

Counselling Needs of Pupils with Autism in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the counselling needs of pupils with Autism in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. To carry out this study, 3 research questions were formulated to guide the study. The survey research design was employed. The population for the study is 210, comprising of 176 pupils and 34 teachers and counsellors from the 3 private primary schools in Enugu East Local Government. The sample size is 24, 15 pupils and 9 teachers/counsellors which was proportionately drawn from the population. A self-structured questionnaire with 16 items and an interview guide was developed by the researcher called counselling needs of pupils with autism (CNPWA). It was a 4 point response option and was validated by 3 experts, one each from guidance and counselling, psychology and measurement and evaluation departments. The instruments were tried trial tested and the data collected was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate. The study revealed that autism exists among primary school pupils, that the autistic pupils have various counselling needs including socio/emotional, educational, communicational and physical and health. Recommendations were made for intervention on the basis of the findings. They include, further investigations on this study, parents awareness to prevent problems at home and school environment, individualized education programme or pupils with autism to meet their needs and challenges as well as inclusive education to help them associate and interact freely with their colleagues and peers using of milder and more productive punishments on them to correct their unacceptable behaviour, establishment of functional guidance and counselling units in all inclusive and special primary schools and organization of workshops for parents, teachers, counsellors and administrators of schools.

Keywords: Autism, Counselling Needs, Pupils.

INTRODUCTION

Guidance is considered as a 'continuing process concerned with determining and providing for the developmental needs of "learners". Counselling is learning oriented process which usually occurs in an interactive relationship with the aim of helping the client learn more about him/herself. Guidance and counselling aims at bringing about maximum development and self realization of

human potentials for the benefit of the individual and the society [1, 2, 3]. In a school, the programme assists students in harmonizing their abilities, interests and values and enables them to develop their full potentials. It directs students on the appropriate subject choices that would enable them to make and take lifelong decisions with regards to their career choices. It also assists them in solving

educational, social and psychological problems. It further helps them to adjust generally to school life especially now that our educational system condoles inclusiveness [4].

In recent times, the mode of handling social problems has proved ineffective, culminating in the increased occurrence of challenged children of which autistic pupils are a part of in addition to psychosocial concerns and maladaptive behaviours exhibited by our youths [4]. [5] described the modern day society as a dynamic one with a complex social, economic and legislative system that creates challenges for the school, pupils, parents and communities at large. Some of these challenges are difficulties in meeting personal needs, challenges in realizing life aspirations, high levels of ignorance, failure in some life endeavors, [6], psychological stress and socio-economic problems, [7]. In reaction to these frustrations, pupils with autism express withdrawal behaviors, unhappiness, annoyance, anger, anxiety and hyperactivity which tend to have debilitating effects on their relationships with significant others in the life of the child [8]. Autism has become an area of intense research focus in the last ten years as well as how to help them improve [9].

The incidence rate of autism shows that the prevalence of autism had risen to 1

out of 59 eight year olds births in the United States and almost 1 in 54 boys Centers for Disease Control (CDC) a United States Government Agency, (2018), Autism is one of the most common developmental disabilities. People with autism also called Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), have differences in the way their brain develop and process information. As a result, they face significant communication, social and behaviour challenges. One way of helping autistic pupils to overcome their challenges in school is through the effective implementation of the guidance and counselling programme [10].

The first organized formal career guidance services for the students in Nigeria were held in Ibadan in 1959. The school guidance and counselling programme have therefore been introduced to assist students overcome the number of challenges they experience at home and at school, also to address the various personal needs of learners. The programme primarily aims at providing opportunities for each pupil to reach his/her full potential in the educational, vocational, social and emotional areas of their lives. It also teaches pupils decision making skills, and the ability to meaningfully plan their life goals [11]. [12], additionally observed that the lack of school guidance services increase dropout rates among academically weak

or challenged pupils, while [13], opined that pupils who lack concentration; self confidence and constantly fail in their academic endeavours require guidance and counselling support.

The goals of counselling on the other hand are more specific it includes assisting pupils to overcome their emotional problems, [14] and change their maladjusted behaviours. It also helps pupils fulfill their potentials and facilitates their overall adjustment, both in school and society. Counselling further enables pupils to make optimum use of available opportunities for the successful achievement of their life goals, [15].

The need for school guidance and counselling was highlighted in the report that about twenty percent of pupils in schools today would at a point need some form of extra provision to meet their special educational needs. For this reason, [16], observed that the role of the school counsellor in recent years has been modified to include helping to meet the needs of pupils with Autism. When it comes to best practice, there is certainly a role for the counsellor in assisting the child, parents and families of children with autism. Knowing the symptoms of each disorder is necessary, but there are other fundamental components of which to be aware. Specifically, it is critical for the counsellor to ridicule or expose unhelpful false believes and

misperceptions about autism spectrum disorder, to identify the individual strengths of children with an ASD, and to be familiar with the common struggles experienced not only by children on the autism spectrum but also those struggles experienced by their parents and siblings so as to offer strengths based approach to serving the child and family [17].

