

Principals and Teachers' Perception of Counsellors' Relevance and Counselling Services as Promotional Factors of Principal-Counsellor Relationship in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine if principals and teachers' perception of counsellors' relevance and services, are facilitators of critical incidents in enhancing school Principal – Counsellor relationship in Edo and Delta States. The objective therefore is to enhance counselling services through the supportive roles of school principals and teachers. Thirty seven principals and one hundred and fifty five teachers from Federal and State secondary schools in Edo and Delta States, were selected for the study. A standardized instrument separated into two sections, B1 and B2 was administered to the subjects, B1 for the principals and B2 for the teachers. The development of the instrument titled 'principal and teachers' perception of counsellors relevance' used in this study was guided by the literature in the subject matter and an adaptation from other relevant instruments. Four research questions with corresponding hypotheses were raised as guide for the study. The data collected was analysed using t-test statistics. The results obtained ascertained principals' and teachers' positive perception of the relevance of school counsellors and counselling services provided, as critical incidents that facilitate principal – counsellor relationship in schools. The result indicated no significant difference in these critical incidents in Federal and State secondary schools in Edo and Delta States. Based on the findings, it was concluded that principals and teachers' positive perception of counsellors' relevance is a critical promotional factors of counselling services in the school system. It was therefore recommended that school principals and teachers should endeavour to lend support to school counsellors' quest and desire to entrench effective counselling services in schools.

Keywords- Perception, counsellor's relevance, principal-counsellor relationship

Introduction

The relevance of Guidance and Counselling in the school system cannot be overstressed. This relevance was facilitated by the Federal Government launching of the National Policy on Education in 1977 edition and the subsequent editions of 1981, 1998 and 2004. Every Educational Institutions have their goals to be accomplished. This can be achieved if you have an enabling environment with a cordial relationship among all stake holders in the school system, specifically the school administrator, the counsellor, the teacher and the students. Although some authorities in the field of guidance and counselling have observed that there seem to be some problems militating against the effective implementation of guidance and counselling programmes in the schools, research have shown that effective and efficient learning could only take place, if functional school guidance and counselling programmes are part of the total school experience (Alude&Egbochuku, 2007). They further stated that teamwork between teachers and counsellors, is a necessity for any guidance programme to thrive. It has also been established through research that the quality of counselling programmes is higher in school situations in which principals and teachers have more positive disposition towards the school counsellors. It means

that counselling services are more effectively delivered when there is a positive relationship between principals and counsellors, teachers and counsellors and between teachers and students.

The need for guidance counselling services in the school setting is realized by school principals and teachers especially now that the school education is expanding and the awareness that students are confronted with various problems. This implies that school teachers and principals' appreciation of school counsellors, who demonstrate competence, support school mission and assist in achieving the successful education of children, are enabling relevant factors facilitating principal-counsellor relationship in schools. Principals' and teachers' perception of counsellors' relevance and services in the school system seem to need further empirical analysis in order to understand more of the critical incidents that promote principal-counsellor relationship and hence the improvement of counselling services in schools (Ojeme, 2011). The investigation was intended to ascertain if principals and teachers' perception of school counsellors' relevance and counselling services provided, are critical incidents that could facilitate counsellor-principal relationship in Nigerian school, in order to promote effective counselling services in Federal and State secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

The school principal, who is in charge of school administration, coordinates the activities of teachers, counsellors and other service providers within the school system. It is conceivable therefore, that the school principal perception of the relevance of the school counsellors and the support provided by teachers, could be critical promotional factors of counselling services in the school system. To the best of the writer's knowledge, there is little or no empirical data on this subject matter. The problem of this study therefore, is predicated on the need to fill this gap in knowledge concerning school principals and teachers' perception of counsellors' relevance as promotional factors in the enhancement of counselling services in the school system.

Research Questions

1. Is there any difference in male and female principals' perception of counsellors' relevance as a critical incident that could facilitate principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools in Edo and Delta States?
2. Is there any difference in principals' perception of counselling services provided as a critical incident that could facilitate principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools in Edo and Delta States?
3. Is there any difference in teachers' perception of counsellors' relevance as a critical incident that could facilitate principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools in Edo and Delta States?
4. Is there any difference in teachers' perception of counselling services provided as a critical incident facilitating principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools in Edo and Delta States?

