

Perception of Teachers in Preparing Future Professional Counsellors in Nigeria: Counselling Implications

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Abstract: The study investigates Perception of teachers in for preparing future professional counsellors in Nigeria: Counselling implication. One research question and two hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive survey technique was used for the study. The population consisted of 10,068 (Male 2,390; Female 7,678) secondary school teachers from 296 public secondary schools in Edo State. The sample comprised of 400 teachers selected from 20 secondary schools using stratified random sampling technique from urban (10) and rural (10) secondary schools. Descriptive statistics was used to answer research questions; t-test was used to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed that the mean score is (50.0) and standard deviation (8.334) meaning that the quality of guidance and counseling services is average. Hypotheses 1 and 2 mean score of (76.34) male is higher than mean of (48.22) female and the calculated value of (2.45) is greater than the table t-value of (1.96) as well as mean score of (70.30) rural, is higher than the urban (54.24) teachers quality with a calculated value of (3.03) greater than the table t-value of (1.96). The two hypotheses were rejected. The study concludes that if the quality of guidance and counselling services is to improve, there will be a corresponding improvement in the perception of teachers. The study recommended among others that the government through the ministry of education and school administrators should ensure regular interactive activities and new ways, techniques and approach in the felid of guidance and counseling for better and quality services.

Keywords: Guidance and Counselling, services, gender, location, professional, future counsellors

Introduction

Guidance counseling is a noble profession whose significance within Nigeria's educational system is increasingly acknowledged by the nation's educational planners and policymakers. (Adeyemo, 2014). Guidance and counselling is a service that human beings need at one point or the other of their life. Ideally, every institution across the federation should have a well-trained counselor available to address various aspects of students' challenges. This necessitates the implementation of school guidance and counseling programs spanning from primary to tertiary education levels. Olayinka (2012) highlights that the lack of vocational and career guidance, as well as developmental guidance at the primary school level in Nigeria, is not only irrational but also poses significant risks, underscoring the need for a reevaluation of guidance and counselling within the education system. Similarly, Ayegba and Enefolo (2014) argue that guidance activities should be designed to address the comprehensive development of students, including the underlying causes of their challenges. According to them, a qualified counsellor should offer a range of services, including academic counselling, orientation programs, student placement,

information dissemination, career development initiatives, continuous assessment and appraisal services, cumulative record-keeping, consultation with parents and teachers, field trips, referral services, and the application of standardized psychological assessments.

Popoola (2015) further emphasizes that guidance and counselling programs contribute to students' success by focusing on academic achievement, prevention, intervention, advocacy, and social, emotional, and career development. These programs help students gain insights into themselves and others, preventing potential issues related to self-concept. By learning interpersonal skills, students can avoid crises, and when challenges arise, they can utilize these skills to navigate difficult situations. A well-rounded development of emotional and social competencies is crucial for students to maximize their educational experience. The program prioritizes four key areas: academic, personal/social, career, and community involvement, all of which benefit students and other stakeholders.

The hallmark of professional counseling lies in fostering a supportive professional relationship that empowers individuals, families, and groups to achieve their mental health, wellness, educational, and career aspirations. Counsellors assist clients in developing strategies to overcome personal obstacles (Suleiman, Olanrewaju, & Suleiman, 2019). They emphasize that the role of guidance and counselling is vital as it fosters personal, social, educational, and career growth, helping individuals identify and build on their strengths while cultivating a positive outlook.

Kolo (2012) asserts that guidance counsellors are certified professionals employed in schools to assist students with both academic and personal decisions. They provide confidential counselling, evaluate students' abilities and potential, and collaborate with other professionals to address student concerns. According to Ocholi and Ocholi (2017), guidance and counselling serve as a key intervention strategy for teachers working with students facing challenges in secondary schools, aiming to resolve their difficulties.

