

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF RESILIENCE-FOCUSED COUNSELLING ON ADOLESCENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

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Abstract:

Adolescence is a very important phase in individual life, characterized by tremendous challenges in some academic, emotional, and social contexts. Challenges faced by adolescents in Nigeria, among others, are academic performance, socioeconomic limitations, and less availability of mental health resources. This study assessed the effects of resilience-based counselling on the academic performance and emotional well-being of adolescents, providing a prospective intervention approach. Adopting a quasi-experimental approach, 200 Nigerian secondary school students were involved, further categorized into an experimental group that received resilience-based counselling for eight weeks and a control group that did not. The intervention incorporated skills like cognitive behavioural therapy, stress management, and mindfulness training to enhance resilience. Resilience-focused counselling produced a statistically significant influence, improving emotional well-being across ARES-i25, better stress management, enhanced self-confidence, and growing problem-solving skills, as shown by the baseline evaluations. ANCOVA results further confirmed that experimental children fared statistically better with their performance than the control groups ($F = 151.504$, $p < .05$), thereby validating resilience-based interventions in promoting academic success. The research concludes with the recommendation that resilience-based counselling offers a much-needed scope in improving academic achievement and emotional stability in Nigerian adolescents, and so structured resilience-training programmes should form the basis of school curricula to promote better coping and general well-being in students.

Keywords: Adolescence, Resilience-focused counselling, Academic performance, Emotional well-being, Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)

Introduction:

Adolescence is that critical transitional stage of life that is essentially characterized by intense growth, discovery, and many other challenges. In Nigeria, it assumes a particular character due to a variety of constraints that range from academic stress to limited resources and socioeconomic difficulties. Manipulative forces influence academic performance and emotional well-being to a great extent by presenting challenges of stress management and mental health disorders. Resilience-focused counselling is one of the established approaches recently in Nigeria to help young individuals to thrive in the face of challenges. Ononye et al. (2022); Biswas et al. (2022). Resilience describes the ability to rise from setbacks and cope with challenging situations effectively. This is absolutely important in ensuring success in higher education, as well as emotional stability. Ononye et al. (2022) have just released a study on academic resilience, emotional intelligence, and school performance among Nigerian students. Their findings showed that those who were deemed to have higher resilience were expected to perform better in academics than their fellows and manage their emotions well, hence the need to ensure the development of resilience in institutions of learning.

Emotional well-being is an important factor in the mental state of a teenager in terms of handling pressure, developing relationships, and decision-making. Indeed, research has shown that resilience acts as a barrier to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. Eduviere et

al. (2021) determine that those adolescents with high resiliency have better psychological health, which means that resilience can enable teenagers to outlast the challenges of growing up in a hazardous environment.

The resilience-focused counselling has been effective in educational institutions. Coping and emotional intelligence-based programs have produced great results. Research carried out in Delta State, Nigeria showed that resilience training may help improve students' ability to connect with salient features of the school environment for academic success and emotional stability (Eduviere et al., 2021). These programs provide students with the required capabilities to cope effectively with academic and personal pressures.

Alongside academic pursuits, other interventions promoting resilience, like cognitive-behavioral therapy and mindfulness, have been very effective in fostering overall mental health. Providing youth with tangible ways to cope with stress and developing their confidence serves as a precursor to long-term success and good well-being (Aipale et al., 2020). It looks like Nigeria is fully on wheels to address the challenges that its youths are facing, and such resilience-based counseling is promisingly realistic in view of its application in youth development. As the various stressors being faced by the youths in Nigeria include but are not limited to academic demands, socio-economic challenges, poor psychosocial support or health facilities, some important developmental processes integrate emotional development. Although resilient individuals have gained theoretical recognition in literature as crucial in enabling individuals to sail through challenges, most schools in Nigeria have not embarked on well-structured programs in building resilience among their students.

