

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

Ani, N.G

Department of Guidance and Counseling Enugu State University of Science and Technology, ESUT, Enugu Nigeria.

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### ABSTRACT

The study determined counselors' perception of interviewing for strength 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 Counselling Strategies for Enhancing Self-Esteem Scale (CSESES). 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. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. 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 counsellors perceive interviewing for strength as a strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. Thus, no significant difference was found between the mean perception scores of urban and rural guidance counsellors on interviewing for strength as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends, among others, that Guidance Counsellors should be provided in all Nigerian secondary schools to cater for emotional and psychological stability of low esteem students. The researcher therefore suggests that the study should be replicated with a large sample size using guidance counsellors of private and federal government owned secondary schools.

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Guidance Counsellors and Interviewing for Strength

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### INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is a concept that is important in the development of everyone regardless of the environment the individuals find themselves. How such individuals feel, affect their thoughts and

behaviours. For secondary school student, healthy self-esteem reveals the ability to uphold strength and work on areas of weakness. On the other hand, the unhealthy self-esteem which is termed 'low

self-esteem' has numerous detrimental consequences. Low self-esteem results in negative self-talks, such as, "I am no good", it degenerates into lack of confidence and the self-will to pursue success, [1]. These negative self-talks turn out to be what young people exhibit and to a large extent this generally affect the academic performances of secondary school students, and their ability to aim high and take risks in life. Generally, secondary school students' emotions are affected by discouragement which in turn causes low self-esteem. Some of these students in turn have high expectations of others and have either unreasonably high or non-existent goals for themselves. To counter the above noted problem, the desire for strength is a self-esteem need that calls for strength for achievement, respect, dignity, independence, confidence and status. This is because adolescent learners feel de-motivated and demoralized when their needs are inadequate as observed [2]

In an attempt to remedy these problems, the highest policy making body on educational matters, 'the National Council on Education', recommended that guidance counsellors should be allowed to practice on full time basis in schools. Thus, [3] made a positive policy statement with respect to the posting of guidance counsellors and the implementation of guidance and counselling services in schools. For instance, the guidance counsellors could

employ interviewing for strength to enhance self-esteem among secondary school students. The guidance counsellors use interviewing for strength to seek for information. Interviewing for strength' is designed to build self-esteem and confidence for success. This involves a process whereby a counsellor engages a client in one-on-one interactive process using questions to obtain relevant information needed to solve the client's problem. [4] opines that interview for strength is the most important strategy to facilitate communication between the counsellor and the client depending on the sincerity and involvement of the interviewer and the ability of the interviewer to respond or give required information correctly. Interviewing for strength involves the establishment of rapport and development of good questioning strategy.

In establishing rapport as a condition for good and effective interviewing for strength, the counsellor, based on his/her competence, treatment, respect and regard for clients ensures that the client to a great extent perceives the counselling process as warm, friendly, sincere and conducive for his psychological growth. [5], remarked that interviewing for strength as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students includes:

- helping secondary school students to draw on their natural strength,

- encouraging secondary school students on how to handle their emotions,
- assuring them that they are not alone in what they are passing through,
- encouraging students to believe in themselves,
- logically presenting the fact that one can make mistakes, [6].

Meanwhile, self-esteem is indeed affected by the daily choices individuals make, and by the actions they take. Interviewing for strength is one of those strategies that works alongside a solution focused approach used to retrieve information from respondents. [7] is of the opinion that in a counselling process, the whole scenario centers on analysis, synthesis, and diagnosis, prognosis, counselling and follow-up. In the analysis, the counsellor uses his interviewing for strength to collect information and data about clients to enable the counsellor make proper analysis of the problem presented. In the synthesis, the counsellor summarizes and organizes the data from analysis made earlier on. During diagnosis, the counsellor seeks for consistencies and patterns that will help to summarize and solve the problem at hand. From here, the counsellor can predict what might happen in future (prognosis). Having established the problem, the causes and consequences, the counsellor uses his expertise to help clients in formulation

and answering questions for themselves (counselling). Thereafter, a follow-up is pursued to monitor the client in order to avoid reoccurrence of the original problem, chart the way forward and determine the effectiveness of counselling. These essentials of counselling procedures and processes are kept alive and achieved through counselor's strategy in interviewing for strength.

Unfortunately, the subjective perception of interviewing for strength by counsellors may influence the counselors' choice of the interviewing for strength for enhancing self-esteem in students. These differences in perception and application of interviewing for strength may influence the outcome of counselling interactions with students regarding self-esteem enhancement. Worst still, people with low self-esteem may lack confidence and be overly critical of any session during the interview. People who wish to improve their self-esteem can get help from a counsellor but in most cases, the client dialogue may not be all encompassing thereby making the student with low self esteem to be worried of others' opinions thereby lacking focus. In addition, raising oneself self-esteem which is the prime purpose of interviewing for strength is affected by the daily choices individuals make and by the actions they take.

With regards to location, a research carried out by [8], recorded that environment play important role in determining trajectories (developments) of secondary school students' self-esteem in the course of strengthen them. The school as it were is regarded as a 'gateway', where almost every child is expected to pass through in order to become respectable citizens in the society. Guidance counsellors operate in these schools which are located either in the urban or rural environments. However, the extent to which their low

self esteem limits them in the course of strengthening them becomes a barrier for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students. It is against this background that the researcher is propelled to ascertain counselors' perception of interviewing for strength as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State bearing in mind the variable. This gap in knowledge and learning, which is the crux of this study is what the researcher is interested on and intends to fill by embarking on this study.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

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

1. Determining counselors' perception of interviewing for strength 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. What are the perceptions of guidance counsellors on

interviewing for strength 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 was tested at 05 level of significance.

