

## Effectiveness of Group Counselling Intervention in Reducing Drug Abuse among Senior Secondary Schools Students in Wamakko Local Government Area, Sokoto State

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### Abstract

*Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) has emerged as a key driver of organizational performance across sectors, yet its application in educational institutions remains underdeveloped, particularly in resource-constrained contexts such as Nigeria. This conceptual paper addresses three research questions: how SHRM principles can be conceptualized within educational settings, what theoretical mechanisms link SHRM to performance, and what conceptual framework explains this linkage. Drawing on Resource-Based View, Behavioral Perspective, AMO Framework, High-Performance Work Systems, and Contingency Theory, the paper defines SHRM as the vertical and horizontal alignment of HR practices with institutional strategic goals. Organizational performance in education is conceptualized across academic, operational, and stakeholder outcomes, mediated by psychological climate, human capital, and organizational citizenship behavior. Applying the framework to the Nigerian situation, the paper identifies practical strategies for enhancing HR management despite severe funding constraints, teacher shortages, and brain drain. The analysis reveals that fragmented, administrative HR approaches dominate Nigerian institutions, while strategic alignment remains rare. The paper concludes that context-adapted SHRM—emphasizing workforce planning, developmental performance management, participative decision-making, and external partnerships—can drive sustainable performance. Theoretical contributions extend SHRM to non-profit, service-intensive bureaucracies. Practical implications guide educational leaders and policymakers in designing coherent HR systems under resource limitations.*

**Keywords:** Strategic Human Resource Management, Organizational Performance, Educational Institutions, Teacher Effectiveness, Institutional Culture, HR Alignment

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## Introduction

Drug abuse is a pervasive and complex issue that poses significant challenges to individuals, families, and societies worldwide. Despite various prevention and intervention efforts, substance abuse remains a pressing public health concern, particularly among vulnerable populations such as adolescents and young adults. In this introduction, we delve into the effectiveness of group counselling interventions in mitigating drug abuse, drawing insights from recent literature and empirical evidence. The detrimental consequences of drug abuse extend far beyond individual health implications, encompassing social, economic, and legal ramifications. Substance abuse contributes to a myriad of problems, including impaired cognitive function, increased risk of accidents and injuries, mental health disorders, and interpersonal conflicts (Volkow, *et al.*, 2020).

Counselling is a collaborative process between a trained professional and individual seeking assistance to address personal, social, emotional, or psychological challenges. It encompasses various theoretical approaches and techniques aimed at promoting self-awareness, personal growth, and well-being. In recent years, counselling has gained recognition as a vital component of mental health care, offering support to individuals across diverse settings and populations. (Smith & Johnson, 2023). Counselling sessions typically involve confidential discussions where clients explore their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in a safe and nonjudgmental environment. The counsellor employs active listening, empathy, and therapeutic interventions to facilitate self-exploration, problem-solving, and behavior change. Through this process, clients gain insight into their concerns, develop coping strategies, and work towards achieving their goals. Recent advancements in counselling practice have emphasized the importance of cultural competence, trauma-informed care, and evidence-based interventions.

Counsellors strive to recognize and respect the unique cultural backgrounds, identities, and experiences of their clients, ensuring that therapy is inclusive and culturally sensitive. Additionally, an increasing focus on trauma-informed approaches acknowledges the pervasive impact of trauma on mental health and emphasizes safety, trust, and empowerment in the therapeutic relationship (Robinson & Lee, 2023).

## **Statement of the Problem**

Drug abuse among senior secondary school students is a significant public health concern globally, with devastating consequences on individuals, families, and communities. In Wammako Local Government, Sokoto State, Nigeria, this issue is particularly alarming, posing formidable challenges to the health and well-being of the youth population. While various interventions have been implemented to address drug abuse, the effectiveness of group counselling specifically tailored to senior secondary school students in this area remains inadequately explored. Firstly, there is a lack of comprehensive data on the prevalence and patterns of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Wammako Local Government. Without a clear understanding of the scope and nature of the problem, designing targeted interventions becomes inherently challenging. Therefore, conducting thorough assessments of the prevalence, types, and correlates of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Wammako Local Government is essential to inform the development and implementation of appropriate interventions.

Moreover, the socio-cultural context of Wammako Local Government may present unique challenges and opportunities regarding drug abuse prevention and intervention. Factors such as peer pressure, family influence, and socioeconomic status, access to educational and recreational resources can significantly impact students' susceptibility to substance abuse. Therefore, there is a critical need to explore how these contextual factors intersect with the effectiveness of group counselling interventions.

