

***Effect of Social Skills Training Counselling Technique on Aggressive Behaviours of Senior Secondary School Students in Kontagora Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria***

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**Abstract**

*This study investigated the effect of social skills training counselling technique on aggressive behaviours of secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. Pre-test post-test quasi experimental design was adopted. An adapted Behaviour Rating Scale was used for the identification of the participants. A sample size of 15 subjects was purposively selected from senior secondary school two (SSS II) students in Kontagora metropolis. Adapted Aggressive Scale was used to obtain data for both pre and post-test for the study. The intervention sessions lasted for ten weeks (two sessions of 60 minutes each per week). Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools of mean, standard deviation and inferential statistical tool of paired sample t-test. The findings revealed that social skills training counselling technique had significant effect on hostile aggressive behaviour of secondary school students with  $t=15.75$ ,  $p=.000$ . However, social skills training counselling technique had no significant effect on emotional aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students with  $t=-.80$ ,  $p=.435$ . It was recommended, among others, that school counsellors and psychologists should employ social skill training counselling technique in reducing aggressive behaviours of senior secondary school students.*

**Keywords:** aggressive, behaviour, social, skills, training, deficit

## **Introduction**

Manifestation of aggressive behaviour is one of the major global and perturbing problems seen among students. It is a manifestation of behaviours that cause harm to oneself and others. These behaviours are demonstrated by students in a variety of forms which could be physical such as hitting, kicking, stabbing, shaking, pushing, grabbing, biting, and vandalism; or verbal such as yelling, screaming, name calling and use of abusive words (Bushman & Huesmann, 2010). Each of these aggressive types could be hostile, instrumental, relational or emotional.

Hostility behaviour is exhibited to cause discomfort to someone who made one angry or feel uncomfortable. Emotional aggression is harm caused impulsively to another person. The instrumental aggressive behaviour is exhibited to cause displeasure to others to achieve a non-aggressive goal such as attention, recognition and social approval. Relational aggression is causing displeasure to the relatives and friends of and things belonging to others. These behaviours of aggression such as assault, stabbing, violence and riot is seen in both male and female, though variation exists both in types and reasons for which it is exhibited.

According to Aluede (2011), Shekarey, Ladani, Rostami and Jamshidi (2013), Onukwufor (2013) and Izuchi and Anetoh (2014), manifestations of aggressive behaviours are frequent among secondary school students. The pervading incidence of aggressive behaviour of secondary school students is one of the most frustrating issues facing parents, teachers, school administrators and community leaders. In secondary schools, the use of weapons such as knives, dagger and bottles for fighting is common especially during inter class and inter school sports competitions.

The consequences of aggressive behaviours among students cannot be over-emphasized. Aggressive students are often socially rejected and stigmatized. They lose opportunity to partake in class or school activities because staff and students are afraid of such students disrupting their class with aggressive or violent behaviour that may cause harm to them. When students behave aggressively in school, they interrupt the teaching and learning process, challenge the teacher and may cause loss of concentration. Also, aggressive behaviour could increase truancy and drop out among students. Students may become truants because of fear of being threatened or bullied by an aggressor. Other students may form groups or gangs to protect themselves and this may increase the rate of violence in schools.

One of the contributing factors to the development of aggressive behaviours among students is deficit in social skills. Aggression is a behaviour that is often a manifestation of social skills deficit (Heffernan, 2011). Students exhibit aggressive behaviours because they often lack skills of interacting with others. Social skill training aims at increasing students' ability to perform essential social behaviours that are vital to the achievement of success in social situations. It improves interpersonal skills such as how to act and react in a social situation. Social skills are verbal and non-verbal skills used to communicate

effectively with other people. It represents the ability to express feelings, thoughts, behaviours or ideas that are important in enabling a person to achieve social interaction. Students with aggressive behaviour can be trained in a variety of social skills, such as smiling when greeting, shaking hands when meeting someone, using the right tone and volume of voice in making request or complaining, and maintaining eye contact, to assist in developing interpersonal skill and competencies. Social skills training covers three aspects which are communication, assertiveness and conflict resolution.

