The Effectiveness Of A Counseling Program Based On Role-Playing Strategy In Reducing School Violence Among Middle School Students

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Abstract:
This study seeks to evaluate a counseling program's efficacy based on a role-playing approach to lower violent behavior in schools among students. With a sample of 20 students drawn from those who scored highest on the school violence scale, the researcher used a quasi-experimental method. The sample was split into two groups: a control group of ten students and an experimental group of ten students.

The study used a counseling program based on the role-playing method, which had 15 sessions, each 45 minutes long, and a school violence scale. Appropriate statistical techniques were employed to evaluate the hypotheses of the study. The results showed the following:

– In the post-test assessment of school violence, the experimental group scored significantly different from the control group, preferring the experimental group.

– The experimental group mean scores in the post-test and follow-up measures on the school violence scale showed no statistically significant change at α = 0.05.

The study recommended using the counseling program based on role-playing strategies to help reduce school violence levels.

Keywords: Counseling program, role-playing strategy, school violence, middle school.

1- Introduction:

The school is the second most important setting after the home in which a kid prepares for future life and ongoing psychological and social development. It is important for society and for it to carry out its educational purpose properly, hence it has to offer a secure atmosphere. Studies show that a good psychological and educational environment inside the school encourages the development of healthy psychological and social growth as well as the adoption of suitable behavioral patterns. On the other hand, some schools' violence has turned them into dangerous environments where students feel uncertainty and anxiety.

School violence throughout educational institutions in almost all nations has noticeably grown in recent years, which has led to further research on this issue because of its detrimental consequences on people and society at large. A common problem impacting all educational levels, school violence is more prevalent throughout adolescence—coinciding with middle school education. Psychological crises of this developmental period increase aggressive impulses and drive teenagers to violence and revolt against authority.

Disrupting the basic function in teaching and developing students, school violence has grown to be an important concern in educational institutions. It includes a variety of behaviors and activities that disturb society at large and school order particularly. This occurrence has unique features in Algeria. Throughout the 2012–2013 academic year, the Ministry of National Education sounded warnings via several media channels over the severity and spread of school violence across all educational levels. The disturbing numbers shown during the Maghreb Symposium on Youth and Violence in Schools, hosted by the Ministry of National Education in Algeria, indicated that:

4,555 teachers were subjected to violence by students.

-1,942 students experienced violence from teachers and administrative staff.

-17,645 cases of student-on-student violence were recorded. -Additionally, 16 cases of student suicides occurred within less than four months.

The Minister of National Education released an official memorandum (No. 04/14, dated January 2,

2014) called "Field Consultation on School Violence" for the 2014-2015 academic year. Education directors were requested in this instruction to offer a thorough viewpoint on the subject, including noting its symptoms, diagnosing its causes, and evaluating its effects.

Algerian publications called the results "dark reports" falling on the minister's desk after education directors gathered and sent their reports to the appropriate ministry. For example, El Khabar ran a story called "Hallucinogenic Pills and Alcoholic Beverages Are More Present in Classrooms Than Books and Notebooks" stressing a record rise in teacher strikes against students and the rising trend of students verbally and physically attacking their teachers.

Violence affects students' emotional, psychological, and physical well-being in significant ways, therefore producing emotions of sadness, anxiety, violent behavior, and a lack of empathy or care for others (Boutoura, 2001, p. 23).

Many initiatives and plans have been created to help teenage students control and lower the severity of school violence, hence minimizing it. Early intervention is absolutely vital as the united efforts of school officials and teachers may greatly reduce the detrimental effects of violence.

A technique based in group psychotherapy; role-playing is among the most powerful tools in this respect. The method calls for a student from the counseling group performing on stage in front of the instructor, other group members, and extra

observers a real-life event. The student conveys their feelings, responses, relationships, and views about the problem at hand by means of this performance (Al-Safasfa, 2003, p. 189).