The Nigerian government's incorporation of these programs was aimed at addressing widespread ignorance among young people regarding career choices and personality development issues. Despite the presence of 170 universities in Nigeria as of 2023, of which 79 are private, 43 federal, and 48 state universities, and 27,042 senior secondary schools (17,453 private and 9,589 public), less than 10% of these institutions have established professional guidance and counselling departments. This low implementation rate persists, despite ongoing efforts by relevant authorities to raise awareness about the importance of guidance and counselling. This backdrop forms the basis for the study.

Literature Review

What is Guidance?

The concept of "Guidance" has wide-ranging definitions by different researchers, but it generally refers to the act of directing, pointing out, or showing the way. In simpler terms, guidance can be understood as helping someone navigate a path or make informed decisions. It involves offering support from a more experienced individual to a less experienced one, particularly in areas like education, career choices, and personal issues. Guidance is intended to help individuals or groups adjust to their environment at all times. It encompasses the procedure of aiding a person in choosing, preparing for, and progressing in various developmental life path activities.

Guidance is essentially a sequence that helps beings discover and develop potential for both personal fulfillment and social contribution. Ayegba and Enefola (2014) describe guidance as a comprehensive set of instructive activities and services designed to assist users in creating and following strategies that lead to positive outcomes and satisfactory adjustment in life.

As defined by Adeyemo (2014), guidance is the process of helping individuals gain self-understanding and self-direction to make the best possible adjustments to their environment. It is designed to assist people in clarifying their goals, making decisions, and addressing challenges they face in life. According to Hassan (2009), guidance includes a variety of services—such as counselling, assessment, information dissemination, referral,

research, and evaluation—that support individuals in growing their self-awareness, which ultimately helps them make wise choices and achieve optimal life adjustment.

Garner (2000) further explains that guidance can be viewed both as a concept and as a process. As a concept, it focuses on the best improvement of the person, while as a process, it aids the individual in gaining a deeper empathetic of their fortes and restrictions, as well as developing the skills needed to solve problems, makes decisions, and navigate life independently.

The Meaning of Counselling

Counselling collaborates relationship among a skillfully qualified counselor and victims, who seeks support and guidance through counseling services.

It involves a professional interaction where the counselor, equipped with specialized training, helps the client (counsee) address and resolve specific challenges or problems.

Counseling typically takes place in a confidential, face-to-face setting, ensuring privacy and fostering trust between the counselor and the client.

It is a dynamic and purposeful process where two individuals work together to address a mutually defined issue. Through mutual understanding and respect, the counselor assists the younger, less mature, or more troubled individual in finding a self-determined solution to their problem.

Counselling involves a range of activities designed to help individuals address personal, academic, career, or emotional challenges. One useful framework for understanding counselling is the IAC Model, which breaks down counselling into three key activities: Informing, Advising, and Counselling. Here's a brief explanation of each:

1. Informing

This activity involves providing individuals with relevant, accurate, and timely information that can help them make informed decisions. In the context of counselling, informing refers to offering factual details that are needed to understand a situation, a problem, or potential options. This could involve sharing information about academic programs, career paths, resources available within a community, or guidelines for personal development. The aim of informing is to empower the individual with knowledge, so they can make choices based on reliable information. For example a career counsellor may provide a student with information about different career opportunities, the educational requirements for those careers, job market trends, and the potential for growth in each field.

2. Advising

Advising is a more personalized activity where the counsellor offers suggestions or recommendations based on the individual's circumstances and goals. Unlike informing, advising involves guiding the individual toward a course of action that seems best suited to their needs. It is often based on the counsellor's expertise, as well as an understanding of the person's abilities, aspirations, and challenges. Advising is aimed at helping the individual

understand possible solutions or strategies and encouraging them to make informed decisions. For instance a counsellor may advise a student on which courses to take to pursue a particular career, or a personal counsellor might recommend strategies to cope with stress or anxiety based on the individual's situation.

