

COUNSELLING NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS WITH EMOTIONAL DISORDERS IN IKWERRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the counselling needs of adolescents with emotional disorders in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 89 emotionally disordered adolescents was drawn through a purposive sampling method in public secondary schools in the area used for the study. Two instruments, titled "Adolescent Needs Assessment Questionnaire" (ANAQ) and "Adolescent Disorders Questionnaire" (ADQ), were used for data collection. Face and content validities of the instruments were ensured by experts. Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument, and the reliability coefficient of (ANAQ) was 0.81 and (ADQ) was 0.79, respectively. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions, while independent t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. It is found that female adolescents are more emotionally disordered and also need counselling than their male counterparts. Male and female adolescents do not differ significantly in the counselling needs of adolescents with different emotional disorders, including depression, anxiety, trauma, and stress. Based on the findings, conclusions and recommendations were made.

KEYWORDS: Counselling needs, emotional disorders and counselling

Introduction

Counselling services are needed in secondary schools to take care of students' personality disorders and apparent ignorance about careers. In the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2008), counselling services are seen as assistance given to individuals or groups of individuals in dealing with common and recurring personal, educational, and vocational needs and problems. It is in the realisation of these needs that the government organised a national seminar of educational experts in 1973 to deliberate on national education, using the national curriculum conference objectives of 1969 and 1970 as the basis and guiding spirit to make recommendations which were later made to undergo some modification by the three major national bodies responsible for educational matters in the country. The result of the modification brought about the national policy on education, issued in 1977 and revised in 1981. In that policy, the Federal Government made the importance and needs of guidance and counselling lucid. Akinboye (2002), Barlow (2016), Deera (2019), Akpata (2020), David (2017), Jones (2017), Isaac (2021) and others have also stressed the need for counselling services in schools. They opined that such services would help the nation curb the excess of our young school children today. Against this background, school counsellors must be actively engaged in the systematic effort of moulding and redirecting the values and attitudes of children as they pass through school or other institutions of learning.

It is evident in our society today that there are people who could have had one thing or the other but failed because they were not exposed to guidance and counselling. Guidance is the process of an individual learning to understand themselves and the world. Counselling is the help given to a client. Guidance is a directive that provides equal information for students about education, vocation, and themselves. The purpose of guidance and counselling in meeting the needs of the individual is based on the assumption that individuals who understand themselves and their world will become more effective, more productive and human beings. Essentially, guidance is seen for adolescents as a greater degree of self-discovery and fulfilment through educational experiences that are meaningful to them. Expressed differently, guidance in education aims to strengthen the uniqueness of adolescents by realising the need and native potential to react freely and individually to the knowledge and opportunities transmitted by their school and non-school environment.

Guidance and counselling should be seen as specialised helping professions that constitute an important aspect of educational services. Many educators have expressed opinions that it is not possible for today's secondary school students to grow up meaningfully. There must be help for them to cope with their social and emotional problems. These problems play an enormous role in our day-to-day lives and can contribute in major ways to the development or underdevelopment of adolescent behavior. This is why the need for counselling is a necessity. In fact, counsellors should be trained and posted to secondary schools to help adolescents identify their various needs, especially their academic and emotional problems. It should be noted that adolescent needs and emotional disorders do not start automatically. However, these needs are often neglected at the early stages of secondary school. Sometimes there is a buildup that could be traced back to the family/home and early childhood. In support of this view, psychologists see child growth as a continuous process.

Against this background, a situation where most secondary schools have no trained counsellor to help the adolescents identify their needs is therefore pathetic. This study therefore aims to identify the counselling needs of adolescents as a panacea to emotional disorder. Counselling needs is the process of helping the individual to discover and develop their educational, vocational, and psychological potentialities. Again, this study also asserts that adolescents require counselling to meet their needs because counselling at the secondary school level is heavily orientated towards vocational guidance, occupational information, and educational decisions.

