EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUP COUNSELLING IN IMPROVING THE PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS OF UNQUALIFIED TEACHERS IN BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the Effectiveness of Group counselling in improving the Pedagogical Skills of Unqualified Teachers. Quasi-experimental of Pre-and Posttest design was adopted. Three objectives were raised to guide the study, which include: to determine the level of pedagogical skills, effectiveness of group counselling in improving the pedagogical skills, and the gender differences in the efficacy of Group counselling in improving the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers. The study's target population was all the unqualified teachers drawn from four LGAs. A sample of 100 teachers were selected through simple and stratified random sampling techniques to participate in the pre-test. After the pre-test, 25 teachers, 11 males and 14 females, were drawn using the Pedagogical Skills Questionnaire (PSQ) to the experimental of pre and post-test. The data were analyzed, and the results are: Group counselling is effective in improving the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers, and no significant gender difference in the effect of Group counselling in improving the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria. It was concluded that group counselling is effective in improving the pedagogical skills of unquailed teachers. Recommendation was made that Group counselling intervention be organised for teachers from time to time to improve their pedagogical skills.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Group Counselling, Pedagogical skills, Improvement, Teachers

Introduction

Teaching is a critical profession that shapes the academic and personal development of students. However, in many regions, including Borno State, Nigeria, the education sector faces significant challenges due to the presence of unqualified teachers who lack the necessary pedagogical skills to deliver quality instruction. Unqualified teachers often lack the skills to deliver instruction effectively, leading to poor academic results and difficulties in meeting students' potential. The shortage of trained educators is often exacerbated by socio-economic challenges, insurgencies, and inadequate teacher training programmes.

To bridge this gap, group counselling has been explored as an intervention strategy to enhance the teaching competencies of unqualified teachers. Group counselling provides a supportive environment where teachers can share experiences, learn new instructional techniques, and develop professional confidence. Research by Olayinka (2008) has shown that counselling-based interventions can improve teachers' motivation, communication skills, and classroom management strategies, which are essential for effective teaching.

The role of teachers in shaping students' academic outcomes and educational experiences is crucial, yet many schools, particularly in low-income and developing regions, employ unqualified teachers due to shortages of trained professionals (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). This has led to a need for alternative

strategies to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills. One such approach is group counselling, a collaborative and interactive method that facilitates professional development. This study examines the effectiveness of group counselling in improving the pedagogical competencies of unqualified teachers. Group counselling in teacher professional development is rooted in social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991). Social learning theory posits that individuals learn from one another through observation, imitation, and modelling, making group counselling a conducive setting for skill acquisition. The transformative learning theory emphasizes critical reflection and discourse, suggesting that unqualified teachers can develop improved pedagogical strategies through guided discussions and experiential learning. In another word, it is rooted in psychological and educational theories, including Vygotsky's (1978) Social Development Theory and Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory. Vygotsky emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning, suggesting that unqualified teachers can develop pedagogical skills through guided collaboration. Bandura's theory highlights observational learning, where unqualified teachers can enhance their skills by modelling effective teaching practices from peers and facilitators.

Several studies have indicated that collaborative learning, such as that which occurs in group counselling settings, fosters the development of teaching strategies. Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008) found that professional learning communities contribute to changes in teaching practices, leading to improved student outcomes. Similarly, Joyce and Showers (2002) demonstrated that coaching and group discussions among teachers enhance their instructional effectiveness.

Unqualified teachers refer to those teachers who have not received the necessary training in teaching methods, lesson preparation and planning, classroom management or pedagogical skills. They may lack the experience and skills needed to effectively engage students, manage a classroom, assess students learning and often experience self-doubt and uncertainty in their teaching abilities. Group counselling provides a supportive environment where teachers can share challenges, receive constructive feedback, and develop confidence in their instructional practices. A study by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) highlighted that professional development programmes that include peer support improve teachers' self-efficacy, leading to greater classroom effectiveness.

