

Perceived Impact of Counselling on Academic Adjustment of Undergraduate Students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated perceived impact of counselling on the academic adjustment of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. Two research questions guided the study, and two hypotheses were tested. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population consist 25,843 students across eight faculties, from which a sample of 380 respondents was selected using a multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Counselling and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (CAAQ), structured on a four-point Likert scale. A pilot study was conducted to establish reliability, and the instrument yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions, with 2.50 as the criterion mean. Hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square (χ^2) goodness-of-fit test at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that counselling has a significant perceived impact on undergraduate students' academic motivation, and academic self-efficacy. The study concluded that functional counselling services play a critical role in enhancing students' academic adjustment and overall academic functioning. It was therefore recommended that the university should strengthen counselling programmes through targeted interventions focused on motivation and self-efficacy to support students' academic success.

Keywords: Counselling, Academic Adjustment, Study Habits, and Academic Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Academic adjustment has become one of the most crucial determinants of students' success and persistence in higher education. Universities across the world are increasingly concerned about students' ability to adapt to the academic, emotional, and social demands of tertiary education. According to Allen, et al., (2018), academic adjustment refers to students' ability to meet the intellectual, behavioural and motivational demands of schooling. Research reports such as those of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2022) indicate that many undergraduates, particularly in developing countries, face challenges in adjusting to the academic expectations of university life, which often result in low performance, stress, and dropout. These challenges threaten the overall quality of education and the preparation of competent graduates to meet global and national development needs.

In Nigeria, academic adjustment problems among undergraduates have continued to draw serious attention from educators, counsellors, and policymakers. Studies such as Olatunji (2020) and Iwu and Ikechukwu (2021) reveal that a significant number of Nigerian undergraduates struggle with low academic motivation, poor study habits, low self-efficacy, and ineffective time management. These difficulties often manifest in poor grades, examination anxiety, truancy, and disengagement from learning activities. The situation is further compounded

by the competitive and demanding nature of the university environment, which requires students to take greater responsibility for their learning, manage time efficiently, and maintain emotional stability despite academic pressures.

Counselling play a vital role in addressing these challenges. Counselling, as defined by Gibson and Mitchell (2016), is a purposeful and professional relationship designed to help individuals understand themselves, make informed decisions, and cope effectively with personal, academic, and social problems. Dilag (2023) opined that the providing students with guidance and counselling in philippines, assist them in determining learning goals, gain emotional support, realize their full potential and overcome challenges that may hinder students adjustment. Within the university context, counselling services are designed to assist students in developing essential life skills, building confidence, and adjusting successfully to academic demands. Akinade (2018) emphasizes that counselling helps students develop positive study habits, and enhance their academic motivation.

Study habits is one the crucial aspect of students' academic adjustment. Study habits refer to the consistent routines and behaviours students adopt in the process of learning, such as attending lectures, organizing materials, revising regularly, and preparing adequately for examinations. Okolie and Chinweuba (2021) found that effective study habits have a direct positive influence on students' academic success. However, many undergraduates exhibit poor study patterns characterized by procrastination, lack of concentration, and poor time allocation. Counselling could address these issues by providing practical training on study skills and learning strategies. Counsellors being a helping professional, help students assess their learning styles, set study goals, and implement structured routines that enhance productivity. In agreement, Ryan, and Deci (2020) noted that through workshops, academic coaching, and follow-up sessions, counselling services would help students replace ineffective study habits with disciplined, self-regulated, and goal-oriented learning behaviours.

Academic motivation constitute another critical components of academic adjustment. It refers to the internal drive that energizes and directs students toward achieving their academic goals (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Motivated students demonstrate greater effort, persistence, and engagement in their studies. However, recent studies have shown a decline in academic motivation among undergraduates, often due to stress, poor learning environments, or unclear goals (Afolabi & Olasupo, 2021). Dilag (2022) noted that guidance and counselling help address this issue by providing motivational support and goal-setting strategies that encourage students to align their academic activities with personal and professional aspirations. Through individual and group counselling, students can develop a clearer sense of purpose and renew their commitment to learning. Counselling could also assist in identifying motivational barriers such as fear of failure, low interest, or lack of direction and replacing them with intrinsic motivation rooted in personal growth and achievement.

In Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi, the researcher observed from counselling interactions with students that many undergraduate students struggle to adjust effectively to academic demands. Some show poor reading habits, low academic motivation, and inability to manage time efficiently. These challenges often manifest in declining performance, stress, and disengagement from learning. Although counselling services are available in the university, their perceived impact on these critical aspects of academic adjustment has not been empirically examined. From the foregoing, it is evident that counselling could play a vital role in enhancing undergraduates' study habits, academic motivation, and time management. However, the extent to which counselling is perceived to impact these areas remains unclear. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the perceived impact of counselling on academic adjustment of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The university environment presents numerous academic, emotional, and social challenges that require students to adjust effectively in order to succeed. Unfortunately, it has been observed by the researcher that many undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi, appear to struggle with poor academic adjustment. Cases of poor time management and low academic motivation are becoming increasingly common among students. These issues often manifest in declining academic performance, examination anxiety, stress, absenteeism, and in some cases, withdrawal from school. Despite the presence of counselling units in

universities, many students either do not make use of the available counselling services or are unaware of their potential benefits. Some students perceive counselling as unnecessary or only meant for students facing severe psychological problems. As a result, a significant number of undergraduates continue to face academic difficulties that could have been prevented or managed through proper counselling interventions. The situation is particularly worrisome in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi, where lecturers and counsellors have continued to express concern over students' poor commitment to studies, and inability to manage time effectively. If these issues persist, they might not only hinder students' academic success but also affect the overall quality of graduates produced by the institution. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate the perceived impact of counselling on the academic adjustment of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the perceived impact of counselling on study habits of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi?
2. What is the perceived impact of counselling on academic motivation of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. Counselling has no significant perceived impact on study habits of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.
2. Counselling has no significant perceived impact on academic motivation of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine counselling and academic adjustment among undergraduate students. The population comprised 25,843 undergraduates drawn from eight faculties in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. A sample size of 380 respondents was selected using a multistage sampling procedure, which ensured adequate representation across faculties and levels of study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Counselling and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire" (CAAQ). The instrument was designed to elicit relevant information on students' counselling experiences and their academic adjustment patterns. It consisted of structured items arranged on a modified four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument CAAQ was validated by three experts, two from guidance and counselling and one from measurement and evaluation; all from Joseph Saarwuan Tarka University Makurdi, Benue state.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted, and the internal consistency of the questionnaire items was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.82, indicating a high level of internal consistency and confirming that the instrument was reliable for the study. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted as the benchmark for decision making, such that mean scores of 2.50 and above indicated agreement, while scores below 2.50 indicated disagreement. The hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using the Chi-square (χ^2) goodness-of-fit test at a 0.05 level of significance. The choice of the use of chi-square goodness of fit is because it is used to determine if the proportions of categorical variables follow the ordinal variables proportions and allows the use of sample to draw conclusion about an entire population.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Research Question 1: What is the perceived impact of counselling on study habits of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi?

Table 1: Means Scores of Perceived Impact of Counselling on Study Habits of Undergraduate Students.

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Counselling has helped me develop better study routines.	157	148	0	75	3.02	1.098	Agreed
2	I now use more effective study strategies because of counselling.	70	229	7	74	2.78	.966	Agreed
3	Counselling has improved how I organize my study materials.	153	133	20	74	2.96	1.112	Agreed
4	Counselling has helped me reduce procrastination in my studies.	61	218	26	75	2.70	.964	Agreed
5	I have become more consistent with my study schedule due to counselling.	158	130	0	92	2.93	1.176	Agreed
Cluster Mean		2.98						Agreed

Table 1 indicated the mean ratings of respondents' responses for items 11 to 15. Respondents rated all items above the 2.50 cut-off point. The cluster mean of 2.98 is above the cut-off point of 2.50 which indicates that counselling has influence on study habits of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.

Research Question 2: What is the perceived impact of counselling on academic motivation of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi?

Table 2: Means Scores of Perceived Impact of Counselling on Academic Motivation of Undergraduate Students.