Social skill training is a valuable therapeutic approach to the modification of many behavioural problems. Social skills training has been used in improving social and emotional competence of students with learning disability (Momeni, Barak, Kazemi, Abolghasemi, Babaei & Ezati, 2012), social self-efficacy (Olaz, Medrano & Cabanillas, 2014), reducing bullying behaviour (Isiyaku, 2016) and avoidant personality disorder (Lawal, 2016) among students.

Wike (2011) revealed that social skill training effectively strengthened children's social and emotional skills, decreased aggressive behaviour and increased children's overall social competencies. He also stated that children who received social skills training scored lower on the teacher-rated relational aggression at fourth and fifth grade. On self-esteem and aggression among male adolescents, Babakhani (2011) revealed that social skill training (SST) has not led to decreasing physical aggression but has decreased significantly verbal aggression in the adolescents. According to Smokowski, Fraser, Day, Galinsky, and Bacallao (2004), minority children who received the Making Choices intervention of social skills training had significant reduction in hostile aggression. Fraser, Day, Galinsky, Hodges and Smokowski, (2004) and Fraser, Galinsky, Smokowski, Day, Terzian, Roderick and Guo (2005) found that SST had significant effect when comparing intervention to control condition across pro-social behaviour, emotional regulation, social contact, cognitive concentration and relational aggression variables. However, Pepler, Craig and Roberts (1995) showed that there is no improvement in the rate of aggression of peer group following SST. It is against this backdrop that the present researchers investigated the effect of social skills training counselling technique on aggressive behaviours among secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the problem**

In many secondary schools today, students are seen fighting, threatening and bullying one another for no genuine reason other than to show dominance, gain recognition and social approval. Reports from secondary schools in Kontagora revealed cases of students fighting with teachers, burgling of school offices and stealing school properties. In Kontagora, a student cut a teacher with cutlass for catching him and others having sexual misconduct within the school. These aggressive behaviours among students have negative effects on their academic performance and overall wellbeing of the school. The adverse effect of aggression does not only affect the academic performance of the students but also impaired the normal functioning of the entire school system. It also has a great

implication on the aggressor's victims, families of the aggressor and the victims and educational system generally.

Several measures have been employed at curbing aggressive behaviour among students. These include establishment and administration of juvenile justice, promulgation of juvenile courts of law, establishment of remand homes and establishment of security and law enforcement agencies, all by government. The school on the other hand gives punishment of different kinds including suspension and expulsion. But despite all these measures, aggressive behaviour is still rampant among secondary school students. Therefore, there is the need for empirical studies to unveil strategies that would help in reducing aggressive behaviours (hostility, emotional, instrumental and relational) most especially in schools; since the school is the building factory of future leaders and followers. This study investigated the effect of social skills training counselling technique on aggressive behaviours among secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria.

### **Research questions**

The study seeks to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of social skills training counselling technique on hostile aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria?
2. What is the effect of social skills training counselling technique on emotional aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria?
3. What is the effect of social skills training counselling technique on instrumental aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria?
4. What is the effect of social skills training counselling technique on relational aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses are formulated and tested in the study:

**Ho1:** There is no significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on hostile aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria.

**Ho2:** There is no significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on emotional aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria.

**Ho3:** There is no significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on instrumental aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria.

**Ho4:** There is no significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on relational aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study was quasi-experimental pre-test post-test design without control group. The population of the study consisted of senior secondary school II students who are identified with the characteristics of aggression in Kontagora metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria. Using purposive sampling technique, Model School Kontagora was selected and 15 students were purposively selected based on the characteristics of being aggressive to participate in the study. The selection was done by providing class and subject teachers, counsellors, house and labour masters with Behaviour Rating Scale which contains ten (10) items on some characteristics of aggression. The researchers as well obtained from the school, the list of students in the black book or disciplinary record. These two helped the researchers to identify students with aggressive behaviour. These students were further given Student Behaviour Questionnaire (SBQ) adapted from both Buss and Perry's (1992) Aggression Questionnaire and Opinas and Frankowski's (2001) Aggression Scale. Those that were found to possess the characteristics of investigation were selected for the study.

