



## **COUNSELLING AGAINST DROPOUT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDO STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study investigated the causes of school dropout among secondary school students in Edo State. Three research questions were formulated and descriptive survey design was adopted. A sample size of 150 teachers was selected from the public school in three Local Government Areas of Edo State. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled Counselling Against School Dropout (CASD). Frequency counts and simple percentages were employed to analyze the data. The findings of the study showed that school dropout was caused by indiscipline, failure, behavioural and emotional problems, and negative values of the society among others. The results also showed that counselling strategies were effective. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the counselling strategies should be adopted by teachers and counsellor in reducing school dropout among students*

**Keywords:** Counseling, Dropout, Student, School, Causes, Consequences, Counselling strategies

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Education is the key to the production of human capital that drives the economy of any nation. The quality of the educational system today can to a great extent shape what the country will be tomorrow. Since schools are established centres for the education of youth in the society, the classrooms for teaching and learning should be engaging, where students see relevance in class work to their world, and to a much larger world around. The goal of secondary education as documented in the [Federal Government of Nigeria \(2004\)](#) is essentially to prepare and equip students to enter the world of work. During secondary education, students develop positive attitude cognitively, emotionally and behaviourally to face the challenges of life. Despite the obvious benefits of education to national development, research findings indicate that youth dropout rate from school is increasing. It is sad to note that it is not every child who starts schooling at primary, secondary or tertiary level that completes his or her education. Dropping

out refers to a student quitting school before he or she graduates. It cannot always be ascertained that a student has dropped out as he or she may stop attending without terminating enrolment. It is estimated that 7.3 million students annually dropout of school in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2004). Reasons for dropping out are varied and may include securing an employment, poor grade, avoiding bullying, family emergency, depression and other mental illness, unexpected pregnancy and boredom from lack of lessons relevant to their desired occupations. Personal characteristic, home, finance and society were found by Ikechukwu (2000) as predisposing factors to school drop among adolescents.

The dropout rate of students can be inimical to the economy of a nation when it is high. It can result in lower skilled work force and reduced human capital for a society that focuses on learning, knowledge, acquisition and education. The probability of criminal behaviour can increase when students drop out of school (Guleck and Guleck, 2008). It tends to lower occupational and economic prospects and life time-earnings of the individual (Catterall, 1985; Rumberger, 1987). In spite of the efforts of successful governments of Nigeria to provide free education by introducing Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976, Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 1999 and State Universal Basic Education (SUBE) in 2000, pupils and students are still dropping out of school for various reasons which may be psychological, emotional and intellectual (academic failure) problems (Egbochuku and Audu, 2004). However to reduce dropout tendency and other behaviour problems counselling strategies can be used. Counselling is a one on one interaction between a trained counsellor and an individual towards assisting the individual to gain an insight into his concerns and also to make wise, intelligent choices/decision. Durosaro (2004) defined counselling as a personal relationship between a counsellor and a counsellee with the aim of assisting the latter in self understanding, decision making and problem solving. It is also oriented towards facilitating effective learning skills, acceptable habits and appropriate behaviours in individual. Many secondary school students may or may not have had access to counsellors to assist them to cope with the difficulties and challenges experienced within and outside the school. Most of the counselling units in schools are not functioning as they should. The counsellors posted to secondary schools are given other assignments such as teaching, enrolment of students and running of errands instead of performing their primary assignment of counselling students. The ratio of counsellors to students is grossly inadequate and most of them need to be retrained. The low awareness of the importance of counselling among students and the non-functioning of the counselling centres in schools may have made students who had the motivation to continue schooling to drop out of school. A functioning unit with a dedicated counsellor would have identified those at risk of dropping out and could have prevented them from leaving the school system. This study therefore, is to determine causes and consequences of dropout and counselling strategies for preventing and reducing dropout among secondary school students in Edo State.

