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Therapeutic Painting and Sexual Violence Expressed by Students in Selected Secondary Schools in Bundibugyo District in Uganda

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Violence,
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Sexual violence has often caused distress to many people, and a lot has been written proposing solutions to this vice. Restoring hope among people who have been affected by sexual violence in Secondary schools in Bundibugyo District requires concerted effort and adopting ways that help to relieve the affected people of stress resulting from their experience with sexual violence. The current study focused on how therapeutic painting can be utilised to describe in detail lived experiences relating to ever-increasing sexual violence in secondary schools in the Bundibugyo district. Despite the various forms of violence that affect secondary school students, sexual violence seems to be a vice that greatly affects school children, and young children are always shy to verbally express how they are affected. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between Visual art therapy and sexual violence expression by students in selected Secondary Schools in Bundibugyo District. The following objective guided the study: To examine the statistical relationship between therapeutic painting and sexual violence expression by students in selected Secondary Schools in Bundibugyo District. 400 S2 students participated in this study, these included; Semuriki High School-Izahura-163, Bukonjo Seed School-17, Bundikahungu Seed school-75, St Mary's Simbya Secondary School-145. Methodology entailed methods such as in-session semi-structured interviews, observation methods, and focus group discussion. An explanatory sequential design was adopted in this study. The study established that there was a statistically significant difference in means; thus, there was a relationship between therapeutic painting and sexual violence expressed by students in selected Secondary Schools in Bundibugyo District ($z = -6.736$, $p < 0.0001$). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings led to the conclusion that therapeutic painting intervention helped to improve the expression of sexual violence among victims, helped them to gain relaxation, lost hope, and lessened the anxiety that had resulted from their experience with sexual violence.

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence against children in schools is recognised both nationally and internationally as a serious human right, health, and child protection concern. Burton and Leoschut, (2013) assert that most sexual violence occurs when educators fail to manage and control class or when the class is left without supervision.

Sexual violence causes emotional, physical, and psychological harm, which in most cases makes students uncomfortable and unable to concentrate on their studies. Individuals in homes, institutions of learning, prisons, and other areas where people are found, sexual violence has been the order of the day. Students in secondary schools of Bundibugyo have also experienced sexual violence. The author explicates that failure by students to find a reliable form of communication to articulate what cannot be articulated verbally and therapy to help students gain relief from sexual violence, restore hope, and lost self-esteem has contributed to worsening the sexual violence among students in secondary schools in Bundibugyo District. Shelly (2022) observed that Art therapy, a nonverbal modality has been shown to reduce symptoms and improve overall self-concept and psychological wellbeing in trauma survivors across the lifespan. The students who are affected by sexual violence are always hesitant to reveal to their teachers and fellow students what they go through, and this usually worsens their situation, resulting in emotional discomfort, which in some cases has led to students committing suicide. Malchiodi, (2014) argued

that expressive modality is more easily tolerated than verbalization because children who have been severely traumatized may repeat experiences through Visual Art. The students manifest stress symptoms such as anxiety, frustration, impaired performance, loss of hope, and ruptured interpersonal relationships at school, which affect the quality of education for students.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study was informed by John Dewey's (Mitias, 1992) Expression theory, which states that the artwork is an intentional object whose expressive qualities relate to feelings felt and intended for expression, which leads him to fresh insight and ways for solving the problem he is working on. The theory articulates how students who are grappling with sexual violence can visually express their feelings, leading them to externalising the effects of sexual violence and helping students who are victims of violence to become less anxious and less stressed, thus becoming hopeful.

LITERATURE

Leeb (2008) defines sexual violence as any sexual act that is perpetrated against someone is will and encompasses a range of offences, including a completed non-consensual sex act such as rape, attempted non-consensual sex act, abusive sexual contact (Like unwanted touching) and non-contact sexual abuse, threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism, verbal sexual harassment). Burton and Leoschut (2013) assert that most sexual violence occurs when educators fail to manage

and control class or when the class is left without supervision. Burton and Leoschut (2013) did not give a hint on how the victims of violence would gain a therapy that could help them to express themselves so as to externalize anxiety, stress, and loss of confidence that result from students' experiences with sexual violence. Because of that, the researcher noted that students who are victims of violence would continue having stress, and anxiety which would even lead to death. Engagement in visual art therapeutic painting among secondary school students in Bundibugyo District worked not only as therapy but also helped them articulate and externalize anxiety, stress, and loss of confidence that resulted from students' experiences of sexual violence.