3. Counselling

Counselling is the core of the process and goes beyond simply providing information or giving advice. It involves a more in-depth, supportive relationship where the counsellor helps the individual explore their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, enabling them to better understand their issues and emotions. The goal of counselling is to facilitate personal growth, emotional healing, and problem-solving. It involves active listening, empathy, and sometimes therapeutic techniques to help individuals navigate life challenges, manage stress, develop coping strategies, or achieve their personal or professional goals. In a therapeutic context, a counsellor would work with a client to explore the underlying causes of anxiety, helping them identify thought patterns and behaviors that contribute to their distress, and then collaboratively working on strategies for managing or Overcoming Anxiety.

Characteristics of Counseling:

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013), counseling is defined by several key features that highlight its nature and approach:

1. Confidential Environment: Counseling occurs in a private and secure setting, ensuring that the client feels safe to share their concerns.
2. Two-Way Process: It is an interactive process where both the counselor and the client actively participate.
3. Private Relationship: Counseling involves a personal and discrete relationship, focused solely on the client's needs.
4. Mutual Relationship: There is a collaborative and respectful connection between the counselor and the client.
5. Mutual Respect: The process is built on a foundation of respect, where both parties value each other's perspectives and contributions.
6. Professional Relationship: Counseling is a structured relationship, with the counselor being professionally trained to guide and support the client.
7. Non-Advisory: Counseling does not involve giving direct advice but focuses on helping the client explore options and make their own informed decisions.
8. Non-Hierarchical: The relationship is based on equality, with no authority or dominance by the counselor over the client.

Comparisons of Guidance and Counselling

- i. Mutually promotes services
- ii. Equally focus at solving problems
- iii. Both are norm activities

Dissimilarities between Guidance and Counselling

Guidance	Counselling
Guidance is a nonstop, lifelong progression that spans every stage of human development, from birth to death adapting to the unique needs and challenges of each phase. This process begins at home, where parents provide the initial guidance, and extends to school, where teachers play a pivotal role in shaping an individual's growth. Ultimately, it continues into society, where the community contributes to further development and support. In essence, guidance follows a progression: Parents → Teachers → Community, ensuring a holistic and seamless journey of growth and learning throughout life.	Not necessarily continuous process
Deals with giving advice and direction	Don't involve counsel and leading
Guidance often involves maintaining a hierarchical or top-down relationship, where one individual holds a position of authority or expertise over the other. Examples include relationships such as teacher and student, doctor and patient, or parent and child. In these dynamics, the guiding figure provides direction, advice, and support, leveraging their knowledge or experience to help the other party make informed decisions or achieve specific objectives.	Counseling emphasizes maintaining a mutual relationship, characterized by two-way communication and collaboration between the counselor and the client. This dynamic allows both parties to actively contribute to the process, fostering understanding, trust, and respect. Unlike hierarchical relationships, this approach ensures equality, where the counselor provides support and guidance while the client participates in self-exploration and decision-making. This mutual relationship is essential for creating a safe and empowering environment for personal growth and problem-solving.
Can be done in communal or close settings	Done in confidential settings Voluntary or Involuntary. depend on aid, Not on Compulsion (Force).
Guidance is generalized as well as specialized: All and sundry, including teachers, parents, and advisers, contributes to the program, making it accessible to all. Specialized Service: Trained professionals like counselors	Specialized service

and psychologists provide expert support to help individuals overcome specific challenges.	
This dual approach ensures comprehensive support for all needs.	
Have on-the-tack solutions	No ready-made solutions. The client knows what is best for him and the counsellor is the facilitator of the growth
It is broader than Counselling. It is a generic term which embraces counselling, information services, appraisal services etc	It is a specified service
Guidance is a preemptive service or defensive services	Counselling is a reactive service. It speculates that the difficulties already exist
From the beginning of recorded history	Recently because of social flexibility and consumerism

Roles of the School Counsellor

School counsellors play an essential role in the educational environment, fulfilling both professional and personal responsibilities. These responsibilities guide their actions and define their scope of activities. The counsellor's role primarily revolves around supporting various stakeholders, including:

1. Individual Student Consultation
2. Parent/Guardian Consultation
3. Teacher Consultation (working with coworkers and comrades)
4. School and Community Engagement (acting as liaison concerning the school and the broader municipal)

Working with Students

The primary responsibility of school counsellors is to serve the needs of the students. They are tasked with addressing the concerned and social needs of students within the school environment. To reach these diverse wants, counsellors design and implement programs integrated into the regular school day. Counsellors must recognize their professional boundaries, offering only the services and using the techniques for which they are adequately trained and qualified. When a student's needs go beyond the counsellor's expertise, or require long-term intervention, appropriate referrals to other professionals or agencies are built.

