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Research Article

Aggression Replacement Training for Conduct Disorder - A Study with Special Reference to Habitual Offenders in Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the significance of Aggression Replacement Training (ART) as an effective intervention program in modifying the Behavior of the offenders. The Aggression Replacement Training is a behavioral intervention for people who exhibit violent or aggressive behavior. Aggressive Behavior may have a variety of consequences, including lower learning achievement, poor social interactions, anxiety, depression, and sometimes even leads to suicidal tendencies. It is a multimodal curriculum that deliberately teaches healthy habits in order to replace antisocial behavior. Experimental research design has been employed for the purpose of the present study. Standardized instruments of (Gibbs, Barriga & Potter, 2001) and (Buss & Perry, 1992) has been utilized in the present study for the assessment of the variables in detail. A total of 30 samples were taken from the Tirunelveli district and used in the study. It can be observed from the results of the study that, ART to a vast extent positively influences the behavior change among the habitual offenders.

Keywords: Conduct Disorder (CD), Aggression Replacement Training (ART), Aggressive Behavior, Offenders and Intervention.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, people have witnessed and experienced both good and bad Behaviors from their surroundings. Society teaches everyone that the safety and comfort comes through good ones and also teaches how to save themselves from the bad ones. As the saying goes that "The coin has two sides", even the bad ones have the two sides. Some can be treated and guided in order to see the light through the darkness. A person is treated as bad by judging his or her

personality as they tend to show aggressive and violent behavior towards others. But we cannot shun them from the society because they are also part of it. Not everyone likes to display their personality in an unapproachable manner, their situation and surrounding influences them to act in an aggressive way. Children with offensive behavior can be provided proper treatment and guidance in order to live a peaceful life in the society.

Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is an intervention for those who lack the required social behavior. It is a social skills training program which aims to bring out the desired social Behavior of the offenders by teaching and guiding them in an apt way. There are multiple types of anti-social behavior. Few examples of anti-social behaviors are as follows: crime, drug misuse, childhood personality disorders, and the list go on. The term Conduct Disorder (CD) refers to a recurrent pattern of antisocial behavior that enables the individual to consistently violate social rules and engage in aggressive behavior that annoys others.

Anti-social Behaviors of the children have gained a lot of attention from the people. As a result, many programs have been initiated with the primary purpose of assisting people to overcome children from their aggressive behavior. Aggression Replacement Training (ART) mainly targets offenders who lack social skills. Children's condition and surroundings determine their behavior; hence, it enlightens the individual to overcome from their anti-social behavior.

ART program involves the moral reasoning and behavioral methods designed in a systematic manner in order to bring out the program's benefit. This structured intervention program is extensively used by therapists.

The primary components of ART are divided into three parts – i. Pro social behavior (behavioral component) ii. Anger Management (emotional component) iii. Moral Reasoning (cognitive component). The first component pro-social behavior is basically related to the social skills. The second component anger management training is designed to aid offenders in reducing their anger levels and to provide self-control. Finally the third component is moral reasoning training which seeks to develop individual's moral reasoning capacity in order to make more matured decisions in social situations. Offenders are actively encouraged to share their ideas during decision-making sessions, which encourage them to make these types of decisions.

This approach appears to be beneficial because it is extensively used to assist offenders in reducing their antisocial behavior. At the same time this also requires quality time, effort, financial commitment on the part of communities, professionals, families and participants.

Over the last three decades of research, it has been demonstrated that ART results in showing improvement in social Behavior and moral judgment as well as reductions in anti-social Behavior. This study examined the efficacy of combining two elements, a skill method and an anger management method, separately and in combination, for offenders who struggle with anger management issues. Both the strategies, whether it is used independently or in combination, they

Aggression Replacement Training for Conduct Disorder - A Study with Special Reference to Habitual Offenders in Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India

gave out the similar results that there is improved desirable behaviors and decreased level of anger.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Ensafdaran et al. (2019) highlighted ART intervention which guides the children who are at risk, and helps them to overcome frustration, increase coping skills and rational thinking. It is stated that for chronically aggressive children, this program is highly beneficial. The majority of research showed that ART has a favorable impact on violence and other behaviors such as stress management and rational thinking. As there were many trials conducted, they focused on limited samples and used control group to measure the effectiveness and the outcome of the program.

