium effect on emotional while, *mean score = 4.96* for control group implies that Solution-Focused Brief Therapy has a high effect on emotional adjustment among junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in Gombe State.

**Research Question Two**

*What is the effect of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy on self-esteem of junior secondary school students exposed to conflicts in Gombe State?*

**Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Respondents’ View of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Effect on Self-Esteem**

S/n	Items	Group	Response Categories						Total	Mean	Decision
			VHE (6)	HE (5)	ME (4)	LE (3)	VLE (2)	U (1)			
6.	I feel like fighting anyone that talks to me harshly	Exp.	15	4	4	3	2	4	32	4.50	HE
		Control	11	18	2	1	0	0	32	5.22	HE
7.	I feel like no one is willing to help me in school work	Exp.	5	5	7	8	5	2	32	3.12	LE
		Control	12	13	7	0	0	0	32	5.16	HE
8.	I don’t like my parent condition due to conflict	Exp.	10	3	8	5	3	3	32	4.09	ME
		Control	14	11	6	1	0	0	32	5.19	HE
9.	Sometimes I don’t think that I am a good human being	Exp.	5	4	5	6	6	6	32	3.30	LE
		Control	9	16	6	1	0	0	32	5.03	HE
10.	I feel timid in the midst of my friends	Exp.	2	2	9	2	9	8	32	2.80	LE
		Control	7	10	13	2	0	0	32	4.69	HE
			Sectional Mean of experimental group						32	3.68	ME
			Sectional Mean of control group						32	5.06	HE

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 above provides the item by item descriptive statistics of the experimental and control group mean score of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Effect on self-esteem in the junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in Gombe State. The result of the experimental and the control group shows that the mean score of items 6 and 8 were higher than the 6 – Likert scale measurement mean benchmark of 3.5, while items 7, 9 and 10 for experimental group are less than the benchmark. The sectional mean scores of experimental and control group were observed to be higher than the 6 – Likert scale measurement mean benchmark of 3.5. It is concluded that the mean score of the experimental and control group differs regarding effect of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy on self-esteem. The result also indicates that *mean score = 3.68*, for experimental group implies that Solution-Focused Brief Therapy has a medium effect on self-esteem while, *mean score = 5.06* for control group implies that Solution-Focused Brief Therapy has a high effect on self-esteem in junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in Gombe State.

**TEST OF HYPOTHESES**

**Hypothesis one**

**Hypothesis one**

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between the emotional adjustments mean scores of junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in experimental and control groups.*

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference between the emotional adjustment mean scores of junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in experimental and control groups.*



**Table 3: T-test Result of Experimental and Control Group on the Effect of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy on Emotional Adjustment Mean Score**

Groups	Total	Mean	Std. dev.	t <sub>calculated</sub>	t <sub>critical</sub>	D.F.	P – Value
Experimental	32	3.59	.3926	3.679	1.96	30	0.00
Control	32	4.96	.3088				

SOURCE: Author computation from SPSS (Version 25)

An independent two samples t-test was computed to determine if the mean response of experimental and control group varies on their opinion regarding the effect of solution-focused brief therapy on emotional adjustment in junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in Gombe State. The test was found to be statistically significant because the response of the control group was significantly higher (*mean = 4.96, Std. Dev. = 0.3088*) than the mean response from the experimental group with (*mean = 3.59, Std. Dev. = .3926*), the mean difference between the two group was found to be 1.37. The mean difference in was significant because  $t_{calculated} = 3.679$  was greater than the  $t_{critical}$  of 1.96 and  $P = 0.00$  was less than 0.05 level of significant at the 30 degree of freedom. It is concluded that, there is a significant difference between the emotional adjustments mean scores of junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in experimental and control groups.

**Hypothesis two**

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between the self-esteem mean scores of junior secondary school students exposed to conflicts in experimental and control groups.*

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference between the self-esteem mean scores of junior secondary school students exposed to conflicts in experimental and control groups.*

**Table 4: T-test Result of Self-Esteem Mean Scores of Students Exposed to Conflicts in Experimental and Control groups**

Groups	Total	Mean	Std. dev.	t <sub>calculated</sub>	t <sub>critical</sub>	D.F.	P – Value
Experimental	32	3.68	.3987	4.09	1.96	30	0.00
Control	32	5.06	.2356				

SOURCE: Author computation from SPSS (Version 25)

The result presented in Table 7 above is the independent two samples t-test of experimental and control group self-esteem in junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in Gombe State. The result revealed that control group mean score (*mean = 5.06, Std. Dev. = 0.2356*) was significantly higher than the mean score (*mean = 3.68, Std. Dev. = .3442*) of the experimental group. The mean score difference (mean difference = 1.38) between the two groups was significant because  $t_{calculated} = 4.09$  was greater than the  $t_{critical}$  of 1.96 and  $P = 0.00 < 0.05$  at the 32 degree of freedom. It is therefore inferred that, there is a significant difference between the self-esteem mean scores of junior secondary school students exposed to conflicts in experimental and control groups.

**DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

**Effect of Solution-Focused Therapy on emotional adjustment junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in Gombe State**

Findings from this study showed that Solution-Focused Therapy on emotional adjustment junior secondary school students exposed to conflict in Gombe State was effective in reducing conflict behaviour experienced by secondary school students. Specifically, this means that Solution-Focused Therapy was able to have reasonable impact on the emotional adjustment behaviour of secondary school students, enough to control their conflict behaviour which could have resulted in both physical and psychological harm to themselves and others in their school environment and outside school environment.

