



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Use of Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy in Counselling Adolescents with Conduct Disorder in Nkayi Secondary Schools, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to embrace Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy as a technique for counselling adolescent with conduct disorder in Nkayi Rural District secondary schools. Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy is an approach that combines elements of Ubuntu philosophy, spiritual principles, and psychotherapy to address the psychological and spiritual well-being of individuals. When it comes to counselling adolescents with conduct disorder in secondary schools, it has been observed by the researcher that Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy miss the mark in utilising the valuable approach by failing to take a holistic view of individuals, considering their psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. Understanding the cultural background of the adolescents and respecting their beliefs and values is a problem with rural secondary school teachers. The study is guided by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory. The nature of this research was essentially qualitative and phenomenological research design guided data gathering from 20 participants through focus group discussion and individual interviews with students, school counsellors and parents. The study concluded that although most of the teachers in schools appreciate Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy as a holistic approach to counselling adolescent students with conduct disorder, some barriers such as inadequate knowledge and skill, lack of collaboration and training, negative attitudes and unavailability of standardised protocols condenses its effectiveness. The study further concluded that educators in secondary schools should embark on integrating Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy into counselling practices in secondary schools to support adolescents with conduct disorders through appropriate teacher training and professional development on Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy, collaboration between parents, teachers, school counsellors and mental health professionals and establishing a supportive and nurturing classroom environment. This study therefore recommended that teachers and school counsellors need to embrace Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy as a technique for counselling adolescents with conduct disorder in secondary schools, through a collaborative effort from learners, parents, teachers, school counsellors and significant others.

Keyword: Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy, Counselling, Adolescent, Conduct disorder

Introduction

Spiritual psychotherapy in this study is being conceptualised in the context of love and belief as principles of existence. It has been anticipated by this study that Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy can provide an opportunity to design Afrocentric programmes to prevent and treat conduct disorder. The aim of this study was to embrace Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy as a technique for counselling adolescent with conduct disorder in Nkayi Rural District secondary schools. If the moral qualities of the children are neglected by parents and teachers, they are sure to be perverted. The measure of one's spirituality seems to be gauged by the character of their home life as Siziba (2022) upholds that the process of an African spiritualist is also developed within the village. Connection with the source of wisdom will give light and the power of discernment between right and wrong, and those so endowed might become morally and intellectually strong and have clearer views and better judgement even in temporal affairs.

According to the Diagnostic Statistical Manual 5th Edition, Conduct disorder is characterized by aggressive behaviours, deceitfulness or theft, destruction of property and serious violations of rules prior to age of 18 (APA, 2013). Gender has been acknowledged as one of the factors predetermining the existence of conduct disorder as the global burden of conduct disorder is considerable, particularly in males (Erskine, Ferrari, Polanczyk, Moffitt, Murray & Vos, 2014). Mohan, Yilanli and Ray (2023) concur that conduct disorder is more common in boys than girls, and further stretch that the ratio could range from 4:1 as much as 12:1. The lifetime prevalence rate in the general population could range from anywhere between 2% to 10% and is consistent among different race and ethnic group. The worldwide prevalence of conduct disorder has been reported as 3.6% for males and 1.5% for females (APA, 2013). Mohammadi et al. (2014) reported a rate of 32.9% for conduct problems among Iranian children and adolescents (Mohammadi et al., 2014).

Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy is an approach that combines elements of Ubuntu philosophy, spiritual principles, and psychotherapy to address the psychological and spiritual well-being of individuals (Nefale, 2003). While Ubuntu philosophy emphasizes interconnectedness, compassion, and the belief that individuals are shaped by their relationships with others, spiritual principles refer to the individual's personal beliefs and connection to something greater than themselves (Qangule, 2019). Psychotherapy, on the other hand, focuses on addressing psychological issues and promoting overall mental health. When it comes to counselling adolescents with conduct disorder in secondary schools, it has been observed by the

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researcher that Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy miss the mark in utilising the valuable approach by failing to take a holistic view of individuals, considering their psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. Similar to findings by Qangule (2019), there are some challenges in understanding and recognizing that conduct disorder is not solely a behavioural issue but also stems from underlying psychological and spiritual factors. The press is marred with cases of conduct disorder, for instance, gross conduct disorder, which relates to an adolescent girl from Mabhalabala area in Nkayi District who murdered their peer on their way from school for a conflict on a boyfriend (Herald, 2021; Siziba, 2022). It was in the interest of this study to explore the use of Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in counselling adolescents with conduct disorders in secondary schools.

