

INFLUENCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES ON EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENTS IN ADAVI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of guidance and counseling services on students' emotional adjustment in secondary schools in Kogi State of Nigeria. The study adopted causal comparative design to determine if there existed differences in students' perceptions on the role of guidance and counseling towards emotional adjustment in secondary schools. The study targeted students from six secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State. The population of the study comprises of all the senior secondary school students of public schools in Adavi Local Government Area in Kogi State of Nigeria. Stratified random sampling was used to obtain the sample size of 367, out of which 184 were boys and 183 girls. Data was collected through the use of structured questionnaire. Mean and Standard deviation was used in answering the research question while ANOVA was used in testing the hypothesis. Findings showed that there existed significant statistical differences among the mean responses of students' from the three secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area on their perceptions of the influence of guidance and counseling services on their emotional adjustment. The study concluded that guidance and counseling services was fairly effective in assisting students with emotional needs in secondary schools. The study recommended among others, that all schools should have a functional guidance and counseling department with trained counselors to assist students who have emotional challenges as it will help rebuilding strong trust and relationship between the teacher and students.

Key words: guidance, counseling, students, emotional adjustments

Introduction

Guidance and Counseling is a professional field which has a broad range of activities and services aimed at assisting individuals to understand themselves, others, school environment and attain abilities to adjust accordingly. Adjustment refers to a process in which an individual find and adopt modes of behaviour suitable to or the changes in the environment. Hence, adjustment involves an individuals' general adaptation to own environment and the demands of life such as the way one relates to other people, that is interpersonal behaviour, handles responsibilities, deals with stress and meets own needs and life satisfaction.

Guidance and counseling is described as an enlightened process whereby people help people by facilitating growth and positive adjustment through self-understanding (Njenga, 2010). Akinade (2012) defined guidance and counseling as a process of helping an individual become

fully aware of himself and the ways in which he is responding to the influences of his environment. It further assists him to establish some personal meaning for this behaviour and to develop and classify a set of goals and values for future behaviour. Ileri and Muola (2010) regards counseling as a process which occurs in a one to one relationship between an individual, troubled by problems with which he/she cannot cope with. Okoye (2010) viewed counseling as an interactional relationship between a counselor and his client, designed to facilitate the personal development of information leading to effective decision making and awareness of the self. Counseling is a learning process in which a counselor helps an individual or individuals learn, understand themselves and their environment and be in a position to choose the right type of behaviours that will help them develop, grow, progress, ascend, mature and step up, educationally, vocationally and socio personally (Egbo, 2013). In other words, counseling is a transformative process of helping people to learn all that are to be learnt both in and outside the school.

The role of guidance and counseling services in the school system cannot be overemphasized. Guidance and counseling services have always played a leading role in terms of child's development and improvement. For this reason, Guidance and counseling services are sine qua non to child's development. According to Eyo, Joshua, and Esuong (2010), Guidance and counseling is one of the educational services that promotes the effectiveness of the educational system for goals attainment and guiding learners through the learning process. This is in line with the goals of educational services as contained in the National Policy on Education (2004) which are to —facilitate the implementation of the educational policy; the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of educational system; and make learning experiences more meaningful for children. Auni, Songok, Odiambo and Lyanda (2014), highlighted that Guidance and Counseling is encompassed by activities of relevant services and also processes of helping persons within and outside the school, to achieve their full potentialities in their emotional, moral, social, academic and vocational developments.

Students in secondary schools are confronted with problems ranging from withdrawal, unhappiness, annoyance, anger, anxiety, and hyperactivity (Nyaegah, 2011). Eyo et al., (2010), adds that students who are at the adolescent stage suffer more stress than any other group. This is because of the physiological and psychological changes they undergo. They latter include questioning of family values, of self-concept, personality development, and emotional experiences. Physiological changes include development of primary and secondary sexual characteristics, endocrine change, and alterations in physical appearances (Akinade, 2012). Nyaegah (2011) opined that adolescents in school also experience social changes, because they are so dependent upon their relationship with others. All the variations can generate high levels of stress because the adolescents are adapting to the new changes. Due to this social emotional challenges that majority of students have been experiencing in schools, governments across the world saw the need for introduction of guidance and counseling services in secondary schools.