Feindler et al. (2016) examined that aggression replacement training (ART) is well regarded as one of the only viable programs for violent criminals. The results and technical assessments were accompanied by a thorough ART program test through a set of group homes, utilizing structured psychological tests. Problems with treatment fidelity and conformity to the ART protocol adversely affected the outcomes.

Nugent and Ely (2010) in their work focused on offender's antisocial Behavior. The ART is a social intervention which enables to improve the social Behavior of the offenders. But this study did not provide a valid data as to, how far it influences the patterns of antisocial Behavior of offenders in short term residential programs. Many recommendations are suggested for future studies in order to provide for more sustainable proof that the ART is possible and useful in order to treat the anti-social behavior among the offenders.

Holmqvist et al. (2009) involved a total of 57 teenagers aged 16 to 19 in the study. Weighted indexes of sentences and police suspicion records were used to assess the outcome. The findings indicate that there are no significant variations between the treatment models. However, an interactive trend was observed to indicate that even teenagers with lower sense of shame had phenomenal positive change at ART schools.

Hatcher et al. (2008) assessed the aggression replacement training program between the English and Welsh offenders. This experiment was between an experimental group and a reference group by keeping their crimes as base. The experimental group is made up of former violent offenders who had been assigned to the program by the rehabilitation officers. The reference group consists of members who were drawn from the people who had been convicted for crimes and received a punishment but they are not enrolled in the program. The results were reviewed from the methods namely "measurement system purpose" and "treatment received". It analyses the completers and non-completers in this program. Hence, it draws out the conclusion that the non-completers were more likely to do the crimes than the completed ones.

It is clearly evident from thorough scrutiny of the available reviews that many studies have been conducted to analyze anger management of children; however efforts or research has not been

conducted to assist the offenders in the age group of 13 – 18 years to reduce or manage their anger and to make them meaningful citizens of the society.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study intends to examine the behavioral problem of habitual offenders. Additionally, this also looks at the changes in indicators and risk variables that occur before and after the intervention program is implemented.

Objectives

1. To assess the antisocial personality disorder prevalent among the habitual offenders.
2. To study the impact of Aggression Replacement Training on the possible antisocial behavior.

Hypothesis

H_{a1}: There will be a significant difference in offender's conduct disorder before and after intervention.

H_{a2}: There will be a significant difference in offender's aggressive behavior before and after Aggression Replacement Training.

H_{a3}: There is a significant difference between Gender and Conduct Disorder.

H_{a4}: There is a significant difference between Gender and Aggression Replacement Training.

Participants

It is the habitual offenders in the District of Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu that are being interviewed for this study. A total of 30 habitual offenders in the age group of 13 to 18 were chosen to participate in the study.

Materials

The following are the tools that were used to examine the data:

How I think Questionnaire (Gibbs, Barriga & Potter, 2001)

Gibbs, Barriga, and Potter were the first to establish the scale, which was in the year of 2001. It was used to determine the Conduct Disorder of offender's. It is a tool that is used to identify persons who are suffering from distorted thinking. There are four categories of conduct disorders that can be assessed in habitual offenders, according to the questionnaire. These are self-centeredness, blaming others, mislabeling, and presuming the worst.

The How I Think Questionnaire was used to determine the level of conduct disorder among offenders (Gibbs, Barriga & Potter, 2001). It is made up of 54 items and is used to determine whether or not a person has distorted thinking patterns.

Aggression Replacement Training for Conduct Disorder - A Study with Special Reference to Habitual Offenders in Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India

Reliability Validity

The internal consistency of a questionnaire used to measure the conduct disorder of habitual offenders was reported to have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.981, according to the findings. Cronbach's coefficients of reliability are greater than 0.7 for each question, which is satisfactory and suggests extremely good reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

Buss and Perry's Aggression Scale for Habitual offenders

Buss-Perry Aggression scale has been developed in order to evaluate the self-reported acts of aggression and to provide an insight into acts of hostility, anger or violence. Anti-social behavior and low self-assurance are connected with aggression. The Aggression Scale may prove beneficial for evaluating treatments and performing future research on violence preventive measures. In addition to physical and verbal aggression, psychological, mental, and emotional animosity can also present themselves in a number of different ways.

