

MODIFICATION OF ATTITUDE OF YOUTHS INVOLVED IN SUBSTANCE ABUSE: A TOOL FOR MINIMIZING INSURGENCY IN BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14649980>

Published Date: 15-January-2025

Abstract: This study, ‘Modification of Attitude of Youth Involved in Substance Abuse: A Tool for Minimizing Insurgency in Borno State.’ was conducted using quasi experimental pre-test post-test group design. The broad objective of the study is to find out if modifying the attitude of youths towards substance abuse will minimize insurgency. One specific objective is to determine the efficacy of modification of attitude technique on subjects in experimental groups before and after treatment. One research question is: what is the efficacy of modification of attitude technique on subjects in experimental groups before and after treatment. The populations of the study were youths between ages 18-24 years who were involved in substance abuse in Borno state. The sample subjects were purposively selected; thus 12 youths from each of the three locations under study were drawn by the use of substance abuse checklist (SAC). The locations were purposively selected and assigned to experimental groups. A ten-item questionnaire, that is, substance abuse questionnaire (SAQ) adopted from a guideline provided by the Centre for Substance Abuse Treatment on a two-point Likert scale was used for both pre- test and posttest exercises. The research questions were tested with appropriate inferential statistics. The result revealed that pre-test scores of subjects in experimental group one exposed to treatment by Modification of Attitude Technique is 78.8456 and the post test score is 54.7083, the mean difference between the pre-test and post test scores of subjects in experimental group one is 24.1373. A reduction in mean score implies that there is improvement in the behavior; attitudes toward substance use changed from positive to negative. This shows that Modification of Attitude technique was effective in managing substance abuse among youths in Borno state. The findings revealed that Modification of Attitude technique was effective in managing substance abuse thereby minimizing the desire to be involved in insurgency. It was recommended that the use of Modification of Attitude should be taught to school managers, counselors and social workers among others and be encouraged in managing substance abuse among youths in Borno state.

Keywords: Minimizing Insurgency, attitude technique, social workers.

1. INTRODUCTION

History has shown that man from time immemorial has used substances to cure, manage and treat bizarre behaviors as well as relieving tensions and everyday stresses. According to Abadinsky (2008), man has generally explored herbs, leaves, roots and barks of trees to cure illnesses, relieves tension and improves his moods. Man has always sought solutions to his health problems from substances irrespective of culture or tradition (Wakawa, 2015). Substances are meant to bring about relief from either psychological or physiological imbalance of the human body system especially as recommended by a medical professional and according to prescription. When substances are used for the above purposes, they save lives but indiscriminate use leads to misery, destroys lives and property.

The Nigerian youth is confronted with a dilemma especially of unemployment and meaningful source of livelihood especially after completing one level of education or the other. -The nation is undergoing a very difficult developmental stage (high inflation, crimes, corruption, agitations, kidnappings etc) which is directly or indirectly affecting individuals

particularly the youths. Many of them have turned to substances/drugs with the hope of finding solutions to their challenges. As a result of this, many youths have turned to substances/drugs as a 'successful' means of resolving their challenges; graduating into insurgencies of various types which has bastardized development in the North eastern region of the country.

Attitude modification is the presentation or exposing the dangers of Substances/drugs to the users and all youths and helping them to develop negative attitudes towards these drugs or substances so they can willingly say no to it. It also helps users to discover their potentials and utilize it positively to earn a living and teaching them life skills that will go a long way in helping them. When people willingly say no to substances/drugs, the rate of criminal tendencies (insurgency) automatically reduces.

Statement of the Problem

Substance abuse has for years been a prevailing problem among Nigerian youths, particularly in Borno State. Many studies have been conducted to look into the nature, causes, effects and how to minimize it. It is one of the most disturbing health and behavior related problems among youths in contemporary Nigeria especially in Borno state leading to variety of criminal activities. Substance abuse is increasingly becoming a matter of concern to parents, teachers, schools and the society at large. The evidences of its increasing prevalence are seen in the number of school aged youths that are involved in gang robbery, terrorism and insurgency, truancy, examination mal-practices, destruction of lives and property all under the influence of drugs/substances. The closure of most secondary schools and adoption of women and girls by terrorists known as 'Boko Haram' in the area of study few years ago shows clearly the evidences of the influence of substance abuse.