Working with Parents/Guardians

Occupied a central role in a student's life, and effective collaboration between parents and school counsellors is crucial. While school counsellors do not provide family counselling, they focus on the student's personal, social, educational, and career development. Counsellors may provide parents with relevant information about their child's progress or needs, ensuring that confidentiality is respected. Counselling activities remain separate from guidance education, and any communication with parents must balance transparency with privacy rights. Ethical standards, such as informed consent and confidentiality, govern the counsellor's interactions with students and their families.

Working with Colleagues and Professional Associates

Counsellors are part of a larger team working to enhance the educational success and well-being of students. This requires

maintaining strong professional relationships with teachers, school staff, clinicians, and other service providers who work with students. Counsellors collaborate with these professionals to share information and coordinate support services for students. This cooperation ensures that the educational and personal development plans for students are comprehensive and aligned with the students' overall well-being. Counsellors must adhere to confidentiality guidelines and legal frameworks while sharing necessary information with colleagues and professionals in the school environment.

Working with the School and Community

The role of the school counsellor extends beyond individual student support to include a broader focus on both the school and community. In addition to providing therapeutic services, counsellors are involved in preventive education, teaching students essential life skills like resilience. By addressing personal and social issues through counselling, the counsellor helps prepare students to face educational challenges with greater readiness.

Counsellors are responsible for developing and maintaining all-inclusive, evolving guidance program that addresses the needs of the entire student populace. These involves categorizing the needs of students, effecting relevant programs, and continuously evaluating and adjusting those programs to ensure they meet students' evolving needs. Counsellors also help connect the school with community resources, providing students with opportunities for growth and success outside the classroom. Through collaboration with local agencies, counsellors facilitate referrals and access to services that support students in their personal development, academic progress, and career transitions.

Historical Development of Guidance and Counselling in Nigeria

The history of guidance and counselling in Nigeria dates back to 1959, when a group of Catholic Irish Reverend Sisters at St. Theresa's College in Ibadan organized the first formal career guidance service for their final-year students. The Sisters recognized the need for students to be informed about career opportunities and to develop human relations skills as part of their preparation for life after school. To support this, representatives from various government departments and ministries were invited to give lectures and seminars on employment opportunities in their fields. The initiative proved successful, as most of the girls who applied for jobs were successfully employed. This early initiative

laid the foundation for the development of formal guidance and counselling programs in Nigerian schools (Adeyemi, 2004).

Research question

1. What is the quality of guidance and counselling services in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated;

Hypothesis one: there is no significant difference in the quality of services offered in guidance and counseling different between male counsellors and their female counterparts.

Hypothesis two: there is no significant difference in the services rendered by counsellors different in urban and rural areas.

Methodology

The descriptive survey technique was used for the study. The population consisted of 10,068 (Male 2,390; Female 7,678) secondary school teachers from 296 public secondary schools in Edo State. The sample comprised of 400 teachers selected from 20 secondary schools using stratified random sampling technique from urban (10) and rural (10) secondary schools across Edo State. The instrument used in collecting data consist of two sections, A and B. Section 'A' contained demographic data while section 'B' contained the items. The guidance counselling service (GCS) consists of 60 items in the instrument arranged in a response order of very high (VH), High (H), Moderate high (MH), Low (L), and very low (VL).