A technique often utilized in many educational fields is role-playing, which lets students use it in social events, clubs, and classrooms. Dramatic play, unlike written theater performances, stimulates creativity and develops abilities by not following strict limits. From a child's point of view, drama is usually more interesting and fun than playing designated parts in pre-written plays. Whether by tapping their pens on desks to simulate the sound of rain, using desks to generate crackling or whistling noises to portray the wind, or mimicking tree movement, it lets all students engage (Nimr, 2010)

2- Study Questions:

Based on the earlier stated problems, this paper investigates several facets of school violence and suggests a counseling program using methods of role-playing to help reduce it. The main issue of this paper is assessing how well a role-playing-based counseling program lowers student school violence.

This experimental study was conducted at Lakhdaari Lakhdar Middle School and seeks to answer the following research questions:

-Are there statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in school violence behavior in the post-test measurement?

-Are there statistically significant differences in school violence behavior within the experimental group between the pre-test and post-test measurements?

2-1-Study Hypotheses:

-In the post-test assessment, school violent behavior in the experimental and control groups shows statistically significant differences.
-Statistically significant variations in school violence behavior inside the experimental group exist between the pre-test and post-test data.

2-3- Study Significance:

This study's significance is in its emphasis on lowering aggressive conduct among middle schoolers—a group that needs assistance and intervention to assist them attain psychological and social integration. The study is also significant as its results can provide educational guidance experts and school counselors efficient counseling techniques

depending on role-playing approaches.

The study also helps to provide a systematic counseling approach that can assist to lower student school violence. Its results might motivate future studies to investigate fresh ideas and strategies teachers and counselors could apply to help students resolve conflicts, improve their problem-solving abilities, and direct aggressive impulses into constructive pursuits like social, cultural, artistic, and sports activities, therefore strengthening their emotional balance and social compatibility.

2-4- Study Objectives:

− Design and carry out a counseling program meant to lower school violence among students.
− Build a consistent scale to evaluate and identify violent conduct in schools.
− Investigate the statistical significance of variations on the school violent behavior scale between the experimental and control groups.
− Examine if statistically significant variations in school violent behavior within the experimental group between post-test and follow-up assessments occur.

2-5- Study Scope:

– Human Scope: The study sample included 20 pupils categorized as showing aggressive conduct.
  Geographical Scope: The study took place in Lakhdaari Lakhdar Middle School. Timeframe: The field research was conducted in the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year.

3- Operational Definitions:

3-1- Counseling Program:

Operationally characterized in this study as a systematic program of fifteen counseling sessions, each lasting 45 minutes. The program includes several activities and processes depending on the role-playing approach used just to the experimental group.

3-2- Role-Playing Strategy:

A teaching and learning exercise in which the instructor gives pupils roles unlike their actual life identities. This method encourages participants to think critically, analyze, and investigate solutions

cooperatively by immersing them in a real-world problem-solving situation. This participatory approach places the student at the center and has them interact with the instructor to seek answers to the given issue (Yusuf & Nasser, 2000).

(Al-Laqani & Al-Jamal, 1999) also describe role-playing as a kind of dramatic simulation that promotes group social interaction and value assessment. A youngster using this approach finds an issue, tries to show and examine it from several angles, and then has a conversation with the instructor and classmates to arrive at a solution.

3-3- School Violence:

Any kind of aggressive behavior—verbal, physical, or psychological—that takes place among students, between students and instructors, or within other educational exchanges constitutes school violence. It also covers school rule infractions and vandalism. School violence in this study is operationally quantified by the score a student gets on the violence assessment scale created for this project.

3-4- Middle School Education:

Usually including students aged 12 to 15 years, this is the educational period before high school. From first-year middle school to fourth-year middle school, it encompasses four academic years, hence corresponding with the teenage growth stage.

4- Previous Studies:

Through the researcher's review of previous studies and research related to either or both variables of the study, the following are the most prominent related previous studies:

4-1- Farmawi's Study (2001):

This study sought to determine how developing creative thinking was influenced by employing an educational unit based on two methodologies, storytelling and role-playing. This study employed the experimental approach and the following statistical techniques: arithmetic mean, standard deviation, t-value, its significance, and sequencing. The results of the study corresponded with those of many other studies using storytelling and role-playing to promote creative thinking among kindergarteners. The study verified that certain dramatic games went unplayed for youngsters due to their inexperience with this kind of play (Faramawi, 2001).

