

Counselors Perception of Group Counseling as a Counseling Strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined counsellors' perception of group counselling as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This was done with particular reference to the location of the schools of the respondents. The population of the study is 105 Guidance Counsellors currently serving in the 291 government owned secondary schools in Enugu State. Out of 105 copies of questionnaire developed by the researcher and distributed, 96 copies were returned signifying 91.43%. The 96 copies were used to collect the data for the study using self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher called Group Counselling for Enhancing Self-Esteem Scale (GCS.FESES). The instrument was face validated by three (3) experts : one in measurement and evaluation and two others in Guidance and counselling Department of Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. Cronbach Alpha Reliability estimate was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. Data collected for this study were analyzed using mean, grand mean and standard deviation, to answer the one research question. The one research hypothesis was tested using t-test statistic. The result showed that group counselling is a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State. Thus there is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of male and female counsellors on the counselling strategies for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends, among others, that the Post Primary Schools Management Board (PPSMB) should assist male and female guidance counsellors who hitherto have been serving as school counsellors by appointment to acquire university education in guidance and counselling for self improvement.

Keywords: Counsellors' Perception, Group Counselling and Self-Esteem

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem as an over reacting view of the self. [1] added that the development of healthy self-esteem is significant for young people to be happy and successful. The term, 'self-esteem' has received a significant portion of attention in both educational and social fields. In a similar vein, researches carried out by [2] looked at self-esteem as an on-going phenomenon that withstands criticism and endures controversies. Rodewalk *et al*, asserted that the ability of self-esteem to endure controversy is an indicator of importance. The researcher perceives self-esteem as the way one feels and thinks about oneself translates into every situation and encounter one has. Ability to create and make an impression showing positive attitude and self-confidence is the key to ones success whether it is professional or personal. An individual needs to be sure of him or herself before trying to inspire others. Having the confidence that one is capable, worthy, courageous and assertive in spite of the person's circumstances is what self-esteem portrays.

An individual is not born with any certain level of self-esteem or confidence. What one feels about oneself is developed early in life as messages from family, friends, media, and culture are presented and that automatically begin to shape the way the individual sees him or herself including the world around. Depending on whether one had a pleasant or unpleasant childhood and growing up experiences, one

needs to be comfortable with oneself and do the best to have a healthy self-worth. Any view one has about oneself takes one to adulthood therefore one needs to learn to deal with it as much as possible. Self-acceptance is paramount in the journey through life and in growing healthy self-esteem.

In other words, the importance of a healthy self-esteem for the foundation of an individual's existence cannot be underestimated. Self-esteem is important because it has an impact on one's life decisions and choices. An individual desiring to work hard in pursuit of a better living brings to mind one whose self-esteem is high; living creatively and using his or her potentials [3]. That is to say that if self-esteem is enhanced in secondary school students, it will enrich students' creative abilities and also elicits the best out of their characters. Be it as it may, not all secondary school students have attained this level of development and as such, the researcher believes that those that have not, need counselling. This is achievable through group counselling.

Group counselling, according to [4], is described as any collection of human beings who are brought into a social relationship with one another. One of the main principles behind group counselling is that people having similar challenges get to meet. In Reach out.com, (2016), group counselling is regarded as a form

of therapy where people with similar experiences or issues come together with a professional therapist. Certain addiction like eating disorders, anxiety, depression and other issues are taken care of in groups. In a secondary school setting for instance, a student with the above vices can get isolated and feel like he or she is facing the world alone. It should be noted that man's life, to some extent, consists of group life. A child is born into a family made up of parents-father and mother and this group continues to enlarge with the arrival of other siblings. He goes into the school to experience other group of individuals as his/her peers.

[5] define group counseling as an interaction that involves more than one person having counselling session or sessions with the counsellor. According to [6], group counseling is a process of interaction that occurs in a large group that facilitates development of healthy attitudes and behaviour in a way that individuals who participate in it gain new information, new orientation to problems such as vocational, occupational, academic or social problems. Group counselling is a process of rendering counselling service to two or more counselees at a time.

