

Counsellors' Perception of Problems Facing Guidance and Counselling Services in Nigerian Schools

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Abstract

The study investigated problems facing Guidance and Counselling services in secondary schools as perceived by the Schools' Counsellors. The design for the study is descriptive of the survey type. The population was made of all the practicing Guidance Counsellors in Nasarawa state secondary schools. All the participatory School Counselors in an annual congress held at the state capital constituted the sample for the study. In all 100 Counsellors were used for the study. A researcher designed questionnaire titled "Counsellor's problems Perception Inventory", validated for face and content with reliability coefficient of 0.74 by test-retest method was used to collect information from the respondents. Two hypotheses were raised at 0.05 level of significance. Result showed that the problems perceived by Counsellors were in the following order of intensity as follows; wrong idea of counselling by Principals and other members of staff, assigning counselors to duties other than counselling, lack of counselling office, lack of fund to purchase materials for counselling and non-exposure to in service training. There was no gender difference in counsellors' perception of problems facing the practice of counselling in the state. There was no significant difference in the perception of counselors' problems in schools based on Counsellors' years of experience. It was recommended that counselling should be a full-time job for Counsellors and they should be exposed to workshops and seminars.

Introduction

Counselling according to Idowu (1990) is a process of planned intervention within a school system by which the total development of students are stimulated in areas relating to their personal, social, career, emotional and academic concerns. Counselling is thus an integral part of the education process. Makinde (1985) defined Counselling as an enlightened process whereby people help people by facilitating growth development and positive change through an exercise of self understanding. Professor Jibril Aminu, a former minister of Education, in his opening address at the 12th National annual conference of the Counselling Association of Nigeria held at the University of Maiduguri in August 1988, noted thus:

"The National policy on Education appreciates that for our educational system to succeed, guidance and counselling has a major role to play. The transition from stage to the next stage of the system is made easier with the assistance of guidance counselors. The educational system has continuous assessment as its bedrock and it is essential that adequate cumulative records is one of the major functions of the counselor. These and several other functions are expected to be performed by the counselor."

Generally, students are faced with appropriate vocational choices, emotional inadequacy and social-personal problems. To overcome all forms of life inadequacies, guidance and counselling provides appropriate assistance to students to better understand and accept themselves, their personalities, endowment, their strengths and weaknesses, their attitudes and worth as unique individuals. This is the fundamental reason for the introduction of guidance and counselling service.

However, school counselors are confronted with series of issues and challenges such as non-recognition of counselling as a professional, what roles are expected of school counselors. Denga (1983) submitted that the public have a hazy, confused and blurred perception of counsellors' roles and functions. Ikeme and Nwoye (1988) discovered that when Counsellors are posted to schools, Principals assigned duties to them according to their schools' need. Most of the times, the Counsellors may be asked to play the role of Vice-Principal, subject teachers, labour master or school clerk. Abolarinwa (2008) opined that for any successful organization of any guidance and counselling program, attempt should be made to clarify the role of guidance counsellors. (Idowu 2007 and Kelvin 2007) found that some Counsellors due to addition of teaching loads to their counselling activities decided to forsake counselling.

Kolo (2012) opined that counselling is the relationship that is qualitative enough to change or affect people's life positively and as such involves a repertoire of skill to establish and maintain that relationship should be exposed to in-service programmes such as seminars and

Workshop in order to enhance their professionalism. From the researcher's observation Counsellors in most schools are not exposed to in-service training. For example the annual international conference organized by the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) where new development in counselling are made known are not attended to by Counsellors.

Bukoye (2004) opined that no meaningful services are cheap, for effective counselling funds are needed. Funds are needed for the purchase of counselling materials like inventories, charts and also to equip the counsellor's office. Denga(2004)opined that Counsellors within their profession are faced with serious challenges like ;lack of acceptance by school personnel , lack of tools for appraisal and placement .

Statement of Problem:

Education is preparation for life. It is the process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable member of the community and as a good citizen (Farrant, 1976). Education is also aim to train individuals, not only for knowledge but to be competent, happy, effective and productive in life. This view on education is rarely achieved; therefore there is a rationale for the introduction of Guidance and Counselling services in the school system. This necessitated the National policy on Education (2004) on the introduction of Guidance and Counselling to schools which say inter alia that:

“in view of the fact that students do not choose courses and jobs realistically and also because of the evident maladjustment exhibited in students, it was necessary to introduce Guidance and Counselling services in our schools and Guidance Counsellors should be posted to all schools to effect the programme”.

Despite the presence of Counsellors in schools, from the researchers observation behavior problems such as: cultism, truancy, examination malpractice, bullying and others are manifested by secondary schools students. Students' performances in examinations both external and internal are falling yearly. This study is therefore set to investigate Counsellors' perception of problems facing guidance and counselling services in schools and why they are not been able to implement the programme successfully in schools in order to curb these myriads of behavior problems.

This study therefore would find answer to this question:

What are the perceived problems by Counsellors facing the effective implementation of Guidance and Counselling in schools?

