MODERATING EFFECT OF GENDER ON EFFICACY OF POSITIVE SELF-TALK AND TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS ON SELF-DEFEATING BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

Self-defeating behaviour is gradually becoming an issue of public concern in Nigeria and adequate research focus is yet to be given to it due to other pressing health concerns. The degree of self-defeating behaviour experienced among secondary school adolescents in recent times is quite high and the negative feedback from this challenge calls for attention. This study therefore investigates the effectiveness of positive self-talk and transactional analysis in reducing self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents, focusing on gender differences and treatment outcomes. The study adopted pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design with a 3x2 factorial matrix. Ninety-six participants were purposively selected from three public secondary schools in Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria, and assigned to positive self-talk, transactional analysis, and control groups. Two validated research instruments were used to generate data; socio-demographic profiles and the Self-Defeating Behaviour Scale. Data were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and descriptive statistics. Results revealed a significant main effect of treatment on self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents ($F(2, 77) = 151.781$, $p < .05$, $\eta2 = 0.798$). Positive self-talk was found to be more effective than transactional analysis in reducing self-defeating behaviour. Additionally, gender differences were observed, with males exhibiting higher levels of self-defeating behaviour than females ($F(1,77)= 8.928$, $p<0.05$, $\eta2= 0.104$). However, gender did not significantly moderate the effect of treatment on self-defeating behaviour ($F(2, 77) = 2.662$, $p > .05$). These findings highlight the efficacy of positive self-talk in mitigating self-defeating behaviour and underscore the importance of considering gender differences in addressing this issue among adolescents. The study underscores positive self-talk and transactional analysis's efficacy in addressing self-defeating behaviour among adolescents, emphasizing tailored interventions and comprehensive approaches. Further research and intervention implementation in educational settings are recommended to support adolescent well-being and development.

Key words: *positive self-talk, transactional analysis, self-defeating behaviour,* adolescents, gender differences, treatment outcomes, effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Self-defeating behaviour among adolescents is a pressing issue in contemporary society, with detrimental effects on individuals' well-being and development. The idea that at times people engage in acts that will make them fail or lead to trouble is defined as self-defeating behaviour. It is referred to intentional behaviour with terminal negative consequence or impact on the self or negative outcome or effect that is definitely or probably the case. These maladaptive cognitions can result in negative affect and contribute to construct a barrier in the way of people's success even though there is no reason why they could not succeed or complete their unsolved goals and tasks. What is peculiar about self-defeating, first and foremost, is the fact that it is not the absence of information, work, or will that prevent the individual from attaining the objectives and performances. However, it should be the negative thoughts or the inner self-dialogue that complicate the case and mar the result (James, 2018). The following are some examples of self-defeating behaviours: Hopelessness, excessive worrying, drug and alcohol abuse, lying, and

obsessive behaviour. In addition, withdrawal, lack of motivation, dependency, fear of failure and procrastination, inferiority feelings; defensiveness and fear of stating ones point of view, fear of success excessive guilt, unrealistic mistrust, unrealistic fear and losing temper (Urell, 2018).

In the context of secondary school adolescents, self-defeating behaviour can lead to academic underachievement, social difficulties, and mental health issues (Deci & Ryan, 2006). Research has highlighted the prevalence of such behaviours, indicating that up to 50% of adolescents partake in activities like substance abuse, self-harm, and risky sexual behaviour, these actions often lead to adverse outcomes such as diminished self-esteem, social withdrawal, and academic struggles (Littleton, Magee, &Axsom, (2017). The impact of self-defeating behaviour extends beyond mental health, influencing academic performance and social interactions (Garcia & Rodriguez, 2020). Gender has been identified as a significant factor in understanding and addressing these behaviours among adolescents. Aafreen, Priya and Gayathri (2018), affirmed that when it comes to academic performance, male tend to perform better than their female counterpart as the author summarized that males have the tenacity to undergo rigorous social challenges than the other gender. The authors further reiterated that the study time of male is higher compared to that of female with this; most of them tend to do well in social relationship. Gender differences were found to be significant in predicting self-defeating behaviour for psychological treatment. Male were found to have higher rates of self-defeating behaviour than female (Solberg, 1994). In a college sample, achievement in computer science has been found to have a positive correlation with gender, education, low social support on self-defeating behaviour (Covin, 2011). A study conducted by Balogun & Oladipo (2020), on the influence of gender, low esteem and anxiety on self-defeating behaviour among students in south east, Nigeria, The finding from the study showed that gender significantly influenced self-defeating behaviour which corroborates the previous findings of Neck, (2012) who reported that gender differences is significant related to self-defeating behaviour among college students.