The instruments were validated through observation of three experts in the field of Counselling Psychology, Test and Measurement. The corrections, observations, suggestions and comments made by the experts were effected. Test retest method of reliability was used to ascertain the reliability of the instruments and the reliability values ranging from 0.90 to 0.82 were obtained. The adapted questionnaire comprised of two sections. The first section elicited information on the demographic data of the respondents while the second section contained thirty seven items on students' aggressiveness focusing on four factors (hostility, emotional, instrumental and relational aggressive behaviours). The items in the instrument required the participants to indicate the frequency in which they exhibit the behaviours in the instrument. The response to each item ranged from 0 times to 6 or more times. This was scored 0 to 6.

A letter was written to the office of the Director, Niger State Secondary Education Board, Minna from which the introductory letter to the principal of the sampled secondary school was obtained. Students with aggressive behaviours were sampled from the selected school. The researchers provided the sampled students with Student Behaviour Questionnaire (SBQ). The filled questionnaire was scored and the scores form the pre-test scores. After the pre-test, the researchers administered the treatment on the participants twice a week for the period of ten weeks. The treatment was to assist students with aggressive behaviour to be able to interact with people around them comfortably without unnecessary or undue outburst or negative reaction. Social skills training used comprises three basic components; communication, assertiveness and conflict resolution. At the end of treatment, the Students Behaviour Questionnaire (SBQ) was re-administered to the participants. The scores obtained constitute the post-test scores for the study. Descriptive

statistics of means and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions and inferential statistical tool of paired sample t-test was used to test the hypotheses.

**Presentation of results**

The results of the study are presented thus:

**Research question one:** What is the effect of social skills counselling technique on hostile aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation on the effect of SST counselling technique on hostility aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis

Treatment	Variables	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Test		15	54.60	9.12
Post-Test		15	21.47	6.81

Results in table 1 showed that the students have a pre-test mean score of 54.60 and post-test mean score of 21.47. This means that the post-test has a mean reduction of 33.13 from the pre-test. This suggests that social skills training counselling technique has effect on the hostile behaviour of senior secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria.

**Ho1:** There is no significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on hostility aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria.

**Table 2:** Paired sample t-test statistics on effect of social skills training counselling technique on hostility behaviour among secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria

Treatment	Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	p-value
SSTCT	Pre-test	15	54.60	9.12	14	15.75	.000
	Post-test	15	21.47	6.81			

\*p<.05

Table 2 showed that the subjects exposed to social skills training counselling technique had a mean score of 54.60 with a standard deviation of 9.12 before the treatment. After the treatment they obtain a mean score of 21.47 and a standard deviation of 6.81. At 14 degree of freedom and t-value of 15.75, the p-value of .000 was found to be less than the chosen alpha of .05. The difference in the mean score of pre-test and post-test could therefore be attributed to the treatment effect. This implies that there is a statistically significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on hostile aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. The

null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of social skills training on hostile aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria was rejected.

**Research question two:** What is the effect of social skills training counselling technique on emotional aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria?

**Table 3:** Result of descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation on the effect SST counselling technique on emotional aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis

Treatment	Variables	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Test		15	19.27	7.48
Post-Test		15	15.50	9.35

Results in table 3 showed that the students have a pre-test mean score of 19.27 and post-test mean score of 15.50. This implies that the post-test have a mean reduction of 3.77 from the pre-test. This suggests that social skills training counselling technique has effect on emotional aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. The statistical significance or otherwise of this effect is tested in hypothesis two.

**Ho2:** There is no significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on emotional aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria.

