
EFFECT OF EDUCATIONAL GROUP COUNSELLING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DAMATURU METROPOLIS, YOBE STATE, NIGERIA

Dr. Usman Mohammed Dakasku¹

Department of Education, Faculty of Arts and Education,
Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria

Zara Mustapha Lawan²

Department of Education, Faculty of Arts and Education,
Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria

Saleh Musa³

Department of Education, Faculty of Arts and Education,
Yobe State University, Damaturu, Nigeria
(Correspondence: musaa099@gmail.com; +2348026203662)

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu, Metropolis, Yobe State, Nigeria. The study has two objectives which are to determine the effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu metropolis; to determine whether the effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu metropolis differ according to gender. Similarly, two corresponding research hypotheses guided the study. Cohort quasi-experimental research designed was used for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two hundred and sixty five (265) students for the study. The findings of the study reveals that there was significant effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students ($t=-7.227$; $p<0.05$) and there was significant difference on the effect of educational group counselling on gender of the students ($t=3.391$; $p<0.05$). Based on the findings of the study, the study recommended that counselling/educational psychologists should intensify their effort to organize seminars on the implications of educational group counselling as effective interventions towards improving students' poor academic performance. Students in the schools should be encouraged and trained on the effective visitation of school counsellors, this will make the students to adopt effective attitude towards visiting school counsellors on various issues affecting their school activities.

Keyword: Educational, Group Counselling and Academic Performance

Introduction

The need for counselling in our educational system is increasingly becoming necessity. This is due to the fact that the days when teachers and principals handle complex problems are gone. Young learners in the school are left today with variety of problems. These problems include educational, vocational and persona-social. Educational group counselling is viewed as the process of “assisting students to realize the maximum educational benefits to them by helping them to better understand themselves and to learn to use the resources of the institution to meet their special educational needs and aspirations” (Sharma, 2017). In the word of Jones (2014) the purpose of educational guidance and counselling programme is to assist students in the development of meaningful educational and career goals. It assists students in developing educational plans consistent with their life goals.

Educational group counselling at the secondary school level provide information about academic progress and requirements, and carefully review students’ academic and educational needs, performance, and challenges (Akinboye, 2016). It is assumed that students at secondary schools are within the age bracket of 12-20 years and therefore not mature enough to make decisions independently. Consequently, they might engage themselves in behaviors that may interfere with their studies (Aina, 2013). Peer influence also sometimes entices students into antisocial behavior like drug abuse and irresponsible sexual behaviour which eventually interrupt their studies (Salawu & Abdulkadir, 2011). Some students might not have been admitted into department of their choice and therefore may find it difficult to create interest and concentrate on their current programmes. Generally, students begin secondary education with limited knowledge about career prospects related to the courses they are enrolled (King, 1993). In addition, job market is very dynamic and keeps on changing every so often that unless students get up to date information they find difficulties after completion of their studies. Students who need to pursue further education also need information on opportunities for advancement (Ezendu & Obi, 2013).

Jones (2014) noted that students who are exposed to educational guidance and counselling services perform in their study better than their counter parts. However, the educational guidance and counselling programme in many secondary schools may not adequately tackle academic advising since in most cases the programme is mainly focused on social and psychological issues affecting students. If students’ academic performance needs are not addressed, they may fail their examinations or drop out from school and subsequently their performance (Omulema, 2015). However, educational group counselling is aimed to aid students to solve their problem related to education at different levels of education from the primary level to the University, as they differ in their intellectual abilities and interests. They are guided to select courses in accordance with their intellectual abilities so that after completing formal education they may effectively adjust in their environment. Similarly, Akinboye (2016) explained that the educational guidance play active roles in dealing with the emotional and psychological problems that could mar the academic progress of the students.

However, educational group counselling is needed because individual differ in intellectual abilities, interest and motivation and in their levels of inspiration. Therefore, to cater the needs of individual student, educational group counselling is needed in schools. Nevertheless, educational guidance and counselling is essential in the area of choice of courses, decision as to further education, making of higher grade, pursue the right type of education, assist students make informed decisions about their education, facilitates the smooth transition for children from home to school help students to develop effective study habit, identifying students strength and weakness, solve students personal problem that might

hinder learning process and help students to cope with examination anxiety (Salawu & Abdulkadir, 2011). Similarly, lack of educational group counselling in secondary schools affects students' academic performance this is because slow learners would not be encouraged and guided to put in their best in their study. These therefore, affect the students to perform poorly which may invariably give rise to poor performance academically (Nnamani & Oyibe, 2016).

