

**ROLE OF COUNSELLING IN REDUCING EXAMINATION STRESS AT
LUANSHYA BOYS SECONDARY SCHOOLS, LUANSHYA DISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

BY

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To the best of my knowledge and complete evidence available, I am satisfied that this is the student's own work by virtue of being his full supervisor from the start of the research project.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my kind loving wife Musonda Gladys. I also dedicate this work to my two lovely children Bright Nsama and Mapalo Nsama. It is my most sincere hope that you will grow up to understand the meaning and essence of ‘research’ in education. Only then will you really understand and appreciate my absence from home during the period I was conducting my research. You really missed my presence. In addition, I also dedicate this work to my mother Kabinga Albina and other family members for their support. Lastly and above all, I dedicate this work to the Almighty God who made it possible for me to do my research.

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SYNONYMS

CBT- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

LB- Luanshya boys

WHO- World Health Organisation

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at investigating the role of counseling in reducing examination stress among the pupils at LB secondary school. Guidance and counseling is a crucial service that settles the minds of pupils when they are faced with dilemmas that affect their education. Provision of academic direction and roadmap to pupil is the counseling main assumption. The case study design was used in order to generate the real situation on the ground. The sample size was ten 14 comprising of ten pupils and four School Counsellors. Purposive sampling was used when selecting the four counselors by virtue of them being members of the School Guidance unit. In addition, snowball sampling was used to select the ten pupils who were fond of complaining of stress related cases, dodging and poor performing in class test as observed from progress chart. Semi structured Interview guide and Termly Progress Chart were used to collect data from the participants. Data was analyzed thematically. It was found that fear of failure, lack of preparedness and lack of rest, unpreparedness to comprehend what they study contributes. The study concluded that counseling role in reducing examination stress needs to be modernized to some advanced heights because is common in every pupil to have fear of failure when it comes to examinations readiness. Recommendations were drawn relevantly from the findings that would create the least restrictive school environment free from examination stress among pupils.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter presents background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, study objectives, study questions, significance of the study, the theoretical framework, delimitation of study, sites and operational definitions.

1.2 Background to the study

The age of secondary school pupils is the adolescence period. Adolescence is the most crucial stage in the life of an individual. According to World Health Organization (2009), adolescence covers 10 to 19 years of life. Normal adolescence is viewed as a period of turmoil and stress. About 10 to 20 percent of normal adolescents' experience severe emotional reactivity and disruptions in family relationships. Since adolescence is considered as a stage of 'stress and storm' as adolescence is a period of significant change, including physical, emotional, social, and academic changes, many teens are under more stress than at any other time of life. Adolescence represents high risk period in human life cycle and hence requires special attention by everyone involved in mental health care (Ajani, 2011).

The role of *Counseling* is key to addressing academic stress in learners. In an international conference on social sciences and society held in Paris, France, Daniel (2015, 20-21 May) presented that, "since counseling in schools was found to play a significant role in promoting a fully functioning career of learners, he wondered if it could not play a similar role in addressing stress in teachers." On the positive side the article affirmed that counseling played a role in addressing stress in learners. On this basis the researcher assumes that it can also help to reduce examination stress in pupils at LB secondary. According to Ndhlovu (2015), counselling is a mutual helping relationship that exists between a client and a trained counsellor. In addition, counselling aims at facilitating meaningful understanding of self and the environment, and results in the establishment or clarification of goals and values for future behavior. In this regard, it is hoped that counselling can help to reduce examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school. However, until a study is done, questions such as what are the causes of examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school, how can counselling help to reduce examination stress in pupils at LB secondary and how can counselling help in preparing

pupils for examinations at LB secondary remain unanswered thereby necessitating a study of this nature.

In order to help understand what examination stress is, Kumari and Jain (2014) explain that academic stress refers to a pupil's interactions between environmental stressors, the pupil's cognitive appraisal of and coping with the academic-related stressors, and psychological or physiological response to the stressors (Lee and Larson, 2000; Lou and Chi, 2000). Similarly, David, (2011) posits that examination stress is the feeling of anxiety or apprehension over one's performance in the examinations. It can lead to pupils being unable to perform to the best of their abilities in examinations. Academic stress is the major source of stress among school going adolescents and it is potential to lead them into low self-esteem. In addition, academic stress must be known that it is a pervasive problem across countries cultures, and ethnic groups, and must be viewed in its context (Wong, Wong, and Scott, 2006). Thus, every pupil desires to succeed in examinations to achieve respect, family pride, and social mobility. This results in extremely high academic demands and extraordinary pressure on pupils and specially adolescents (Banerejee, 2001). As a consequence of stress and demands to perform well in examination the pupils may not be able to enjoy their academic life and it may become a burden for them. Excessive stress results in increased prevalence of psychological problems like depression, anxiety, substance abuse and suicide ideation (Bansal and Bhave, 2006; Arria, et al., 2009).

LB secondary school has 1745 pupils and all these pupils go through tests every academic term and examinations at the end of their grade nine and twelve. There are 173 Pupils in grade nine and 223 in grade 12 and if all these experience examination stress due to the need to succeed in their academic life or due to the demand by their parents or other stressors surely there is need to carry out this study and ascertain the role counselling can play in reducing examination stress in pupils.

Guidance and counselling are important for learners, and schools have a huge role in bringing out the best in children (Fair brother and Warn, 2004). Furthermore, stated that good conduct is coveted, but sometimes young minds need guidance to polish their personality. Through counselling, children are given advice on how to manage and deal with emotional conflict and personal problems.

Proper counselling will help incorporate valuable lessons in their daily life. Some sessions should involve career guidance, where the learners are advised on the selection of courses and

different career paths. It's important to prepare them for life after school and what to expect in the different fields they might opt for.

Pupils are given proper guidance on how to deal with psychological problems which can badly impact their studies (Schafer, 2000). Through these sessions, the pupils will be able to develop certain problem-solving skills which to an extent help them deal with particular issues surrounding their lives. The pupils are advised on how to cope with different situations they tend to face in their school life. For instance, how should they talk politely or relate with their peers. This advice will give them perspective on how should they behave in certain scenarios. It helps to shape a pupil's behavior and also instill enough discipline in them. Proper guidance helps them achieve their goals, well guided & counselled students know what to do and how to do things in the best possible way (Banerjee, 2001).

Learners learn how to live in peace and harmony with others in the school community. Thereby, they also learn to appreciate other people in their class. It helps to bridge the gap between pupils and the school administration, since they are able to guide their problems through a proper counselling channel in the office. Pupils get comprehensive advice on career, courses and jobs that enable them to make a proper and informed choice and understand what they can do after they are done with school.