Hypotheses

HO1: There is no significant difference in male and female principals' perception of counsellors' relevance, as a critical incident that could facilitate principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State Secondary Schools.

HO2: There is no significant difference in principals' perception of counselling services provided, as a critical incident that could facilitate principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools in Edo and Delta States.

HO3: There is no significant difference in Teachers' perception of counsellors' relevance, as a critical incident that could facilitate principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools.

HO4: There is no significant difference in Teachers' perception of counselling services provided as a critical incident facilitating principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design to ascertain principals and teachers' perception of Counsellors' relevance and counselling services provided as critical incidents fostering school counsellor-principal relationship in Federal and State secondary schools in Edo and Delta States.

A simple random sampling technique was used to select thirty-one schools from the total of one thousand, five hundred and forty schools in Edo and Delta States. Thirty-seven school principals and one hundred and fifty-five teachers from Federal and State secondary schools in Edo and Delta States participated in the study. The instrument for this study titled 'principal and teachers' perception of counsellors' relevance' used in this study was guided by the literature in the subject matter and an adaptation from other relevant instruments. The instrument was made up of B1 for principals and B2 for teachers. The instrument was validated by experts in the field of guidance and counselling and measurement and evaluation. The instrument was pre-tested in schools that were not included in the study. The responses obtained from the pre-test, enable further re-organization and refinement of the instrument as well as establishment of its reliability using Cronbach Alpha formula. The reliability coefficient obtained were 0.79 and 0.63 for B1 and B2 respectively.

On the spot administration and collection of the instrument was adopted by the researchers and the research assistant that was trained and engaged for this purpose. The score of data were pooled and analysed using t-test statistics.

Results

HO1: There is no significant difference in male and female principals' perception of counsellors' relevance, as a critical incident that could facilitate principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State Secondary Schools.

Table 1 below shows a t-test analysis on principals' perception of Counsellors' relevance by gender.

Table 1 : t-test Analysis of Principals' Perception of Counsellors' Relevance

Type	N	X	SD	df b/w mean	t
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Male	14	23.9	2.16	.7671	-1.040
Female	23	24.7	2.18		

$p > .05$

An examination of the data in Table 1 reveals a calculated t value of -1.040 which is less than the critical t value of 2.04, with a degree of freedom 35 at alpha level of .05. so, the null hypothesis which states that there was no significant difference between male and female principals' perception of the relevance of Counsellors, as critical incident that facilitate principal-counsellor relationship in schools is retained. Therefore, it can be concluded that both male and female principals do not differ in their perception of counsellors' relevance in schools.

HO2: There is no significant difference in principals' perception of counselling services provided, as a critical incident that could facilitate principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools in Edo and Delta States.

Table 2 shows a summary of t-test analysis on principals' principals' perception of counselling services by school type.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of Principals' Perception of Counselling services provided.

Type	N	X	SD	df b/w mean	t
State	33	82.0	13.13	.2803	-.040
Federal	4	82.3	15.26		

$p > .05$

The result in Table 2 shows a calculated t-value of -.040, which is less than the critical t value of 2.04, with 35 degree of freedom at alpha level of .05. therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there was no significant difference in principals' perception of counselling services provided as critical incident that could facilitate principal and counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools is retained. Conclusively, therefore, this implies that principals in federal schools do not differ significantly from principals in State schools, in their perception of counselling services provided in their schools.

HO3: There is no significant difference in Teachers' perception of counsellors' relevance, as a critical incident that could facilitate principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools.

Table 3 below shows a summary of t-test analysis of teachers' assessment of counsellors' relevance by school type.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Teachers Perception of Counsellors' Relevance

Type	N	X	SD	df b/w mean	t
State	135	23.1	2.70	-.5146	-.822
Federal	20	23.6	2.48		

$p > .05$

The result in Table 3 above shows a calculated t value of $-.822$, which is less than the critical t value of 1.96, with 153 degree of freedom at alpha level of $.05$. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that there was no significant difference in teachers' assessment of the relevance of school counsellors, as a critical incident facilitating principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools is retained. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers in Federal schools do not differ from teachers in State Schools, in their assessment of the relevance of school counsellors.