Group counseling as the name implies gives an individual the opportunity of seeing others who are faced with similar challenge. Students will like to talk among themselves and those who have

similar challenge understand the feelings of one another a bit more than family members or friends. Group counselling involves,

- helping the groups' negative self-talk by applying 'Stopping techniques',
- logically stating reasons for group members to become more passionate about themselves,
- stressing the need to be focused,
- helping the client to be goal oriented (Reach out.com, 2016).

Characteristically, membership of a group counselling session ranges from two to a maximum of twelve counselees to one counselor. Problems discussed in group counseling are highly personal to members than those discussed elsewhere like in group guidance [7] For instance, a couple may decide to see a counsellor over a problem that is causing emotional or physical disturbance in their family under group counselling and have their problem resolved. Such a problem may be infertility, dwindling source of income or interference from in-laws of both sides. As a dynamic interpersonal process that focuses on conscience and behavior, group counseling can also be used to treat ineffective study behavior, excessive shyness, stage freight, gynecological issues (like irregular or painful menstruation, low sperm count and premature ejaculation), poor relationship

with the opposite sex and other behaviour related disorders. [8] Concludes that the main thrust of group counselling is to influence attitudes, stamp out bad habits and treat other personal problems of members.

Group counseling is also an important aspect of counselling activities. There are instances where the counsellor will need to see students in groups. In such instances he/she may not achieve progress and success if he/she adopts individual counselling strategy. Individuals, who have similar problems when put together for counselling intervention, identify with others and realize that they are not alone, that they are others who share similar problems with them. Group counselling interventions help to improve the self-concept of children alcoholics, Zink, (2000) discovered that group counselling sessions are effective for reducing the 'at-risk' behaviours on adolescent girls.

Regarding gender, [9] carried out a research with the findings that a wide range of western countries have determined that adolescent females on average have a sense of self-esteem than adolescent males. Females generally tend to link self-esteem to the quality of their relationships while males link self-esteem to their achievements. Incidentally, the guidance counsellors in this study are both males and females. The researcher

sought to find out counsellors' perception regarding group counselling as one of the counselling strategies for enhancing self-esteem. Preventing multiple and risky behaviours are not only about adolescent girls, [10] listed a number of ways they can also be prevented among adolescents both males and females in general:

- Support and strengthen family functioning.
- Increase connections between students and their schools.
- Make communities safe and supportive for children and youth.
- Promote involvement in high quality out-of-school-time programs.
- Promote the development of sustained relationships with caring adults.
- Promote children and youths opportunities to build social and emotional competence.
- Provide children and youth with high quality education during early and middle childhood.

It can be said that group counselling provides opportunities for social interactions among students which will in turn give rise to positive change in behaviour. The researcher sought to find out if school counsellors will perceive group counselling as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu state.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to examine counsellors' perception of group counselling as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. Specifically the study aims at;

1. determining counsellors' perception of group counselling as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research question guided the study.

1. How do guidance counsellors perceive group counselling as a

counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The following research hypothesis guided the study and were tested at .05 level of significance.

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of male and female

guidance counsellors on group counselling as a strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive the survey research design. The area of the study was Enugu State, Nigeria. The population for this study comprised 105 practicing guidance counsellors in all the 291 government owned secondary schools in the 6 Education Zones of Enugu State. Of these 59 female counsellors while 46 male counsellors. The population is small so no sampling was done. The instrument used for data collection was a 4 item questionnaire called Group Counselling for Enhancing

Self-Esteem Scale (GCS.FESES). The instrument had a 4-point response scale with response category of Strongly Agree (SA)---4 points; Agree(A)-----3 points; Disagree (D)----2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD)—1 point. The instrument was validated by three experts; two from Guidance and counselling department and one from measurement and evaluation, all from Faculty of Education, Enugu State university of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using

Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate and it yielded a reliability coefficient of .81. The study was carried out in all the 291 secondary schools in Enugu State. One hundred and five copies of the questionnaire were distributed but ninety-six copies were retrieved from the respondents representing 91.43 percent return rate. Data collected were analyzed using mean with standard deviation. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was

regarded as agreed while any mean below 2.50 was regarded as Disagreed. The one null hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance using t-test statistic. If the calculated t-value was less than the critical table value of +1.96 for the required degree of freedom of 94, the null hypothesis was not rejected but if the calculated t-value was equal to or greater than the critical, t-value, the null hypothesis was rejected.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Research Question 1: How do guidance counsellors perceive group counselling as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State?

