

THE THERAPEUTIC EFFECT OF GROUP COUNSELLING ON THE STUDY HABIT PROBLEMS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OSUN STATE OF NIGERIA.

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

Many students do not know how to study even though they seem to be reading their books while some play away their precious time during and after school hours.

Instead of looking inwards and examine their area of weaknesses, blames are shifted to the third party. But surely all hope should not be lost, the students themselves can make the best use of the available opportunities by cultivating effective study habit.

It has been found out that success as regards study habits depends not only on ability and hardwork but also on methodology (Tussing 1962).

According to Madox (1969) the differences between individuals in their capacity for work and study are determined by intelligence and special abilities; industry efforts, chance and phenotypic factors. So ability is not the only factor in accomplishing success.

Tabberer and Alman (1984) affirm that many students have problems with their study habit either while at school or at home. Some students find it difficult to get used to settling down for private study periods and to discipline themselves and make the most of their time instead of being distracted by other activities.

The New Standard Dictionary of the English Language defines study as "to apply the mind to, with a view to learn or learn about, to examine, to search into, to master the details of"

Habit is also defined as a regular and fixed mode of action whether physical or mental; it is also a condition which causes a tendency to continue such a mode.

Learning, according to Witting (1970) consists of three major stages; the first stage being the acquisition stage which entails reading, knowing what has been read and having a clear knowledge of what is being studied. It is also referred to as the concentration or attention stage.

Retention stage is the second stage and it involves keeping in the brain what has been read or studied.

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The third stage is the Recall stage and it is the last stage. This is the stage at which what has been learnt and stored in the brain is now brought forth for use verbally or practically.

Making use of Bakare's study Habit Inventory (SHI), Ojo (1977) found out that Nigerian Students had problems with the 'concentration' aspect of the study Habit exercise.

Karlin (1964) emphasized that achievement in Study Habit is a pre-requisite to achievement in school work and that when no provision is made for achievement by the weak student, such a student would eventually be frustrated and remain in a miserable state of academic failure until such a time when he can improve on his study habit.

This idea was supported by Unoh (1972) that opined that educational wastage and under achievement is likely to occur even among potentially able students unless study skills are effectively identified and taught and until study habit difficulties are effectively remedied.

According to Akinboye (1980) some of the factors that affect individuals study habits include; the study environment, motivation, remembering, and forgetting, time scheduling and efficient use of time, note-taking, reading skills, personality variables and socio-economic background.

The problem of lack of motivation to study is compounded by inadequate resources, poor environment and unsuitable attitudinal orientation.

Akinboye (1976) tested one hundred and seventy-six secondary school students selected from a pre-identified population of subjects with poor study habit and found out that the majority of these students could not study effectively except when given planned psychological support.

Group method of guidance is a potent method of psychological intervention which also enhances social orientation. There has been an assumption that the more students work together in a small group, the more they interact and the more they come to understand one another and be attracted to one another (Ezewu 1986).

Oladele (1991) has described group counselling as a process in which a counsellor is involved in a relationship with a number of counsellees and that group counselling focuses on assisting counsellees to cope with their day to day adjustment and developmental problems. The values of group counselling have been summarized by him as follows:

- (a) Group Counselling provides the counsellees an opportunity to develop positive natural relationships with others.
- (b) Group Counselling may provide the counsellee an opportunity of a real-life situation in which members can test reality, gain insights into his own feeling, peers reactions and feedback and also suggestions concerning alternative ways of behaviour.

- (c) In group counselling, the counsellees not only receive help but also help others.
- (d) Group provide for an economic use of the counsellor's time than individual counselling.
- (e) Group maximizes a climate of coping and interdependence among members.
- (f) Group encourage self-exploration and provide an opportunity to try out new social skills and role.

The major objective of group counselling is to help each counsellee achieve a more positive and realistic image.