Observations show that a significant number of youths are found as inmates in Remand homes in the area of the study for crimes ranging from theft to murder all perpetrated under the influence of substances. Teachers and parents in the area of study have realized over the years that no matter how promising the future of a student/child is, once involved in substance use, the student's /child's psychological, physical and emotional states become affected and the achievement of scholastic dreams by such students/children become disrupted.

The increasing level of substance use among youths in the area of study have led to many promising people losing their lives as a result of attacks from such youths and many have given up their jobs and businesses and ran into hiding for fear of losing their lives. Insurgency has made almost every economic activity impossible and every means of livelihood unattainable. A close look at the violent anti-social tendencies, physical combats in public areas and on the streets of most towns in Borno state and the crises prevalent in the area of study shows that most of those involved in are the youths between ages 18 – 24 who were under the influence of one substance or the other..

Parents, teachers, school managers, curriculum planners, policy makers, non-governmental agencies, social workers, medical practitioners among others are worried about this ugly situation, as all efforts to curb substance abuse remain a mirage. These scenarios and many others have necessitated this study to use the techniques of attitude modification in managing substance abuse among youths in Borno State. Although many types of psychotherapies have been used over the years to manage substance abuse among youths in Borno state, (drug therapy, aversion technique, desensitization among others), modification of attitude technique has not been used at least in the area of study. It is this gap the researcher intends to fill by the use of this approach to see how useful it can effect changes in the attitude of youths involved in substance abuse.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to find out if modification of the attitude technique will be effective in managing substance abuse thereby deterring youths from insurgency.

The specific objectives of the study are to: -

- i. Determine the efficacy of Modification of Attitude technique on subjects in experimental groups before and after treatment?
- i. Find out if youths who abuse substances are aware of the dangers of substances/drugs associated with their health and behavior

Research Questions

The Study answered the following research questions:

- ii. What is the efficacy of modification of attitude technique on subjects in experimental groups before and after treatment?
- iii. Are youths involved in substance abuse aware of the dangers associated with their health and behavior?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the meanings and definitions of important concepts in this study. It discusses the opinions of different researchers related to substance use as well as modification of attitude technique in managing substance abuse. From time immemorial, man has explored every root, twig, leaves and fruits and plants to satisfy hunger and thirst as well as to cure diseases/illnesses and to keep them elated when in low mood. Today, the urged or motivation to achieve happiness, wealth or academic success by whatever means has spread to high level in our societies particularly among youths. The desire to feel good, avoid stress and traumatic experiences, perform highly in fields of endeavor is so intense that youths who could not ordinarily achieve them resort to substances which they believe will aid them to achieve it.

The history of substance use is as old as man himself and evidences point out that the history of man shows that he has always used substances for one reason or the other, either according to prescription by medical professionals or self-prescription, for instance, the native society of western Hemisphere have utilized, apparently for thousand years, plants containing hallucinogenic substances. The sacred mushrooms of Mexico called 'God's flesh' by the Aztecs was used very much among them to alter moods (Kazdin, 2012). The history of Bura people of western Borno shows that they use special types of tree barks known as *hyero*, *debiro*, *dikhir*, *bark of sura* and seeds of some kind of plants known as *Bikurnawa*, *kwahyakh wiyaku*, *wadla-wadla* and fermented local drink known and called *burkhutu* to energize themselves, relax when exhausted, heal illnesses and alter or elevate their moods when down (Davies, 1956) in (Wakawa, 2015). These substances are good when used sparingly but over use cause intoxication and addiction especially among youths.

An American sociologist, Bernard Barber, said not only can nearly anything be called drugs/substances but things so called turn out to have an enormous variety of psychological and social functions, not only religious, therapeutic and addictive, but political, aesthetic, ideological and aphrodisiac and so on (Kazdin, 2012). He added that the use of chemical substances to treat diseases and to alter moods have plunged man into unpredictable, untold vicissitudes of life for a long time. Osuji (2005) opines that the ways substances are used and misused depend on so many factors some of which are accessibility to the substances, unstable nature of families, poverty levels, high socio-economic status, desire to achieve high grades particularly students and other stresses of life. Ancient records indicate that human beings have been using psychoactive substances and indeed other substances either to alter their moods or induce mystical experiences, relieve psychological or physical tensions or for any other purposes (Grilly, 2002) in Wakawa, (2015). Substances used and still on use are psychoactive substances which are stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens or non-conventional substances. Various substances are used all over the world in diverse ways for different purposes, that no one view or one definition could possibly embrace all the medical, psychiatric, psychological, sociological, cultural, economic, religious, ethical, and legal considerations that have an important bearing on addiction. (Encyclopedia of Psychology, 2012) in Wakawa, (2015).

