

SOCIAL REFORMATION ROLES OF COUNSELORS AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN UYO METROPOLIS

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of social reformation roles of counselors and behavioral change in secondary school students' in Uyo Metropolis. The population of this study comprised all the 16 secondary school counselors and the 9,016 JSS3 students in Uyo Metropolis. The study adopted Expost-Facto research design, while stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the 200 respondents. The two instruments for data collection which were tagged "social reformation and students' behavioral modification Questionnaire" (SRSBMQ) as well as "Agricultural Science Achievement Test (ASAT)" were administered to 200 respondents and used for the study. The instruments were vetted by experts in Test and Measurement before the reliability test was conducted with 40 respondents and the result which was 0.75 proved the instrument reliable for the study. Data collected were analyzed using regression analysis. The results of the data analyses were all significant and from the results of the analysis, it was observed that there is significant influence of social reformation in the role of counselors on the behavioral modifications of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis. It was also observed that there is a significant influence of social reformation by the role of counselors on the improved level of academic performance of Students in Uyo Metropolis. One of the recommendations was that Government and NGO's should establish more Counseling centers in every field of organization in government custody. There should be at least three counselors to a school, from nursery to tertiary institutions, depending on the population strength.

KEY WORDS: Social reformation, counselor, behavioral change, students, secondary school, Uyo Metropolis.

INTRODUCTION

Education is synonymous with the existence of human societies. The education of any society usually reflects its whole essence. This means that it encapsulates its philosophy and way of life. The education of any society involves the transmission of all knowledge that is deemed worthwhile. Anyaogu (2011) asserts that the school is an important agency of education needed to bring about a positive and desirable modification in the behavior of learners in a more systematic way. The quality of teaching must be very good to yield the desired results. A high quality education is required to adequately prepare pupils for adult life roles. What this means is a type of education that is functional in enabling the learner gain thinking habits and develop the technical means needed for them to enhance their ability in solving practical problems. Functional education provides avenues for poverty reduction. It is only through education and counseling that children can realize their potentials for self-fulfillment.

Okobia and Okorodudu (2004) assert that the efficient and effective processing of the child through the educational system will require Guidance and counseling services. Counseling is uniquely relevant and sine quanon in the reformation and sustainability of education all over the world. It is the driving or motivating force that makes teaching and learning more meaningful to students and adults at all levels of education. Counseling is instrumental in preserving the

values of education and in ensuring that educational course content of each subject or course is actualized through the facilitative role of the manager of counseling programmes, “the counselor. Counseling provides a form of education, which the students receive from their counselors.

According to Bulus (2001), school counselors are solely responsible for ensuring efficiency in students’ social and personal development. They bring social reformation to the school and society in diverse areas. The desire for academic success is partially rested on the sound mind and body. Emotional and stress-related problems are areas of health concern for which counselors must also focus. Rapid social transformation has generated deviant behaviors among secondary school students in recent times in Nigeria. The most harmful in relation to the well-being of students in secondary schools is drug abuse (Ralls, 2011) and other related vices which threaten students’ progress at school. Drug abuse is alarming and has raised series of questions about the essence of drug educators and school counselors. Indeed, the situation is worrisome and requires immediate and effective intervention to eradicate. Addiction takes a long time to get someone away from. Counselors are expected to effect social reformation by encouraging students’ growth and development in ways that will foster their behaviors, interests, and welfare, as this promotes the formation of healthy relationships (Ralls, 2011).

Esbroeck (2008) believes that students may need support at each stage of their development. Some may need counseling assistance to cope with their life challenges at school. Others may also need counseling to overcome barriers that prevent them from finishing a stage and entering into a new developmental stage. Phillips and Smith (2011) have identified family-related matters, bullying, behavioral and emotional problems, depression, self harm and suicide, and mental health issues as areas of concern in social counseling. Those areas are the potential sources of problems that confront students in their academic pursuits. Phillips and Smith (2011) again noticed that these challenges can affect their relationships with peers in school, and even outside including their families and their engagement with education. Unfortunately, students who may have gone through these challenges either seek for counseling services or live with it to escalate. As a result, some stop schooling, or may have their academic work terminated by the school due to poor academic performance or unacceptable behavioral life, and may end up committing suicide. The role of school counselors here involves reforming the behavioral changes in students by counseling them on the vices they exhibit. Counselors are trained to understand the effects of different drugs and can assist with interventions or community referrals. The counselor is also essential in developing substance abuse prevention programs in a school.