The current study reflects [18], client centered counselling theory which proposes that people have a natural actualizing tendency to fulfill their potentials and become the best in life. However this will be impossible without the right therapeutic relationship which enables them to gain insight into their challenges and make meaningful adjustment to progress in life. The therapeutic relationship according to Rogers revolves round empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard and genuineness, [19]. When others deny clients acceptance and positive regards, clients lose touch with the meaning of their own experiences and thus stifle their innate tendency to grow in a meaningful direction. Pupils with autism have a natural tendency to study, grow and self actualize when given the right and needed support. With a therapeutic relationship from counsellors, teachers, administrator, siblings, parents, colleague pupils and even ministry of

education, they will naturally build and actualize themselves [20].

The theory further emphasizes that the clients self concept is the key in defining who he or she is and his or her subsequent behaviour. These are equally relevant to the current study [21]. Roger's theory defines the self concept to comprise two major viewpoints, name the client's image of his or herself as perceived by others, and secondly, the image of what the clients desires to be. This implies that the perceptions others have for the client, profoundly influences his or her self-concept and suggests that parents, teachers, administrator and all others play a critical role in influencing the pupils self-concept [22]. The interaction school staff and colleague have with pupils with autism thus gravely impact on them. With good. school guidance and counseling services, staff

Statement of the Problem

The needs of pupils with autism necessitate immense guidance and counselling support services. This service significantly assists the pupils in their adjustment at home and to school life and further, enhance their psycho-social and educational development. The main concern is improving the self image of pupils with autism as well as meeting up with their needs, present critical

and pupils will better relate with each other to enhance the development and .interactions of pupils in schools [23, 24, 25].

Apart from representing the client's awareness of him or herself, the self-concept is additionally projected in the client centered theory as the major tool by which he or she socially assesses him or herself and further seeks self-actualization. It is pertinent to note that most of the works reviewed are foreign and even those that were carried out on autistic children were done outside the setting of the researcher's interest. This gap in knowledge and learning is what the researcher intended to fill. As a result of this, the researcher got motivated to investigate the counselling needs of pupils with autism in primary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria.

implicates for counselling. This study sought to ascertain the existence of autism among primary school pupils, the social, emotional, communicational and educational needs of the pupils with autism and the level of educations at which pupils with autism require guidance counselling in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate into the counselling needs of pupils with autism in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. establish the existence of autism among primary school pupils in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State

2. establish the counselling needs of pupils with autism in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State.
3. determine the level of education at which pupils with autism require guidance and counselling support.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study.

1. To what extent does Autism exist among primary school pupils in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State?
2. What are the counseling needs of pupils with Autism in Enugu East

Local Government Area of Enugu State.

3. At which level of education do pupils with Autism require guidance and counselling support in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State?

Research Methodology

The study was carried out in three selected private schools in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. The population for the study consisted of the teachers/counsellors and pupils of the three selected private schools in Enugu East Local Government of Enugu State. They are St. Paul's primary school, God's Grace Academy, and Madonna Int'l School. The total population in all schools was 210. There were 60 pupils in St. Paul's primary school and 10 teachers & counsellors, 80 pupils and 15 teachers and counsellors in God's Grace Academy,

and 36 pupils and 9 teachers & counsellors in Madonna Int'l School. The sample that was used in this study includes the three (3) selected private primary schools in the area with 8 respondents drawn from each selected schools. There were 3 teachers/counsellors and 5 pupils in each selected school, which was 24 respondents for the selected three schools. The sample technique used was purposive sampling in which all the pupils and teachers/counsellors of the

schools had equal chances of being selected.

Total (N) 24

Teacher 3 x 3 = 9

Pupils 5 x 3 = 15

The two main instruments that were used for data collection in this research area are self-designed questionnaire and a self structured interview guide. The questionnaire title is counselling needs of pupils with autism (CNPWA). The questionnaire has 16 items well structured for the students and the teachers/counsellors. The instruction has a 4 point response scale with response category of strongly agreed, agreed, strongly disagreed and disagreed. The questionnaire was validated through a pilot test in the institution by three parts each in guidance and counselling department, psychology department and measurement and evaluation department all from faculty of education, Enugu state

university of science and technology (ESUT) Enugu. The experts reviewed the questionnaire items, made necessary corrections and suggestions. Their views formed the validation of the instrument. A test estimate was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered on 24 respondents. The reliability of the data was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. Out of the 24 questionnaires that were distributed, all were returned because the population size is small therefore, presenting 62.5% of 15 respondents of the pupils and 37.5% of 9 respondents of the teachers/counsellors totaling 100% return.