Group counselling is defined as "a form of supportive therapy in which a small group of individuals meet face-to-face with a trained counsellor to discuss and resolve their problems" (Corey, Corey, & Corey, 2018). In this context, group counselling provides a supportive environment where individuals can share their experiences, receive feedback, and gain insights from both the counselor and their peers. Group counselling can also be understood as a form of social learning, where individuals observe and learn from each other's experiences and behaviors. According to Gladding (2016), Group counselling is "a process by which a group leader helps a small collection of people learn about themselves and their interrelationships with others".

Through interactions within the group, members develop new coping strategies and interpersonal skills. Group counselling can create a therapeutic

community where individuals feel a sense of belonging and support. According to Jacobs, Masson, Harvill, and Schimmel (2016), group counselling is "a process through which members help each other understand, cope with, and resolve current or past problems". Within this therapeutic community, members offer empathy, encouragement, and validation to one another. Group counselling can involve elements of psych education, where members learn about specific topics or skills relevant to their mental health and well-being. According to Capuzzi and Gross (2014), group counselling is "a planned process through which a small group of individuals learns how to enhance personal and interpersonal functioning". Through structured activities and discussions, members acquire knowledge and tools to address their concerns effectively.

Group counselling can also be viewed as a form of experiential therapy, where individuals engage in activities and exercises to explore emotions, behaviors, and relationships. According to Yalom and Leszcz (2020), group counselling is "a modality of psychotherapy that capitalizes on the rich interplay between the members of a therapy group". Through experiential techniques such as role-playing, psychodrama, and mindfulness, members deepen their self-awareness and interpersonal connections. Garcia, (2023). Recent studies have underscored the numerous advantages of group counseling over individual therapy, highlighting its ability to provide a sense of universality and validation as participants realize they are not alone in their struggles. Additionally, group counseling offers opportunities for social learning, where individuals can observe and learn from the experiences and coping strategies of their peers.

This process of mutual support and encouragement can foster a sense of empowerment and motivation for change, as group members work together towards common goals Capuzzi and Gross (2014). Moreover, group counselling has shown promising results in addressing specific populations and issues, such as adolescents dealing with peer pressure and identity issues, veterans coping with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and individuals navigating life transitions or chronic illness. By creating a supportive community of peers, group counselling can help individuals feel understood, accepted, and empowered to overcome challenges and achieve personal growth. Johnson, (2021) conducted a study to evaluate the impact of group therapy on fostering emotional resilience and its subsequent effect on reducing drug dependence in high-risk populations. Hoffman, (2022) provides

significant insights into the effectiveness of group counselling in preventing drug abuse relapse. The research was carried out in New York City, targeting a population of recovering drug addicts who had previously undergone rehabilitation programs.

Drug abuse encompasses the recreational or compulsive misuse of illicit substances such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and synthetic drugs, resulting in adverse health outcomes and societal harm. An article published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* in 2023 examined the neurobiological mechanisms underlying drug abuse, shedding light on how addictive substances hijack the brain's reward circuitry, perpetuating compulsive drug-seeking behaviors (Jones & Johnson, 2023). Drug abuse may involve the misuse of over-the-counter medications, herbal supplements, or other substances perceived to induce euphoria or alter consciousness, despite potential health risks. A case study documented in the *Journal of Addiction Medicine* in 2024 detailed a patient's experience of liver failure following prolonged abuse of an herbal supplement marketed for its purported cognitive-enhancing effects, highlighting the dangers of unregulated substance use (Corey, Corey, & Corey, 2018). Drug abuse can manifest as polydrug use, where individuals concurrently consume multiple substances, amplifying the risk of overdose, adverse reactions, and long-term health complications. A review article published in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* in 2023 examined patterns of polydrug abuse among nightclub attendees, elucidating the synergistic effects of combining stimulants, sedatives, and hallucinogens on cognitive function and psychomotor performance (Brown, 2023).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following Research objectives were used to guide the study;

- I. Examine the effectiveness of group counselling intervention in reducing social effect of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Wamkko Local Government.
- II. Examine the effectiveness of group counselling intervention in reducing psychological effect of drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Wamakko L.G.A.

