

Inculcating Happiness Through Positive Psychotherapy: An Option for Reducing Organised Violent Behaviour

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of inculcating happiness into persons, through application of positive psychotherapy, on reducing organised violent behaviour. Participants were 87 (men = 56 & women = 31) undergraduate students, age ranged from 16 to 34 years, with mean age of 23.26 years and standard deviation of 3.9 years. Self-report organised violent behaviour questionnaire developed by the author was used to collect information from the participants on organised violent behaviour before (at time 1) and after (at time 2) intervention. Within subject design was adopted with repeated measures analysis of variance statistics. The results revealed that positive psychotherapy was effective in reducing self-report organised violent behaviour after intervention at time two, $p < .001$. The study is innovative in that it linked positive psychotherapy with organised violent behaviour. Practically, the outcome of the study is useful to peace psychologists, social scientists, security providers and community leaders in addressing the issue of violence at behaviour level.

Keywords: Happiness, positive psychotherapy, violent behaviour

INTRODUCTION

Research into violent behaviour has captured the attention of psychologists, providers of security, and governments around the world because of its ravaging nature. Research efforts with respect to understanding psychological interventions which increase happiness generally and its elements such as positive emotions, engagement, meaning and resilience have been developed across different populations with the aim to reduce negative behaviour tendencies, for examples, in school children (Seligman, Ernest, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009), and military personnel (Seligman & Matthews, 2011), but not specifically to reduce organized violent behaviour. Literatures have adduced how happiness relate with less tendency to engage

in violent behavior and peace generally. For example, happiness has been shown to counteract the outgroup homogeneity effect under some conditions (Johnson & Fredrickson, 2005). Cohrs, Christie, White and Das, (2013) also suggest that happy people promote peaceful relations at the interpersonal and community levels. While destructive nature of organised violent behaviour ravages on, empirical evidence linking positive psychotherapy with happiness as intervention to reduce organised violent behaviour is yet to receive the required attention, especially within the Nigerian context.

The destructive nature of organised violent behaviour in Nigeria is not debatable. Incessant episodes of killings and destruction of properties in Nigeria including bombing of public places has been recorded. Organised violent behaviour has been perpetrated in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria by the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND)

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and in the North East by Boko Haram who complain unhappily of varied issues and even in tertiary institutions by cult groups who may not be happy with either the other groups or the system. Since its inception, Boko Haram has been destructive on human lives. Boko Haram alone staged more than 100 attacks which claimed 2,053 civilian lives, in the first half of 2014 and more than 5,000 lives overall (Human Rights Watch, 2014). These incidences emanate from varied grievances of the groups' expression of unhappiness.

For the feeling of unhappiness, people die from war, but since 1945, more people have died in the hands of their compatriots than through interstate violence (Lopez, 1994). At international and local levels, some kinds of violent behaviour have been recorded more than 40 times since 1945 with casualties ranging from 7 to 16 million people (Harff & Gurr, 1988). Unhappiness has been adduced for violent and long-term conflicts between ethnic groups that had also claimed more than 10 million lives since the world war 11 (Horowitz, 1985). These figures may have increased many folds over the years. Psychological efforts are required to tackle such violent behaviour. Thus, tapping into positive psychotherapy which can inculcate happiness into people as psychological intervention becomes research imperative, at least to mitigate the destructive consequences of organised violent behaviour. To this end, this study identified approach to reduce organised violence at behaviour level by inculcating happiness into people through positive psychotherapy. This has become imperative following the fact that reacting to any form of crime, including organised violence after it happens is the social equivalent of Band-Aids on cancer (Myers, 2005). Creating environments free of violent behaviour through psychological interventions, such as positive psychotherapy which inculcates happiness in persons can be advantageous to Nigeria and the world at this

time violence has turned humans mercilessly into agony.

Seligman and Fowler (2011), observe that studies had not offered evidence on how increases in positive emotions, virtues, and character strengths, well-being, and resilience across different populations might contribute to better relationships (an index of nonviolent behaviour) among all populations. To this effect, this study aims to fill this gap in literature. The study, specifically investigates how application of positive psychotherapy, as intervention, to inculcate happiness into people will mitigate organized violent behaviour among a Nigerian sample. This study contributes to peace psychology literature by providing empirical evidence linking positive psychotherapy to organised violent behaviour through inculcation of happiness. Most essentially, to the best awareness of the researcher, no previously published studies have linked positive psychotherapy to organised violent behaviour through inculcation of happiness.

