

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE ROLES OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT: *The study investigated teachers' perception of the roles of Guidance Counsellors in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select three hundred and seventy (370) male and female secondary school teachers from a population of five thousand three hundred school teachers. The "School Teachers' Perception of Guidance Counsellors Rating Scale" (STPRGCRS) was administered to the respondents to collect necessary data. The t-test statistics was used to test three null hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that there were no significant differences in teachers' perception of the role of Guidance counsellors in secondary school in Rivers State. Therefore, the three null hypotheses were accepted. Based on the above findings six (6) recommendation were made: (1) The Government of Rivers State should endeavour to establish counselling units in each secondary schools, and should be functional to meet the needs of students. (2) Qualified counsellors from accredited colleges and universities, with minimum qualification of bachelor in Guidance and counselling or psychology. (3) Counsellors should focus on counselling students as their primary functions. (4) Counsellors should hold staffing with parents, students and teachers as time will permit in each school session. (5) Counsellors should strictly observe confidentiality as code of ethics. (6) Counsellor should be able to refer students with major emotional problems to the appropriate helping professionals.*

KEYWORDS: Teachers' Perception, Guidance, Counsellors, Secondary Schools

INTRODUCTION

The Guidance and Counselling activity in the secondary school settings is gaining a new dawn. As the educational mission in Nigeria has expanded to include Guidance and Counselling services in elementary, secondary and higher institutions. In Nigeria junior secondary school starts after successful completion of the 6th grade or primary six. A child will complete three years of classroom instructions and be able to sit for the junior school certificate examination. The successful completion of JSS III will lead to enrolment in SSS I.

The students who start the junior secondary school are predominately early adolescents, who made successful transition from the primary six grades. The early adolescence period is a turbulent period for the developing child. Let us look at our society today; the most endangered age group is the adolescence. Those who drop out from school join the antisocial groups, committing all forms of crime across the entire country. The secondary schools have turned out to be the recruitment grounds for antisocial groups (Eremie, 2006). These children not only join the dangerous antisocial groups, but also do hard and illicit drugs (Effiong, et al 2005). They are highly influenced by peer group pressure which leads to juvenile delinquencies across the nation.

Some of these students drop out of school due to lack of adequate guidance and counselling services in the school system. We cannot watch daily, seeing our students get wasted on the streets and in jails awaiting trial or already sentenced. There is a great need to reclaim these students through effective guidance and counselling at the junior and senior secondary school level.

The Federal Ministry of Education in response to such needs of the students has spelt out guidance and counselling objectives in the **Blue Print** for educational institutions in Nigeria. The recognition of such needs by the Federal Ministry of Education, if carried out effectively by school guidance counsellors will help to focus the students' attention on their academic work.

Guidance was the father of counselling as it was practiced during the period of Frank Parson. The focus of guidance in the days of Frank Parsons was to guide an individual to make choices in the areas of choosing classroom instructional activities, and also to prepare the individual to enter a given vocation or occupation. A guidance counsellor is to assist individual to make choices in selecting and planning of courses in the school setting. While, counselling is the process whereby a person (counselee) enters a helping relationship with a professionally qualified counsellor to help the counselee in making choices and decisions leading to desirable development and growth throughout the life span (Gladding, 1988; Anagbogu (1988) and Corey (1986).

In other for the school guidance and counselling professional to effectively carry out his or her role, objectives are set and to be met. The guidance and counselling objectives include the following:

1. To assist students in developing self esteem and self worth.
2. To assist students in developing interest, values, aptitude, knowledge and skills about self and environment.
3. To assist students in developing learning skills.
4. To assist students in making appropriate and developmental life goals.
5. To assist students to make smooth transition from JSS to SSS learning environment.
6. To educate teachers, non academic staff and parents to be sensitive to the developmental needs of the students at school and home environment.
7. To encourage students in developing their educational and vocational aspirations.
8. To encourage students in developing open and trustworthy communication climate among peers and teachers.
9. To educate students against antisocial behaviours and activities.
10. To assist SSS students to prepare for college and university environment.

All guidance and counselling professionals in school settings are expected to carry out the above stated objectives by utilizing appropriate counselling and guidance modalities. Counsellors at this level should be able to carry out the following functions and activities:

1. Organizing and presenting classroom curricula for students towards developmental ventures.

2. Organizing and making available all educational, vocational, and other developmental information to students for adequate decision making.
3. To assist students to conscientiously assess their personal characteristics and potentials.
4. To provide tutorial services for students who are lagging behind academically.
5. To provide school stress preventive services.
6. To initiate a variety of community and school activities.
7. To serve as service coordinator between school and the communities.
8. To conduct individual and group counselling and guidance sessions.
9. To adequately inform students what is required of them to enter colleges and university, and occupational outlook.

Statement of the Problem

Guidance and counselling services in Nigerian schools is relatively new in content and context. There is uncertainty regarding the counsellor's roles. The school counsellor is seen as an intruder to the roles and functions of the typical classroom teachers. Guidance counsellors are mostly seen as 'Jack of all trade, master of none'. They are expected to fulfill diverse and conflicting roles and functions. Counsellors are expected to teach regular classes, as well as perform administrative functions. Often, teachers perceived counsellors as intruders to their classroom management of students.

