

Accessibility of Counselling Services and Students Academic Resilience in Tertiary Institutions in Ogun State

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Abstract

Counselling is a process that takes place in a one-to-one relationship between individuals faced with challenges which they cannot cope with alone and a professional worker whose training and experience qualify him/her to help others to arrive at solutions to various types of personal difficulties. In a nutshell, counselling service helps the client attain self-actualization through a professional counsellor specially trained to render such services, with no gender discrimination. This study examined the accessibility of counselling services and student academy resilience in Ogun State, Nigeria, tertiary institutions. It is a non-experimental study, which involves the use of a simple survey research design where questionnaires were used to acquire necessary data for the research work. The population comprises all tertiary students in Ogun State. A random sampling technique was used to select 200 students as a sample for the study. Two (2) research questions were raised and answered in this study. The instrument's reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha, and data collected were analyzed using a simple percentage statistical tool. The research findings revealed that counselling service plays an essential and crucial role in career choice, improvement of academic resilience and performance and help shape the hostile conduct of students. Therefore, it was recommended that guidance and counselling services be emphasized in schools by having professional counsellors in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. Efforts should be made to motivate and encourage students to visit counselling service centres in the school in order to develop skills and capacity for academic resilience, which will, in turn, enhance their all-around performance.

Keywords: Counselling, Services, Academic Performance, Attitudinal Changes

Introduction

Counselling Psychologists' services in tertiary institutions are essential in guiding students in optimum performance in their various life situations, such as; education, professional, social, health, moral, personal and marital areas. The work of counselling as a profession should be explicitly inevitable at all levels of education. Counselling services in school assist learners of all standards to harmonize their abilities, interests, and values and build strong self-esteem, thereby helping them to develop their full potential. All these are geared towards improving the student's personality in all areas and facilitating better resilience, especially in their academics and other areas. Counselling service has been an age-long affair in Nigeria, dating from the time of our ancestors until now. However, it was only in 1959 that it became professionalized. Counselling

services are an essential aspect for higher institutions students. Unfortunately, its importance has not been visualized as per the desired level in educational institutions. More encouraging results could be achieved if a child is properly guided and supported in school, particularly at the elementary level. Problems faced by students, which include absenteeism, examination malpractices, drop out and some others, can also be controlled and eliminated by conducting and offering professional and learner-centred counselling programmes.

Counselling is an essential tool for effective interpersonal relationships with the primary objective of driving self-understanding and equitable adjustment to one's environment.

Counselling is part of a broad sector of applied psychology, which has been developed in the frames of career counselling as well as of guidance and support of individuals during their effort to pursue a career according to their dexterities and abilities or their effort to resolve psychological problems associating with the academic and professional life, (Kantas, 2008).

Counselling services are presented by Nwachukwu (2007) as information services, placement services, appraisal services, vocational guidance services, counselling services, referral services, evaluation, follow-up, and consultancy and research services. As a vital component of every type and level of education, the absence, under-utilization or non-utilization of these services in the present-day school system has led to the unprecedented rise in the crime wave, violence among students, depression, cultism, wrong subject combination, wrong career choice and poor academic performance among other issues. Braddock (2001) identified that the purpose of counselling services for students is to:

- improve academic achievement
- foster positive attitudes toward school learning and work
- increase acquisitions and application of conflict resolution skills.
- decrease dropouts.

Ubana (2008) in the study gathered in their study that students' attitude towards guidance and counselling services was negative and that the sex of the student and the geographical location of the school had no significant influence on students' attitudes toward guidance and counselling services. According to Gysbers and Henderson (2001), guidance and counselling evolved from a position to a service and finally to a program; the guidance and counselling services met the expectations of most students. Gururani (2006) adds that counselling includes personal contact

with students by individuals who consciously attempt to understand and assist them through the specific procedures utilized in personal interviewing.

There are two major types of Counselling services: individual and group counselling.

Individual counselling is one-to-one between a professionally trained Counsellor (Therapist) and his client (Counselee). The goal is to help the client understand himself, clarify and direct his thought to make a worthwhile decision. Through this, client challenges are alleviated. It mainly changes the client by altering maladaptive behaviour, learning decision-making, or preventing problems (National Open University of Nigeria, 2006).

Group Counselling is a counselling session between a professionally trained counsellor and a group of people. The number of this group should be at most seven, or at least ten, in order to have a cohesive group and a practical well controlled counselling session. Members of the groups are clients/counselees whose tasks or challenges meant for resolution are similar. A free atmosphere is allowed during group counselling, and freedom of speech is encouraged. The counselees are free to express themselves individually as counselling progresses so that the burden surrounding the tasks or problems to be resolved would be open for all to consider and benefit from. All counselees are expected to participate and express their feelings. The counsellor's responsibility during group counselling is to help remove the marks covering the problem. The counsellor helps open up the problem with his professional competence and knowledge. The counsellor is not just a group member; he is to direct the affairs and situations.