Considering the idea by Masango (2016) that secular psychotherapies such as parent management training problem solving skills and multi-systemic therapy did not seem to be very effective in treating conduct disorder, particularly in adolescents, spiritual psychotherapy may provide an opportunity to design programs for treatment of offenders with severe conduct disorder and psychiatric disorders (Dulcan, 2014). Spiritual psychotherapy has been conceptualized in the context of love and belief as principles of existence: belief in the sacred, belief in unity, and belief in transformation; and love of others, love of work, and love of belonging (Mohammadi, Salmanian, Ghobari-Bonab & Bolhari, 2017). It has been observed by the researcher that building relationships is a challenge with adolescent students in secondary schools. As Ubuntu philosophy emphasizes the importance of relationships and interconnectedness (Letseka, 2012), in counselling adolescents with conduct disorder, building a strong therapeutic relationship based on trust, empathy, and respect is crucial. This relationship might provide a safe space for adolescents to explore their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.

In USA, White (1920) argues that young people were built for God, and without God, as the centre of their lives they become frustrated and confused, ever searching and desperately grasping. In the African context, the revisit of the concept of Ubuntu spirituality through psychotherapy is to regain the lost African values through the response of adolescents to the impact of postmodernism, colonization and changes in the family systems. Masango (2006) sees African people as trying to define ways of recapturing their African ness through various ways that give value to Ubuntu. In African spirituality, Masango (2006) argues that there is a great belief among Africans that if a person lived a good life and dies (divine life), that person according to African belief system becomes a good ancestors. Therefore teachings in African societies strive to shape future leaders that would resemble good ancestors. Hence, the need for Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy is based on the premises that changes in the technological world seem to discredit many traditional teachings that used to assist a growing child (Siziba, 2022). Such threats were the basis of this exploration on Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy for counselling Adolescents with Conduct Disorder in Nkayi Rural District Secondary Schools.

Neglecting an individual's religious and/or spiritual beliefs leaves them less than whole (Letseka, 2012). A study by Bibbins (2000) has suggested that a relationship does exist between the strength of one's spirituality and one's overall health and wellness. Furthermore Carter and McGoldrick (1999) suggest that faith, prayer, and spiritual rituals can actually strengthen health and healing by triggering emotions that influence the immune and cardiovascular system. Spirituality entails the belief in a higher power than oneself and it involves an attempt to align our life toward this higher power. Whatever one's particular view of spirituality, it is a force that can help the individual make sense of the universe and to find a purpose for living. Knowledge of Ubuntu and Ubuntu therapy is integral in psychotherapy although a study in Nkayi by Siziba (2022) on embracing Ubuntu philosophy in inclusive education pointed that many primary school teachers experienced challenges in conceptualizing and understanding Ubuntu. However it is the

counsellors' responsibility to be aware that spirituality is a significant force for many of their clients and according to Mohammadi et al. (2017), it is especially important to pursue spiritual concerns if the client indicates them. Therapists usually inquire about their clients' general physical health and their attitudes and practices about their physical health. In a like manner, it is in the realm of duty for therapists to inquire about their clients' values, beliefs, and the sources from which they have attempted to find meaning in life.

Towards the 21st Century, educators are beginning to realize the importance of training future counsellors in religious and spiritual issues (Corey, 1996). There is increasing evidence of counsellors' need to be knowledgeable and competent in the area of religion and spirituality in counselling. A general understanding of the various religious, ritual, and spiritual practices from different world views would be necessary. Gaining knowledge and information related to religious and spiritual views of others would decrease concerns in discussing such issues when they arise in the counselling setting. Many counsellors may have fears related to talking about religious and spiritual issues with an individual due to their own lack of knowledge of other religions. Spirituality is the human longing for a sense of meaning and fulfilment as expressed in societal myths, rituals, and symbols. The inclusion of spirituality in counselling is a means to care for the whole person and mental health professionals from various cultures and religious orientations offered a broad view of spirituality by demonstrating the close relationship between spirituality and counselling. This included the need to gain insight into self, a belief that change is possible, accepting responsibility for one's own actions, and the importance of ritual in daily life. A life lived without spirituality, is not truly a life lived at all. Borysenko (1995) recommended that the mind, body, spirit connection could be achieved through the daily use of mindfulness, meditation, and prayer.

