

CAUSES, CONSEQUENCIES AND COUNSELING STRATEGIES FOR CURBING PROCASTINATION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EBONYI NORTH EDUCATION ZONE.

BY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the causes, consequences, and counseling strategies for curbing procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey design. Three research questions guided the study. The population comprised 67 counselors in all the public secondary schools in Ebonyi North Education Zone. Researchers designed questionnaire was used for the data collected. The instrument was validated by three experts' one in measurement and evaluation and the remaining two from Guidance and Counseling all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Akwa. All 67 copies of the questionnaire distributed were properly filled and returned to the researchers. The data collected for the study were analyzed using Arithmetic Mean. The findings revealed that distractions, fear of failure, forgetting, trauma, poor time management, too many commitments, lack of motivation and lack of belief in one's ability are the causes of procrastination among secondary school students. They also agreed that the consequences of procrastination are depression, poor performance in examination, discontinuation of study, lowers student's morale, anxiety, search for short cuts and poor study habit. The counselors also revealed the strategies for curbing procrastination among students as; self-reinforcement strategies, behavioral shaping skills, cognitive behavior therapy, emotional regulation skills and sharing problems with like-minded people. The study recommended among others that the government and non-governmental organizations should organize seminars on the consequences of procrastination on academic of students periodically.

Keywords: *Causes, Consequences, Counseling, Procrastination, School, Student, Strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

The importance of education cannot be overemphasized because it permeates every society and serves as the vehicle of civilization. Education helps individuals develop their minds, think very well, and gain knowledge to prepare them for their future. Education according to Offor and Offiah (2020) is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Education is therefore required for meaningful socio-economic and political development. Learners in secondary school education are mainly adolescents and these adolescents always emulate their mates in school in whatever form of behavior they exhibit, particularly that which interest them such as taking drugs, alcoholism, truancy stealing, disobedience, laziness, disregarding school rules and regulations, procrastination. Procrastination is the result of combination of mistrust of one's ability to do a task, and inability to delay pleasure and blame something outside of himself for the abuses that he does (Adebayo, 2017). Procrastination among secondary school students has been identified as one of the most common maladaptive behavior. Some people would say that it is a form of deviance because by definition deviance is "any violation of norms" and avoiding what should be done is violation of norms (Adeniyi, 2019). In today's world of technology and internet, however, people procrastinate all the time. It seems that procrastination is now more of a social norm than a deviance. Adeniyi (2019) stated that by definition a social norm is a "rule or standard of behavior shared by members of a social group." The norm in the case of education is to do work and learn in school. Although procrastination is a deviance of the norm of education, there are more students who procrastinate than students who get everything done as soon as it is assigned. Procrastination is done solely to complete task optimally. However, the delay does not make the task even better, it leads to a delay that is not useful. Some experts interpret the procrastination negatively and pessimistically, considering it as a permanent and indestructible disorder, but only reduced to normal limits. On the other hand, some experts have higher optimism by considering procrastination as a deviation that can be easily overcome through changes in behavior, thinking (cognitive), and motivation (Adeleye, 2016). So, procrastination is a delay in starting, implementing, and ending an activity. Kartadinata and Sig, (2018) explained that academic procrastination occurs from junior, senior students to adults and makes them not to do their academic work even though the student has desire to do it. Studies have indicated many reasons for student's procrastination. For instance, Ferrari (2021) mentioned the causes of procrastination as lack of clear goals, lack of commitment, task, anxiety, emotional stress, social problems, over confidence, time management problems, learning styles, irrational thinking, and illness. Some of the students seem accustomed to delay their work and about 20% of the students delay their academic work as their routine and later it becomes their habit (Kliener, 2018). Likewise, Goode (2018) asserted that longer timelines of completing a task, plenty of leisure time and co-curricular activities promote procrastination. Procrastination has negative consequences on students' personality, their learning achievement, the school, and the society in general. Ellis and Knaus (2017) observed that high level of procrastination makes students' unable to regulate and organize them to achieve their academic goals causing them depression, anxiety and stress which may lead to truancy and dropping out of school. The problem of procrastination affects many students in secondary schools in Nigeria. However, many students do not know that their inability to read is problem of postponing their time to studies but they are engaged more on pleasurable things in which they cannot benefits from it, not knowing that the students who studies their books perform better than those who are not serious. According to Thomas (2014), procrastination due to cyber loafing behavior leads to negative effects for the learning environment, it affects the flow of teaching, learning transaction and lowers the academic

