

Perceptions of Teachers on Guidance and Counselling Services in Junior Secondary Schools in Moro Local Government of Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstrak: Studi ini mengeksplorasi persepsi Guru terhadap Layanan Bimbingan dan Konseling di Sekolah Menengah Pertama di Pemerintah Daerah Moro Negara Bagian Kwara, Nigeria. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain survei deskriptif, yang sebagian besar bersifat kualitatif. Desain survei biasanya cocok ketika individu bertujuan mengumpulkan pendapat partisipan untuk menggambarkan karakteristik fenomena yang ada. Total peserta penelitian adalah 10 orang guru. Metode pengumpulan data utama yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah wawancara semi terstruktur. Wawancara menggunakan pertanyaan terbuka yang selaras dengan tujuan penelitian dan pertanyaan penelitian. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan pemahaman umum di kalangan pendidik bahwa bimbingan dan konseling memainkan peran penting dalam mendorong perkembangan siswa dan menjamin keberhasilan sekolah. Ada kekhawatiran mengenai ketersediaan dan efektivitas layanan ini. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa sekolah harus fokus pada peningkatan jumlah konselor terlatih untuk memberikan dukungan yang memadai bagi siswa. Hal ini memerlukan upaya pemerintah untuk mengalokasikan sumber daya guna menciptakan lebih banyak posisi dan meningkatkan rasio konselor terhadap siswa.

Abstract: The study explores the perceptions of Teachers on Guidance and Counselling Services in Junior Secondary Schools in Moro Local Government of Kwara State, Nigeria. The study used a descriptive survey design, which was mainly qualitative. The survey design is typically suitable when individuals aim to gather the opinions of participants to describe the characteristics of an existing phenomenon. The total participants of the study were 10 teachers. The primary method of data collection employed in this study was semi-structured interviews. The interviews utilised open-ended questions that aligned with the study's objectives and research questions. This study's findings indicate a common understanding among educators that guidance and counselling play a crucial role in fostering student development and ensuring school success. Concerns exist regarding the availability and effectiveness of these services. The findings suggest that schools should focus on enhancing the number of trained counsellors to provide sufficient support for students. This could entail governmental efforts to allocate resources for creating more positions and enhancing the ratios of counsellors to students.

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INTRODUCTION

Psychological and social problems influencing students in educational institutions have their roots in shifting society and family values as well as in broken families and communities. Everyone would be able to recognise the importance of guidance and counselling in the school system if they were introduced into secondary education systems, generally speaking. The students also have the chance to pick attitudes and skills required to create educational goals fit for their needs, interests, aptitudes, and knowledge that would help them decide on paths in life and careers.

Guidance and counselling in school first started in Nigeria in 1958. During that year, the Calotte Sisters of St Theresa's College in Ibadan recognised the necessity of offering their final-year students appropriate guidance regarding employment or vocational opportunities. First employed by the Federal Ministry of Education Lagos in 1961, Dr Bercpiki was a vocational guidance officer. Trained professional counsellors currently staff the facility rather effectively. Yahaya (2019) stated that efficacy in counselling for secondary school hinged on counselling being regarded in its totality and included in a whole school approach. Whether group or individual, the therapy process should be treated gently and subtly. Counselling tries to empower the person. To properly complete this work, the teacher-counsellor needs professional training. After the 1900s, the world wars were the next major event influencing the evolution of school guidance and counselling services.

Watkins et al. (2012) revealed that an increasing population of students entering schools demanded the introduction of these services. It emerged in reaction to socioeconomic crises the conflicts brought forth. To overcome the horrific war events they had shared with their family, relatives, and friends, the students needed counselling. This field should be guaranteed to have a national perspective (Omoniyi, 2016). In schools, guidance and counselling programs are meant to help students grow. Eyo et al (2010) guidance and counselling programmes for secondary school students are meant to solve the physical, emotional, social, vocational and academic challenges of adolescent adolescents. To enable the pupils to satisfy a wide range of needs, from academic adaptation to psychological and sociological ones. Therefore, guidance and counselling, which form a significant component of the overall program of education, should be given in line with the state laws and regulations as well as the Ministry of Education policies and rule-abiding (Boitt, 2016).

Counsellors are supposed to create efficient Guidance and Counselling services at educational institutions that will help to create whole people. The program should thus aim at all spheres of guiding and counselling, including personal and social, vocational, health, and educational ones among others. Kyauta et al. (2018) noted in their guidance theory that the necessity of establishing counselling and guidance programs in Nigerian schools would aid in moulding student knowledge. Notwithstanding this awareness, these tend to slow down the provision of guidance programs in Nigerian secondary schools (Jacob & Owobamigbe, 2021).