Positive self-talk is a therapeutic approach that has shown promise in addressing self-defeating behaviour. This technique involves replacing negative self-statements with more positive and realistic ones, thereby challenging irrational beliefs and enhancing self-efficacy (Latinjak, Hatzigeorgiadis, and Zourbanos (2017). By reframing negative thoughts, individuals can reduce self-defeating tendencies and develop a more constructive mindset. Van Raalte, Vincent, and Brewer (2016) reported that self-defeating behavior was more prevalent among males, with a rate of 10.33% compared to 6.87% among females. Professionals in the field of social education argue that men typically have the capacity for self-control and can benefit from positive self-talk interventions. They suggest that men should reflect on their environment and their role in shaping it, as their inherent desires and actions contribute to their personal issues. Thus, self-awareness plays a crucial role in regulating behavior, as an individual's self-talk significantly influences their actions.

Similarly, Transactional analysis theory, developed by Eric Berne (1961), offers a framework for understanding self-defeating behaviour and its treatment. This theory posits that individuals operate from different ego states (Parent, Adult, and Child), and self-defeating behaviour often stems from the Child ego state, characterized by feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, and a need for approval. Interventions based on transactional analysis aim to help individuals recognize and modify their self-defeating patterns by strengthening their Adult ego state, promoting rational thinking and self-acceptance (Urell, 2018). Falaye and Afolayan (2015), in their study on use of Self-Management Techniques (SMT) and Transactional Analysis (TA) to enhance self-disclosure of HIV positive status, used introverts and extroverts male and female participant, revealed that the exposure of the participants to the treatments (SMT and TA) encouraged their self-disclosure as well as strengthen their interpersonal communication skills. In a similar study on titled Psychotherapy and disclosure of sero status, Falaye and Afolayan (2015) found out how

Transactional Analysis can be used to enhance Self- disclosure of HIV+ status and their findings showed that the 30 participants exposed to Transactional Analysis received awareness and develop self-confidence. The result also revealed that Transactional Analysis is effective in enhancing self-disclosure of positive zero status and in the process of the treatment that participants are able to interact and transact greatly with themselves thereby promoting their interpersonal relationship. However, while these studies provide evidence for the effectiveness of transactional analysis and positive self-talk interventions, they do not specifically examine the potential moderating effect of gender on treatment outcomes. Limited research has explored whether these interventions may be differentially effective for male and female adolescents, considering the potential influence of gender socialization and gender norms on self-defeating behaviour (Brown & Corcoran,2006). Research suggests that gender differences play a significant role in the manifestation and treatment of self-defeating behaviour. Women tend to exhibit higher emotional intelligence and are more likely to engage in self-destructive behaviours as a means of coping with emotional distress (Kopetz, &Orehek, (2015). Men, on the other hand, tend to exhibit higher levels of aggression and are more likely to engage in self-destructive behaviours as a means of asserting dominance (Biryu, 2006).

Statement of the Problem:
Self-defeating behaviour is a significant concern among secondary school adolescents, with manifestations such as fear of failure, substance abuse, and low self-esteem. Despite the recognition of this issue, empirical investigations into effective treatment strategies, particularly considering gender differences, remain limited. Addressing this gap is crucial for developing tailored interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of self-defeating behaviour on adolescent development. Understanding the factors that contribute to self-defeating behaviour and developing effective interventions is essential for promoting positive youth development. Gender differences in self-defeating behaviour have been observed, with studies suggesting that boys and girls may exhibit distinct patterns of self-defeating behaviour and respond differently to interventions. However, the existing literature on gender-specific treatment strategies is limited, making it challenging to develop tailored interventions that address the unique needs of male and female adolescents. To address this gap, further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of various treatment strategies for self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents, considering gender differences. By developing a better understanding of the factors that contribute to self-defeating behaviour and identifying effective intervention approaches, researchers and practitioners can work towards mitigating the adverse effects of self-defeating behaviour on adolescent development

Purpose of the Study:
This study aims to examine the moderating effect of gender on the treatment of self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents. By investigating how gender influences the efficacy of intervention strategies, the study seeks to inform targeted and personalized approaches to address self-defeating behaviour in this population.