Ubuntu philosophy originates from African cultures, so it's important to be culturally sensitive when implementing Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy in schools (Qangule, 2019). Understanding the cultural background of the adolescents and respecting their beliefs and values is a problem with rural secondary school teachers as Siziba (2022) acknowledges that teachers fall short of cultural competence in schools for effective guidance and counselling. Teachers need to understand that Ubuntu philosophy promotes values such as compassion, empathy, and community and such values, according to Lepphoto (2021), can be integrated into the counselling process, helping adolescents develop a sense of responsibility, empathy towards others, and a connection to their community. To provide comprehensive care, collaboration with schools, teachers, and families has been observed to be a challenge as Qangule (2019) advocates that Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy involves working closely with teachers and school administrators to create a supportive environment for the adolescent. Engaging families in the counselling process and providing them with guidance and support had to be explored in this study so as to establish the extent to which it can contribute to positive learning outcomes. It is also important to note that Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy is not currently being implemented by trained professionals who have a solid understanding of Ubuntu philosophy, spiritual principles, and psychotherapeutic techniques in Nkayi secondary schools. Some teachers seem not to have adequate experience working with adolescents with conduct disorder and are not knowledgeable about evidence-based interventions for this population. Spiritual experience is necessary to increase self-awareness, mindfulness, and openness to enrich and fulfil lives.

Statement of the problem

Adolescence has been depicted as a period of storm and stress, a time in development in which trouble with behaviour, emotions, and relationship especially with parents is at its peak. Adolescents with conduct disorder have difficult time following rules and behaving in a socially acceptable way. Conduct

disorder is a prevalent occurrence amongst adolescents in Zimbabwe that affects almost every strata of society. The press is marred by cases of conduct disorder almost in a daily basis, for instance, gross conduct disorder, which relates to an adolescent girl from Mabhalabhala area in Nkayi District who murdered their peer on their way from school for a conflict on a boyfriend (Herald, 2021; Siziba, 2022). There is therefore, need to conscientise school counsellors on embracing Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy for counselling both adolescents with conduct disorder and the would-be victims of this heinous act.

Objectives of the study

Based on the above research problem, the following research objectives were raised to guide the study:

- To explore the understanding of Ubuntu spirituality in adolescence with conduct disorders
- To embrace Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in adolescence with conduct disorders in Nkayi Secondary Schools

The Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following research questions;

- How effective is Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in counselling adolescents with conduct disorders?
- How best can teachers embrace Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in counselling adolescents with conduct disorders in Nkayi Secondary Schools?

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to specifically establish improved ways of embracing Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy for Adolescents with Conduct Disorder in Nkayi Rural District Secondary Schools in order to empower teachers, students and enhance participation.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

American psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner formulated the Ecological Systems Theory to explain how social environments affect children's development. This theory emphasizes the importance of studying children in multiple environments, known as ecological systems, in the attempt to understand their development. Accordingly, children typically find themselves enmeshed in various ecosystems, from the most intimate home ecological system to the larger school system, and then to the most expansive system which includes society and culture. Each of these ecological systems inevitably interacts with and influences each other in all aspects of the children's lives.

The ecological systems theory validates the analysis of parenting from an Ubuntu way of life. The ecological approach is born out of biological theories that explain the interdependencies between organisms and their environments. Ecology focuses on the relationship between living organisms and the environment; all life forms seek adaptive balance, require resources and a reciprocal environment (Devore & Schlesinger, 1999). The ecological systems theory views children as developing with a system of relationships and contextual influences affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment. The goal of the ecosystems narrative is to enhance and advance the psychosocial functioning of persons and to challenge noxious social conditions that impede the mutually beneficial interaction between person and their environments (Morales & Sheafor, 1998). The ecological systems theory underscores the need to celebrate the variables that brings the best outcome for the benefit of the system's survival. Mutual interdependence and cooperation among members of the system are paramount for the best outcome. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model organizes contexts of development into five nested levels of external influence: Microsystem, Mesosystem, Ecosystem, Macrosystem, and Chronosystem. Microsystem is the smallest and most immediate environment in which