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of

urban and rural Guidance counselors interviewing for strength as a counselling 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 conducted in 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 lived in urban areas while 46 lived in rural area. The population is small so no sampling was done. The instrument used for data collection was a 5 item questionnaire called Interviewing for Strength as a Counselling Strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem Scale (IFSC.SS) 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 .73. 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 were tested at .05 level of significance using t-test statistic. If the calculated t-value was less than the critical table value of  $\pm 1.96$  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:** What are the perceptions of guidance counsellors on interviewing for strength as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State?

**Table 1:** Mean Perception Score ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD) of Guidance Counsellors' on Interviewing for strength as a Counselling Strategy for enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State

N = 96

S/N	Interviewing for strength as a strategy for Enhancing Self Esteem among Secondary School Students are based on:	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
		4	3	2	1			
1	Helping secondary school students on their natural strengths	66	15	9	6	3.47	0.91	Agree
2	Encouraging secondary school students to control their emotions	42	45	6	3	3.31	0.73	Agree
3	Assuring students that they are not alone in the challenge they are facing	3	9	36	48	1.65	0.77	Disagree
4	Encouraging students to believe in							
5	Themselves	45	48	3	0	3.43	0.56	Agree
	Logically presenting the fact that one can make mistakes	36	54	3	3	3.28	0.68	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.02</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

The data in Table 1 show that, on interviewing for strength guidance counsellors affirmed that they perceive 4 out of the 5 items (1, 2, 4 and 5) as counselling strategies for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. Interviewing for strength recorded mean scores of 3.47, 3.31, 3.43 and 3.28 and they are above the cut-off point of 2.50. The respondents however disagreed with item 3 with a mean score of 1.65. All the items have small standard

deviation showing variability of the respondents' score. This is indicative that there is homogeneity in their responses for the items raised.

The grand mean of 3.02 is well above the cut-off point of 2.50. Thus, the answer to research question 1 is that guidance counsellors perceive counselling strategies that connote interviewing for strength as those for enhancing self-

esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State.

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of urban and rural Guidance counselors on interviewing for strength as a counselling 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 Urban and Rural Counsellors interviewing for strength as a Counselling Strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Location	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Urban	59	2.67	0.29	94	1.61	$\pm 1.96$	NS
Rural	37	2.63					Do not reject $H_{01}$
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>5.30</b>					

Significant at  $P < .05$ ,  $df = 94$ , critical t-value =  $\pm 1.96$

The t-test analysis in Table 2 above shows that the calculated t-value is 1.61 while the critical t-value is  $\pm 1.96$  at .05 level of confidence. This implies that the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value. Thus, going by the guideline for the interpretation of the respondents'

data, there is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of urban and rural Guidance counsellors on interviewing for strength as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State

#### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The result in Table 1 showed that guidance counsellors perceive counselling strategies that connote interviewing for strength as those for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. Secondary school students need strength to achieve their potentials in life. They need strength to grow confidence with which to earn respect in both the academic world and in interpersonal relationships. Like in everyone else, independence is a result of self-worth in young people and this is what interviewing for strength stands to

achieve. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of [9] who held that interviewing for strength can lead to raise awareness of the students' circumstances. For instance, their rights as citizens of the country they come from and what they should expect from the land. This kind of awareness Scheel perceived, can help secondary school students draw on their natural strength thereby stand a chance of improving their self-worth and getting their self-esteem enhanced.

The first research hypothesis tried to ascertain if there is a significant

difference in the mean perception scores of urban and rural guidance counsellors on interviewing for strength as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. The analysis of the t-test comparison according to Table 7 showed that the computed  $t$  (1.61) is less than the critical  $t$ -value ( $\pm 1.96$ ) at .05 level of confidence. Thus, going by the decision rule, no significant difference was found between the mean perception scores of urban and rural guidance counsellors on interviewing for strength as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. This research hypothesis two is hereby not rejected.

This finding is at variance with that of [10] who found that the difference in the mean scores of guidance counsellors serving in urban and rural areas is

attributed to the fact that environment has been shown to play an important role in determining trajectories of secondary school students' self-esteem. [3] also held that students in rural areas generally suffer from social and cultural deprivation in comparison with urban students. The finding is in agreement with the policy of Enugu State Post Primary Management Board, [7] on the issue of some guidance counsellors refusing their postings to rural secondary schools. All these may explain the reason for the variation in their perception of the strategies for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. On the whole, the social changes both in reasoning and behaviour affect every choice made by individuals including guidance counselors' perception of counseling strategies who found out among others that female have a sense of self-esteem than males.

#### CONCLUSION

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

1. Guidance Counsellors perceive interviewing for strength as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of urban and rural guidance counsellors on interviewing for strength 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. The implication of the findings of this study to guidance counsellors is a demand for hard work and better understanding of all that are expected of them as professional.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Guidance Counsellors should be provided in all Nigerian secondary schools who will cater for emotional and psychological stability of low esteem students.
2. School authorities should introduce some kind of reward

system every term to the students that portray exemplary behaviours (high self-esteem). Such students should be rewarded heftily to reinforce their behaviour. A deliberate category for instance called the most recently improved student should be introduced specifically for the low-self esteemed students.

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