Table 2: t-test Analysis on the Difference between the Quality of Guidance and Counselling Service of Male and Female Teachers'

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df.	t-cal.	t-crit	Decision
Male Teachers	200	76.34	12.45	398	2.45	1.96	Reject
Female Teachers	200	48.22	11.68				

Table 2 indicates that male teachers with a mean score of 76.34 are higher in teachers' quality of guidance and counseling services than females with a mean of 48.22. The calculated value of 2.45 is greater than the table t-value of 1.96 showing that there is significant difference in the quality of guidance and counselling

The instrument were validated by three experts of Measurement and Evaluation from Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma, corrections made were effected before administering to respondents. Reliability was determined through test and the coefficient obtained was 0.71 and 0.82 from (GCS) which confirmed the instrument's reliability for use in the study. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics to answer research questions; t-test was used to test the hypotheses.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: What is the quality of guidance and counselling services in Nigeria?

Table 1: mean and standard deviation of teachers' quality of guidance and counseling service

N	Mean	SD
400	50.0	8.334

Table 1 indicates that the mean score is 50.0 while the standard deviation is 8.334. The result means that teachers' quality of guidance and counselling services is average as it is neither high nor low.

Hypothesis one: there is no significant difference in the quality of services offered in guidance and counselling different from male counsellor and their female counterparts.

services of male and female teachers. Therefore hypothesis 1 was rejected.

Hypothesis Two: there is no significant difference in the services rendered by counsellors different in urban and rural areas.

Table 2: t-test Analysis on the Difference between the Quality of Guidance and Counselling Service of Urban and Rural Teachers'

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df.	t-cal.	t-crit	Decision
Urban Teachers	200	70.30	10.	398	3.03	1.96	Reject
Rural Teachers	200	54.24	13.41				

The result in Table 3 indicates that rural teachers with a mean score of 70.30 are higher in teachers' quality of guidance and counseling services than urban teachers with a mean of 54.24. The calculated value of 3.03 is greater than the table t-value of 1.96 showing that there is significant difference in the quality of guidance and

counseling services of rural and urban teachers. Therefore hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion is based on the results from the analyses. Data from research question 1 indicate that the mean score is 50.0 while the

standard deviation is 8.334. This finding is congruent with Adeyemo 2014 who found that teachers' quality of guidance and counseling services is average. The finding of the present study disagrees with Agi (2013) who discovered that teachers' quality of guidance and counselling services is low.

The result from hypothesis 1 indicates that male teachers with a mean score of 76.34, is higher in teachers' quality of guidance and counseling services than females with a mean of 48.22. Also the calculated value of 2.45 is greater than the table t-value of 1.96 showing that there is significant difference in teachers' quality of guidance and counseling services of male and female teachers. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was rejected. This result is in consonance with (Ayegba, & Enefola 2014) that conducted a study on problems and prospects of guidance and counselling in Nigerian educational system and found significant difference in teachers' quality of guidance and counseling services of male and female teachers.

The result from hypothesis 2 indicates that rural teachers with a mean score of 70.30, is higher in teachers' quality of guidance and counselling services than urban teachers with a mean of 54.24. The calculated value of 3.03 is greater than the table t-value of 1.96 showing that there is significant difference in teachers' quality of guidance and counselling services of rural and urban teachers. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Conclusion

The study concludes that if teachers' quality of guidance and counselling services is to improve, there will be a corresponding improvement in the attitude and perception of teachers in the deliverables of guidance and counselling services. Also teachers must ensure to improve the personal and professional lives so that they can face the demands of their daily tasks and provide a supportive, qualitative and better guidance and counselling services.

Counselling Implications

School counsellors should educate teachers about their right to access counselling services and emphasize the importance of such support. Counsellors can offer therapy and coaching to help teachers address the challenges they face, which may be impacting their ability to deliver high-quality guidance and counselling services. Providing this support will help teachers improve their performance and better meet the needs of their students

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made

1. The government through the ministry of education and school administrators should ensure regular interactive activities and new ways, techniques and approach in the field of guidance and counselling for better and quality services.
2. Gender sensitivities should be improved upon as sex should not be a limitation to delivery of quality guidance and counselling services.

3. Location problem should not be a cause why quality guidance and counselling services not render at both urban and rural teachers face similar counseling issues.

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