

Virtual Career Counselling Platforms, Emotional Mastery Training and Academic Engagement of Technical College Students in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between virtual career counselling platforms, emotional mastery training, and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State. A correlational survey research design was employed to determine the predictive influence of these factors on students' academic engagement. Three public technical colleges were purposively selected from five in the state based on their structured implementation of both virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training. The study targeted Year 2 students who had previously participated in these interventions, ensuring that only those with prior exposure were included. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 180 students for the study. Data were collected using three researcher-developed instruments: the Virtual Career Counselling Scale (VCCS), the Emotional Mastery Training Scale (EMTS), and the Academic Engagement Scale (AES). Each instrument contained 10 Likert-type items measured on a four-point scale. Expert validation was conducted to ensure content relevance, and a pilot study established the reliability of the instruments, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.81 for VCCS, 0.78 for EMTS, and 0.84 for AES, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Data were analysed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between virtual career counselling platforms and academic engagement ($r = 0.436, p < 0.05$), as well as between emotional mastery training and academic engagement ($r = 0.412, p < 0.05$). Furthermore, multiple regression analysis showed that virtual career counselling and emotional mastery training jointly accounted for 62% of the variance in academic engagement ($R^2 = 0.62, F = 45.23, p < 0.01$), indicating that both variables significantly contribute to students' academic engagement. Based on these findings, it is recommended that technical colleges institutionalise virtual career counselling platforms, integrate emotional mastery training into curricula, and seek government and stakeholder support to sustain these interventions.

Keywords: Virtual career counselling, emotional mastery training, academic engagement, technical college students, Ogun State

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Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, academic engagement has become a crucial factor in determining student success, particularly in technical colleges where both theoretical knowledge and practical skills are essential for career readiness. Academic engagement encompasses students' level of participation, commitment, and enthusiasm toward learning activities, directly influencing their performance, skill acquisition, and career aspirations. This position is supported by Oyewole et al. (2023), who emphasised that behavioural engagement is a critical determinant of students' academic success and sustained participation in learning activities. However, various challenges hinder students' engagement, including inadequate career guidance, emotional instability, and lack of motivation. Disengaged students are more likely to struggle with poor academic performance, low retention rates, and reduced employability after graduation. In technical education contexts, Oyewole and Oderinde (2022) further noted that students' engagement is closely linked to the acquisition of practical and career-oriented skills, which influence their persistence and future employability. While different strategies have been employed to enhance academic engagement, there is a need to explore innovative approaches, such as virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training, especially in the context of technical education in Nigeria.

Career counselling is an essential component of educational success, as it provides students with direction, confidence, and the necessary information to make informed career choices. Traditional career counselling methods have been widely used in schools, with studies indicating their positive effects on students' career development and academic motivation (Savickas, 2019). However, with technological advancements and the increasing demand for accessible career guidance, virtual career counselling platforms have gained popularity. Studies by Gati and Levin (2019) found that students who receive career guidance through virtual platforms demonstrate improved decision-making skills and higher engagement levels in academic activities. Virtual career counselling offers flexibility, convenience, and a broader range of career-related resources, enabling students to access expert advice regardless of their geographical location. In Nigeria, where technical college students often face limited access to career advisors and industry-specific guidance, virtual career counselling could bridge the existing gap. This aligns with

findings that digital learning environments and technological tools enhance students' participation, accessibility to resources, and overall academic involvement (Ogundipe & Oyewole, 2026). Similarly, Oluwande and Oyewole (2023) highlighted that access to structured career information significantly improves students' goal orientation and commitment to academic tasks. However, little is known about the extent to which these platforms influence students' academic engagement, particularly within technical education.

In addition to career guidance, emotional stability plays a pivotal role in shaping students' engagement and overall academic success. Emotional mastery training, which involves techniques for self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience-building, has been identified as a crucial factor in helping students cope with academic stress and maintain focus in learning environments. Research by Gross (2015) and Pekrun (2017) indicates that students who develop emotional regulation skills demonstrate higher levels of motivation, persistence, and engagement in academic tasks. Supporting this view, Oyewole and Abiodun (2025) found that psychological factors significantly influence students' attitudes, motivation, and engagement in learning, particularly in demanding academic environments. Furthermore, emotional distress has been linked to absenteeism, low participation, and decreased academic performance, particularly among students in highly demanding fields such as technical education (Salami, 2019). Despite this, most existing studies on emotional intelligence and academic engagement have primarily focused on university students, leaving a significant gap in research on technical college students who face unique stressors related to balancing theoretical learning with intensive technical training. The need to integrate emotional mastery training as a strategy to enhance engagement among technical students cannot be overstated.

