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## Research Article

# Effect of Cognitive Restructuring Counselling Technique and Critical Thinking on Attitude Towards Okada Rider's Drug Abuse Behaviour in Onitsha Urban, Anambra State

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### Abstract

**Objective:** The study determined the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on attitude towards drug abuse behaviour of commercial motorcyclists (okada riders) in Onitsha urban in Anambra state. **Methodology:** Quasi-experimental one group pre-test and post-test design was adopted for the study. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study comprised all single and married commercial motorcyclists (okada riders) in Onitsha urban. A sample of 12 participants was drawn for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the participants. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire developed by the researchers. The face validity and reliability of the instrument was established. Cronbach Alpha method was used in estimating the internal consistency of the instrument. Mean scores and t-test were used to present the data. **Results:** The findings of the study indicated that the okada rider's negative attitude towards drugs changed after exposure to treatment package. Also, no significant difference exists between the attitude of adolescent and adult okada riders towards drug abuse. **Conclusion:** It was concluded that cognitive restructuring technique can effectively be utilized in changing attitude of commercial motorcyclists (okada riders) towards drug abuse. It was therefore, recommended that cognitive restructuring technique and intervention should be introduced to okada riders in all the okada parks in Anambra state and that adequate counselors should be employed and redeployed to Nigeria Road Safety Commission.

**Key words:** Okada riders, Onitsha urban, drug abuse, research question, null hypothesis

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**Competing Interest:** The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

**Data Availability:** All relevant data are within the paper and its supporting information files.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Onitsha is situated in Anambra North Senatorial district in South Eastern part of Nigeria. It is a commercial city and the major economic activity of the inhabitants is trading. It has the largest singular market in West Africa popularly known as Onitsha Main Market (Otu Onitsha) and other markets located at different places in the city such as Ochanja, Otu Okwodu, Medicine Market, located at Head Bridge (Niger Bridge) and other markets. Due to the commercial nature of the place, traders from different parts of Nigeria and across Nigeria come to the city of Onitsha to transact one business or the other with their customers. Some of the traders buy goods from Onitsha and take them to interior areas. Others export goods to other countries in West Africa, Africa or across the globe. The traders deal in many products ranging from local and foreign fabrics, show materials, men and women wears, cosmetics, jewelries, foods, electronics, building materials, sports materials and various household equipments. The roads are always busy and sometimes congested because of the commercial nature of the place. Various means of transport are utilized by the inhabitants, petty traders and merchants in the city and some of the transport systems include: Buses, taxi, keke (tricycle) and motorcycle (okada).

Motorcycle, popularly known as okada was invented to facilitate motorways transport as a result of increasing population and industrialization<sup>1</sup>. Some Nigerians engage in commercial motorcycle driving as a means of empowering themselves economically. This business, popularly known as okada riding in almost every part of Nigeria is currently receiving unprecedented patronage from both single and married citizens. In fact, it has become a lucrative enterprise in Nigeria particularly in Onitsha and other parts of South East Zone of Nigeria<sup>1</sup>. Thus, okada riding is a means of livelihood to many Nigerians. The network of motorcycle ways help to speed journey and cut off the long lines of crawling traffic in all the big towns. Moreover, most motorcycle drivers can take their passengers to their destinations in both rural and parts of urban areas where they are permitted to operate within the shortest possible time irrespective of traffic jams and obstructions on the highways.

Despite all the efforts of the Federal Road Safety Commission to ensure protection and security of lives of individuals at all cost on the roads by compelling motorcycle users to always wear their helmet and adhere strictly to high way codes while riding their motor bikes on the roads, some commercial motorcyclists still ride their motorcycles carelessly on the roads. The Federal Road Safety Commission, as a matter of priority, arrests the defaulters, confiscates their

motorcycles and makes them pay some amount of money before releasing them to the owners. Concerned individuals and communities have expressed dissatisfaction over the manner individuals who are going about their normal businesses and school children are either knocked down or killed by okada riders. No wonder commercial motorcycle riding business has been banned in almost all state capitals and urban centres in Nigeria. Most Nigerians associate the recklessness of okada riders to drug abuse. Drug abuse is such a powerful phenomenon that forms the culture of okada riders in Anambra state, particularly in Onitsha urban.