According to the National Policy on Education, Faremi (2021) stresses the importance of guidance services in our secondary schools, most of them merely assign the counsellors the task of part-time counselling while teaching obligations are stressed for such officers. Mostly focused on the development of every pupil, a counsellor will work to develop whatever good traits the individual possesses (Nota et al., 2020). The counsellor makes use of the rapport with the students to offer an adult model for the growth of self-concepts and meaningful activities like orientation, in which the more experienced student leaders can help others acquire confidence and self-reliance (Nurani, 2022). Furthermore, certain interventions aimed at developing social skills satisfy the needs typical at this level of adolescent development (Suleiman et al., 2019).

This has prompted the guidance services to focus increasingly on the objective of psychological development, which aids students in cultivating their ability to make well-rounded judgments, enhance personal growth, liberate students, and address the specific needs of individuals for tailored learning (Oyem, 2016). In the contemporary

landscape of science and technology, secondary schools in Nigeria are grappling with a multitude of challenges, including widespread failure in school and public examinations, examination malpractice, indiscipline, overpopulation, and a decline in societal values and standards. In light of this challenge, secondary education must incorporate a robust and effective guidance and counselling program, managed by qualified professionals (Adeniran et al., 2022).

In other areas, the meaning of the title counsellor is still a mystery. For example, when a counsellor is hired as a teacher, administrator, or principal, some wonder what it implies. Placed in the professional hierarchy of the school staff, the counsellor is a somewhat different person. Consequently, the qualified school counsellor is someone with the ability to support the decision-making process of parents and children using skills and traits (Fitriyah, 2023.). The role of counsellors involves fostering growth and facilitating personal evolution in a reality that often defies comprehension. Unlike most of his colleagues who are under direct supervision, the counsellors find themselves in quite odd positions (Geesa et al., 2019). At times, the school officials, including educators, may lack an understanding of the essential role of guidance services within their institution, perceiving the school counsellor as a potential threat to their authority as leaders of the establishment. Counselling, conversely, aids in preventing dissatisfaction, reinstating self-awareness, and imparting knowledge on the essential tasks necessary for typical adolescent development (Studer, 2014).

One cannot stress the need for direction and counselling services in every educational establishment. In response to this demand, advice and counselling programs have been running since 1971 and greater focus on its services in 1998 through the National Policy of Education that advised guidance and counselling departments be established in all secondary schools (Bakke & Harjula, 2024). Still, there are signs that students still struggle, showing up as school discontent, disciplinary issues, and more exam cheating among others. This could be the result of poor application of the counselling and guidance programs in educational institutions.

School guidance and counselling services aim to provide students with opportunities to cultivate self-awareness and an appreciation for others, enhance their relationship skills, establish ethical standards, and foster a sense of responsibility, thereby influencing their knowledge and behaviour (Ayeni et al., 2024). Despite the emphasis placed by the National Policy on Education regarding the necessity of guidance services in secondary schools, there appears to be a sluggish advancement in the provision of such services within Nigerian schools (Igwebueze, 2024). In most secondary schools, the counsellors are only given the assignment of counselling duties while teaching activities are emphasised for such officers despite this recognition (Wingfield et al., 2010).

At times, the educational administrators, including the teaching staff, may lack awareness regarding the essential role of guidance services within their institution, perceiving the school counsellor as a potential threat to their authoritative position as leaders of the establishment. Educators may cultivate feelings of resentment towards counsellors due to the counsellors' unique role, which diverges significantly from that of their colleagues who operate under direct oversight. Additionally, the confidentiality inherent in the counselor-student relationship can hinder the overall effectiveness of the counselling role within the school environment. This research was undertaken to explore the views of junior secondary school educators regarding guidance and counselling services within the Moro Local Government area of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the perception of teachers towards guidance and counselling services in junior secondary schools in Moro LGA of Kwara State.

1. Investigate the perceptions of teachers on guidance and counselling services in junior secondary schools in Moro LGA of Kwara State.

2. Investigate the perceptions of male teachers on guidance and counselling in the junior secondary schools in Moro LGA of Kwara State.
3. Investigate the perceptions of female teachers on guidance and counselling services in junior secondary schools in Moro LGA of Kwara State.

Research Question

1. What are the perceptions of teachers on guidance and counselling services in junior secondary schools in Moro LGA of Kwara State?
2. What are the perceptions of male teachers on guidance and counselling services in the junior secondary schools in Moro LGA of Kwara State?
3. What are the perceptions of female teachers on guidance and counselling services in junior secondary schools in Moro LGA of Kwara State?

