EFFECT OF RESILIENCE COUNSELING ON TEST ANXIETY AMONG STUDENTS OF HIGHER INSTITUTIONS OF YOBE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of resilience counseling on test anxiety among students in higher institutions in Yobe State. The study aimed to find out the prevalence of test anxiety among students in the Universities in Yobe State and to determine gender difference in the post-test mean scores on test anxiety exposed to resilience counseling among students in Universities in Yobe State The study used quasi-experimental design in form of pretest, posttest and control group. The population of this study were (100 level) students in Universities in Yobe State. The sample size was 320 and they were purposely selected to participate in the study. The study used researcher developed instrument for data collection titled Students Test Anxiety Identification Checklist (STAIC). Percentage and independent t-test was used in the analysis of data. The study findings revealed that there is prevalence of test anxiety among students. It was also found that there is gender difference in the mean scores on test anxiety exposed to resilience counseling among students in Universities in Yobe State. The study recommended that Student's Affairs unit and guidance and counseling centers in the universities should organize orientation and sensitization lectures to newly admitted students before the commencement of continuous assessment (CA) or semester examination. Teacher Counsellors /lecturers should make use of resilience therapy to minimize or eliminate test anxiety among students in Universities.

Keywords: Resilience Counseling, Test Anxiety Students.

Introduction

Education is one of the major aspect for the well-being of the society in all dimensions; economically, socially and politically as well as technologically. It is for this reason that much emphasis is attached to its acquisition at all times and at different levels. Thus, a person's

education is closely related to his/her life chances, income and well-being. Education is provided at various levels and one of these levels is undergraduate programme (Degree Programme). This programme is rigorous and demands adequate time and attention on the side of students taking into cognizance the number of courses being offered, nature of lectures and intensity of the training. Students that take part in such programme include newly admitted students and old students among others.

The main objective of every teaching-learning interaction is to bring about harmonious development of the individual and acquisition of desired knowledge, values and skills to enable the leaner to function in a particular way. The outcome of successful acquisition of knowledge and skills in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains are measured through series of tests and examinations after a period of instructions and it is referred as academic achievement (Muktar & Gishiwa, 2020). It can also be described as the outcome of education, that is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved educational goals. Jackson, (2010) lamented that the beginning of university programme can be a significant life transition in which people's abilities to adjust may be challenging. Newly admitted students who are commencing university studies found themselves somehow unfamiliar in with campus life often find the experience to be not only new, but also frightening and difficult to deal with it.

In the universities in Yobe State most of the students admitted are from secondary schools in the rural areas where interaction is homogeneous in nature and these categories of students lack tertiary institutions experiences like how to take lectures, writing an assignment and testes as well as examination among others. As such, most of the students find it difficult to adjust and many among them begin to develop phobia particularly in relation to taking tests and examinations.

In an attempt to address this issue, the Students Affairs Division in the universities in Yobe State usually make efforts to ameliorate such condition by, organizing annual orientation lectures for the newly admitted students. These orientation lectures are crucial in assisting the students to cope with some challenges they are facing during their first interactions in the universities like registration processes, booking accommodations, locating library and

BECAMES aware of university rules and regulation as well as to know lecture vanues, among others.

Equally, the Guidance and Counseling centers in the universities usually follow up with additional support services to such categories of students (fresher's) to sensitize them and counsel them on their feelings and perceptions about academic and other activities in the universities. From the records of guidance and counseling units of the two universities in the State, students are still displaying their fears and worries about their stay in the institutions.

The present study was carried out to find out students levels of resilience, prevalence of examination phobia and effect of resilience therapy on examination phobia among them.

Examine Students levels of resilience is necessary to be able to assist them to adjust and cope with the transition in the new environment and to face the challenges of test anxiety. Examinations/test cause anxiety for some students. They may be worried about the examination, for days before it takes place or during examination period, when taking the examination they may experience negative thoughts and unpleasant physical symptoms which can prevent them from performing well to the best of their ability. As observed by George (2014) examination phobia is simply a test to judge students' knowledge and capabilities in their personality. Generally examination period can cause tension and make the students nervous whether it is written or oral. Understanding the factors which influence student's adaptation is an important area in need of research.

