



Teachers' Perceptions of the Roles of Guidance Counsellor in Public Secondary School in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate Teachers' Perceptions of the Roles of Guidance Counsellor in Public Secondary School in Rivers State. Three research objectives and research questions were raised. The researcher used descriptive survey. The population of the study consist of One Thousand Four hundred and Twenty seven (1427) Principals, teachers in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor local government in Rivers State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 285 principal, teacher counselor, SS1 students. The instrument used was Teachers' Perceptions of the Roles of Guidance Counsellor in Public Secondary School Questionnaire (TPRGCQ). A 4-Point rating scale of strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree was used and the respondents were requested to select one of the four (4) options. Test-re-test method was used for the reliability test which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.89. Data was analyzed using the mean and standard deviation, while hypotheses were tested using Z-test statistical analysis. The findings revealed that: (1) H_{01} was accepted, there was no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers regarding appraisal services. (2) H_{02} was accept, there were no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers regarding research, services of Guidance Counsellors in Public Secondary Schools in Rives State.

Keywords: Teachers' Perceptions, Guidance Counsellor

INTRODUCTION

Education is obviously the basic instrument of economic growth and technological advancement of any society. It is in recognition of this fact that governments commit immense resources to ensure the provision of education for their citizens and also tailored their policies towards ensuring that it is made accessible to the generality of their citizenry (Oyebade, Oladipo & Adetoro, 2008). Education is the bedrock for survival, growth and development of any society. As a concept, it has generated a lot of controversies over the years. However, its relevance to individual and societal growth shows its significance to the economic, social, political and cultural development of human society world-wide. Counselling on the other hand helps prevent frustration, restores self-understanding and educates on tasks necessary for good adolescent growth. Counselling is concerned with the worth of an individual, awareness of the various aspects of growth, helping an individual understand himself or herself and his or her world. Thus, it provides favourable conditions for healthier growth and correction of unbecoming behaviour (Gourneau, 2012). Guidance and counselling services are therefore necessary in secondary schools where adolescent stage is at its peak. At this stage, students need to clarify their goals and values, strengthen their interests and aspirations, appreciate their philosophies and cognition and adjust to the norms of society.

Perception of teachers is therefore very important in making counseling services a success in schools. This is important to be considered in coming up with guidance and counseling programs. In his works (Gourneau, 2012) stressed this aspect so much. According to him, teachers are very instrumental in shaping the attitudes of their children and making them do the right things in their lives. He further stressed the need to have teachers express kindness and responsibility towards students.

Guidance and Counseling services are important to different group of people depending on their situation. Some groups of people may need counseling services more than others. Young people for instance, may need counseling in order to make good choices in their lives. This is important since it helps a child get formed into a responsible adult in the future. This thus requires counseling services to be given out in schools where these children can be found. Though there could be few schools today that have counseling services in Africa, there is no harm for a school to have an office for the purpose (CPA, 2009).

Guidance counselors, therefore, need to be equipped with skills required to design comprehensive guidance programmes, provide counseling service, and use assessment procedures with a gender perspective. Emphasis should be on the gender sensitization of trainers of guidance counselors, as well as provide them with the knowledge and skills which they can use in training their trainees on how to address gender stereotypes, that may influence the decisions that young people may make with respect to careers and other roles in society. Due to a lack of training in gender analysis, many providers of guidance services have continued to provide services, and/or organize activities, that continue to maintain and reinforce the existing gender stereotypes (Bhusumane, 2013).

Guidance and counselling is a term usually used together which focus on assisting individuals attain self-understanding and direction, although attempts have been made by various authors to define the term separately. While Ezeji (2011), defines guidance as the help given by a person to another in making choices, adjustment and in solving problems, Denga (2011), sees guidance as a cluster of formalised educational services designed by the school to assist students to achieve self knowledge or self-understanding which is necessary for them to attain full self-development and self-realization of their potential. On the other hand, Okeke (2013), defines counselling as a helping relationship involving the counsellor and the client, in which the counsellor uses his professional knowledge and skills to assist the client attain proper development and maturity, improved functioning and ability to cope with life's problems.