In Nigeria, specifically Borno state, marijuana, tobacco/nicotine, caffeine, *bikhurnawa*, *burkhutu* and alcohol among others are classified as social substances which are used for festivities and recreational purposes. These substances have no legal prohibition and are called over the counter (O.T.C.) substances. They are obtainable in almost all kiosks and super markets all over the states. There are many more substances in use in the area of study that can neither be classified according to their pharmacological composition or their effects on the users. These substances according to Wakawa (2015) are: volatile solvents (inhalants) such as gasoline, correction fluid, rubber, solution, acroso, nail polish removal, kerosene, petrol, butyl nitrates, paint thinner, formalin (popularly called 'madaran sukurdie') and soak away; others are cough Syrups, local snuff, *hyero*, *bikurnawa* (seed of local plants grown in southern Borno), *bark of sura*, *Burkhutu* (local bear made from fermented corn) and many others. The same source defined substances as something that remedies, as well as destroys the body function, they are as good as they are bad. This means when substances are used in line with medical prescription, they are good and are lifesaving aid but when used inappropriately can lead to many disorders and consequently death.

According to Abadnisky (2012), some substances/ drugs are two aged swords, they can save or wreck lives depending on the prescriber and the user. Some of the most dangerous substances are very useful under some situations particularly under medical prescriptions.

Development of Substance Abuse

In Nigeria, for hundreds of thousands of years, men even during pre-historic time have used several substances for a variety of purposes. For some, to enhance their moods or performances, for some to treat one ailment or the other, yet for others, it is to gratify some pleasurable desires. The use and abuse of substances for whatever reason, is individually, culturally and socio-economically determined (Kazdin, 2012). Substances of abuse as stated earlier are classified based on their chemical composition or pharmacological properties, whether they are legal or illegal and whether they cause disorder or not. Kazdin (2012) posits there is nothing intrinsic to the substances themselves that sets one active substance apart from other active

substances; their attributes as substances are imparted to them by users. This is to explain that though substances differ in their pharmacological and physiological actions, their use and values are individually and culturally determined. These substances are consumed mostly on non-prescription basis and self-administered for variety of reasons, for instance “to cope with adverse situations, to socialize, to conform, or to expand experiential awareness” (Grilly, 2002). Regardless of the seeming harmlessness, if they are ignored, they lead to disorder of stronger substances/drugs. Those who use substances/drugs according to Osuji (2005) are classified into the following groups: -

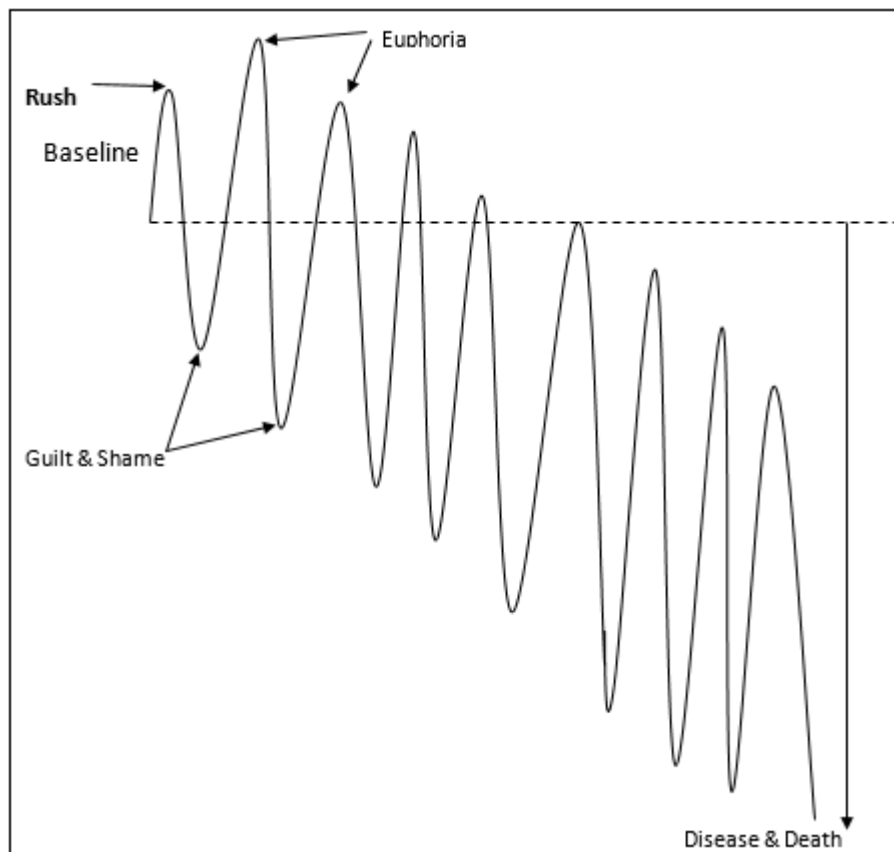
- Experiential users.
- Periodic/recreational users.
- Compulsive users.
- Ritualistic users.