Reliability Validity

The Cronbach's alpha score for the survey questions that are used to assess the aggressive Behavior of habitual offenders was 0.979, which indicates that the questionnaire was reliable. For each question, Cronbach's reliability coefficients are more than 0.7, showing very good reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

Statistical tools used in the study

In order to assess the data, the researcher performed a pre-test and post-test as well as MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance).

4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Mean score of Conduct Disorder of Offenders Before and After the Intervention.

H_{a1}: There will be a significant difference in offender's conduct disorder before and after the intervention.

Table 4.1

Changes in conduct disorder of the offenders before and after the intervention.

Significant at 5% level

From the table 4.1, it is inferred that the mean scores of Post-test (116.17) was less than Pre-test

Variable	Pre-test (n=30)		Post-test (n=30)		t-value	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Conduct disorder of Habitual Offenders	202.57	47.190	116.17	51.060	7.744	.000

(202.57) results with respect to Conduct Disorder. The P value (.000) is statistically significant at 5% level. Hence, the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

4.2 Mean score of Pre-test and Post-test of Habitual Offenders with respect to Aggression Replacement Training.

H_{a2}: There will be a significant difference in offender's aggressive behavior before and after Aggression Replacement Training.

Table 4.2

Changes in aggressive behavior of the offenders followed by Aggression Replacement Training.

Variable	Pre-test(n=30)		Post-test(n=30)		t-value	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Aggressive Behavior of Habitual Offenders	118.67	21.61	56.10	28.860	9.397	.000

Significant at 5% level

From the table 4.2, it is inferred that the mean scores of the Post- test (56.10) was less than pre test (118.67) results with respect to Aggression replacement training. The P value (.000) is statistically significant at 5% level. Hence the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H_{a3}: There is a significant difference between Gender and Conduct Disorder.

Table 4.3

Multivariate Analysis of Variance of the offender's Gender and Conduct Disorder.

Dependent variable	Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Conduct Disorder	Between groups	2	9628.58	4814.29	2.540	.098
	Within groups	27	51176.08	1895.41		

Aggression Replacement Training for Conduct Disorder - A Study with Special Reference to Habitual Offenders in Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India

	Total	29	60804.66			
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***p>0.05**

There was a statistically significant effect in the Gender of offender and Conduct Disorder ($F(2,27) = 2.540, p > 0.05$; Wilk's Lambda = .719; partial eta squared = .152), and therefore the alternate hypothesis stating that the offender's Conduct Disorder will be influenced by Gender is rejected.

H_{a4}: There is a significant difference between Gender and Aggression Replacement Training.

Table 4.4

Multivariate Analysis of Variance of the offender's Gender and Aggression Replacement Training.

Dependent variable	Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Aggression Replacement Training	Between groups	2	216.05	108.02	.144	.866
	Within groups	27	20230.91	749.29		
	Total	29	20446.96			

***p>0.05**

There was a statistically significant effect in the Gender of offender and Aggression Replacement Training ($F(2,27) = .144, p > 0.05$; Wilk's Lambda = .719; partial eta squared = .152) and therefore the alternate hypothesis stating that the offender's Aggression Replacement Training will be influenced by Gender is rejected.

5. CONCLUSION

Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is a behavioral intervention which focuses on individual's thoughts, emotions and Behaviors. Enough points have been presented to show that it produces desirable behavior in the case of offenders. This intervention makes the offenders to see their positive side of the life in the society. Habitual offenders should be subjected to this intervention which will improve their social skills and anger management ability.

In terms of creating social behaviors and lowering aggressive and violating behaviors, Aggression Replacement Training (ART) should be considered as an effective intervention for offenders. It should be able to describe what the training program is trying to achieve or persuade the offenders to do in terms of anti-social behavior. It will also be necessary to check whether the participants lack social skills, ability to control anger, moral judgment or not, because these characteristics have been showed as mediators. This program should be implemented efficiently in order to provide fruitful results that will, in turn, improve our society. Finally it has been demonstrated that ART would be successful in reducing the aggressive Behavior of offenders.

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Aggression Replacement Training for Conduct Disorder - A Study with Special Reference to Habitual Offenders in Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India

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