Hypotheses:
1. There is no main effect of treatment indicating difference in levels of self-defeating behavior among secondary school adolescents.
2. However, the analysis of data did not reveal main effect gender on self-defeating behaviour among the adolescent in the secondary schools.
3. There will be no combined interactive effect of treatment and gender for self-defeating behaviour of secondary school adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design with a 3 x 2 factorial matrix. A multistage sampling procedure was employed to select participants. From the four Local Government Areas in Oyo, Oyo State, three were chosen. Then, using a simple random sampling technique, three public secondary schools were selected from each of these chosen Local Government Areas. Fifty (50) students were selected each from three selected Public Secondary Schools. Screening of participants was done to ascertain the level of self-defeating behaviour and only students with highest scores were selected making ninety-six (96) participants for the experiment. Participants were randomly allocated to one of the two experimental groups or the control group.. Two instruments were used to generate data.

Socio-demographic Profile: The socio-demographic profile instrument was meticulously crafted to capture vital demographic information from the participants. It aimed to delve into various factors that could potentially influence the study, including but not limited to age, gender, grade level, and socioeconomic status.

Self-Defeating Behaviour Scale: Developed by Baumeister and Bushman (2008), this scale consists of 32 items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." Response options were assigned scores as follows: Very Strongly Agree (4), Strongly Agree (3), Agree (2), Disagree (1), and Strongly Disagree (0). Scores were categorized into three levels: low (0 to 1.33), medium (1.34 to 2.67), and high (2.68 to 4.0) for self-defeating behaviour. The scale's reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicating that higher scores reflect greater susceptibility to self-defeating behaviour. Although the original study did not specify a cutoff point, Wu and Kei (2017) reported an internal consistency of Cronbach's alpha at 0.85. Additionally, an adapted version of the scale was pilot-tested with thirty Senior Secondary School Students in the Iseyin Local Government area of Oyo State, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.86 and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89. These validations confirm the scale's reliability and appropriateness for the study.

Inclusion Criteria
The following criteria determined participants' eligibility: i. Participants were bona fide students from the selected secondary schools in Oyo, Oyo State, exhibiting high self-defeating behaviour.
ii. Only those who scored above average on the screening instrument were considered.
iii. Participants agreed to the terms of the training sessions, including punctuality, participation in group activities, maintaining consistency, and completing assigned tasks.
  i.   Parental consent was obtained for their participation in the study.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed for demographic analysis, while inferential statistics, including Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and Scheffe Post-hoc Analysis, were utilized to test hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level, allowing for a comprehensive examination of treatment effects.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Showing Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	42	44%
	Female	54	56%
Age	11-15 years	58	60%
	16-18 years	38	40%
School	ADS High School Opapa, Oyo	33	35%
	Olivet Baptist High School	32	33%
	Oranyan Grammar School	31	32%
Class	SSS I	59	61%
	SSS II	37	39%
Religion	Islam	55	57%
	Christianity	41	43%
Family Background	Polygamy	60	63%
	Monogamy	36	37%
Current Family Social Status	Parent living together	82	85%
	Parent living separately	13	14%
	Parent divorced	1	1%
Parent's Occupation	Unemployed	-	-
	Unskilled workers	6	6%
	Semi-skilled worker	36	38%
	Professional	54	56%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 showed that 42(44%) of the respondents were males and 54(56%) were females. 58(60%) were aged 11-15 years, 38(72.3%) were aged 16-18 years. 33 (35%) of the respondents were from ADS High School Opapa, Oyo, 32 (33%) of the respondents were from Olivet Baptist High, 31 (32%) of the respondents were from Oranyan Grammar School, Oyo, 59(61%) were SSS1 students and 37(39%) were SSS2 students. 55(57%) were Muslims and 41(43%) were Christians. 60(63%) were from Polygamous family and 36 (37%) were from Monogamous family. 82(85%) of the respondents were parent living together, 13(14%) of the respondents were parent living separately and 1(1%) were parent divorced. 6(6%) of the respondents parents' occupation were unskilled workers, 36(38%) of the respondents parents occupation were semi-skilled worker and 54 (56%) of the respondents parents occupation were profession.

