

INFLUENCE OF SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-EFFICACY ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF COUNSELLING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EMOHUA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

Dr. Bruno U. Onyekuru

Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *Self-esteem and self-efficacy are two psychological constructs which enable people in general to assess their qualities or abilities to perform some tasks in comparison to others. They bestow confidence to people and influence our belief and behaviour. Hence, this correlational study investigated the influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy on counselling perception among students. A sample of 614 students was composed from a population of 4792 senior secondary school students in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria using a combination of simple random sampling technique and proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection is Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy and Counselling Perception Scale. The instrument validated through the assistance of three experts in Counselling Psychology has reliability coefficients obtained through Cronbach alpha technique in the range of 0.69-0.72. The results of the study show that self-esteem and self-efficacy each has negative and significant influence on students' counselling perception. Based on the finding, it was therefore recommended that students irrespective of their level of self-esteem and self-efficacy should have positive perception about counselling.*

KEYWORDS: Self-esteem, self-efficacy, counselling perception, self-evaluation, self-worth, opinions, beliefs, narcissism.

INTRODUCTION

Cambridge Dictionary defines perception as view, opinion or belief held by people on the basis of apparent features of things or as awareness of things acquired through physical sense, especially sight. Perception was defined by Mander (2003) as process by which we translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of wider world around us. It involves becoming aware of our world through the senses and the sensations are interpreted and organized to produce meaningful experiences of our external world which might perhaps not be the real situation. Perception is more of exploration of the world by different means rather than transmission of information. It is acquired and shaped by memories, motivations, emotions and experiences (Lahey, 2003).

Therefore, students' counselling perception is the views, opinions and beliefs students hold about counselling. These views, opinions and beliefs are acquired through various processes and wide range of experiences. So, when students interact with peers, teachers and other people at home or in school, they are exposed to wide range of experiences about counselling obtainable

from the notions, views and beliefs held by teachers and students about counselling which help them to form different perceptions about counselling. Parents and teachers must expose students to right type of experiences especially at the formative stage since experiences at formative stage of a child make permanent impression. They should endeavour to transmit appropriate notions, opinions, views and beliefs about counselling to the younger generation for the youths to be positively disposed towards counselling. They should inculcate appropriate awareness and positive perception about counselling to the students. Inappropriate information about counselling transmitted to them by parents or teachers may lead to negative or wrong perception about guidance and counselling by the students.

It is an undeniable fact that some students have positive or favourable perception of counselling while others have negative and unfavourable perception of counselling. Those who have positive perception about counselling think that counselling is needed for their proper adjustment in society and for self-actualization. Owing to numerous challenges confronting young people ranging from cultism, bullying, fraud, examination malpractices, to robbery, counselling is necessary to overcome these challenges or at least distance oneself from perpetrators of these vices. However, the students who have negative and unfavourable perceptions about counselling think that counselling is irrelevant and therefore not needed in their lives. They are of the view that counselling is for only students with chronic academic and disciplinary problems.

Therefore, all hands must be on deck for counselling to be appreciated and valued by students and youths. Awareness of counselling must be created. School administrators, government and parents must discharge their social or official responsibilities effectively in this respect. They should create the needed awareness of counselling, create conducive environment for counselling to thrive, provide for counselling and encourage students to go for counselling. The counsellors should not make themselves redundant and irrelevant. They must endear themselves to students, teachers and school management through some laudable programmes if they are to remain relevant and appreciated. Relationship among counsellors, students, teachers and school management must be cordial for guidance and counselling services to be offered effectively and appreciated.

Some factors such as self-esteem and self-efficacy are thought to have influence on perception students have of counselling (Vogel, Wester & Larson, 2007). Self-esteem was defined by Schwalbe and Staples (2015) as the feelings an individual has about himself that affect the way he views himself. It was defined by Scott, Murray, Mertens and Dustin (2006) as appreciating one's own worth and importance and having the character to be accountable for oneself and to act responsibly toward others. Self-esteem represents an individual's overall appraisal of himself and his value as a person (Hafekost, Boterhoven de Haan, Lawrence, Sawyer & Zubrick, 2017). It is a perception of worth about oneself which can be positive or negative. It is usually a perception that is based upon feedbacks one receives from other important people in one's life, as well as one's own thoughts about oneself. It is thought to be an assessment of competence and worth of a person in relation to others. A person's self-esteem is a reflection of his beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. It spans across domains and roles, and consists of both positive and negative self-judgment. Self-esteem addresses feelings and emotions.