Academic performance is commonly measured through examination or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best evaluated or which aspects are most important. However, procedural knowledge such as skill or declarative knowledge such as assessment results which individual factors successfully predict academic achievement elements such as test anxiety, environment, maturation when developing model of schools achievement (Ige, 2017). Today, students' academic achievement in many public secondary schools is not encouraging. The poor performances of students have defeated the aims of parents/guidance sending their children to public secondary schools to study. The general publics have also been disappointed by the rate of poor academic achievement and they contend that the standards of skills acquisition in public secondary schools have fallen. Academic performance of senior secondary schools students has been declining over time (Ambe-Uva, Iwachukwu & Jibir, 2018). Students are prone to making unwise career choice or no choice at all because there is no counsellor to guide them and no sufficient information for educational counselling. The fact that secondary school student's cannot make realistic educational plans is a serious problem that prompted the researchers to investigate the effect of educational group counselling on the academic performance of secondary school students in Damaturu Metropolis Yobe State, Nigeria.

Research findings have suggested that educational group counselling improves retention through improved academic performance among other benefits (McLaren, 2004; McArthur, 2005; Sayles, 2005). Students who do not receive educational guidance may take more time to graduate, or have lower GPAs because they lack knowledge of school resources (Hunter & White, 2004; Flaga, 2006). Interaction with school counsellors through academic guidance can positively affect a student's intellectual, academic, and personal development (Alexitch, 2002).

In the same vein, Egbule (2006) emphasized that educational guidance and counselling services enable students to make appropriate use of their educational opportunities. It aids in planning effective study habit which in turn, enhances students' academic competencies. Furthermore, Adeoye (2016) revealed that educational group counselling services are intervention processes that are effective in dealing with student academic problems. The counsellor also keeps proper record of continuous assessment of the academic activities of the students. Through the counsellors effort, the academic deficiencies ranging from slow learning, lack of attention, poor concentration and other learning difficulties are remedied (Yusuf, 2004).

However, despite the efforts of scholars and researchers in finding lasting solution to the problem of poor academic performance of secondary school students, little studies have concentrated on the effect of educational group counselling, therefore, in order to filled gaps in the previous studies and add more to the existing literature, this study investigated effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu metropolis, Yobe State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In schools, success is measured by the level of the students' academic performance. Students' achievement remains a top priority for educators. Stakeholders in education have affirmed that the goal of education cannot be achieved without the input of professional counsellors and the National Policy on Education (2013) has emphasized the importance and relevance of school counsellors in every secondary school. Therefore, guidance and counselling programmes in general plays a vital role in preventing educational, personal-social and vocational problems that the students might have faced in their studies. Moreover, many school's administrators are yet to embrace the programme because they do not see the benefit of appropriate educational counselling.

Similarly, Adegoke (2004) affirmed that students encounter a lot of academic challenges which they find difficult to cope with. Oluwatimilehin (2012) explained that indiscipline, drug addiction, poverty, non-challant attitude of the students have resulted into poor academic performance. As such, students need the services of professional counsellor in their schools. Therefore, the gap in achievement between students' academic excellent constitute a great source of worry and serious concern as discomfiture to both parent, schools managers, policy maker and various government agencies responsible for the education of students in senior secondary schools in Damaturu Metropolis. In addition, most students are left unguided either because their schools have no educational guidance or counselling unit or the nature of educational guidance or counselling is not up to standard. Therefore, owing to the gap identified above, the researchers are concerned by the situation and ought to investigate the effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu Metropolis, Yobe State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to determine:

- i. Effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu metropolis.
- ii. Whether the effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu metropolis differ according to gender.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu metropolis.

H₀₂: The effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu metropolis does not significantly differ according to gender.

Methodology

In this study the research design employed was quasi experimental research design. Specifically, the study employed the cohort quasi-experimental design. This design is aimed at comparison of post-test scores of two or more cohorts (Kpolovie, 2010). Cohort design is used to investigate the effect of treatment conditions on a dependent variable by obtaining post-test scores from the cohorts and comparing them with post-test scores of cohorts of the control groups.