Students can experience extreme discomfort and anxiety during examination/test situations, and seek avoidance whenever possible. However, little is known empirically regarding what effects resilience and exposure therapies have on these students particularly during examinations in the University.

Resilience refers to the ability to adapt and bounce back from worse situations, failure, conflicts, misfortune, frustration and depression. Resilience can also be defined as the capability of one and positively function in diverse situations (Sneha & Maheswari, 2021). Resilience can be described as one's ability to overcome adverse events. These events might include traumatic experiences, loss, serious health problems and other types of stress events like examination period that can significantly impact the health status and well-being.

Therapy is a treatment intended to relieve or heal disorder or to cure a particular phobia. Therapy can also be referred to as the psychological treatment of mental and emotional condition through verbal communication and interactions. Resilience therapy simply refers to the psychological treatment for helping one to be able to bounce back from adverse events phobia or traumatic life experience (Masten, 2014).

Test anxiety is a mental feeling of uneasiness or distress in reaction to a school situation that is perceived negatively. Test anxiety is a kind of anxiety which relates to the impending danger from the environment of the academic institution including teachers, subjects and certain events (Thakur, 2016). Test anxiety is one of the most common psychological disorders in school aged children and adolescents worldwide. It is associated with substantial negative effects on students, social, emotional, intellectual and academic success (Thakur, 2016).

Kavakci, Semiz, Kartal, Dikici and Kugu (2014) carried out a study on test anxiety prevalence and related variables in the students who are going to take the university entrance examination. The purpose of this study was to test anxiety among students and its diverse effect on students' academic performance. The objectives of the study were to find out the prevalence of test anxiety among students. The second objective was to identify the predictors of test anxiety and the related variables among students who were going to take the university entrance examination. Descriptive study design was used. The population of the study was 15700 who were tol take the university entrance examination. 436 students were randomly selected which comprised 220 females and 216 males from different schools. The instrument used for data collection was socio demographic form and Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI) Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) State Traits Anxiety Inventory (SATI). The study finding revealed that approximately half of the students 48.3 % were found with moderate level of test/ examination anxiety. The study concluded that the prevalence of examination anxiety was higher. Therefore, the study recommended that test anxiety prevention program should be organized to minimize depression and examination anxiety among students.

Thakur (2016) carried out a comparative study of examination phobia among boys and girls in rural and urban higher secondary school in Raipur (India). The general objective of this

study was to find out the significance differences in examination phobia among boys and girls in higher secondary schools. The specific objectives were to measure the prevalence of examination phobia among boys in higher secondary schools in the rural area, determine the causes related to examination phobia among girls in higher secondary schools in the rural area. Find out the causes related to examination phobia among boys in higher secondary school in the urban area. To measure the causes related to examination phobia among girls students at higher secondary schools in the urban area, and to compare the causes related to examination phobia between boys and girls students of rural and urban areas. The design of the study was descriptive survey. The population of the study was 187 and the sample size was 126 participants. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation and t-test was used in the analysis. The result revealed that there was no significant difference between boys and girls in the causes of examination phobia in higher secondary school. The finding also showed that location (rural or urban area) was not a significant factor in examination phobia among students in higher secondary school in Raipur India. The study recommended that relaxation techniques, bio feedback (to control stress and muscle tension) family therapy, parents training and meditation as well as healthy atmosphere for students should be provided to help students.

Khan and Joseph (2020) conducted a research on the impact of examination fear on secondary schools students' self-esteem in Karachi Pakistan. The objectives of the study were to determine the prevalence and to identify the factors which cause examination fear among secondary school students, to find out prevalence of examination fear on secondary school students self –esteem. The study used survey research design. The study adopted mixed method where questionnaire and interview were used as the instruments of data collection. The researcher used convenient random sampling technique and 138 students were selected to participate in the study. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed through statistical package of social science (SPSS) 22. The study found that greater percentage of students 73% exhibited symptoms of examination phobia. The study also revealed that lack of social support, poor parental and teacher/ students relationship were among the factors that caused examination phobia among students. The study recommended that Guidance and

Counseling Serives should be provided to help students. Equally, parent's teachers and student's relationship should be improved.