The need for guidance and counseling services in all secondary schools cannot be overstated due to increasing complexities of modern life that have placed heavy demands and responsibilities on secondary school students. These students are faced with numerous personal, academic, social and emotional needs and problems, which, if unattended to, could lead to host

patterns of undesirable behaviours (Alemu, 2013). School guidance and counseling programmes have therefore been introduced to assist students to overcome and adjust to a host of emotional challenges they experience at home and at school. Virtually, all countries have established channels to intensify and improve guidance and counseling services in their respective learning institutions in an attempt to address tenets of students' behaviours. The history of guidance and counseling around the world varies greatly based on how different countries and local communities have chosen to provide personal, academic and emotional adjustment among the post primary students (Alumu, 2013). Eyo et al (2010) hold the view that emotions are central to all aspects of life, including intellectual performance, social behaviour and physical health. Akinade (2012) has observed that emotional adjustment among adolescents is the most profound and important experience that culminates to the change of behaviour. Ebochukwu and Alika (2010) have identified school counselors as key to influencing students' management of two fundamental emotional reactions which mostly determine their behaviour. These are anger and fear. Individual students are capacitated and empowered to vent out their feelings in ways appropriate and acceptable to their school norms, they stressed.

Auni et al., (2014), defines anger as a strong emotion often characterized by feelings of great displeasure, indignation, hostility, wrath and vengeance. It is a completely developmental and at times a natural response to frustration that can be skillfully dealt with an ease geared to a win- win outcomes. According to Eyo et al., (2010), all secondary school students experience anger at different times as a result of poor performance, conflict between them and teachers, parents, colleagues, support staff, fellow students, prefects and environment. As such, Nyeagah (2011), urges that dealing with anger can be confusing, it's hard to know what to do with such powerful and potential factors that cause anger among students. Njenga (2010) contends that schools counselors emerge eminently in assisting students learn to control their anger in order to adapt to their physical and social worlds. Auni et al., (2014) states that when anger is managed in healthy ways, it can be a positive thing, a red flag that something is wrong, a catalyst for change and a good motivator among students. Njenga (2010) have observed that individual, group and crisis counseling in secondary schools help students to examine their anger and use appropriate anger management techniques that positively impact on students' health, differences and overall happiness. Ebochukwu and Alika (2010) views counselors as people with skills that help in influencing individuals' engagement in the process leading to behavioural change in the right direction. As such, school counselors play vital role in helping students to understand and apply the most appropriate ways of managing their anger which is the most primal and complex feelings in the range of human emotions (Akinade, 2012).

Okoye (2010) refers to fear as a distressing negative emotion induced by a perceived danger, pain, shame or threat. Njenga (2010) articulate that fear seem to be a usual and common emotion of the school going adolescents. It forms the basis of all neuroses and the most pervasive psychological phenomenon of the adolescence. According to Auni et al., (2014), fear becomes the predominant emotional feature among the secondary school students. Alemu (2013) contends that most secondary school students experience fear of social rejection, failure of examinations, humiliation, embarrassment, and commitment. In addition, Okoye (2010) argues that fear among adolescents is caused by unmet basic needs which include security, loss,

significance, self-fulfillment, and selfhood. As such, fear results to powerful emotional responses that affect mental and physical reactions. Auni et al., (2014) postulates that fear is almost always related to future events, such as worsening of situation that is unacceptable. Fearful students tend to develop avoidance or confrontational behaviour. Fearful students also, easily give up any challenging tasks, are fond of procrastination and are easily influenced by others, they stressed. Akinade (2012) states that avoidant or confrontational behaviour adversely affects the personal normal routine and social activities especially in secondary schools.

Egbo (2013) views systematic desensitization counseling technique as the most appropriate tool that helps students cope and adjust to fearful emotion. Further, Eyo et al. (2010) points out some strategies used by secondary school counselors to help students' manage fear and adjust their behaviour reactions. These techniques are geared towards change of behaviour. They include admitting fear, building self-esteem, building new different learning principles and techniques of relaxation and consultation in times of need or crisis.

According to Ebochukwu and Alika (2010), the adoption of guidance and counseling in most secondary schools in Nigeria was as a result of behavioural pattern of students in most schools. The school environment, peer group and the relationship with teachers has a role to play in the academic performance of the students. The movement for the adoption of counseling services emphasises on personal issues, social and emotional adjustments in order to develop and promote students character and avoid behavioral problems.

In India, informal guidance can be traced back to the ancient times. However, formal guidance movement was first introduced in Culcutta University in 1938 to conduct research on the field of educational and vocational guidance (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). Formal guidance and counseling in Ghana began in the late 1960s as a result of the outcry of Ghanaians for meaningful education for their children which did not reflect the manpower needs of their country (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). In Ethiopia, formal guidance and counseling was first introduced in the higher education curriculum of Addis Ababa University in 1967 (Alemu, 2013). Since then, the course has been given to university students at the Department of Psychology and graduates have been assigned to schools and other settings to provide guidance and counseling services. In Tanzania, professional counseling in schools were implemented following the Arusha National Conference that took place in 1984 where guidance and counseling services were endorsed by the government as an integral part of the country's education system (Ireru and Muola, 2010). Formal guidance in Nigeria started in 1959 at St. Theresa's College, Oke-Ado in Ibadan. This was done by some missionary sisters who, out of sympathy and concern for products of their school, felt that school leavers would have a problem seeking admission, employment and adjusting to the conditions in society (Ebochukwu & Alika, 2010). Okoye (2010) noted that majority of the heads of department in our higher institutions, do not have adequate training that would help them to handle the varied issues affecting students in schools since the short term workshops and seminars that majority of them had attended were not sufficient in empowering them to effectively guide and counsel students. The guidance and counseling teachers in Nigeria, especially in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State also had other responsibilities in schools with heavy subject loads and therefore not able to run the programme well. The same study also reported that some students had a poor attitude towards

the programme and were not willing to confide in teachers doubling up in the guidance and counseling activities and being a member of the disciplinary committee.