HO4: There is no significant difference in Teachers' perception of counselling services provided as a critical incident facilitating principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools.

Table 4 below shows a summary of t-test analysis of teachers perception of counselling services by school type.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Teachers' Perception of Counselling Services Provided

Type	N	X	SD	df b/w mean	t
State	135	80.31	15.18	-.0.02	-.000
Federal	20	80.33	12.13		

$p > 0.5$

The result in Table 4 shows a calculated t value of $-.000$, which is less than the critical t value of 1.96, with a degree of freedom 153 alpha level of $.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there was no significant difference in Teachers' perception of counselling services provided as a critical factor facilitating principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State schools is retained. Consequently therefore, Teachers in Federal and State schools do not differ in their perception of counselling services provided in the school.

Discussion

The finding of this study on male and female principals' perception of the relevance of counsellors as a critical incident facilitating principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools indicates that there is no significant difference in the means of male and female principals' perception of counsellors' relevance. The null hypothesis was retained, with the conclusion that gender does not influence perception of the relevance of counsellors in the school system. This is to say that both male and female principals hold same beliefs about the relevance of counsellors as facilitatory critical

incidents of principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State secondary schools. The result of this study corroborates the finding of Ross and Herrington (2005), which affirms the relevance of counsellors in the school system. They stated that school principals appreciate counsellors who demonstrate competence, trust, worthiness, collaborative respect, who go the extra mile to provide connection between home and school and among teachers, administrators and students.

Also, the result of the test on teachers' perception of the relevance of Counsellors as a critical incident facilitating principal-counsellor relationship in Federal and State school indicate that there is no significant difference between Federal and State schools. This result contradicts the opinion of Jones (1978) who had earlier regarded the super-imposition of Counsellors on the educational structure as an unnecessary extravagance in an age when economic and academic resources are scarce. The studies of Ogu (2015) and Ohevwo (2017) which revealed over 70% of teachers awareness of the need of guidance services is in consonance with the result of this study. The finding of this study also corroborates with the views of Allude and Egbochuku (2007), who reported that most teachers perceived Counsellors as positive contributors to the school instructional programme. They observed also that many teachers strongly acknowledge the caring attitude of counsellors, their accessibility and time spent with the students. Teachers' recognition of the relevance of school counsellors is worthy of note. They are most likely to collaborate with school counsellors in their work.

Since the outcome from the hypotheses testing on the relevance of school counsellors indicated positive result, it is expected therefore, that performance of counselling services would be positive as well. The result is particularly positive for the school counselling profession. Good counsellors know and understand how important they are to the dynamics of the entire school. Baker and Gerler (2004) opined that school counsellors function in essence as the mortar that binds the bricks of the school building together, cementing students, parents, teachers and administrators together in the effort to educate children. Critical incidents that determine support from the school principal and teachers are those in which the principals and teachers experience the value that counsellors add to the school. It is therefore, expected, that the quality of counselling services provided would be higher in schools where principals and teachers are supportive of counselling services than in schools where they are not.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were reached based on the findings of this study.

- i. Principals' positive perception of counsellors' relevance in the school system is a critical factor facilitating principal-counsellor relationship for provision of effective counselling service in schools.
- ii. Gender does not influence perception of counsellors in the school system.
- iii. Principals' positive perception of counselling services provided in schools is a relevant enabling factor for counsellors' effectiveness.
- iv. Teachers positively perceived school counsellors as relevant personnel in the school system.
- v. Teachers positively perceived counselling services provided as an enabling factor facilitating principal-counsellor relationship.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. School counsellors should know the values that their school principal and teachers appreciate most in a professional counsellor.

2. Knowledge of these values or attributes should be used by school counsellors as their own benchmarks for enhancement of their professional role.
3. Principals and teachers should endeavour to lend support to school counsellors' quest and desire to entrench effective counselling services in schools.

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