

COUNSELOR AND COUNSELING FACILITIES FOR CONDUCTIVE COUNSELING ENVIRONMENT IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTHERN EDUCATIONAL ZONE IN CROSS RIVER STATE

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ABSTRACT: *This study investigated counseling for conducive environment in Southern Educational Zone in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose, two hypotheses were formulated to direct the study. Survey research design was adopted with a sample of 100 school counselors and 300 students randomly selected. The selection was done through simple random sampling technique. The counselor/student opinion questionnaire was the instrument used for the data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established through the split-half method of Spearman Brown Prophecy formula and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was employed to test the hypotheses under study. The result of the analysis revealed that the school counselor and counseling facilities are significantly related with conducive environment for counseling. Based on the findings, it was recommended that adequate facilities as well as trained and devoted counselors be provided in all secondary schools in the study area.*

KEYWORDS: *counselor, counseling, facilities, conducive, environment, schools*

INTRODUCTION

Environment exerts a very strong influence on man that is why man dresses, speaks and behave the way he does because of this influence (Pasimo, 2000). However, the influence could be negative or positive depending on the nature of the environment. To John Locke, a child is the product of his environment (Peretomode, 1994). Locke's position by explanation means that, it is the responsibility of the environment to either make the child to be useful or otherwise.

Asong (2005) sees environment as everything around us that we see, feel, interact or make use of. This could be physical which has to do with non human materials within where we find ourselves that we see, fell and make use of, or social having to do with fellow human beings we interact with in our daily living. The term 'conductive' is defined by Oxford Advance learners' Dictionary as "making it easy, possible or likely for something to happen". Put together therefore, a conducive environment may be that kind of environment that could enhance promising performance, discipline, uprightness, productivity inter alia. Otherwise, it is an environment that is stimulating and challenging enough to bring out best from whoever is concern. It is on this note that Dean (2003) observes that a conducive environment does not only enhance learning and performance, but increase productivity.

To talk about conducive school environment is to consider so many things that enhance learning in school such as classrooms, staff offices, counseling facilities laboratories, libraries, workshops, equipment, teaching aids, qualified and experienced staff, sporting facilities, good administration, healthy staff/students relationship (Hagan, 2001). To some extent, any school environment with all these human and non-human materials can bring up students who are dependable in all spheres of life.

To bring about a conducive environment in school and anywhere else therefore, counseling services must be considered uppermost. As asserts by Tero (2007) that counseling is the “life-wire” of a school and where counseling service is not provided for, there is bound to be the problem of career frustration, academic imbalance and unhealthy relationship among students in school. This is because counseling can help to connect and bridge the gap in the relationship between staff/staff, staff/students, and choice of career and others in school. It is therefore described as a process that focuses on enhancing the psychological well-being of the client, such that the client is then able to reach his full potential (Bondhorn and Wolfe 2010). This is achieved by the counselor facilitating the client personal growth, development, and self understanding, which in turn empowers the client to adopt more constructive life practices (Brigman and Campbell, 2003). It means that, where counseling is not provided for, the clients are left in confusion. This agrees with the Christian Creed (Holy Bible) “Where no counseling is, the people fall: but in the multiple of counselors, there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14). It is in the light of the above that Ajams (2001) observes that any school without a counselor is like a wandering flock without a shepherd. This emphasized the significant role of a school counselor and counseling services, without which, a school would lose its relevance. Alade (1999) believes that it is because of lack of counselors in our school that we witness restiveness among the youths in schools. To Abene (2007), every school, whether private or public, ought to have a professional and an experienced counselor for the smooth running of the school.

Considering the relevance of counseling services in our secondary schools, these services were therefore supposed to be provided in all schools to enable the student; staff and management develop their full potential and live in a healthy relationship among them. In addition, the environment ought to be conducive where facilities and experts are made available.

Although that should be the case, observation has shown that the school system, the secondary in particular, is plagued with a catalogue of anti-social behaviours such as examination malpractice, cultism, falsification of results, drug abuse and others due to lack of conducive environment for counseling. It is sad to note that most secondary schools in Cross River State are suffering from this problem as some of the schools are under staffed, some operate in dilapidated buildings with leakages all over, in some, the students are found sitting on windows frames whiles classes are on, no school libraries, laboratories and workshops. To make things worse, in some, there are no counselors and counseling facilities like computer machines, projectors, cameras, radio tape recorders, and so on.

The lack of these services has caused restiveness among our uniformed youths and has slowed down the pace of national economic development including its sustainability. Nim (1999) observes that the major problem our schools are suffering from is not the teacher or teaching method, neither

is it remuneration or administrative styles but lack of counselors and facilities as this could render the students uninformed.

The study therefore seeks to determine if the lack of conducive environment for counseling in secondary schools in Southern Educational Zone of Cross River State can be addressed by attending to the counselor and counseling facilities in school. The question is, could the school counselor and/or counseling facilities be responsible for the un-conducive environment for counseling in the secondary schools?