It allows pupils to talk to teachers about various experiences that make them uncomfortable. They can openly share problems that they cannot share with their parents. Talks related to alcohol, drugs, personal feelings or any kind of abuse, can be openly discussed. Guidance and counselling also make students better human beings since they are counselled on how to act and behave in a particular situation (Schafer, 2000). It enables learners undergoing certain difficulties in their lives, to ask questions and clarify them through guiding and counselling. Therefore, counselling helps pupils ask questions without any fear since the person in charge is willing to help.

1.3Statement of the problem

Since examination stress is the feeling of anxiety or apprehension over one's performance in the examinations (David, 2011) there is need for counselling to help reduce this pervasive

process in pupils. However, it is not known how counselling can help to reduce examination stress in pupils. As a result, it became necessary to conduct a study of this nature to explore the role that counselling can play in reducing examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to establish how counseling could help to reduce examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school.

1.5 Study Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the causes of examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school.
2. Establish how counseling can help to reduce examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school.
3. Ascertain how counseling can help to preparing pupils for exams at LB secondary school.

1.6 Study Questions

The study questions were:

1. What were the causes of examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school?
2. How could counselling help to reduce examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school?
3. How could counselling help in preparing pupils for examinations at LB secondary school?

1.7 Significance of the study

The study would establish the role of counselling in reducing examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school. Above all, the recommendations that will be reached upon might be used in other schools where the same challenge could exist. Furthermore, the study will add value to the body of knowledge in this area of addressing pupil stress in the teaching fraternity by education practitioners. With this view, study may also inspire other researchers to undertake future studies in the areas that will not be tackled.

1.8 Delimitation

The study was conducted at LB secondary school of Luanshya District in Zambia. The school had been chosen by virtue of the researcher being a teacher at the very school. Not only that but the environment where the examination stress vice is manifested by pupils that seemed parallel to educational calls

1.9 Limitations

There were many possible research limitations that could affect the study; among them could be (1) the quality of findings, and (2) the ability to answer your research question (source). The findings of this study were limited in the sense that, an action research was done on a small scale. Hence, in view of this, the research could not generalise its findings to a large population.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

The Cognitive behavioural theory founded by Albert Ellis (1950s) was employed in this study. It has been found to be quite effective in the treatment of many issues such as anxiety disorders, depression, and even severe stress. Whether the stress is contributing to mood disorders or is just creating unpleasant feelings that are interfering with a happy lifestyle, cognitive therapy (or a mix of cognitive and behavioural therapy) can be a very effective mode of treatment. Cognitive therapy for stress rests on the premise that it's not simply the events in our lives that cause us stress; it's the way we think about them. This theory is a psychotherapy based on modifying cognitions, assumptions, beliefs, and behaviours, with the aim of influencing disturbed emotions. It influences how pupils perceive examinations on the idea of how they think, feel, act and respond to their emotions.

1.11 Operational definitions

Stress: Difficulty that causes worry or emotional tension and produces strain on the physical body.

Academic stress is a type of stress that arises due to academic

1. 12 Summary of the chapter

The chapter has presented the introduction to the study proposal, by giving the background of the study, problem statement, and purpose of the study, research objectives and questions. The

chapter has further presented the theoretical framework which guided the study. The next chapter presents the reviewed literatures on this study by different scholars.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED

2.1 Overview

This chapter presents literature relevant to the role of counseling in reducing examination stress in pupils. In order to provide context, the review begins with the historical background of stress in pupils. Thereafter, the literature review will be guided by the study questions and presented according to subheadings derived from the study questions.

2.2 Causes of Examination Stress in Pupils

Academic stress among students has long been researched on, and researchers have identified stressors as too many assignments, competition with other students, failures, lack of pocket money (Fair brother and Warn, 2003). Others are poor relationships with other students or lecturers, family or problems at home. Institutional (university) level stressors are overcrowded lecture halls, (Ongori, 2007; Awino and Agolla, 2008), semester system, and inadequate resources to perform academic work. Erkutlu and Chafra (2006) for instance opine that, when these events take place, an individual becomes disorganised, disoriented and therefore less able to cope up, thus resulting in stress related health problems. The pressure to perform well in the examination or test and time allocated makes academic environment very stressful (Erkutlu and Chafra, 2006; Polychronopoulou and Divaris, 2005; Misra and McKean, 2000). This is likely to affect the social relations both within the University and outside (Fair brother and Warn, 2004) since there is conflict with the social aspect of one life.

Stress emerges for young people as they enter adolescence, a transition that brings rapid emotional changes. Teens must confront the challenges of developing healthy relationships with peers, meet the expectations of school and the responsibilities of family, and negotiate life in their neighborhoods. Stress left unchecked or unmanaged, can have a profound impact on an adolescent's physical and mental well-being, leading to illnesses such as depression. Vijayalakshmi and Lavanya (2006) conducted a study on "Relationship between Stress and Mathematics Achievement among Intermediate Students". A sample of 180 intermediate students were selected by stratified random sampling procedure and survey method was adapted to carry on the investigation. The findings showed that senior intermediate students have more stress than juniors.

Huan et al. (2008) conducted a study on “The Impact of Adolescent Concerns on their Academic Stress”. The Adolescent Concerns Measure and the Academic Expectations Stress Inventory were used. Results obtained showed that only the scores on the personal concerns subscale were positively associated with the academic stress arising from self and other expectations, in both adolescent the boys and the girls. For the girls, school related concerns were also predictive of academic stress arising from other expectations. They also obtained significantly higher scores on the Academic Expectations Stress Inventory than the boys did.

Poor performance in school can easily lead to problems with self-esteem, behavioral problems and depression (Schafer, 2000). Huan et al. (2008) conducted a study on “The Impact of Adolescent Concerns on their Academic Stress”. Results obtained showed that only the scores on the personal concerns subscale was positively associated with the academic stress arising from self and other expectations, in both the boys and the girls. The results of the studies on academic performance and stress supported that high pressure and stress mediate for poor academic performance.

Relationship or Relations on its own is a broad topic that can be discussed and it has had a lot of effect on most aspects of a life of individuals. This bond that is created between people can at times turn to be a burden on them and others to turn out to be victims of relationship abuse (Raya, 1993). Relationship abuse is an example of oppressive and coercive practices used to keep up force and control over a previous or current cost accomplice. Abuse can be enthusiastic, money related, sexual or physical and can incorporate dangers, seclusion, and terrorizing. In view of this relationships might look very simple and easy but at the long run, they really cause so much stress than one can imagine especially in the life of pupils (Gore, 2013).

