

Counselling Seeking Behaviour and Adjustment of Public Secondary School Students in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated counselling seeking behaviour and adjustment of public secondary school students in Ekiti state, Nigeria. The study specifically determined the relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and adjustment (physical, social, academic and emotional) of public secondary school students. The descriptive research of the survey type was adopted in this study. The population for this study consisted of all senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample for the study consisted of 200 students drawn from 20 public secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample was selected using multistage sampling procedure. A self-developed questionnaire tagged Counselling Seeking Behaviour and Adjustment Questionnaire (CSBANQ) was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated by experts in the area of Guidance and Counselling. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. A co-efficient value of 0.88 was obtained which was considered high enough to make the instrument reliable. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the counselling seeking behaviour of public secondary school students was low and not encouraging. It was further revealed that counselling seeking behaviour was related to physical, social and emotional adjustment of students. It was however revealed that counselling seeking behaviour of students was not related to academic adjustment. It

IJOBAS

Accepted 27 April 2020

Published 30 April 2020

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.3800793

was recommended among others that school should sensitize students on the need to inculcate counselling seeking behaviour and importance of counselling.

Keywords: Counselling Seeking Behaviour, Adjustment, Students,

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Introduction

Ejionueme (2010) describes counselling as a crucial process that addresses students' behavioural content, moral capacities and social tolerance. Asikhia (2010) says that counselling is important because it provides an insight on working knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is necessary to assist young people to be disciplined and be able to deal with challenges and realities they face in their ever changing environment, understand themselves, their academic social and physical environment. Counselling is very important function in avoiding emotional, learning, social, individual and other related difficulties amongst secondary school students. The behaviour of students can be managed through counselling. The policies on counselling have been aimed at preparing students to face challenges they may encounter in and out of the education system (Kauchak, 2011).

Students are counselled to alter any maladjusted behaviour. It appears that when counselling services are provided they help prepare students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and grow in their ability to understand and accept the results of their choices. Counselling is a means of assisting students to be aware and empower them to make intelligent decisions.

Personal experience shows an increase in the cases of physically, socially, academically and emotionally maladjusted students in the secondary school. Due to the challenges that majority of students have been experiencing in schools, it appears that counselling seeking behaviour could influence adjustment of student. The adjustment of an individual has consequences for later adjustment and wellness in other areas of his or her life. Mangal (2007) and Olofintoye (2008) define adjustment as a process of altering behaviour or affective response so as to reach a harmonious relationship with a new or challenging environment, situation or person.

Socially, a student is well adjusted if he does not exhibit withdrawal behaviours and other anti-social behaviours. On the other hand, social adjustment problems could manifest in the form of maladaptive behaviours such as fighting, truancy, bullying, examination malpractice, school violence, cultism, school drop-outs, to mention but a few (Auni, Songok, Odhiambo & Lyanda, 2014). Academic adjustment is the ability of students to cope with academic burdens of the school through personal commitment to achieve academic goals. It is assumed that a good academic adjustment could bring about the passion and motivation a student needs to achieve high academic success. Emotional adjustment according to Sharma and Saini (2014) is the maintenance of emotional equilibrium in the face of internal and external stressor. Some of the salient emotional problems specific to secondary school students are the feeling of inferiority, inability to think properly, worrying too much, feeling that life is not worth living, feeling anxious without apparent reason etc. (Kumaraswamy, 2013).

It appears that counselling seeking behaviour has a very important function in avoiding emotional, physical, social, academic and other related difficulties amongst secondary school learners. It seems that the physical, social, academic and emotional adjustment of students can be managed through counselling seeking behaviour. In view of the above, the study examined counselling seeking behaviour and adjustment of public secondary school students in Ekiti state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

- i. assessed the counselling seeking behaviour of public secondary school students;
- ii. determined the adjustment of public secondary school students;

- iii. examined the relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and physical adjustment of public secondary school students;
- iv. examined the relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and social adjustment of public secondary school students;
- v. determined the relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and academic adjustment of public secondary school students; and
- vi. examined the relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and emotional adjustment of public secondary school students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the counselling seeking behaviour of public secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?
2. What is the extent of adjustment of public secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were generated for this study:

1. There is no significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and physical adjustment of public secondary school students.
2. There is no significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and social adjustment of public secondary school students.
3. There is no significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and academic adjustment of public secondary school students.
4. There is no significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and emotional adjustment of public secondary school students.

Methodology

The descriptive research of the survey type was adopted in this study. Descriptive research was considered appropriate because, it focuses on the observation and perception of the existing situation without manipulation of variables. The population for this study consisted of all senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample for the study consisted of 200 students drawn from 20 public secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample was selected using multistage sampling procedure.

An instrument tagged Counselling Seeking Behaviour and Adjustment Questionnaire (CSBANQ) was used to collect relevant data for the study. Section A of the CSBANQ sought for demographic information about the respondents, Section B sought for information on counselling seeking behaviour of students while Section C consisted of items to elicit information on adjustment of students. Likert type rating scale was used as follows: Always, Sometimes, Rarely and Never.