In a study conducted by Hanfesa, Tilahun, Dessie, Shumet, and Salelew, (2020) on test anxiety and associated factors among first-year Health Science students. The objective of the study was to assess the prevalence of test anxiety and associated factors among first-year regular undergraduate health science students of the University of Gondar, northwest Ethiopia. The method adopted in this research was an institutional-based cross-sectional study using survey design. The population of the study was 813 and the sample size used in the study was 349 first year students selected using stratified random sampling technique. The results of this study revealed that, test anxiety was 54.7% among first year students in the University of Gondar. The study concluded that test anxiety was a major problem of first-year undergraduate health science students.

House (2013) conducted a research on the predictors of resilience in first-year university students of Tasmania. The purpose of the study was to identify the concurrent demographic intrapersonal and interpersonal factors predicting resilience in first year university students and to determine whether there were differences in the experiences of full-time and part-time students in resilience. The design adopted for the study was survey design. The population of the study was all first year students. Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of participants. The sample size was 420 students. Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. Independent T-Test, Mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis in this study. The study revealed that high level of personal growth initiative, optimism and social adjustment determines higher level of resilience among university students. The study also revealed that part-time student reported higher level of resilience compared to full-time students in the university

In another study conducted by Lawal, Idemudia, and Adewale, (2017) on academic self-confidence (Resilience) effects on test anxiety among Nigerian university students. The study investigated academic self-confidence effects on test anxiety as indicators of performance impairment and intrusive worry. The population of the study was 206 Nigerian undergraduate

students comprising males and females. The students took the Westside Test Anxiety Scale as instrument of data collection administered by the researchers. Data were analyzed to predict performance impairment and intrusive worry from academic self-confidence, taking into account student's years of study and gender. The study results indicated that, first year students reported higher intrusive worry than those in second, third and fourth year of studies in the university.

Barrington, Hancock, and Clough (2019) carried out a study on the impact of Resilience program on student's anxiety, depression and mental toughness. The aimed was to investigate the impact of resilience program in school using anxiety and depression measures and also find out the relationship between mental toughness and educational outcomes. The study adopted experimental design. The participants were 139 year five students from an Abu Dabhi primary school. (70 Boys and 69 Girls). The final sample comprises 134 participants (66 boys and 68 girls). The researchers conducted a six week experimental study where the 38 students assigned to the experimental group and fifty one students 51 were to control group. Six time hour lectures were taught to the experimental group by the researchers. The instruments of data analysis were mean and standard deviation, correlation analysis, independent t-test analysis and ANOVA should have been used in data analysis. The findings revealed that there was a strong positive correlation between anxiety and depression. Analysis of variance found that the resilience program had more significant effect.

Statement of the Problem

Certainly various studies justified that numerous factors and conditions of learning bring about phobia among students particularly fresh students when they are expecting test or examination in the universities (Javed & Khan 2011). Also George, (2014) lamented that examinations provoke anxiety in some students at different level. Certainly students have examination phobia when taking or writing examination, some students may experience negative thoughts or fear of failure and at most time develop unpleasant physical symptoms which prevent them from performing well (George, 2014).

Test and xaminations in the university are likely to cause phobia among fresh students because it is often being the first time these students experienced such kind of evaluation of their

performance and thus makes them to exhibit certain level of anxiety and phobia due to lack of social support, intensive orientation and exposure as well as resilience building. Inadequate ideas on how the examinations are conducted and problem of adjustment in the university are among the factors that cause examination phobia and other academic stress among students in universities in Yobe State.

In universities in Yobe State, newly admitted students are not in exception to phobia particularly when tests or examination time table are released. Students may begin to express concerns, worries and their fear toward the examination. These and other related factors are as a result of new transition from basic education to higher education and as a result of maladjustment to university life among others.