4-2- Al-Najjar's 2001 Study:

The study sought to investigate how much a creative acting program may lower hostility in preschoolers. The study sample consisted of 15 preschool children who formed the experimental group. All created by the researcher, the Goodenough-Harris Draw-A-Man Test, an aggressive behavior observation form, and a creative theater software were employed by the researcher. Statistically significant variations in the experimental group before and after the drama program's execution were established by the study, hence proving its efficacy in lowering hostility among preschoolers (Al-Najjar, 2001).

4-3- Suhimi's Study (2002):

This research looked at how well a program lowered aggressive conduct among industrial secondary school pupils. Aged 16 to 17, the sample included 24 students split into two groups of 12. A session assessment form connected to the suggested treatment program, a violence behavior scale, and a logical cognitive-behavioral program mixed with certain psychodrama techniques were all employed by the researcher to lower violent conduct in middle-adolescent pupils in industrial secondary school. Statistically significant variations in the degree of aggressive conduct following program application between the experimental and control groups—in favor of the experimental group—were identified by the study (Al-Suhaimi, 2002).

4-4- Yahya and Abdulaziz's Study (2003):

This study sought to show how well symbolic reinforcement and isolation helped to lower violent behavior in a group of intellectually impaired youngsters. Thirty youngsters between the ages of ten and fourteen made up the research sample; males and girls were evenly distributed. They were split into two experimental groups and a control group. The first experimental group used the isolation technique in the first phase and the symbolic reinforcement approach in the second. The findings

showed that, compared to isolation, symbolic reinforcement was more successful in lowering aggressive behavior (Yahya & Abdelaziz, 2003).

4-5- Al-Agha's Study (2005):

This study sought to investigate how well a suggested psychodrama-based therapy program would reduce certain behavioral issues among middle school children. Twenty-four students made up the study sample, split evenly between experimental and control groups. The study employed the suggested psychodrama program, a behavioral issue scale, and a behavioral problem survey methodology. The results showed statistically significant variations in the severity of behavioral issues between the experimental and control groups following application of the psychodrama program. The experimental group's behavioral issue severity also differed statistically significantly between pre-test and post-test assessments (Al-Agha, 2005).

Based on the findings of previous studies, some indications draw attention to the importance of the study's topic and the advantages resulting from these investigations depending on the results of earlier research. They may be summed up as follows:

− Mostly using the experimental approach and data gathering via pre-test and post-test assessments, the research investigated the influence of role-playing technique in different disciplines and educational levels.
− Previous research on the role-playing technique in lowering classroom violence is few.
− Reviewing earlier research reveals frequent terminology connected to role-playing include drama, acting, simulation, and psychodrama.

6- Methodology and Procedures:

6-3- Study Methodology:

We followed in our study the quasi-experimental approach, as it is suitable for this study, and due to its goal of investigating the effectiveness of a counseling program.

Experimental Group	Pre-Test Application	Guidance Program Application	Post-Test Application	Follow-Up Test
Experimental Group	Pre-test Application	Program Application	Post-test Application	Follow-up Test
Control Group	Pre-test Application	/	Post-test Application	/

6-1-Study Population:

The study population included all students who exhibit violent behaviors towards their peers, themselves, or even towards their teachers, or through the damage they cause to property. This was reviewed from the observation and follow-up records of the school guidance and counseling counselor on one hand, as well as the reports of the institution's administrative team, headed by the principal and the educational advisor. This was also consistent with many students' responses in the school violence scale prepared for this study.

6-2-Study Sample:

The study sample consisted of 20 students, randomly selected from those indicated by the school guidance counselor and the educational advisor as having violent behaviors. They were divided into two groups: an experimental group consisting of 10 students, and a control group consisting of 10 students. The equivalence of the two groups was verified using the (t-test), to examine differences in mean performance at the level of statistical significance in the school violence scale, and Table (1) illustrates this.