This article begins with a review of literature on positive psychotherapy and happiness. The review provides explanations and definitions of key terms and indicates how positive psychotherapy was developed and the place of happiness in positive psychotherapy. Subsequently, social and biological perspectives on happiness are discussed. Thereafter, happiness as a theoretical background of positive psychotherapy was presented. Further, organised violent behaviour, especially in relation to psychological intervention of positive psychotherapy is highlighted. Then, hypothesis concerning the effect of positive psychotherapy on happiness to reduce the tendency to engage in organized violent behaviour is presented. Thereafter, an overview of the method adopted in this study and results of data analysis are presented. Finally, the findings, implications,

limitations as well as suggestions for further studies and conclusion are discussed.

Positive Psychotherapy and Happiness

Positive psychotherapy is the scientific base of positive psychology, which looks at what goes right in life, from birth to death and at all stops in between and scientifically pursues the optimal human functioning, building a field that focuses on human strengths and virtues, sheds light on the “dark side” of human functioning, and opens the door to understanding, preventions and health promotion (Seligman, 2002; Peterson, 2006). Positive psychotherapy works on the assumption that optimism is a good defence against unhappiness. Those who are optimistic will believe that life will be better and it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy for them. Just like dwelling on negative events can lead to depression, dwelling on things that have gone well can help in picking up. The moment you have a feeling of being negative about things, just take a moment out and remind yourself of the stuff that has gone well. It further assumes that if people are happy with life, such people are more popular since people like to hang around with happy people. Seligman (2002) believes that to get a happy person, the negative in his life will be got rid of and then get the positives. By reminding ourselves of what went well, positive psychologists believe that we build a buffer against unhappiness which will make us better able to take life's knocks when they come. And no doubt, this will knock out the tendency to engage in negative behaviour such as organised violent behaviour.

Therapies that have devoted and addressed the positive of clients are few, and first developed and tested happiness intervention consisting of some tactics, such as being more active, socializing more, engaging in meaningful work, forming closer

and deeper relationships with loved ones, lowering expectations and prioritising being happy (Fordyce, 1977, 1983). Fordyce found that students who received detailed instructions on how to do these were happier and showed fewer depressive symptoms than the control group. Later, Fava (1999), Fava and Ruini (2003) developed well-being therapy (WBT) which is based on the multidimensional model of psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 1998). This model consists of building environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, autonomy, self acceptance, and positive relations with others and is provided after patients with affective disorder have successfully completed a regime of drugs or psychotherapy. Also, Frisch (2006) proposed quality of life therapy, which combines a life satisfaction approach with cognitive therapy. The approaches of Fava and Frisch were based on faulty cognitions, troubles or emotions or maladjusted relationships and apply well-being as a supplement. Based on the above exploratory researches, Seligman, Rashid & Parks (2006) developed Positive Psychotherapy (PPT). The field of positive psychology has made significant scientific advancement in analysing the above issue (e.g. Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Haidt, 2006; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005; Seligman, 2002; Joseph and Linley, 2005).

Psychological intervention based on the premises of positive psychotherapy will avert and mitigate negative behaviour tendencies such as organised violent behaviours through inculcation of happiness. Seligman et al. (2006) provide a theoretical framework to the study of positive psychology using earlier work on happiness and satisfaction which culminate in introduction of Positive Psychotherapy (PPT). PPT assumes that it is possible that directly building these positive resources may successfully counteract negative symptoms and may also buffer against their future reoccurrence. Initially, PPT was used for the

treatment of depression but has been extended to interventions in other negative behaviours such as school system and military organisations (Seligman, Ernest, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009; Seligman & Matthews, 2011). The basic ingredient of positive psychotherapy is happiness. Happiness may be regarded as a mental or emotional state of well-being characterised by positive or pleasant emotions ranging from contentment to intense joy. Based on Seligman et al. (2006), this study proposed a psychological intervention to inculcate happiness into people so as to reduce organised violent behaviour. Happiness is either socially or biologically rooted and this has been documented in literature as discussed in the section that follows.