children live, comprises the home, school or daycare, peer group and community environment of the children. Interactions within the microsystem typically involve personal relationships with family members, classmates, teachers, school counsellors and caregivers. The mesosystem encompasses the interaction of the different microsystems which children find them in. It is, in essence, a system of microsystems and as such, involves linkages between home and school, between peer group and family, and between family and community. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, if a child's parents are actively involved in the friendships of their child, for example they invite their child's friends over to their house from time to time and spend time with them then the child's development is affected positively through harmony and like-mindedness. However, if the child's parents dislike their child's peers and openly criticize them, the child will experience disequilibrium and conflicting emotions, which will likely lead to negative development. The exosystem in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model pertains to the linkages that may exist between two or more settings, one of which may not contain the developing children but affect them indirectly nonetheless. Based on Bronfenbrenner's findings, people and places that children may not directly interact with may still have an impact on their lives. Such places and people may include the parents' workplaces, extended family members, and the neighbourhood the children live in. The macrosystem in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is the largest and most distant collection of people and places to the children that still have significant influences on them. This ecological system is composed of the children's cultural patterns and values, specifically their dominant beliefs and ideas, as well as political and economic systems. The chronosystem adds the useful dimension of time to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. It demonstrates the influence of both change and constancy in the children's environments.

Related Literature

Globalization has brought some changes in the way people, families and communities perceive their local traditions against the backdrop of a fluid global village. In considering parenting in conjunction with globalization, I am underscoring that globalization is not totally a political, economic, and social movement, rather, it is a socially conscious issue that shapes and channels the way of life. Parenting has been transfigured and confronted with challenges because children are growing up with limited parental attention due to heavy work demands. Moreover, easy access to technology and social media has negative and positive influences on both parents and children. The global society has been affected by globalization and parenting has not been spared. In the context of the 21st century, Ubuntu parenting is offering an alternative approach to the outlook of parenting and Ubuntu is providing communal based approach to produce the resourceful and disciplined child desired by the environment and community (Shambare, 2021).

Bishop Desmond Tutu popularized the word "Ubuntu," to describe the goal of human relationships. Ubuntu means "I am because you are" or "I am because we are." Ubuntu is the virtue of interdependence in which our joys and sorrows are one. When you succeed, your success contributes to my wellbeing. My success brings wellbeing to your life. The apostle Paul calls this "the body of Christ," the lively spiritual organism which, when healthy, allows us to express our gifts and bring out the gifts of others (I Corinthians 12:12-31). We matter to each other and can add beauty and joy to each other's lives. Our sacrifices, and the sacrifices of others, contribute to the health of our communities. Obviously, this has ethical as well as personal implications.

Ubuntu has three pillars: interpersonal values (regard for others), intrapersonal values (regard of self) and environmental values (regard for community) (Mphalala, 2017). These pillars are integrated into the framework outlook of Ubuntu which is the individual, the family, the community, the environment and the spiritual. On the personal level, Ubuntu is obvious. When I am supporting others in my family circle or circle of friends,

their lives flourish and filled with greater joy. When others support me, I can achieve more than I thought possible. On the larger level, if we want our congregations, communities, or nation to succeed, then we must recognize that everyone matters. Poverty and injustice harm the health of the nation. Homelessness – especially among those who do not choose to be houseless, like the working poor – nags at the soul of the nation. Inability to get a good education or health care can lead to greater crime as well as spread of pandemics. We all matter and we can all share in each other's wellbeing. Out of our gratitude, let us reach out to each other in love.

The theology of Ubuntu is deeply embedded in African spirituality – a spirituality that is central to life and transforms all human relations. As Membe-Metale (2015) affirms, Ubuntu is a spirituality that enables mutual sharing and satisfaction and is illustrated in the biblical account of the disciples sharing all they had with one another so that no one lacked anything (Acts 4:32–35). Ubuntu theology affirms the interaction and relationship among persons in which everyone's humanness is recognised and affirmed. It is the philosophy of reconciliation and forgiveness that expresses respect for a person's dignity irrespective of what that person has done (Ntamushobora, 2012). In this theology and ideology, Tutu seeks restorative justice over against retributive justice to give opportunity for the healing of both the oppressed and the oppressor as children of God.

