

**P-R-R STUDY TECHNIQUE, GROUP COUNSELLING AND GENDER
INFLUENCE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Ohanaka, Blessing Ijeoma
Iyoba Girls' Senior Secondary school
Benin City

Abstract

This study investigated the influence of gender on the effectiveness of Preview-Read-Recall (P-R-R) study technique and group counselling on the academic performance of senior secondary school students. The objectives of this study were to determine the effect of Group Counselling combined with P-R-R study technique on the academic performance of senior secondary school students; and to find out if the outcome of the treatment would be influenced by the gender of the students. The sample for this study consists of forty-five Senior Secondary School Students comprising of twenty-one (21) males and twenty-four (females). The treatment group was exposed to a combination of group counselling and P-R-R study technique, while the control group was exposed to a non-specific treatment. Two hypotheses were formulate and tested using mean scores and the t-test The result of the study showed a significant difference between the treatment group and control in their academic performance. This implied that a combination of group counselling and P-R-R was effective in enhancing secondary school students' academic performance. The treatment package was also suitable for both males and females. It was recommended that a combination of group counselling and P-R-R should be used to enhance secondary school students' academic performance irrespective of their sexes.

Key Words: Academic performance, Group counselling, Study techniques, Gender, Nigeria

Introduction

The issue of academic performance has been a major problem confronting the educational sector. Researchers and educators have no doubt that academic performance or achievement in school is determined by numerous factors. These factors are as complex and varied as those that influence all aspects of children's development.

Researches conducted attributed poor performance to different variables such as intelligence, personality traits, lack of basic facilities, shortage of qualified and good teaching staff, lack of motivation, lack of availability of students' textbook and study materials, study habits, school environment, student - teacher ratio among others (Cevawaza, 1979; Akinboye, 1980; Gidado, 2000; Dawa, Adamu, Olayemi, 2005).

Some of these factors occur naturally in children, through no effort of theirs, while others are internalised by children through some external motivating force. These external forces influence or predetermine the direction of their behaviour. There are other complementary factors that have bearing on children's ability, these factors keep them striving through their educational processes, with obvious disparity in their academic performance.

Other causes of poor performance in schools reported by researchers include the perverted societal values, which placed premium on wealth and material benefit at the expense of hard work, merit and integrity; and the general desperation for certificates and desire to obtain good grades without studying hard. They contended that the type of attitude that students bring to bear on their studies is formed through their analysis of the values of the society (Tar, 1995; Eweniyi, 2002; Oriola, 2003). According to Olayinka (1996) and Yahaya (2003), passing examination to secure certificates either for admission into higher institution or secure good jobs is the main goal of education to many people and not the acquisition of knowledge and skills through studying.

Many students perform poorly because they lack the right attitude to study and do not have the right orientation from home and from the society (Obilade, 1987; Ladipo, 2000; Eweniyi, 2002). The attitudes of human beings play significant role in their behaviours. The study of human habits and attitudes is relevant and essential to counselling, as it can help in the understanding of the rationale for their behaviour and provides basis for prediction and assistance.

Oayinka (1980) defines counselling as a psychological process of helping an individual to achieve his self-direction, self-understanding and mental balance necessary to make the maximum adjustment to

the school, home and society. Counselling programmes are therefore necessary in schools to help students to understand themselves, and their world so as to become adjusted and self-directed individuals.

According to Counselling Technique (2006), like individual counselling, group counselling has been viewed as a common helping function that provides counsellors with an effective alternative to individual counselling. Group counselling is an invaluable tool for self-learning and experimenting with different ways of behaving. It involves individuals who are having difficulties they wish to resolve that are of personal, educational, social or vocational nature (Corey and Corey, 1992; LaFrance, 1998; Group Counselling, 2007).

Uguma and Akpama (2005) state that the issue of sex and academic performance has attracted reports. While some propose that males perform better than females in academics, others argue that the reverse is the case, and still others say that the difference in performance between the two is insignificant.

Maccoby and Jacklin (1994) showed that female performance was better in general intelligence test in their pre-school years, while their male counterparts performed better in high school. Vernon (1972) states that average score of boys and girls are the same in general test. He notes that girls do better in most verbal tests and tests involving rote memory; boys, in tests of inductive reasoning and mathematical ability, though with a great deal of over-lapping. Adigwe (1992) believes that there is a higher problem solving achievement among males than females. Dennis and Dennis (1976) reported that studies on mathematics and verbal aptitudes clearly demonstrated that females are generally superior to males in verbal areas, while males are superior to females in quantitative areas particularly in numerical reasoning.

Hypotheses

In order to carry out this study, two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the treatment group and control in their academic performance at the end of treatment.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female students in their academic performance at the end of treatment

Design

The experimental group had a treatment package consisting of a combination of group counselling and Preview, Read and Recall (P-R-R) while the control had attention placebo.

Sample

The study was carried out in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The target population for the study was Senior Secondary School Students in the Local Government Area. One co-educational school was selected for this study, using the purposive sampling method. The school was chosen because it had a practicing counsellor, some counselling facilities and a large student population when compared to other public schools in the local government area. The sample consists of forty-five (45) students (21 males and 24 females). The students were randomly assigned into two groups using the stratified random sampling technique.