Social Perspective on Happiness

Growing research into happiness provides implicit explanatory evidences supporting socially constructed happiness. For example, in a study, Diener and Seligman (2002), conducted at the University of Illinois found that the most salient characteristics shared by the 10% of students with the highest levels of happiness and the fewest signs of depression were strong ties to friends, family and commitment to spending time with them. It is important to work on social skills, close interpersonal ties and social support in order to be happy. Initially, difficulties were encountered in measuring happiness since even depressed people feeling blues could have a moment of cheerfulness. Also, happiness is inherently subjective and as such difficult to measure. However, Diener (1980) argue that satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) became the most widely used tool, which he (Diener) has found to square well with other measures of happiness, such as impressions from friends and family, expressions of positive emotion and low incidence of depression.

Furthermore, researchers (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi as reported by Wallis, 2005) pioneered a method called experience sampling which uses beepers and later hand held computers to contact subjects at random intervals. In this method, a pop-up screen presents an array of questions: what are you doing? How much are you enjoying it? Are you alone or interacting with someone else? This method was found to provide an excellent picture of satisfaction and engagement at a specific time during a specific activity.

In another study, Kahneman(2004) (cited in Wallis, 2005) devised a new tool to measure happiness called the day reconstruction method. Here the participants fill out a long diary and questionnaire dealing with the details of everything they did on the previous day and whom they were with at the time and rating a range of feelings during each episode (happy, impatient, depressed, worried, tired etc) on a seven point scale. This method was tested on a group of women in Texas with interesting outcomes. The five most positive activities for these women were (in descending order) sex, socializing, relaxing, praying or meditating, and eating. Exercising and watching television came close. This was followed by cooking, and taking care of children, whereas housework ranked last. This finding contradicts *Time Poll* (2004) finding that children or grand children or both are the greatest thing that has brought them happiness in answer to the question: "what one thing in life has brought you the greatest happiness?" The point of controversy in happiness research has been on what kind of information is more meaningful - global reports of well-being such as "my life is happy" and "my children are my greatest joy" or more specific data on day-to-day experiences (e.g. what a night! The kids were such a pain!"), (Wallis, 2005).

In their own contribution Kahneman, Diener and Schwarz (2003) distinguished between the experiencing self and the remembering self. Their study revealed that what you remember of an experience is particularly influenced by the emotional high and low points and by how it ends. In somewhat a follow up, Kahneman and his colleagues tested the power of ending in one of his studies involving people undergoing a colonoscopy, an uncomfortable procedure in which a flexible scope is moved through the colon. While a control group had the standard procedure, half the participants endured an extra 60 seconds during which the scope was held constant: Movement of the scope is typically the source of discomfort. It turned out that members of the group that had the somewhat longer procedure with benign ending found it less unpleasant than the control group and they were more willing to have repeat colonoscopy. Kahneman et al likened asking people how happy they are to asking them about the colonoscopy after it is over. Thus, this study surmises that socially constructed happiness inculcated through positive psychotherapy can mitigate organized violent behaviour.

Biological Perspective on happiness

Evidences of happiness generative of genes or biological impulses exist with psychological intervention's capacity to activate such happiness in individuals. The role of positive psychotherapy in inculcating happiness into people to reduce organized violent behaviour is untapped by previous studies. For examples, Lykken (1996, as cited in Wallis, 2005) published a paper supporting the role of genes in determining happiness and satisfaction in one's life. In his study 4,000 sets of twins born in Minnesota from 1936 to 1955 were used. After comparing happiness data on identical versus fraternal twins, he concluded that about 50% of one's satisfaction with life comes from

genetic programming (Genes influence such traits as having a sunny, easy-going personality; dealing well with stress; and feeling low levels of anxiety and depression.) He further found that circumstantial factors, such as income, marital status, religion, and education contribute only about 8% to one's overall well-being. Based on the outcome of his finding on the large influence of genes, Lykken proposed an idea that a human being has a happiness set point much like our set point for body weight. Whatever happens in our life - good, bad, spectacular, horrific - we tend to return in short order to our set range; the post-tsunami images of Asian children were found returning to school smiling and those who lost limbs returned to happy life after sometimes (Wallis, 2005). In 2012, there was an anecdotal observation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) by flood disaster, living a moment of happy life in their temporary resettlement camps in Anambra East and West Local Government Areas of Anambra State, South East Nigeria.

Happiness as a Theoretical Background of Positive Psychotherapy

The theoretical background for the development of PPT was based on Seligman (2002) proposal that the wieldy notion of happiness could be decomposed into three more scientific manageable components: Positive emotion (the pleasant life), engagement (the engaged life), and meaning (the meaningful life).