Such counseling initiatives on resilience seek to develop certain potentials that enhance academic performance and emotional well-being by further equipping adolescents with various ways of managing stress and emotional intelligence. Ononye et al., 2021; Eduviere et al., 2021. Unfortunately, not many empirical investigations have been carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of such programs within the Nigerian setting; therefore, the process of understanding resilience-based counselling and its applications, especially for most specific life challenges of Nigerian adolescents, is not as yet satisfactorily developed. As a consequence, the need has arisen for this research project. The focus of the research is on establishing how this intervention influences students' academic achievement and emotional distress.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of resilience-focused counselling on adolescents' academic performance and emotional wellness, and the objectives are:

1. To determine the impact of resilience-focused counselling on the academic performance of adolescents in Nigeria.
2. To examine the effect of resilience-focused counselling on the emotional wellness of Nigerian adolescents.

Research Question

1. What is the effect of resilience-focused counselling on the emotional wellness of Nigerian adolescents?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the academic achievement of students who were exposed to Resilience-focused counselling and those who were not.

Methodology

The research adopted a quasi-experimental research design to assess the effect of resilience-focused counselling on adolescents' academic performance and emotional well-being in Nigeria. This design was selected as it allowed comparison between groups (those who underwent resilience-focused counselling and those who did not) while controlling for some key variables

in measuring the impact of the intervention. The target population was constituted of adolescents from secondary schools across Nigeria, especially from the urban and semi-urban contexts where academic and socio-economic pressures were more common. A total of 200 adolescents were selected for the study using the stratified random sampling method to ensure representation was achieved. Data collection was achieved through standardized questionnaires and achievement tests. Emotional wellness was measured using a validated scale, such as the Adolescents' Resilience Evaluation Scale (ARES-i25) (Glaveanu, 2024). There were two groups, comprised of an experimental group that received eight weeks of resilience-focused counselling sessions and a control group that did not receive any intervention. The counselling sessions incorporated techniques such as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), stress management, and mindfulness practices aimed at enhancing resilience. Pre- and post-tests were carried out to determine whether there was a change in the academic performance and emotional wellness of the respondents. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. ANCOVA was performed on four pre- and post-scores of the experimental group, while the treatment effects of the entire results yielded an independent sample t-test between the experimental and control groups.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the effect of resilience-focused counselling on the emotional wellness of Nigerian adolescents?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Items Indicating the effect of resilience-focused counselling on the emotional wellness of Nigerian adolescents

S/N	ITEM	Adolescents' Resilience Evaluation Scale (ARES-i25) (F)					mean	S.D
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always		
1	When a crisis occurs, I focus on identifying the necessary steps to overcome it.	15	24	51	56	54	3.55	1.22
2	If I have a specific task to complete, I block out distractions and remain fully engaged in the task.	21	25	36	55	63	3.57	1.32
3	Life's problems can affect me emotionally for a long time, and it can be challenging for me to regain my good mood.	24	11	43	55	67	3.65	1.31
4	In the face of a crisis, I conduct thorough analysis to identify who or what is responsible and then work	17	21	47	61	54	3.57	1.23

	toward resolving the situation.							
5	I sometimes feel that life's problems are weighing me down.	17	17	36	69	61	3.7	1.22
6	When confronted with challenges, I've received support from family members to help me overcome them.	17	20	38	57	68	3.69	1.27
7	I believe that I can learn valuable lessons from my failures.	27	20	47	54	52	3.42	1.33
8	I ask relevant questions to solve tasks as efficiently and effectively as possible.	13	31	51	55	50	3.49	1.20
9	I am able to resolve many situations successfully.	19	18	43	61	59	3.62	1.26
10	I am open to learning from other people's ways of thinking and behaving.	17	18	42	62	61	3.66	1.23
11	In difficult times, I've also received support from people outside my family, such as colleagues, friends, teachers, and counselors.	17	22	32	69	60	3.67	1.25
12	I prefer to work independently and rarely ask for further explanations, even if I don't completely understand the task at hand.	21	27	40	53	59	3.51	1.32
13	Even when faced with problems in life that I don't know how to solve, I remain calm and composed.	20	14	47	54	65	3.65	1.27
14	If a plan for solving a difficult situation isn't working, I stay persistent and move on to the next solution.	27	21	44	57	51	3.42	1.33
15	I find it difficult to recover when going through life's crises.	18	28	45	53	56	3.5	1.28
16	When I don't know something, I actively seek information from others—whether from colleagues, professors, or specialists.	20	18	44	63	55	3.58	1.25
17	I trust my intuition and feel that I can read people well.	18	15	32	69	66	3.75	1.24
18	My friends have been there to help me through tough times and offer support.	18	23	37	60	62	3.62	1.27
19	When I face a difficult situation for which I have no solution, I quickly lose my self-confidence.	17	18	35	60	70	3.74	1.26
20	I like the way I react to challenges, even when things are tough.	16	17	52	61	54	3.6	1.20
21	I try to accept myself, even when I am wrong or make mistakes.	15	22	36	72	55	3.65	1.20