The offering of guidance and counseling services in schools has several goals. These goals include helping the individual access a greater part of their personal resources. The offering of these services is thus seen as a means of enabling the individuals to regain their lost energy and get back on track. Secondly, it is to enable the individual to live more competently and with contentment, and thirdly is to improve the mental health and reduce psychological disturbances among other goals (Alemu, 2013). Guidance and counseling services therefore play an important role in preventing educational, social, mental, emotional and similar problems. The reduction or elimination of such problems among students assures them of a better life and subsequent achievement of their full potential. When such a state is achieved, the student is said to have attained school adjustment. The way students respond to and perceive the influence of guidance and counseling services on their adjustment to school will, to a great extent determine whether or not guidance and counseling services are needed or will be effectively utilized in schools. When students have a negative perception of the influence of guidance and counseling services, the consumption of the services will be minimal, thus, many cases of maladjustment are likely to be evidenced among the students and vice versa. It is due to the above reasons that the researchers investigate the influence of guidance and counseling services on students' emotional adjustments in secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The number of students in school has been on a steady increase over the years. These learners suffer enormous emotional challenges which affect their academic life and other aspects of their lives. Students in secondary schools in Kogi state has been discovered with problems ranging from withdrawal, unhappiness, annoyance, anger, anxiety, and hyperactivity. These have even made most of them not to appreciate the impact of education, especially with the idea of furthering their academic to higher institutional level. It is generally agreed that students need guidance and counseling services to help them in their psychological and emotional adjustment. Few studies have been done to determine the effectiveness of these services. If their effectiveness is not determined, stakeholders may not know the exact challenges faced by these learners. This study therefore, sought to determine the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services towards emotional adjustment of students in public secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State of Nigeria. This would be useful in establishing the wellness of the learners and highlight areas of improvement in delivering guidance and counseling services to these students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' perceptions of the influence of guidance and counseling on emotional adjustment in secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State of Nigeria.

Research Questions

What is the secondary school students’ perception of the influence of guidance and counseling services on their emotional adjustment?

Null Hypothesis

There are no significant differences among the mean responses of students’ from the three secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area on their perceptions of the influence of guidance and counseling services on their emotional adjustment.

Methodology

The study adopted causal comparative design to determine if there existed differences in students’ perceptions on the role of guidance and counseling towards emotional adjustment in secondary schools. This design was chosen because it allows a researcher to investigate the possibility of a causal relationship among variables. It is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the researchers have no ability to control the independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred and therefore cannot be manipulated by the researchers. The population of the study comprises of all the senior secondary school students of public schools in Adavi Local Government Area in Kogi State of Nigeria. The sample for the research consisted of 367 respondents of which 184 were boys and 183 were girls. The study employed stratified random sampling method in selecting respondents from three secondary schools out of six existing secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area. Data was collected through the use of questionnaire. The questionnaires were closed ended designed in a Likert scale format and was disseminated, and 329 out of 367 questionnaires collected back from the students by the researchers the same day, immediately after the students have completed them. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis at 95% level of significance or α level. The face validity of the instruments was ensured through opinions of three experts in educational measurement and evaluation. The generated items of the instruments were edited, corrected and restructured. The internal consistency reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach alpha, with a result of 0.83.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the perception of secondary school students on the influence of guidance and counseling services on their emotional adjustment?

Table 2: Secondary school students’ perception of the influence of guidance and counseling services on their emotional adjustment

Items	Item	A	UD	DA	Mean	Remark
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number		3	2	1		
1	I feel confident in making decision	44	35	250	1.37	Reject
2	I use to control my anger always	83	39	207	1.62	Reject
3	I am feeling happy most of the time	94	48	187	1.72	Reject
4	I easily feel independent	103	45	181	1.76	Reject
5	I avoid worry most of the time	108	44	177	1.79	Reject
6	Am always relieve of tension and nervousness	98	60	171	1.78	Reject
7	Am always feeling calm and energetic	121	52	156	1.89	Reject
8	Am feeling enthusiastic all the time	100	85	144	1.87	Reject
9	I always sleep well and soundly at bed time	139	47	143	2.00	Accept
10	Am feeling relaxed most of the time	148	63	118	2.09	Accept
Grand Mean					1.79	

