Counsellors' Perception of Changing Environment as a Counselling Strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to ascertained counsellors' perceptions of changing environment as a 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.05 level of confidence. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. This was done with particular reference to the location of the respondents. The population of the study was 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 was used to collect the data for the study using self -structured questionnaire developed by the researcher called Changing Environment Scale (CES).The instrument was face validated by) experts. Cronbach Alpha Reliability estimate   was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. Data collected for this study was analyzed using mean, grand mean and standard deviation, to answer the research question. The hypothesis was tested using t-test statistic. The finding showed that counsellors perceive changing environment as a strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. Thus, no significant difference was found between the mean scores of urban and rural guidance counsellor's perception on changing environment as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. Based on the findings, a recommendation and suggestions for further studies was made.

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Guidance Counsellors and Changing Environment

INTRODUCTION

Someone's environment is all the circumstances, people, things, and events around them that influence their life. Changing environment in social learning theory was propounded by Albert Bandura in1977. Changing environment as used by Albert Bandura (1977) entails that if a therapist who discovers that his/her clients behaviour is adversely affected by environmental factors or personal or behavioural elements, such a therapist could change the clients location (environment). According to [1], not only does the environment influence a person's thinking, but their subsequent behaviour influences their environment. In other words, the environment influences how a person thinks and feels, which in turn influences their behaviour, which impacts the environment, and so on. [2] recommended that once the counsellor notices any environmental issues impinging on adolescent's or student's development, they should be an urgent reason for change. The change of environment will assist the client in overcoming his/her challenging situation. Changing environment according to [1] is based on:

Preventing inconveniencing incidents or experience that can affect the self-esteem negatively recommending change of school if the environment is the reason for bad behavior discouraging anxious moments that give rise to anxiety, rewarding any desired behaviour from the students and changing the environment to change behaviour of the adolescent

Guidance counsellors are professionals who can easily identify systematic factors that act as barriers to their students or clients' development. If the environment is the cause of the behaviour problem, the counsellor could recommend change of environment. If [2], recommended change of environment for a behaviour problem which has environmental issues, this study sought to find out how counsellors perceive this to be practicable.

Low self-esteem is seen as having some adverse effects on secondary school students both in short and long term durations. Students with self-esteem problems are usually easily frustrated, give up easily, make negative statements about themselves and become anxious when faced with challenges, chances are that they could easily yield to some vices. Fear of failure and that of being rejected by peers could precipitate unpopular behaviours like smoking, fighting, illicit sex and they in turn associate with low self-esteem. Can deploying changing environment as a strategy by counsellors, be of help in this study?

This topic however is simply directing the responsibility of guiding and counselling these young people out of the depleting state of vulnerability they find themselves to counsellors in schools as re-echoed in the Federal Government in her National Policy on Education [3]. This exercise is restricted to secondary schools in Enugu State. The counsellors as it is, operate in schools which is the 'gateway', where almost every child is expected to pass through in order to become respectable citizens in the society. These schools are found in urban and rural environments.

Thus, during the last three decades, the general trend in the review of literature suggests that certain types of socio-cultural environments are generally associated with lower level of aspiration, language deficiencies and minimal occupational and social adjustment. A research carried out by [4], recorded that environments play important role in determining trajectories (development) of secondary school students' self-esteem. In addition, relative to urban and suburban communities, rural settings are characterized by greater isolation, fewer educational and public health resources, and higher level of poverty. [4] further reported that students staying in rural areas generally suffer from social and cultural deprivation in comparison with urban students. There are indications from researches carried out by [4, 5] that the environment plays a determining role in students' self-esteem. Students from urban environment are found to be superior as compared to the students from the rural environments. The important social changes in the secondary school students include increased peer group influence, more mature patterns of social behaviour, new social groupings and social acceptance. To have appropriate development of a child, organized and effective environment in the family and his social world are a pre-requisite. These social changes both in reasoning and behaviour affect every choice made by individuals including guidance counsellors. As a result, counsellor in both urban and rural schools may be facing different challenges on students' reactions to their environments.

Basically, as the environment affects the students, it also affects the counsellor. Their thought patterns and ideas are influenced by their social setting. [6. 7], lamented on the fact that greater percentage of counsellors refused their postings to rural secondary schools. Some of these counsellors, according to these researchers, do not want to stay away from family members or travel long distances to their places of primary assignment (work).This they found affects

counselling services in schools located in rural areas. The already few counsellors get fewer as a result of placement's rejection by counsellors to rural schools. Based on this information, the researcher sought to find out counsellors' perception of counselling strategies regarding location as a variable.

Rural schools are fertile grounds for sourcing out secondary school students whose reasons for delinquent and maladaptive behaviours are likely to be on the increase. School dropouts seem to be more in the rural areas probably because of lack of proper guidance. With professional counsellors, students are likely to know the implications of getting involved in unwanted vices that could affect self-esteem. It is against this background that [7], stressed that for guidance and counselling to win acceptance in Nigeria secondary schools, there is the urgent need for guidance services to be instituted in both urban and rural secondary schools. Guidance and counselling services are mostly felt in urban schools because the supervisors of schools from the Post Primary Schools Management Board intermittently visit schools in the urban areas than they do to school in rural areas. The availability of counsellors in both urban and rural schools will help sustain the relationship of counsellors and their environment. Consequently it will enhance their perception of changing environment as a counselling strategy as they try to assist students with issues of low self-esteem. Meanwhile, the extent to which they must have dented the image of therapist can be very devastating just because of their negative perception about a person which is traceable to low self-esteem. It is against this background that the researcher is propelled to ascertain counsellors' perception of changing environment as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State bearing in mind counsellors' gender as a variable.