success and performance of students to a great extent. In addition, Owukwaba (2019), pointed out that students who procrastinate have been given certain measures to curb the problem such as giving prizes to students who performed excellently in school examinations, supporting media programme on moral ethics, and rewarding well behaved students in school in their presence so that there will be changes but procrastination issues persist in many secondary schools. Therefore, students' procrastination behavior is considered as an educational and societal problem. Several methods may be used to tackle the problem of procrastination in schools, ranging from punishment to enticing students with new incentives. Ihegbulem (2016), pointed that sensitizing student through moral instructions, seminars, workshops, and media programme can also help in curbing procrastination among students. Other strategies include self-management, goal setting, time management. Also, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy can be used for effective counseling strategy in helping students with procrastination behavior. Oguzie and Nwokolo (2019), procrastination serves as major problem affecting many students in secondary schools in Nigeria, because they are fond of postponing what they are expected to at right time, for instance, many students spend much time on social media instead of reading their books. Making them not to perform excellently in school examination and negatively affects their functioning and contributions as integral members of the society. It is therefore important to check the habit of procrastination among secondary school students in order to prevent its formation and consequent adverse effect in future life. In view of the problems posed by procrastination to school in the Nigerian educational system, thus, the study investigated the causes, consequences, and counseling strategies for curbing procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone, Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the causes, consequences, and counseling strategies for curbing procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone, specifically the study determines:

1. Causes of procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone.
2. Consequences of procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone
3. Counseling strategies for curbing procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone.

Research questions.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the causes of procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone?
2. What are the consequences of procrastination among secondary students in Ebonyi North Education Zone?
3. What are the counseling strategies for curbing procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone?

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Nworgu (2015) defined descriptive survey study as any study that aim at collecting data and describing it in a systematic manner, the characteristic, feature, and facts about a given population. This design is considered appropriate for this study since the study sought to explore the counselor's opinions on the causes, consequences, and strategies for curbing procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone. The population of the study was 67 counselors in all the secondary schools in Ebonyi North Education Zone. There was no sample because of the limited numbers of senior secondary school guidance counselors in Ebonyi North Education Zone.

The instrument used to collect data for the study was a structured questionnaire captioned "Causes, consequence and counseling strategies for curbing procrastination among secondary school student's questionnaire" (CCCSCPSSSQ). The instrument was validated by three experts in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Akwa. The reliability of the instrument was established through test-retest method using a sample of 20 counselors in Enugu State which is outside the study area, the instrument yielded a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.75. The researchers with the help of three research assistances administered copies of the questionnaire directly to the respondents in their various schools. The data collected were analyzed using Arithmetic Mean.

Research question 1

Table 1; Mean rating of the causes of procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone.

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN (X)	REMARK
1	Fear of failure	3.40	Agreed
2	Home involvement	3.30	Agreed
3	Forgetting	3.43	Agreed
4	Lack of Clarity	3.60	Agreed
5	Overly Lenient Deadline	4.25	Agreed
6	Resistance	3.05	Agreed
7	Too Many Commitment	3.31	Agreed
8	Poor Time Management	3.70	Agreed
9	Lack of Motivation	3.29	Agreed
10	Lack of Belief in one's Ability	3.38	Agreed

Data in Table 1 shows that the respondents agreed that problem of fear of failure, home involvement, forgetting, lack of clarity, overly lenient deadline, resistance, too many commitments, poor time management, lack of motivation and lack of belief in one's ability are the causes of procrastination among secondary school students with mean score ranged from 3.05 to 3.70.

Research question 2

Table 2; Mean rating of the consequences of procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone.

S/N	ITEM	MEAN (X)	REMARK
1	Depression	3.47	Agreed
2	Poor Performance in Examination	2.50	Agreed
3	Lowers the Morale	3.38	Agreed
4	Discontinuation of Study	3.29	Agreed
5	Search For Short Cut	4.51	Agreed
6	Anxiety	4.22	Agreed
7	High Stress Level	5.00	Agreed
8	Loss of Valuable Time	3.90	Agreed
9	Poor Study Habit	2.78	Agreed

Data in Table 2 reveals that the respondents agreed to the consequences of procrastination among secondary school students are Depression, Poor performance in examination, Lowers the morale, Discontinuation of study, Search for short cut, Anxiety, High stress level, Loss of valuable time and Poor study habit with mean score ranging from 2.50 to 5.00.