Dependent measure

The participants completed the study Behaviour and Time Management Inventory (SBTMI) developed by Egbochuku (2004) and modified by the researcher, a week before the commencement of the treatment packages and immediately after the completion of the treatment. The SBTMI is a self-reporting inventory, which consists of sixty (60) items designed to measure students' academic performance. These items are in form of direct questions to which the respondent is required to provide answers on a four-point scale by indicating the extent to which the items are true about him/her.

Treatment

The treatment lasted twelve sessions with an average of two sessions weekly. Group counselling plus P-R-R constituted the treatment for the treatment group. This involved the integration of P-R-R study technique into group counselling to assess the extent the combination would improve students' academic performance.

Procedure

SBTMI and P-R-R were used as guides to break down the activities carried out during the treatment sessions into different sessions, for the treatment group.

Session One

Topic: Introduction and Explanation of Treatment Programme

The participants were introduced to the facilitator and to one another as exclusive members of the group. The facilitator established rapport with the members of the group and solicited their cooperation on confidentiality of treatment materials and methods, punctuality, full participation all through the session and regular attendance. The participants and the facilitator agreed on time for therapy sessions. The treatment programmes were introduced to the group. Participants were encouraged to ask questions to clear any doubt.

Session Two

Topic: The purpose of group counselling and its relevance in improving students' academic performance.

The facilitator explained group counselling and what is meant by study habit to the subjects. The group was intimated with the purpose of group process and its relevance in the attempt to improve study behaviour on areas they show relative deficiency. The students discussed their problems as regards their studies. They asked questions for clarification.

Session Three

Topic: Identifying and Improving on some defective study skills that could lead to poor study behaviour, such as time management.

The group discussed the problems encountered by the subjects in their studies. The facilitator encouraged members to proffer solutions to some of the identified problems. The outlined nine dimensions by which students' study behaviour could be improved in the modified Study Behaviour and Time Management Inventory by Egbochuku (2004) and modified by the researcher was used to discuss the problems students encounter in their studies.

The first dimension: Timetable Management was discussed. The students were guided in their discussions. Assignment to prepare personal reading timetable was given to the group, after the facilitator had given the guidelines on how to prepare one.

Session Four

Topic: Developing skills In three dimensions of academic performance. In study behaviour and time Management Inventory (SBTMI): Reading and note making; listening and note taking; and effective concentration.

The group reviewed the strength and weaknesses of the personal study timetable drawn by some of the subjects. The students were guided through question and answer interaction to explain reading and note making, listening and note taking, and effective concentration. They later discussed the problems they encountered in them. The students were guided to proffer solution to he problems identified.

Session five

Topic: Improving on class assignment; examinations and class tests, and teacher consultation and relationship dimensions in study behaviour and time management inventory

The group members discussed the problems they encountered in their class assignments, examination and class tests, and Teacher Consultation and relationship. The facilitator encouraged them to proffer solutions to some of the identified problems through questions and answers. More solutions were proffered by the facilitator. Assignment was given to assess the session.

Session Six

Topic: *Establishing an effective study procedure and organization, and a summary of the dimensions of academic performance, in the study behaviour and time management inventory*

The group members were guided through questions and answers to explain Study Procedure and Organization. They discussed the problems encountered in the study dimension. The students were guided to proffer solutions to the problems identified. More solutions were proffered by the facilitator. Students were given a summary of the dimensions of Study behaviour in SBTMI.

Session Seven

Topic: *Introduction of a Study Technique: P-R-R Study Type Reading Technique*

The facilitator explained study technique or study-type reading techniques of the students. The P-R-R- study technique was introduced and the acronym explained to the subjects. In P-R-R: P stands for Preview, R = stands for Read Actively, and R stands for Recall. The facilitator explained the need for the use of P-R-R- study technique to improve academic performance. This study technique ensures thorough learning and facilitates later "re-learning" when one reviews for examination.

Session Eight

Topic; *Development of effective study skills: Skill of Previewing*

The students explained the acronym P-R-R and the need for the use of this study technique. Under the guidance of the facilitator, the

group members practiced the use of the first letter in P-R-R; - P which stands for Preview. Using a comprehension passage in their English Language Textbook, the students were given assignment to practice 'preview' in their studies at home.

Session Nine

Topic: Development of effective study skills: skills of Reading and Recalling

Some students demonstrated how they handled the assignment given to them during the last session. Under the guidance of the facilitator, the students practiced the use of the two 'R' - steps in P-R-R-, which stand for Read Actively and Recall respectively, still using the comprehension passage in their English Language Textbook. Students were given assignment to practice using the P-R-R study technique to study other school subjects at home.

Session Ten

Topic: A review of progress in the use of P-R-R- study technique

An overview of the sessions covered applying the P-R-R study technique was done by the facilitator and the students through the use of questions and answers. Chapters in textbooks of some other school subjects were used to practice each of the skills in P-R-R the facilitator evaluated the progress of the students in acquiring the reading skills. Students who have learnt to apply the skills to other school subjects demonstrated to other members of the group.