Mallum (2000) observed lack of cooperation between counsellors and other academic staff that contributed to poor service delivery to the students. Therefore, this researcher is interested to know and understand: What perception do teachers have about the roles of guidance counsellors in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate secondary school teachers' perception of the roles of guidance counsellors in secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. Do teachers perceive educational guidance and counselling as the role of guidance counsellors in secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. Do teachers perceive personal-social counselling as the role of guidance counsellors in Rivers State?
3. Do teachers perceive vocational guidance as the role of guidance counsellors in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

For the purpose of this study, the following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference in perception of male and female teachers in respect of counsellors guiding students in their emotional and educational problems in secondary schools in Rivers State.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers in respect of personal-social guidance as the role of guidance counsellors in Rivers State.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on vocational guidance as it relates to the role of guidance counsellors in Rivers State.

Scope of the Study

This study was limited to secondary school teachers in Rivers State. The study was, however, delimited to sixty secondary schools, and three hundred and eighty teachers were used for the study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research method used was the descriptive survey. The researcher employed survey method because perception of teachers in secondary schools was the primary concern of this study. Therefore, it is appropriate to study the perception of the teachers. The t-test statistics was used at 0.05 level of significance.

Population of the Study

The study covered three hundred and seventeen (317) government approved secondary schools in Rivers State with total teacher population of five thousand three hundred (5,300).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample population for this study consisted of three hundred and seventy (370) female and male teachers. One hundred and seventy (170) were male while two hundred (200) were female.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for this study was on likert scale. It was a 4-point interval scale; strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Responses were assigned values ranging from (4)-points to (1)-point. The scale is entitled "School Teachers Perception of the Roles of Guidance Counsellors Rating Scale" (STPRGCRS). The scale has three (3) sections: personal data (section A), Response Guide (section B), twenty items/role guidance counsellors function in the school setting.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument (STRGCRS) was subjected to content and face validity by experts in psychometrics, in the faculty of Education. A test is valid when it measures what it purports to measure at any given time and situation (Anastari, 1982).

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined by utilizing the test-retest method. After the first administration of the instrument, an interval of two weeks was allowed before the second administration. The spearman Brown Prophecy formula was used to determine the reliability of the full length of the test. A correlation coefficient of 0.89 was reached. This was considered high enough as a reliability estimate of (STRGCRS).

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: Was tested using the t-test statistics and the result is shown in table 1.

Table 1: The T-Test Analysis of the mean and standard Deviation of Perception of Male and Female Teachers in respect of Counsellors Guiding Students in their Emotional and Educational problems

Variables	Respondent	N	Mean	Std Dev	std Error Mean	DF	P	t-cal	t-crit	Dec.
Teachers perception of emotional guidance	Male	170	3.2	0.72	0.5886	368	0.05	0.9	1.96	Accepted
	Female	200	4.3	0.92	0.6477					

The data in table 1 revealed that the calculated t-value of male and female teachers' perception of educational counsellors was 0.9, while the critical t-value was 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 368 at 0.05 confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted, meaning that, there was no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers in terms of emotional and educational guidance as the role of guidance counsellors.

Hypothesis 2: Was tested using the t-test statistics and the result is shown in table 2.

Table 2: The T-Test Analysis of the mean and standard Deviation of Perception of Male and Female Teachers in respect of Counsellors Guiding Students in their Personal-social problems in Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

Variables	Respondent	N	Mean	Std Dev	std Error Mean	DF	P	t-cal	t-crit	Dec.
Teachers perception of personal social-problems	Male	170	3.3	0.76	.05961	368	0.05	1.02	1.96	Accepted
	Female	200	4.5	0.98	.06534					

The data in table 2 revealed that the calculated t-value of male and female teachers' perception in respect of counsellors guiding students in their emotional and educational problems was 1.02, while the critical value was 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 368 at 0.05 confidence level. Therefore, the null significant difference in the perception of male students in their personal-social guidance as the role of guidance counsellors.

Hypothesis 3: Was tested using the t-test statistics and the result is shown in table 3.

Table 3: The T-Test Analysis of the mean and standard Deviation of Perception of Male and Female Teachers in respect of Counsellors Guiding Students in their Vocational Guidance needs

Variables	Respondent	N	Mean	Std Dev	std Error Mean	DF	P	t-cal	t-crit	Dec.
Teachers perception of vocational guidance	Male	170	3.3	0.76	0.5971	368	0.05	1.04	1.96	Accepted
	Female	200	4.5	0.98	0.6562					

The data in table 3 revealed that he calculated t-value of male and female teachers' perceptions in respect of counsellors guiding students in their vocational guidance needs was 1.04, while the critical value was 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 368 at 0.05 confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted, meaning that there was no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers in terms of counsellors guiding students in their vocational guidance needs.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that secondary school teachers (male and female) perceived emotional and educational problem as the roles of counsellors, leading to no significant difference in their perception. Also, male and female teachers perceived that counsellors are to adequately guide students to resolve their personal-social problems.

In addition, the study revealed that male and female teachers perceived counsellors to guide students towards their vocational guidance needs. These findings are in line with Kehinde (2011); Uzeoshi (2002) who indicated in their studies that vocational guidance, students' emotional and educational problems solving is the roles of the counsellors.

CONCLUSION

Base on the findings of this study, it can be concluded with high level of confidence that male and female teachers in secondary schools in Rivers State are fully aware and informed that the guiding of secondary school students towards their vocational guidance needs, personal-social, emotional and educational problems are the roles of the counsellors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Government of Rivers State should endeavour to establish counselling units in each secondary school, and should be functional to meet the needs of students.
2. Qualified counsellors from accredited colleges and universities, with minimum qualification of bachelor in Guidance and counselling or psychology.
3. Counsellors should focus on counselling students as their primary functions.
4. Counsellors should hold staffing with parents, students and teachers as time will permit in each school session.
5. Counsellor should strictly observe confidentiality as code of ethics.
6. Counsellor should be able to refer students with major emotional problems to the appropriate helping professionals.

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