

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLEDGE

Level of Self-Concept and Job Satisfaction of Guidance Counsellors in Enugu State Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study sought to find out the level of self-concept and job satisfaction of counselors in secondary schools in Enugu state, Nigeria. At the same time to know if the self concept of counselors is related to their job satisfaction. In carrying out this study, three research questions were generated. Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect data. A total of 218 counsellors were sampled, through proportionate stratified random sampling technique out of 640 counsellors in secondary schools in Enugu state Nigeria. Mean ratings and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient were used to provide answers to the research questions, while t test was used in testing the hypotheses. The findings showed that the levels of self-concept and job satisfaction among counselors were low regardless of experience. It was also found out that the self-concept of counselors has a low correlation with their job satisfaction. Based on the above findings, it was concluded that counselors have low self-concepts and as a result were not satisfied with their jobs. It was recommended that Government should help to create awareness on the need to recognize counsellors to help boost their self-concept, thereby improving their satisfaction with their job.

1. Introduction

The main essence of Guidance and counselling is to help a troubled student or client to overcome obstacles to his growth and help him in achieving maximum development of his personal resources through a special interaction with a counselor. The ultimate goal of counseling is to help the individual resolve personal conflicts and become more self-directive. Ipaye (1983) considers counselling as a form of personal helping carried out mainly by means of interpersonal communication whereby the counselor helps the counselee in achieving adaptive attitudes, insights and behavior. It is a method of helping all the individual's positive strengths for development and by concentrating on the individual's personality, behavioral and functional assets that could be mobilized. Iwuama (2009), noted that counselling is meant both preventive and curative, He noted that one error committed by many people is to think that counselling is meant only for problematic situations or only for people with problem, the truth is that it is meant for all, "normal" or persons having problems by creating opportunities for them to cope with their problems now and in future when they occur in their process of growth and development. The main focus of counselling therefore is to aid the individual to explore and participate in his own development towards a self-reliant and fulfilled person. As the majority of Nigerian counsellors today are connected one way or another with the schools, it seems necessary at this juncture that counsellors are posted into the secondary schools to help the students in developing positive adjustment in educational vocational and socio personal lives. (Akinade, 2012).

Nigeria, in its transition from an essentially traditional society to a modern, technological one is presently undergoing very rapid changes in its political, economic, industrial, social, religious and educational life. Such rapid changes often place considerable stress on individuals and groups whose coping and adaptation mechanisms often breakdown when they find it too difficult to accommodate these rapid changes. A number of disabling societal and individual problems result. Thus, Nigeria is today beset by such problems as lack of any guiding values, lack of patriotisms acrimonious interpersonal conflicts, self seeking leadership, and monumental corruption, little or no value on human life, armed robbery and colossal inefficiency. The family in which the child grows is not immuned against these problems. Parents themselves are preoccupied with their own problems; often leave the child to grow confused and unguided throughout his primary years.

The child then proceeds to the secondary school very poorly prepared to cope with the stresses of the adolescence and with those inherent in studying at the secondary school stage. At the secondary school, the child is faced with educational, social and emotional stress. These problems can only be handled by professional counsellors. Okoye (2009) regretted that many conditions on the job could create emotional tension for the counselor like lack of awareness, negative attitude from the principals and teachers, lack of recognition by government etc. Thus job dissatisfaction could cause the counselor to have low self-concept.

Self-concept according to Nwachukwu (2000) is a self picture of a person's worth, self-view a person has, the way, he feels about himself and how he thinks other people view of him. It means who a person wants to be and what he will be. Self-concept of guidance counsellors is therefore how the counselors views of him as counsellors and how they see other peoples' view of them. This includes;

feelings about the counselling profession (professional self-concept), ideas and values (social self-concept), feelings about academic qualification or status (academic self-concept) and a general feelings about self in relations to attitudes of others, environment and other attributes (general concept). Mallum (2007) stated that a counselor with a positive self-concept will be motivated to put more efforts in the career while a counselor with negative self-concept performs very lowly, is not resourceful and committed. Thus counsellors with positive self concepts will no doubt contribute positively to the educational development.