## 2. THE PROBLEM

School dropout issue is a major social and economic problem that poses complex subject for policy makers, educators, parents, counsellors, students and others. Young adolescents who leave

school without completion are at a disadvantage on the labour market in today's knowledge-based society. The personal and social development of dropout students is in danger of being hindered. They are at risk of social exclusion and life of poverty. They are also less likely to participate in life – long learning than other students who continue their education and training. The revenue of government is also affected because the individuals who are supposed to contribute their quota to the economic development of the nation are unemployed have health problems, lower earnings, unstable, poor and also those involved in criminal activities are likely to be behind bars. The consequences of dropping out of school are numerous. Determining the factors and life circumstance that influence individuals in the secondary schools to drop out would be important in finding counselling strategies to be used to lower dropout cases and graduate students who will go on to live more productive and better lives. The focus of this study is to use counselling strategies to lower/reduce dropout rate in secondary schools.

#### Research Questions

1. What are the causes of school dropout in secondary schools?
2. What are the consequences of school dropouts?
3. What counselling strategies could be adopted to lower/reduced dropout cases in secondary schools?

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted for this study. A descriptive survey uses the sample, data of an investigation to document, describe and explain what is existent or non-existent or the present status of a phenomena being investigated (Ali, 2006).

#### 3.1. Population

The population of this study comprised of secondary school teachers/counsellors in Benin metropolis.

### 4. SAMPLE

In Benin metropolis there are 43 public secondary schools. The random sampling technique was used in selecting six (6) secondary schools from the 43 public secondary schools and with stratified sampling technique; one hundred and fifty (150) teachers/counsellors were selected for the study.

The instrument used in this study was a researcher made questionnaire titled Counselling Against School Dropout (CASD). It was a structured type of questionnaire containing a section A, B and C. Section A contains the demographic information while section B and C contain 35 items which was made up of the causes, consequences and the counselling strategies. The validity of the research instrument was established through the review of the item by two experts. Applying Cronbach Alpha, a reliability coefficient of 0.74 was obtained.

**Data Analysis:** The data collected were tallied and analyzed using frequency count and percentage

## 5. RESULT

The data collected were tallied and analyzed. They were built in tables to highlight the major findings. The results were then presented in sequential manner.

**Table -1.** Respondents Rating Of the Causes of School Dropout.

S/N		Frequency	%
1.	Can indiscipline (absenteeism, fights, lateness, rudeness, stealing, truancy) lead to dropout	131	87.3
2.	Does lack of interest in classes lead to dropout of students?	126	84
3.	Can behaviour and emotional problem result in school drop out?	124	82.7
4.	Does failure lead to school dropout	121	80.7
5.	Can time spent with friend (peers) not interested in school work be responsible for school dropout?	121	80.7
6.	Can low social economy (poverty) status of parents lead to drop out?	120	80
7.	Can lack of basic needs lead to school drop out?	119	79.3
8.	Can the negative values of a society influence students to drop out of school?	116	77.3
9.	Does poor performance in school work lead to drop out?	101	67.3
10.	Can threat of being hurt in school lead to drop out?	98	65.3
11.	Does the negative attitude of the teacher promote school drop out?	94	62.7
12.	Can too many missed days in school attendance result in school drop out?	84	58
13.	Can poor school home communication lead to school drop out?	83	55.3
14.	Can lack of parents involvement in handling school assignments given to their children lead to school drop out?	81	54
15.	Do students drop out of school because they cannot pay fees?	75	50

In Table 1 the respondent rated all the items above 50%. The conclusion is that all of the items are the causes of school dropout.

**Table - 2.** Respondents' rating of consequences of school dropout.

s/n		Frequency	%
1.	Can school dropout increase criminal activities in the society?	134	89.3
2.	Can school dropout lower self-esteem?	134	89.3
3.	Can school dropout create negative emotional response?	131	87.3
4.	Does school dropout put the individual at a disadvantage in the labour market?	129	86
5.	Does school dropout affect the personal and social development of the students?	121	80.7
6.	Can high school dropout rate increase unemployment?	111	74
7.	Is the dropout at risk of a life of poverty	94	62.7
8.	Can school dropout contribute to the economic development of the society or nation?	83	55.3
9.	Will the student be able to fulfill his or her educational aspiration after dropping out of school?	74	49
10.	Can school dropout create rich employment opportunities?	69	46

In table 2.0 above the respondents rated 1 to 8 above 50% except items 9 and 10. This indicates that they agree that dropout increase criminal activities, lower self esteem, causes negative emotional response and the disadvantage of individual in the labour market, affects the personal and social development of students, increase unemployment, put one at risk of poverty life which all constitute the consequences of dropout.