Statement of the Problem

Counselling is a guidance service that every adolescent (whether bright or dull) needs. For a school system to function very effectively, the need for a guidance counsellor is paramount. It is expected of the counsellor to meet the different types of counselling needs and emotional problems of the students. The challenges faced by adolescents are enormous, and these impede their academic achievements. Most adolescents in secondary schools need to be counselled appropriately in terms of their needs and emotional problems for optimum academic achievement. Considering the challenges associated with learning, the counsellor needs to work with the teachers in order to identify the adolescents with different emotional disorders and counselling needs. Therefore, the counsellor ought to create awareness by letting the students know the importance of the counselling unit so that students with counselling needs and emotional problems can see the counsellor for counselling. It is expected that the counsellor will engage the students in one-on-one or group discussions to resolve the challenges faced by these young adults on a daily basis. But unfortunately, most

of the students are ignorant of the fact that counsellors are there to meet their needs. It was as a result of this problem that the National Policy on Education emphasised guidance and counselling in secondary schools to be provided by trained counsellors.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to find out the counselling needs of adolescents with emotional disorders. In specific terms, the study achieved the following objectives:

1. To find out the emotional disorders of adolescents based on gender.
2. To verify whether counselling needs of adolescents with emotional disorders differ based on their gender.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the emotional disorders of adolescents based on gender?
2. To what extent do counselling needs of adolescents with emotional disorder differ based on their gender?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of adolescents with emotional disorders based on their gender.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of adolescents with different emotional disorders (Depression, Anxiety, Trauma and Stress).

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised all the 89 emotional disordered adolescents in the 13 junior and senior public secondary schools in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. A sample of 89 emotionally disordered adolescents was drawn through purposive sampling techniques and used for the study. Two instruments titled "Adolescents needs Assessment Questionnaire "(AN AQ) and "Adolescent's Disorders Questionnaire" (ADQ) were used for the data collection. Three experts in measurement and evaluation determined the face and content validities of the instruments: using test-retest method with a sample of 20 emotionally disordered adolescents. The reliability coefficients of (AN AQ) was 0.81 and (ADQ) was 0.79. The researcher personally administered the instruments with the assistance of two school teachers in each of the schools, who were trained on what to do. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using independent t-test and one-way ANOVA at 0.05 Alpha level of significance. All the scores that fell within and above the Criterion mean of 2.50 were accepted while those that fell below the Criterion mean of 2.40 were rejected.

Results

Research question 1: What are the emotional disorders of adolescents based on gender?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of adolescents based on gender

S/N	TERMS	MALE ADOLESCENT			FEMALE ADOLESCENTS		
		X	STD	R/C	X	STD	R/C
1	I cannot tackle a piece of academic work with usual speed.	2.033	0.808	Rejected	2.864	0.955	Accepted
2	I usually experience some shoddiness in the ability to think and concentrate.	2.200	0.761	Rejected	2.780	1.068	Accepted
3	I cannot sleep at all, always having some feelings of restlessness.	2.100	0.960	Rejected	3.017	0.881	Accepted
4	I'm always sad even in the face of things that could excite me.	2.667	0.959	Accepted	2.136	1.074	Rejected
5	I often relax into a feeling of low esteem.	2.567	1.006	Accepted	2.695	1.055	Accepted
6	I cannot stand the thought of failure.	3.133	0.860	Accepted	3.119	0.561	Accepted
7	I am always tensed up or disturbed when asked to answer a question or when asked to address the public.	2.300	1.055	Rejected	3.119	0.721	Accepted
8	I am always afraid that something dangerous may happen.	1.933	0.785	Rejected	2.627	0.981	Accepted
9	I am always worried about self-esteem.	2.933	0.944	Accepted	3.136	0.819	Accepted
10	I cannot relax if a problem is still pending.	3.667	0.711	Accepted	3.780	0.418	Accepted
11	I often brood over a past shocking experience.	3.000	0.871	Accepted	3.034	0.850	Accepted
12	I often relapse into a state of less physical and mental alertness.	2.400	0.932	Rejected	1.983	1.025	Rejected
13	I get easily heightened whenever I remember a dangerous experience.	3.533	0.776	Accepted	2.678	1.006	Accepted
14	I cannot be left alone over a period of time (it is usually advised that people should be in my company).	2.700	1.755	Accepted	2.729	0.925	Accepted
15	I am often irritated when working with my peers.	2.033	0.964	Rejected	2.017	0.938	Rejected
16	I feel uninterested in almost all school activities most of the day for every day.	2.800	0.997	Accepted	2.610	1.170	Accepted
17	I feel a significant lack of appetite most of the day for nearly every day.	2.900	0.960	Accepted	2.102	0.803	Accepted
18	I often experience lack of interest in peer activities, tiredness, fatigue and gloomy feelings (that cannot be traced to any perceivable reason).	3.200	0.761	Accepted	2.136	0.860	Rejected
19	I feel highly agitated at the slightest distraction.	3.000	0.781	Accepted	2.729	1.014	Accepted
20	Grand mean (X) standard deviation	2.742	0.500	Accepted	2.830	0.467	Accepted