**Table 4:** Paired sample t-test statistics on effect of social skills training counselling technique on emotional aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis

Treatment	Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	p-value
SSTCT	Pre-test	15	19.27	7.48	14	0.80	.235
	Post-test	15	15.50	9.35			

\*p value > .05

From table 4, the results revealed that there is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test mean scores of subjects exposed to social skills training. The table showed the pre-test mean score of 19.27 with standard deviation of 7.48 and post-test mean score of 15.50 with a standard deviation of 9.35. This indicates a mean difference of 3.77. This is an indication that senior secondary school students exposed to social skills training treatment had little reduction (3.77) in their post test score compared to their pre-test which may not be attributed to the SST treatment. With 14 as degree of freedom and 0.80 as the t-value, the p-value was found to be .235 which was greater than the chosen alpha

of .05; thus, there is no statistically significant effect of social skills training on emotional aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on emotional aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria was retained.

**Research question three:** What is the effect of social skills training counselling technique on instrumental aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria?

**Table 5:** Result of descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation on the effect of SST counselling technique on instrumental aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis

Treatment	Variables	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Test		15	23.93	6.20
Post-Test		15	8.40	4.85

From the results in table 5, the pre-test mean score of subjects is 23.93 and post-test mean score is 8.40. This implies that the post-test have a mean reduction of 15.53 from the pre-test. This suggests that social skills training counselling technique has effect on instrumental aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis. Hypothesis three tests the statistical significance of this effect.

**Ho3:** There is no significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on instrumental aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria.

**Table 6:** Paired sample t-test statistics on effect of social skills training counselling technique on instrumental aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria

Treatment	Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	p-value
SSTCT	Pre-test	15	23.93	6.20	14	9.00	.000
	Post-test	15	8.40	4.85			

\*p value < .05

Table 6 revealed that the group exposed to social skills training technique of counselling achieved high reduction in their post-test mean score when compared with their pre-test mean score. In their pre-test, group has a mean score of 23.93 with a corresponding standard deviation of 6.20 and post-test mean score of 8.40 with a corresponding standard deviation of 4.85, both at 14 degree of freedom and t-value of 9.00. This indicates that there is a mean reduction of 15.53. The difference in the scores may be attributed to the treatment. The obtained p-value of .000 was found to be less than .05 alpha level of



significance. This means that there is significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on instrumental aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on instrumental aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria was rejected.

**Research question four:** What is the effect of social skills training counselling technique on relational aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria?

**Table 7:** Mean and standard deviation on the effect of SST counselling technique on relational aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis

Treatment	Variables	N	Mean	SD
Pre-Test		15	38.53	7.72
Post-Test		15	18.3	7.48

Table 7 revealed the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation on the effect of social skills training counselling technique on relational aggressive behaviour of secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. The table shows pre-test mean score of 38.53 and post-test mean score of 18.73. This implies that the post-test have a mean reduction of 19.80 from the pre-test. This suggests that social skills training counselling technique has effect on relational aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. However, in order to establish whether the effect is statistically significant or otherwise, hypothesis four is tested.

**Ho4:** There is no significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on relational aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria.

**Table 8:** Paired sample t-test statistics on effect of social skills training counselling technique on relational aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Nigeria

Treatment	Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	p-value
SSTCT	Pre-test	15	38.53	7.73	14	7.35	.000
	Post-test	15	18.73	7.48			

\*p value < .05

Table 8 showed that the subjects exposed to social skills training counselling technique had a mean score of 38.53 with a standard deviation of 7.73 before treatment. After the

treatment, they obtained a mean score of 18.73 and a standard deviation of 7.48. At 14 degree of freedom and t-value of 7.35, the p-value of .000 was found to be less than the chosen alpha of .05. The difference in the mean score of pre-test and post-test could therefore be attributed to the treatment effect. This implies that there is a statistically significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on relational aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on relational aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria was rejected.

### **Discussion of the findings**

This study investigated the effect of social skills training counselling technique on aggressive behaviours of senior secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. The aggressive behaviours of the subjects were investigated on the basis of hostility, emotional, instrumental and relational components. The finding of the study revealed that social skills training counselling technique had significant effect on hostile aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. This implies that when compared with their pre-test, the subjects exposed to social skills counselling technique shows a significant reduction in the post-test score which indicated significant effect of SSTCT on hostile aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students. This is supported by the study of Smokowski et al. (2004) on School-Based Skills Training to Prevent Aggressive Behaviour and Peer Rejection in Childhood. The study revealed that minority children who received the Making Choices intervention of social skills training had lower post-test ratings on overt (hostility) aggression than minority children who did not receive the intervention. This implied that SST had significant effect in reducing hostile aggression in children.