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
6	Counselling has helped me develop a stronger interest in my academic work.	166	154	32	28	3.21	.881	Agreed
7	Counselling sessions have increased my motivation to set academic goals.	280	72	12	16	3.62	.743	Agreed
8	Counselling has encouraged me to stay committed to my studies.	236	112	22	10	3.51	.725	Agreed
9	I feel more inspired to improve my academic performance because of counselling.	178	160	26	16	3.32	.779	Agreed
10	Counselling has helped me overcome personal issues that reduced my motivation to study.	190	130	40	20	3.29	.857	Agreed
Cluster Mean		3.39						Agreed

Table 2 indicated the mean ratings of respondents' responses for items 1 to 5. Respondents rated all items above the 2.50 cut-off point. The cluster mean of 3.39 is above the cut-off point of 2.50 which indicates that counselling has influence on academic motivation of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.

Hypotheses

In testing the hypotheses of this study, Chi-square (X^2) was used to test the responses of respondents at .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: Counselling has no significant perceived impact on study habits of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test of Perceived Impact of Counselling on Study Habits of Undergraduate Students.

Response	O	E	df.	Level of sign.	X ² cal	P-value	Decision
			3	.05	281.747	.000	Sig.
SA	82	95.0					
A	234	95.0					
D	24	95.0					
SD	60	95.0					
Total	380						

Table 3 revealed that $\chi^2 = 281.747$, $df = 3$ and $p = 0.00$. Since the p-value of 0.00 is less than the set alpha-value of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) at 3 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that counselling has no significant perceived impact on study habits of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi was therefore rejected. This implies that counselling has significant perceived impact on study habits of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.

Hypothesis 2: Counselling has no significant perceived impact on academic motivation of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test of Perceived Impact of Counselling on Academic Motivation of Undergraduate Students.

Response	O	E	df.	Level of sign.	X ² cal	P-value	Decision
			3	.05	178.737	.000	Sig.
SA	166	95.0					
A	154	95.0					
D	32	95.0					
SD	28	95.0					
Total	380						

Table 4 revealed that $\chi^2 = 178.737$, $df = 3$ and $p = 0.00$. Since the p-value of 0.00 is less than the set alpha-value of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) at 3 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that counselling has no significant perceived impact on academic motivation of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi was therefore rejected. This implies that counselling has significant perceived impact on academic motivation of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings of the study from research question one and hypothesis one, revealed that counselling has a significant perceived impact on the study habits of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. This finding corroborate with that of Abubakar and Ojo (2020) whose study found that effective guidance and counselling services correlate with academic engagement and study habits of undergraduates. In a similar vein, the findings agree with that of Okolie and Salami (2022), which reported that counselling positively influenced students' reading patterns, revision habits, and overall study discipline. This suggests that counselling serves as a practical intervention that helps students translate academic intentions into productive study behaviours.

The finding of research question two and hypothesis two revealed that counselling has a significant perceived impact on the academic motivation of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. This finding is consistent with the study of Lee, Kim, Lee and An (2025) who reported that group counselling significantly impact on Korean University students academic self-efficacy and learning motivation.

Also, in agreement with this finding is that of Ademola and Patrick (2020), who reported that counselling interventions significantly enhanced students' academic drive, persistence, and engagement in learning activities. This outcome suggests that counselling provides an enabling environment where students can rediscover purpose in their academic pursuits, thereby reinforcing sustained motivation toward academic success.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the perceived impact of counselling on the academic adjustment of undergraduate students in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi, with specific focus on study habits and academic motivation. The findings revealed that counselling has a significant perceived impact on all two dimensions of academic adjustment studied. This suggests that counselling services play a crucial role in supporting student's academic development by promoting effective study behaviours and enhancing their motivation to learn which will improve their way of handling academic tasks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. University counselling services should incorporate structured study-skills training into their programmes. Workshops on effective reading strategies, note-taking, examination preparation, and concentration techniques could be organized regularly to help students adopt more effective and consistent study behaviours
2. University counselling unit should intensify motivational counselling programmes such as goal-setting workshops, academic guidance sessions, and periodic motivational seminars. These initiatives could help students sustain interest in their studies, clarify academic goals, and remain committed to their academic pursuits throughout their undergraduate programmes

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