Table 1 shows that all the mean scores of the emotionally disordered male and female adolescents are based on gender. On the items of male adolescents, the following categories 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18 and 19 were identified and accepted as the areas the male adolescents are emotionally affected and thereby needs counselling. While Item 1, 3, 7, 8, 12 were rejected by male adolescents that they do not need counselling in such areas. Then, the female adolescents indicate items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8,9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 19 as areas that they need counselling and all the items were accepted. However, item 4, 12, 15 were rejected on the basis that they do not need counselling. Therefore, the major needs of male adolescents that are emotionally disordered are “I cannot relax if a problem is still pending”, “I get easily frightened whenever I remember a dangerous experience”. Then, the female major needs of the emotionally disordered adolescents are: “I cannot stand the thought of failure”, “I am always worried about self-esteem”, “I cannot relax if a problem is still pending”, I often experience lack of interest in peer activities tiredness, fatigue and glooming feelings (that cannot be traced to any perceivable reason). Hence, the above items on the table and their overall mean (X) shows that the female adolescents are more emotional than their male counterparts. Thus, the female adolescents require counselling.

Research question 2: To what extent do counselling needs of adolescents with emotional disorder differ based on their gender?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of counselling needs of adolescents with emotional disorders how it differs based on gender

S/N	COUNSELLING NEEDS	MALE ADOLESCENTS (30)			FEMALE ADOLESCENTS (59)		
		X	STD	R/C	X	STD	R/C
1	I must do my classwork or examination on my own.	3.500	0.731	Accepted	3.542	0.651	Accepted
2	I have to concentrate while studying.	3.800	0.407	Accepted	3.678	0.471	Accepted
3	I need to develop interest in school work.	3.167	1.020	Accepted	3.034	1.144	Accepted
4	I need to know all the federal and state owned universities in my state.	3.333	0.844	Accepted	3.356	0.826	Accepted
5	I must to learn to cope with the examination anxiety.	3.700	0.535	Accepted	3.729	0.520	Accepted
6	I need to know all the skill acquisition centres in my area.	3.567	0.728	Accepted	3.458	0.750	Accepted
7	I like a career that has a bright future.	3.833	0.379	Accepted	3.881	0.326	Accepted
8	I need to know my abilities.	3.633	0.765	Accepted	3.950	0.222	Accepted
9	I always want to know about industries, firms and factories in my area.	3.233	0.935	Accepted	3.542	0.727	Accepted
10	I want to earn money immediately after my secondary school.	2.600	1.192	Accepted	3.017	0.991	Accepted
11	I need to know the type of work I would like to do.	3.900	0.305	Accepted	3.932	0.314	Accepted
12	I need to identify the local trades in my area.	3.233	1.073	Accepted	3.186	0.990	Accepted
13	I do not have enough time to relax.	3.567	0.728	Accepted	3.576	0.747	Accepted
14	I value myself as an individual no matter the condition.	3.933	0.254	Accepted	3.983	0.130	Accepted
15	I like to be bold.	3.800	0.484	Accepted	3.797	0.446	Accepted

16	I need to move together with people.	3.433	0.817	Accepted	3.441	0.815	Accepted
17	I like to share things or feelings with others.	3.300	0.952	Accepted	3.390	0.810	Accepted
18	I need to increase self-confidence.	2.733	0.531	Accepted	3.864	0.345	Accepted
19	I like to form positive concepts about myself.	3.767	0.504	Accepted	3.881	0.375	Accepted
20	I like to be very effective anywhere I find myself.	3.533	0.571	Accepted	4.000	0.000	Accepted
21	I like to express myself freely.	3.267	0.944	Accepted	3.542	0.837	Accepted
22	I like to make suitable friends.	3.667	0.479	Accepted	3.950	0.221	Accepted
23	I need to accept people the way they are.	3.467	0.776	Accepted	3.508	0.773	Accepted
24	I need to develop healthy personalities/interpersonal relationship.	3.660	0.621	Accepted	3.661	0.512	Accepted
25	I like to appreciate and recognize good people.	3.200	0.916	Accepted	3.830	0.378	Accepted
	Grand mean X	3.511			3.630		
	Standard Deviation	0.299			0.288		