Arewa (2000) opines that some students are too resilient to give in, and others who resist may have their academic performance affected. Thus, they are being influenced into unacceptable societal behavioral life like drug abuse, alcoholism and lesbianism. Counselors owe it as a duty to reach out to students and not wait for students to come to them for counseling services. In this sense, social reformation is achieved. Nelson. Covin and Smith (1996) assert that teen pregnancy continues to be a societal concern. Precipitating factors are visible prior to middle school. Counselors are often the liaison with community agencies that work to prevent student pregnancy and assist with students who do become pregnant. Tolerance of diversity is an important goal in a multicultural society. School counselors help all students to be acceptant of others regardless of sex, age, race, sexual orientation, culture, disability, or religious beliefs.

The essence of incorporating guidance and counseling into the school system was to eliminate overwhelming ignorance of many young people on their behaviors and performance at school. Various educational researchers have established the fact that educational processes and development take place in three areas namely, cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of an individual. The philosophy of the country’s educational system dwells on the creation of well-balanced individuals with requisite knowledge, skills, values and aptitudes for self-actualization and for socio-economic and political development. Achieving this philosophy involves the social reformation roles of counselors to effect behavioral changes in secondary students in Uyo

metropolis. There is the need to adopt social guidance and counseling techniques by counselors themselves. These can facilitate good behavior in citizens, a goal which the government is relentlessly pursuing.

Statement of Problem

The inadequacy of Guidance and counseling services in our schools appears to be the major cause of the rising wave of crime in the country, increased indiscipline in schools and drug abuse. The lack of Guidance and counseling in our schools has been identified as leading to the increase in HIV/AIDs cases, the increasing number of street children and high dropout rates. It is expected that the effective implementation of the Guidance and counseling policy will have a significant impact on reducing schooling problems and anti-social habits likely to inhibit quality of teaching and learning outcomes. Students will be adequately prepared for the world of work and to meet life's challenges. It is expected that delivery of pre-tertiary education through counseling by both state and non-state sector will produce social reformation in the lives of young people. The researcher recognizes the serious nature of the behavioral problem and intends to understand it from students' life stories and wishes to affect these challenges with effective counseling for effective reformation of secondary school students in Uyo metropolis. Previous researchers have examined the reformation role of counselors in the area of career choice (Evans and Burck, 1992), and career development (Baker & Taylor, 1998). Several studies documented the importance of school counselors on students' aspirations, self-efficacy, and goals related to career plans and accomplishments (Alliman-Brissett, Turner & Skovholt, 2004; Bobo, Hildreth, & Durodoyn, 1998; Mau, Hitchcock, & Calvert, 1998; Turner & Lapan, 2002). This study hereby intends to fill a gap in literature by focusing on social reformation roles of counselors in the areas of behavioral change and improvement of secondary school students in Uyo metropolis.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this work is to examine social reformation roles of counselors and behavioral change of secondary school students' in Uyo Metropolis. Specifically, the study seeks:

1. To ascertain the influence of social reformation role of counselors on behavioral change in secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis.
2. To find out the influence of social reformation role of counselors on the improved level of academic performance of Students of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis.

