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Abstract- The present study examined the impact of cognitive behavioral group counseling in boosting self-esteem among recidivists. The study was conducted at Sodo and Arba Minch prisons, Ethiopia. This quasi-experimental study used a pre and post-test research design with a control group. During the first stage, the researcher identified recidivists from both prisons. The result revealed that there were 81 and 75 recidivists at Sodo and Arba Minch prisons respectively. All recidivists took the Rosenberg self-esteem scale in order to screen out those who have low self-esteem. Out of these, 21 recidivists of Sodo prison and 24 recidivists of Arba Minch prison were found with low self-esteem. As a result, 21 recidivists of Sodo prison with low self-esteem were assigned into an experimental group and 24 recidivists of Arba Minch prison with low self-esteem were assigned into a control group. Rosenberg Self-esteem scale was used for measuring self-esteem. Participants in the experimental group received group counseling for eight weeks, one day per week, for an hour per session with a total of 8 sessions.

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The Impact of Cognitive Behavioral Group Counseling in Boosting Self-Esteem among Recidivists

Behailu Beshir[α] & Bereket Merkine[σ]

Abstract- The present study examined the impact of cognitive behavioral group counseling in boosting self-esteem among recidivists. The study was conducted at Sodo and Arba Minch prisons, Ethiopia. This quasi-experimental study used a pre and post-test research design with a control group. During the first stage, the researcher identified recidivists from both prisons. The result revealed that there were 81 and 75 recidivists at Sodo and Arba Minch prisons respectively. All recidivists took the Rosenberg self-esteem scale in order to screen out those who have low self-esteem. Out of these, 21 recidivists of Sodo prison and 24 recidivists of Arba Minch prison were found with low self-esteem. As a result, 21 recidivists of Sodo prison with low self-esteem were assigned into an experimental group and 24 recidivists of Arba Minch prison with low self-esteem were assigned into a control group. Rosenberg Self-esteem scale was used for measuring self-esteem. Participants in the experimental group received group counseling for eight weeks, one day per week, for an hour per session with a total of 8 sessions. Results of paired and independent t-tests indicated that, after treatment, participants engaged in experimental group showed statistically significant increase in the level of self-esteem (p=0.00). This study concludes that cognitive behavioral group counseling is a good therapy for boosting self-esteem among recidivists.

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I. Introduction

Rates of criminal recidivism are reported to be as high as 50% in many jurisdictions, and, unlike recorded crime rates in the general population, have not declined in recent years. (Ministry of justice, 2012) Recidivism is a broad term that refers to relapse of criminal behavior, which can include a range of outcomes, including rearrest, reconviction, and reimprisonment. A number of studies have tried to identify factors that influence repeat offending rates within and between countries, (Fazel S and Yu R, 2011; Hanson RK and Morton-Bourgon KE., 2005) but these studies are hampered by problems with sample selection, definitions of what constitutes recidivism, and the length of follow-up.

Self-esteem has been defined as the "conviction that one is competent to live and worthy of living" (Branden, 1969; p.110) and is a term used to reflect a person's overall evaluation or appraisal of his or her own worth. It can be seen as a schema, in that it is a broad, pervasive theme or pattern, comprised of memories, emotions, cognitions and bodily sensations regarding oneself and one's relationships with others, developed during childhood or adolescence and is elaborated throughout one's lifetime (Young, Klosko, & Weishaar, 2003).

Prior studies demonstrate the importance of examining self-esteem among forensic samples. For example, positive self-esteem was found to significantly associate with recidivism (Boduszek *et al*. 2013b). Negative self-esteem, on the other hand, was a significant predictor of the cognitive centrality dimension of criminal social identity (Boduszek, Adamson, Shevlin, Mallett, and Hyland 2013a). Low levels of self-esteem in general were related to a range of violent offending behavior, including interpersonal attacks (Sutherland and Shepherd 2002), sexual assaults (Shine, McCloskey, and Newton 2002), and partner violence (Lewis, Travea, and Fremouw 2002).

Cognitive behavioral approaches for the inmates have received empirical support for the effectiveness in reducing behavioral problems and improved coping in diverse correctional populations including offenders, substance abusers, sex offenders and juvenile offenders (Reilly & Shopshire, 2000; Ireland, 2004; Milkman & Wanberg, 2007; Moster, Wnuk, & Jeglic, 2008; Hammer, 2010).

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Recidivism has long been major topics of interest for criminologists and the general public but the issue of self-esteem not well addressed. Although various treatment programmers and activities were being implemented to rehabilitate recidivists, however cognitive behavioral group counseling that emphasized on self-esteem is not yet fully implemented in Ethiopian prisons. In this article, the researcher identified recidivists with low self-esteem and examines the impact of cognitive behavioral group counseling in boosting self-esteem among recidivists.

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II. Methods

a) Research design

The present study employed quasi experimental research design (pre and post-test with a control group) to assess the impact of cognitive behavioral group counseling in boosting self-esteem among recidivists. Paired t-test and independent t-test were used to analyze the data. Among the variables in the study, self-esteem was considered as the dependent variable while cognitive behavioral group counseling as independent variable.

b) Population

The participants for the present study were selected among recidivists from two prisons in Ethiopia. These are Sodo and Arba Minch prisons. Sodo is a town and administrative center of Wolaita zone in South-Central Ethiopia. Arba Minch is a town and administrative center of Gamo zone in Southern Ethiopia. Wolaita zone is bordered on the South by Gamo zone. Basically, 1404 prisoners were located in Sodo prison institution. The data base of the institution further shows that there were 81 recidivists in Sodo prison. Out of this, 21(15 male and 6 female) recidivist with history of low self-esteem were assigned into experimental group. On the other hand, Arba Minch prison had 75 recidivists. Out of this, 24 (17 male and 7 female) recidivists had low self-esteem. This is considered as control group.

c) Instruments

The RSE (Rosenberg, 1965, 1989) is one of the most frequently used self-rating instruments for evaluating a person's self-esteem, and has high internal reliability. The instrument measures a positive or negative global self concept. The scale includes 10 items and the respondent is asked to answer every statement and select the most suitable answer from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree).

d) Procedure

During the first stage, the administrative permission and ethical clearance from the prison authority was obtained. This researcher selected prisoners that match the purpose of the present research from the data base in the institution. Having done this, date is appointed to make the first contact with the participants of the research. Participants were not asked for their names or any other personal information to reduce the chance of biased responses. Written and signed consent from the participants were obtained prior to their participation in the said research study.