The importance of this study is further underscored by the rising concerns about skill mismatch and unemployment among Nigerian youths. Reports indicate that many technical college graduates struggle to secure employment due to a lack of proper career planning and inadequate soft skills, including emotional intelligence and adaptability (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022; Egbetola & Oyewole, 2024). Without adequate guidance, technical students may pursue career paths that are misaligned with labour market demands, leading to frustration and disengagement. Additionally, the growing emphasis on digital learning and virtual support systems necessitates an investigation

into the effectiveness of online career counselling platforms as a tool for enhancing academic engagement. Similarly, given the increasing recognition of emotional intelligence in workforce readiness, understanding how emotional mastery training influences students' academic engagement is essential for developing holistic educational interventions.

Despite the relevance of career counselling and emotional regulation in education, existing studies have not sufficiently explored their combined impact on academic engagement, particularly among technical college students in Ogun State, Nigeria. Available literature has largely focused on general career counselling methods and emotional intelligence as separate constructs, without examining their interaction within the technical education sector. Given the increasing reliance on digital platforms for educational support and the recognition of emotional intelligence in learning, understanding how virtual career counselling and emotional mastery training jointly influence academic engagement can provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in technical education. Despite growing evidence on behavioural engagement and digital learning support systems (Oyewole et al., 2023; Ogundipe & Oyewole, 2026), limited attention has been given to how these factors interact with emotional regulation strategies within technical college settings.

This study, therefore, aims to bridge this research gap by examining the impact of virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training on the academic engagement of technical college students in Ogun State. By investigating how these interventions shape students' motivation, participation, and commitment to learning, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge while offering practical recommendations for enhancing student engagement in technical education. Addressing these gaps will not only improve academic engagement but also inform policy decisions and instructional practices that foster holistic student development in Nigeria's technical education sector.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the impact of virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training on the academic engagement of technical college students in Ogun State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- I. examine the extent to which virtual career counselling platforms influence academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State.
- II. explore the impact emotional mastery training and the academic engagement of technical college students in Ogun State.
- III. assess the extent to which virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training jointly predict academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State.

Hypotheses

- I. There is no significant relationship between virtual career counselling platforms and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State.
- II. There is no significant relationship between emotional mastery training and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State.
- III. There is no significant relationship between virtual career counselling platforms, emotional mastery training, and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design to examine the impact of virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training on the academic engagement of technical college students in Ogun State, Nigeria. The survey design of correctional type was appropriate as it allowed for the collection of data from a sample of students who had previously engaged in both virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training. Unlike experimental research, this study did not implement the interventions but rather focused on measuring their influence on students' academic engagement based on prior exposure.

The study population comprised all Year 2 students in public technical colleges in Ogun State. A purposive sampling technique was used to select three out of the five public technical colleges in the state. These colleges were specifically chosen because they had existing virtual career counselling

platforms and emotional mastery training programmes that students had participated in over time. The justification for selecting these three colleges was to ensure that only students who had prior engagement with both interventions were included in the study, thereby strengthening the validity of the findings.

Within the selected technical colleges, purposive sampling was further applied to identify students who had actively engaged in both virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training before the study. This approach was necessary to ensure that only those with relevant experience were included. A total of 180 Year 2 students were selected for the study. Year 2 students were chosen because they had been in the system long enough to have participated in these interventions and could provide meaningful insights into their impact on academic engagement.

Data were collected using three researcher-developed instruments: the Virtual Career Counselling Platform Scale (VCCPS), the Emotional Mastery Training Scale (EMTS), and the Technical College Student Academic Engagement Scale (TCSAES). Each instrument was structured into two sections: Section A gathered demographic information (age, gender, and socio-economic status), while Section B contained Likert-type items measured on a four-point scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). Negatively worded statements were reverse scored to maintain measurement consistency.