Research questions

The following research questions will be answered:

1. What is the influence of social reformation role of counselors on behavioral change in secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis?
2. To what extent does social reformation role of counselors help in improving the academic performance of Students of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested:

1. There is no significant influence of social reformation role of counselors on the behavioral change of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis.
2. Social reformation role of counselors has contributed significantly to the improved level of academic performance of Students of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Role of Counselors in Behavioral Change in Students

Deviant behavior in students stems from the challenges they face in life. Duveskog (2009) outlines drug abuse, alcoholism, domestic violence and rape as social vices which have a negative impact on people and on the society as a whole. Devising appropriate tools and framework to encourage students to reveal the problems (or difficulties) in their life can help counselors to deliver efficient counseling services. Guidance and Counseling in the school set-up provides students with intrinsic motivation to manage their academic life, social or personal and career development, (Brown, 1999). Counseling services and programs rendered to students within the context of school counseling is geared towards helping students to resolve emotional, social or behavioral problems, (Ormrod, 2003). According to Cocco (2004) students are able to develop a clearer focus and a sense of direction towards growth and development. This can be achieved through effective and high quality counseling programs. Effective and high quality counseling programs are important to school climate as well as a crucial element to improve students' achievement (Esbroeck, 2008).

The basic aim of education is to acquire an accumulated knowledge, norms and values towards the development of oneself and the nation at large. Oye *et al.* (2012) pointed out that individuals need education in order to acquire this accumulated knowledge. Thus, counseling is considered a vital component of educational curriculum, which ensures that the acquired knowledge benefits the individual and the society at large. However, to achieve such an ultimate benefit, life design process is a necessity through counseling. Phillips and Smith (2011) and Heward, (2003) describe school counseling as a service delivery activity. The activities are designed to provide a wide range of services for children, young people and families, so as to make schools a well-resourced facility for community counseling services.

Denga (2002) noted that, every new profession is held with suspicion until it proves its worth. The role of the school counselor is common in the public sector, especially in the secondary school system. The services of guidance and counseling are still wanting, to help curb indiscipline in schools, which has been on the increase. Most of the nefarious activities that require guidance and counseling include; stabbing, fighting, robbery, rapes, bullying, riots, destruction of school stores, administration blocks, libraries, among others. Apart from that, Anagbogu (2012) also noted that youthful exuberance resulting from; drug and sexual abuse, disobedience to school rules and regulations, lateness to school, use of abusive words, among others, have contributed to high increase in secondary school dropouts, low academic performance, and emotional and mental distress vis-à-vis. Related to this, Cunningham and Cordeiro (2003) also added that, Guidance counselors should serve to provide variety of services to assist students, in such areas as; academic, social, emotional, and behavioral matters for the purpose of academic excellence.

Therefore in order to achieve social reformation, it is vital that counselors be aware of, and comprehend the perceptions that it holds. However, awareness and understanding is required to meet up with the goals of the profession. Again, it is imperative for Guidance counselors to appreciate the origin of school counseling in order to develop better insight or understanding of the operation of today's guidance work.. It is crucial for Guidance counselors to have a common knowledge of the functions of school counselors in order for guidance programs to be effective. School counselors are seen as key players in restoring values in secondary schools and through this, they assume responsibility for the continued development and growth of the profession. Counseling is built with a foundation in teamwork. Through collaborative and concerted effort of the duo, counselors will maintain a powerful force in the profession by ensuring that children today have the necessary programming to meet with their needs (Lenhardt and Young, 2001).

Roles of Counselors in Improving Academic Performance of Students

The school counselor must understand what students want and offer counseling assistance to help them solve their problems. Nwaokolo (2006) asserts that counselors play significant roles in the secondary school education in helping students when their selecting courses, developing reading plan, and guide them to choose their study disciplines. He noted that most parents of the school children attribute students' poor performance as ineffectiveness of the school counselors to discharge their functions. This people have wondered whether school counselors play active roles in proper counseling of the students. On the other hand, some parents also observe that most teachers see counselors posted to their schools as their rivals and devise means of disengaging or discrediting their work by giving false impression that the schools do not have enough facilities, such as; conducive counseling office, adequate funds, etc, to accommodate counseling work (Nwaokolo, 2006). Due to this negative perception of the effectiveness of school counselors, most parents have developed negative feelings concerning their task and some of them prefer sending their children to the Principal instead of the Counselor for counseling due to the interpersonal relationship they have with the Principal.