Counselling is also defined according to Eze (2012), as an inter-personal relationship between a professionally trained individual (counsellor) and a troubled individual (counsee) or individuals (counsees) whereby the former utilises his professional skills to help the latter to be able to solve his educational, vocational and person social problems. Bark (2013), states that guidance and counselling are the assistance made available by qualified and trained persons to an individual of any age to help him to manage his own life activities, develop his own points of view, make his own decisions and carry his own burden. The focus of guidance and counselling in school is to address the needs and concerns of students or learners at different levels of academic or educational development. Braddock (2011), states that the purpose of guidance and counselling in schools is to improve academic performance, foster positive study attitudes and habit, increase acquisitions and application of conflict resolution skills and decrease school dropouts. The primary mission of a school's guidance and counselling program is to provide a broad spectrum of personnel services to the students. Denga (2011), referred to these services as "cluster of formalised educational services designed by the school to assist students to achieve self-knowledge or self-understanding which is necessary for them to attain the fullest self-development and self-realization of their potential". These services include: student appraisal service, information service, counselling service, placement service, orientation service, referral service, follow-up and evaluation service, and research service. Appraisal service involves the use of tests and non-test instruments to collect, analyze and interpret data on students to understand themselves better. It also affords counsellors and significant others, the opportunity of having insight into the strengths and weaknesses of students. Information service is tailored towards equipping students with the necessary information's in the areas of educational, vocational and personal social. This information's are very important because they assist students to make wise decisions about life. Counselling service is a face to face interaction between the counsellor and the students, through which students are assisted towards overcoming obstacles to their academic, vocational, personal-social progress and other life needs. Placement service is concerned with assisting students to adjust to the next stage of development whether in school or on the job. Orientation service is designed to familiarize fresh students with their environment. It is a process of initiating an individual to a work or learning situation and of instructing him about rules, regulations and responsibilities, as an introduction to a new situation. Referral service affords the school counsellor an opportunity to refer the cases which he cannot handle to specialists like clinical

psychologist, medical practitioner and others. Follow-up and evaluation service is designed to ascertain the extent to which the guidance programme previously carried out by the school is meeting the objectives for which it was established and also to monitor the progress of students in their work places.

Research service helps the school counsellor to discover relevant information that can improve students' learning and understanding. The services should be an on-going process which professional counsellors should embrace and encourage. These services constitute the core of any guidance program and should be organised to facilitate the growth and development of all students from kindergarten through post high school experiences (Erford, 2010; Erford, 2011; Neukrug, 2011).

Guidance and counselling needs resources and facilities like offices since most information given by students should be kept confidential by the teacher. Otherwise, the students will lose their confidence in the teacher and become more defiant. It was thus important to establish the perceptions held by both teachers and students towards guidance and counselling services and find out the reasons behind the perceptions held. This study therefore intended to investigate the Teachers perception of the roles of guidance counselors in Public secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher's perceptions of guidance and counselling has remained an illusion, despite the provision of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. The issue of poor performance has been raised in many educative and political rallies that have been held within the two zones. They even went further to aid secondary schools in the construction of science laboratories in conjunction with the parents and other stakeholders so as to boost the performance of science subjects. However, the performance has not become any better resulting to all stake-holders being concerned about the worrying situation. The poor performance may be an indicator that the guidance and counselling programmes have not been able to make education system successful and effective in the area. 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 divers 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 (2010) observed lack of cooperation between counsellors and other academic staff that contributed to poor service delivery to the students.

This lack of counsellors role definition within the school, brings about some doubt about the authenticity and cordial relationship that should exist between teachers and counsellors. It is the conflict of roles and the possible consequences that constitute the problem being addressed by this study. Finding out teachers' perception of counsellors' roles may therefore point out areas of conflict in the roles of teachers and guidance counsellors and how to reduce same thus promoting good relationship among teachers and counsellors in the selected schools and help to enhance success in the guidance programme. In considering that, the problem of study is to examine the Teachers perception of the roles of guidance counselors in Public secondary schools in Port Harcourt.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find out how teachers perceive the roles of guidance counsellors as offered in public Secondary schools Rivers State, Nigeria. The study is aim at achieving the following objectives:

1. Determine the perceptions of male and female teachers as regards the appraisal service of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state.
2. Find out how male and female teachers perceive the *Follow-up* and Evaluation Services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state.
3. Ascertain the perceptions of male and female teachers' with respect to the Research Services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:-

1. To what extent does the perception of male and female teachers as regards influence of appraisal service of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state?
2. To what extent do male and female teachers influence theperceive the *Follow-up* and Evaluation Services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state?

3. To what extent do perceptions of male and female teachers' influence Research Services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state.

1.5 hypotheses

The following hypotheses were proposed and tested in the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers the appraisal service of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers as regards the Research Services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive survey design was used to carry out this study. The comparative analysis was achieved by means of utilizing z-test statistic for the comparison of mean scores at 0.05 level of significance. While, the research questions were answered by descriptive statistics: Mean and Standard deviation.