In trying to address sexual violence using visual art therapy, Coiner and Kim (2011) indicated that the effects of creative art therapy include a positive mood, a sense of confidence and self-efficacy, and, above all, lessened anxiety. Coiner and Kim's (2011) studies hardly utilized therapeutic painting as an expressive channel for sexual violence. This is in addition to neglecting the use of visual art therapy on secondary school students as a way of lessening anxiety, bringing back lost hope and comfort, and lessening the stress that resulted from secondary school children's encounters with sexual violence. The researcher, in this study made a difference when he used visual art therapy to enable victims of sexual violence in secondary schools to sing their 'song' and also get respite from negative mood, hopelessness, self-denial, emotional instability, loss of hope which result from their experience of sexual violence.

Kost (2019) asserted that historically, visual art served as an aesthetic practice and was linked to personal growth, self-understanding empowerment, and healing. Kost (2019) left a gap since their research is not focused on secondary school children, and visual art therapeutic painting and expression of sexual violence had been skipped leading to escalation of sexual violence among secondary school students.

In support of Kost (2019) and Lenesch (2013) observe that visual art is a friendly language, unlike relying on adult authoritative words. The investigator to some extent concurs with Linesch (2013) but notes that his study is not specific on the kind of therapy that is most suitable for Secondary school students who are victims of violence. In addition to being used to depict violence against Secondary school students in secondary schools, the current study went the extra mile and utilized visual art therapeutic painting to provide relaxation from anxiety, emotional discomfort, stress, and other miseries that result from exposure to sexual violence.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

An explanatory sequential design was adopted in this study. Creswell and Clark (2011) refer to explanatory Sequential design as a type of research design that involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data that was followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data.

In this design, the researcher used explanatory-sequential design because the researcher was interested in following up the quantitative results with qualitative data; thus, the qualitative data was used in the subsequent interpretation and clarification of the results from the quantitative data analysis. A mixed research approach was adopted. The researcher collected, analysed, and integrated both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. The mixed methods approach was engaged in this study because it helped to ensure that the limitations of the quantitative method were balanced by qualitative methods. By using mixed methods, the researcher was able to understand inconsistencies between quantitative results and qualitative findings.

Population

Population was defined by Burns (1997) as the total number of potential units for observation, or an entire group of people, objects, or events having at least one variable. Only senior two secondary school students were selected because it is a transition stage from childhood to

adolescence. At this stage, adolescents are faced with many challenges that are linked to violence in addition to lacking skills of expression; therefore, the researcher also wanted to help them be able to properly express inner messages in their brain using symbols, colours, and any other material.

Sampling Strategy

Simple random sampling was used to select senior two secondary school students in Bundibugyo District. The researcher used simple random sampling because it is easy to use when extracting a research sample from a larger population. Four secondary schools were purposively selected because they lie almost on the border of Congo and Uganda and, therefore, have had more experience with war and other immoralities associated with violence.

Methods of Data Collection

A semi-structured interview was used to collect data in a wide variety of research designs and is mostly associated with the collection of qualitative data when the interest is in people's experiences, behaviour, and understanding. The observation method was used in experiments in which both control and experimental groups of respondents were chosen from sample secondary

school students who were pretested so as to measure the dependent variable before intervention in experimental groups and after. The observation method was used with the aid of an artistic expression observation score tool for recording the observed expressions or indicators that were exhibited during art activities. The focus group discussion method is a form of data collection method that involves gathering information from people of similar backgrounds to discuss a specific topic of interest. The researcher introduced an intervention to the experimental group, whose members were selected using a simple random sampling method and used focus group discussion on both experimental and control groups in order to obtain detailed information about personal and group feelings, perceptions, and opinions of secondary school students in regard to visual art therapeutic expression of physical, sexual, and emotional violence expressed.