On the other hand, Myrick (2003) stresses that some teachers hold misconceptions about the role and task of counselors because they are often misinterpreted as administrative assistants who have little time to spend counseling students. Studies of Nwaokolo (2006) also noted that most school principals, teachers and parents have false impression about the role of school counselors. As mentioned earlier, they believe that schools can function well without school counselors. With regards to this, the new National Policy on Education has incorporated Guidance counselors' work due to its job demand and prospect. Based on this fact, it is evident that the Principals, teachers and parents have wrong perceptions on the importance of guidance and counseling programme, (Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey 2002). The researchers in their intuitive knowledge argue that such myopic perception or prediction should be discarded because it cannot add value to the educational process of teaching and learning. Counseling is built with teamwork, through collaborative efforts with others; collation is built towards meeting up with the expectations of children's needs (Lenhardt & Young, 2001). Career counselors on the other hand do offer a wide range of career related programmes to students aimed at assisting students to plan their career, make informed decisions, and choose careers that will land them into the right vocation (Collins, 2007).

The need for guidance and counseling in the Nigerian school system is increasing rapidly in today's society. Youths have a variety of choices to make in life in areas such as; health, subjects to choose, course of choice to study at the university, and so on. A lot of people expect counselors to produce solutions to their problems. Such students require a high level of counseling to strengthen their own ability, improve academic performance, to make wise choices, and to face the problems encountered in the society, (Niles an Harris-Bowlsbey, 2002). Presently, the performance of students in secondary education is deteriorating day-by-day. To this effect, the services of school counselors in secondary education is important in guiding students in career building for optimum performance in their various life situations such as; education, profession, social, health, moral, personal and marital areas, (Isaacson and Brown, 2000). It is worthy to note that the work of Guidance counseling as a profession should be explicitly inevitable in secondary education, (Zunker, 2002). Lenhardt and Young (2001) noted that most parents of school children attribute students' poor performance to the ineffectiveness of school counselors in discharging their functions. They have wondered whether school counselors play active roles in proper counseling of the students, (Rosenbaum and Person, 2003).

METHOD

Research Design

An Expost-Facto design was used for this study. In this type of design the researcher cannot manipulate the effects on the respondents' variables, but just obtain the effect already existing in the natural course of events.

Area of the Study

The research area for this study was Uyo Metropolis. Uyo Metropolis encompasses Uyo Local Government, and some parts of Uruan, Itu, Ibesikpo and Ibion0 Local Government Areas. It Lies between latitude 5.05 north and longitude 8⁰ East.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all the 16 secondary school counselors and the 9,016 JSS3 students.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the 200 respondents derived from 5 secondary schools. These 200 respondents make 2.21% of the total population of 9016.

Instrumentation

The main instruments used in this study were two in number. One of them was a questionnaire titled "social reformation and students' behavioral modification Questionnaire" (SRSBMQ), while the other one was "Agricultural Science Achievement Test (ASAT)" prepared by the researcher. The questionnaire had two sections, (sections A and B). Section A was used to collect information on the personal data of the respondents while section B of the questionnaire was made up of two variables,-- counseling and behavioral modifications. Each of the two variables was measured with 5 items in a four level Likert scaled questionnaire. The (ASAT) was measured with 20 questions, each scoring 5 marks to give 100%. For the two instruments the obtained data was coded statistically before the statistical analysis of the data took place.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument passed through face and content validation by experts in Test and Measurement.

Reliability of the Instrument:

Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the level of reliability of the instrument. In the trial test, a total of 40 respondents were randomly selected from two schools that did not form part of the main study and the instrument administered on them. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.75 and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument.

Procedure for Collecting Data

A letter of introduction was written by the researcher. This letter was to introduce the researcher to the Principal of each school for understanding and assistance. The questionnaire were issued and retrieved 3 days latter from each respondent. The exercise took about one week.