METHOD

A qualitative design was used for this study. The survey design is typically suitable when individuals seek the opinions of participants to describe the nature of an existing phenomenon. The study sought information from a sample of teachers on their perception towards guidance and counselling services in junior secondary schools in Moro LGA in Kwara State. Moro Local Government Area in Kwara State had 23 Junior Secondary Schools. In the study areas, a total of 5 junior secondary schools were chosen for selection. The focus of the study was on junior secondary school teachers from five schools chosen in the Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State. The potential participants consisted of two teachers from each of the five junior secondary schools chosen in the Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State. Teachers were utilised as they are actively involved in referring students to school counsellors, and their perceptions could influence the provision of guidance and counselling services, either positively or negatively. The primary method of data collection employed in this study was semi-structured interviews. The interviews utilised open-ended questions that aligned with the study's objectives and research questions.

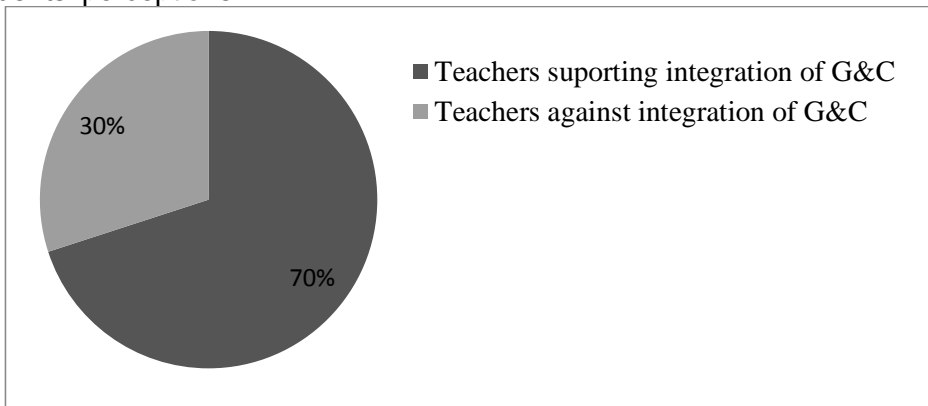
The information collected from the interviews was subjected to a thematic analysis for examination. Following the conversion of voice notes to text, they were systematically categorised and thematically coded. The themes were subsequently analysed and discussed about the study's objectives and research enquiries, alongside the existing body of literature. The investigation followed ethical guidelines and established best practices for qualitative inquiry. Before giving their consent to participate, the respondents were informed about the objectives, methodologies, and intentions of the study. They received guarantees that the information about them and their answers would remain anonymous and secret. Furthermore, participants were enquired whether they consented to the recording and utilisation of their voices for reporting and data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Question 1: What are the perceptions of teachers on guidance and counselling services in junior secondary schools in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State?

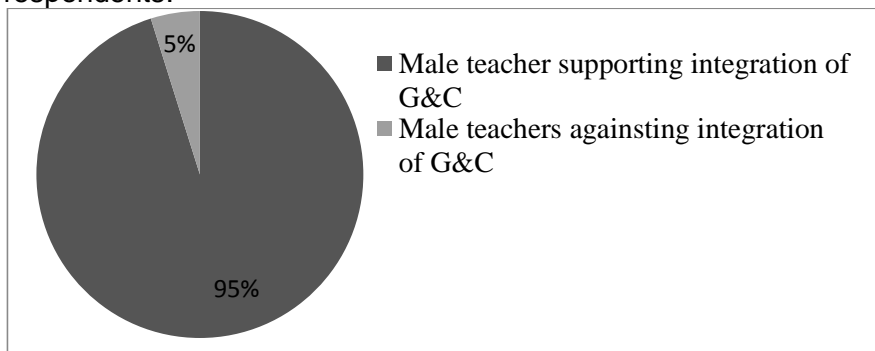
The responses to the above question revealed that, unanimous agreement on the importance of guidance and counselling programs in junior secondary schools. The first respondent emphasizes that these programs are essential for achieving educational goals, indicating their critical role in supporting students' academic, emotional, and social development. Another respondent echoes this sentiment, stressing the necessity of having dedicated counsellors in schools to effectively implement these programs and aid students. Another respondent emphasizes the broad benefits of guidance and counselling and their positive impact on all school stakeholders. Another respondent further underscores the practical challenges faced in Nigeria, suggesting that multiple counsellors would be preferable to meet the growing demand for guidance services. Another respondent stated the importance of guidance and counselling services as services that cannot be emphasized in school.