Another factor that determines counsellors' competence and commitment to his duties is job satisfaction. Nwankezi (2010) defines job satisfaction as level of fulfillment and contentment of a person over his job. Unachukwu (2009) stated that job satisfaction enables a worker to put more effort to work and interest into his work and to identify himself with the goals of the organization. In this regard, the worker becomes deeply committed to his work. It is commitment, enhanced effort; motivation and loyalty result in the accomplishment of the goals of his organization. Onu (2008) noted that "Only satisfied counselors will be more stable and committed to their job. Hence ensuring the desired educational objective of counselling in secondary schools.

The above assertions show that the efficiency of guidance and counselling work depends to a large extent on the levels of self-concepts and job satisfaction among the counselors. It is a well known fact that the educational system can only achieve its laudable objective if the counselors have high or positive concepts and satisfied in their jobs.

Akinade (2012) noted that reception and development of guidance and counselling still faces some challenges. The problems it faces could be grouped as those caused by men, material and money. Although, the rationale for the introduction of guidance and counselling is inserted in the National policy on education (2004), one would have expected the nation to embrace the discipline enthusiastically. However, the contrary is the case, its reception is with suspicion and a wait and see attitude.

Iwuama (2004) noted that some people such as weakly-informed colleagues, principals, teachers or administrators doubt the efficacy of counselling. Such people see the counselor as a person with hidden agenda and some give them negative or derogatory labels. This is more so where the other workers doubt the moral integrity of counselors who give individual counselling to younger ones. Makinde (1988) wrote that the head teachers see the counselors as rivals instead of helpers.

One wonders how the counselors see themselves and their job in the midst of these problems and challenges. One is tempted to ask those questions. What is the level of self-concept of the counselling profession? Are they satisfied with their jobs? Is there any relationship between the self-concept of counselors and their job satisfaction? These questions are the constituents of the study?

2. Research Questions

To carryout the study, three research questions were formulated to guide.

- i. What level of self-concept do experienced and inexperienced guidance counselors in Enugu state Nigeria possess?
- ii. What is the level of job satisfaction of experienced and inexperienced counselors?
- iii. To what extent is the self-concept of counselors related to their job satisfaction?

2.1. Research Design

Descriptive and correlation was the study. A correlational study is a survey or examination of the extent of relationships or lack of it between two major variables (Clark 1997). In this study, the level of self-concept and job satisfaction of counselors was established and through the use of correlation coefficients, the degree of the relationship or lack of it between self-concept and job satisfaction among counselors in Enugu state were also established.

Population of the study: The population for this study consisted of the entire male and female counselors in secondary schools in Enugu state and they were six hundred and forty (640) counselors.

2.2. Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 218 counsellors was selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique.

2.3. Instrument for Data Collection

Two sets of standardized instruments were used because they have been used in a number of studies and have been found to have high validity indexes. One was a self-concept inventory (SCI) developed by clemes and bean (2001). The inventory has two sections; A and B. in section A, the counselors were asked to provide information on their age academic qualifications, rank and gender. Section B of the inventory consists of 20 items on self-concept structured in a four points scale of strongly agrees (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). Every respondent was asked to tick a point on the scale that agreed with the level of his perception. Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.85.

The second instrument was a job satisfaction questionnaire (ISO) developed by the researcher. The questionnaire comprised 20 items that were to elicit information on the level of job satisfaction of counselors. The items were structured on a 4-point scale of High satisfaction, (4) moderate (3) low satisfaction (2) and no satisfaction, Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.88.

2.4. Method of Data Analysis

Mean scores were used in ensuring the research question 1-4. Research question 5 was answered using Pearson product moment correlation. The t-test was used in testing if the correlation coefficient were significant at the 0.5 level of significance.

2.5. Method of Data Analysis

Research Question one: What levels of self-concept of less experienced secondary school counselors in Enugu state, Nigeria possess?

S/N	Self-Concept Category	Mean Rating of Less Experience	Mean Rating of Experience
1	Professional self-concept	2.10	2.32
2	Academic self-concept	2.61	2.96
3	social self-concept	2.02	2.04
4	emotional self-concept	2.50	2.60
	Grand mean	2.31	2.48

Table 1: Mean rating of the self-concept do less experienced secondary school counselors in Enugu state, Nigeria possess?

The analysis presented in table 1, the academic and emotional self-concept was below 2.50 while the mean ratings for professional and social self-concept were below 2.50. This shows that both experienced and less experienced counselors have high academic and emotional self-concept while they have low professional and social self-concept. The grand mean score for experienced teachers was higher than that of less experienced counselor indicating that experienced counselors have higher self-concept than less experienced counselors.