The population of the study comprises of Five (5) public Senior Secondary Schools in Damaturu Metropolis with the total population of seven thousand five hundred and eighty seven (7,587) (Teaching Service Board, 2020). Purposive sampling technique was used to select two hundred and sixty five (265) students with low academic performance from the five selected public senior secondary schools through end of first term examination record for the 2019/2020 academic session. This record is also called an unobtrusive measure. It refers to data collection procedure, which involves no intrusion into the naturally occurring course of events. The unobtrusive method of data collection is useful because it eliminates the reaction of respondents to testing, and being observed, or interviewed, which often influence the nature of data obtained by researchers (Awotunde & Ugodulunwa, 2004). This method is also useful as supplementary to the use of interviews and questionnaires because it provides a useful way of checking the validity of data they yielded. However, the sampled participants were divided into 2 groups for each school selected, one group received educational group counselling and the other group served as control group and received lectures on COVID-19.

The study was carried out in three different but interconnected phases viz: pre-treatment, treatment and post-treatment. At the pre-treatment, a preliminary meeting was organized to familiarize with the selected participant for the study. At the treatment stage participants in the experimental group only were exposed to 7 sessions of treatment on educational guidance. Topics treated include: reading and note taking, planning and organization of time for study, learning and remembering strategies, planning, writing of homework, assignment, and use of library and preparation for taking test and examination. Each session covered an average of 1 hour and once in a week. The control groups were exposed to a lecture on COVID-19 for 7 sessions as well. At the post treatment stage the end of second term examination scores were used as an academic performance of the experimental group and those in the control group. Paired sample t-test and t-test for independent sample statistical analysis were employed to analyze the data for the study. Paired sample t-test was used so as to establish any significant difference in the academic performance of participant in experimental and control group while t-test for independent sample was used to test the significant difference between the students gender.

Results

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu metropolis.

Table 1: Summary of paired sample t-test of Students Exposed to Educational Group Counselling and those exposed to COVID-19 lectures

| Group | N | \bar{X} | Std Dev | Std Error Mean | t | df | sig.(2-tailed) |
|--------------|-----|-----------|---------|----------------|--------|----|----------------|
| Experimental | 170 | 48.0588 | 9.43710 | 2.28883 | | | |
| | | | | | -7.227 | 45 | .000 |
| Control | 95 | 21.3529 | 5.11291 | 1.48260 | | | |

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

The result in table 1 showed that there was significant effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of students exposed to educational group counselling ($t = -7.227$; $p < 0.05$). This is because the calculated p-value of .000 was found to be lower than

the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu metropolis is hereby rejected.

H₀₂: The effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu metropolis does not significantly differ according to gender.

Table 1: Summary of independent t-test of Students Exposed to Educational Group Counselling according to gender

| Gender | N | \bar{X} | StdDev | Std Error | Df | t-cal | t-crit | Sig (p) |
|--------|----|-----------|---------|-----------|-----|-------|--------|---------|
| Male | 85 | 30.9474 | 6.07795 | 1.39438 | | | | |
| | | | | | 168 | 3.391 | 2.05 | .002 |
| Female | 85 | 24.6364 | 1.02691 | .30963 | | | | |

* Significant at $p < 0.05$

Result in table 2 is the independent sample t-test which showed that, there is a significant difference between male and female students exposed to educational group counselling. This is because the calculated p-value of .002 was found to be lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Moreover, the calculated mean value of 30.9474 and standard deviation value of 6.07795 for male students is higher than the calculated mean value of 24.6364 and standard deviation value of 1.02691 for female students. This implies that male students adjusted better than the female students. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that the effect of educational group counselling on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Damaturu metropolis does not significantly differ according to gender is hereby rejected.

Discussion

The result in the Table 1 showed that, there was significant effect of educational group counselling intervention on academic performance of students in the experimental group. The mean value of the table further revealed that the students in control group had lower academic performance mean scores than their counterpart in the experimental group. This further means that the treatment had significant effect on academic performance of secondary school students. This finding is in line with the previous findings of McLaren, (2004); McArthur, (2005); Sayles (2005) that educational guidance improves retention through improved academic performance among other benefits. However, students who do not receive educational guidance and counselling may take more time to graduate, or have lower GPAs because they lack knowledge of school resources (Hunter & White, 2004; Flaga, 2006). As such, interaction with school counsellors through academic counselling can positively affect a student's intellectual, academic, and personal development (Alexitch, 2002).