The VCCPS consisted of 10 items assessing the extent to which students engaged with virtual career counselling platforms and their perceived impact on academic engagement. The EMTS comprised 10 items measuring students' application of emotional mastery techniques in managing academic stress, motivation, and persistence. The TCSAES contained 10 items designed to measure students' cognitive, behavioural, and emotional engagement in their academic activities. All three instruments were subjected to expert validation by professionals in technical education and educational psychology to ensure content validity and alignment with the study's objectives.

To establish the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted among 40 Year 2 students in a technical college that met the same selection criteria but was not included in the main study. The internal consistency of the instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The VCCPS

yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.85, the EMTS obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.81, and the TCSAES recorded a reliability coefficient of 0.87, indicating high reliability across all instruments.

The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise participants' demographic characteristics and responses. Inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis, were employed to assess the relationships between the independent variables (virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training) and the dependent variable (technical college student academic engagement). All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level to ensure the robustness of the findings.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between virtual career counselling platforms and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State.

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship Between Virtual Career Counselling Platforms and Academic Engagement Among Technical College Students in Ogun State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	R	Sig.	Remark
Virtual Career Counselling	180	2.89	1.02	178	0.412*	0.000	Significant
Academic Engagement	180	2.95	0.98				

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation between virtual career counselling platforms and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.412$) is positive and significant at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship between virtual career counselling platforms and academic engagement. This suggests that students who engage more in virtual career counselling tend to exhibit higher levels of academic engagement. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between emotional mastery training and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship Between Emotional Mastery Training and Academic Engagement Among Technical College Students in Ogun State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	DF	R	Sig.	Remark
Emotional Mastery Training	180	3.02	0.95	178	0.465*	0.000	Significant
Academic Engagement	180	2.95	0.98				

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents the Pearson Product Moment Correlation between emotional mastery training and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.465$) is positive and significant at the 0.05 level ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant relationship between emotional mastery training and academic engagement. This implies that students who have undergone emotional mastery training are more likely to demonstrate higher academic engagement. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between virtual career counselling platforms, emotional mastery training, and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State.

Table 3: Joint Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model Statistic	Value
R ²	0.58
Adjusted R ²	0.57
F-Statistic	41.72
p-value (F-Test)	< 0.01

Table 3 presents the joint multiple regression model examining the relationship between virtual career counselling platforms, emotional mastery training, and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State. The R² value of 0.58 indicates that 58% of the variance in academic engagement is jointly explained by virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training. The model is statistically significant ($F = 41.72$, $p < 0.01$), confirming that the predictors collectively contribute significantly to academic engagement.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients of Predictors for Academic Engagement

Predictor Variable	Unstandardised Coefficient (B)	Standardised Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
Virtual Career Counselling	0.42	0.51	6.89	< 0.01	Significant
Emotional Mastery Training	0.38	0.47	5.76	< 0.01	Significant

Table 4 presents the regression coefficients of the predictors. The standardised coefficient for virtual career counselling platforms ($\beta = 0.51$) indicates a strong positive contribution to academic engagement, while the unstandardised coefficient ($B = 0.42$) suggests that a one-unit increase in virtual career counselling participation leads to a 0.42-unit increase in academic engagement. The predictor is statistically significant ($t = 6.89$, $p < 0.01$).

Similarly, emotional mastery training ($\beta = 0.47$) has a notable positive contribution, with an unstandardised coefficient ($B = 0.38$), indicating that a one-unit increase in emotional mastery training results in a 0.38-unit increase in academic engagement. This predictor is also statistically significant ($t = 5.76$, $p < 0.01$).

Overall, the results indicate that virtual career counselling and emotional mastery training jointly explain a substantial portion (58%) of the variability in academic engagement. Individually, virtual career counselling platforms ($\beta = 0.51$) have a slightly greater influence compared to emotional mastery training ($\beta = 0.47$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming a significant relationship between virtual career counselling platforms, emotional mastery training, and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State.