Self-esteem can be an important part of success and is shaped by the environment or experiences. Those who consistently receive overly critical or negative assessments from caregivers, family members and friends will most likely experience problems of low self-esteem. Too low self-esteem can leave people feeling feeble-minded, faint-hearted, defeated or depressed. It can also compel people to make bad choices, fall into destructive relationship or fail to live up to their full potentials. Low self-esteem is characterized by negative thoughts, inferiority complex, anxiety and unhappiness. People with low self-esteem have low self-worth. They are infuriated at slightest chance.

Too much self-esteem usually referred to as narcissism can put people off or damage personal relationship. Narcissism can lead to increased aggression in retaliation for wounded pride. People with high self-esteem have strong penchant for clique formation and in-group favouritism which may increase prejudice and discrimination. Robins and Trzeniewski (2005) noted that self-esteem is typically high in childhood and adulthood but is lower in adolescence and old age.

A combination of school factors, family and innate intelligence appears to be an essential ingredient to increasing students' self-esteem during academic years. Academically and interpersonally, students' self-esteem is affected daily by evaluations not only from school personnel but also from peers and family members. There appears to be a cyclic relationship between self-esteem and academic performance. Good academic achievement leads to high self-esteem and high self-esteem can lead to good academic achievement and facilitates persistence after failure (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs 2003).

Hafekost, et al. (2017) recognized two types of self-esteem namely, global or trait self-esteem and domain-specific self-esteem. Global self-esteem refers to an individual's feelings about himself relative to others. It is a feeling about his general self-perceived through experiences. When a person says he is not good, the remark is a reflection of his global self-esteem. Domain-specific self-esteem refers to evaluation of oneself in a particular or specific area. Value judgments about physical appearance, academic ability, sporting ability, mathematics ability, verbal ability, social relationships, etc belong to domain-specific self-esteem.

Self-esteem can influence students' perception of counselling, and overall zeal for seeking for counselling or avoidance of counselling from especially professional sources. Some people understand seeking help from another person as admitting that one cannot deal with one's problems on one's own and, as such, can be an admission of inadequacy (Miller, 2015). Thus, a person may decide not to seek help in order to maintain a positive self-image. Yeh (2002) found that collective self-esteem negatively predicted attitudes towards counselling in an Asian population. Bee-Gates, Howards-pitney, Rowe and LaFromboise (1996) found that self-esteem was directly related with general help seeking for a problem described as serious.

Self-efficacy was defined by Bandura (1997) as one's ability to succeed in a specific situation or accomplish a task. One's sense of self-efficacy can play a major role in how one approaches goals, tasks and challenges. Experience, modelling and persuasion are essential concepts in development and reshaping of self-efficacy (Ormrod, 2006). The experience of mastery is very

important in determining self-efficacy. This is because success raises self-efficacy while failure lowers it. The impact of modelling in the development and shaping of self-efficacy cannot be over-emphasized. Self-efficacy of a person can improve by another person's success. For instance, if someone notices that another person with similar characteristics is succeeding in his chosen endeavour or career, the person is likely to increase his self-efficacy accordingly. People of different sexes have dabbled into gender stereotyped careers and jobs as a result of effect of modelling on self-efficacy. Hence, careers and jobs which were hitherto reserved for people of a particular sex are now taken up by people of opposite sex. For instance, more women enrolled into aeronautics when they observe that fellow women can fly planes, a job once reserved for men. Improvement from self-efficacy through modelling stems from the belief that what a person can do, another person can equally do it. Furthermore, self-efficacy can be engendered through social persuasion. People's self-efficacy can increase if they are encouraged to engage in a task and persuaded that they can successfully accomplish it. Alternatively, their self-efficacy can decrease when they are discouraged about a task.

Self-efficacy level can enhance or impede motivation. People with high self-efficacy choose to perform more challenging tasks (Bandura, 1997). They set for themselves higher goals and stick to them. Actions are reshaped in thought, and people anticipate either optimistic or pessimistic scenarios in line with their levels of self-efficacy. Once an action has been initiated, highly self-efficacious individuals invest more effort and persist longer than those who are low in self-efficacy. When setbacks occur, those who rate high in self-efficacy recover more quickly and maintain commitment to their goals. High self-efficacy also allows people to select challenging settings, explore their environments or create new ones. People with high self-efficacy believe they can perform well and are likely to view difficult tasks as something to be mastered rather than something to be avoided. Individual who rate high in self-efficacy may perceive counselling in a negative light. Like people who are high in self-esteem, those who rate high in self-efficacy feel capable of solving their own problems and therefore may not need counselling. Thus, avoidance of counselling may be high among people who rate high in self-efficacy compared to those whom rate low in self-efficacy. A study by Jumat (2015) revealed that among students who sought for and received counselling for various academic challenges, only 12% of them rate high in self-efficacy and 74% of those who never sought for counselling rate high in self-efficacy. Nexton (2016) found self-efficacy had a negative relationship with counselling perception.