The experiential users may be primarily curious and may be conforming to a group pressure either from peers or other social groups. The periodic /recreational user may use substances for fun and excitement but regular or continuous use may develop into a pattern of substance use disorder where the individual user continually indulges in the use of substance. The compulsive user: - this is where the individual or substance user has developed a physical and or psychological dependence on the substances. The ritualistic users: - these are people who use substances because they believe they will induce some spiritual or religious experiences. All these patterns started from occasional use, progresses to regular pattern or intake and into maladaptive substance abuse.

Osuji (2005) further explains that use of substances start at first, for social reasons or in company of friends and masks as a relaxing activity or sense of wellbeing. The users turn to substances as a means of escaping from stress, tension, anxiety and feelings of inadequacies and other related problems. The users’ self-controls as regard substances of use diminish and crave for the substances increase. As control lessens, their work, academics, families, health and social relationships and all other aspects of their lives begin to suffer.

Anderson (2002) cited in Wakawa, (2015) represented the addiction cycle (disorder) diagrammatically thus:

The Addiction Cycle



Source: Neil Anderson, The Way of Escape 2014.

He explained that the remedy for addiction disorder is threefold, these are:

- i. stop the addictive behavior
- ii. Use attitude modification towards the triggers and
- iii. Use the understanding of choices, making meaningful sacrifices.

Leshner (1999) cited in (wakawa, 2015) iterates that addiction is a brain disease that develops over time as a result of the initially voluntary behavior of using drugs. The consequence according to him is uncontrollable, compulsive drug craving, seeking, and use that interfere with individual's functioning in the family and in society at large.

Maxwell (2002) emphasizes that people do not stop the negative cycle of addiction by thinking differently but by acting differently, for this purpose, people who are involved in substance use disorder are encouraged to find alternative behavior patterns by engaging in creative ventures and other extra-curricular activities. Thus, the technique of modification of attitude is utilized effectively for this purpose. Substance abuse leads to traffic accidents, crimes, or violence, sexual promiscuity, destruction of lives and properties, arson, academic failures, murders, anxiety, depression and other negative feelings (Osuji, 2005 and koob, ud). While Balogun (1998) in the same source asserts that substance disordered persons have no respect for their bodies or lives. According to him, they are slowly killing themselves by taking substances. They introduce themselves to economic loss, social damage, physical and mental ill health, family distress and break up.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Substance use has been explained by researchers as a bio-psychosocial problem as such determined by interaction of psychological, environmental and psychosocial factors. Others have proposed the disease/psychodynamic, psychoanalytic, cognitive and social learning theories, among others as causes of substance use. This study is based on choice and attitude change theories. These theories explain why people develop psychological disorder; behave in deviant maladaptive and personally distressed ways and advocated attitude change as a therapy to be used to minimize behavior disorder such as substance abuse.