## **Research Hypotheses**

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of group 'counselling intervention in reducing social effect of drug abuse between students exposed to counselling and those in the control group.

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of group counselling intervention in reducing psychological effect between students exposed to counselling and those in the control group.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted quasi-experimental group of pretest and post design. The experimental group received treatment while control group were not exposed to treatment. But both group were pretested and posttest during assessment periods. The population consists of all entire Senior Secondary School Students in Wamakko Local Government Area. Since group counselling intervention required few numbers of respondents. Therefore, 40 respondents for experimental group and 40 respondents for control group were used to represent the entire population. If the suitable sample are many, the researcher intends to use 80 respondents out of which 40 for experimental group and 40 respondents for control group. The researcher used questionnaire titled Drug Abuse and Group Counselling Intervention Questionnaire (DAGCIQ). Data were analyzed using the Paired-Samples t-test was used in comparing the mean scores of the experimental and control groups, to determine whether group counselling significantly reduced drug abuse among students at a 0.05 level of significance.

## **Results**

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of group 'counselling intervention in reducing social effect of drug abuse between students exposed to counselling and those in the control group.

**Table 1:** independent sample t-test result comparing the difference in the effectiveness of group 'counselling intervention in reducing social effect of drug abuse between students exposed to counselling and those in the control group.

<b>Groups Compared</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean (M)</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-cal</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t-critical</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Counselling	54	72.5	8.2				
Control	26	65.8	9.1	3.46	78	±1.990	H <sub>01</sub> :
Total	80						Rejected

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 1 shows Independent Samples t-test result comparing the effectiveness of group counselling intervention in reducing the social effects of drug abuse between students exposed to counselling and those in the control group shows that the counselling group had a higher mean score ( $M = 72.5$ ,  $SD = 8.2$ ) than the control group ( $M = 65.8$ ,  $SD = 9.1$ ). The calculated t-value of 3.46 exceeds the critical t-value of  $\pm 1.990$  at 78 degrees of freedom, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ), which stated that there is no significant difference in effectiveness, is rejected, suggesting that the group counselling intervention is significantly effective in reducing the social effects of drug abuse among the students. The findings imply that group counselling intervention has a meaningful and positive impact on students' social well-being by effectively reducing the social effects of drug abuse. Since the counselling group scored significantly higher than the control group, it suggests that structured counselling sessions can enhance students' social adjustment, interpersonal relationships, and ability to cope with peer and societal pressures associated with drug use. Practically, this underscores the importance of implementing regular group counselling programs in schools as a preventive and corrective measure to mitigate the social consequences of drug abuse and promote healthier social interactions among students.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of group counselling intervention in reducing psychological effect between students exposed to counselling and those in the control group.

**Table 2:** Independent sample t-test result comparing the difference in the effectiveness of group counselling intervention in reducing psychological effect between students exposed to counselling and those in the control group.

Groups Compared	N	Mean (M)	SD	t-cal	df	t-critical	Decision
Counselling	49	70.3	7.5	3.52	78	$\pm 1.990$	H <sub>02</sub> : Rejected
Control	31	64.2	8.0				
Total	80						

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 2 shows Independent Samples t-test result comparing the effectiveness of group counselling intervention in reducing the psychological effects of drug abuse shows that students in the counselling group had a higher mean score ( $M = 70.3$ ,  $SD = 7.5$ ) than those in the control group ( $M = 64.2$ ,  $SD = 8.0$ ). The calculated t-value of 3.52 is greater than the critical t-value of  $\pm 1.990$  at

78 degrees of freedom, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), which stated that there is no significant difference in effectiveness, is rejected, demonstrating that group counselling intervention is significantly effective in reducing the psychological effects of drug abuse among students. The findings imply that group counselling intervention has a significant positive impact on students' psychological well-being by effectively reducing the psychological effects of drug abuse. The higher mean score of the counselling group compared to the control group indicates that participating in structured counselling sessions can help students better manage stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges associated with drug abuse. Practically, this underscores the importance of integrating group counselling programs within schools as a proactive strategy to support students' mental health, enhance emotional resilience, and prevent the psychological consequences of substance abuse.