The finding is in agreement with Hinchey (2015) who conducted a study on the Implementation of Solution-Focused Therapy (SFT) with At-Risk Youth in an Alternative School Environment. The research indicated that the potential utility of schools as sites for service delivery of mental health interventions. The application of Solution-Focused Therapy (SFT) within the school domain is reflected in the child psychotherapy literature. Findings on the use of SFT in school settings suggest that it may be well suited to school contexts given its time-efficient, goal-directed, and strengths-based behavioural approach. The primary purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of SFT with at-risk students in junior secondary schools exposed to emotional conflicts.

In addition, the findings of this study revealed that the effect of solution-Focused Therapy of junior secondary school students was significant. What this implies is that the effect of SFT on emotional adjustment of junior secondary school students is substantial. This finding of the study is consistent with Durosaro and Ajiboye (2011) who investigated the problems and coping strategies of internally displaced adolescents in Jos metropolis. The results showed that educational and emotional problems are most prominent among internally displaced adolescents. The emotional problems are characterized by memory of fearful events and nightmare. The major coping strategy employed by respondents is repression because they often avoid thinking about their present condition. Respondents were different in their problems and coping strategies based on gender. On the other hand, they were similar in terms of their problems and coping strategies based on age and educational status. Based on the findings, it was alternative



educational activities should be provided for junior secondary school students who are exposed to conflicts. Also, trauma counselling should be adequately and readily available for these students exposed to various forms conflict.

One reason for the reduction in students' conflicts in school in experimental group 1 (solution-focused therapy) over those in control group might be due to the thought, feelings, beliefs and perception changing process in solution-focused brief therapy. This is because the students became very much aware of how their beliefs, feelings, thoughts, perception and actions affect their academic performance, within the few weeks of training, thus the willingness to change. Ultimately, the goal of this technique is to help students recognise that sometimes their thoughts lead to feelings and actions which are antisocial on which emotional conflict is one of them.

This is also in line with findings made by Oduwale and Fadeyi (2013). They evaluated the state of internally displaced persons in Nigeria. The major findings of their study revealed neglects on the part of the State apparatus (government) in ensuring better, effective and functional policies. Its magnitude is capable of threatening national cohesion of the country and endangering high rate of internally displaced persons across the country. The study concludes that given the magnitude and complexity of crises of internal displacement, these are inimical toward the discourse "Development". This affects the country from achieving Millennium Development Goals – goal number eight (8): rights to safety of lives and properties as equally enshrined in other international treaties – choices to healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity and self-respect and the respect of others.

### **Effect of Solution-Focused Therapy on the academic achievement of junior secondary school students exposed to conflicts in Gombe State**

Findings from this study revealed that solution-focused therapy was effective on academic achievement of junior secondary school students. What this implies is that solution-focused therapy, which required the students to rehearse the appropriate behaviour they should exhibit when they are provoked, did have impact on them. The findings is in line with the works of Foluke (2017) who carried out a study on the Influence of Counselling Services on Perceived Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Lagos State. The study aimed at looking at the influence of counselling services on perceived academic performance of secondary school students in Lagos State. The findings of this study showed that there was no significant difference based on age, class level and school type. However a significant difference was found on the basis of respondent's religion, gender and the number of times the students visited the counsellor.

Furthermore, findings from the present study revealed that the effect of solution-focused therapy of junior secondary school students is significant. What this implies is that the outcome of the treatment using solution-focused brief therapy on academic achievement of junior secondary school students was substantial. This finding agrees with Zalacro (2019) who conducted an investigation on Educating Children in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) Camps through Blended Learning: Prospects and Challenges. Education occupies a central place in human rights. It is essential and indispensable for the exercise of all other human rights and for general societal development. Internally displaced people (IDPs) are considered as most vulnerable due to the increased demands of IDPs for essential public services and livelihoods. The children in these camps also face a lot of hardship with little or no education because of overcrowding and influx of people, especially in the North East of Nigeria. Blended Learning is a hybrid of face-to-face (F-T-F) and computer mediated form of instruction. As an instructional strategy it harnesses the better of the two methods to improve the instructional process especially of the children in IDP camp Schools which are usually over crowded with on the spot recruited teachers. Some challenges envisaged were inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, ready computer literate teachers and specialized manpower for the e-learning platform. It was recommended that educating displaced children in IDP camps should be given effort that is more concerted by more NGOs, Humanitarian organization, Philanthropists and not left for the host government alone. This is because the children are at the heritage of the future and investing in them educationally is vital for a healthy society for today and tomorrow.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Solution-Focused Therapy was effective in reducing conflict in junior secondary schools. This can be achieved through the employment of professional counsellors that will be made available in schools in order to keep the victims of school violence adjust adequately, psychologically and socially, through the use of preventive counselling approach which will be adopted in schools to help curb the menace of school violence.
2. There is need for these techniques to be incorporated into regular school counselling curricular. Moreover, high-risk students need to be engaged to participate in special training activities that take place outside of the classroom, such as small group discussions, peer relationship training or after school sessions as may be arranged and spearheaded by the school counsellor.
3. Solution-focused therapy is effective therapeutic technique for treating conflicts of junior secondary school students. Therefore practicing counsellors and therapists should adopt the use of these technique in counselling among junior secondary school students to modify and treat conflict related behaviours.





4. There is also the need for school administrators, teachers, parents, students and the entire school community to work together to curb incidences of school violence among students. This can be achieved through holding of Parents Teacher's Association meetings, Seminars and attendance of conferences where such issues are discussed.
5. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended that professional counsellors be actively involved in the provision of services such as trauma counselling, career counselling, and family counselling to students exposed to conflicts in junior secondary schools.
6. The study recommended that the Federal Ministry of Education, the State and Local Government should facilitate the implementation of entrepreneurship and civic education curriculum for junior secondary schools and all areas prone to crises for a permanent resolution of crises and behaviour control in those areas throughout the country.

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