The Pleasant Life

This consists of a lot of positive emotions about the present, past and future and learning the skills to amplify the intensity and duration of these emotions. The positive emotions about the past include satisfaction, contentment, fulfillment, pride and serenity, (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005; McCullough, 2000, Seligman et al, 2005). And Seligman et al (2006) developed gratitude and

forgiveness exercises that enhance how positive memories can be. Positive emotions about the future include hope and optimism, faith, trust and confidence and these emotions especially hope and optimism are meant to buffer against depression (Seligman, 1991, 2002). Optimism and hope interventions have earlier been found to counteract pessimism (e.g., Seligman, 1991, 2002; Snyder, 2000). Positive emotions about the present include satisfaction derived from immediate pleasures.

Evidence to the above has been provided when positive emotions counteracted detrimental effects of negative emotion on physiology, attention and creativity (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Fredrickson, 2000). Positive emotions contribute to resilience in crises (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). In another development, Fredrickson and Joiner (2002) reported that positive emotions and a broad thought-action repertoire amplify each other, leading to an upward spiral of well-being, and this can contribute in reducing violent behaviour.

The Engaged Life

In Seligman's theory, the second happy life is engaged life, a life that pursues engagement, involvement and absorption in work, intimate relations and leisure (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Csikszentmihalyi's term for the psychological state that accompanies highly engaging activities is flow. As the time passes quickly and attention is completely focused on activity and so the sense of self is lost. One way to enhance engagement and flow is to identify people's highest talents and strengths and then help them to find opportunities to use these strengths more (Seligman, 2002). The highest strength is called signature strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In a programme of therapeutic interventions aimed at transforming the structure of daily life toward

more engagement, among the reported benefits are reduced levels of depression and anxiety (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). For instance, a client with the signature strength of creativity is encouraged to take a pottery, photography, sculpture or painting class or someone with the signature strength of curiosity is encouraged to make a list of things he or she would like to know. With that in practice, the tendency to engage in violent behaviour is averted and mitigated. Thus, it is imperative to explore the links between engagement life as aspect of happiness and organised violent behaviour.

The Meaningful Life

The third aspect of happy life in Seligman's theory involves the pursuit of meaning. This consists in using one's signature strengths and talents to belong to and serve something that one believes is bigger than the self, (Seligman, 2002). There are various positive institutions where one can find meaningful life such as religion, politics, family, community, and nation. The particular institution one serves in order to establish meaningful life notwithstanding, engaging in meaningful life produces a sense of satisfaction (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002); produces a subjective sense of meaning which is strongly correlated with happiness (Lyubomirsky, et al, 2005).

Seligman et al (2006) tested the robustness of the correlation of the lack of positive emotion, lack of engagement, lack of meaning with depression using 327 young adults at the University of Pennsylvania (mean age = 23.51 years, SD = 6.63; 53% women, 69% Caucasian). The sample included clinically depressed (n = 97), none depressed psychiatric (n = 46), and none depressed non psychiatric (n = 184) students. The study found that clinically depressed students experienced

significantly fewer positive emotions, less engagement and less meaning in their lives than did the non depressed psychiatric and non depressed non-psychiatric sample.

In a somewhat replication study, Huta, Peterson, Park and Seligman (2006) measured life satisfaction as a function of pursuing each of the three lives. The result revealed that pursuit of meaning and engagements were robustly correlated with higher life satisfaction and lower depression while pursuit of pleasure was marginally correlated with higher life satisfaction and lower depression. That gives Seligman and his colleagues enough evidence to hypothesise that moving the empty life (lack of pleasure, lack of engagement and lack of meaning) in the direction of the full life (pleasure of positive emotion, engagement and meaning) would relieve depression. In a two face-to-face studies of PPT, one with mildly to moderately depressed young adults, to examine the causal effect of enhancing positive emotions, engagement and meaning, the results indicate that PPT did better than two active treatments of Treatments As Usual (TAU) and Treatment As Usual with Medication (TAUMED), with large effect sizes. Therefore, systematically enhancing positive emotions, engagement, and meaning was quite efficacious in treating unipolar depression (Seligman et al. 2006). There seems to be a growing interest in this new area of research in psychology. This study considers the need to link positive psychotherapy to organised violent behaviour through inculcation of happiness apt.