Validity of Data Collection Instruments

The instrument was judged to be valid if the Content Validity Index (CVI) was higher than the recommended value of 0.70. In this research, the content validity index of the instruments was 0.75, 0.825, 0.7 above 0.70, as indicated in the table below; therefore, it was valid.

Table 1: Validity test results

ITEMS	Number of items rated as relevant	Content Validity Index
Therapeutic Drawing	30	0.75
Therapeutic Painting	32	0.825
Therapeutic Modelling	28	0.7

Quantitative Data Analysis

A Wilcoxon signed rank test was performed to determine if there was a statistically significant

difference in the mean of the therapeutic painting and expression of sexual violence before and after students received visual art therapeutic treatment. A total of 60 students were used in the analysis.

Table 2: Wilcoxon signed-rank test

Sign	obs	sum ranks	expected
Positive	0	0	914.5
Negative	59	1829	914.5
Zero	1	1	1
All	60	1830	1830
Unadjusted variance	18452.5		
Adjustment for ties	-18		
Adjustment for zeros	-0.25		
Adjusted variance	18434.25		
$z = -6.736$			
$\text{Prob} > z = 0.0000$			

Ho: There is no relationship between therapeutic painting and sexual violence ($H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$).

Ha: There is a relationship between therapeutic painting and sexual violence ($H_a: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$).

PRESENTATION OF QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The findings of the study revealed that in the control group post-test in *Table 3*, 9 participants scored 2, which is 15% of the participants who used the position of images or figures, 16 participants scored 3, which is 27% of the total number of participants used the position of images or figures in drawing expressing sexual violence. 26 participants in score 4, which is 43% of the total number of participants, used the position of images or figures in paintings expressing sexual violence. 9 participants in score 5, which is 15% of the total number of participants, used the position of images or figures in paintings expressing sexual violence.

In the Experimental group post-test in *Table 3*, after the introduction of the intervention, 9 (15%) participants out of the total number of 60 participants in rate 2 used the position of images or figures in therapeutic painting expressing sexual violence. 25 (42%) participants scored in rate 3 out of the total number of 60 participants who used the position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through therapeutic painting, 23(38%) participants in score 4 out of the total number of 60 participants who used the position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through therapeutic painting whereas 3 participants in score 5(5%) out of the total number of participants used the position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through therapeutic painting.

Whereas, in the Experimental group pre-test in *Table 4*, 37(62%) participants scored 1 out of the participants used the position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through painting. 21(35%) participants in score 2 out of the total number of participants used the position of images or figures in drawing expressing sexual violence, whereas 2(3%) participants in score 3 out of the 60 total participants used the position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through painting. Since, the post-test experimental group in *table 3* show that, 25(42%) participants scored in the third highest rate 3 out of the total number of 60 participants who used position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through therapeutic painting and 23(38%) participants scored in the second highest rate 4 out of 60 total number of participants who used position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through therapeutic painting, compared to 37(62%) participants who scored in the lowest rate 1 out of the 60 participants who used position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through painting and 21(35%) participants in the second lowest rate 2 out of the total number of participants used position of images or figures in painting expressing sexual violence, it shows that introduction of the intervention led to improved artistic expression of sexual violence through therapeutic painting using position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence among the experimental group.

Table 3: Post-test comparison of control and experimental groups on the position of images or figures used in therapeutic painting expressing sexual violence

Indicator	1-Post-Test Cont			2-Post-test Exp		
	Rate	Number	%	Rate	No. of StD	%
Position of images or figures	1	-	-	1	-	-
	2	09	15	2	09	15
	3	16	27	3	25	42
	4	26	43	4	23	38
	5	09	15	5	03	05

Table 4: Pretest comparison of control and experimental groups on the position of images or figures used in therapeutic painting expressing sexual violence

Indicator	1-Pre-Test Cont			2-Pretest Exp		
	Rate	Number	%	Rate	No. of StD	%
Position of images or figures	1	30	50	1	37	62
	2	30	50	2	21	35
	3	-	-	3	02	03
	4	-	-	4	-	-
	5	-	-	5	-	-

Experimental Group

Statistical Methods

Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was performed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the mean of the position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through therapeutic painting before and after students

received a therapeutic painting treatment. A total of 60 students were used in the analysis. The test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in means; therefore, there is a relationship between therapeutic painting using the position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence expressed by students in selected Secondary Schools in Bundibugyo District ($z = -6.736, p < 0.0001$).