Modification of Attitude Technique:

Modification of attitude is one of the techniques used to guide clients into birth of new meanings into their lives. It modifies behavior by causing a shift in attitude, to see the past as not a source of weakness but strength. This may start with the realization by the client that attitudes are not determined by the situation but by the person (Ras, 2000) in (Wakwa, 2015). Frankl emphasized that the same situation in which one finds himself/herself can be interpreted by another person differently. He reiterates that the attitude one takes toward events influences psychological health or it may lead, if it is negative, to sickness. Guttman (1996) correctly pointed out that people can lead self-fulfilling lives if they acquire confidence in themselves, if they are willing to say "I can", rather than "I cannot", to the tasks at hand. Frankl emphasizes that, "He that has a why to live can bear with almost any how"; that is, those who see meaning in their suffering, or those that attach meaning to someone, or something, in a given situation, will be more competent and efficient to handle those situations than those who are still moving in their existential vacuum and do not see/do not find any meaning, in where they are/or what they do.

In this technique, clients are assisted to have a cognitive restructure of situations around them, and to view the presumed negative events as positive, which make clients better people. Kazdin (2012) posits that when people experience something out of the ordinary, their responses to the situation will be based on their value system which will influence their attitudes. Frankl however explained that accepting negative situations in one's life does not necessary mean apathy or rationalization but understanding that there is a way forward in every situation.

In modification of attitude technique, meaning can be found in all circumstances depending on person's perception and frame of mind regarding the situations confronting him/her. According Kazdin (2012), human beings by the very attitude he chooses is capable of finding fulfilling and meaning in even hopeless situations. Frankl emphasizes that despite biological, psychological and sociological facts and factors, social environment, heredity endowment, and instinctual drives that can limit the scope of man's freedom in them; they can never totally blur the human capacity to take a stand toward all those conditions, to choose an option.

4. METHODOLOGY

This section presents the framework of how the study was conducted. This research employed the quasi experimental pre-test post-test design. This type of design is used outside laboratory setting and the scheduling of treatment variable is usually out of control of the researchers. It determines the effectiveness of a technique on dependent variable, in this case, effect of modification of attitudes technique on substance abuse among youths in Borno state. The population of the study comprised all youths in Borno State who were found to be involved in substance use. To select subjects for the study, A 10 item SUDC was distributed to youths in three sampled locations; Bama, Bui and Shani. This consisted of ten items covering presenting needs, immediate needs and level of functioning of the youths in relation to substance abuse. The SUDC was developed by the center for substance abuse and treatment; however, it was adapted in order to suit the environment of the research. This was distributed to available youths in the three sampled locations who filled and returned to the researcher. Twelve (12) youths who were purposively selected from each of the three (3) locations constituted the respondents.

To collect data for this study, the researcher used the SUDQ. This is a questionnaire which comprised two sections A and B, the first section deals with the subjects' demographic variables while the second part deals with questions on (1). Health Status (2). Emotional stability (3). Social supports (4) legal problems (5) perception of substance use and (6) willingness to change. Experts validated the instrument to ensure its adequacy for the present work. The data collection was in three phases which were: the pre-treatment, the treatment and post treatment phases. In line with the objectives of this research work, a set of questionnaires, SUDQ was used for pretest and posttest exercises. There was a familiarization visit to each location by the researcher, the SUDQ was administered to the respondents, filled and returned to the researcher, this was done at the beginning of the treatment procedure. The subjects were guided by way of instruction on how to fill the questionnaires. The filled questionnaires were analyzed and kept until the end of the experiment. The posttest exercise using the same instrument was given to the subjects of the three sampled locations after treatment.

Summary of Treatment Sessions

The intervention lasted for 8 weeks and 16 contact sessions, each contact session was 20 minutes.

Two experimental groups, Bama and Shani received treatment using modification of attitude technique while Bui remain a control group; receiving no treatment.

The SUDQ was administered at the beginning before treatment sessions for each group as the pretest and at the end of the treatment sessions for both groups as the post test.

Procedure for the Post Treatment Session

This was the phase where the effects of treatments were determined by administering the same instrument (SUDQ) to all the subjects in the two experimental and the control groups after the intervention. This is the post-test which was compared with the pre-test results through data analysis to determine the efficacy of the treatment.

Experimental Groups (Using Modification of Attitude Technique)

The modification of attitude technique was administered to the subjects in 16 sessions, each lasting for 20 minutes. The first session was basically aimed at establishing good rapport between the researcher and the subjects. Ground rules were explained for successful exercise and the researcher instructed them on sitting arrangements which was a round table sitting arrangement throughout the exercise except otherwise. The sitting arrangement chosen strengthened the working relationship. There were incentives for participants throughout all the sessions.