Table 1: Results of the (t-test) for mean performance on school violence among students before application to verify equivalence

Group	Count	Mean	St.d	df	T Value (t)	Sig. Level
Experimental	10	5.53	0.36	18	-1.25	0.23
Control	10	46.3	0.47			

The results from Table (1) indicate that there are no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the pre-test measurement of school violence behavior, which proves the equivalence of the two groups. Therefore, the current study was conducted.

6-4- Study Tools:

6-4-1- School Violence Scale:

The school violence scale was developed by referring to educational literature and previous studies, especially (Al-Rashoud, 2006), (Aboud,

1991), (Al-Amaira, 1991), and (Al-Shaqirat & Al-Masry, 2001). It consists of sixty items covering four dimensions: violence towards oneself, violence towards others, violence towards teachers, and violence towards property.

To verify the psychometric properties of the scale, validity and reliability were examined as follows:

A. Validity:

-Virtual Validity: The validity of the school violence scale was verified by presenting it to a them. No items were deleted, but some statements were modified and reworded for clarity. The final version of the scale consisted of (40) items, with no new items added.

-Internal Consistency Validity: The scale's validity was further verified using internal consistency validity, with a pilot study sample of (35) students. The correlation coefficient was calculated between each item's performance and its corresponding total dimension score, ranging between (0.66 - 0.21), and

group of specialized school counseling professors. The number of reviewers was (6) faculty members from Kasdi Merbah University in Ouargla and Hamma Lakhdar University in El Oued. They were asked to provide their opinions on the tool in terms of: the clarity of the statements in measuring what they were intended to measure, their importance, or any relevant comments. The researcher studied the reviewers' comments and suggestions and made modifications agreed upon by more than (75%) of

the correlation coefficients were statistically significant at the ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) level.

6-4-2-Reliability Using Test-Retest and Cronbach's Alpha Methods:

The reliability of the scale was assessed using the (T-Retest) method, where the scale was administered and then re-administered to the pilot study sample after a two-week interval. Table (2) presents the correlation coefficients using the test-retest method and Cronbach's Alpha method.

Table 2: Reliability Coefficients of the School Violence Scale Using Test-Retest and Cronbach's Alpha Methods

Reliability Coefficient	Test-Retest Method	Cronbach's Alpha Method
Self-directed Violence	0.89	0.78
Violence Towards Property	0.81	0.72
Violence Towards Peers	0.87	0.76
Violence Towards Teachers	0.85	0.77
Total Score	0.9	0.81

The results in the above table indicate that the reliability values for the school violence scale using the test-retest method and Cronbach's Alpha were 0.81 and 0.90, respectively. These values are considered acceptable for the current study purposes.

A. Application, Scoring, and Interpretation of the School Violence Scale:

The scale was administered individually, where each student responded to the items by selecting one of five options. The application of the scale took approximately 10 minutes. The scale scores range from 55 to 200, and the interpretation is based on the following three levels:

- (1 - 2.33) indicates a low level of school violence behavior.
- (2.34 - 3.66) indicates a moderate level of school violence behavior.
- (2.67 - 5) indicates a high level of school violence behavior.

6-4-3- The Counseling Program:

School violence is one of the issues that has preoccupied those concerned with education in our country. It can hinder the educational process due to the time and effort required to address it and may also obstruct a student's adjustment in their school environment. Since it is a learned behavior, it can be modified. Given that it is an abnormal behavior, this program was designed to align with the general objectives of education to help students develop in a healthy manner, adapt to their school community, and improve their school environment to benefit from the services provided.

The program considers the following objectives:

- Reducing school violence behavior among students.
- Training violent students in coping skills to handle stressful situations.
- Raising students' awareness of the consequences of school violence behavior.

The program provided therapeutic services to students exhibiting violent behavior to achieve the stated objectives.

– Program Duration: The program is implemented over two months, consisting of 15 sessions, each lasting (45) minutes.

– Program Location: Lakhodari Lakhdar Middle School.

This program was developed based on the understanding that school violence is a learned behavior. Children imitate the behavior of their parents or friends in their environment, and it can be modified, especially during childhood, before it becomes a deep-seated trait or reaches an advanced stage that is difficult to treat.

