



Exploration Of Counselor's Perception Of The Redesign Service: A Qualitative Study Of Secondary Schools In Niger state

Mohammed Chado

Science Department, Government Day Secondary School Sabon Wuse, Niger state

chado.mohammed@yahoo.com

Abstract: Guidance and counseling helped students in solving problems, imparting high self esteem, positive self-concept, good morals, peer respect, discipline, and parental acceptance and improved their study habits. The analysis on role of guidance and counselling revealed that the students scored the highest mean indicating that all the students supported development of good personality and health awareness as roles played by guidance and counselling in secondary schools. This was followed by the students' agreement though with little variation that guidance and counselling played a role in helping them to better understand themselves. Analysis of the perceptions towards career counselling revealed positive perceptions. The highest agreement concerning the perception towards career guidance was that it reduces anxiety; all students should consult counsellor when making career decisions, assist individuals in dealing with career issues, helps students to access career information.

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1. Introduction

Guidance and counselling services have been introduced in Niger state secondary schools to address several issues. A department was established in the ministry of education to undertake such services in schools. Guidance and counseling unit in the Ministry provided very effective services to secondary schools as well as being able to conduct in service courses for teachers. In addition, the unit developed a very useful career guidance booklet for use by secondary school students when filling in career application forms. However, that the "once vibrant unit" was no longer as effective as it used to be. Since most of the professionally trained personnel in the unit had retired or were deployed to other sections, institutional and field staff had nowhere to seek the necessary advice to help them carry out their duties effectively. Further noted that guidance and counseling remained a very weak component at all levels of the education system and that even where it existed it was undertaken in a haphazard manner. This was because teachers identified for the purpose had not been trained and so had no professional competence in the subject. This situation is common across many public secondary schools in Niger state.

Perception of counsellor

Research carried out by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization Programme (UNESCO, 2012) in Marsabit Central

District found out that counseling services were not effectively conducted to many students in schools and therefore, they were not ready to make informed career choices. Several studies have been carried on the Role of Guidance and Counselling Programme in Decision Making in Schools. For example, Sink and Stroh (2007) completed a large-scale (state-wide) study in Washington DC using a causal comparative design to find out whether school counselling interventions in elementary schools with guidance and counselling programs foster higher academic achievement test scores in students. The study was completed exceptionally well from a measurement perspective and provided excellent support and validation for the hard work that school counsellors did to ensure that students received social, emotional, psychological and academic support from them. The findings reported that early elementary-age students who attend the same school for three or more years do better academically when there is guidance and counselling program, even if it is not fully implemented. Additionally, students who remained in the same school for multiple years with a well-implemented counselling program will obtained higher achievement test scores than students who attend schools without such programs. They recommended full Implementation of counselling programs in all the schools. The reviewed study above focused on finding

out whether or not guidance and counselling in schools lead to good academic achievements among students. This context was limited and was explored in this study as part of the constructs that underpinned the phenomenon under investigation.

In another study, Brigman and Campbell (2008) used a quasi-experimental, pre-post test design to evaluate the impact of a school-counselling-led intervention on student academic achievement and school success behaviors. The results of this study indicated a significant difference between treatment and comparison groups on reading and math Scores. These results provide very strong support for the conclusion that school counselling interventions that focus on the development of cognitive, social, and self-management skills can result in sizable gains in student academic achievement. The context of the above reviewed study was based on evaluating the impact of a school-counselling-led intervention on student academic achievement and school success behaviours. However, this context was holistically captured in the current study as part of the constructs of the role of guidance and counselling on students' career decision-making. Moreover, the reviewed study adopted quasi-experimental design which may have led to systematic manipulation of variables.

Conclusion

Guidance and counseling helped students in solving problems, imparting high self esteem, positive self-concept, good morals, peer respect, discipline, and parental acceptance and improved their study habits. The analysis on role of guidance and counselling revealed that the students scored the highest mean indicating that all the students supported development of good personality and health awareness as roles played by guidance and counselling in secondary schools. This was followed by the students' agreement though with little variation that guidance and counselling played a role in helping them to better understand themselves. Analysis of the perceptions towards career counselling revealed positive perceptions. The highest agreement concerning the perception towards career guidance was that it reduces anxiety; all students should consult counsellor when making career decisions, assist individuals in dealing with career issues, helps students to access career information.

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