Generally, the respondents collectively advocate for the integration of comprehensive guidance and counselling services in schools. They view these programs as not only beneficial but necessary for nurturing students holistically, addressing academic challenges, and supporting their mental and emotional well-being. The consensus among the respondents reflects recognition of guidance and counselling as integral components of the educational system, essential for fostering conducive learning environment and ensuring the overall success and well-being of students and school communities alike. The below illustration explains the consensus among the respondents' perceptions.



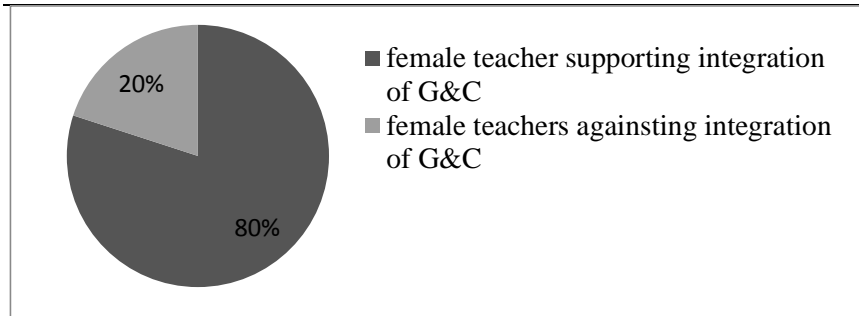
Question 2: What are the perceptions of male teachers on guidance and counselling services in junior secondary schools in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State?

The responses to the above question revealed that the perceptions of male teachers towards guidance and counselling in junior secondary schools Moro Local Government Area in Kwara State are generally positive but also reflect concerns about implementation and effectiveness. A respondent highlights that achieving educational goals depends heavily on these programs, indicating a strong belief in their necessity. Another respondent stresses the importance of having counsellors to effectively implement guidance programs and support student needs. A respondent also emphasizes the widespread benefits of guidance and counselling across all school stakeholders. The illustration below explains the perception of male teachers among the respondents.



Question 3: What are the perceptions of female teachers on guidance and counselling services in junior secondary schools in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State?

The responses to the above question revealed that the Female perspectives also affirmed the importance of guidance and counselling. A respondent sees these programs as providing valuable insights for students and school administrators alike. Another respondent views guidance and counselling as crucial for fostering good moral behaviour among students. A respondent also echoes the sentiment that these programs benefit students significantly. Another respondent acknowledges the shortcomings in current implementation due to insufficient counsellors and suggests governmental intervention to address these issues. The illustration below explains the perception of male teachers among the respondents



Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study revealed that there is a shared recognition among teachers that guidance and counselling are essential for student development and school success. This is in line with Eyo et al. (2010) who confirmed that guidance and counselling services are crucial for addressing various challenges faced by adolescents, including academic, social, emotional, and vocational difficulties. The respondents' concerns about the practical difficulties in implementing these programs, such as insufficient numbers of counsellors which is also in line with the findings of Adeniran et al. (2022) who emphasized that the lack of resources and prioritization by school administrators often hinders the effectiveness of guidance services.

The second finding revealed that male teachers recognize the importance of guidance and counselling. Specific concerns raised by them, such as the need for more counsellors and better governmental support, though they also share concerns about its current implementation as seen in the studies of Kyauta et al. (2018) and Oyem (2016). The third finding revealed that female teachers' belief that guidance and counselling services benefit not just students but the entire school community aligns with the work of Nurani (2022) who notes, that effective counselling can foster better social skills, self-reliance, and overall well-being among students, contributing to a healthier school atmosphere and society at large.

CONCLUSION

With the viewpoints expressed by teachers, it was concluded that the role of guidance and counselling programs in junior secondary schools are unanimously recognised as essential services for achieving educational goals, supporting students' academic and personal development, and fostering a positive school environment. However, concerns regarding the availability of counsellors, the quality of services provided, and the need for governmental intervention to improve implementation were also highlighted. These concerns indicate a gap between the perceived importance of guidance and counselling and the actual resources and support available in many schools. Based on the findings the following were recommended:

1. Schools should prioritize increasing the number of trained counsellors to ensure adequate support for students. This may involve government initiatives to fund additional positions and improve counsellor-to-student ratios.
2. To provide ongoing professional development and support for counsellors to enhance their effectiveness in addressing the diverse needs of students. This can include training in mental health support, academic guidance, and conflict resolution.
3. There is a clear call for governmental intervention to improve the infrastructure and resources available for guidance and counselling programs in schools. This could involve allocating more resources, developing policies to standardize counselling services, and ensuring accountability for the implementation of these programs.

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