Observations have shown that most okada riders involve themselves in drug abuse and as a result suffer its devastating consequences such as induced acute renal failure, psychiatric disorders and untimely death. A drug is any product other than food or water that affects the way people feel, think, see and behave. It is a substance that due to its chemical nature affects physical, mental and emotional functioning of an individual. It can enter the body through chewing, inhaling, smoking, drinking, rubbing on the skin or injection. Drug abuse is the use of drugs for purposes other than medical reasons. It refers to misuse of any psychotropic substances resulting in changes in the body functions, thus affecting the individual in a negative way socially, cognitively or physically<sup>2-4</sup>.

Prevalence of drug abuse among different categories of people (young and old) in the country is on increase. The problem of drug abuse knows no boundaries or social class. Ikechukwu-Illomuanya<sup>4</sup> stated that increase in substance use in Nigeria is spreading like hurricane across age brackets, gender and socio economic groups. Okoha and Duru<sup>5</sup> pointed out that the people mostly at risk in this problem in Nigeria are the adolescents and early adults of both gender and between 15-30 years. Longbap<sup>2</sup> posited that drug abuse among adolescents in secondary schools is on increase. So also, okada riders in the neighborhood, mostly adolescents and early adults involve themselves in drug abuse in order to do some super normal things like speeding and unusual overtaking on the roads or to be recognized by the members of their group.

Some of the drugs commonly abused by okada riders include marijuana, hemp, hashish, alcohol, heroine, cocaine, barbiturates and caffeine. Some okada riders in Onitsha urban get addicted to these drugs. Addiction to drugs means that a person's body can no longer function without these substances. The addictive substances can alter mental state and behavior to a point, where the individual becomes a threat to himself and others. Once a person becomes addicted to drugs, it is hard to stop using drugs<sup>6</sup>. Drug abuse is a serious problem in Nigeria and the government

has become interested in it. Consequently, the Federal Government of Nigeria has taken bold steps aimed at curbing the high incidences of drug abuse by setting up drug abuse Committees in all the states in the Federation. The Federal Government declared war against drug abuse and campaign against drug abuse in 1987 and 1988, respectively. In 1990, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) was established to combat drug abuse in the country, all to no avail<sup>6</sup>.

Negative attitude towards drugs by okada riders has negative impacts that impede national development. It impedes the development of any society as it is a threat to the life, health, dignity and property of all individuals<sup>1</sup>. Observations have shown that some of these okada riders are always involved in road accidents and in most cases, they die with their passengers on the way or end up with broken legs, hands, ribs or other parts of the body. Some okada riders have been found guilty of possession of dangerous weapons such as pistols and chemical substance like acid. Some of the culprits attack their passengers at night or lonely places at gun point and do away with their belongings. Also, passengers who resist letting go of their belongings have been reported killed or seriously injured by the okada riders<sup>7</sup>. Thus, social security of citizens is threatened by the activities of okada riders who have negative attitude towards drugs.

The effects of drug abuse on okada riders include: Untimely death, psychiatric disorders, heart disease, induced acute renal failure, chronic dishonesty, lying, cheating, stealing and borrowing to support habits, road accidents and suicide<sup>5</sup>. Thus, if nothing is done to stop the okada rider's drug abuse behavior and reckless driving on the roads in Onitsha urban of Anambra state, many lives of individuals will either be cut short or rendered useless as a result of road accidents. These individuals are potential candidates for nation building.

This study determined the effect of cognitive restructuring strategy on attitude towards drug abuse behavior of okada riders will no doubt consolidate the work of Arikelola and Ikechukwu-Ilomuanya<sup>1</sup> on capacity building strategy for commercial motorcyclists in Nigeria and the study carried out by Ikechukwu-Ilomuanya<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, there ought to be an intervention strategy for okada riders in order to prepare them for productive living because they are potential candidates for national development. Cognitive restructuring counselling intervention therefore becomes inevitable for okada riders in Onitsha urban for positive changes and adjustment to normal life. Cognitive disputing and teaching clients how to practice skills taught on their own has become imperative for okada riders in Onitsha urban so as to help them contribute their quota to national development.