Statement of Problems

Environment has a positive and a negative impacts. Despite the positive impact, the negative impact of environment most times is life threatening. It is life threatening because it comes with illness, social misfit, hatred etc. When these problem gets out of hand the resultant effect is devastating. It is devastating because it goes with low self-esteem especially when self-esteem is not developed. The victim suffers from inferiority complex and this affects adversely their academic performance and interpersonal relationship with their peers and significant others. The current technology driven society, where ICT dictates the pace of development of a nation, Nigeria cannot but have assertive, confident and focused students to enhance its national development. The worries of all and sundry is that if the school system is not equipped with a professional therapist to educate all on the important of changing environment, the culture of self-esteem in their students, the nation will in no distant time be at risk. The argument has been that guidance counsellors have not come to grip on changing environment as a strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students. This most of the time affects the esteem of students to the extent that their cognitive performance is drastically affected. The consequence of the above is that it makes students leave secondary schools with low self-esteem of themselves. This, according to this group fits into the adage that you do not give what you do not have. Most students aspire to excel in their academic pursuit but this might become an illusion unless it is equally nursed and nurtured by counsellors who have a clear cut perception of changing environment as a strategy that enhances self-esteem. It is against this background that this study is being undertaken. The problem of this study is therefore, put in a question form, "what are Counsellors' perceptions of changing environment 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 find out counsellors' perception of changing environment as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. Specifically the study aims at;

1. ascertaining whether counsellors perceive changing environment as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State.

Research Questions

1. Do counsellors perceive changing environment as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State?

Hypothesis 1

One hypothesis guided the study and was tested at .05 level of significance.
There is no significant difference between the mean scores of urban and rural guidance counsellors perception on changing environment 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 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 [8]. 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 items questionnaire called Changing Environment Scale (CES). 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 ±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

This section presents the results of the study according to the research question and hypothesis that guided the study. The data analyzed were presented in Tables 1-2.

Research Question 1: Do counsellors perceive changing environment as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary schools in Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean Perception Scores (X̄) and Standard Deviation (SD) of Guidance Counsellors' on perceive Changing Environment as a Counselling Strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State

= 96

S/N	Changing Environment as a strategy for Enhancing Self-Esteem among Secondary School Students are based on:	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	X	S̄D	Decision
1	Preventing inconveniencing incidents or experience that can affect the self-esteem negatively,	41	23	17	15	2.93	1.11	Agree
2	Recommending change of school if the environment is the reason for bad behaviour,	3	17	29	47	1.75	0.85	Disagree
3	Discouraging anxious moments that gave rise to anxiety	53	27	13	3	3.35	0.83	Agree
4 5	Rewarding any desired behaviour from the students	61	21	7	7	3.41	0.91	Agree
	Changing environment to change behaviour of the adolescent	11	15	31	39	1.97	1.01	Disagree
	Grand Mean					**2.68**		**Agree**

Table 1 showed that the respondents agreed with 3 out of the 5 items raised (1, 3 and 4) on Guidance Counsellors' perception of changing environment as a strategy for enhancing self-esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State. The respondents mean scores for these items are 2.93, 3.35and 3.41. 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 also showed that the respondents disagreed with the remaining 2 items (2 and 5) with 1.75 and 1.97as their mean scores. Their standard deviation is small signifying that the respondents' responses are homogenous. The table further indicated a grand mean score of 2.68.Based on the guideline for the interpretation of the respondents' data, the answer to research question 1 is that changing environment is a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of urban and rural guidance counsellors perception on changing environment 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 ($\overline{X}$) Mean Scores of Urban and Rural Guidance Counsellors Perception on Changing Environment as a Counselling Strategy for Enhancing Self-esteem among Secondary School Students in Enugu State..

LOCATION Decision	N	$\overline{X}$	S^2	df	t-cal	t-crit
Urban	59	2.68	0.29	94	1.61	±1.96
NS						
						Do not reject
Ho$_1$						
	37	2.63				
Rural						
Total	**96**	**5. 30**				

Significant at P< .05, df = 94, critical t-value = ±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 ±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 no significant difference between the mean scores of urban and rural guidance counsellors on changing environment as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State.

Discussion of the Findings

The research question sought to ascertain whether guidance counsellors perceive changing environment as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. The result in Table 1 showed that guidance counsellors perceives changing environment as a counselling strategy for enhancing self-esteem among secondary school students in Enugu State. The finding is consistent with those of [2] who found that changing environment is expedient in resolving the consequences of low self-esteem which adversely affect students. To assist such victims he recommended that once guidance counsellors notice any environmental issues impinging on adolescents' or students' development, they should urgently suggest a change of environment in order to stabilize the client.

CONCLUSION

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

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

2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of urban and rural guidance counsellors perception on changing environment 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 school environment with the assurance of adding value to themselves through improvements in academic performances instead of remaining in an environment that that affects their development negatively. 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.

RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the implication of the study, this recommendation was made;

1. There should be general awareness exercise in schools by the Ministry of Education to ensure that students who are affected by environmental factors should be transferred to another environment that correlates with his or her traits.

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