This view has been buttressed by Olayinka (1993) who defined group counselling as an interpersonal process led by a professionally trained counsellor and conducted with individuals who are coping with typical developmental problems. It focuses on thoughts, feelings, attitudes, values, purposes, behaviour and goals of the individual and the total group. He goes on further to restate that the group transactions and group mechanisms facilitates increased understanding of self and others. It also creates the conditions and climate for re-evaluating one's thought, feelings and behaviour and all these would make the counsellee to be better equipped to experience and cope with the tasks of daily living.

Olayinka (1993) indicated some occasions that demand group counselling and poor study habit was mentioned among others.

Poor study habits constitute real hinderance to the self-actualization of the individual students and it is against this background that this study was carried out to explore the extent to which group counselling could be of help in solving the problems of poor study habit among secondary school students.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Two null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

- (1) There will be no significant difference in the pre-treatment and post-treatment scores of students exposed to group counselling.
- (2) There will be no significant difference in the study habit problems of students exposed to group counselling and those not exposed to group counselling.

METHODOLOGY

DESIGN This study employed a clinical approach and as such a pre-test - post-test design using the student t-test to find out if there is any significant difference in the study habit problems of students exposed to group counselling

and those not exposed to group counselling. The two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

SAMPLE This study was carried out with 40 senior secondary school class two students, 20 boys and 20 girls (8 students each were chosen from five schools) all in Oshogbo township to facilitate accessibility and ensure prompt attendance. 20 students were randomly chosen from 128 students who had previously indicated their willingness to participate in the programme as the experimental group while another 20 were chosen to serve as control. Their ages range from 14 years to 18 years with a mean age of 16 years.

INSTRUMENT

Bakare's (1977) Study Habits Inventory (SHI) was made use of as a pre-test and post-test instrument. It is a self report inventory. It affords the subject the opportunity to describe the situations, habits and conditions which affect his use of study time and his subsequent performance on tests and examination.

The inventory consists of 45 items written as direct questions concerning students habits and methods of study to which the respondents were asked to provide answers on a five-point scale of how frequently each of the questions applies to him. The SHI according to Bakare (1977) has a test-retest reliability of at least 0.83.

PROCEDURE

All the 40 students that constitute both the experimental and the control groups were given the SHI to respond to before the commencement of Therapy. It was after this that they were divided by random sampling into either the experimental or the control group. The researcher continued group counselling with the experimental group while no treatment was given to the control group.

Because of distance the whole group counselling was conducted four times within a period of two weeks. Each counselling session lasted for an average of two hours after the normal school periods. Particular attention was paid to each of the eight sections of the study Habit Inventory. These are:-

Section A : Home work and assignment

Section B : Time Allocation

Section C : Reading and note taking

Section D : Study period procedures

Section E : Concentration

Section F : Written work

Section G : Examinations

Section H : Teacher consultation

The question in each section were re-examined and turned into positive statements for the students to re-align their study habits. At the end of the fourth counselling session, the study Habits Inventory (SHI) was administered to the 40 students (the experimental and the control groups) to collect data on a post-test basis as to the effectiveness or otherwise of the group counselling sections.

RESULT

ANALYSIS OF DATA The pre-test scores and the post-test scores for each of the 20 subjects that made up the experimental group were computed and subjected to the t-correlated test while post-test scores of the control group were also computed and compared with those of the experimental group - using the student t-test.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

HYPOTHESIS ONE To test the hypothesis which states that; there will be no significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores of the students exposed to group counselling. The data collected from the 20 subjects to the inventory before and after their exposure to group counselling were subjected to t- (correlated) test and the analysis of the result showed that there is a significant difference between the students scores before and after group counselling.

TABLE ONE
COMPARISON OF THE PRE-TEST AND THE POST-TEST
SCORES OF SUBJECTS EXPOSED TO GROUP COUNSELLING.