This is informed by the fact that their negative attitude towards drug taking has a serious negative impact on their future. Elaigwu<sup>8</sup> buttressing this view, pointed out that diagnosis and treatment of drug abuse and dependence are very important because drug related problems can have an enormous impact on addict's future. Drug use for some okada riders can lead to an abusive and addictive pattern that requires intervention.

In this study, cognitive restructuring technique is explored as one of the techniques through which okada riders will be assisted to work on their major irrationality systematically on daily bases and practice skills taught on their own. Cognitive restructuring is an insight strategy related to the recognition and change of negative behaviours, thoughts and maladaptive beliefs. The technique is a helping service which makes use of cognitive techniques to help clients develop consciousness to rational (self helping) level. It involves the use of cognitive skills to imbue the young okada riders with relevant skills and capacity to develop behaviours, which will help, them deal more effectively with drug abuse and addiction. It is expected that okada riders be trained to think critically so that they can deal more effectively with the problems they encounter.

Furthermore, okada riders will benefit from a systematic programme of cognitive restructuring technique. It will give them an opportunity to talk about themselves, reasons for taking drugs and to discuss problems with counsellors who have time and are willing to listen to them. Some of the counselling needs which okada riders need counsellors to discuss with them include: Risk involved in drug abuse and addiction, how to stop drug abuse and development of rational thinking. Ellis<sup>9,10</sup> affirmed that man has control over his feelings/thoughts. Thus, the counsellor can help the clients to realize that when an undesirable consequence occurs such as severe anxiety or urge to abuse drugs, they can be quickly traced to the person's irrational beliefs. Also, when these beliefs are effectively disputed by challenging them rationally, the disturbed consequences disappear and eventually cease to occur. Onwuasoanya<sup>11</sup> collaborated with this view point by asserting that those who engage themselves in abnormal behaviours should be helped to overcome such behaviours using cognitive behaviour modification techniques. Thus, okada riders will be helped to gain insight that they can dispute the urge to abuse drugs in order to speed or do unusual overtaking on the roads because what matters is how well they ride their okadas but not how fast. Also, they will realize that they are the cause of the problems they are having and that they can confront the irrational belief that they must

abuse drug before riding their okadas bearing in mind that abnormal riding of okada has devastating consequences. Moreover, cognitive restructuring intervention will bring the okada riders to the level of logical thinking and consciousness that will enable them to function adequately in their okada riding business for greater efficiency and maximum profitability.

The study therefore determined the effect of cognitive restructuring counselling intervention technique and processes on attitude towards drug abuse behaviour of okada riders in Onitsha urban in Anambra state. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The following research question was raised and answered in the course of the study:

- What is the attitude mean score of okada riders towards drug abuse before and after cognitive restructuring treatment?

To strengthen the study, the following null hypothesis was postulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitude mean scores of adolescent and adult okada riders on drug abuse after exposure to cognitive restructuring treatment

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study adopted quasi-experimental one group pre-test and post-test design. The population of the study included all single and married commercial motorcyclists (okada riders) in Onitsha urban in Anambra state. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the subjects. Purposive sampling technique ensured that the participants were adolescent and adult commercial motorcyclists (okada riders) who have negative attitude towards drugs. In this study, data was collected through pre-test that was administered to the okada riders at the beginning of the programme in order to measure their attitude towards drug abuse behaviour and to identify those with negative attitude towards drugs. Also, individuals who sell articles around the okada parks secretly helped the researchers to identify okada riders that are known for drug abuse. After the pre-test, the okada riders who have negative attitude towards drugs were exposed to cognitive restructuring treatment for a period of 5 weeks. A post-test was given to the same group

of okada riders at the end of the programme in order to identify the desirable programme outcome.

The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire, which was developed by the researchers and validated by experts in Guidance, Counselling and Philosophy of Education in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability of the instrument was established. To trial test the instrument, a pilot study was carried out in Ogidi in Idemili North Local Government Area in Anambra state, which is outside the study area. In order to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha method was used and reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained which was considered reliable. The questionnaire titled "Okada Rider's Attitude Towards Drug Abuse Questionnaire" (ORATDAQ) was made up of two sections. Section "A" elicited information on the bio data of the respondents while section "B" was made up 16 items, which focused on eliciting information on attitude of okada riders towards drug abuse. The respondents were instructed to rate the items on 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA: 4 points), Agree (A: 3 points), Disagree (D: 2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD: 1 point). However, the illiterate okada riders were helped by the researchers and the research assistants to fill the questionnaire.