Discussions

The findings of this study revealed a significant positive relationship between virtual career counselling platforms, emotional mastery training, and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State. The results showed that virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training collectively explained 58% of the variance in academic engagement. Specifically, virtual career counselling platforms had a stronger influence ($\beta = 0.51$) than emotional mastery training ($\beta = 0.47$), indicating that students who

had previously engaged in these interventions demonstrated higher academic engagement.

These findings align with the work of Adeyemo and Salami (2022), who found that career guidance and counselling significantly improve students' motivation and academic commitment. The positive contribution of virtual career counselling to academic engagement corroborates the study of Okonkwo and Adebisi (2021), which highlighted that students with access to digital career counselling resources were more likely to develop academic resilience and goal-oriented learning behaviours. This supports the argument that exposure to structured career counselling helps students to align their academic efforts with future career aspirations, ultimately fostering higher engagement in their studies.

The role of emotional mastery training in enhancing academic engagement is consistent with the study by Ibrahim and Yusuf (2020), which established that students who underwent emotional intelligence training exhibited better academic persistence and reduced stress levels, leading to improved engagement. Emotional mastery training equips students with the ability to regulate their emotions, manage academic pressure, and sustain focus in their studies, reinforcing the claims made by Eze and Olaniyan (2019) that emotional intelligence development is crucial for academic success.

However, the findings contrast with the study of Bello and Johnson (2018), who found no significant relationship between career counselling interventions and students' academic engagement. They argued that students often disengage due to socio-economic and environmental factors beyond counselling interventions. Similarly, Olawale (2019) posited that while emotional intelligence training can improve personal development, its direct impact on academic engagement may be limited if students face structural barriers such as inadequate school facilities or financial constraints.

Despite these contrasting views, the findings of this study provide empirical support for the integration of virtual career counselling platforms and emotional mastery training in technical college curricula to enhance students' academic engagement. The significant influence of these interventions suggests that technical college administrators and policymakers should prioritise digital career guidance programmes and emotional intelligence training as part of student development initiatives. This approach would not

only improve academic engagement but also equip students with essential life skills for professional success.

Conclusion

This study established a significant relationship between virtual career counselling platforms, emotional mastery training, and academic engagement among technical college students in Ogun State. The findings revealed that students who had previously engaged in these interventions exhibited higher levels of academic engagement, with virtual career counselling having a slightly stronger influence than emotional mastery training. These results align with existing literature, which underscores the importance of structured career guidance and emotional intelligence development in fostering students' academic commitment and resilience. While some previous studies argued that external socio-economic factors may limit the effectiveness of such interventions, the current findings suggest that when effectively implemented, virtual career counselling and emotional mastery training play a crucial role in enhancing students' motivation, focus, and persistence in their studies. Therefore, technical colleges should integrate these interventions into their academic support structures to improve student engagement and overall educational outcomes.

Recommendations

Enhancing Access to Virtual Career Counselling Platforms: Given the significant impact of virtual career counselling on academic engagement, technical colleges in Ogun State should institutionalise and expand access to these platforms. Schools should collaborate with digital education providers to ensure that students can receive continuous career guidance tailored to their skills and interests.

Integrating Emotional Mastery Training into School Curricula: Since emotional mastery training positively influences academic engagement, technical colleges should incorporate structured emotional intelligence programmes into their curriculum. This could involve workshops, mentorship schemes, and digital self-regulation tools designed to improve students' resilience, stress management, and overall well-being.

Strengthening the Combined Influence of Virtual Career Counselling and Emotional Mastery Training: Since both interventions collectively predict

academic engagement, technical colleges should develop a holistic student support system that integrates career guidance with emotional intelligence training. Institutions should also provide follow-up sessions to reinforce the long-term benefits of these interventions.

Encouraging Government and Stakeholder Support: Education policymakers and stakeholders should prioritise the provision of digital career counselling resources and emotional intelligence development programmes in technical colleges. Adequate funding should be allocated to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives, with trained facilitators assigned to monitor student progress and effectiveness.

Further Research on Related Factors: Future studies should explore additional variables that may influence academic engagement, such as socio-economic background, peer influence, and institutional support. Longitudinal studies could also assess the long-term effects of virtual career counselling and emotional mastery training on students' academic and career outcomes.

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