The final belief is that ordinary human beings cannot speak to God directly, because God is not their equal – hence ancestors become a bridge between the lower and higher being (Tutu, 2012). Christians are aware that Jesus is the mediator, who connects them directly to God. This concept share light to the way some Africans communicate in life, and thus, should not be taken lightly by those who do not operate in that world of communication. As a strategy it could have been used in order to connect them with Christian believes system. The concept of Ubuntu, connected to the idea of ancestor ship shapes a way of living that respects human beings, life, the elderly, as well as the villagers (community). At this stage one is able to live with other people in a respectable way and therefore it is a common saying among Africans, that it takes the whole village to raise a child. The statement captures good values, ethics and spiritual development of a person, thus, being holistically taken

In the African village one is not allowed to live life alone like in an island. Mbiti in Qangule (2019) emphasizes this point by reminding that: "An individual does not exist alone except corporately" (Mbiti 1970:109). In other words, a way of life (spiritual life) is lived in a community with others. Donker (1997:8) on the other hand had this to say about individualism: "The individual is not a physical being, but a spiritual and divine individual, who lives with other human beings". It can never be lived alone. In South Africa, the Nguni tribe shares another element of life that shapes a human being, through a powerful proverb or idiom that says: Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (Letseka, 2012), meaning a person is a person because of other people.

Similar to findings by Qangule (2019), Setiloane (1986:13) affirms the above facts by saying that: "In the African community, it is the responsibility of adults to shape children, so that they may learn how to live with others in the community". The concept of body, mind and soul also includes issues of ecology. This issue is an important part of life, especially in the way Africans relate to nature. The above highlights the concept of spirituality which is ecological, manifesting, sensitivity towards and solidarity with the earth. The connection with the whole of nature was therefore important, nurturing it instead of dominating it. Thus, life in an African village is connected to the entire God created part of life. In other words, Africans are connected to God as much as creation is part of God. We are therefore charged to care for it.

In Ubuntu authoritative parenting emphasizes, interdependence, affiliation, and cooperation versus confrontation. Ubuntu parenting emphasizes discipline, skills development, and accountability at every level of children's

development. Family becomes foundational and relationship critical children from authoritative families or communities understand the importance of setting goals and objectives that conform to the expectation of the family. "Children from authoritative homes whose parents are willing to exert control and explain their reasons for doing so show the most competent behaviours and they are more self-reliant and competent" (Rathus, Rogerson & Berk, 2017:218). Being competent means feeling able, knowledgeable, and skilled in a task. Significantly one becomes productive and resourceful. This analysis fulfills the conclusion made by Baumrind (1991) that the authoritative style of parenting fosters self-esteem, maturity, cognitive development, responsibility, and critical thinking (Rathus et al., 2017). Ubuntu parents teach their children to be hands on, creators of solutions when situations demand so. This is not done in an abusive manner rather in an affectionate manner.

In psychotherapy, it is important for the counsellor to assist the client understand the need of others and avoid harming those that are important in creating their self. Psychotherapist emphasise that the Self is defined by the existence of others and social resources need care, conservation and preservation. Obama in Williams (2018) points that Ubuntu describes our greatest gift, the recognition that we are all bound together in ways that can be invisible to the eye; that there is a oneness to humanity; that we achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others, and caring for those around us." Nelson Mandela once said: "A traveller through a country would stop at a village and he didn't have to ask for food or for water. Once he stops, the people give him food, entertain him. That is one aspect of Ubuntu but it will have various aspects." This shows that students with conduct disorders can be ecologically accommodated through adequate provision of services by the community and Ubuntu psychotherapy.

Tutu used his pastoral experience to induce acts of reconciliation telling black South Africans that Jesus calls them to reconcile with wrongdoers, without demanding justice for victims. Moreover, they described personal moments of forgiveness at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as inspired by the spirit of Ubuntu, and he argued that the compelling force behind the desire to find forgiveness in the painful, impossible moments was made possible by the spirit of Ubuntu (Tutu, 1999). It is important to know that 'I am a person through other persons: I am because I am human, open and available to others, affirming of others' (Tutu, 2017:121). Ramose (2009) argues that this is why the human being in African thought is not definable in terms of the single physical or psychological characteristic with the exclusion of everything else.