The result in the table 2 showed that there was no significant difference in the gender of the student treated with educational group counselling. Since the conceptualization of educational group counselling, several of studies have been done showing its ability to effectively treat on students' gender effectively. In the same vein, Egbule (2006) emphasized that educational guidance and counselling services enable students to make appropriate use of their educational opportunities irrespective of their gender. It aids in planning effective study habit which in turn, enhances students' academic competencies. Furthermore, Adeoye (2016)

revealed that educational counselling service is an intervention processes that is effective in dealing with student academic problems. Therefore counsellors should keep proper record of continuous assessment of the academic activities of the students. Through the counsellors effort, the academic deficiencies ranging from slow learning, lack of attention, poor concentration and other learning difficulties are remedied (Yusuf, 2004).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, persistent poor academic performance of secondary school students need not to continue forever. There is hope that with the use of educational group counselling, the situation can be changed for the better. The study has found out that educational group counselling has an effect on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in the school. By and large, it was also concluded from this study that educational group counselling has effect on the students' academic performance in the school. By implication, students' poor academic performance can be drastically changed through educational counselling.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Counselling/Educational psychologists should intensify their effort to organize seminars on the implications of educational counselling as effective interventions towards improving students' poor academic performance.
2. Students (male and female) in the schools should be encouraged and trained on the effective visitation of school counsellors. This will make the students to adopt effective attitude towards visiting school counsellors on various issues affecting their school activities.

REFERENCES

- Adeoye, E.A. (2016). *Relationship between the counsellor and other school guidance personnel*. In A.I. Idowu (Ed.). *Guidance and counselling in education*. Ilorin:University of Ilorin Press.
- Aina, J.K., (2013) Analysis of gender performance in physics in College of Education, Nigeria. *Journal of Education Trends 1 (1)*, 58-64.
- Akinboye, O.J (2016) *Guidance and Counselling Strategies for Handling Adolescent and Youth Problems*. Ibadan: University Press
- Alexitch, L. R. (2002). The role of help-seeking attitudes and tendencies in students' preferences for academic advising. *Journal of College Student Development, 43(1)*,5–14.
- Ambe-Uva T. N., Iwuchukwu, O. &Jibrin L. J. (2008). Gender Analysis in National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN): Implication and Policy Issues in Bridging the Divide. *Journal of Applied Science Research 4 (7)*, 814-825
- Egbule, J.F. (2006). *Guidance services*. In Okobiah and Okorodudu (2006). *Issues, concepts, theories and techniques of guidance and counselling*. Benin City Nigeria: Ethiope publishing Cooperation
- Ezendu, F.O. and Obi, T.N. (2013).Effect of gender and location on students' achievement in Chemistry in secondary schools in Nsukka L.G.A. of Enugu State, Nigeria.*Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 3(15)*.
- Federal Ministry of Education (2013).*National Policy on Education*, Lagos: NDECR.
- Flaga, C. T. (2006). The process of transition for community college transfer students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 30*,3-19. From <http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/mewa/html/assessment/checklists.html>
- Hunter, M. S. & White, E. R. (2004). Could fixing academic advising fix higher education? *About Campus, 2*, 20-25.
- Ige, O.O., (2007), Statistical analysis of the relationship between students' performance in English and Mathematics in some selected secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Education 4(172)*,164-171
- Jones, J. A., (2014).*Principles of Guidance*. New York: McGraw-Hill New York.
- King, M. (1993). *Academic advising, retention, and transfer*. In M. King (Ed.), *Academic advising: Organizing and delivering services for student success*. New directions for community colleges. (pp. 21-31). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- McArthur, R. (2005). Faculty-based advising: An important factor in community college retention. *Community College Review, 32(4)*, 1-19.
- McLaren, J. (2004). The changing face of undergraduate academic advising. *Guidance & Counseling, 19(4)*, 173-175.
- Nnamani, S.C, and Oyibe, A.O (2016).Gender and academic achievement of secondary school students in social studies in Abakaliki Urban of Ebonyi State.*British Journal of Education 4(8)*,72-83.
- Omulema B. (2015) *General Psychology*. Njoro: Egerton University Press.
- Sayles, S. (2005). Student Success Strategies.*The ABNF Journal, 16(5)*, 98-101.
- Sharma, V. (2017).*Guidance and Counseling in India*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.
- Yusuf, A.A. (2004). *Teachers and pupils attitude towards the introduction of guidance services in Ilorin West primary schools (Unpublished B.Ed project)*.University of Ilorin.