**Table-3.** Respondent rating on Counselling Strategies

s/n		Frequency	%
1.	Communication between school and home – invite parents to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their children	148	98.7
2.	Identify students at risk of not completing their schooling – work with them to develop educational plan for their future, personal-social goals based on self-knowledge, information about school, world of work and society?	147	98
3.	Addressing the direct needs of students – provide the needed guidance, support and encouragement for students to complete secondary school successfully and plans for tertiary education (individual and group counselling).	146	97.3
4.	Students with financial problems – information service can expose them to access scholarship, financial aid/assistance to complete schooling	146	97.3
5.	Promote regular school attendance by discussing with students the behaviour that improves school attendance such as goal setting, study habit, note taking and examination	144	96
6.	Remedial classes/extra lessons, organize classes for students after school to enable them catch up with lessons missed	144	96
7.	Career counselling – Focus on the level of aspiration of the students. Discuss and stress the importance of believing in himself/herself as one who can achieve success in any chosen career by organizing seminars, career day, excursions among others	142	94.7
8.	Effective personal skills – discussion that will help them to be punctual and attentive in class, build self-esteem, make good friends, have good value for school, obeying school rules, etc.	141	94
9.	Low achieving students – organize early intervention to improve their performance and use individual counselling to identify what is causing low performance which could be personal – social or academic problems.	140	93.3
10.	Offer social emotional counselling; adopt individual counselling to discuss and allay their pains/troubles or fears about schooling	140	93.3

In table 3.0 all the respondent rated all the items above 90%. This indicates that the items are all counselling strategies that could be used for the prevention of school drop-out.

## 7. DISCUSSION

The result presented in table 1.0 shows that in the respondents' opinion, indiscipline, lack of interest in classes, emotional problem, failure, poverty, lack of basic need, negative value of society, threat at school, truancy, poor performance, lack of parental involvement and non-payment of school fees are the causes of school dropout . This agrees with the report of [Terence et al. \(2006\)](#) and the findings of [Archambault et al. \(2009\)](#). They stated that dropping out of high school is positively associated with later crime - an outcome that is consistent with a control perspective.

In table 2.0 the respondents rated eight of the items as consequences of school dropout. This indicates that they agree that dropping out increase criminal activities, unemployment, lower self esteem and decreases the personal and social development of students. This finding corroborates the study of [Brideland et al. \(2006\)](#) and [Karl et al. \(1997\)](#) studies on the consequence of school dropout. Finally, the result presented in table 3.0 shows that the respondents rated all the counselling strategies as preventive measure of school dropout. This finding confirms the advocacy of [Croninger and Lee \(2001\)](#), [Fallis and Opotow \(2003\)](#) and [Ream and Rumberger \(2008\)](#) who suggested the need to adopt counselling strategies in order to prevent students dropping out of school. They stated that rather than relying on standard punitive approaches, schools can respond to dropping out more effectively by taking students concerns seriously and that teachers/counsellors are important source of social capital for students. Moreover, students who came from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and who have had academic difficulties in the past find guidance and assistance from teachers/counsellors especially helpful.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study and the discussion that followed, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Indiscipline, lack of interest in class, failure, behavioural and emotional problems were found to be the causes of school dropout,
2. Criminal activities, low self-esteem, negative emotional response and increase in unemployment are the consequences of dropping out of school and
3. Counselling strategies help to prevent dropping out of school.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The teachers/counsellors in conjunction with the community should organize seminars and workshops where the students will be sensitized on the consequences of dropping out of the school.
2. The counselling strategies identified in this study should be explored by the counsellors/teachers.
3. The parents should emphasize the importance of education to their children.
4. The government should create counselling unit in every school.
5. Education planners should include in the curriculum counselling where assertiveness, self-esteem, study habits, career week etc. Should be taught in school.

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