The program will include the following sessions:

– An introductory session to build a counseling relationship, set expectations and standards, and conduct the pre-measurement.

- A session on adolescence, violent practices, and preparation for psychodrama.
– A session to train participants in self-assertion skills, self-control, and regulation.
– A session to train participants in releasing energy in acceptable ways through relaxation.
– A session to train participants in problem-solving skills.
– A session to train participants in positive interactions with others through mental communication skills (polite listening, persuasion, and mutual understanding).
– A session to teach participants the skill of forgiveness and proactive engagement with others.
– A session to teach participants responsibility and decision-making.
– A session to teach participants role modeling to learn new behaviors.
– A session to reduce violent behavior through storytelling and acting.
– A session to reduce violent behavior using the "mirror strategy."
– A session to teach participants social skills and making friends.
– A session to help participants develop psychological and physical well-being.
– A session to teach participants how to initiate and end conversations with others and avoid problems.
– A concluding session for program evaluation and post-measurement application.

7- Study Results:

-First Question: Is there a statistically significant difference at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the mean scores of the experimental and control groups on the School Violence Behavior Scale after applying the program?

To verify this question, the Mann-Whitney test was used to determine the significance and direction of differences between the experimental group members and the mean scores of the control group in the post-measurement on the Violence Behavior Scale. Table (3) presents the results:

8- Study community and its sample: the study community represents teachers and therefore the sample of the study consisted of (115) teachers (male and female) selected in a random manner

Table 3: Mann-Whitney test results for the significance of differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the mean scores of the control group in the post-measurement on the Violence Behavior Scale

Total Score		Dimension
Control Group	Expérimental Group	Group
10	10	N
3.75		Mean
0.79		St.d
14.25	14.25	Mean Rank
142.5	142.5	Sum of Ranks
-2.84		Z Value
0.05		Sig

The table shows statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups on the School Violence Behavior Scale. The experimental group demonstrated an improvement in student behavior, with a total rank sum of (67.50), compared to the control group, which had a total rank sum of (142.50) and showed no improvement in school violence behavior.

This improvement is attributed to the counseling program based on the role-playing strategy, which helped students acquire various skills such as self-assertion, positive interactions with others, storytelling, modeling, and social-psychological development. The findings partially align with Agha's (2005) study on the role of psychodrama in reducing the severity of certain behavioral problems.

Thus, the variety of techniques used in the program, the nature of student interactions, the

assigned homework, the activities, questions, and learned skills contributed to the improvement observed in the experimental group, whereas the control group remained unchanged.

-Second Question: Between the post-test and follow-up test, is there a statistically significant difference at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the mean scores of the experimental group kids on the School Violence Behavior Scale?

To verify this question, the Wilcoxon test was used to determine the significance and direction   of differences among the experimental group members on the scale. Table (4) presents the results:

Table 4: Results of the Wilcoxon test for the variations between the mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test and follow-up test on the School Violence Behavior Scale

Scale	Measurement		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z Value	Sig.	Sig. Direction
Violence Behavior	Post-test / Follow-up	Positive Ranks	7	6.43	45	1.78	0.05	Not Statistically Sig.
		Negative Ranks	3	3.33	10			
		Ties	0					
		Total	10					

Table (4) shows that there are no statistically significant differences at the ($\alpha = 0.05$) level between the mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test and follow-up test on the School Violence Behavior Scale. This indicates that the students in the experimental group maintained their level of improvement after being monitored for a month.

        The findings of this question partially align with the results of a study conducted by (Schulman, Suran, Stevens, & Kupst, 1979) and with a study by Douglas et al. (2003), which clearly highlight the importance of the counseling program and its role in maintaining reduced school violence behavior among middle school students.

9- Recommendations:

– Using the counseling program to lower the degree of middle school pupils' school violent behavior.

– Employing role-playing strategies, which are considered practical and easy-to-implement methods.

- Encouraging school guidance and counseling advisors to benefit from the current program and apply it to reduce school violence behavior among middle and high school students.

– Directing similar studies to conduct further research aimed at reducing behavioral problems among students across different educational levels.

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