Research question 3

Table 3; Mean rating of respondents on the counseling strategies for curbing procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone.

S/N	ITEM	MEAN (X)	REMARK
1	Use of Self-reinforcement Strategies	3.47	Agreed
2	Use of Behavioral Shaping Skills	3.97	Agreed
3	Using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	3.38	Agreed
4	Using Emotional Regulation Skills	3.29	Agreed
5	Sharing Problems with Likeminded People	3.21	Agreed

Data presented in Table 3 reveals that the respondents (counselors) agreed that self-reinforcement strategies, behavioral shaping skills, cognitive behavioral therapy, emotional regulation skills and sharing problems with likeminded people are counseling strategies for curbing procrastination among secondary school students, with mean scores ranging from 3.21 to 3.48.

Discussion of findings

Causes of Procrastination among Secondary School Students in Ebonyi North Education Zone.

The finding in Table 1 reveals that respondents agreed that distractions, fear of failure, home involvement, forgetting, trauma, lack of clarity, overly lenient deadlines, resistance, too many commitments, poor time management, lack of motivation and lack of belief in one's ability are the causes of procrastination among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Education Zone. This finding is in line with Irshad and Sanvat (2020) and Goode (2018) pointed out that students appeared to procrastinate and unable to complete their task in time due to their illness, social and family problems, lack of motivation, interest, overconfidence, laziness, negative attitude to their teachers, lack of guidance and counseling or monitoring from teachers, lack of coordination with

class fellows, habit dependency, communication gap among others, which delay students' academic work. This finding agrees with the view of Negesh, Shrudha and Siddana (2017) who in their assertion posted that student tend to procrastinate more when a lecturer is flexible with a deadline which will reduce deadline pressure.

The Consequences of Procrastination among Secondary School Students in Ebonyi North Education Zone.

Findings of the study in Table 2 showed that the consequences of procrastination are; depression, poor performance in examination lowers the morale, discontinuation of study, anxiety, high stress level, loss of valuable time and poor study habit. The finding of this study is in consonance with the view of Shah (2020) who found that procrastination has negative effects on the learning of students resulting to low achievements in examinations, anxiety, lowering their morale. In addition, Irum and Nawal (2015) observed that procrastination increase stress, worry, and fear, leading to miserable life with shame and self-doubt. Also, it makes students to be unable to regulate and organize themselves to achieve their academic goals causing them depression, anxiety, and stress.

The Counseling Strategies for Curbing Procrastination among Secondary School Students in Ebonyi North Education Zone.

Findings of the study in Table 3 showed that the respondents agreed that the counseling strategies used by counselors in Ebonyi North Education Zone for curbing procrastination among secondary school students are: use of self-reinforcement, cognitive behavioral shaping skills, cognitive behavioral therapy, emotional regulation skills, seminars and sharing problems with likeminded people. The finding of this study agrees with the view of Wilson (2019) who posited that cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), emotional regulation skills, self-reinforcement and behavioral shaping skills can also help in curbing procrastination among students

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that the causes of procrastination among secondary school students are fear of failure, forgetting, lack of clarity, overly lenient deadlines, resistance, too many commitments, poor time management, lack of motivation and lack of belief in one's ability are the causes of procrastination among secondary school students. They also concluded that the consequences of procrastination among secondary school students are depression, poor academic performance, discontinuation of study, anxiety, poor study habit, loss of valuable time, high stress level, lowers students' morale and examination malpractice. Finally, the study concluded that the counseling strategies used in curbing procrastination among students are self-reinforcement, behavioral shaping, cognitive behavioral therapy, emotional regulation, seminars and sharing problems with likeminded people.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Seminars on the consequences of procrastination on academic performance should be organized for students periodically.
2. Counselors should bring out effective counseling strategies for handling the problem of procrastination among secondary school students.

3. Government should provide counseling personnel who will always be available to offer assistance to those in need in their counseling units of various secondary schools in Ebonyi North Education Zone.
4. The school Administrations and management should promote programmes that support curbing of procrastination among secondary school students.
5. Counselors working in secondary school should educate students on prevention of procrastination and peer support groups to act as valuable resources for adolescents who do not have adaptive coping skills to deal with procrastination.

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