The instrument was validated by experts in the area of Guidance and Counselling. The experts determined its face and content to ensure the appropriateness of the instrument in measuring what they are supposed to measure. The reliability of CSBANQ was determined by finding the internal consistency of the instrument. In doing this, a pilot study was carried out in a secondary school outside the sampled area. The instrument was administered on 30 respondents. In order to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, data collected was analysed using cronbach's Alpha and yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.88.

The researcher personally visited each of the school sampled to administer the instrument. The data collected through the instrument were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using frequency counts, means,

standard deviation and percentages. Hypotheses 1 – 4 were tested using inferential statistics of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the counselling seeking behaviour of public secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Counselling seeking behaviour of public secondary school students

S/N	Counselling Seeking Behaviour	Always (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)	Mean
1	I book appointment to see the counsellor	12 (6.0%)	9 (4.5%)	111 (55.5%)	68 (34.0%)	1.83
2	I walk into the office of the counsellor.	39 (19.5%)	27 (13.5%)	86 (43.0%)	48 (24.0%)	2.29
3	I walk along with the counsellor as I discuss my challenges.	21 (10.5%)	22 (11.0%)	59 (29.5%)	98 (49.0%)	1.83
4	I send written notes to the counsellor	26 (13.0%)	28 (14.0%)	60 (30.0%)	86 (43.0%)	1.97
5	I make phone calls at home to the counsellor	6 (3.0%)	4 (2.0%)	27 (13.5%)	163 (81.5%)	1.27
6	I prefer sending text messages to the counsellor	9 (4.5%)	16 (8.0%)	24 (12.0%)	151 (75.5%)	1.42
7	I prefer to chat online with the counsellor	11 (5.5%)	14 (7.0%)	21 (4.0%)	154 (77.0%)	1.31

Mean Cut Off: 2.50

Table 1 shows the counselling seeking behaviour of public secondary school students in Ekiti State. The mean marks of all the items were less than 2.50 and therefore rejected. This implies that most of the respondents (students) rarely or never book appointment to see the counsellor; they rarely or never walk into the office of the counsellor, they rarely or never walk along with the counsellor as they discuss their challenges; they rarely or never send written notes to the counsellor; they rarely or never make phone calls at home to the counsellor; they rarely or never send text messages to the counsellor; and they rarely or never chat online with the counsellor. It can be concluded that the counselling seeking behaviour of public secondary school students in Ekiti State is low and not encouraging.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of adjustment of public secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Summary of adjustment of public secondary school students

S/N	Adjustment	N	Mean Average	S.D.	Ranking
1	Physical	200	2.51	0.61	2 nd
2	Social	200	2.46	0.51	3 rd
3	Academic	200	2.59	0.53	1 st
4	Emotional	200	2.30	0.49	4 th

Table 2 shows the mean summary of the adjustment of public secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The table revealed that the students' academic adjustment was greater than other adjustment, closely followed by physical adjustment, social

adjustment and emotional adjustment. The graph below shows the adjustment of public secondary school students at a glance.

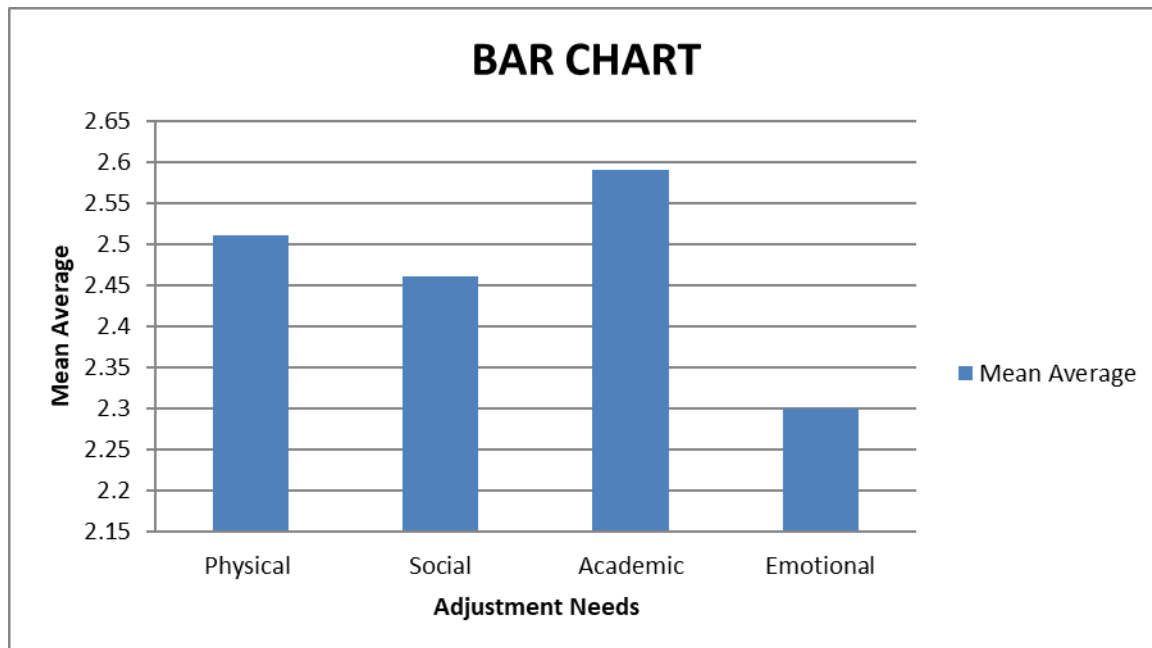


Figure i: Bar chart showing adjustment of public secondary school students in Ekiti State

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and physical adjustment of public secondary school students.