The result of the study as shown in Table 2 above shows that only item numbers 9 and 10 were accepted because they have mean value equal and greater than 2.0 (approximate value of the Grand Mean) while items number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 were rejected because they have mean value less than 2.0 (approximate value of Grand Mean). This indicates that most of the respondents do not perceive guidance and counseling services as positive influence on their emotional adjustment on having confidence in making decision, controlling their anger, feeling happy most of the time, feeling independent easily, avoiding worry most of the time, feeling calm and energetic always, feeling enthusiasm all the time, and relieve of tension and nervousness always. Moreover, they do sleep well and soundly at bed time, as well as feel relaxed most of the time.

Null Hypothesis

There are no significant differences among the mean responses of students' from the three secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area on their perceptions of the influence of guidance and counseling services on their emotional adjustment.

Table 2: Analysis of variance on the mean responses of students' from the three secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area on their perceptions of the influence of guidance and counseling services on their emotional adjustment

Emotional adjustment					
	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between group	85.835	2	42.917	69.646	.000

Within group	234.567	326	720
Total	320.401	328	

From the Table 2 above, the obtained ANOVA values were $F(2, 326) = 69.646, p = 0.05$ and the critical values were $F(2, 326) = 2.99, p = 0.05$. Since the calculated F values were higher than the critical values, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was therefore concluded that there exist significant statistical differences among the mean responses of students' from the three secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area on their perceptions of the influence of guidance and counseling services on their emotional adjustment

Discussion of Findings

Guidance and counseling services provision in secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State of Nigeria was found to be fairly effective in assisting students with emotional needs as shown from responses from the participants. Responses showed that learners' habits and characters were not impacted upon receiving counseling. For instance, majority of the students agreed that they do not feel confident enough to make their own decisions on life issues. Secondly, most of the students who do have difficulty in controlling their anger which could lead to all types of punishment including exclusion from school are not influenced by guidance and counseling services. This showed that anger management skills were poorly provided to students and this was found not to be helpful to them. Less than half of the respondents reiterated that they usually felt unhappy with their life style including their carrier field. More independent and worries after receiving guidance and counseling services were also encountered among the students. The respondents also agreed that most of them do not feel nervous after receiving counseling services.

Moreover, despite the fact that most students perceive guidance and counseling as making them feel calm and energetic; there is quite a large number that reported no change. This therefore calls for teacher counselors to make follow-ups after students have received guidance and counseling services. The students were also required to give their opinion on their enthusiasm after receiving guidance and counseling services, the result indicated that more than half of the respondents reported that they do not feel enthusiastic after receiving guidance and counseling services. This implies that guidance and counseling services in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State is ineffective as it reports negative feedback on the students' enthusiasm and inefficient in its services.

However, majority of the respondents reiterated that they sleep very well and soundly and feel relaxed most of the time after receiving guidance and counseling services. Showing that irrespective of the fact of the negative influences of guidance and counseling services on the students' emotional adjustment, most of the students do sleep very well as well as relax their minds and body against some emotional burdens, after receiving guidance and counseling services. The results shown above suggest that many students do not perceive that guidance and counseling services are important in addressing student emotional needs, however, this might be associated with poor provision of guidance and counseling services in secondary schools in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State of Nigeria.

Conclusion

With respect to the findings of the study, it was concluded that guidance and counseling services was fairly effective in assisting students with emotional needs in secondary schools. The effect of guidance and counseling services on the students' emotional adjustment is very low as the students: do not perceive guidance and counseling services as positive influence on their emotional adjustment on having confidence in making decision, do not control their anger most of the time, do not feel happy most of the time, do not feel independent easily, do not avoid worry most of the time, do not feel calm and energetic always, do not feel enthusiasm all the time, and do not have relieve of tension and nervousness always, after receiving guidance and counseling services. Though, majority of the students among, do sleep well and soundly at bed time, as well as feel relaxed most of the time.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that:

1. The teacher counselors should regularly make follow-ups to examine learners' progress after they have received the guidance and counseling services. This will evaluate the services offered by the schools and therefore lead to the necessary modifications resulting to improvement of the services. If not, possible assistance may be offered to students by making the necessary referrals.
2. School counselor should be regularly and intermediately be offered in-service training as well as seminars and workshops in order to up-date them with the innovative means and practices on guidance and counseling services.
3. Researches should be conducted on how to make the implementation of guidance and counseling services in the school setting an effective and efficient one.
4. Finally, the results and findings of this study should go beyond being additional data for understanding educational theories but a new chapter in research endeavor. There is need for all hand to be on deck as far as the school stakeholders are concerned in relation to the emotional and academic welfare of the students.

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