Organised Violent Behavior

Organised violent behaviour refers to the group's tendency or disposition to plan and perpetrate any form of violence in reaction to perceived identity and security threats

(Anyaegbunam, 2014). It is a violence planned by a group through shared grievances, enhanced by group polarisation which produces negative consequences. Organised violent behaviour has been a source of concern to psychologists in general and scholars of positive and peace psychology in particular because of its negative consequences such as destruction of lives and properties of people, ravaging of peaceful coexistence of people: perverts interpersonal relationship, creates fear, and places limitation on cooperation among diverse ethnic and religious groups (Anyaegbunam, 2014). Positive psychologists have advanced the use of positive psychotherapy for global wellbeing and resilience (Cohrs, Christie, White & Das, 2013), to reduce its destructive nature.

When circumstances provoke an individual's aggressive reaction, the addition of group interaction will often amplify it (Myers, 2005). Intergroup threat is a vital cause of organised violent behaviour. For example, a threat to group esteem may be experienced when highly positive characteristics associated with the out-group overwhelm group members' ability to maintain a positive image of the group, which possibly results in negative attitudes and behaviour toward the out-group (e.g., Branscombe, Spears, Ellmers, & Doosge, 2002). Group members are likely to show a distinctiveness threat the moment the uniqueness of the group is threatened by too much similarity to or assimilation of the out-group, which may also increase intergroup bias and negative intergroup behaviour (e.g., Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004). Intergroup threat can result to negative behaviour tendencies including organised violent behaviour. Perceived threat leads people to

become more politically intolerant (e. g., Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse, & Wood, 1995), to respond more punitively towards out-group (e. g., Hermann, Tetlock, Viser, 1999), and to use aggression and violence against

outgroups (Arian, 1989; Spanovic, Lickel, Denson, & Petrovic, 2010). Similarly, a strong identification with a group earns people their self-image, which gives them their social identity from the groups (Tagfel & Turner, 1979). As a result, people who identify strongly with their groups are more likely to interpret situations as threatening to their groups, and as this happens, to respond more strongly to the threat (e. g., Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006). In all situations analysed above the result is always organised violent behaviour which calls for psychological interventions for long term solutions.

The above theoretical arguments and empirical findings in the literature concerning the positive psychotherapy have attracted studies that focus on reducing violent behaviour. For examples, virtues and character strengths, transcendence and temperance may contribute to peace (Cohrs, Christie, White & Das, 2013) and bring about non violent behaviour in people. Attaching importance to self-transcendence values that focus on universal humanity has been shown to correlate negatively with support for war and military interventions (Cohrs, Moschner, Maes, & Kielimann, 2005), and positively with support for human rights (Cohrs, Moschner, Maes, & Kielimann, 2007), and nonviolent dispositions and involvement in peace activism (Mayton, 2009). A study that used false-feedback manipulation to cause good or bad moods in negotiators has shown that happy negotiators were more disposed than sad negotiators to plan to be cooperative before actual negotiations, to use more cooperative strategies during negotiation, to achieve better outcomes, and to honour agreements after negotiations (Forgas, 1998), and effective negotiation can avert organised violent behaviour. This study builds on the

premises that group-polarisation provides an explanation for shared grievances breeding organised violent behaviour, and that at

individual level this can be reduced by the application of positive psychotherapy through inculcation of happiness. To this end, hypothesis concerning the effect of positive psychotherapy on happiness to reduce reported tendency to engage in organized violent behaviour were proposed and tested on a sample of undergraduate students. Thus, it is predicted that :

Hypothesis: After an application of positive psychotherapy to inculcate happiness as intervention, the reported tendency to engage in organised violent behaviour will reduce.

METHOD

Participant

Eighty-seven (56 = men & 31 = women) undergraduate students freely took part in this study. The participants' age ranged between 16 and 34 years with mean age of 23.26 years and standard deviation of 3.9 years. Thirty students participated in group one, 30 participated in group two and 27 students participated in group three - the control group. The participants were drawn from the population of undergraduate students of the social science disciplines. The choice of undergraduate students was informed by the fact that students most often made their grievances known through groups which sometimes manifest in such behaviour that can be regarded as organised violent behaviour.