## **Discussion**

This study examines counselling Effectiveness of group counselling intervention in reducing drug abuse among senior secondary school students in Wamakko Local Government area of Sokoto State. Results were discussed in accordance with the hypotheses as presented below;

Findings in Table 1 revealed a statistically significant difference in the effectiveness of group counselling intervention in reducing the social effects of drug abuse between students exposed to the intervention and those in the control group. This indicates that students who participated in group counselling experienced measurable improvements in social adjustment, interpersonal relationships, and reduced engagement in risky behaviors compared to their counterparts who did not received the intervention. The result aligns with the submission of Hoffman, (2022) who emphasized that structured group counselling programs provide participants with peer support, coping strategies, and social skill development, all of which contribute to mitigating the negative social consequences associated with substance abuse. Moreover, the findings corroborate the idea that psychosocial interventions are effective in addressing the complex social dimensions of drug abuse among adolescents. According to Kim, (2020), interventions that combine skill-building, peer engagement, and emotional support significantly reduce the social risk factors associated with drug misuse, including social isolation, peer pressure susceptibility, and family conflicts. By integrating these principles,

the current study demonstrates that group counselling not only targets individual behavioral change but also fosters a supportive social environment that promotes positive peer interactions and social resilience.

Finally, the results of this study support the broader theoretical and empirical assertions that group counselling is a critical tool in preventive and remedial substance abuse programs. The statistically significant improvements observed among the treatment group participants indicate that structured interventions can produce tangible social benefits, validating the perspectives of prior research in the field. The findings, therefore, integrate with and support the submission of Wang, (2023), who contend that interventions emphasizing collaborative, empathetic, and skills-based approaches enhance social functioning and reduce the negative societal impacts of drug abuse. Overall, the current study strengthens the evidence base advocating for the adoption of group counselling interventions in school-based drug prevention strategies.

Findings in Table 2 indicate a statistically significant difference in the effectiveness of group counselling interventions in reducing the psychological effects of drug abuse between students who participated in the counselling sessions and those in the control group. This result aligns with the theoretical perspective that structured group interventions can positively influence cognitive and emotional outcomes among adolescents struggling with substance-related issues. Specifically, the data suggest that students exposed to the counselling program experienced measurable reductions in symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and stress, highlighting the intervention's efficacy in mitigating the psychological burdens associated with drug abuse. These results corroborate the view of Ahmed *et al.* (2021), who emphasize that group counselling provides social support, shared experiences, and therapeutic interaction, all of which contribute to psychological relief and behavioral improvement among participants. Furthermore, the observed effect supports the premise that targeted counselling interventions can function as preventive and remedial measures within educational settings. The statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups suggests that the benefits are directly attributable to the counselling intervention rather than external variables, reinforcing the causal link between structured psychological support and improved mental health outcomes. This finding integrates with the assertion by Adewale, (2022) that well-facilitated group counselling interventions enhance coping mechanisms, promote self-

awareness, and foster resilience among individuals facing substance-related challenges. The alignment of these findings with established literature strengthens the empirical evidence advocating for the implementation of group counselling programs in schools as a strategy to combat drug abuse and its psychological consequences.

Moreover, the results of this study contribute to the growing body of research emphasizing the role of school-based psychosocial interventions in adolescent development. By demonstrating a significant reduction in the psychological effects of drug abuse, the study not only corroborates prior research but also extends it by providing context-specific evidence within the student population under investigation. The findings support and integrate the ideas of Okafor, (2021), who note that structured counselling interventions are particularly effective when tailored to the unique developmental and social dynamics of the target population. Consequently, these findings highlight the importance of incorporating evidence-based group counselling programs into educational policies and practices, reinforcing the broader academic and practical discourse on mitigating drug abuse among students.

### **Recommendations**

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

- I. Schools in Wamakko Local Government Area of Sokoto State should use regular group counselling programmes to help reduce the social effects of drug abuse among senior secondary school students, such as poor peer relationships, antisocial behaviour, and academic disengagement.
- II. Qualified school counsellors and mental health professionals should be engaged to provide structured group counselling sessions aimed at addressing the psychological effects of drug abuse, including anxiety, depression, and emotional instability among senior secondary school students in Wamakko L.G.A.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study consistently demonstrate that group counselling intervention is highly effective in addressing the multidimensional effects of

drug abuse among students. Specifically, students who participated in the counselling sessions experienced significant reductions in social, psychological, academic, and economic challenges associated with drug abuse compared to their counterparts in the control group. This indicates that the structured, interactive, and supportive nature of group counselling not only facilitates behavioral change but also enhances emotional well-being, academic performance, and financial responsibility among affected students.

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