	X_1	X_2	d	d^2
1.	131	148	-17	289
2.	128	135	-7	49
3.	130	136	-6	36
4.	104	140	-36	1296
5.	96	137	-41	1681
6.	102	135	-33	1069
7.	131	139	-8	64
8.	138	145	-7	49
9.	125	137	-12	144
10.	130	140	-10	100
11.	120	133	-13	169
12.	134	142	-12	144
13.	110	151	-41	1681
14.	129	145	-17	289
15.	137	149	-12	144
16.	108	137	-19	261
17.	131	135	-4	16
18.	93	135	-42	1764
19.	144	150	-6	36
20.	116	158	-42	1764
		Total	= 1578	11,165

d = difference

$$d = (X_1 - X_2)$$

where X_1 = Pre-test scores

X_2 = Post-test scores

t (correlated) = 6.13

t (critical) = 2.09

Since the observed value of t (correlated) 6.13 is more than the t (critical) Hypothesis one is rejected.

To test for Hypothesis Two which states that there will be no significant difference in the study Habit problems of students exposed to group counselling and those not exposed to group counselling.

TABLE TWO:

**T - TEST COMPARISON OF THE POST-TEST SCORES
OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND THE CONTROL GROUP.**

Variable	Experimental Group (Exposed to Group) (Counselling)			Control Group			t	p
	N	X	S.D.	N	X	S.D.		
Post-test Scores	20	141.35	2.63	20	129	2.89	23.33	0.05

N = Number of Subjects

X = Mean of Scores

S.D. = Standard Deviation

d.f. = 38

t (obs) = 23.3

t (crit) = 2.05

observed is greater than the t critical the hypothesis two is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis stated in this study was rejected. In other words, there is

significant difference in the pre- and post- treatment scores of students exposed to group counselling.

t (correlated) = 6.13; t (critical) = 2.09; P = 0.05; df = 19

The second hypothesis was also rejected to proof that there is a significant difference in the Study Habit problems of those exposed to Group counselling and those not exposed to group counselling t (observed) = 23.3; t (critical) = 2.05; P = 0.05; df = 38).

These findings are in consonance with Olayinka (1993) that recommended that group counselling is a potent instrument in the remediation of poor study habits, and that group counselling provided opportunity for learning for self direction with respect to educational, vocational and personal - social aspects of life.

Group counselling facilitates dynamic problem solving since it provides an avenue for identification with other group members and the common knowledge that the particular problem at hand is being experienced by others and not just peculiar to a counsellee.

Also, Group counselling provides opportunity for peer - reinforcement and group brain-storming to acquire skills which can be practised and applied to out - of - group situations.

Group Counselling is more relevant and cost-effective than individual counselling especially when there are many clients having the same or similar problems. Members of the group are reinforced in their attempts to be honest, to take risks, to experiment with new behaviour, to make use of their initiative and to participate fully in the group sessions.

The mutual learning and exploration of personal concerns bind the group members in a meaningful way (Corey 1995). This view is further strengthened by the submission of Brabender and Fallon (1993) that the group facilitates progress towards individual goals.

Group Counselling affords the members of the group the opportunity to have varied practice situations and be trained in practice generalization to stabilize the desired target behaviour (Rose 1989).

CONCLUSION

That there is an increasing wave of poor academic performance among the youths of today due to poor study habits among other factors cannot be disputed. In order to cover up their inadequacies some of the students look for ways of cheating during examinations instead of preparing relevantly for the examinations.

Going by Akinboye's (1980) description of study as a determined, purposeful behavioural pattern geared towards previewing in an attempt to master an assignment which as such involves the totality of the behavioural traits, the implication is that school counsellors, teachers and all grades of educationist

CORES
COL GROUP.

t	p
23.33	0.05

would have to help their students in learning how to study effectively.

The regular academic classes can be utilized for Group counselling since the classroom, according to Olayinka (1993) is an almost, ideal, readymade group guidance laboratory. More studies need to be carried out in this area using a larger sample.

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