The reality is that stress occurs when an event or stimulus requires us to change in some way makes a change in living environment a stressful experience (Tung & Chahal, 2005). Apart from moving from home to school, our daily bumping into new faces on campus, disorders from roommates, etc. is tensed experience.

Health issues are a concern to everyone because bad health causes a lot of damage to the life of a person. In the life of a student, health problems cause a lot of stress and these stress turn out to even make the conditions worst by adding insult to injury (Schafer, 2000). Stress can lead to physical symptoms including headaches, upset stomach, elevated blood pressure, chest

pain, and problems sleeping. Research suggests that stress also can bring on or worsen certain symptoms or diseases.

An increase in class workload stresses up pupils in the sense that when they have to do more than they can handle, they turn to get frustrated and are unable to focus and think straight. Students will overschedule their plans to meet up with the class workload in order to get good grades but eventually because these tasks are too much for them, they end up messing everything up (Raya, 1993). Especially in situations where there are a lot of assignments to do after having a very long day at work makes pupils more confused.

Every student has a life outside the academic curriculum and environment. When a student has to compromise and use their personal time for other activities for studies, they turn to get bored and lose interest in studies (Gore, 2013). At the long run, this situation stresses them up which causes them to lose focus on academic work. As the saying goes "all work and no play make Jack a dull boy ", it also applies to students since they will become dull if all they do is to use their private time for studies and not have time for themselves.

Procrastination is the avoidance of doing a task which needs to be accomplished. It is the act of accomplishing more pleasurable things set up of less pleasurable ones or completing less critical errands rather than more pressing ones, in this manner putting off approaching assignments to a later time. When student keeps doing this they lose interest in doing that particular task or assignment and once the loss of interest sets in stress follows up since they will be thinking how to meet up with the deadline for the assignment or task (Tung & Chahal, 2005).

It is the desire of pupils to miss lessons or skip school. Although some pupils wake up and decide to miss lessons or school, others also have to do that due to circumstances beyond their control. When some students miss class or lectures they become disturbed and worried especially if the course is on they have difficulties in understanding (Tung & Chahal, 2005). When this happens they start to wonder how they will make up for the lessons they lost so as they will be on the same pace with their fellow colleague in school. The thought of finding ways to make up with lessons which they have issues in becomes a burden and stress them up beyond imagination.

The human body is in such a way that it needs some rest and break from time to time. In a situation where students have to be in the learning and teaching environments for long periods of time affects the cognitive thinking of the students (Raya, 1993). They become tired and

lazy to continue the studies. These feelings, in the long run, makes the students stressed up since the body does not have enough energy and zeal to continue with the teaching and learning process.

Living conditions of people place a major role in the feeling and thinking of pupils. When students live in a condition which is difficult to afford some basic amenities of life they really live unhappily and this affects almost all the aspect of their life (Myer, 2005). Therefore, when they start to ponder about this issues they get stressed up and lose focus.

Literature review have cited the root causes of stress in general among students but not exactly as a result of examination. The knowledge gap here is that the causes of examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school are not yet known.

2.3 How Counselling has helped to reduce examination stress in pupils

In order to break the vicious circle of examination-related stress and anxiety. Recent research in counsellor training has focused on the difficulties and encouragement (Ignore and Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009). This could be like helping students keeping things in assisted relaxation training that reduce stress symptoms and enhance student well- being while in school (Ignore, 2007).

Little is known on how directly counselling had been used to reduce examination stress. We argue that, unless the university puts appropriate measures that take care of wellbeing of the students, the student's health may compromise the quality of education they are supposed to get (Daniels and Harris, 2000; Smith et al., 2000; Finlayson, 2003).

Some studies have revealed that examination stress is best prevented than treated (Ongori and Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009). A systematic, persistent, organized, planned and regular effort from the beginning of the academic session is the best method for any adolescent to prevent anxiety related to examination. The best way to prevent exam stress is confidence, ensured by timely preparation for the exam. Propranolol can be of some help in reducing symptoms of examination stress (David, 2011). These methods are self-help techniques and are straight forward and effective, which are helpful in the long run up to the examination. These include the following:

1. Checking how quickly you are breathing by placing your hand on stomach. If it is one breath in a couple of seconds, start breathing out slowly till you get out the last of the breaths in the series in about 20 seconds time. This has to be done for some time till you are doing it naturally.
2. Relaxation routine: Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Try to locate areas of tension and relax these muscles. Think of relaxation and for at least 20 minutes do some stretching exercise.
3. Physical activity: Regular exercise for even as short as 10-20 minutes a day can be very helpful in coping with stress in the long run. Cycling, going to gymnasium or walking all help to reduce stress.
4. Complementary therapies: Yoga, meditation and massage help in reducing stress and providing relaxation.
5. Sleep: Sleep hygiene must be maintained. Stimulants must be avoided before sleep. A good bath can relax you most of the time and give you a comfortable sleep. Medications for inducing sleep must be avoided.
6. Support groups: Choose a fellow mate for custody or create a study circle. This group support through discussion and even clarify doubts through mutual support. Maintaining clarity of thought long before the study process will help you not to panic before exam.

From the literature review above there has been little known on how counseling in a secondary school could help reduce examination stress. Only ways and activities that could reduce stress in general. The knowledge gap here is that is not yet established to know how counseling can help to reduce examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school.

2.4 How Counselling Helped to Prepare Pupils for Examinations

The role of counseling in preparing students for examinations cannot be overemphasized. Below are some literature by some scholars.

Some studies have revealed that counseling students during school helps to relieve pressure, to escape the procrastination trap, to reframe and instill hope for change, to work on commitment strategies for action planning and taking smart breaks (Kumanri and Jain, 2014). Other studies suggested that counseling services should aim to acquaint students with before examinations

activities like: finding out about the exam, asking for help where things seem hard, keeping students cooled, prepare the best they can, maintaining a health mindset, getting connected to supportive peers and students to become their own motivational coach apart from counseling itself (ibid).

Gibbons and Gibbons (2007) and McCarty et al. (2007) have carried out extensive research on stress and found out that, stress is associated with how an individual appraises situations and the coping strategies adopted. The only way to reduce stress is talking the precaution measures before it develops in students. The following categories are areas in which students could get helped to avoid stress through effective guidance:

- Counsellors helping students on the study tips for examinations
- Counsellors helping students find ways to pay for college, such as financial aid or scholarship programs
- Counsellors helping students think about different kinds of careers they might want to pursue.
- Counsellors explaining and helping students with the college application process. Students do feel they are being given the support and guidance they need in regards to their futures (Ongori and Agolla, 2008). Based on personal background, these are the only experiences that the researcher had with a guidance counsellor; this is why “guidance counselling needs to change”. It needs to change into a service which kids find both supportive and productive.