Therefore, despite the efforts of the university management, guidance and counseling unit and Student's Affair Division in minimizing students' phobia in examination, the issue is still escalating particularly among level 100. If left unchecked this and other related factors may lead to poor academic performance, psychological imbalance and deteriorating quality of education and productivity in these universities. Hence the rationale behind this research.

Objectives of the study

The study sought to achieve the following objectives;

1. To determine the prevalence of test anxiety among students in Universities in Yobe State.
2. To determine gender difference in the post-test mean score on test anxiety exposed to resilience counseling among students in Universities in Yobe State.

Research Question

The study equally attempted to answer one research question;

1. How does test anxiety prevail among fresher students in Universities in Yobe State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis was formulated for the study;

1. There is no gender difference in the post-test mean score on test anxiety exposed to resilience counseling among fresh students in Universities in Yobe State.

Method Research Design

This research adopted a quasi-experimental design inform of Pretest and Post-test design to examine the effects of resilience counseling techniques on test anxiety among students of universities in Yobe State. The study employed nonequivalent group design as a type of quasi-experimental design involving at least two groups from the two Universities both of which were pretested; and received the experimental treatment and both groups were post-tested.

Diagramatical representation of the design

Group	pretest	treatment	post-test
Experimental	X0 →	X^1 →	X3
Control	X0 →	$X0^1$ →	X3

The population of this study consists of all one hundred level (100 level) students of universities in Yobe State Nigeria. Fresher students who were newly admitted in Federal University Gashua and Yobe State University were participated in this study. Therefore, the target population was selected in four (4) different faculties from the above two Universities in Yobe State which comprises one thousand seven hundred and eighty six newly admitted (1786) fresh students. As such the distribution of target study population is presented in the table below as:

Table 1: Distribution of target population

S/N	University	Number of Faculties	Number of student		Total
			Male	Female	
1	Yobe State University Damaturu	2	506	324	830
2	Federal University Gashua	2	513	443	956
	Total				**1786**

Source: Records Office, (2022)

The reasons for selecting only four (4) faculties despite the fact that there are many faculties in these Universities is because fresher students from these faculties are larger in number, they could easily be accessed as they are offered general courses and could represent the other faculties in these universities.

Sample Size

The sample of size for this study consisted of one hundred and eighty six (186) male and one hundred and thirty four (134) female fresh students. They were selected from three hundred and twenty (320) level 100 students from four (4) different faculties in Yobe State University Damaturu and Federal University Gashua. The sample size was determined by using research advisor (2006) table for determining sample size from a given population.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the subjects across the four Faculties from the two different Universities. Purposive sampling was employed because it is a strategy in which particular settings, person or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be obtained from other choices (Maxwell, cited in Abdullahi 2022).

Data Collection Instrument

The study used researcher's-developed instruments for identification of students having examination phobia and for data collection for this study, namely, Students Test Aanxiety Identification Checklist (STAIC). The instrument has two sections, A and B. Section A sought information on students personal data and section B contained twenty (20) items which sought information used in answering research question and testing of research hypothesis. Face and construct validity of the instrument was done to determine the validity of the research instrument by experts from Guidance and Counseling, Test and Measurement Department, Bayero University Kano for ascertaining the appropriateness of the items in relation to the research objective and hypothesis formulated for the study, relevance, adequacy and the language used in the instruments and finally the instrument is valid.

The Cronbach alpha Coefficient of reliability was used to assess the internal consistency of the instrument. The alpha Coefficient obtained was .655 which was considered to be high enough to be used in this study (Tuckman, 1978; Atadogas, 2011 cited In Abdullahi, 2022).

Moreover, it was necessary to confirm the internal consistency of this research instrument considering the pre-test and post-test nature of the study.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers collected a letter of introduction from the Department of Education Bayero University, Kano and present it to Federal University Gashua and Yobe State University Damaturu seeking for permission to conduct the study. After granting the permission the researchers went round to the sampled faculty and contact the Deans for discussion on the conduct of the research and also solicit the help of the counsellors or teacher-counsellors at the respective participating University to assist in distributions and collection of the Checklist. The researcher personally explained the content of the Checklist items to students clearly with emphasis using Hausa language in order to understand the researcher adequately.