Table 2: Shows that all the counselling needs of the adolescents (both male and female) and reveals that all the items of the counselling needs attracted a mean score that were above the criterion mean (X) of 2.5 from all the categories of respondents. The result indicates that the respondents expressed high needs for counselling. On the items of male adolescents, their major counselling needs are:” I have to concentrate while studying; I like a career that has a bright future; I need to know the type of work I would like to do; I need to know my abilities; I value myself as an individual no matter the condition; I need to increase self-confidence; I like to perform positive concepts about myself; I like to be effective anywhere I find myself; I like to make suitable friends; I like to appreciate and recognize good people . Hence, item 1- 25 were all accepted by the male and female adolescents as areas that they need counselling. The above items on the table shows that female adolescents need more counselling than their male counterparts.

Hypothesis 1

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of adolescents with emotional disorders based on their gender.

VARIABLES	N	X	SD	DF	T-CAL	T-CRIT	RESULT
MALE	30	3.511	0.299	87	0.650	1.980	Sig
FEMALE	59	3.630	0.288				

Table 3 present the t-test analysis of the mean score of male and female adolescents. The table shows that the calculated t-value is 0.650 as against the critical t-value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance with 97 degree of freedom. Since the t-value of 0.650 is less than the critical t-value of 1.980 at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is therefore, accepted. There is no sufficient evidence to reject it. It follows then that male and female adolescents do not differ significantly in their counselling needs.

Hypothesis 2

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of adolescents with different emotional disorders (Depression, Anxiety, Trauma and Stress).

Table 4: One-way analysis of variance summary table of counselling needs of adolescents with different emotional disorders (Depression Anxiety Trauma and Stress).

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ.	DIFFERENCE	MEAN SQ	F-CAL	F-CRIT	DECISION
Between Group	298.6309	3	99.5436	0.3292	2.70	Rejected
Within Group	24192.9287	80	302.4116	-	-	
Total	2449.15595	83	-	-	-	

Since the calculated F-value of 0.3292 is less than the critical f-value of 2.70 at 0.50 level of significance, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of adolescents with different emotional disorders (Depression, Anxiety, Trauma and Stress).

Discussion

The study established that both male and female adolescents have emotional problems. This result is in line with the following experts in psychology, David (2017) and Barlow (2016), who argue that women are expected to be more passive, sensitive to other people, and perhaps more reliant on others than men (needs for affiliation). Although these stereotypes are slowly changing, they still describe current sex roles to a large extent. But this culturally induced dependence and passivity may put women at severe risk for emotional disorders by increasing their feelings of uncontrollability and helplessness. Again, Barlow went further by saying that males are strongly encouraged by independent, masterful, and assertive traits, despite their emotional challenges.

Again, research question two shows to what extent counselling needs of adolescents with emotional disorders differ based on their gender. From the results of male adolescents, it suggests that the male adolescents need counselling in all spheres of their lives in order to face their future challenges. What may give rise to these needs could be as a result of their inability to identify their future educational needs, vocational needs, and personal/social needs. These are in line with the following experts: Akinboye (2002), Akpata (2020), Isaac (2021), Jones (2017) all stress on the emotional needs of male adolescents and how counselling can redirect their focus. In the same view, all the categories for the female items were all accepted by the correspondents. But the table reveals the major areas where female adolescents need counselling. The item is, "I like to be very effective anywhere I find myself." Although all the other items for both male and female adolescents are above the criterion mean cut off point of 2.5, the result indicates that both male and female adolescents need counselling.

Conclusion

This paper describes the counselling needs and types of emotional disorders among adolescents in secondary school in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The needs are educational, vocational, and personal/social in nature. Each need has its unique role to play in the overall success of the adolescents and school programmes. The emotional disorders of adolescents are described as being depression, anxiety, trauma, and stress.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:

1. Greater attention should be paid by the school guidance counsellor to counselling needs and emotional problems among adolescents in secondary school which seems to be partially neglected.
2. The Ministry of Education as well as well-meaning individuals in the society should provide all the necessary resources that will help in the smooth running of the counselling units, which is the current room that transmits students through a successful academic, vocational and personal/social journey to reality.
3. Counsellors should always organize programmes for the adolescents that will enable them to overcome their emotional and other problems.
4. Government and non-government agencies should organize programmes through the media organizations to reach out to the youth on the behavioral problem that is caused by the devastating disorders among adolescents.

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