In order to proceed, firstly, the researcher identified the total number of recidivists located at Sodo and Arba Minch prisons. According to the data base of Sodo Prison, currently there were 81 recidivists whereas; Arba Minch prison had 75 recidivists. A self-esteem scale of Rosenberg was administrated to all recidivists in both prisons. 21 were found to have a low self-esteem at Sodo prison and 24 were found to have a low self-esteem at Arba Minch prison. Therefore, the researcher assigned 21 recidivists of Sodo prison with low self-esteem into experimental group and 24 recidivists of Arba Minch prison with low self-esteem into control group.

Before the treatment begins, participants were asked for their permission to complete the self-report questionnaire for Rosenberg's self-esteem inventory scale. The result was kept confidential and opened only after post-test evaluation. The researcher conducted the group counseling sessions. The interventions were based on Cognitive Behavioral Group Counseling (CBT) model. Duration of the intervention was for 8 weeks, 1 session per week.

Immediately after group counseling, the questionnaire booklet was given to each participant and post-test was administered and scored by using the same tool. SPSS version 20 was used for data analysis. Paired t-test and independent t-test were used to reveal the effects of group counseling in boosting self-esteem among recidivists at Sodo and Arbaminch prisons. P-value less than 0.05 considered significant.

At the end of the treatment, participants were thanked for their participation in the research practice. They were also informed that the counselor is ready to help participants in the study for any difficulty that might happen in the future.

e) Research Hypothesis

This study tested the following research hypothesis:

- There will be statistically significant difference in the self-esteem of experimental group, which results due to the treatment effect.

f) General Objective

The general objective of this study is to find out whether cognitive Behavioral Group Therapy brings significant change in boosting recidivist's self-esteem.

g) Results

The major purpose of the present study was to examine the impact of cognitive behavioral group counseling in boosting self-esteem among recidivists. This study included 21(15 male and 6 female) recidivists in experimental group and 24 (17 male and 7 female) in control group. There was no drop out in the treatment group. Totally, the treatment group received 8 hours of treatment.

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Table 1: Paired t-test of Rosenberg self-esteem score in the pre and post-test in the control group (Arba Minch prison)

Variable	Group	Test	Mean	N	SD	t-value	P-value
Self-esteem	Arba Minch	Pre-test	6.92	24	4.75	0.15	0.87
		Post-test	7.00	24	3.48		

The above table indicate that there is no statistically significant mean difference between the two mean scores of self-esteem (P=0.87) of control groups before and after group counseling.

Table 2: Paired t-test of Rosenberg self-esteem score in the pre and post-test in the experimental group (Sodo prison)

Variable	Group	Test	Mean	N	SD	t-value	P-value
Self-esteem	Sodo	Pre-test	7.85	21	3.95	8.06	0.00
		Post-test	21.52	21	6.49		

As shown in table 2, there is statistically significant mean difference between the two mean scores of self-esteem (P=0.00) of experimental groups before and after group counseling. It is believed by the researcher to have been so due to the treatment effect and not by chance.

Table 3: Independent t-test of Rosenberg self-esteem score in the post-test of both experimental and control groups

Variable	Group	Test	Mean	N	SD	t-value	P-value
Self-esteem	Sodo	Post-test	21.52	21	6.49	9.51	0.00
	Arba Minch		7.00	24	3.48		

In the above table, the t-value 9.51 for the mean difference in self-esteem score between the recidivists at Sodo and Arba Minch prisons after group counseling were statistically significant (P=0.00). The mean self-esteem score of recidivists of Sodo and Arba Minch prisons were 21.52 and 7.00 respectively. It reveals that self-esteem of the recidivists at Sodo prison reduced significantly when compared to recidivists of Arba Minch prison. Hence, it ensures that cognitive behavioral group counseling make an impact in boosting self-esteem.

III. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of cognitive behavioral group counseling in boosting self-esteem among recidivists. The results of the present study showed that there is significant difference in self-esteem score observed after receiving group counseling. This finding is therefore consistent with many other researches conducted elsewhere. For instance, the relationship of self-esteem to crime and violence is particularly noticeable among those individuals who engage in repeated criminal activities. A study of those individuals who were identified as persistent recidivists in criminal activities found that they had the common characteristics of general alienation from others, low self-esteem and confidence, and considerable hostility and defiance of moral norms. On the other hand, some researchers have argued that interventions designed to raise self-esteem may produce little tangible benefit and may even lead to harmful and unintended consequences (e.g., Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996). Accordingly, Baumeister et al. (2003) called for further research on the consequences of self-esteem, lamenting the lack of studies that used multiple methods, longitudinal designs, large representative samples, and appropriate controls to test the effects of low self-esteem.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis discussed above, one can conclude that cognitive behavioral group counseling is effective in boosting self-esteem among recidivists. The findings also can serve as a stepping-stone for further future studies.

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