Treatment Phase

The researchers gathered all students identified with Test anxiety in a particular hall. Counseling techniques was for intervention in which the researchers used Solution Focused Brief Therapy and In Vivo (exposure) Counseling Techniques on the students identified with examination phobia. The treatment lasts for about 25-30 minutes' in every session and it was done once in a week for the period of eight (8) weeks.

Results

The data collected for this study was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to answer research question and to test the hypothesis.

Answering research question

How was test anxiety prevail among students in the Universities in Yobe State?

Frequency count was used to determine the prevalence of test anxiety among students in the Universities in Yobe State Nigeria. A student responding to the student's test anxiety Identification checklist was scored on four-point likert scale to identify the students with examination phobia. The responses to the items were weighted by assigned numerical values of Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A), 3 points, Disagree (DA), 2 points, Strongly Disagree (SD), 1 point respectively. The summed score of all the items chosen by respondent represented the individual's total score. Therefore, any student having less than 30% indicates that student's does not have test anxiety. Any score of 30% and above indicated that students were having test anxiety. Such student needed resilience counseling treatment in order to minimize or eliminate test anxiety. Based on the data collected in the pretest of both experimental and control groups, the findings of this study revealed that about 76% of all the students from both State and Federal Universities in Yove State had test anxiety. Therefore, there is prevalence of test anxiety among students in the Universities of Yobe State.

Hypotheses Testing

There is no gender difference in the post-test mean score on test anxiety exposed to resilience counseling among students in the Universities in Yobe State.

Table 2: Gender difference in the mean score of test anxiety exposed to resilience counseling among students in the Universities in Yobe State.

Variables	**n**	**X**	**SD**	**Df**	**t-cal**	**p-value**	**sig**
Male	186	24.04	.9047				
				104	4 .057	0.001	0.05
Female	134	18.76	.7766				

Table 2: above shows the analysis of the independent sample t-test for posttest mean score of the male and female students exposed to resilience therapy. The observed p-value 0.001 which is less than the significant value (0.05) with df =104. The null hypotheses which says there is no gender difference in the post-test mean score on test anxiety exposed to resilience counseling among students in the Universities of Yobe State is rejected. And the reason for rejection is because the observed p value (0,001) is less than the significant level (0.05). Therefore, there is gender difference in the posttest mean score on test anxiety exposed to resilience counseling among students in the Universities of Yobe State.

The study findings revealed that there is prevalence of test anxiety among students in the Universities of Yobe State. Therefore the finding of this study agreed with, Kavakci, Semiz, Kartal, Dikici and Kugu (2014), Thakur (2016), Khan and Joseph (2020) and Hanfesa, Tilahun, Dessie, Shumet, and Salelew, (2020) who found that there is prevalence of test/examination phobia among students at different levels.

Equally the results of this study clearly revealed that there is gender difference in the posttest mean score on test anxiety exposed to resilience counseling among students in the Universities of Yobe State. This indicates that resilience counseling is effective intervention in the treatment of test anxiety among students. Therefore, the result of this study agreed with House (2013), Gorge (2014) and Barrington, Hancock, and Clough (2019) who discover the effectiveness of resilience counseling and found significant gender differences in the mean score of students exposed to resilience counseling.

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the findings of the study, the research shows that there is prevalence of – test anxiety amon students in the Universities of Yobe State. Likewise the finding of this research work shows the effect of resilience counseling in minimizing test anxiety among fresher students particularly in the University.

Recommendation

From the findings and conclusion of this study, it is recommended that;

1. Student's affairs unit and guidance and counseling centers in the universities should organize orientation and sensitization lectures to newly admitted students before the commencement of continue assessment (CA) or semester examination.
2. Teacher Counselor /lecturers should make use of resilience counseling to minimize or eliminate test anxiety among students in the University.

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