Population and Sample of the Study

The Population of this study consists of One Thousand Four hundred and Twenty seven (1427) Principal, teacher counselor, SS1 students in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor local Government Areas of Rivers State. The simple random sample of 285 principal, teachers' counselor and students was drawn from the study.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for this investigation was a 4-point Modified Likert scale which is an interval scale-ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree with a numerical value ranging from 4 points to 1 point. The instruments that were used for this study were the questionnaire titled: Teachers' Perceptions of the Roles of Guidance Counsellor Questionnaire (TPRGQ). The instrument has 15 items. A weighted average of 2.5 was accepted for research questions.

Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by Experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, who ascertained the face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test-re-test method, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool. A reliability coefficient of 0.725 was obtained for the study.

RESULTS

4.2 Research Question 1: *To what extent do the perceptions of male and female teachers as regards the appraisal services of guidance counselors in Public secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 4.2: Mean response on the perceptions of male and female teachers as regards to the appraisal services of guidance counselors in Public secondary schools in Rivers State (N = 198)

S/N	Items	SA	A	DA	SDA	$\bar{\chi}$	SD	Remark
1	Guidance counselors should be responsible for collecting information about opportunities open to students	102	71	18	7	3.35	0.62	Strongly Agreed
2	The major role of guidance counselors is to identify guidance needs of the students rather than the teachers	99	77	8	14	3.31	0.72	Strongly Agreed
3	Counselors should spend more of their time on individual and group counseling	102	71	18	7	3.35	0.62	Strongly Agreed
4	Counselors should be facilitators of individual counseling, small group planning and career goals	69	99	16	14	3.12	0.69	Strongly Agreed
Total Mean/S.D						13.13	3.17	Accepted
Grand Mean/S.D						2.282	0.79	Accepted

Source: Survey Data, 2018

The results on table 4.5 showed positive mean responses of 3.35, 3.31, 3.35 and 3.12 for items 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. It is generally concluded that Guidance counselors should be responsible for collecting information about opportunities open to students. The major role of guidance counselors is to identify guidance needs of the students rather than the teachers with the grand mean score of 2.282.

4.4 Research Question 2: *To what extent do perceptions of male and female teachers' influence Research Services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state?*

Table 4.3: Mean response on how male and female teachers' influence Research Services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state? (N = 198)

S/N	Items	SA	A	DA	SDA	$\bar{\chi}$	S.D	Remark
5	Counsellor always encourages students to discover new ways of doing things	144	23	21	10	3.40	1.22	Strongly Agreed
6	Counsellor always introduces new ideas to students on educational matters	59	102	20	17	3.02	0.74	Strongly Agreed
7	Counsellor encourages students to always read far and wide reports of researchers carried out in journals	88	77	18	15	3.20	0.79	Strongly Agreed
8	Counsellor always introduces new treatment techniques	71	89	15	23	3.05	0.89	Strongly Agreed
Total Mean/S.D						12.67	3.64	
Grand Mean/S.D						3.17	0.91	Accepted

Source: Survey Data, 2018

The results on table 4.6 showed positive mean responses of 3.40, 3.02, 3.20 and 3.05 for items 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The indicated that Counsellor encourages students to always read far and wide reports of researchers carried out in journals . With Grand mean of 3.17

4.5 Research Question 3: *To what extent does male and female teachers influence the perceived the Follow-up and Evaluation Services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 4.4: Mean Response on the perceptions of male and female teachers influence the perceive the *Follow-up and Evaluation Services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state (N = 198)*

S/N	Items	SA	A	DA	SD A	$\bar{\chi}$	SD	Remark
9	There is no contact with former students at any point in time.	122	39	24	13	3.36	0.86	Strongly Agreed
10	Counsellor visits students after resolution of their problems	79	34	66	19	2.87	1.10	Agreed
11	Counsellor develops plans to trace former students after leaving school	38	99	33	28	2.74	0.99	Agreed
12	There is counsellor-student relationship after school.	150	10	20	18	3.47	2.38	Strongly Agreed
Total Mean/S.D						12.44	5.33	
Grand Mean/S.D						3.11	1.332	Accepted

Source: Survey Data, 2018

The results on table 4.7 showed positive mean responses of 3.36, 2.87, 2.74 and 3.47 for items 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. This indicates that Counsellor develops plans to trace former students after leaving school, with a Grand mean of 3.11

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers the appraisal service of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state

The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using z-test. The result is present in table 4 below:

Decision rule: reject H_0 if p-value is less than the level of significance. Accept H_1 if otherwise.