Testing of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical method. The results are summarized as follows:

Hypothesis One: This hypothesis posited that there is no significant main effect of treatment on self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents. To evaluate this hypothesis, ANCOVA was employed to compare the post-test scores of participants on self-defeating behaviour. The pre-test scores were used as covariates to assess whether the differences observed in the post-test results were statistically significant.

Table 2: Summary of 3x2 Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Showing the Significant Main and Interactive Effect of Treatment Groups, and Gender among secondary school adolescents.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Square d
Pre-test	59.104	1	59.104	.867	.355	.011
Main Effect:						
Treatment	20688.960	2	10344.480	151.781	.000	0.798
Gender	594.667	1	594.667	8.928	.004	0.104
2 way interaction:						
Treatment * gender	362.865	2	181.433	2.662	.076	0.065
Total	731201.000	96				
Corrected Total	40487.990	95				

a. R Squared = .870 (Adjusted R Squared = .840)
Source: field survey, 2024

According to the results presented in Table 2, there is a significant main effect of treatment on self-defeating behaviour among secondary school students, with F (2, 77) = 27.863, p < .05, η^2 = 0.798. This indicates that the levels of self-defeating behaviour among the treatment groups differed significantly from those in the control group. As a result, the null hypothesis could not be supported and was rejected. The data show that the treatment explained 79.8% of the variance in self-reported self-defeating behaviour on the PESQ. To further clarify the differences between the treatment groups and the control group, Scheffe's post-hoc analysis was conducted, with the results detailed in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Scheffe Post-Hoc Analysis of Self-Defeating Behaviour Showing Differences Between Treatment Groups and the Control Group.

Treatment group	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Positive-Self Talk (PST)	32	61.4333		
Transactional Analysis (TA)	31		83.0333	
Control group (CG)	33			105.8056
Sig.		0.035	0.043	0.022

Table 3 shows that experimental group I (Positive Self-Talk (PST)) had the lowest mean score ($\bar{x}$ = 61.43), followed by experimental group II (Transactional Analysis (TA)) with a mean score of $\bar{x}$ = 83.03, and the control group with a mean score of $\bar{x}$ = 105.81. This finding suggests that Positive Self-Talk (PST) was more effective in reducing self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents compared to Transactional Analysis (TA). The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R² = .84) indicates that 84% of the variance in self-defeating behaviour among these adolescents can be explained by the differences between the groups.
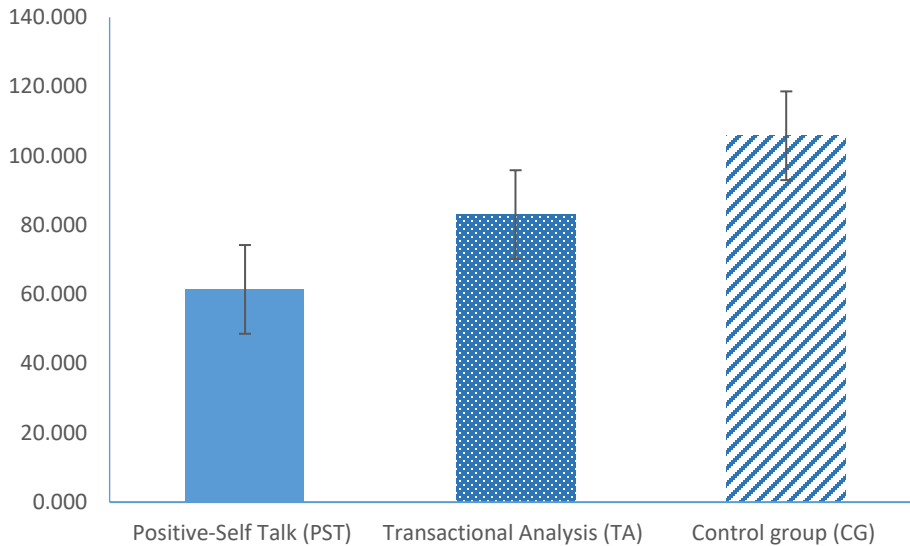
Fig. 2: The bar chart Showing the Significant Differences of self-defeating behaviour among Various Treatment Groups and the Control Group.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant main effect of gender on self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents.