Reflective practice is a critical component of effective teaching. Group counselling encourages teachers to analyse their teaching methods, recognize areas for improvement, and implement changes based on peer feedback. Research by Schön (1983) on reflective practice emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and adaptation in teaching, which can be facilitated through structured group discussions.

Teaching, particularly without formal training, can be stressful. Group counselling offers emotional support by allowing teachers to share experiences and coping strategies. Studies on teacher well-being suggest that peer support systems reduce burnout and enhance job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). The effectiveness of group counselling in enhancing the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers has been explored in various studies. Unqualified teachers, often lacking formal pedagogical training, face challenges in classroom management, lesson planning, and instructional delivery. Group counselling, which offers emotional and professional support, has been identified as a potential intervention for improving their teaching capabilities (Corey, 2020).

Studies indicate that group counselling can serve as a vital tool for professional development among teachers. According to Gladding (2018), group counselling provides a supportive environment for teachers to share experiences, receive feedback, and develop problem-solving strategies. This collaborative approach can help unqualified teachers build confidence, improve instructional

techniques, and manage classroom challenges effectively.

Several studies have examined the impact of group counselling on pedagogical competencies. A study by Brown and Lent (2019) found that teachers who participated in group counselling sessions demonstrated improved lesson planning skills, better student engagement techniques, and enhanced classroom management strategies. Additionally, Ochieng and Wanjiru (2021) observed that peer support in counselling groups leads to increased motivation and professional commitment among unqualified teachers.

Despite its benefits, group counselling as an intervention faces several challenges. Some studies highlight the resistance of teachers to group counselling due to stigma or lack of awareness (Nelson-Jones, 2015). Additionally, the effectiveness of counselling programmes depends on the quality of facilitators and the structure of the sessions (Sue & Sue, 2021). In addition, implementing group counselling programmes requires trained facilitators, time, and funding, which may not always be available; Some unqualified teachers may be reluctant to adopt new teaching strategies due to ingrained habits or fear of failure; and the effectiveness of group counselling may vary based on cultural, institutional, and individual differences. Group counselling functions in some issues including: creating hope, generality, data transfer, altruism, group solidarity, emotional discharge, social skills development, imitative behaviour, learning signs and factors, therapy review of the family primary group (Kakiya, 2010).

Research done by Wallerstedt & Higgins (2000) showed that training group therapy helped clients understand what are their abilities and what they can do, and use different ways to communicate with others therefore reach to the suitable adjustment. Eslami et al. (2013) investigated the effectiveness of group therapy on adolescents with maltreated parents in Mashhad and concluded that group therapy is effective in improving the quality of life, happiness and life satisfaction of adolescents' maltreated parents and teachers. Corcoran (2006) also concluded that compared with conventional therapy, the treatment group had a greater impact on reducing stress and improving attitudes and behaviour. In addition, the research of Lisbeth et al. (2010) showed that the group counselling approach has been effective on the self-efficacy and adjustment of isolated school children.

Research indicates that male and female teachers exhibit distinct communication styles, which influence their teaching effectiveness and interactions with students. Mynbaeva and Seitova (2017) conceptualized these differences, emphasizing that female teachers often adopt a more student-centred and collaborative approach, while male teachers tend to employ directive teaching methods. These gendered teaching styles may affect how teachers engage with group counselling interventions, potentially influencing their pedagogical skill development.

Several studies suggest that women are generally more receptive to group counselling interventions than men. Research by Eagly and Carli (2007) on gender and leadership found that women tend to be more collaborative and open to feedback, traits that align well with the goals of group counselling. In contrast, men may exhibit more resistance to introspective and emotionally expressive counselling techniques, which could moderate their skill improvement outcomes.

A study by Guimarães and Boruchovitch (2020) on emotional intelligence in teachers found that female educators tend to have higher levels of emotional awareness and regulation, making them more likely to benefit from counselling interventions that focus on interpersonal skills. Given that pedagogical success relies on emotional intelligence, these gendered differences may translate into variations in the effectiveness of group counselling for skill enhancement.