The research question was answered using mean scores and independent t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The researchers and three research assistants that were trained in two days workshop on how to effectively carry out the counselling programme carried out the experiment. The research assistants were National Youth Service Corp Members who are serving in Onitsha in Anambra state.

## **RESULTS**

**Research question:** What is the attitude mean score of okada riders towards drug abuse before and after treatment?

Results in Table 1 indicate that the participants obtained attitude mean score of 23.83 before treatment and 63.17 after treatment. Higher attitude mean score after treatment indicates positive response to cognitive restructuring treatment. Lower attitude mean score before treatment indicates negative attitude to drugs.

Table 1: Attitude of okada riders towards drug abuse before and after cognitive restructuring treatment

| Periods          | No. | Mean  | Standard deviation |
|------------------|-----|-------|--------------------|
| Before treatment | 12  | 23.83 | 1.17               |
| After treatment  | 12  | 63.17 | 0.98               |

Table 2: Summary of t-test on attitude mean score difference of adolescent and adult okada riders on drug abuse

| Category    | No. | Mean | Standard deviation | Df | t-cal | t-crit |
|-------------|-----|------|--------------------|----|-------|--------|
| Adults      | 6   | 57.5 | 6.44               | 10 | 0.89  | 2.228  |
| Adolescents | 6   | 57.2 | 6.55               |    |       |        |

Df: Degree of freedom

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the attitude mean score of adolescent and adult okada riders towards drug abuse after exposure to cognitive restructuring treatment

Results in Table 2 revealed that attitude mean score of adult okada riders after exposure to cognitive restructuring treatment was 57.5 while that of the adolescents was 57.2. The calculated t of 0.089 with 10 degree of freedom (df) is less than the critical t of 0.228 at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the attitude mean score of adult and adolescent okada riders towards drug abuse after exposure to cognitive restructuring treatment.

## DISCUSSION

Analysis of data in Table 1 shows that cognitive restructuring technique helped okada riders to a very large extent to have positive attitude towards drugs and to ride their okada responsibly on the roads. The attitude mean score of okada riders before they were exposed to cognitive restructuring treatment (pre-test) was lower than the attitude mean score they obtained after exposure to treatment condition (post-test). This implies that cognitive restructuring treatment has positive effect on attitude of okada riders towards drugs. This finding tallies with the finding of Elaigwu<sup>8</sup> who applied cognitive restructuring treatment on self-concept, locus of control and drinking behaviour of students and it had positive effect on them after exposure to treatment. This finding also agrees with the assertion of Akinade and Adedipe<sup>12</sup> and Onwuasoanya<sup>11</sup> that cognitive restructuring is an effective counselling strategy that is used in behaviour modification.

The results of the study reveal that no significant difference exists between the attitude mean score of adolescent and adult okada riders towards drug abuse. The results in Table 2 did not provide sufficient ground for the researcher to conclude that age, having wife and children influenced the attitude of okada riders towards drug abuse.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusion could be drawn from the findings of the study. Cognitive restructuring counselling

technique was effective in changing the attitude of okada riders towards drug abuse. The okada riders showed improvement on attitude towards drugs after receiving treatment. The results of the study have therefore empirically proven the efficacy of cognitive restructuring treatment in changing negative attitude of okada riders towards drugs.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Cognitive restructuring counselling programme which served as an intervention technique should be introduced to okada riders in okada parks in Onitsha urban, Anambra state, South East Zone and other areas of the country where okada riders are allowed to operate in order to acquaint the users with necessary skills and attitudes required in their business operations
- There is need for future researchers to focus on effects of cognitive restructuring and film show on attitude towards okada rider's drug abuse behaviour in Anambra
- Adequate counsellors should be employed and redeployed to the Federal Road Safety Commission by the Federal Government
- Counsellors should embark on regular neighborhood enlightenment campaign to sensitize the okada riders towards protection of lives at all cost and to create in them consciousness about obedience to law and order

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