Other counselling services include career-development programs to foster awareness of career alternatives, programs in human relations skills, training in essential job skills, and acquiring and disseminating related information. Counsellors work with teachers, administrators, and families in coordinated efforts to help resolve specific student challenges. If necessary, they can refer students to trained therapists for additional assistance. In order to drive this cumbersome task, counselling programmes are developed through cooperative and effective enterprise with other disciplines (Okoye, 2010). This largely explains why some of the methodologies and techniques used in Guidance and Counselling are derived from those used in other disciplines. These disciplines include; psychology, sociology, religion, philosophy, politics and medical science.

Resilience is the ability to face, to adapt to challenges and to overcome them. A person with solid resilience skills does not allow setbacks to prevent him/her from progressing. According to

Ungar (2005), resilience is the successful adaptation to situations despite risks that put someone at a disadvantage or adversity. However, psychological resilience emphasizes the creation of psychological well-being through adaptation to the problems encountered, while academic resilience emphasizes academic achievement despite facing severe obstacles, Gayles, (2005). Resilience is the ability to develop, mature, and increase self-competence in dealing with adverse conditions, including biological and environmental constraints. Resilience theory believes that almost all young people have an innate and natural capacity for resilience that can develop positively and healthily Martin and Marsh, (2009). Resilience includes the ability to bounce back to the original state. Cassidy (2016), as cited in Ike, Wiwin and Fitri (2022), argues that resilience is a psychological construct that explains success despite adversity and is considered an asset in human characteristics, which describes the ability to bounce back and overcome obstacle Gayles, (2005). Novotny (2011) explained that the term resilience is used together with descriptive adjectives, so discussing resilience in specific fields, such as academic resilience, will be more accurate.

Resilience and academic resilience are closely related. *Academic resilience* is a concept rooted in psychological resilience Martin and Marsh, (2009). Resilience and academic resilience have several definitions. Morales and Trotman (2011) define academic resilience as a student's capacity to cope with acute or chronic problems that are considered the primary disturbance in the student's capacity to face academic challenges, Hampton, (2016). The other definition of academic resilience is to emphasize a process of dealing with high-risk situations through the education system and producing excellent academic achievement. Academic resilience refers to students' capacity to perform highly despite a disadvantaged background, or more precisely, the heightened likelihood of success in school despite environmental adversities brought about by early traits, conditions, and experiences (OECD 2011). Wang, Haertal and Walberg (1994), as cited in Ike, Wiwin and Fitri (2022), academic resilience also is when students achieve good educational outcomes despite adversity. Counselling services play a pivotal role in improving students' academic resilience at all levels by equipping them with proper skills in either eliminating or overcoming the hurdles they face in their studies when professional counselling is offered. Unfortunately, there is no robust mechanism of legal counselling services in some public institutions, nor is there an appointment of full or part-time counsellors in most schools. Those

mentioned above informed the need for the study to investigate the accessibility of counselling services and students' academic resilience in tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Counselling services are an essential aspect for higher institutions students. Unfortunately, its importance has not been visualized as per the desired level in our educational institutions. More encouraging results could be achieved if a child is appropriately guided, particularly at the elementary level. Students face various challenges, which include examination malpractices, identity formation, failure in examination, study habit problems, peer group influence, absenteeism, drop out and some others. The ratio of these challenges can be controlled or eliminated when proper counselling programmes are in place. Unfortunately, there is no robust mechanism of formal counselling services in some of our institutions, nor is there an appointment of full or part-time counsellors in most schools, hence the need for this study on the accessibility of counselling services and students' academic resilience in tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the research is to examine the accessibility of counselling services and student academic resilience in tertiary institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to;

1. examine the impact of counselling services on students' academic resilience.
2. examine the factors hindering the accessibility of counselling services for students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. How do counselling services impact students' academic resilience?
2. What factors hinder the accessibility of counselling services for students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprises all tertiary institutions in Ogun State. A random sampling technique was used to select two (2) tertiary institutions. One hundred students were randomly selected from each of the chosen schools to make a total of 200 as a sample for the study. A self-developed questionnaire was used

as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B. Section contained information on the respondents' demographic data.

Also, section B contained items on the main title of the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. Data collected were analyzed using a simple percentage statistical tool.

Data Analysis and Result Presentation

Research Question one: What are impact of Counselling services on students' Academic Resilience?