Statement of the problem

Counselling is very important in the lives of students as through it, solutions to various challenges confronting them are proffered. Despite the obvious benefits of counselling, students have different perceptions about it. While some view it positively, others view it negatively. The willingness of students to access counselling is largely dependent on the perception they have about it. Acceptance and avoidance of counselling stem from notions acquired about counselling over the years from peers and other people important in the lives of students.

Various factors such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, etc have been suggested to influence students' perception of counselling. Those who have low self-esteem and low self-efficacy are believed to have favourable disposition towards counselling and are willing to access counselling. Those

who have high self-esteem and high self-efficacy, on the other hand, are believed to have unfavourable disposition towards counselling and are more unwilling to access counselling. Hence, students who develop unwillingness to access counselling may be susceptible to conduct disorder, anxiety, low self-confidence, poor academic performance and depression. Studies on influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy on students' counselling perception are scarce to the best knowledge of the researcher. Hence, the problem of the study is to investigate the influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling.

Research questions and hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level.

RQ1: What is the influence of self-esteem on students' perception of counselling?

RQ2: What is the influence of self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling?

RQ3: How do self-esteem and self-efficacy jointly influence students' perception of counselling?

HO1: There is no significant influence of self-esteem on students' perception of counselling.

HO2: Self-efficacy has no significant influence on students' perception of counselling.

HO3: There is no significant joint influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling.

METHODOLOGY

This is a correlational study that examined the influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling. From a population of 4792 senior secondary 1, 2 & 3 (SS1, SS2 and SS3) students in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State, a sample of 614 SS1, SS2 and SS3 students was composed for the study using simple random sampling technique and proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The simple random sampling technique was used to compose 8 schools from the 20 existing secondary schools in the local government area. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to compose a sample of 614 SS1, SS2 and SS3 students from the 8 schools. The instrument for data collection is Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy and Counselling Perception Scale. It was adapted from Self-esteem Scale by Rosenberg (1965), Self-Efficacy Scale by Scholz, U., Dona, B. G., Sud, S. & Schwarzer, R. (2000) and Perception and Attitude of Students' towards Guidance and Counselling Inventory by Salami (2009) and modified by the researcher to suit the present context. The instrument was divided into four sections. Section A was designed to elicit the students' demographic information, while section B, C and D were designed to obtain self-esteem, self-efficacy and counselling perception of the students respectively. It contains 10 items on self-esteem, 10 items on self-efficacy and 20 items on students' counselling perception. All the items were non-cognitive and of 4-point response options format of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The instrument was validated by requesting three experts in Counselling Psychology to vet it for clarity, appropriateness and suitability of the items for those it is intended. The reliability coefficients of the instrument obtained through Cronbach alpha technique are 0.75, 0.69 and 0.72 for sections on self-esteem, self-efficacy and students' counselling perception respectively. These figures are sufficient for the instrument to be used for the study. Coefficient of simple regression was used to answer research questions 1 and 2,

while coefficient of multiple regression was used to answer research question 3. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using t-test associated with simple regression while hypothesis 3 was tested using ANOVA associated with multiple regression. All null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS

RQ1: What is the influence of self-esteem on students' perception of counselling?

Research question 1 was answered using coefficient of simple regression and the results are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Coefficient of simple regression for the influence of self-esteem on students' perception of counselling

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
(-)0.602	0.362	0.361

Table 1 shows that the coefficient of simple regression for the influence of self-esteem on students' perception of counselling is (-)0.611 which shows that self-esteem has a moderate negative influence on students' perception of counselling in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State. The square of coefficient of regression is 0.362. The adjusted square of coefficient of regression is 0.361 which implies that self-esteem accounts for 36.1% variation in students' counselling perception, while the remaining 63.9% variation in students' counselling perception was not accounted for by self-esteem.

HO1: There is no significant influence of self-esteem on students' perception of counselling.