Table 5: Wilcoxon signed-rank test

Sign	obs	sum ranks	expected
Positive	0	0	914.5
Negative	59	1829	914.5
Zero	0	0	0
All	60	1830	1830
Adjusted variance	18434.25		
Unadjusted variance			18452.50
Adjustment for ties			-18.00
Adjustment for zeros			-0.25
$z = -6.736$			
Prob > z = 0.0000			

The test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in means; thus, there is a relationship between Therapeutic Painting and Sexual Violence expressed by students in selected Secondary Schools in Bundibugyo District ($z = -6.736, p < 0.0001$).

Descriptive Statistics

The results presented below were extracted from the in-session interviews, Focus group discussion, and observations. The students gave their lived experiences by painting, explaining, and in some cases indicating in their work how they were

affected. These results were informed by the explanatory sequential design in which qualitative data was used in the subsequent interpretation and

clarification of the results from the quantitative data analysis.

Table 6: Painting expressing sexual violence

Forms of Violence	Frequency of Occurrence as reflected by students in Therapeutic Paintings Expressing Sexual Violence	%
Rape	26	43
Unnecessary Touch	24	40
Prolong-idly Staring at someone	03	5
Verbal abuse	04	7
Sexual Assault	03	5

As shown in the above *table 6*, out of the 60 students that participated in a painting activity expressing sexual violence in selected secondary schools of Bundibugyo District, 26 (43%) S2 students depicted rape, 24 (40%) S2 students depicted unnecessary touches, 3 (5%) S2 students depicted gazing at someone, 4 (7%) S2 students depicted verbal abuse, 3 (5%) students expressed

sexual assault. Painting (A) depicts unnecessary touch as a form of sexual violence experienced and expressed by students in Secondary schools of Bundibugyo District. Whereas, painting (B) is expressing rape as a form of sexual violence experienced and expressed by students in Secondary schools of Bundibugyo District.

Plate 1: Painting A, depicting unnecessary touch



Painting (B) below is expressing rape as the most common form of sexual violence experienced and expressed by students during art sessions or

experiments in selected Secondary schools in Bundibugyo District.

Plate 2: Painting B, depicting Rape



Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

13.7±0.91 with minimum and maximum age of 13-16 years of age.

The majority of students 39 (65%), were males. The mean age and standard deviation were

Table 6: Demographic data

Variable		n (%)	Mean	Std. Dev	Median	Min	Max
Sex	Male	39 (65)					
	Female	21 (35%)					
Age	13	33 (55)	13.7	0.91	13	13	16
	14	15 (25)					
	15	9 (15)					
	16	3 (5)					

The models were run to detect the impact of gender and age on sexual violence, but all were statistically insignificant; thus, no relationship, therefore, there was no difference.

DISCUSSION

Results show that before the introduction of the intervention, in the post-test in *Table 3*, 9 participants scored in rate 2, which was 15% of the participants, and 16 participants scored in rate 3, which was 27% of the total number of participants. 26 participants scored in rate 4, which is 43% of the total number of the 60 participants. 9 participants scored in rate 5, which was 15% of the total number of participants that used the position of images or figures in paintings expressing sexual violence. Most of the respondents scored at the lowest rate, and this was attributed to the fact that students had little skills

of expression using the position of images to articulate how they were affected by sexual violence. In the Experimental group post-test in *Table 3*, after the introduction of the intervention, 9(15%) participants out of the total number of 60 participants in rate 2 used the position of images or figures in therapeutic painting expressing sexual violence. 25 (42%) participants scored in the third highest rate 3 out of the total number of 60 participants, 23 (38%) participants scored in the second highest rate 4 out of the total number of 60 participants, while 3 participants scored in the highest rate 5 (5%) out of the total number of participants that used the position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through therapeutic painting.