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between Counsellor's years of experience and their perception of problems affecting the practice of Guidance and Counselling services in schools.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female Counsellors in their perception of problems affecting the practice of guidance and counselling services in schools.

Purpose of Study

The Study is to investigate the problems facing Guidance and Counselling activities in schools as perceived by the Counsellors. The study also ascertained whether there would be gender difference in the perception of Counsellors' problems in schools.

Methodology

This was a descriptive research of the survey type. The population consisted of all the practicing Guidance Counsellors in Nasarawa state secondary schools. The sample consisted

Of 100 practicing Counsellors present at the state conference of Counselling Association of Nigeria Nasarawa state branch held at Lafia the state capital. An instrument in form of questionnaire titled “Counsellor's perception of counselling problems “designed by the researchers, validated for face and content. The reliability was ascertained by test-retest method with reliability coefficient of 0.81. This questionnaire consisted of two sections A and B. Section A contained demographic information about the respondent such as: sex, qualification, years of counselling experience and other duties in the school apart from counselling. Section B consisted of 20 items on Counsellors perceived problems in schools.

Response was based on a 4-point scale of the Likert typed ranging from strongly agreed to strongly disagreed

Administration of the Instrument.

The questionnaire was administered to respondents personally by the researchers to the respondents during an congress of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) Nasarawa State chapter. They were made to complete the questionnaire on the spot and collected from them on completion.

Data Analysis

The data generated were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistic using frequency and percentages for the descriptive while hypothesis 1 was analyzed by Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Hypothesis 2 by Student's t-test. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Table 1

S/N	COUNSELLOR PERCEIVED PROBLEM	MEAN	%	RANK
1	Attitude of Principal and other staff	37.43	75.1	1 st
2	Assigning Counsellor to other duties	31.5	68.9	2 nd
3	Lack of Counsellor's office/ill-equipped office	30.8	64.78	3 rd
4	Problem of fund	27.23	56.43	4 th
5	Non-exposure of Counsellor to workshop	26.07	52.56	5 th

From table one which contained summary of perceived problems faced in schools by Counsellors, attitude of Principals and other members of staff ranked first. Followed by assigning Counsellors to their duties. Lack of Counsellor's office or poorly equipped office ranked third. Problem of fund for the Procurement of counselling equipment and furniture to the counsellor's office. Non-exposure of counsellors to seminars and workshop ranked fifth.

Table Two: Hypothesis one stated that there is no significant relationship in the perception of counselling problems by Counsellor in schools based on their years of experience. The r-cal. is less than r-table at 0.05 of significance. The hypothesis was thereby accepted

Table 2

Variable	N	X	SD	DF	R-CAL.	R-TABLE
Counsellors' perception of problems	100	12.56	8.42	98	0.481	1.96
Years of Counselling experience		27.31	18.38			

P 0.05

Table Three

There is no significant difference between male and female Counsellors in the perception of problems facing counselling in schools.

Variable	N	X	DF	T-CAL.	T-TABLE
MALE	60	18.42	98	7.31	8.48
FEMALE	40	21.62	98	7.31	8.48

P 0.05

Since t-calculated 7.31 is less than t-table 8.48 the hypothesis was accepted. There is no significant difference between male and female Counsellors in their perception of counselling problems. The hypothesis was accepted

Discussion

The study revealed Counsellors' perception of problems militating against the practice of counselling in secondary schools. These problems were in the following order of magnitude. Wrong attitude of principals and other members of staff towards counselling, assigning counsellors to other duties in the school apart from counselling, like subject teacher, class master, games master, labour master and others. Problem of fund to purchase counselling materials like inventories and equipping the Counsellors office. The findings agreed with Denga (1983) who opined that the public have a hazy, confused and blurred perception of counsellor's roles and functions. The findings from the study was in line with Ikene and Nwoye (1988) posited that when Counsellors are posted to schools, Principal assigned duties to them different to counselling according to the schools' needs. The study also revealed that Counsellors were not exposed frequently to in-service training. This was in line with Scannel (1996) who referred to continuous professional development as a systematic improvement and broadening of knowledge and development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional duties throughout one's working life.

The finding from hypothesis one indicated no relationship between the years of counselling and perception of counselling problems. Both experienced Counsellors perceived counselling problems in the same way.

Result of Hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female in their perception of problems facing counselling in schools. Both male and female counselors faced similar problems

in regard to counselling.

Recommendations and conclusion

On the basis of the finding it can be concluded that School Counsellors are faced with problems in schools which had hampered effective counselling in schools. Such as: assigning duties to them apart from counselling, lack of fund to implement counselling projects in schools and uncooperative attitude of principals and staff. The following recommendations are made:

- 1 Counselling should be a full-time job in schools and no other duty assign to Counsellors.
- 2 Seminars and workshop should be organized for Counsellors to enhance their professional competency.
- 3 Office should be provided for school Counsellor and located in a place where students are free to express their individual problems.

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