Table 3: z-test: Analysis of a ratings on the perceptions of male and female teachers the appraisal service of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state

Gender	N	$\bar{\chi}$	S.D	DF	z-cal	z-crit	P-value
Female	134	38.77	11.30	196	0.974	1.960	NS
Male	64	36.72	10.72				

Table 5 revealed that z-cal value of 0.974 is less than the z-critical value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance with 196 degree of freedom. From this empirical result, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant difference between Perceptions of male and female teachers as regards to the appraisal services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The null hypotheses is, therefore, upheld while the alternate hypothesis is rejected

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers as regards the Research Services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state.

Table 6: z-test: Analysis of mean ratings of perceptions of male and female teachers as regards the Research Services of guidance counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers state.

Gender	N	\bar{x}	S.D	DF	z-cal	z-crit	P-value
Female	125	37.61	10.22	196	1.08	1.960	NS
Male	73	35.06	11.34				

Table 6 revealed that t-cal value of 1.08 is less than the t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with 196 degree of freedom. From this empirical result, the null hypothesis, which stated that significant difference between Male and female teachers and the Research Services of guidance counselors in Public secondary schools in Rivers State was by the finding of the result not rejected. This means that Male and female teachers as regards to the Research Services of guidance counselors. The null hypotheses is, therefore, upheld while the alternate hypothesis is rejected

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion of this study was based on findings of this study. Findings from table one which was for research question one showed that both male and female teachers perceive that guidance counsellors should engage in administrative duties in the school rather than full time counselling, engage in teaching functions rather than counselling services alone in the school setting, should coordinate guidance services in the school, assist and provide information to students in their choice of career, and should spend more time on individual and group counselling respectively.

The findings on appraisal services according to respondents revealed that counsellors help students discover occupations that suit students abilities through personality traits; test are conducted before promotion to the next class; and that school records of students are well kept for further use. The findings supports the view of Okeke (2003) who stated that appraisal services of guidance and counselling affords the counsellors the opportunity of having insight into the strength and weakness of students.

The views of respondents on follow-up and evaluation services as guidance and counselling services provided in Rivers State secondary schools revealed that counsellors visits students after counselling session and also visit students after resolution of their problems; counsellors develops plans to trace former students after leaving school and equally maintain counsellor-student relationship after school. According to Yahaya (2010), the importance of follow-up and evaluation services is that the data obtained from the follow-up is kept in the school and it is used in evaluating the effectiveness of the entire guidance and counselling programme. Moreover, under the referral services as services provided by guidance counsellors, the respondents agreed the following as services provided by counsellors in Rivers State. These services include that students are helped to receive outside support concerning personal issues; counsellors always identify students with special needs which requires the services of referral sources; and that students are encouraged to visit other professionals for help.

The findings on information services of guidance and counselling supports the view of Okeke (2003) who stated that information services are tailored towards equipping students with the necessary information in the areas of educational, vocational and personal-social in order to be able to make wise decision about life.

CONCLUSION

Although the counsellors played their role in order to assist the students to choose a reputable career, however, the effects or influence of the counsellors effort on the career choice of students was low. This could be that the counsellors are not well resourced, did not do effective and efficient follow-up, counsellor-parent consultation concerning students career choice as against their ability and interest was not properly done. This can be one of the factors that resulted in students not making the right choice of career, hence becoming shop attendance, yogurt sellers while others join the 'sakawa' group. It was also concluded that environmental factors, the study opt to establish whether they influence the choice of career students among secondary school students make. The study's findings showed that environmental factors play a great role in influencing Students' career choices. However, part of the respondents felt that environmental factors have no influence in their career choice whereas we had a

significant percentage that had no idea and remained neutral. The study's conclusion is that environmental factors play a significant role in determining the career choice students among secondary school students make.

And finally, with regard to personality factors, the study sort to find out how personality factors influence the career choice. The findings showed that personality factor too significantly influence the career one chose. It was the highly rate factors by respondents as one of the most significant factor that influence career choice. The study's conclusion is that personality factors play a significant role in determining the career choice students among secondary school students make.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for Factors that influence secondary school students' choice of career in Rivers State:

- 1) Government should support guidance and counselling practically by providing and making funds available for all the services in guidance and counselling.
- 2) Guidance and counselling should be made an integral part of University and secondary school programmes and therefore supported by all concerned.
- 3) The guidance counsellor should be consulted by all schools administration in implementing some of the counselling programmes.
- 4) Guidance counsellors should be committed to the counselling programmes through helping the teachers with the identification of students with learning problems and inform the teachers, so that different individualized methods can be used for effective teaching and learning.
- 5) Parents also should be included in guidance and counselling programme through giving them progressive report of their students.
- 6) Counsellors should understand their limits in helping the students and therefore make use of referrals.

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