



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## EFFECT OF SELECTED COPING STRATEGIES ON WORRY ORIENTED ACADEMIC STRESS OF PUPILS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND SOUTH EASTERN STATES OF NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study was designed to determine the effect of selected coping Strategies on the worry oriented academic stress of the pupils with visual impairment in school for the blind South Eastern Nigeria. The study was a non-equivalent control group pre-test and post-test quasi experimental design involving two treatments and one control. Multi-stage sampling cluster sampling and random sampling were used appropriately to arrive at the sample. The data obtained from the administration of the instrument were very organized and analysed using mean scores, standard deviation and a 3 x 2 Analysis of Covariance. The research findings showed that instructing the pupils with visual impairment –Goal setting and Effective time management reduced their academic worries.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education in Nigeria has been acknowledged as an essential enjoyed service by all. Federal Republic of Nigeria (F.R.N., 2004) disclosed that the philosophy of education in Nigeria includes provision of equal access to the educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. All citizen here includes the exceptional children. The exceptional children require education. Abang (2005) perceived exceptional child as one who deviates significantly in one way or the other from the normal trend of development which may be with regarded as visual, auditory, physical or behavioral. Deviation in visual development is regarded as visual impairment. According to Eke (2001) visually impaired children are those certified as having difficulty with vision such that they cannot benefit from general education with the use of sight except with modification. In view of America Foundations of the Blind in Eke (2006), the types of visual impairment are: totally blind, partially sighted and low vision. Sense of sight is highly regarded more so for those in pursuit of education. It is the queen of all senses Abang in Eke (2001) asserted that eighty percent of learning activities come from the se of sight.

This implies that mild or profound loss of sight subject one to challenging experience in school. This supposedly informed the setting of objectives of special education (FRN,2004) which among others include equal educational opportunities for all and provision of education for all disabled in order that they may play their roles. Efforts so far made by the government on the foregoing objectives fall far below expectation. Iheanacho (2001) disclosed the objectives are not yet realized. The author revealed a confessional statement of the government that so far, the delivery of services for the exceptional children (which included the visually impaired ones) in Nigeria is minimal. National Teacher Institute (NTI, 2000) stated that there is setback in the implementation of objectives. The above non-implementation of set goals and objectives has brought stress face to face with visually impaired in school due to loss of sight. Maurus (2005:16) defined stress as "impelling force which causes distress and strain". In school, visually impaired children experience academic stress. Horn by (1981) viewed worry as instance of discomfort or no peace of mind. Eke (2006) perceived worry oriented academic stress as feeling weak, being bored, often complaining and upset in arising from academic challenges. This could mar the educational plan of the visually impaired

hence they could be helpless and hopeless forever. The above experience subject pupils with visual impairment in school for the blind to frustration. It is referred to as academic worry oriented stress. The sorry situation and condition of pupils in school for the blind in South Eastern States in Nigeria is better seen, felt than described. The venture in the policy and available efforts in the schools have not taken care of the situation. Researchers and researchers attempted various ways to arrest the situation to no avail. The hope is not lost hence the present researchers articulated new area that call for the pupils themselves to be part of their solution to the problem by exposing them to skills in coping strategies. Ray of hope could abound by introduction of coping strategies which can to a large extent minimize the pangs of worry oriented academic stress of this special population's ways of handling new situations at each life stage. Eke (2000) perceived academic coping strategy as a strategy applied by student to resolve challenging academic demands. These strategies could be steps to world helping to limit the worry oriented academic stress of the visually impaired. If the visually impaired ones employ them, it could go a long way to compliment or supplement whatever service that come their way from the government. Goal effective time management are popular strategies. Goal setting (Essuman, Nwachukwu and Nwaogu 1990) is identifying and defining problems and changing them to set goals that are achievable Wilson (2003) conceptualized Effective time management as the ability to plan, organizing and control time. Studies (Wilson, 2002; Kabuga, 2003) found one visually impaired under academic stress got relived significantly due to use of the above strategies in America.