Most importantly the Griggs article states that, Effective Counsellors work closely with the school administrators to develop counselling programs that are responsive to student needs (Agolla, 2009). This approach assumes that individual learning styles will be assessed and that instructional and counselling interventions can be compatible with the various learning styles (p. 296). The article demonstrates and explains the importance of individualizing counsellor guidance based on students’ learning needs.

The Importance of a High School Counsellor According to Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, and Holcomb-McCoy (2011), “School counsellors play a vital role in college counselling. Student access to school counsellors is a critical link in the college counselling process that includes information, choice, application, and enrolment” (p. 190). This article discusses the important role that counsellors play in their students’ lives when it comes to reducing student’s stress while at school. Most importantly, it emphasizes the fact that when students have a consistent and positive relationship with their counsellors, the students are more likely to be stress free.

Relating counselling services to the academic achievement of students may help alleviate some of this role confusion for school counsellors in the future and lead to a clearer role definition. Not only in schools but in the communities in which the school counsellor works, allowing all students adequate access to school counselling services that may help them become successful learners (Agolla, 2009).

Ndu (2004) noted that secondary schools have a two-fold crucial responsibility: to nurture students who have varying abilities, capacities, interest and unlimited potentials and to prepare those individual to become effective functioning members of their changing societies. Moreover, Mutie and Ndambuki (2002) point out that most of the students in secondary schools comprises of adolescent marked by emotional development that include mood swing, enthusiasm, tenderness, cruelty, curiosity and apathy, it is marked with increase in stressful events. For instance, secondary schools have been associated with students' unrest. This antisocial behaviour could be a mirror image of violence. Effective guidance and counselling service is based on a complete understanding of student experience. Therefore all students would require guidance and counselling service in order to develop their academic, social and personal competence. Counselling is also a method of behaviour change. This shows that counselling can help to prepare pupils for examination by giving appropriate guidance and services related to examinations.

Counselor should take all necessary measures in order to reduce stress and anxiety that their pupils experiencing (Ongori and Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009). For example, counselors could encourage patients to take a deep breath before an injection, provide the necessary information before a procedure and offer support to both patients and their families. Counselors are aware that direct interventions are necessary for preventing the spreading of anxiety, in which an individual's anxiety may negatively effect and others students around.

Literature reveals that there are two important factors in stress management, because while the body is resting is retrieving the desired energy level (David, 2011). However, for enable students to rest, some counseling interventions may be required to ensure comfort, potential stress management and promote to spiritual serenity.

Many relaxation techniques can be used to relieve stress. Counseling services can teach those techniques to students and encourage them to use when they facing stressful situations outside the school (Ongori and Agolla, 2008). Relaxation techniques that are often applied are

breathing exercises, massage, progressive relaxation, guiding use of images, biofeedback, therapeutic touch, music therapy, humor and laughter and finally meditation.

Examinations are time bound and timetabled. So through counseling students are acquainted with managing their time properly with less stress experiences that they feel that everything is under control (Agolla, 2009). Controlling other students' demands is an important element in proper time management, because many times their demands cannot be addressed. Sometimes students need to be taught which demands can fulfill without experiencing any stress, which to negotiate and which to reject. As it comes to time management it is important to consider, what goals can be achieved during the day and which during the week? In addition, it is necessary for students to consider what is important to them and what can be achieved.

Most studies reveal how students can be prepared for examinations but not how counseling role can be used to get students set for examinations. The knowledge gap is that there has been no any study conducted to establish how counseling can help to preparing pupils for exams at LB secondary school.

2.5 Summary of the Chapter

The literature reviewed in this chapter brought out key studies and gaps in relation to the study questions. Those studies looked at the causes of examination stress, how counseling can help to reduce examination and how counseling can help to preparing pupils for exams. The knowledge gaps have been found because there has been such a study conducted at LB Secondary in line with examination stress related issues.

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the research methods and procedures that will be used to conduct this study. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:12), research methodology is “the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project; to some extent, this approach dictates the particular tools the researcher selects”. This chapter consists of research design, study population, study sample, sampling techniques and sample size, instruments for data collection, data collection techniques, data analysis and ethical issues of the study.

3.1 Research Design

Since there was need to have in depth understanding about the role of counselling in reducing examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school, a case study design was used. According to George and Bennett (2005) case studies help to generate new ideas that might be tested by other methods because they focus on a single event.

3.2 Study population

The population for the study was all grade 12 pupils and their school counsellor at LB secondary school. The grade 12 pupils were chosen because they were the one who could provide relevant data to the causes of examination stress in themselves. In addition, they were best placed to provide data on how to prepare for examinations to avoid excessive stress in themselves. The school counselors were chosen to be part of the population because they are the ones who can best provide data on how counseling can help to reduce examination stress in pupils and how counseling can help in preparing pupils for examinations at LB secondary school.

3.3 Study sample size

Since this was a qualitative study, sample size was not pre-determined. It was determined at the point of saturation. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that in qualitative studies sample sizes are arrived at when participants start repeating themselves and is usually between 7 and 50th interview. In this case the key informers were the pupils so they determined the saturation point. The study comprised all the counsellors and the 10 pupils who had been recorded to frequently abscond tests and academic works.

3.4 Sampling techniques

Purposive sampling was used to select the counsellors and snowball sampling to select pupils who abscond a lot from tests and examination activities for the study. Thus only 10 pupils from the entire grade 12 classes which were the examination classes selected for the sample. The other characteristics based on those who underperformed by checking from their termly progress chart.

3.5 Data collection instruments

The instruments used in collecting data were progress charts and interview guides. Interview guide had been chosen because it allows for follow up questions and as such enables for in-depth understanding of the role of counselling in reducing examination stress.

3.6 Data collection procedure and time line

Upon getting the ethical clearance letter from the University of Zambia ethical committee, the researcher sought for permission from the District Education Board in order to go ahead and collect data from LB. The head teacher was written to with attached permission letter from DEBS. Upon being allowed, the research piloted the study. The researcher personally conducted the interviews with all the participants. That was after the researcher explained the purpose of the research and guidelines to the participants. The targeted staff for the interviews were assured of confidentiality of the information was give and encourages them to give fair and objective answers. Face-to-face interaction provided the platform for the researcher to clarify any possible challenge and also created the opportunity to interact with the people.