In Summary, Group counselling can be an effective strategy for enhancing the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers; by fostering collaboration, self-reflection, and peer support, group counselling contributes to professional growth and improved teaching practices. However, successful implementation requires institutional support, ongoing facilitation, and tailored approaches to address specific teacher needs. Despite the potential benefits, there is limited empirical evidence on the effectiveness of group counselling in improving pedagogical skills among unqualified teachers in Borno State. This study, therefore, seeks to assess the impact of group counselling in enhancing the instructional abilities of these teachers and its implications for educational quality.

Statement of the Problem

The researchers have observed that the presence of unqualified teachers in schools poses a significant threat to the quality of education in Borno State. Many of these teachers lack the necessary training in lesson planning, classroom management, instructional delivery, and student engagement. This deficiency may negatively affect students' learning outcomes, leading to poor academic performance and a lack of motivation among learners.

Previous interventions, such as short-term teacher training programmes, have had limited success due to their theoretical focus and lack of continuous professional support. Group counselling, as a psychological and professional development approach, has been suggested as a viable alternative for improving pedagogical skills. However, there is a lack of substantial research on its effectiveness in the context of unqualified teachers in Borno State.

This study seeks to address this gap by investigating whether group counselling can significantly improve the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers. The findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in the education sector.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to determine:

- 1. The current level of pedagogical skills among unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria.
- 2. The effectiveness of group counselling in improving the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria.
- 3. The gender differences in the effect of Group counselling in improving the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria.

Research Question

One research question was answered in the study.

1. What is the current level of pedagogical skills among unqualified teachers in Borno State?

Null Hypotheses (H₀)

Ho: Group counselling has no significant effect in improving the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria.

 H_{02} : There is no significant Gender difference in the effect of Group counselling in improving the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The design adopted for the study is a quasi-experimental research design which is not pure or true experimental research. A quasi-experimental design according to De-Rue, Nahrgang, Hollenbeck, and Workman, (2012), is an empirical study used to estimate the impact of an intervention on its target population without random assignment. In addition, according to Shuttleworth (2018), quasi experimental design is the most accurate form of experimental research in that it tries to prove or disprove a hypothesis mathematically with statistical analysis. In using the true experimental design, the sample groups must be assigned randomly and there must be a viable control group, only one variable can be manipulated and tested and finally the tested subjects must be randomly assigned to either control or experimental groups. Quasi experimental research is used in this study because is a type of research usually used in school setting where it may not be proper to use pure experimental design among teachers. This work was done in the school setting using Unqualified Teachers in Borno state. There are many quasi experimental methods available but the one employed in this study is the non-randomized pre-test and post-test design.

Population of the Study: The population of the study consists of all Unqualified teachers drawn from four LGAs in Borno State, Nigeria, which includes Maiduguri Metropolis, Knoduga, Damboa, Jere and Kaga. The total figures of the Teachers that were identified as unqualified was 1,100 enrolments were used. A sample of 100 out of 1100 teachers were selected through simple and stratified random sampling techniques to participate in the pre-test. After the pre-test 25 teachers, 11 males and 14 females were drawn using Pedagogical Skills Questionnaire (PSQ) to experimental group. That is, 25 teachers who scored less than 15 out of total marks of 30 were used in the treatment. A score of 15 above were considered pass mark.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument used in this study is self-developed questionnaire entitled: Pedagogical Skills Questionnaire (PSQ). The instrument was designed to measure the Teachers Pedagogical skills. The inventory is a psychological inventory and consists of 30 items. Each item has alternative A – D and has *only* one answer which called Key and the rest are called distractors. The inventory was used for both the pre and post- tests. The content and face validity of the instrument was ascertained by subjecting the inventory to the scrutiny of experts in test and measurement from Department of Education, Borno State University, Maiduguri. The instrument was pilot tested among 30 teachers of Kamslum primary school Maiduguri metropolis, Borno State and test re-test method was used to obtain the reliability coefficient (r). The researcher gave two-week time interval between the first and the second administration of the instruments. The data was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The coefficient r obtained was 0.78 based on the Cronbach Alpha reliability index and was adjudged suitable for the study.