Ubuntu therapy broadly refers to communality, oneness, co-operation and sharing (Qangule, 2019). In this paper, the authors propose an alternative psychotherapy, called Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy, which is based on the Ubuntu concept and is aimed at incorporating the African culture into psychotherapy. Ubuntu counselling and wellness provide compassionate and multiculturally competent counselling and wellness services for racial/ethnic minorities and underserved populations (Mabovula, 2011). It is believed that we are all responsible for one another and should be willing to meet that responsibility with eagerness to serve, compassion, and genuineness (Letseka, 2013). Individual coaching on Anxiety Management, Boundary Setting, Coping Skills, Goal Setting, Grief and Loss, Emotional Regulation, Life Transitions, Mindfulness Techniques, meditation, yoga, Parenting Skills, Relationship Building, Social Skills, Self-Care Strategies, and Stress Management have proved successful in African communities (Hanks, 2008). Ubuntu tenets of collaboration, respect and integrity permits the creation of inclusive social and cognitive spaces for construction of knowledge needed to enhance school counselling (Lephoto, 2021). Thus, the development of effective Ubuntu oriented school counselling can help to eliminate any discrimination of personality, and equal attitude to all learners become a culture in inclusive schools. Ubuntu values of collaboration, solidarity, social justice, empathy, care and empowerment are the

necessary cultural capital to enhance school counselling in Lesotho schools (Lephoto, 2021).

Methodology

The nature of this research is essentially qualitative. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:398) maintain that 'qualitative researchers investigate in depth small distinct groups as the researcher is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the research participant perspective'. The phenomenological research design is relevant to the research since the aim is to understand and explore perceptions and experiences on Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in counselling adolescents with conduct disorders, particularly for a small selected group in their natural setting. The school counsellors and teachers were given a platform to express themselves in the interviews, explaining how they feel about Ubuntu counselling techniques in schools. They were given an opportunity to make suggestions on how to embrace Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in counselling adolescents in secondary schools.

Population and sampling

For interviews, the sample included 4 students, 2 school counsellors and 4 parents of secondary schools in Nkayi, Matabeleland North province of Zimbabwe. For focus group discussions, 2 groups of adolescent students composed of a total of 10 students. The schools are implementing inclusive education for students with conduct disorders access the school curriculum through enhanced guidance and counselling. The sample of 20 participants was conveniently selected from secondary school teachers, students and parents, where the researcher had contact persons for easy data gathering.

Instrumentation

Data gathering took place through focus group discussion, individual interviews with students, school counsellors and parents. The method used for interviewing participants has been chosen because of the quality of data it produces and for its ability to allow the researcher to combine the benefits derived from interviews as well as from participant observation. The researcher also recorded observations made during counselling practice sessions and students interaction.

Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participating teachers and the participants consented to participate in the study where their responses were kept in confidence as their names were not appended to their responses. Participants were also free to withdraw from the study when they felt to do so.

Data analysis

Data analysis is an important stage when conducting research. It should be accurately done to enable the researcher to answer the research question(s). The major goal of data analysis was to condense data so that researchers can interact with it meaningfully (Lichtman, 2010). Data analysis involved three steps: organising the data, coming up with themes and interpreting the data. At this stage, the researchers sorted and resorted data until meaningful themes emerge. The study employed a qualitative, thematic data analysis approach where the data gathered was coded, organised into emerging themes and analysed.

Results and Discussion

The findings from the interviews and observation are discussed below:

How effective is Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in counselling adolescents with conduct disorders?

Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy was considered a holistic approach to counselling that combines psychological techniques with spiritual and cultural elements derived from African traditions. Participants agreed that Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy recognises the interconnectedness of the mind, body, and spirit, with interventions involving not only talk therapy but also incorporating mindfulness techniques, meditation, expressive arts, and other practices that support the overall well-being of adolescents. While Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy have been considered as effective in certain contexts, it is essential to note that teachers in Nkayi secondary schools confirmed that there is limited scientific research specifically examining its effectiveness in treating adolescents with conduct disorders. Conduct disorder was understood as a complex mental health condition characterised by persistent patterns of aggressive, antisocial, and rule-breaking behaviours by students. Participants agreed that effective treatment of conduct disorders typically involves a multimodal approach that addresses various factors such as individual, family, and social dynamics. Participants stated that spirituality and cultural factors can provide a sense of meaning, connectedness, and support, which if well-embraced may positively impact the therapeutic process. Participants also agreed that Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy may incorporate rituals, ceremonies and community involvement as part of the treatment approach, with stakeholders made aware of it.