One is apt to ask if such could work in this part of globe among the visually impaired especially pupils in the schools for the Blind, Oji-river Enugu state and Olokoru, Umuahia, Abia states both in South Eastern Nigeria. The pupils in these schools are very much exposed to -academic -worry oriented stress. Worse still, they lack focus, planning in face of academic challenges of academic workload, often complaining to government for being callous to their worries among others. An informal interview and interactional session with teachers in the school revealed that they are neither away of any formal coping strategy on worry oriented academic stress nor taking time to instruct the pupils on how to cope. The pupils in the schools do not have idea of coping strategies either. In cognizance of the very importance of goal setting and time management strategies, this study became apt and inevitable so as to instruct the pupils with visual impairment in these schools for the Blind the use of this selected coping strategies to find out how they affect coping with worry oriented academic stress.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine the effect of selected coping strategies on the worry oriented academic stress of the pupils with visual impairment in school for the blind in South Eastern states of Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to examine

- Effect of goal setting on the pupils with visual impairment worry oriented academic stress.
- Effect of time management on the pupils with visual impairment worry oriented academic stress.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the effect of goal setting on the pupils with visual impairment worry oriented academic stress?
2. What is the effect of time management on the pupils with visual impairment worry oriented academic stress?

### **Statement of Hypothesis**

Instruction on the selected coping strategies have no significant effect on pupils with visual impairment worry oriented academic stress as measured by their means on VIWO-ASQ.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The design used for the study was a pre-test and post-test quasi experimental design of the effect of instructional programme on goal setting and time management of the pupils with visual impairment worry oriented academic stress. The population for the study consisted of 83pupils from the senior primary schools for the blind both in Oji River and Olokoru Umuahia of Enugu state and Abia State respectively. In each of the schools there were two groups identified as experimental and control groups. The total number of the population of the sample served as the sample in using census. In Oji River school Enugu state for the blind with sample of 41, it was divided into three of 14, 14 and 13 where in each group there abound pupils in primary 4,5 and 6 and identified as two experimental groups and one control group. In Olokoru Umuahia Abia state school for the blind with sample of 42, they were divided into three: 14, 14 and 14 respectively to serve as two experimental groups and one control groups. The instrument used for the study was a set of questionnaire developed by the researchers named Visually Impaired Worry Oriented Academic Stress Questionnaire (VIWO-ASQ). This was used for pre -test and also for post-test after reshuffling the items. It consists seven item statement meant to elicit information on worry oriented academic stress. The pupils were required in a four point scale the degree of agreement or otherwise to each of the statements on worry oriented academic stress. The instrument was face and content validated by three experts, one each from special education, educational psychology and research measurement and evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering it on Pupils with visual impairment at St. Joseph's School for the blind Obudu, Cross River State in South South Nigeria. The internal consistency was computed using Cronbach Alpha that gave the Reliability Coefficient of .83. This affirmed the reliability of the instrument.

There were two instructional programmes which are respectively on goal setting and time management. There was also placebo for the control group. They were validated by three experts above. Six research assistants were trained on how to use the instructional packages and placebo. Two in each case of the packages and placebo were trained on how to use them on the pupils. In the end there was trial testing of the packages and the placebo on pupils with visual impairment at St. Joseph School for the blind that were not part of the study. Three research assistants were scheduled for each school to handle packages and the placebo after the pre-test of instrument. The researchers and the assistants had access to the

school through a formal procedure and protocol to the respective school authority. The school and special teachers in the school assisted in deducing the groups that were three in each case: Experimental group one to be exposed to Goal setting and Experimental group two to be exposed to Time Management and the third group served as Control group billed for the placebo. By and large when put together Goal setting was exposed to 28 pupils, Time management to 28 pupils and Placebo billed for the control group 27 pupils. The instructional programmes and the placebo lasted five weeks. There after, the instrument was reshuffled for use as a post-test. Mean scores and standard deviation was used to answer research questions. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypothesis to determine the significance difference in the group means at 0.05 level, Scheffe's Multiple Comparative technique was used to show direction of difference among the mean scores.

## RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in the tables according to the research questions and hypothesis which guided the study.

### Research question one

What is the effect of Goal setting strategies on the pupils with visual impairment worry oriented academic stress?

**Table 1. Visually Impaired Pupil' Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores on Academic Worry**

Group	Pre-test N	X	Sd	Post-test	X	Sd
Goal setting	28	18.29	1.25	28	7.14	.38
Control	27	16.17	1.75	27	15.00	1.41

**Table 2. Visually Impaired Pupil Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores on Academic Worry**

Group	Pre-test N	X	Sd	Post-test	X	Sd
Time	28	16.86	2.27	28	9.00	1.63
Management Control	27	16.17	1.72	27	15.00	1.41

**Table 3. Summary of Analysis Covariance (ANCOVA) on the Student with Disabilities' Post-test Scores on Worry of VIWO-ASQ**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Mean Square	Significance of F	F	Decision at 0.05 Level
Covariates	11.473	1	11.473		10.029	
Pre-test	11.473	1	11.473		11.473	
Main Effect						
Goal setting Strategy	210.775	2	105.387	92.128	92.128	*S
Time Management Strategy	210.775	2	105.387	92.128	92.128	*S
Control						
Explained	222.247	3	74.087	64.762	64.762	*Sq.
Residual	18.303	39	1.144			
Total	240.550	42	12.661			

\*S=Significant at 0.05 level

\*\*NS=Not significant at 0.05 level

The result in table one showed that the pupils with visual impairment who received instruction in Goal setting had an overall mean Pre-test academic worry score of 18.29 and S.D of 1.25, while the mean Post-test score academic worry oriented stress was 7.14 with standard deviation of .38. The control group had over all mean Pre-test academic worry oriented stress of 16.7 and S.D of 1.41. This appears to show

that subjects in treatment group has less academic worry oriented stress. The treatment group seems to show marked improvement in coping with academic oriented worry as a result of the treatment.

### Research Question two

What is the effect of Time Management strategies on the Pupils with visual impairment worry oriented academic stress?

The result In table two shows that the pupils with visual impairment exposed to time management strategies had an over all mean pre-test academic worry oriented stress of 16.86 and SD. OF 2-27, while their mean post-test was 9.00 with S.D of 1.63. The control group had over all mean of Pre-test academic worry oriented stress of 16.7 and S.D of 1.72 while the mean post-test was 15.00 with standard of 1.41. This appears to show that subjects in the treatment group had less academic worry oriented stress. The treatment groups seem to show marked improvement in coping with academic worry oriented stress as a result of the treatment.

**Hypothesis:** A corresponding hypothesis raised to further address the research question was. Instruction on selected coping strategies will have no significant (p .05) effect on the academic worry oriented stress as measured by their mean scores on VIWO-ASQ.

Results In table three shows that the treatment as a factor has significant effect on coping with academic worry oriented stress. This is because the F – value of 92.128 in respect of treatment as main factor has significant effect on the pupils with visual impairment coping with academic worry oriented stress. This is because of the F- Value of 92.128 in respect of treatment as main factor is shown to be significant at .000

level. This indicates that at 0.05 level, the F.Value of 92.128 is significant. This seems to suggest that equipping the pupils with visual impairment with skills in goal setting and time management significantly reduce their academic worry oriented stress on the mean where it was rejected.

**Table 4. Results of Scheffe Test for Post-test VIWO-ASQ of Academic Worry Mean Scores of the Treatment and Control Groups**

Group		1 (GSS)	2 (TMS)	3 Control
Mean(X)		7.14	9.00	
Group	Mean(X)	*	*	
1=GSS	7.1429	*		
2=TMS	9.0000			
3=Control	25.00			

\*Denotes pairs of groups significant differences at 0.005 level.