3.7 Data analysis instruments

Data analysis is the process of systematically applying statistical and or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap and evaluate data (Andelchi and Bruno, 2012). The data was chosen on merit of interdependency of producing a standard language and framework to guide description. The data was analyzed using qualitative and thematic analysis. As the initial step in analyzing the collected data for this study, the information was gathered and organized according to the common features. The qualitative data that was collected by interviews was analyzed thematically through three stages, namely assembling of the data in

which a researcher put together all the data obtained in the field. Data was coded, refined and categorized into more logical themes that can best explain the studied issue.

Lastly, building of meanings marked the third stage in which meanings and interpretation was assigned to each category ready for a discussion and reporting the outcome of the study. The records that were collected from test results will help to see how pupils fair in tests, how they perceive them and their response to academic assessments. Because pupils do better in class exercise than tests as well as at O level national examinations. The progress charts helped revealing this data. Generally, the collected data was coded, sorted, grouped and identified so as to see the related parts that correspond to the research objectives and questions. The results were presented in narratives which provided voices of participants on the subheadings derived from the study objectives or questions.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Upon getting the ethical clearance letter from the University of Zambia ethical committee, the researcher abided by all necessary research regulations. Strydom (2011:113) points out that research “should be based on mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation, promises and well accepted conventions and expectations between all parties involved in the research project”. In undertaking this research, the researcher protected the rights and values of participants to ensure that not only would the findings of the study be accurate and objective, but that participants be willing to be interviewed and that both their anonymity and confidentiality would be respected and protected. The researcher ensured total conformity to research ethics at all cost by embracing virtues and participant’s autonomy. The researcher’s self-disclosure was the priority to both counselors and pupils in the study. Consent was obtained from all in writing and letters outlining the researchers input desired from them. Furthermore, participants were assured of full ethical principles: anonymity, beneficence, malfeasance, fidelity and confidentiality.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the research. The findings are presented in relation to the following study questions : (i) What were the causes of examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school? (ii) How did counselling help to reduce examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school? (iii) How did counselling help in preparing pupils for examinations at LB secondary school?

4.1 Bio-Data of Participants

Table 4.1 Gender of Counsellors

gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	1	25
Females		75
Total	4	100

The table 4.1 presents the gender participation among the four counsellors that were at LB secondary school. There were 1 male counsellor and three female counsellors.

Table 4.2 Qualifications Counselors in Counseling

qualification	Frequency	Percentage
masters	0	0
Degree	3	75
Diploma	1	25
certificate	0	0
Total	4	10

The table 4.2 presents the qualifications that were possessed among the four counselors particularly in the counseling field. The results showed that three counselors had degrees in counseling and one counselor had a diploma.

Table 4.3 Counselor Experience in the Service

Years	Frequency	Percentage
Below 5	0	0
5-10	2	50
10-15	2	50
15 and above	0	0
Total	4	100

The table 4.3 revealed the counselors experience in the guidance unit. It was found that two counselors had experience ranging between 5-10 years and two had experience between 10 - 15 years in the guidance unit.

4.2 Counselors Views on the Causes of Examination Stress in Pupils.

Question sought to find out if pupils experience examination stress. When it came to finding out the occurrence of pupil’s examinations stress, all the four guidance staff agreed that it was common. In response to question two, the frequency of occurrence of examination stress among learners, the guidance teachers responded as monthly, often, when pupils were about to write tests/exams and sometimes.

Objective three aimed at finding out the general performance among grade 12s as observed from the termly progress chart, the guidance teachers reported as average, good, and very good. The response variations were given by the guidance teachers as from an individual perception.

In trying to find out how often pupils complained of stress related cases to the guidance department, the answers were; “yes, some do and others do not, mostly those who whose performance is below average, sometimes when talked to and no.

The causes of examination stress among learners that were given by the guidance teachers. It shows that mostly unpreparedness among learners for examinations develop stressful situation in them.

Counselor one said *“pupils were experiencing family pressure for underperforming and parents had no mercy but to always shout at them”*

Counselor two said that, *“stress in pupils emerged from their unpreparedness for examinations. Not only that, but also competition with peers academically made them developed stress because they failed to cope up with their peer’s level”*

Counselor three said that, *“pupils developed stress due to fear of failure that came from within internal pressure in themselves, and that external pressure too had contributed”*

Counselor four said *“Unpreparedness, inability to comprehend what they study*

4.3 Counselors’ Views on How Counseling Can Help to Reduce Examination Stress in Pupils

Counselor one said that, *“by pupils preparing themselves well on time for examinations and reporting stress related situations to the guidance unit”*

Counselor two said that, *“parents should as well help their children to study hard for examinations by mentoring the their study routines while home rather than exerting pressure on their poor performance”*

Counselor three said, *“There is need to timetable counseling period for each class at least twice in a week so that study tips can be shared to the learners”*

Counselor four said, *“counseling could be the best way for pupils to confide in their teachers and get relevant advice on how to academic related challenges. Not only that, pupils need direction to follow so it is through counseling that that direction can be set for learners to challenge stress issues”*

4.4 Counselors Views on How Counseling Can Help To Preparing Pupils

In order to exhaust all the objectives, the researcher tried to find out if counselors were receiving a good number of pupils for counseling due to examination stress. The following were the responses: *“sometimes, yes, personally a few on studying guidance and often”*.

Furthermore, counselors were asked how successful their counseling was. They all said yes it was successful. In order to ascertain the success of the counseling practices carried out among learners who complained of stress, the researcher wanted to know if counselors had observed some positive changes among those they counseled. They said “some yes”, “some” and “yes”.

Counselor one said,

“Counseling can prepare pupils for examinations by providing information to the learners that is examination related and strategies that could be employed before and during examinations. And by encouraging learners to have organized study materials, prioritizing ones schedules and regular study as well as counseling pupils frequently”. Thereafter, counselors were asked if their guidance unit had fully prepared their pupils adequately for examinations. Then the three counselors said “yes the guidance unit did prepare learners well” and one said “I do not know”. Then the researcher went on to elicit responses on whether the guidance unit had the stress management system in their school, and they all said yes”.

Counselor two said, *“Counseling could help learners to remove fear of failure in them by giving them total assurance that they can easily make it, all required from them is confidence”*

Counselor three said, *“Counseling could help learners get prepared for examinations by getting provided with the information of the importance of going through past papers and other examination materials”*

Counselor four said that,

“Counseling could help learners get some solutions from the examinations problems they can be experiencing after sharing with the guidance teachers. And by encouraging learners to start preparing examinations early to avoid waiting until the last minute” “hold meetings with learners in examination classes” “they should start as early as January for examination classes” “talking to them before the examination begins.