Hypothesis 1 was tested using t-test associated with simple regression and the results are shown in table 2.

Table 2: T-value associated with simple regression analysis for the influence of self-esteem on students' perception of counselling

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	86.115	1.900		45.312	0.00
Self-esteem	-1.288	0.069	-0.602	-18.631	0.00

Table 2 shows that the absolute t-value for the influence of self-esteem on students' perception of counselling is 18.631 which is significant at 0.00 alpha level and also significant at 0.05 alpha level since 0.00 alpha level is less than 0.05 alpha level. As t-value is significant at 0.05 alpha level, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is a significant influence of self-esteem on students' perception of counselling among secondary school students in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State.

From the unstandardized b-coefficients, the model describing the influence of self-esteem on students' counselling perception is given by $CP = 86.115 - 1.288SES$, where CP represents counselling perception while SES represents self-esteem.

RQ2: What is the influence of self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling?

Research question 2 was answered using coefficient of regression associated with simple regression analysis. The results are shown in table 3

Table 3: Coefficient of simple regression for the influence of self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
(-)0.667	0.445	0.445

Table 3 show that the value of coefficient of simple regression for the influence of self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling is (-)0.667 which shows that self-efficacy has a high negative influence on students' perception of counselling. The square of coefficient of simple regression is 0.445. The adjusted square of coefficient of simple regression is 0.445 which implies that self-efficacy accounts for 44.5% variation in students' perception of counselling while the remaining 55.5% variation in students' counselling perception is not accounted for by self-efficacy.

HO2: Self-efficacy has no significant influence on students' perception of counselling.

Hypothesis 2 was tested using t-test associated with simple regression and the results are resented in table 4.

Table 4: T-value associated with simple regression analysis for the influence of self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std.Error	Beta		
Constant	90.158	1.782		50.587	0.00
Self-efficacy	-1.426	0.064	-0-.667	-12.172	0.00

From table 4, it can be seen that the absolute t-value for the influence of self-efficacy on students' counselling perception is 12.172 which is significant at 0.00 alpha level and also significant at 0.05 alpha level. As t-value is significant at 0.05 alpha level, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. This implies that self-efficacy has a significant influence on students' perception of counselling among secondary school students in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State.

From the unstandardized b-coefficients, the model describing the influence of self-efficacy on students' counselling perception is given by $CP = 90.158 - 1.426SEF$, where CP represents counselling perception while SEF represents self-efficacy.

RQ3: How do self-esteem and self-efficacy jointly influence students' perception of counselling?

Research question 3 was answered using coefficient of regression associated with multiple regression analysis. The results are shown in table 5

Table 5: Coefficient of multiple regression for the joint influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling

R	R ²	AdjustedR ²
(-)0.634	0.402	0.400

Table 5 shows that the coefficient of multiple regression for the joint influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy on students' counselling perception is (-)0.634 which shows that self-esteem and self-efficacy have moderate negative joint influence on students perception of counselling. The square of the coefficient of multiple regression is 0.402. The adjusted square of the coefficient of multiple regression is 0.400 which implies that 40% variation in students' counselling perception is attributable to the joint effect of self-esteem and self-efficacy while the remaining 60% variation in students' counselling perception is not attributable to the joint effect of self-esteem and self-efficacy.

HO3: There is no significant joint influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling.

Hypothesis 3 was tested using ANOVA associated with multiple regression analysis and the results are as presented in table 6.

Table 6: ANOVA associated with multiple regression analysis for the joint influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	33679.047	2	16839.523	245.612	0.00
Residual	41891.129	611	68.562		
Total	75570.176	613			

Table 6 shows that mean square regression is 16839.523 and the mean square residual is 68.562. The degrees of freedom regression, residual and total are 2, 611 and 613 respectively. The f-value is 245.612 which is significant at 0.00 alpha level and also significant at 0.05 alpha level. As f-value is significant at 0.05 alpha level, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant joint influence of self-esteem and self-efficacy on students' perception of counselling.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It was found in this study that self-esteem has a moderate, negative and significant influence on students' perception of counselling in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State. It was also found that self-efficacy has a high negative and significant influence on students' perception of counselling. The finding that self-esteem has a negative influence on students' perception of counselling is similar to the finding of Yeh (2002) which revealed that collective self-esteem negatively predicted attitudes towards counselling in an Asian population. Similarly, the finding that self-efficacy has a negative influence on students' perception of counselling is in line with the findings of Jumat (2015) and Nexton (2016). Jumat (2015) found that among students who sought for and received counselling for various academic challenges, only 12% of them rated high in self-efficacy and 74% of those who never sought for counselling

rated high in self-efficacy. A study by Nexton (2016) revealed that self-efficacy had a negative relationship with counselling perception.