Table four shows that the difference between the treatment group one (GSS) and treatment group two (TMS) was significant at 1.05. The pupils with visual impairment exposed to goal setting (GSS) had an overall mean score of 7.14 while those exposed to Time management (TMS) had an overall mean of 9.00. This implies that goal setting strategy was more effective than time management strategy in facilitating of coping with academic worry oriented stress. The table further shows that the difference between treatment group one (GSS) and Control group was significant at 0.05. The pupils exposed to GSS had over all mean score of 7.14 while the control group had over all mean of 25.00. From the table, it shows that the difference between treatment group two (TMS) had an overall mean score of 9.00 while the control group had over all mean of 25.00.

## DISCUSSION

It has been shown in the study that instructing the pupils with visual impairment the coping strategies affect their academic worry. The evidence showed that equipping the pupils with skills in goal setting and time management strategies significantly lessened their academic worry oriented stress. The academic worry oriented stress of the pupils make them to be disturbed and not to have peace of mind. Agulana in Eke (2006) asserted that worry is both stressor and stress manifest. The coping strategies could help in making less the academic worry oriented stress just as shown in tables one and two. The results agreed with the findings of Kabuga, (2003) in a study of the blind Asian postgraduate student where she noted that the blind students interest and vigor in pursuing set goals were instrumental to his success, which reduced significantly worries related to his academic demands. This was as a result of achieving set goals on time. Indeed, the coping strategies breed interest and vigour, which could help one to cope with worry and any thing related. Kabuga in the study found that the student had positive attitude thence often been carried away by his love for education due to ensuring goals set are achieved. Moreover, Lazarus in Eke (2006) remarked that make up of one's thought, attitude and temperament determine one's perception, which could bring about adaptive responses. One with skills in goal setting or time management coping strategies could bring about positive change in perception and coping with academic worries. The present study agreed with the findings made by Powel and Enright in Eke, (2006). They researchers found in their study that adaptive responses help to alleviate the stress as academic worry and return the system back to a state of equilibrium. This, they asserted, is possible

when on is aware of personal resources as in skill in any of the coping strategies which could produce solution to stress. The above could help lessen the academic worry oriented stress of the pupils with visual impairment as affirmed by the study. Lazarus disclosed that coping ensures confidence in one, which takes away worry. The above could be as a result of skills in goal setting or time management both of which showed significant effect on worry for those exposed to the strategies. Acquiring skill in goal setting or time management brings about less academic worry oriented stress of the pupils with visual impairment. It is therefore, not surprising in this study for they are corroborated and reinforced by the above study. The result in Scheffe's test in table four showed that goal setting strategy and time management strategy were respectively effective but goal setting strategy proved to be more effective. There was significant difference in the effectiveness of the two coping strategies. The significant difference in the effectiveness of the two strategies in coping with academic worry oriented stress could be as a result of nature of the dimension of stress called worry. A possible reason could be that worry as a stressor or stress manifest could be handled more by goal setting strategy than time management strategy. That is why the pupils in group one who were exposed to skills in goal setting had over all less mean academic worry score. Another possible reason could be that the pupils exposed to goal setting strategy seem to be more involving and then became more effective in coping with worry.

## Conclusion

From the findings, it is concluded that exposure of the pupils with visual impairment to the selected goal setting and time management strategies significantly lessened their academic worry oriented stress.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusion reached, the following recommendations are made. Primarily, emphasis should be given at equipping the pupils with visual impairment the skills in using these coping strategies by experts to be deployed in their schools. This can be done also by Special teachers and or guidance counsellors. It is vital that teacher preparation Institution should expose the preservice and in-service teachers to this strategies so that they can teach this special population especially those that have something to do with learners with visual impairment. Moreover, seminar, workshops and conferences should be organized by state and federal ministry of Education. Special educator and those in allied professions with focus on these strategies. Further, the writers of text books should be directed and encouraged by ministry of Education and Non governmental organization to author works on goal setting and time management strategies.

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