Treatment Phases

Stage One: Pre-test Phase

The researchers with the aid of trained research assistants administered the questionnaire. One hundred respondents participated at this level and only twenty-five (25) teachers that scored less than 15 marks out of the total marks of 30 in the pre-test were accepted to participate in the treatment. The researcher explained reasons for inviting them and participation is voluntary and any information obtained from them is meant for research only, and meeting times were also scheduled.

Stage Two: Treatment Phase

There were 24 treatment contacts of four hours' duration across six weeks. The treatment was counselling presentation on pedagogical skills which consists of qualities of good teacher, lesson

planning and presentation, Class management and control, participatory teaching pedagogy, the three Ps, ethics of teaching profession, Record keeping and Instructional media. The pedagogical skills were broken down into smaller and meaningful discussion. They were also taught learner centred method. They include using a variety of teaching strategies like group instructions, hands- on activities, or inquiry—driven projects, and designing, implementing, and assessing lessons to meet different learning styles and abilities. They were taught how to create a safe and inclusive learning environment, promoting student agency, fostering a growth mind-set, building strong teacher- student relationships and using technology effectively. Simulation, group presentation, discussion, and micro teaching were used during group counselling.

Stage Three: Post-test Phase

The researcher administered post-test to the same respondents that were identified unqualified teachers to see the effect of treatment. The data obtained through the pre-test and post-test were analysed using t-tests.

Method of Data Analysis: The data generated from the completed instrument were scored following the scoring instructions provided in the manual. Data on the research question was answered using mean and standard deviation and frequencies. The null-hypotheses one and two were tested using t-test.

Results

The data generated were analysed and the results are presented in line with the research question and hypotheses raised in the study in Table 1-3.

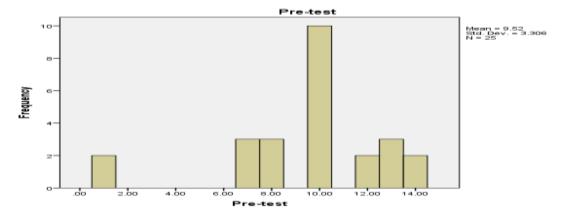
Research Question 1: What is the current level of pedagogical skills among unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Level of Pedagogical Skills among Unqualified Teachers in Borno State, Nigeria.

S/N	Variable	N	Mean	Std Deviation
1	Pre-test	25	9.52	3.31
2	Post-test	25	27.04	3.01

The results in Table1revealed the mean and deviation on the level of Pedagogical Skills of both the pre and post-tests among the Unqualified Teachers in Borno State, Nigeria. The pre-test has the mean and standard deviation of 9.52 and 3.31 while the post-test has the mean of 27.04 and standard deviation of 3.01 respectively. This shows that group counselling has a significant impact on the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers in Borno state, Nigeria.

Figure 1



The result in figure 1 reveals the mean distribution of Pre-test of the unqualified teachers in Borno state. The result revealed that the pedagogical skills of the teachers is weak during the pre-test.

Figure 2

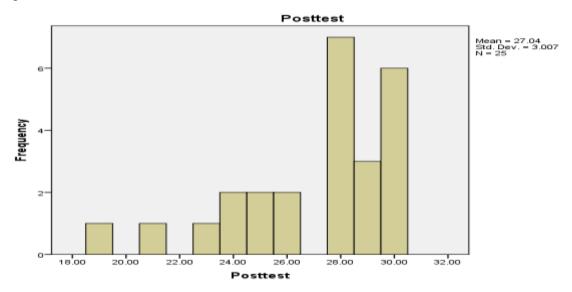


Figure two revealed the result of post- test on the effect of group counselling on the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers in Borno state, Nigeria. The result revealed that group counselling therapy has significant effect on the pedagogical skills of the unqualified teachers. This can be seen from the result in figure two. Therefore, the teachers need group counselling in order to improve the pedagogical skills.

Ho1: Group Counselling has no Significant Effect in improving the Pedagogical Skills of Unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria.