22	When people close to me face problems, I analyze the situation to learn from it.	21	22	41	54	62	3.57	1.31
23	In my family, we tend to solve problems independently rather than relying on others.	31	21	37	56	55	3.42	1.39
24	If I encounter a situation I don't know how to solve, I look for information online to help guide my solution.	24	20	33	60	63	3.59	1.34
25	I believe I have many strengths and the ability to manage any situation that comes my way.	28	15	46	54	57	3.48	1.35
	Grand mean						3.59	1.27

Adolescents' Resilience Evaluation Scale (ARES-i25) (Glaveanu, 2024)

The dataset in Table 1 shows results from the Adolescents' Resilience Evaluation Scale (ARES-i25), which explored how Nigerian adolescents' emotional health responded to resilience-focused counselling interventions based on mean scores and standard deviations (SD). Participants marked their responses at a level between "Sometimes" and "Often" across all items except for one question. "I can truly read people, and I follow my intuition" received the most frequent "Often" responses (3.75, SD = 1.24), followed distantly by "I think that I can learn from my failures" and "When problems occur, the members of our family try to solve them on their own," which the analysis of participant responses shows a mean resilience score of 3.59 along with an SD of 1.27, indicating moderate resilience while maintaining consistent response variability on each item. External resources, together with emotional control, received significant scores among participants; "I was supported by individuals outside my family in challenging situations" scored 3.67, and "I lose self-confidence right after encountering a difficult situation without available solutions" acquired 3.74 points. Contacts for self-reliance and failure learning reveal potential areas that need additional focus during counselling interventions. Research findings demonstrate that resilience-based counselling practices result in positive wellness effects for emotions together with increased self-belief and better stress control and support-seeking abilities but also reveal particular areas requiring improvement.

Table 2: Achievement Test

		Value Label	N
Group	1.00	Resilience-focused Counselling	175
	2.00	Control	25

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the academic achievement of students who were exposed to Resilience-focused counselling and those who were not.

*Confidence level/alpha (α) level = .05

Table 3: Summary of the analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Post Achievement Scores of the Experimental Group and the Control Group -test

Dependent Variable: Achievement Post-test						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Corrected Model	4312.038 ^a	2	2156.019	834.521	0.000	
Intercept	550.985	1	550.985	213.267	0.000	
Pretest	0.003	1	0.003	0.001	0.975	

Method	391.416	1	391.416	151.504	0.000
Error	508.957	197	2.584		
Total	12009.000	200			
Corrected Total	4820.995	199			

a. R Squared = .894 (Adjusted R Squared = .893)