2.6. Research Questions Two

What is the level of job satisfaction of less experienced and experienced counselors?

S/N	Sources of Variation	N	X	Sd
1	Less experienced counselors	118	2.01	0.33
2	Experienced counsellors	100	2.31	0.40

Table 2: Mean ratings of the job satisfaction of less experienced and more experienced counselors.

Analysis presented in table 2 the mean rating of the job satisfaction of less experienced counselors was 2.01 which was below the agreement level of 2.50. The rating of job satisfaction of experienced counselors was 2.31, which was also below the agreement level. This shows that both less experienced and experienced counselors were not satisfied with their job.

2.7. Research Question 3

To what extent is the self-concept of counselors related to their job satisfaction.

Variables	N	EN	Ex ²	E _{xy}	R
Self-concept (X)	20	54.57	152.02		
Job satisfaction (Y)	20	51.45	155.05	155.05	0.04

Table 3: Summary of Pearson r for the relationship between self-concept and job satisfaction of guidance counselors

In table 3, correlation of self-concept and job satisfaction of counselors was 0.04. This value was low. This shows that self-concept of counselors has a low positive relationship with their job satisfaction.

3. Discussion

Research question one showed that the academic and emotional self-concept of both less experienced and experienced counselors were high while their professional and social self-concept were low. This shows that both the less experienced and experienced counselors have high academic and emotional self-concept but they have low professional and social self-concept. In other words, their values, regards, feelings and ideas about the counselling profession and their status as counselors are low. This findings is unfortunate because if teachers have low professional and social self-concept regards and feelings towards their profession and towards themselves as people in the counselling fields, then they are not proud of being counselors, consequently, they are not likely to be committed to performing their jobs, Okoye (2009) found out that counselors with low professional self-concept perform very low and are not committed to their duties. This findings call for serious attention to the feelings of counselors about their job. Educationists like Onu 2008 and Unachukwu 2009 have long recognized that self-concept exerts a powerful influence on role perception and role performance of educational personnel. This also applies to counselors who because of their positive or negative self-concept could see themselves as superior or inferior before other professionals. In support of this view, Iwuama (2012) stated that people tend to behave in a manner that is consistent with the way they view themselves. Therefore, if counselors in this study have low self-concept, it means that they are not proud of their job. On the contrary they may not be committed in performing well.

In answers to research question 2, job satisfaction is influenced by experience. Experienced counselors were found to have greater job satisfaction than less experienced counselors. This finding supports the work of peter (2004) in his study of the relationship between counselors' job satisfaction, self-concept and some demographic variables. He found significant difference in the job satisfaction of counselors based on their years of counselling experience. The counselors might have developed negative self-concept in counselling, perhaps because of unfair treatment given to counselors like irregular payment of salaries and fringe benefits. This finding is also unfortunate because Unachukwu (2009) noted that job satisfaction leads a worker to put in more effort, time and interest into his work and to identify himself with the goals of the organization. In so doing the worker becomes deeply committed to his work. His commitment, enhanced effort, and motivation and loyalty results in the accomplishment of the goals of the organization.

Moreover, a low relationship was found between the job satisfaction of counselors and their self concept. This relationship found between self-concept and job satisfaction indicated that the low self-concept of counselors could be responsible for the low levels of job satisfaction and vice versa. This finding agrees with Iwuama (2012) who discovered that self-concept and job satisfaction are related and that counselors with higher self-concept are more satisfied with their jobs than counselors with lower self-concept. Counselors in this study were found to have academic self-concept implying that they are not fairly treated and respected by the government and the general public, as well as other professionals who probably may have similar educational qualifications with them. It is only recently that government is trying to elevate the level of counselors at least paying their salaries.

4. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- i. Government should carryout an enlightenment campaign about the importance of counselling to the general public.
- ii. Government should employ professional counselors and ensure that only qualified counselors are doing the work of counselling.
- iii. Regular seminars and workshops should be organized for counselors aimed at inculcating positive self-concept in their professions.
- iv. Counselors should be paid as and when due to make them feel satisfied in their job.
- v. The attitude of the public towards the counselor should change to positive.

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