However, some participants argued that while Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy may have anecdotal support, there is a lack of rigorous scientific research specifically examining its effectiveness in treating conduct disorders. Participants in this study indicated that Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy draws from specific cultural traditions, and therefore it is crucial to work with therapists who are knowledgeable and experienced in integrating cultural elements into therapy appropriately. Participants also highlighted that adolescents with conduct disorders have diverse needs and experiences and with inadequately trained staff, it is important to consider the unique characteristics of each individual and tailor the treatment accordingly. Thus, participants advocated for comprehensive assessment by a qualified mental health professional to help determine the most appropriate treatment approach for adolescents with conduct disorders.

Students indicated that Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy is less effective as it lacks the collaborative approach from therapists, psychiatrists, and special educators which makes it difficult to address the multiple aspects of conduct disorders by teachers only who are not well-informed and not ready to deal with conduct disorder. Participants also indicated some barriers to the implementation of the therapy itself and the overall effectiveness of the treatment considering the use of Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in counselling adolescents with conduct disorders in secondary schools. It was mentioned that absence of empirical evidence and standardized protocols make it challenging to evaluate the therapy's outcomes. Some participants indicated that negative attitudes in the use of therapy stems from teachers' and students' beliefs as individuals may not feel comfortable engaging in Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy due to parental or personal beliefs, religious affiliations and cultural differences from the rural context leading to some ethical implications when incorporating spiritual and cultural practices into therapy. Participants also lamented the lack of standardised assessment tools particularly on evaluating the effectiveness of Ubuntu therapy in counselling as availability of teachers and school counsellors trained in Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy may be limited in rural secondary schools.

How best can teachers embrace Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in counselling adolescents with conduct disorders in Nkayi Secondary Schools?

Teachers highlighted that integrating Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy into counselling practices in secondary schools to support adolescents with conduct disorders requires a

thoughtful and collaborative approach through appropriate teacher training and professional development on Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy so that educators understand the principles, cultural context, and appropriate implementation of this therapy to provide guidance and support. Teachers indicated that collaboration between teachers, school counsellors and mental health professionals is crucial to incorporate Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy principles into the overall support system for adolescents with conduct disorders. Participants argued that secondary school teachers need to emphasize reconciliation and restorative justice, foster an inclusive and respectful environment that embraces diverse cultural backgrounds so as to respect and honour the cultural beliefs and practices of students and their families, encouraging students to feel comfortable expressing their cultural identities and beliefs. Participants indicated that teachers need to incorporate elements of Ubuntu philosophy into their teaching practices by promoting empathy, compassion, and interconnectedness among students through open discussions, group work, and collaborative problem-solving.

As participants agreed that Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy often incorporates rituals, ceremonies, and symbolism, it was emphasised that there is need for teachers to explore incorporating meaningful rituals or symbolic practices into classroom activities or school-wide events so as to foster a sense of belonging, connectedness, and emotional healing for students. Therefore teachers were lobbied to establish a supportive and nurturing classroom environment that promotes positive behaviour, emotional well-being, and social skills development. Participants urged teachers to encourage cooperation, empathy, and conflict resolution skills among students as a way of embracing Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in effective teaching and learning.

Discussion

The findings indicated that most of the teachers in schools appreciate Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy as a holistic approach to counselling adolescent students with conduct disorder, although there are some barriers that condense its effectiveness. Similarly, Mabovula (2011) agrees that Ubuntu counselling and wellness provide compassionate and multiculturally competent counselling and wellness services for racial/ethnic minorities and underserved populations. This study reiterated that Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy recognises the interconnectedness of the mind, body, and spirit, with interventions involving talk therapy incorporating mindfulness techniques, meditation, expressive arts, and other practices that support the overall well-being of adolescents. Similar sentiments were highlighted by Hanks (2008) who argues that individual coaching on anxiety management, boundary setting, coping skills, goal setting, grief and loss, emotional regulation, life transitions, mindfulness techniques, meditation, yoga, parenting skills, relationship building, social skills, self-care strategies, and stress management have proved successful in African communities. Teachers and school counsellors have inadequate knowledge of using Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy in dealing with secondary school adolescents with conduct disorders. Secondary schools in Nkayi lack collaborative approach from school counsellors, psychiatrists and special educators which makes it difficult to address the multiple aspects of conduct disorders by teachers only. A study by Siziba (2022) establishes that teachers have inadequate knowledge on embracing Ubuntu in inclusion, although the current study agrees on lack of knowledge on Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy. This means that the spiritual component of therapy needs attention. Lack of standardised protocols, negative attitude emanating from different beliefs, religious affiliations and cultural differences and lack of rigorous scientific research on Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy abbreviates its effectiveness in treating conduct disorders. Unavailability of secondary school teachers and school counsellors trained in Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy limit the effectiveness of Ubuntu spiritual

psychotherapy in managing adolescents with conduct disorder in schools.