Session Eleven

Topic: Evaluation of the overall effect of training on the participants

The experimenter and the students through questions and answers overviewed the session covered by the training. The experimenter assessed the overall effect of the training on participants through questioning. The students were encouraged to apply the skills

learnt to all school subjects so as to improve on their study behaviour.

Session Twelve

Topic: Administration of study behaviour inventory to obtain post-test scores

The study behaviour inventory was administered to the students to obtain the post-test scores. The students were requested to write their names, and the experimental group they belonged to, for easy identification. The inventories were collected after the students filled them. The facilitator expressed gratitude to the members of the group for their cooperation.

The Control Group

No treatment was applied to this group since it served as control to the experimental group. However, time was spent with the group discussing issues like the effect of excretion in human and plants.

Results

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of pre and post-test scores of experimental and control groups.

Treatment groups			N	Mean	Std deviation
Experimental group.	Pair .1	Pre-test score on academic performance	23	29.13	14.511
		Pos-test score on study academic performance	23	37.61	14.761
Control group	Pair 1	Pre-test score on study academic performance	22	32.27	15.332

Treatment groups			N	Mean	Std deviation
		Post-test score on study academic performance	22	32.50	14.699

Table 2: Paired samples test

Treatment groups			Mean	Std deviation	T	Sig (2-tailed)
Experimental group.	Pair .1	Pre-test score on academic performance	-6.09	9.09	-3.229	.000
		Post-test score on academic performance				
Control group	Pair 1	Pre-test score on academic performance	-.23	6.264	-.170	.886
		Post-test score on academic performance				

Results on table 1 show that the students in the experimental group improved on their academic performance with mean of 29.13 vs 37.61 for pretest and post-test respectively. The control group had a minimal improvement with mean of 32.27 and 32.50 for pretest and post-test respectively. The experimental group had a post-test mean of 37.61 as against 32.50 post-test mean for the control group. However, table 2 shows $t = -3.229$ which was significant at .004 for the experimental group and $t = .170$ which was not significant at .886 for the control group. This indicates a difference in the enhancement of the

academic performance skills of students in the experimental group showing the effectiveness of the treatment. It is therefore concluded that the students treated improved in their academic performance because there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group was therefore rejected.

Table 3: Distribution of post-test mean scores for the treatment group and control on academic performance, skills based on treatment by sex

Sex	Treatment		
	Experimental group	Control	Total
Male	33.64 (11)	29.50 (10)	31.67 (21)
Female	41.25 (12)	35.50 (12)	38.38 (24)
Total	37.61 (23)	32.50 (22)	35.25 (45)

Table 3 shows the mean scores of males and females after treatment. The scores presented in the cells show a difference between the total mean scores of males and females, (31.67 vs 38.38). the experimental group has a mean score of 33.64 vs 41.25) for males and females respectively, while the control is 29.50 vs 35.50 for males and females respectively. The total mean scores show a difference between male and female mean score with the female mean score higher, conclusion could not be reached on this data.

Discussion, conclusion and recommendations

The crux of this study is to determine if group counselling and a study technique could enhance academic performance. This was done by studying the effect of group counselling combined with P-R-R on the experimental group. Considering the first hypothesis, the study found that there was a significant difference between the treatment group and the control in their academic performance skills at the end of treatment. The students in the treatment group improved in their academic performance, when compared with the students in the control group. This result corroborates studies such as Akinboye (1974), Ladipo (2000) and Yahaya (2004) in which group counselling was used with a study technique to enhance study habits, and academic performance.

P-R-R. is a relatively new study technique developed by University of Texas Learning centre (UTLC). Literature on studies using P-R-R is scarce. UTLC (2005) has confirmed the effectiveness of the technique among university students. Researches using P-R-R among secondary school students are yet to be recorded especially in Nigeria. This study is designed to fill this gap. Annis and Davis (1978) investigated the effect of various study techniques and preference for study technique, the result showed that participants using a non-preferred technique scored significantly higher than participants using a preferred technique. The findings of this study showed that a combination of P-R-R study technique and group counselling enhanced students' academic performance. The second hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female students in their academic performance skills at the end of treatment was not concluded. The distribution of post-test mean scores for the treatment group and control on academic performance skills based on treatment by sex showed that the female total mean score was higher. This means that females gained more from the treatment, although the result showed that both male and female students improved in their academic performance.

In conclusion, students could be assisted to improve on their academic performance. Group counselling combined with P-R-R study

technique has been proved effective in enhancing students' academic performance.. The effect of group counselling would have been beneficial to students, it would have provided opportunity for constructive change which help them to release all inhibitions that would have affected the improvement of their academic performance.

It is recommended that school counsellors should be exposed to the use of P-R-R study technique, which is new but effective in enhancing academic performance. A combination of this study technique with group counselling in this study has proved effective in improving students' academic performance and should be employed by counsellors. This will help improve students' academic performance and reduce examination malpractice. Counsellors should also enlighten staff and students about this study technique and the need for students to improve on their academic performance using the technique.

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