The findings that self-esteem and self-efficacy each has a negative influence on students' perception of counselling are not surprising and can be explained from the fact that people who have high self-esteem and self-efficacy also rate high in self-confidence. They feel more superior, knowledgeable, achieving and less dependent than most other people. They feel that they are capable of solving their own problems by themselves without recourse to assistance from other people. Hence, they are most likely to have negative perception about counselling and may be unwilling to access counselling. However, people who rate low in self-esteem and self-efficacy also rate low in self-confidence or self-trust. They appear to be less achieving and less trusting to their own skills and ability. They appear to be dependent as they rely on others to see them out of their problems. This probably explains why they have positive perception about counselling, are favourably disposed towards counselling and are more willing to access counselling than people who rate high in self-esteem and self-efficacy.

CONCLUSION

Secondary school students have various perceptions about counselling. While some of them view it positively, others view it in a negative light. Some factors have been found to have influence on perception held by students about counselling. Some of these factors are psychological (self-esteem and self-efficacy). Self-esteem and self-efficacy each has a negative influence on counselling perception and by extension may influence willingness to access counselling.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that students irrespective of their level of self-esteem and self-efficacy should have positive perception about counselling. In any social system, there is established interdependence among people and none solves all his problems in isolation. No matter the level of their self-esteem and self-efficacy, they need the contributions of people in their lives. Since knowledge is infinite and nobody is a repository of knowledge, students need to avail themselves of the services of counsellors so as to have their problems solve.

References

- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company
- Baumeister, R. F., Cambell, J. D., Krueger, J. I. & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Does high self – esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in Public Interest*, 4, 1–44
- Bee-Gates, D., Howard-Pitney, B., Rowe, W. & LaFromboise, I. (1996). Help-seeking behaviour of native American India high school students. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 27, 495-499
- Hafekost, K., Boterhoven de Haan, K., Lawrence, D., Sawyer, M. G. & Zubrick, S. R. (2017). Validation of the Adolescent Self-Esteem Questionnaire: Technical report:

Telethon Kids. *Institute and the Graduate School of Education*, University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

- Jumat, L. (2015). Perception of counselling among students with various self-efficacy. *Journal of Educational Review*, 32 (12), 539-546
- Lahey, B. B. (2003). *Psychology: An introduction*. New York: McGraw Hill
- Mandera, M. L. (2013). *Perception of teachers and students towards guidance and counselling services in public secondary schools in Ongata Rongai and Ngong zones of Kajiado North District, Kajiado County, Kenya*. Unpublished thesis submitted to Faculty of Education, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Miller, W. R. (2015). Motivation for treatment: A review with special emphasis on alcoholism. *Psychological Bulletin*, 98, 84-107
- Nexton, G. A. (2016). Relationship between self-efficacy and counselling perception among college students. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 18 (12), 76-83
- Ormrod, J. E. (2006). *Educational psychology: Developing learners*. New Jersey: Pearson/Merril Prentice Hall.
- Salami, S. O. (2009). Perception and attitude towards counselling among rural college students in Nigeria. *Ife Psychologia*, 8, 19-23
- Schwalb, M. L. & Staples, C. L. (2015). Gender differences in sources of self-esteem. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 158-168
- Scholz, U., Dona, B. G., Sud, S. & Schwarzer, R. (2000). Is general self-efficacy a universal construct? *European Journal of Psychological Association*, 18 (3), 242-251
- Scott, C. G., Murray, G. C. Mertens, C. & Dustin, E. R. (2006). Student self and school system: Perceptions and implications. *Journal of Educational Research*, 89 (5), 286-293
- Robins, R. W. & Trzesniewski, K. H. (2005). Self-esteem development across the lifespan. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 14 (3), 158 – 162
- Rosenberg (1965). *Society and adolescent self-image*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press
- Vogel, D. L., Wester, S. R. & Larson, L. M. (2007). Avoidance of counselling: Psychological factors that inhibit seeking help. *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 85, 410-422
- Yeh, C. J. (2002). Taiwanese students' gender, age, interdependent and independent self-construal, and collective self-esteem as predictors of professional psychological help-seeking attitudes. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 8, 19-29