The second session introduced the subjects to the concept of substance abuse and the important steps taken in order to quit the behavior. The third session presented the concept of maladaptive behavior specifically substance abuse. The fourth session introduced the concept of the structure of human beings relating it to substance abuse. In the fifth session, the researcher presented the concept of freedom of choice to create awareness to the ability to choose whichever behavior to be involved in based on modification of attitude views. The sixth session presented the different types of substances of abuse and their effects on the individual. The subjects were also asked to answer questions that lead to self-discovery and reflection.

Sessions seven, eight and nine presented the idea of modification of attitudes and how the subjects can modify their negative attitudes through creative thinking, active involvement in some activities and self-reflection. Session ten presented some

questions to the subjects aimed at self-evaluation. Session eleven presented suitable activities the subjects would engage in to help them develop self-control from substance use disorder and learn to appreciate others. Session twelve was presented by asking the subjects to write down their plans of action of how they intended to quit substance abuse. Session thirteen was used for revisions and attending to subjects who had peculiar problems. Session fourteen was used for outing where subjects and the researcher went out together to watch games and beauty of nature; this was to encourage subjects' desire for extra-curricular activities. The purpose of this was to assist subjects develop alternative behavior patterns other than substance abuse.

Session 15 was used for post-test administration, while the last session, session 16 was the concluding session where the subjects appreciated the people they invited and presented the gifts they bought with the money saved instead of using them on substances. The researcher in turn appreciated them and concluded the exercise officially by presenting to them the workshop bags promised at the beginning of the exercise. There was exchange of phone numbers and addresses for further contacts and follow - ups when necessary.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This is the presentation of the outcome of the research in a tabular form and discussions of the results.

Research Question One: What is the efficacy of Modification of Attitude technique on subjects in experimental group one (Bama)?

Table 1: Shows the difference between Pre-test and Post-test mean scores of subjects in experimental group one.

GRP 1	N	Pre-test	Post-test	Std	Mean Diff
M AT	12	78.8456	54.7083	18.33381	24.1373

Keys:

GRP—Group;

N -- Number

M AT – Modification of Attitude Technique

Std – Standard Deviation

Research Question 3: Are youths involved in substance abuse aware of the dangers associated with their health and behavior

Table 2: Shows the difference in post-test mean scores of subjects in experimental groups 1&2 as it relate to awareness of the dangers of substance abuse to their health and behavior.

Variable	Treatment grp	N	Mean Scores	Std
Awareness	One	12	53.5000	17.6198
	Two	12	52.2144	15.4779

Keys:

GRP—Group;

N -- Number

Std – Standard Deviation

Table 2 shows the post- test mean scores of subjects in experimental groups 1 and 2 as it relate to their levels of awareness to the danger of substance abuse to their health and behavior, with group one having a mean score of 53.5000 and group 2 having a mean score of 52.2144 respectively, which implies that there is a difference in the mean scores of subjects in the two groups. However, there is only slight mean score difference of 0.0416 with group one having higher mean score than group two. This means all respondents are aware that substance abuse is dangerous to their health and behavior but lacked ability to control it.

6. DISCUSSION

The result of the study reveals that modification of attitude is a significant therapy for minimizing substance abuse among youths in Borno state. The findings from the locations under study show significant change of behavior after treatment. All subjects were willing to quit substance taking after being subjected to modification of attitude technique even though treatment lasted for a short time. From the findings of the study, it was clear that youth could engage in any behavior under the influence of substances hence the rising increase in criminal activities especially insurgency in the area of study. The pre-test and post-test scores reveal that treatment using modification of attitude technique was positive; attitudes towards substances changed from positive to negative. This implies understanding and willingness to change from negative behaviors associated with substance abuse to positive alternative behaviors.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of subjects both experimental groups. This means modification of attitude technique has effect on substance abuse.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It was recommended that all counselors, social workers, medical personnel, non-governmental agencies, psychiatric doctors and everyone involved in rehabilitation of youths' behavior problems should employ the use of modification of attitude technique/ therapy.
2. Materials/resources for proper implementation of modification of attitude techniques should be provided to all counseling units, remind homes, social workers' offices by the combined efforts of parents, philanthropists, ministries etc to assist counselors and psychologists in doing their works.
3. More research studies is required in this area to ascertain its usefulness in managing substance abuse.

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