Table 2: The t-test on Effect of Group Counselling in Improving the Pedagogical Skills of Unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria

S/N	Variable	N	Mean	STD	DF	T	Sig	Remark
1	Pre-test	25	9.52	3.31	24	14.40	.000	
								Significant
2	Post-test	25	27.04	3.01	24	44.10	.000	

The result in Table 2 revealed that the t – valve is 14.40 and 44.10 which greater than 0.005, and the p-valve is .000 which is less than the t-valve. This means that, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate is accepted.

Ho₂: There is no significant gender difference in the effect of Group counselling in improving the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Result of t-test on Gender Difference on the effect of Group counselling in improving the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria

S/N	Variable	N	Mean	STD	Df	T	Sig	Remark
1	Male	11	27.27	3.38	23			
						.337	.740	NS
2	Female	14	26.86	2.80	19.35			

The result in Table 3 revealed that the t-value of .337 is less than the p-value of .740, hence; the null hypothesis is accepted while the alternate is rejected. This means that there is no exceptional in the pedagogical skills. All the teachers need improvement in respect of sex.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated Effectiveness of Group Counselling in Improving the Pedagogical Skills of Unqualified Teachers in Borno state, Nigeria. The findings revealed that the level of the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers was low and majority scored less than the cut-off marks of 15%. This finding concurs with Olayinka (2008) has shown that counselling-based interventions can improve teachers' motivation, communication skills, and classroom management strategies, which are essential for effective teaching.

Similarly, Joyce and Showers (2002) demonstrated that coaching and group discussions among teachers enhance their instructional effectiveness. This shows that the teachers need counselling on how to improve the pedagogical skills; because the pedagogical skills may improve the proficiency of the teachers.

The results with respect to hypothesis one revealed significant effect of group counselling in the pedagogical skills of unqualified teachers in Borno state, Nigeria. This finding is consistent with the studies of Eslami et al. (2013) & Olayinka (2008) found that counselling-based interventions can improve teachers' motivation, communication skills, and classroom management strategies, essential for effective teaching. They also reported the effectiveness of group therapy on adolescent with maltreated parents in Mashhad. That is group therapy is effective in improving the quality of life and happiness and life satisfaction of adolescents' maltreated parents. Similarly, Corcoran (2006) found in the treatment group compared with conventional therapy that the treatment group had a greater impact on reducing stress and improving attitudes, skills and behaviour. In addition, Lisbeth et al. (2010) showed that group counselling approach has been effective on the self-efficacy and adjustment of isolated school teachers.

The result with respects to hypothesis two revealed no significant gender difference in Effectiveness of Group Counselling in Improving the Pedagogical Skills of Unqualified Teachers in Borno state, Nigeria. This finding concurs with the findings of Corey (2016) that group counselling enhances self-efficacy and emotional intelligence among teachers, both of which are critical components of effective pedagogy. However, the extent of its impact may differ based on gendered socialization patterns and emotional expressiveness, which influence how teachers engage with counselling processes. In Contrary to the finding are Guimarães and Boruchovitch (2020) & Eagly and Carli (2007) on emotional intelligence in teachers found that female educators tend to have higher levels of emotional awareness and regulation, making them more likely to benefit from counselling interventions that focus on interpersonal skills. Given that pedagogical success relies on emotional intelligence, these gendered differences may translate into variations in the effectiveness of group counselling for skill enhancement. This means that all teachers in respect of gender experiences have same inadequacy in pedagogical skills and both need group counselling therapy in respect of their differences. Therefore, there should not be biased in planning and organising treatment programme for all the unqualified teachers in Borno State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that: the level of teachers, pedagogical skills are low need improvement; group counselling is effective in improving the pedagogical skills of unqualified

teachers, and also there is no significant gender difference in the improvement of the pedagogical skills of unqualified teacher in Borno State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

- 1.Group counselling intervention should be organised for teachers from time to time to improve their pedagogical skills by school administrators, ministry of education and stakeholders.
- 2.Government should organise institutional support, ongoing facilitation, and tailored approaches to address specific needs of teachers.
- 3.All teachers should be given equal treatment or intervention in respective of sex difference.

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