Instrument

Self-report Organised Violent Behaviour Questionnaire (OVBQ) developed by the author with 23 items ($\alpha = .91$), was instrument used. The items of the questionnaire were generated from review of literatures. The first draft of the questionnaire was made up of

39 items and was given out to seven experienced lecturers, two from the humanities (English and Linguistics), three from psychology, one from political science, and one from sociology. The lecturers were asked to vet the items in terms of content and clarity to measure organised violent behaviour on 7-point rating format of not suitable at all = 1; not suitable = 2; lowly suitable = 3; suitable = 4; moderately suitable = 5; more suitable = 6 and most suitable = 7. Thirty-two items were rated moderately suitable and above by 85.71% of the lecturers. Furthermore, as result of their vetting, the 32 items which they agreed that measured organised violent behaviour were retained while seven items they rejected were discarded for want of fact and content validity. After, the 32-item questionnaire was reframed as 5-point rating option of Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 3, Undecided (UD) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 for use by the target population of this study.

Further, I conducted a pilot study in which the 32 items were administered to 32 undergraduate students who scored the items on 5-point rating format and their responses were subjected to exploratory factor analysis in which 26 items loaded in one factor. After removing six items that loaded differently, the remaining 26 items were subjected to further analysis which revealed that only 23 items loaded perfectly, from .40 and above on a latent variable referred to as organised violent behavior (See Table 1). Thus, I retained the 23 items in the final draft of the questionnaire as used in this study.

Finally, the reliability of the 23-item questionnaire was ascertained by administering it to 32 undergraduate students. After, their responses were subjected to statistical analysis using Cronbach Alpha. The result showed that the instrument was reliable in measuring latent variable of organized violent behaviour with $\alpha = .91$. Therefore, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire to measure organised violent behaviour were not in question.

Table 1
Items and factor loadings of organised violent behaviour questionnaire

| S/N | Item | Factor loading |
|-----|---|----------------|
| 1 | Use of violence by a group is not wrong provided it leads to achievement of the group's desired goals. | 68 |
| 2 | Instead of allowing my group to be frustrated, I will mobilise members to use violent to get what we need from other groups | 82 |
| 3 | If it becomes necessary I can mobilize members of my religion to defend our religious beliefs | 40 |
| 4 | I feel that there are times it is beneficial to express violence in a relationship | 41 |
| 5 | I can engage in violence with other persons without considering who they are. | 72 |
| 6 | Most often, I try to avoid violence at all costs * | 59 |
| 7 | I withdraw in the face of violence regardless of the circumstances * | 70 |

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| 8 | I feel like not controlling my anger toward a non-group member | 46 |
| 9 | I feel I'm in position to take a revenge of what was done to/against my group | 44 |
| 10 | I will organise people to threaten the democratic government because of unfavourable policies made by such government | 52 |
| 11 | Killing of civilians should be accepted as an unavoidable part of security demands | 43 |
| 12 | Fighting should be approved in situation of security needs | 40 |
| 13 | When law enforcement is inadequate to protect my group members, I can accept plans to take laws into our own hands for protection | 68 |
| 14 | I can plan to revolt against imposition of religion on my group members | 82 |
| 15 | I will not hesitate to engage in violence instead of compromising my religious faith even in my work place | 68 |
| 16 | It is not wrong to engage in violence if I am deprived of needs my colleagues enjoy | 82 |
| 17 | It is not wrong to apply violence to restore my group's threatened identity | 41 |
| 18 | Sometimes I feel like using violence to achieve security needs of my group | 40 |
| 19 | In some situations, I can do anything right or wrong to ensure that I am not reduced to a poor person | 72 |
| 20 | I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments that I cannot allow other people to ridicule us without reacting violently | 59 |
| 21 | Sometimes, if it becomes unavoidable, I can engage in violence as a means to achieve the goal I set for myself | 70 |
| 22 | I feel unhesitant to plan for revenge of my group's felt injustice | 46 |
| 23 | If my group is physically attacked I will plan to attack back | 44 |