METHODOLOGY

Area and population of the study

The area of study was southern Educational Zone (Calabar zone) of Cross River State with 158 public and private senior secondary schools spread over the seven local government areas of Southern Senatorial District. The population consisted of senior secondary school students and counselors in private and public schools in the zone. The population size was 300 senior secondary one (SS1) and 100 professional and non-professional counselors within the zone.

Sample and sampling technique

The simple random sampling technique was used to select the 300 students and 100 counselors for the study. That is, three (3) students were to evaluate or assess one (1) counselor.

Instrumentation

Two different instruments were used for the study. The student and counselor's opinion questionnaire (SOQ, COQ). Each of the instruments comprised 20 items all of the Likert type 4 point scale (Strongly agree 4 points, Agree 3 points, disagree 2 points and strongly disagree 1 point). The respondents were required to indicate the level of agreement for each statement.

In terms of validity, the instruments were subjected to face and content validity by researchers and experts in measurement, evaluation and psychology in the department of educational foundations who confirmed that the instruments were suitable for measuring what there were purported to measure. The reliability of the instruments was established through the split-half reliability method of Spearman Brown Prophecy, the exercise was carried out among 50 students and 10 counselors who we not used in the main study. A reliability index of 0.73 and 0.81 was obtained indicating a high reliability.

Data collection

With the assistance of some class teachers, the instruments were administered to the subjects in the sampled schools after thorough explanation. All the 400 copies of the instruments were retrieved and were properly completed making a 100% return rate.

RESULT

The data collected was analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The presentation of the result is presented for each hypothesis.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between school counselors and conducive environment for counseling in senior secondary schools. The independent variable in this hypothesis is school counselor; while the dependent variable is conducive environment for counseling. To test this hypothesis, respondent's scores on school counselors were correlated with their scores on conducive environment for counseling using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis of the relationship between school counselors and conducive counseling environment for students (=100)

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r
School counselors	1678	2564	46637	0.72*
Conducive counseling environment	1679	2589		

*Significant at .05. Level, critical $r=.195$, $df=98$

The result in table 1 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.72 is greater than the critical r-value of .195 at .05 level of significance with 98 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. The result therefore means that the school counselors have a significant relationship with conducive environment for counseling in senior secondary schools in Southern Educational Zone, Cross River State.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between availability of counseling facilities and conducive environment for counseling in senior secondary schools.

The independent variable involved in this hypothesis is availability of counseling facilities, while the dependent variable is conducive counseling environment. To test this hypothesis, respondents' scores on availability of counseling facilities were correlated with their scores on conducive counseling environment using Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis of the relationship between school counseling facilities and conducive counseling environment for students (N=100).

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r
Counseling facilities	1778	2764	46637	0.66*
Conducive counseling environment	1679	2589		

*Significant at .05. Level, critical $r=.195$, $df=98$

The result in table 2 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.66 is higher than the critical r-value of .195 at .05 level of significance with 98 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypotheses was rejected. This result therefore means that availability of counseling facilities has significant relationship with conducive environment for counseling for students in senior secondary schools in southern educational zone, Cross River State.

DISCUSSION

The results from the testing of the two hypotheses are quite revealing. The findings as shown in hypothesis one revealed that a significant relationship exists between the school counselors and conducive environment for counseling in schools. This is in agreement with Ajams' (2001) position who observes that the school counselor is like a shepherd whose absence can cause the sheep to be wandering. This is also in line with Alade's (1999) belief that the restiveness among the youths in the society is as a result of the absence of the counselors in schools. To him, the only way the environment can be made conducive is only when professional and experienced counselors are available. It is in the light of the above that Abene (2007) opines that every school, private or public, ought to have a professional and experienced counselor to enhance a conducive counseling environment in school. Tero describes counseling as the "life wire" of the school. The counselor being the facilitator therefore plays a significant role in creating a conducive environment for counseling. However, Jones (2004) who tend to disagree with the above position observes that in spite of some counsellors' professionalism and experience, they fail to practically demonstrate these skills which to some extent, scare clients away, otherwise, creating an un-conducive environment rather.

The findings of hypothesis two also indicated that availability of counseling facilities in schools has a significant relationship with conducive environment for counseling. The findings of the hypothesis is in consonance with Hogan (2001) who believes that the availability of counseling facilities in school can bring up students who are dependable in all spheres of life. Really, counseling facilities are like tools which the counselor is supposed to work with and where these facilities are not there, it renders the efforts of the counselors useless. Nim (1999) observes that the major problem the school is suffering from is that of counseling session where there is no office, table for the counselor and chairs for the clients, computers to store the information, recorders and others. The counselor therefore needs tools to work with the enhance a conducive environment for counseling. To do this therefore, counseling and counseling facilities must be provided.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were reached:-

1. There is a significant relationship between the school counselor and conducive environment for counseling.
2. There is a significant relationship between availability of counseling facilities and conducive environment for counseling in schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the results.

1. Every secondary school should be provided with a professional counselor to man the counseling services. The government can do this by awarding scholarship for those reading counseling by way of in-service training, seminars and workshops.

2. Counseling facilities should be provided in all schools and ensures that the counseling office is fully equipped and manned by professional experienced and devoted counselors.

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