Academic performance data from adolescents who received resilience-focused counselling is compared against a control group in Tables 2 and 3. The experimental treatment group receiving counselling had 175 members, while the control group consisted of 25 members, according to Table 2. The study calculated post-test achievement scores using ANCOVA to analyze experimental and control group data as shown in Table 3. The analysis shows that resilience-focused counselling positively influenced students' academic results through a p-value of .000, which remains below .05, so the effect is definite. The method used (counselling intervention) created substantial differences in scores based on statistical analyses ($F = 151.504$, $p = .000$). Damaging variables through R-squared adjustment produced a value of .893, which indicates that post-test achievement score variance explains 89.3%. Research outcomes demonstrate that resilience-focused counselling boosts adolescent academic outcomes because it strengthens their response abilities when confronted with demanding life situations. The ANCOVA analysis demonstrates a strong statistically significant relationship between the intervention method (resilience-focused counselling) and post-test achievement scores ($F = 151.504$, $p = 0.000$) at a p-value far below .05. Analysis results showed resilience-focused counselling produced better academic results than traditional interventions, thereby proving the null hypothesis rejected.

Discussion

The research investigated how resilience-focused counselling helps Nigerian adolescent students with their academic results and their emotional well-being. Results showed important changes in both domains that demonstrate that resilience directly boosts adolescents' ability to handle stressful situations and succeed inside and outside the classroom. Studies validate the results by showing how resilience acts as a shield for defending against daily hardships (Ononye et al., 2022; Eduviere et al., 2021).

Resilience-focused counselling proved successful in advancing emotional well-being among adolescents because the Adolescents' Resilience Evaluation Scale (ARES-i25) data showed enhanced outcomes. Participants used resilience-building strategies often, as indicated by their overall score of 3.59 ($SD = 1.27$). The results showed participants excel when evaluating others by intuition (mean = 3.75) while showing low confidence (mean = 3.74) when faced with problems beyond their solutions. The results support previous research conducted by Aipale et al. (2020) and Biswas et al. (2022) that resilience training enhances the capabilities for stress control and external support-seeking along with self-belief.

Results of the ANCOVA statistical analysis indicated that experimental subjects obtained significantly better test results than the control participants. A higher achievement level was evidenced in the experimental group results that received resilience-focused counselling, $F = 151.504$, $p = .000$, which explained 89.3% of post-test score variation. Resilience-focused counselling is effective in improving student academic performance as it teaches crucial abilities necessary for managing personal academics effectively. These findings are in agreement with the results obtained in an earlier study by Ononye et al. (2022), which established that resilience acts as an important predictor of success in academic achievement among adolescent Nigerian school students.

The implications of these findings have wide-ranging impacts on education policy and mental health standards in Nigeria. The inclusion of resilience-based counseling in school education programs is an active strategy that helps students solve academic and emotional problems. These would facilitate students in managing stress through developing their emotional capacity. The programs on promotion of full development would, in turn, simultaneously promote improved

academic performance. Training in CBT and mindfulness practice could be easier to access and more effective when done through standardized training inculcated into national educational systems (Eduviere et al., 2021).

Conclusion

The study confirms that resilience-based counselling can offer realistic strategies that would help improve academic performance and emotional well-being in adolescents in Nigeria. Students who receive such training develop ways to manage stress and acquire emotional intelligence to reinforce self-belief. This development will provide them with important tools necessary to navigate through both academic and personal challenges. The significant positive results achieved for both academic performance and emotional well-being make it imperative that interventions to enhance resilience be incorporated in schools. Recommendations drawn from these findings are helpful to policymakers, educators, and mental health experts in creating conditions at schools where adolescent development and the preparation of students to better cope with adversity are supported.

Recommendations

1. Schools should implement formalized counseling programs to equip students with the skills required to cope with various academic pressures and personal problems.
2. The education system shall need to develop teachers' and counsellors' training programs to train them to apply CBT and mindfulness techniques that enhance resilience among learners.
3. Schools should take a lead, with the help of the government, in developing flexible resources that help adolescents with accessing training materials on emotional intelligence and managing stress.
4. Resilience-based counseling programs should be evaluated at schools through regular use of evidence-based measurement tools, such as the Adolescents' Resilience Evaluation Scale (ARES-i25), to enable continuous program improvements. Schools in all parts of the country should attract trained counselors for the provision of regular student support services, especially in settings with limited educational resources and high academic pressures.

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