Table 3: Relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and physical adjustment

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Counselling Seeking Behaviour	200	11.92	1.92	0.359*	0.003
Physical Adjustment	200	2.51	0.61		

*P<0.05

Table 3 showed that the r-cal value of 0.359 was significant at 0.05 level because the P-value (0.003) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and physical adjustment of public secondary school students. This implies that counselling seeking behaviour is moderately related to physical adjustment of students. As counselling seeking behaviour increases, physical adjustment of students increases.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and social adjustment of public secondary school students.

Table 4: Relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and social adjustment

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Counselling Seeking Behaviour	200	11.92	1.92	0.501*	0.000
Social Adjustment	200	2.46	0.51		

*P<0.05

Table 4 showed that the r-cal value of 0.501 was significant at 0.05 level because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and social adjustment of public secondary school students. This implies that counselling seeking behaviour is moderately related to social adjustment of students. As counselling seeking behaviour increases, social adjustment of students increases.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and Academic adjustment of public secondary school students.

Table 5: Relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and Academic adjustment

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Counselling Seeking Behaviour	200	11.92	1.92	0.059	0.403
Academic Adjustment	200	2.59	0.53		

P>0.05

Table 5 showed that the r-cal value of 0.059 was not significant at 0.05 level because the P-value (0.403) > 0.05. The null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and academic adjustment of public secondary school students.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and emotional adjustment of public secondary school students.

Table 6: Relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and emotional adjustment

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Counselling Seeking Behaviour	200	11.92	1.92	0.297*	0.000
Emotional Adjustment	200	2.30	0.49		

*P<0.05

Table 6 showed that the r-cal value of 0.297 was significant at 0.05 level because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and emotional adjustment of public secondary school students. This implies that counselling seeking behaviour is lowly related to emotional adjustment of students. As counselling seeking behaviour increases, emotional adjustment of students increases.

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that the counselling seeking behaviour of public secondary school students in Ekiti State was low and not encouraging. The findings of the study showed that there was significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and physical adjustment of public secondary school students. Counselling seeking behaviour was moderately related to physical adjustment of students. That is, as counselling seeking behaviour increases, physical adjustment of students increases. In line with this finding, Alemu (2013) and Ng'eno (2012) found that counselling seeking behaviour was related to students' physical adjustment.

It was also revealed from the findings that there was significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and social adjustment of public secondary school students. Counselling seeking behaviour was moderately related to social adjustment of students. That

is, as counselling seeking behaviour increases, social adjustment of students increases. Auni, Songok, Odhiambo and Lyanda (2014) found that counselling seeking behaviour was significantly and positively related to students' social adjustment. Contrary to this finding, Alemu (2013) found that counselling services were not significantly related to students' social adjustment. It could be inferred that when students have seek counselling service, there will be improvement in their social adjustment.

However, the findings of the study revealed that there was no significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and academic adjustment of public secondary school students. In consonance with this finding, Auni, Songok, Odhiambo and Lyanda (2014) concluded that counselling seeking behaviour has no relationship with students' academic adjustment.

The findings of the study further showed that there was significant relationship between counselling seeking behaviour and emotional adjustment of public secondary school students. Though, counselling seeking behaviour was lowly related to emotional adjustment of students. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Ndirangu (2007) and Alemu (2013) who found significant relationship between counselling service and emotional adjustment of secondary school students. It implies that when students seek for counselling services, there is always a better adjustment in emotional behaviour of students.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that counselling seeking behaviour of public secondary school students in Ekiti State was low and not encouraging. It was also concluded that counselling services is very effective in ensuring physical, social and emotional adjustment of students in secondary schools as counselling seeking behaviour of students was related to their physical, social and emotional adjustment. However, counselling seeking behaviour of students was not related to academic adjustment.

Recommendations

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

1. The school should sensitize students on the need to inculcate counselling seeking behaviour and importance of counselling.
2. School counsellors should regularly make follow-ups to examine students' physical, social and emotional adjustment after they have received counselling services.

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Cite this article:

Author(s), ONIJIGIN, E.O. (Ph.D)(2020). "Counselling Seeking Behaviour and Adjustment of Public Secondary School Students in Ekiti State, Nigeria". Name of the Journal: *International Journal of Academic Research in Business, Arts and Science*, (IJARBAS.COM), P, 127- 135. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3800793> , Issue: 4, Vol.: 2, Article: 13, Month: April, Year: 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.ijarbas.com/all-issues/>

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