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to three groups – group one, which received positive psychotherapy as intervention for eight weeks, group two, which received positive psychotherapy as intervention for four weeks and group three, the control group, which did not receive positive psychotherapy as intervention. The students (participants) were assigned to their groups through balloting. Organised violent behaviour questionnaire was administered first to the three groups before the commencement of the study and again at the end of eight weeks. Group one and group two received interventions in form of positive psychotherapy as prescribed above but not group three. The intervention was drawn upon Seligman, Rashid, and Parks (2006) and Seligman (2002) positive psychotherapy aimed at building happiness into people on the bases of pleasant life which consists of positive emotions about the present (e. g. satisfaction derived from immediate pleasures), past (e.g. satisfaction, contentment, fulfillment, pride, serenity and learning how to amplify the intensity and duration of those emotions) and future (e. g. hope, optimism, faith, trust and confidence about them); engagement life (life that pursues engagement, involvement and absorption in work, intimate relations and leisure) and meaningful life (using ones signature strengths and talents to belong to and serve various positive institutions e. g. family, community etc). The participants were told that the study was to investigate how application of positive psychotherapy would affect their behaviour in a group relative to violence, that participation would earn them two marks each as part of the mid-semester test. The students usually take mid-semester test as a serious academic business because it forms part of their end of semester grade and so were unhesitant to participate in the study after assurances of confidentiality and anonymous treatment of their responses. The students were not actually

awarded the marks at the end of the study, but were debriefed. Instructions to fill in the questionnaires were given in written form. Measures of age, gender, and religion were collected using a section of the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were collected from the participants on the spot in the beginning and at the end.

Design/Statistics

The study is a within-subject design that applied Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics to establish the difference between groups one, two and three on their tendency to engage in organised violent behaviour before and after their responses to positive psychotherapy as intervention measured two times in the beginning and at the end of the intervention. Intervention times (1 & 2) were treated as independent variable while measure of organized violent behaviour was treated as dependent variable.

RESULTS

To determine the effectiveness of positive psychotherapy, repeated measures ANOVA were employed on two levels obtained from two times intervention measures, each from three groups on organised violent behaviour. The result showed that before intervention (at time 1) group one scored ($M = 81.70$; $SD = 18.76$), group two scored ($M = 77.36$; $SD = 14.79$) while group three scored ($M = 46.37$; $SD = 13.83$). Then, after intervention (at time 2) group one had ($M = 43.80$; $SD = 6.89$), group two scored ($M = 53.70$ $SD = 6.10$), and group three scored ($M = 45.77$; $SD = 7.32$). The results produced significant main effect of positive psychotherapy on organised violent behaviour, $F(2, 84) = 138.13$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .62$.

Furthermore, to determine which of the groups that responded more effectively to tendency to reduce organised violent behaviour after application of positive psychotherapy, Pairwise comparisons (Scheffe method) were conducted for the three groups. The results revealed that group one differed but not significantly with group two in their reduced self reported tendency to engage in organised violent behaviour after positive psychotherapy, (mean difference = 2.78, $p = .50$, $SE = 2.36$); group one significantly reported more reduced tendency to engage in organised violent behaviour than group three, (mean difference = 16.67, $p < .001$, $SE = 2.42$). Also, group two reported more reduced tendency to engage in organised violent behaviour than group three, (mean difference = 19.45, $p < .001$, $SE = 2.42$).

behaviour among the undergraduate student population used in this study.

The study found that there were differences in individuals' self report on organised violent behaviour measure before and after experiencing positive psychotherapy. Thus, the intervention was considered effective after eight weeks in accordance with the expectation. This implies that experiencing positive psychotherapy as intervention produced lower self reported tendency to engage in organised violent behaviour after intervention at eight weeks, indicating that application of positive psychotherapy as intervention is effective in reducing the tendency to engage in organised violent behaviour. Earlier studies have found positive psychotherapy effective in reducing negative behaviour consequences. For example, Seligman, Ernest, Gillham, Reivich, and Linkins, (2009) found positive psychotherapy effective in reducing violence among school children, of which military personnel showed reduced negative behaviour (Seligman & Matthews, 2011). Further, the finding is in line with other earlier results which revealed that those who received positive psychotherapy would show nonviolent dispositions and involvement in peace activism (Mayton, 2009). Instilling wellbeing (happiness) in people was found to be associated with a stronger support for democracy and a greater tolerance towards immigrants and racial outgroup (Diener & Tov, 2007). As people are made to be happier, they are likely to promote peaceful relations at interpersonal and community levels (Cohrs, Christie, White & Das, 2013).