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such as regression analysis. Test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis one

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of social reformation role of counselors on the behavioral modification of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis. In order to test the hypothesis regression analysis was performed on the data, (see table 1).

TABLE 1

Regression Analysis of the influence of social reformation role of counselors on the behavioral modification of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.94	0.88	0.88	0.49	0.88

***Significant at 0.05 level; df= 198; N= 200; critical R-value = 0.139**

The table above shows that the calculated R-value 0.94 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.139 at 0.5 alpha level with 198 degree of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.88 predicts 88% influence of social reformation role of counselors on the behavioral modification of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis. It was also deemed necessary to find out the extent of the variance of each case of independent variable (social reformation role of counselor) and behavioral modification of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis) as responded to by each respondent (see table 2).

TABLE 2

Analysis of variance of the influence of social reform role of counselors on the behavioral modification of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	339.33	1	339.33	1442.18	.000b
Residual	46.59	198	0.24		
Total	385.92	199			

The table above presents the calculated F-value as (1442.18) and the P-value as (0.000). Being that the P-value (000) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result therefore means that there is significant influence of social reformation role of counselors on the behavioral modification of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis.

Hypothesis Two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of social reformation role of counselors on the improved level of academic performance of Students in Uyo Metropolis. In order to test the hypothesis regression analysis was performed on the data, (see table 3).

TABLE 3

Regression Analysis of the influence of social reform role of counselors on the improved level of academic performance of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.96a	0.92	0.92	0.40		0.92

***Significant at 0.05 level; df= 198; N= 200; critical R-value = 0.139**

The table above shows that the calculated R-value 0.96 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.139 at 0.5 alpha level with 198 degree of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.92 predicts 92% influence of social reformation role of counselor on the academic performance of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis. It was also deemed necessary to find out the extent of the variance of each case of independent variable (social reformation role of counselor) and academic performance of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis) as responded to by each respondent (see table 4).

TABLE 4

Analysis of variance of the influence of social reform role of counselors on the behavioral modification of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	370.10	1	370.10	2350.39	.000b
Residual	31.18	198	0.16		
Total	401.28	199			

The table above presents the calculated F-value as (2350.39) and the P-value as (0.000). Being that the P-value (000) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result therefore means that there is significant contribution of social reformation role of counselors to the improved level of academic performance of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of the data analysis in Table 1 was significant due to the fact that the obtained R-value (0.94) was greater than the critical R-value (0.139) at 0.05 level with 198 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant influence of social reform role of counselor on the behavioral modification of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis. The result therefore was in agreement with the research findings of Duveskog (2009) who outline drug abuse, alcoholism, domestic violence, and rape as social vices which have a negative impact on people and on the society as a whole. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

The result of the data analysis in Table 3 was significant due to the fact that the obtained R-value (0.96) was greater than the critical R-value (0.139) at 0.05 level with 198 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant influence of social reform role of counselors on the academic performance of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis. The result therefore was in agreement with the research findings of Nwaokolo (2006) who asserts that counselors play significant roles in the secondary school education in helping students to select courses, develop reading plans, and guiding them to choose their study disciplines. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative was accepted.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research work, it was concluded that counselors are working effectively to reform the society including the society through improving the behaviors and academic performance of students even with very limited resources. It was also concluded that there is significant influence of social reformation role of counselors on the behavioral modification of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis. Finally, the social reformation roles of counselors have contributed immensely to the improved level of academic performance of secondary school students in Uyo Metropolis.

Recommendations

1. School counselors should improve the nature of the achievement climate in their schools. They should also draw from a vast array of interventions that will help students increase their academic achievement.
2. Scholarship and subventions should be made available to counselors by government and NGOs in order to give them a more adequate training.
3. Government and NGO's should establish more Counseling centers in every field of organization in Government custody. There should be at least three counselors to a school from nursery to tertiary institutions depending on the population strength. It creates an atmosphere for early introduction of children to career counseling practice which is intended to foster quality education.

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