The 23 (38%) participants who scored in the second highest rate 4 out of the total number of 60 participants evidence that the introduction of the

intervention led to improved expression of sexual violence through therapeutic painting and led to lessened anxiety, restored emotional stability, and above all lessened stress. These findings are in agreement with Coiner and Kim (2011), who pointed out that psychological effects such as those expressed through visual art therapy result in enhanced ability to self-expression, promoted self-awareness, self-acceptance, lessened anxiety, and above all improved self-confidence among victims. Drass, (2015) affirms that the layout of a visual art therapy room can provide structure, routine, and safety.

In the Experimental group pretest in *Table 4* above, 37(62%) participants scored at the lowest rate 1 out of the participants who used the position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through painting. 21(35%) participants scored in the second lowest rate, 2 out of the total number of participants who used the position of images or figures in drawing expressing sexual violence, whereas 2(3%) participants scored in rate 3 out of the 60 total number of participants who used the position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through painting. The post-test experimental group in table 1 show that, 25 (42%) participants scored in the third highest rate 3 out of the total number of 60 participants who used position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through therapeutic painting and 23(38%) participants in scored in the second highest rate 4 out of the total number of 60 total number of participants that used position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through therapeutic painting, compared to 37(62%) participants who scored in the lowest rate 1 out of the 60 participants who used position of images or figures while expressing sexual violence through painting and 21(35%) participants in the second lowest rate 2 out of the total number of participants used position of images or figures in painting expressing sexual violence, it shows that introduction of the intervention led to improved artistic expression of sexual violence through therapeutic painting using position of images or figures while

expressing sexual violence among the experimental group.

The majority of students successfully used the position of images to express sexual violence, and this helped to relieve them of stress, anxiety, loss of confidence, and fear that had resulted from their experience of sexual violence. The findings in this study are in agreement with those of Malchiodi (2014) who points out that art therapy helps children to visually express and record experiences, perceptions, feelings, and imagination. Similarly, the results in this study were reinforced by Johan et al. (2018) study which asserted that art therapy through painting helped a group of teenagers interpret and manage emotions about anger and provide positive value to the therapeutic process.

CONCLUSION

The test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in means; thus, there is a relationship between therapeutic painting and sexual violence expressed by students in selected Secondary Schools in Bundibugyo District ($z = -6.736, p < 0.0001$). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that therapeutic painting intervention helped to improve the expression of sexual violence among victims and helped them to gain relaxation, lose hope, and lessen anxiety resulting from their experience with violence.

Recommendations

Adoption of Innovative visual art impression model in designing, implementing, and evaluating secondary school children violence prevention policies and programs. Build consensus among all stakeholders in secondary schools, students inclusive on violence and related vices and suggest practical solutions for violence-related issues. The research in this study recommended the adoption of the Innovative visual artistic impression model (IVAIM) in designing, implementing, and evaluating children's expression of violent experiences in Secondary schools.

There should be a strengthening of capacities among service providers, institutions, and communities so that appropriate information and services are rendered to children who sometimes fear to express themselves, are secretive, or lack skills of self-expression. The researcher recommended that this study helps administrators in secondary schools to be aware of violence in their schools, resulting in exposure to it by utilising visual art therapy in addition to other expressive channels.

The researcher further recommends that this study on visual art therapy and violence expressed be utilised by secondary school administrators and policymakers to highlight the forms of violence common in secondary schools, the age bracket of students mostly affected, common perpetrators of violence and formulate new policies that can cope with the ever-increasing violence thereby helping to restrain perpetrators from committing more acts of violence in Secondary schools. The researcher recommends that the study findings be used to provide evidence-based information to the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development to restructure the way they deal with violence and devise better ways of addressing violence in the contemporary era by incorporating visual art therapy and artistic expression to work as therapy for victims of violence and means through which victim of violence can express what they cannot express verbally. The study, among others, recommends that the findings be utilised by academia, especially those who may wish to carry out further research on the use of visual art therapy regarding the expression of issues other than violence among Secondary school students.

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