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO		TOTAL	
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %
1.	Counselling services help in making career choices based on the aspirations and motivation	147.00	73.50	53.00	26.50	200.00	100.00
2.	Counselling service assisted me in solving my education challenges.	183.00	91.50	17.00	8.50	200.00	100.00
3.	Counselling gives comprehensive educational assistance to students.	170.00	85.00	30.00	15.00	200.00	100.00
4.	Counselling service is the backbone of students' academic resilience.	95.00	47.50	105.00	52.50	200.00	100.00
5.	Counselling should be considered important in all schools	190.00	95.00	10.00	5.00	200.00	100.00

TOTAL	785.00	78.50	215.00	21.50	10000	100.00
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The study shows that majority of the respondents 147 (73.50%) choose ‘Yes’ for item 1 while the remaining 53 (26.50%) choose ‘No’. For item 2, majority of the respondents 183.00 (91.50%) selected ‘Yes’ while the remaining 17 (8.50%) selected ‘No’. Majority of the respondents 170.00 (85.00%) opted for ‘Yes’ for item 3 while the remaining 30.00 (25.00%) choose ‘No’. For item 4, majority of the respondents 95.00 (47.50%) choose ‘Yes’ while the remaining 105.00 (52.50%) chose ‘No’. Finally, majority of the respondents 190.00 (95.00%) in items 5 choose, ‘Yes’ while the remaining 10.00 (5.00%) choose ‘No’. This therefore shows that counselling services have impact on students’ academic resilience.

Research Question Two: What are the factors hindering accessibility of counselling services of students in tertiary institution in Nigeria?

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO		TOTAL	
		Freq (N)	Percent (%)	Freq (N)	Percent (%)	Freq (N)	Percent (%)
1.	Schools and students do not attach importance to counselling services.	197.00	98.50	3.00	1.50	200.00	100.00
2.	Students do not like confiding in guidance counselors.	187.00	93.50	13.00	6.50	200.00	100.00
3.	Schools do not provide for career talk in their time table and curriculum.	130.00	65.00	70.00	35.00	200.00	100.00
4.	Students do not feel safe in explaining their career/Academic problems to a counsellor.	195.00	97.50	5.00	2.50	200.00	100.00
5.	Students do not	188.00	94.00	12.00	6.00	200.00	100.00

	believe in counselling						
TOTAL		897.00	89.70	103.00	10.30	10000	100.00

The study shows that the majority of the respondents, 197 (98.50%), chose 'Yes' for item 1 while the remaining 3 (1.50%) opted for 'No'. For item 2, the majority of the respondents, 187.00 (93.50%), chose 'Yes' while the remaining 13 (6.50%) selected 'No'. The majority of the respondents, 130.00 (65.00%), selected 'Yes' for item 3, while the remaining 70.00 (35.00%) chose 'No'. For item 4, the majority of the respondents, 195.00 (97.00%), choose 'Yes' while the remaining 5.00 (2.50%) choose 'No'. The majority of the respondents, 188.00 (94.00%), in item 5, opted for 'Yes' while the remaining 12.00 (6.00%) chose 'No'. This, therefore, shows many hindrances to the accessibility of counselling services amongst students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Research question 1: How do counselling services impact students' academic resilience? Findings from this research revealed various impacts of counselling services on students' academic resilience in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. These findings align with Braddock (2001), who says counselling services improve academic achievement, foster positive attitudes toward school learning and work, increase the acquisition and application of conflict resolution skills and decrease dropouts.

Research question 2: What factors hinder the accessibility of counselling services for students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria? Findings revealed some factors that hinder the counselling services accessibility in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This is in line with Makinde (2013) when she stated that some schools do not provide time for career talk in their timetable and that counselling services do not reflect it in the school curriculum. Therefore, this research suggests that school proprietors and principals must provide counselling services and clinics to give students privacy. Students do not feel safe exposing their 'secrets' to a counsellor.

Conclusion

The study concluded that counselling service plays an essential and crucial role in career choice, improvement of academic performance and help sharpen hostile conduct of students to positive ones. Hence, the availability and functioning of counselling services equip students with skill

and capacity building in academic resilience, thereby creating an avenue for smooth and successful academic achievement, the ability to maintain or improve grades from previously poor to better ones, steadfastness in the pursuit of their academics despite facing difficult obstacles until they can graduate.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- Guidance and counselling services should be functional in schools by appointing full-time counsellors.
- Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria should encourage students to visit counselling services units to enhance their academic resilience and performance.
- Some basic subjects of Guidance and Counselling outlines may be taught as compulsory subjects in all teacher training institutions at bachelor's and master's degree levels.
- Counsellors should be included in the implementation level of the new policy. They should be a part of the policymakers. This ensures adequate representation of the guidance programme in the policy document.
- Counsellors should be incentivised to discharge their duties accordingly through proper remuneration and promotion.
- Institutions implement admission rules and regulations that compel schools and prospective candidates to undergo career counselling and development training.

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