4.5 Pupils' Reasons on the Causes of Stress

It was thought relevant by the researcher to know if learners understood the term examination stress, hence they were asked to define it. It was found that from ten pupils involved only six gave proper definition of academic stress in more meaningful manner. With the quest to address objective 2 which sought to find if pupils themselves experienced stress during tests and examinations. The answers were as follows:

Pupil one said, *"I do not understand the teachers teach especially mathematics that is why I develop pressure and fear test writing"*

Pupil two said, *"my health conditions is not good so most of the time I am absent and miss lessons which make me develop learning gaps and lag behind in performance, this why I develop examination stress"*

Pupils three said, *"The reason why I fear examinations is because I have not adequately studied and ready for it. Further said I may be ready in the next two months from now"*

Pupils four said, *"I have a lot of debts for school fees, so most of the times I just sneak in and later sent home for school fees collection. This make me not to pay much attention but always having stress and panic attacks"*

Pupils five said, *"I have never passed well due to family instability, my parents have been on separation and I do a lot of work home rendering me not to have enough time for studies because I am the eldest in my family who can help my mother when she is selling at the market"*

Pupils six said, *"I experience examination stress because I have not been studying as expected, when I try to study I fail to understand some written text. I have a problem with language fluency so it makes me fail most of the subject"*

Pupil seven said, *"some teachers they like threatening me and shouting at me that I will fail the examinations. Not only that some teachers have poor pupil to teacher relationship hence developing the barrier between and them. I even fail to ask them questions because I am not free"*

Pupil eight said, *"Most of the times I go to school with hunger, so I fail to concentrate even if I try hard to learn. This makes me develop pressure for examinations"*

Stress Experiences among Learners

Another objective was aimed at finding out how often pupils experienced stress. The following were the responses. Then the frequencies of examination stress experiences among learners were like, 5 pupils said in every test, 2 said always, 1 said sometimes and said daily.

In try to answer objective four on what made pupils develop examination stress. The following were the reasons. Pupils themselves spotted out “negative attitude towards school, lack of afore and beforehand planning and failure to anticipate for future circumstances, results of failure, failure of adequate preparation, fear that they were missing out more things expected in the examinations, basically inadequate preparation and planning, lack of adequate preparation and fear of failure, when come across a different question which they had little knowledge about and, failure to study”

Question five aimed at finding out then if pupils were ready to sit for examinations. From the ten pupil’s variations in answers were as shown in the diagram below.

Pupils’ Readiness’s to sit for Examinations Then

The responses on how readily prepared the pupils were by the time they were interviewed. The answers were; 1 was ready to sit for examinations then, 6 said were not ready till December and 3 might be ready after two months.

Pupils’ Self-Management of Stress

In order to address objective two, pupils were asked how they overcame stress during tests and examinations and the following measures were given. Pupils said by believing that they could make it, by breathing three times and always, having enough rest and knowing that what they had learnt and studied is enough to pass the examinations, by trying not to think about the test, revise and study where felt they were behind in, coming up with a studying strategy, studying extremely hard for tests and passing through different papers, reflecting on the topic not comfortable with, proper preparation and praying to God and sleep and study.

In trying to find who helped pupils reduce such examination stress, one said “my physics teacher” “ the other said “no one other than myself” some said “teachers” “my classmates” “my friends” “ friends, family members and at times teachers” “ mainly it is God who inspires me to push forward’ “ friends during study groups” and friends”.

Thereafter, pupils were asked if they went for counseling via the guidance unit. The following were the answers; four said “sometimes, three said “no” and three said” yes”

Reporting of Stress to Guidance teachers

Then the reporting of stress to guidance unit when they experienced it. The answers were as follows: 5 said they did not go to the guidance unit, 3 said they went for counseling to the guidance unit and 2 said sometimes they sought help from the guidance unit.

For those three who said they usually go for counseling said they were helped and saw change in the school progression.

Furthermore, pupils were asked on what they thought could help reduce examination stress in learners, and the following measures were suggested: inspiring them, setting incentives and providing adequate equipment that can enhance learners in the field of study, adequate preparation, social interactions like counseling learners pertaining to examination stress , motivating the learners to study hard , encouraging skills on time management and planning, counseling should be granted to pupils so as to help them prepare adequately for their examinations, quick revision and frequent exposure to the examinations questions , past paper revision, and preparing adequately.

Guidance Unit Role to prepare Pupils for Examinations

The pupils own view about 6 said they were not well prepared and 4 said they were prepared by the guidance teachers on the way to go for examinations. When pupils were asked on how often they were met and given guidance tips. About seven pupils said they were met often and three said not regularly done. And they said that during such meetings pupils were motivated.

Summary of the Chapter

The chapter has presented findings of which period pupils are prone to experience high levels of stress and some of the ways in which Guidance and pupils can work together to mitigate the stress challenges to ensure better performance. The major causes of stress and means of reducing stress have been addressed including adequate preparation before the examination period, seeking help from the counsellors.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

This chapter presents the interpretation and discussion of the findings depending on how issues were raised. In this respect, data analysis refers to the separation of elements of research data to expose some general principles that can be utilised to explain the nature of the phenomenon being investigated and can be applied in other contexts (Denscombe, 2003). Before interpreting results, the reader is challenged to recall the three main objectives of the research.

These were to: *Identify the causes of examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school establish how counseling helped to reduce examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school; and ascertain how counseling helped to prepare pupils for exams at LB secondary school.*

5.2 Causes of Examination Stress in Pupils

From literature it was reviewed as well that, Poor performance in school can easily lead to problems with self-esteem, behavioral problems and depression (Schafer, 2000). Academic stress among pupils has long been researched on, and researchers have identified stressors as too many assignments, competition with other students, failures, lack of pocket money (Fair brother and Warn, 2003). From LB pupils had reported issues to do with pressure coming from their families and school as the cause of stress. This could be in line with what Ongori, 2007; Awino and Agolla, 2008 reported that, others have poor relationships with other students or lecturers, family or problems at home. Institutional (university) level stressors are overcrowded lecture halls, (, semester system, and inadequate resources to perform academic work.

Pupils had revealed that the fear of failure and unpreparedness developed stress in learners for examinations. And this was shared from literature that, the pressure to perform well in the examination or test and time allocated makes academic environment very stressful (Erkutlu and Chafra, 2006; Polychronopoulou and Divaris, 2005; Misra and McKean, 2000).

