# EFFECTS OF POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT AND SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING COUNSELLING TECHNIQUES ON SULLENNESS AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KADUNA METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

The researcher hereby declare that this Thesis entitled, Effects of Positive Reinforcement and Social Skills Training Counselling Techniques on Sullenness among Senior Secondary School Students in Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria, has been conducted by me in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling The information derived from literatures has been duly acknowledged in the text and in the references provided. No part of this Thesis was ever presented for another degree or diploma in any other Institution or University.

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# CERTIFICATION

This Thesis entitled, Effects of Positive Reinforcement and Social Skills Training Counselling Techniques on Sullenness among SeniorSecondary School Students in Kaduna Metropolis, Nigeria, has been read and approved as meeting the regulation governing the award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Guidance and Counselling of theAhmadu Bello University Zaria and isapproved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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# DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to my dear wife, Comfort Kolo whose prayers, patience and sacrifices in various ways constituted a source of help and strength for me in the completion of this work.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **MFQ** | Mood and Feelings Questionnaire |
| **PR** | Positive Reinforcement |
| **SST** | Social Skills Training |
| **FI** | Fixed Interval schedule |
| **VI** | Variable Interval |
| **FR** | Fixed Ratio |
| **VR** | Variable Ratio |

**OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Positive Reinforcement:** is a counselling technique that uses tangibly /non ±tangibly rewards like verbal praise, clap of hands or material gifts for studentstoexhibit, maintain and increase frequency ofsuch adesired behaviour.

**Social Skills Training**: is a counselling technique that uses effective communication, effective listening, assertiveness, modelling as well as self-control for behaviour modification.

**Sullenness:** This is a behaviour upset in which studentshave feelings of persistent sadness, irritability, resentment and unsociable disposition.

# ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the effects of positive reinforcementand social skills training counselling techniques on sullenness among senior secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis, Nigeria.A quasi ±experimental design of pretest, posttest controlgroup was employed for this study. The population of the study consisted ofone hundred and fifty (150)senior secondary school students who showed symptoms of sullenness drawn from three selected public senior secondary schools in Kaduna metropolis. Purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 30 students (15males and 15 females) with high incidence of sullenness as indicated by their scores on the MFQ checklist.The instrument adopted for the study was Mood and Feelings Questionnaire (MFQ). Whilet-test, one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical methods were used to test the five null hypotheses*

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*positive reinforcement is effective in reducing sullenness among secondary school students (p=0.003), social skills training counselling technique is effective in reducing sullenness among secondary school students (p=0.000), in comparing the two techniques both are effective (p=0.000), differential significant effectiveness did not exist among male and female students exposed to positive reinforcement counselling technique on sullenness (p= 0.241) and social skills training (p =0.391). It was recommended that counsellors, school psychologists, school principals and teachers should be exposed to positive reinforcement and social skills counselling techniques training in re-addressing Sullenness among secondary school students.*

# CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

**1.1 Background to the study**

Sullenness as a behaviour problem is a major concern to educators and the society because of its negative impact on students¶social life and cognitivefunctioning. Educators have described behaviour problems such as Sullennessin students as a major concern in schools over the years, as many teachers feel ill-equipped to assist students who exhibit such behaviours (Ducharme&Shector, 2011).By not addressing behaviour problems such as Sullenness during secondary school days, young people could face a number of adverse challenges during adulthood (Kern, White &Gresham, 2007). Sullenness as described by Fergusson (2014),is synonymous to moody, peevishand unsociabledisposition.

The wide range of symptoms associated with Sullenness such as persistent sadness, discouragement, low self ±esteem, indecisiveness, suicidal impulses among others do impaired on the cognitive capacity of students for full and effectivefunctioning of its victims (Davis, 2010). He further stressed that due to these associated symptom.Sullen behaviours are indicative of underlying insecurities and fears that are harboured within its victims, it is a state of mood disturbance in which the victim has feelings of lowering- mood, resentment, persistent sadness among others(Linus, 2013). He further opined that Sullenness conjure images of a person who is bad ±tempered, unhappy, has deeply ingrained anger, bitterness and feels frustrated and stranded from ways to get their basic needs met. Sullen individuals tend to get into the cycle of negative thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that tend to perpetuate low mood. When sullen

individuals make mistakes or are ignored, they indulge in self- GHIHDW WKRXJKWV VXF

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some worthwhile things and when someone was friendly to them. They focus on negative experience and allows that to become the only way they see the world (Corey, 2013).

Students at adolescent stage may experience sullen signs once in a while due to some biological, psychological, and social shifts that occur in the process of growth and development. Sullenness becomes a concern when five or more of its symptoms persist for two or more weeks with more noticeable changes persisting in students to continue in negative and pessimistic point of view; it does then become a concern.

Ellsworth (2011), opined that an interaction with classroom teachers and educational stakeholders in recent times attest to the prevalence of sullen behaviour among students in the classrooms. The researcher as a teacher/counsellor has also witnessed frustrationsamong teachers cum students where lack of proper management of sullen students, lack of social skills and proper reinforcement strategies were major causes of classroom disruptions.

Linus (2013), asserted that sullen students behave the way they do because they have experienced and often continue to experience some emotional turmoil associated with a

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lessons learnt naturally during childhood. By this assertion it may then imply that sullenness among students cut across gender. Students whose parents are more controlling may likely become closed-off, sullen and irritable in their adolescent life. The anger, confusion, unfairness andfrustrations as well as chumming and roiling feelings which they cannot expressed freely often spill out inform of Sullenness. There is no one cause of Sullenness but combination of factors some of which may be beyond the scope of schools, such factors as grief over the death of loved ones, family factors, poverty; lack of social support, parenting styles which may have

their roots from home serving as triggers for studentV¶ HPRWLRQDO WUDXPD ,W

difficult for teachers to influence such factors alone but can seek the supports of counsellors and behaviour management experts towards minimizingsuch behaviours.

In the works of Massi and Favilla (2000), emotional and behavioural problems are strong predictors of social adjustment deficits which may impede functional interpersonal relationships. It is obvious therefore, that sullenness entails both social and emotional problems that cannot be