Table 2
Means and standard deviations for organised violent behaviour, group and intervention time

| Organised violent behaviour | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|---------|---------|
| | Group | Group 2 | Group 3 |
| Time 1 | | | |
| M | 81.70 | 77.36 | 46.37 |
| SD | 18.76 | 14.79 | 13.83 |
| Time 2 | | | |
| M | 43.80 | 53.7 | 45.77 |
| SD | 6.89 | 6.10 | 7.32 |

Note: M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; N = 87; group 1 = 30, group 2 = 30, group 3 = 27

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to establish how the application of positive psychotherapy as intervention measure would be effective in reducing self report tendency to engage in organised violent behaviour after inculcation of happiness. The result revealed that after eight weeks of intervention, positive psychotherapy reduced the self reported tendency to engage in organised violent

Obviously, a group considers the use of violence adequate provided it leads to achievement of the group's desired goals and so would not allow groups' members to be

frustrated instead the members would resort to using violence to get what they need from other group. Thus, when it involves achievement of goals by a given group, such group can mobilise their members against the target out-group considered as the cause of such frustration without considering the negative peace implication of doing that. Their sole interest lies in achieving their goals and not anything else. Positive psychotherapy can be applied to reduce the tendency in people to engage in organised violent behaviour that may result from perceived intergroup frustration of others' goals.

The needs for security and identity are vital for human existence and survival within societal settings. Intergroup threat breeds violence (Arian, 1989; Spanovic, Lickel, Denson, & Petrovic, 2010). When needs for security and identity are threatened by the out-group, ingroup members involved express their grievances through group. Group shared grievances can be stronger and manifest in negative behaviours such as organised violent behaviour, thus, depicting that group polarisation can also lead to negative tendencies such as organised violent behaviour. Then, developing virtues and character strengths such as transcendence and temperance contributes to peace (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and non violent behaviour (Cohrs, Christie, White & Das, 2013).

Building positive emotions, engagement life and meaningful life (components of happiness) through positive psychotherapy is considered essential for reducing negative behavioural tendencies. On the whole, this study is innovative by providing empirical framework for understanding how to use happiness through positive psychotherapy to reduce latent organised violent behaviour and possibly achieve long term results of peace.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study raise important implications for peace psychology education designed to enhance the peaceful coexistence of people. The finding suggests that when people are made to be happy, the less the thought of perpetrating organised violent behaviour. Thus, the outcome of the study can be successfully applied by social psychologists in particular, other psychologists and social scientists interested in peace building, to reduce latent organised violent behaviour at individual and community level. Security providers are informed of the need to provide happy environments so to reduce security risks. Even control of political violence can be anchored on the findings of this study.

Further, the findings of this study inform leaders of the need to see their positions as means of impacting positively on the lives of the people under their control so as to guarantee happiness which mitigates violence, while government should not toil with the happiness of people. To this end, therapists and even school teachers who are working towards reducing violence in society can make use of the outcome of this study.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study is limited in some areas. The outcome should be interpreted with caution since the results obtained here are specific to population of undergraduate students who were not actually perpetrating violence at the time of the study. And so, might not be generalised to samples in real violent crimes such as terrorism. Violence has no gender boundary but the study was not designed to consider gender differences in responding to positive psychotherapy targeted at reducing organised violent behaviour. Further, in administering positive psychotherapy, the study considered only happiness as the only aspect of science of wellbeing that can influence organised violent behaviour. And finally, the instrument used to

access organised violent behaviour may not have exhausted the possible aspects of the concept.

Further studies in this direction may consider an attempt to capture the real people who actually engage in organised violent behaviour. This will create improvement in generalisation. Such studies may also consider the exploration of gender differences in engagement in organised violent behaviour. In order to tap more into other aspects of science of wellbeing that affect organised violent behaviour, further studies in this direction may consider such variables as satisfaction of human needs, religious imagery, and ethnic identity as relating to organised violent behaviour.

CONCLUSION

Applying Seligman, Rashid, Parks (2006) positive psychotherapy as intervention to inculcate happiness in persons, this study found that the sample under consideration, who received intervention reported less tendency to engage in organised violent behaviour after intervention, which is in line with well-documented evidence of positive psychotherapy to reduce negative behavioural consequences in the school system and military personnel. The outcome of this study signals the use of such intervention as an option to inculcate happiness into persons with the objective of reducing the tendency to engage in organized violent behaviour. The study becomes the first to address the issue of reducing organised violent behaviour by inculcating happiness through positive psychotherapy, making both empirical and theoretical contributions to the study of peace psychology. Thus, the study opens the ways for more extensive studies that use positive psychotherapy as intervention to reduce organised violent behaviour in violent prone societies in the future.

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