Guidance Counsellors on Group Counselling as a Counselling Strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State.

Table 1: Mean Perception Scores (\bar{X}) and Standard Deviation (SD) of

S/ N	Group Counselling as a strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students are based on:	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Helping the group's negative self-talk by applying 'stopping techniques'	51	21	19	5	3.22	0.94	Agree
2	Logically stating reasons for students to became more passionate about themselves	43	29	16	8	3.11	0.97	Agree
3	Stressing the need of being focused	3	23	33	37	1.91	0.86	Disagree
4	Assisting students to be goal oriented	41	34	19	2	3.18	0.82	Agree
Grand Mean						3.18		Agree

N = 96

Table 1 showed that the respondents agreed with 3 out of the 4 items raised (1, 2 and 4) on guidance counsellors' perception

of group counselling as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State.

The respondents mean scores for these items are 3.22, 3.11 and 3.18. They were accepted as agree based on the decision that their mean ratings are more than the cut-off point of 2.50. The Table showed that the respondents disagreed with the remaining 1 item (3) with 1.91 as their mean scores. Their standard deviation is small in all the items signifying that the

respondents' responses are homogenous. The table also indicated a grand mean score of 3.18. Based on the guideline for the interpretation of the respondents' data, the answer to research question 1 is that group counselling is a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State.

HO₁: There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of male and female guidance counsellors on group counselling as a strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of the Difference Between the (\bar{x}) Mean Perception Scores of Male and Female Guidance Counsellors on Group Counselling as a Counselling Strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State.

Gender	N	\bar{x}	S ²	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Female Counsellors	55	2.97	0.39	94	1.14	±1.96	NS Do not reject Ho ₁
Male Counsellors	41	2.90					
Total	96	5.87					

Significant at P< .05, df = 94, critical t-value = ±1.96

The t-test analysis in Table 2 above indicates that the calculated t- value is 1.14 while the critical t-value is ±1.96 at .05 level of significance. This implies that the calculated t-value is less than the critical t- value. Thus, going by the decision rule, there is no significant

difference between the mean perception scores of male and female counsellors on the counselling strategies for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The result in Table 1 showed that group counselling is a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among Secondary

School Students in Enugu State. The findings are in line with that of [4] who found that group counselling sessions are

effective for reducing the 'at risk' behaviours in adolescents.

The first research hypothesis tried to find out if there is a significant difference in the mean perception scores of male and female guidance counsellors on group counselling as a strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. The analysis of the t-test comparison according to Table 2 showed that the computed t (1.14) is less than the critical t-value (± 1.96) at .05 level

of significance. With regard to the decision rule, research hypothesis 1 which held that there is a significant difference between the mean perception scores of male and female guidance counsellors on group counselling as a strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State is not rejected. This finding is at variance with that of [3] who found out among others that females have a sense of self-esteem more than males

CONCLUSION

Conclusively from the above analysis and interpretations done and the information from related literature, it implies that

1. Cognitive restructuring is a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State.

2. There is a significant difference between the mean perception scores of experienced and less experienced guidance counsellors on cognitive restructuring as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this study have far reaching implication for students to enable them navigate through schools with the assurance of adding value to themselves through improvements in academic performances. This will likely spur students up into becoming more

focused. Being successful will become a priority resulting from a positive shift in students' study habit. At the end of the day the findings could help place students on top of their circumstances by enhancing their self-esteem.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve this mission the following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study.

1. The Post Primary Schools Management Board (PPSMB) should assist experienced male and

female guidance counsellors who hitherto have been serving as school counsellors by appointment to acquire university education in guidance and counselling for self improvement.

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