The main analysis presented in Table 2 also revealed that there is a significant effect of gender on self-defeating behaviour for secondary school adolescents; $F_{(1,77)} = 8.928$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta 2 = 0.104$. Thus the hypothesis, which this experiment sought to test cannot be confirmed because it was never statistically evidenced as null. This suggests that gender of students significantly influenced the self-defeating behaviour of secondary school adolescents. The table also shows that gender accounted for 10 percent of the variation in math grades while the interaction term only explained 1 percent of the variation in students' math performance. This yielded a four percent score of variances in the self-defeating behaviour of secondary school adolescents. To reduce the risk to the second type of error and to make it clear exactly where the difference between the two lies, we computed a pair-wise comparison appropriately corrected with Bonferonni correction and the result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Bonferonni correction pair-wise comparison to determine the significant difference of self defeating behaviour between secondary school adolescents based on gender of the secondary school adolescents.

(I) Gender	(J) Gender	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.c
Female ($\bar{x}$= 85.369)	Male	7.999	.965	.003
Male ($\bar{x}$= 93.368)	Female	-7.999	.965	.003
Grand mean 82.996			2.891	

Table 4 revealed that after controlling for the effect of pre-test self-defeating behaviour score, female participants displayed lower ($\bar{x}$= 85.369) self-defeating behaviour mean score than the

male participants ($\bar{x}$= 93.368). By implication male participants' have higher tendency to experience self-defeating behaviour than the female participants.
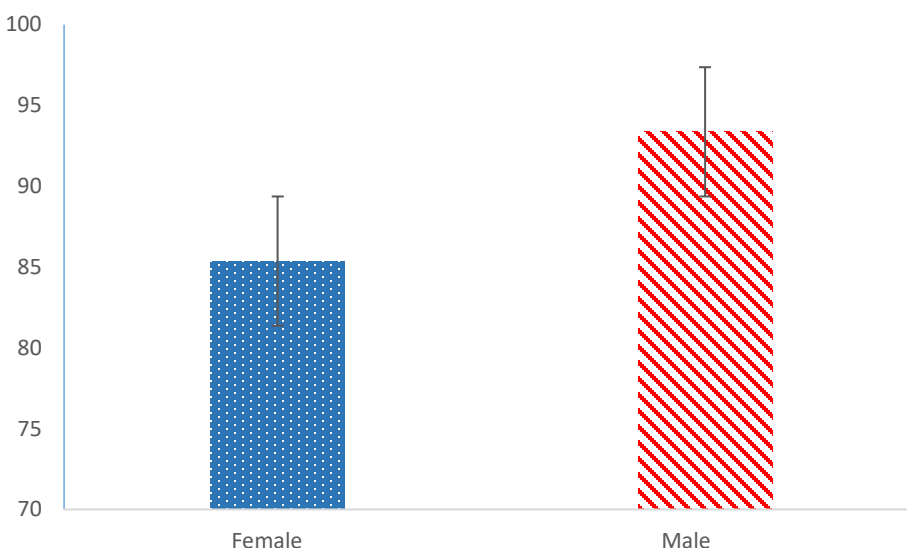
Fig. 3: The following is a bar chart that indicates the significant Differences of Self-defeating behaviour among Secondary School Adolescents based on their Gender (

Fig: 3 female participants displayed lower self-defeating behaviour mean score than the male participants. By implication male participants' have higher tendency to experience self-defeating behaviour than the female participants. .