One pupil had shared that she had mathematical challenges which made her always to develop stress throughout her school time and her teacher had not created a rapport that she could consult her. Vijayalakshmi and Lavanya (2006) conducted a study on “Relationship between

Stress and Mathematics Achievement among Intermediate Students”. This is true mathematics has been a challenge for the majority of the pupils and as a compulsory subject many pupils panic a lot in this subject.

Most of the pupils had reported themselves that they developed stress because of not performing well regardless of how committed they were. This is concurrent with the findings from literature review that, poor performance in school can easily lead to problems with self-esteem, behavioral problems and depression (Schafer, 2000). Huan et al. (2008) conducted a study on “The Impact of Adolescent Concerns on their Academic Stress”. Results obtained showed that only the scores on the personal concerns subscale was positively associated with the academic stress arising from self and other expectations, in both the boys and the girls. The results of the studies on academic performance and stress supported that high pressure and stress mediate for poor academic performance.

Poor pupil to pupil and pupil to teacher relationship is subject to academic stress development in learners. This bond that is created between people can at times turn to be a burden on them and others to turn out to be victims of relationship abuse (Raya, 1993). Relationship abuse is an example of oppressive and coercive practices used to keep up force and control over a previous or current cost accomplice. In view of this relationships might look very simple and easy but at the long run, they really cause so much stress than one can imagine especially in the life of pupils (Gore, 2013).

Health issues were a concern to some pupils at LB as well because bad health causes a lot of damage to the life of a person. In the life of a student, health problems cause a lot of stress and these stress turn out to even make the conditions worst by adding insult to injury (Schafer, 2000). Stress can lead to physical symptoms including headaches, upset stomach, elevated blood pressure, chest pain, and problems sleeping. For sure from chapter four one pupils had complained of his health condition making to be absent from school hence lagging behind academically, and that caused stress in her.

Due to failure to prepare adequately in advance for examinations pupils had reported that they developed panic attacks which led to stress because the workload became bulk wanting to cram all subject content. An increase in class workload stresses up pupils in the sense that when they have to do more than they can handle, they turn to get frustrated and are unable to focus and think straight. This finding was similar from what was reviewed that, students will

overschedule their plans to meet up with the class workload in order to get good grades but eventually because these tasks are too much for them, they end up messing everything up (Raya, 1993). Pressure of work collapses the cognitive strength indeed, there is no way a person can understand the content for a week instead of one year. When a student has to compromise and use their personal time for other activities for studies, they turn to get bored and lose interest in studies (Gore, 2013).

Some pupils reported of bad living conditions coming from their homes with empty stomach, which caused total loss of concentration on the subject content taught to them. From literature review it was also quoted that, when students live in a condition which is difficult to afford some basic amenities of life they really live unhappily and this affects almost all the aspects of their life (Myer, 2005). For education really to be meaningful, there are certain basic needs that should be met, and deprivation of such may lead to a stressful school life especially where other pupils are meeting such needs while others are not.

5.3 Findings on Counseling Role Reduce Examination Stress in Pupils

From the findings, the roles of the guidance in reducing academic stress in learners is relevant and vital. According to the recent research in counsellor training has focused on the difficulties and encouragement (Ignore and Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009). This could be like helping students keeping things in assisted relaxation training that reduce stress symptoms and enhance student well-being while in school (Ongori, 2007).

Though it was said that little is known on how directly counselling had been used to reduce examination stress. Some authors argued that, unless the schools put appropriate measures that take care of wellbeing of the students, the student's health may compromise the quality of education they are supposed to get (Daniels and Harris, 2000; Smith et al., 2000; Finlayson, 2003). Pupils had similarly reported counselling fosters a systematic, organized, planned and regular effort from the beginning of the academic session as the best method to prevent anxiety related to examination. They later shared that best way to prevent exam stress is confidence, ensured by timely preparation for the exam.

During counseling study tips are given to the pupils. For instance, a table is meant for studying, the bed for sleeping and the time suitable for studies (Wallach, 2012). An uncluttered table without your phone, laptop, and other distractions is the right approach. Lying on your bed or on the sofa in front of the TV will not only damage your posture but will hamper concentration

too, so find a comfortable table and chair you can work on. All these tips are provided during counseling when preparing pupils for examinations.

Counseling is healing that gives hope and confidence to stressed learners. The best way to cope with exam stress is to be prepared which can be done through counseling (Oken, et al, 2010). Sometimes, pupils just are not able to adequately prepare for a variety of reasons. Some coping techniques for relieving test anxiety include getting rid of negative thoughts by taking deep breathes. Attending a yoga class or listening to relaxing music is other way to relive test stress. Another coping technique is more of an overall approach to test-taking; pupils should try to excel but avoid being perfectionists.

5.4 Findings on Counseling Role in Preparing Pupils for Exams

Throughout the life time of school days learners are being acquainted to the way learners should lead their academic process. The moment a learner enters school the role of guidance begins, they are being explained to on what career pathways to pursue and reasons are stated to them. In every teaching and learning experience the role of counselling is being manifested from the teachers in particular subjects. From chapter four some learners mentioned that some teachers do help them to prepare for examination through counselling. Counselling is any direction provided to someone who lacks clarity on the way solves such a problem.

According to some studies have revealed that counseling students during school helps to relieve pressure, to escape the procrastination trap, to reframe and instill hope for change, to work on commitment strategies for action planning and taking smart breaks (Kumanri and Jain, 2014). And other studies suggested that counseling services aim to acquaint students with before examinations activities like: finding out about the exam, asking for help where things seem hard, keeping students cooled, prepare the best they can, maintaining a health mindset, getting connected to supportive peers and students to become their own motivational coach apart from counseling itself. These findings correlated with what counselors shared that it was through counseling that where pupils were acquainted to the examination routines and timetables as well as how to handle themselves during such times.

The following were areas in which pupils could get helped to avoid stress through effective guidance:

- Counselors helping pupils on the study tips for examinations
- Counselors helping pupils find ways to pay for school, such as financial aid or scholarship programs

In relating counselling services to the academic achievement of pupils may help alleviate some of this role confusion for school counsellors in the future and lead to a clearer role definition. This was said that, not only in schools but in the communities in which the school counsellor works, allowing all students adequate access to school counselling services that may help them become successful learners (Agolla, 2009).