The current study revealed that Nkayi secondary schools should therefore embark on integrating Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy into counselling practices in secondary schools to support adolescents with conduct disorders. Schools require a thoughtful and collaborative approach through appropriate teacher training and professional development on Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy so that educators understand the principles, cultural context, and appropriate implementation of Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy to provide proper guidance and support. The study established that collaboration between parents, teachers, school counsellors and mental health professionals is crucial to incorporate Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy principles into the overall support system for adolescents with conduct disorders. Although Setiloane (1986:13) and Qangule (2019) affirms that in the African community, it is the responsibility of adults to shape children, so that they may learn how to live with others in the community, this study established that teachers, school counsellors and mental health professionals are part of the community that need to be actively involved in raising students with conduct disorder. Teachers cannot remain alone in the ecological context in dealing with adolescents with conduct disorder as they live in a community of professionals, as Mbiti argues that "an individual does not exist alone except corporately" (Mbiti, 1970:109). This collaboration can involve sharing information, discussing interventions, and jointly monitoring the progress of students, where students are part of the therapy with teachers initiatively educating themselves about Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy. It is important to note that teachers should not attempt to provide therapy or counselling beyond their professional scope (Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education, 2015) therefore, the integration of Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy should be done in collaboration with trained mental health professionals who can guide and supervise the process. This study revealed that teachers need to establish a supportive and nurturing classroom environment that promotes positive behaviour, emotional well-being, and social skills development as a way of embracing Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in effective teaching and learning. In other words, by embracing Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy principles and working collaboratively with mental health professionals, teachers can contribute to creating a supportive and culturally sensitive environment for adolescents with conduct disorders emphasising reconciliation and restorative justice in schools. By embracing Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy principles, collaborating with mental health professionals, and creating a supportive and inclusive environment, teachers can contribute to the well-being and personal growth of adolescents with conduct disorders in secondary schools.

Conclusion

The study concluded that although most of the teachers in schools appreciate Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy as a holistic approach to counselling adolescent students with conduct disorder, some barriers such as inadequate knowledge and skill, lack of collaboration and training, negative attitudes and unavailability of standardised protocols condense its effectiveness. Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy recognises the interconnectedness of the mind, body, and spirit, with interventions involving talk therapy incorporating mindfulness techniques, meditation, expressive arts, and other practices that support the overall well-being of adolescents.

The study further concluded that educators in secondary schools should embark on integrating Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy into counselling practices in secondary schools to support adolescents with conduct disorders. For teachers to fully embrace Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in counselling adolescents with conduct disorders in Nkayi secondary schools, the study argues that appropriate teacher training and professional development on Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy should be embraced so that educators understand the

principles, cultural context, and appropriate implementation of Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy to provide proper guidance and support. It is also concluded that collaboration between parents, teachers, school counsellors and mental health professionals is crucial as teachers cannot remain alone but jointly monitoring the progress of students with conduct disorders with other professionals. Establishment of a supportive and nurturing classroom environment that promotes positive behaviour, emotional well-being, and social skills development can be one of the ways of embracing Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy in managing adolescents with conduct disorders in rural secondary schools.

Recommendations

This study therefore recommends that;

- Teachers and school counsellors need to embrace Ubuntu Spiritual Psychotherapy as a technique for counselling adolescent with conduct disorder in secondary schools. Attending workshops, seminars, or training programs to gain a deeper understanding of how to incorporate Ubuntu principles into counselling practices is the essence of matter.
- A general understanding of the various religious, ritual, and spiritual practices by teachers and school counsellors from different world views is necessary for ethical relevance when using Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy.
- Effectiveness of Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy needs collaborative attention of the learners, parent, teacher, school counsellor and significant others and relevant intervention techniques that value Ubuntu diversity.
- Staff development and in-service training of teachers and school counsellors should be considered in counselling adolescents with conduct disorder in secondary schools as Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy emphasises the importance of community and interconnectedness which might be beyond their professional scope.
- Teachers need to engage in on-going professional development to deepen their understanding of Ubuntu spiritual psychotherapy and expand their counselling skills though collaborating with others to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to counselling that incorporates Ubuntu principles.

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