Hypothesis Three: There was no significant interaction effect between treatment and gender on self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents. Table 2 illustrates that neither treatment nor gender had a significant impact on self-defeating behavior in this group, with ($F_{(2, 77)}$ = 2.662, p > .05, η^2= 0.065). Consequently, the null hypothesis was accepted at the required significance level. This means that gender did not substantially affect the treatment's impact on self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents. As a result, the study did not uncover a clear positive or negative interaction between the variables. The absence of significant post-hoc interaction further indicates that the research did not reveal a definitive correlation between treatment and gender.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

The initial hypothesis proposed that there would be no significant main effect of treatment on self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents. However, upon conducting ANCOVA at a significance level of 0.05, the results indicated a notable main effect of treatment on self-defeating behaviour among this demographic. This suggests a discernible difference in self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents. Post-hoc analysis using Scheffe further revealed that the experimental group I, which underwent Positive Self-Talk (PST), exhibited the lowest self-defeating behaviour post-test mean score, followed by experimental group II (Transactional Analysis (TA)) and the control group. Consequently, Positive Self-Talk (PST) was evidently more effective than Transactional Analysis (TA) in mitigating self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents. These findings resonate with William, (2009), who observed a decrease in Self-Defeating Scale-Short Form scores among adolescents

exposed to positive self-talk workshops. Similarly, various empirical studies align with the outcomes of this research. For instance, Schrum, (2010) noted a significant decrease in adolescent self-defeating behaviour following short-term intervention in positive self-talk, while Ebrahimisani, Hashemian, and Dvkanhan (2012) reported an improvement in adolescent self-behaviour and a reduction in self-defeating acts post positive self-talk workshops. Positive self-talk seems to equip adolescents with skills to address positive mindset patterns, which are predictors of reckless behaviours such as criminal activities, substance abuse, and risky sexual behaviour (Gonzales & Field, 2014). Transactional analysis was also found to be effective in reducing self-defeating behaviour, although not as potent as positive self-talk. This finding is consistent with Fashina (2010), who identified transactional analysis as an efficacious behaviour enrichment program, supported by longitudinal data demonstrating its effectiveness. Additionally, several empirical studies highlighted the benefits of transactional analysis, including improved social relationships, communication, and relationship satisfaction among adolescents in both short and long-term contexts (Falaye & Afolayan, 2015; Falaye & Okoiye, 2013; Olusakin & Aremu, 2010). Hence, while positive self-talk appears highly effective in the short term, transactional analysis offers sustained effectiveness over time. The second hypothesis proposed that there would be no significant main effect of gender on self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents. Contrary to this hypothesis, the ANCOVA results showed a significant main effect of gender, revealing notable differences in self-defeating behaviour between male and female adolescents. This finding contradicts Agbaje& Alake (2014), who reported no significant gender difference in adolescent self-defeating behaviour. Additionally, Atovigba,(2012) found that gender differences in self-defeating behaviour were more pronounced among females with higher levels of self-worth or value compared to males with lower levels. Similarly, the results support Brown & Corcoran (2006), who suggested that males tend to exhibit higher levels of self-defeating behaviour than females, particularly in predictive behaviours such as gambling addiction. However, there are conflicting findings, with Zember& Blume (2011) reporting gender differences favouring males in self-defeating behaviour, while Ali (2013) found no significant gender effect. These inconsistencies underscore the need for further research in this area to elucidate the complex interplay between gender and self-defeating behaviour. The hypothesis suggested that there would be no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents. The results supported this hypothesis, showing that gender did not significantly influence the impact of treatment on self-defeating behaviour. This finding aligns with Ali (2013), suggesting that gender may not substantially influence the effectiveness of treatment on self-defeating behaviour. However, there is still disagreement among researchers regarding the impact of gender on self-defeating behaviour, warranting further investigation.

Conclusion

This study examined the efficacy of positive self-talk and transactional analysis in reducing self-defeating behaviour among secondary school adolescents. Both therapies were found to be effective, with positive self-talk demonstrating greater effectiveness, particularly in the short term. The results underscore the importance of addressing self-defeating behaviour through relationship-building and conflict resolution skills, rather than surface-level problem-solving. Gender differences were also evident in self-defeating behaviour, highlighting the need for tailored interventions based on gender-specific factors.

Recommendations:

The study suggests integrating positive self-talk and transactional analysis into school counseling and curriculum. This could mitigate self-defeating behaviour among adolescents. Implementing workshops and seminars would facilitate students' engagement in these strategies. Educational psychologists, counselors, teachers, and school administrators should adopt these approaches. Parents should promote self-esteem to reduce adolescent self-defeating behaviour. Future research should further explore these interventions' efficacy and address identified limitations.

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