According to Ndu (2004) noted that secondary schools have a two-fold crucial responsibility: to nurture students who have varying abilities, capacities, interest and unlimited potentials and to prepare those individual to become effective functioning members of their changing societies. Guidance and counselling service is based on a complete understanding of pupil preparation for school programs like examinations experience in school. Therefore all students would require guidance and counselling service in order to develop their academic, social and personal competence. Counselling serves a method of behaviour change. It is by that depiction that counselling help to prepare pupils for examination by giving appropriate guidance and services related to examinations.

Counseling provides relaxation techniques can be used to relieve stress and be ready for examinations. Counseling services teach those techniques to learners and encourage them to use when they facing stressful situations within the school (Ongori and Agolla, 2008). Since examinations are time bound and timetabled, through counseling students are acquainted with managing their time properly with less stress experiences that they feel that everything is under control (Agolla, 2009). This was as well shared by the counsellors counselling helped pupils, in proper time management. Examination preparation is a long journey which needs prioritizing of important elements, hence counselors with their specialty in that field they understand better than the child what the roadmap to a successful school life, and they share such to an unexperienced child.

Analytically basing on the findings, with regular guidance and counseling sessions, teachers can give the desired focus to every pupil. Continuous interaction with pupils can build trust which can fine-tune the relationship between the teacher and child. Counseling sessions are a gradual process to mould and redirect pupil for examination Process. Every child is special and

unique in its own way. Productive counseling in line with examinations can help the teacher to understand how much attention is required to be given to particular subject.

Successful pupils are ever disciplined. Discipline also causes pupils to study hard in order to obtain good results. Counseling helps in improving the relationship between the teacher and children which can be beneficial to develop control on the child. Every educational institution has its own goals that can be achieved if you have control over the children. This helps you to maintain discipline and keep pupils in check. Along with academic and career development, social and personal development is also important. Pupils need to acquire knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to set their own goals, make their own decision and take necessary decisions to achieve those goals. Children need to also know how to pass with flying colours. Guidance prepares pupils for career and personal challenges through career and personal development, it makes them competent for future success, equips them with all the latest career trends and shapes the child for decision taking and making the process by developing their interpersonal skills (Wong, et al, 2006). It induces teamwork and leadership qualities. Educates them about the changing world. Furthermore, the author added that guidance fosters effective learning, gives them a feeling of being heard and facilitates with better communication skills and enhances their personalities. In line with preparing pupils for examinations guidance works on polishing the skills to reach a determined goal which is passing grade 12 examinations at senior secondary school in this case.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

From the reflection of multiple literature available, with the supplement of this study it was worth concluding and recommending some practical actions in order to promote modern counselling practices that would address the stressful situations that emerge academic related pressures. The study brings to light that guidance and counselling role in reducing examination stress cannot overemphasised and it needs to be heightened to its level best based on its assumptions in secondary schools. There are lot of pupils who drop out prematurely before reaching grade 12 levels which some other peers cherish more to do. Academic life for pupils is quite tormenting to some pupils, they could not develop the desire to stretch their potential, but those even fear to even sit for their grade 12 examinations. Al these factors are embedded in examination stress effects. Conducive environments to help to reduce stress among learners, because conducive school environments bring up enlighten pupils who are ever ready to pursue any academic path with fear of failure.

6.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that Regardless of how ready the pupil may be ready to sit for an examination, stress is present in everyone because no one knows its content. However, academic stress that some pupils develop makes them fail and just fear to sit for examinations. The importance of a solid foundation in education cannot be overemphasised. Guidance and counselling practices in secondary schools lays the developmental and academic milestone for learners before they leave senior secondary education. In order to accommodate pupils peacefully and avoid examination stress, counselling is the only legacy that can be given to the pupils so as to set them on the road map of being ever ready and confident to sit for examinations.

6.3 Recommendations

In order to reduce examination stress in pupils at LB secondary school the following practical possible recommendations are shortlisted to ensure examination sstress free life while schooling:

1. Development of a more structured stress management system at LB.
2. Guidance and counseling programs to be timetabled on the master time table.
3. Teacher to pupil relation policy to aim at address academic stress that affects pupils to perform excellently.
4. The school to set the conducive environment that will be least restrictive to the individual needs of learners.
5. Guidance teachers need to become more vigilant in tracing all sources of academic stress and develop their practical measures.

Future Research

In future, there shall be need to conduct a study on the following;

- Teacher/ pupil relationship policy; with the aim of addressing stress that affect pupils to perform excellently.
- Timetabling of Guidance and counselling programs; to identify ways of incorporate the counselling program into the master timetable.
- Conducive environment for learning; creating an enabling atmosphere for individual learning of pupils.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PUPILS

The purpose of this group discussion is to establish how counselling can play a role in reducing examination stress among yourselves (pupils). As a result feel free to participate. Your identity will be anonymous and the data collected may help policy makers to use counselling to reduce examination stress in pupils.

The questions below shall help us to explore how counselling can help to reduce examination stress in pupils:

Questions on stress causes 1-5

1. What is examination stress?.....
2. Do you experience examination stress during class lessons and tests?.....
3. How often do you experience stress?
4. What do you think make you develop examination stress if so?.....
5. Are you ready to sit for examinations right now?.....

Questions on stress reduction 6-10

6. How do you overcome stress during such times?
7. Who helps you to reduce such examination stress?
8. Do you go for counseling?
9. If yes in Q8, do you get helped?
10. What do you think can help reduce examination stress in learners?.....

Questions on counseling role in preparing pupils for examinations Q 11-15

11. Have you been adequately prepared to sit for examinations by the guidance teacher and teachers?.....
12. Give the reason(s) for your answer.....
13. Do the guidance department meet you oftenly giving examination tips?.....
14. If yes in Q13, do you get motivated to sit for examinations?.....
15. If no in Q14, explain why.....

Thank you for participating in the study

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

The purpose of this interview is to establish how counselling can play a role in reducing examination stress in pupils. As a result, feel free to participate. The data that will be may help policy makers to use counselling to reduce examination stress in pupils.

The questions below shall help us to explore how counselling can help to reduce examination stress in pupils:

1. Do your pupils experience examination stress?
2. How often have your pupils reported about their examinations unpreparedness?...
3. How is general performance among grade 12 pupils as observed from termly progress charts?
4. Do those pupils who report stress cases perform well as observed from progress charts?
5. What are the causes of examination stress among your learners?
6. Do you receive a good number coming for counseling due to examination stress?
7. Do you effectively counsel them?
8. Do the pupils you counsel show some positive change?
9. How do you think counseling can be best executed to reduce examination stress among learners?
10. Does the guidance unit prepare pupils adequately for examinations?
11. Does the guidance unit have a stress management system in your school?
12. From your experience how can guidance unit prepare pupils for examinations?

Thank you for participating