On the slight contrary, the finding of the study contradicts the study of Babakhani (2011) on the effect of social skills training on self-esteem and aggression among male adolescents. The results of covariate and repeated measures analysis showed that SST has not led to decreasing physical aggression but has decreased significantly amount of verbal aggression in the adolescents. However, the present study is different from Babakhani's study as it focused on SST and aggressive components. Babakhani (2011) considered the broad categorization of aggression (physical and verbal) which did not look into the specific components of hostility as it is the case in the present study.

The finding also revealed that social skills training counselling technique had no significant effect on emotional aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. This means that the difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of subjects exposed to social skills training counselling technique is insignificant. Therefore, the social skills training counselling technique is ineffective in reducing emotional aggressive behaviour of the subjects exposed to it. This contradicts the study of Wike (2011) which revealed that social skills training effectively strengthened children's social emotional skills, decreases aggressive

behaviour and increased children's overall social competencies. The reason for the ineffectiveness of SSTCT on emotional aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students may be due to the low emotional aggressive behaviour of the students who were exposed to SSTCT. This is seen in the pre-test mean score of 19.27 out of the 42 maximum score for emotional aggression in the Student Behaviour Questionnaire used for the study.

The result of the study revealed significant effect of social skills training counselling technique on instrumental aggression among subjects exposed to it. In the study of Pepler et al. (1995) on SST and aggression in peer group, the result showed that there is no improvement in the rate of aggression following SST. However, the result of a covariate and repeated measures analysis in the study of Babakhani (2011) showed that SST has not led to decreasing physical aggression but has decreased significantly verbal aggression among adolescents.

The findings of the study also revealed that social skills training counselling technique had a significant effect on relational aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kontagora metropolis, Nigeria. The social skills training counselling technique is effective in reducing relational aggressive behaviour among secondary school students that were exposed to the treatment. The effectiveness of social skills training counselling technique on relational aggression may be because aggression is a problem of interaction and social skills training enhances competent socialization and foster positive relationship. It may also be due to communal living system of the people of Kontagora. Students who value the relationship learn to improve their interpersonal relationship. This finding is in line with the study of Wike (2011) which revealed that children who received social skills training scored lower on the teacher-rated relational aggression at fourth and fifth grade. The studies of Fraser et al. (2004) and Fraser et al. (2005) are also in agreement with this study; their findings revealed that medium to large effect sizes were found when comparing intervention to control condition across pro-social behaviour, emotional regulation, social contact, cognitive concentration and relational aggression variables. The result of the study conducted by Leff et al. (2009) revealed that relationally aggressive girls who were randomized to friend to friend (F2F) programme of social skills training had extremely large improvements in teacher-reported peer likeability, large decreases in relational aggression and moderate reductions in physical aggression, hostile attributions and loneliness as compared to relationally aggressive girls in the control condition.

### **Conclusion**

Considering the findings of the study, it was concluded that social skills training counselling technique had significant effect on hostile, instrumental and relational components of aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Kontagora Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria but had no effect on emotional component of aggressive behaviour of the students. Therefore, teaching of social skills to students should be encouraged to prevent unnecessary aggressive behaviour.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended that:

1. School counsellors and psychologists should employ social skills training counselling technique in reducing hostile, emotional, instrumental and relational aggressive behaviour among senior secondary school students.
2. Social skills training counselling techniques should be emphasized to increase pro-social behaviour, inhibit aggressive responses and handle anti-social behaviour in schools.
3. Most behavioural modification techniques are unconsciously used at home and the society. Since the home contributes to the problem of an aggressive child, it is therefore, recommended to parents and guardians should make use of social skills training in helping their aggressive children or wards.
4. Seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized for school teachers and other school staff on the use of social skills training counselling technique in reducing anti-social behaviour among senior secondary school students knowing well that their behaviours as teachers and significant others influence the life of their students and wards.

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