Category	St. Paul's primary school		God's Grace Academy		Madonna Int'l School		Total		Percentage returns (%)
	Samples issued	Samples returned	Samples issued	Samples returned	Samples issued	Samples returned	Samples issued	Samples returned	
Pupils	5	5	5	5	5	5	15	15	62.5
Teachers/counsellors	3	3	3	3	3	3	9	9	37.5
Total Size							24	24	100%

Data collected was analyzed using mean with standard deviation and grand mean.

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Where, Σ = Summation, f = Frequency, x = Nominal, N =Total number of response,

\bar{x} = Mean value.

Average means score of 2.5 was gotten therefore, any mean score of 2.5 and above was regarded as agreed while any mean score below 2.5 was regarded as disagreed.

RESULTS

Research Questions 1: To what extent does autism exist among primary school pupils in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State?

Table 1: Mean ratings of the responses of pupils and Teachers/Counsellors on the extent to which autism exist among primary school pupils in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State.

S/N	Items	Returned Respondents	Rating			Scale			SD	Decision
			4	3	2	1	N	\bar{X}		
1	Autism exists among pupils in Enugu East LGA	Pupils	05	08	-	02	15	3.27	1.03	A
	Autism exists among pupils in Enugu East LGA	(Teachers/Counsellors	06	03	-	-	09	3.27	0.50	A
2	Autism can occur in any family, Irrespective of race, status or religion	Pupils	09	04	-	02	15	3.33	1.05	A
	Autism can occur in any family, Irrespective	(Teachers/Counsellors	05	03	-	01	09	3.33	1.00	A

	of race, status or religion									
3	Autism differs in occurrence with the age of pupils	Pupils	10	03	02	-	15	3.53	0.74	A
	Autism differs in occurrence with the age of pupils	(Teachers/Counsellors	04	03	02	-	09	3.22	0.83	A
	Autism is a disorder not a disease	Pupils	12	-	-	03	15	3.40	1.24	A
	Autism is a disorder not a disease	Teachers/Counsellors	07	-	02	-	09	3.56	0.88	A
	Grand Mean:	Pupils						3.38	1.02	A
		Teachers/Counsellors						3.45	0.80	A

Table 1 shows the responses of the pupils and teacher/counsellors on the existence of autism in primary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. All the respondents acknowledged the existence of autism as they recorded mean scores of 3.27, 3.33, 3.53 and 3.40 for pupils and 3.67, 3.33, 3.22 and 3.56 for teachers/counsellors which are all above the average mean score of 2.50. The standard deviation for all the items are small signifying that there is homogeneity in the responses of the

respondents. The Table also shows that the respondents grand mean score for the items raised for the pupils and the teachers counsellors are (3.38 and 3.45). From the foregoing, the answers to research question one is that autism exists among primary school pupils in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State since the grand mean scores of both the pupils and teachers counsellors are above the cut-off point of 2.50.

Research Questions 2: What are the counselling needs of pupils with Autism in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State?

on the counselling needs of pupils with Autism in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Table 2: Mean ratings of the responses of pupils and Teachers/Counsellors

		Rating scale								
		Returned	4	3	2	1				
S/N	Items	Respondents	SA	A	D	SD	N	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
A. Communication Needs										
5.	Autism pupils are not respected among their colleagues	Pupils	08	05	-	02	15	3.27	1.03	A
		Teachers	06	03	-	-	09	3.67	0.50	A
6	Colleagues and teachers hardly, Talk with them in schools	Pupils	09	04	-	02	15	3.33	1.05	A
		Teachers	05	03	-	01	09	3.33	1.00	A
7	They hardly interact with their parents and sibling	Pupils	10	03	02	-	15	3.40	1.06	A
		Teachers	04	03	02	-	09	3.22	0.83	A
B. Social/emotional needs										
8	Their colleagues often tease them at school	Pupils	12	-	-	03	15	3.40	1.24	A
		Teachers	07	-	02	-	09	3.56	0.88	A
9	Their teachers make fun of, them when teaching in the class	Pupils	09	04	-	02	15	3.33	1.05	A
		Teachers	01	03	-	05	09	2.00	1.23	D
10	The teachers in school easily scold them whenever they make least mistake	Pupils	10	03	02	-	15	3.53	0.74	A
		Teachers	-	04	05	-	09	2.44	0.53	D
C. Educational needs										
11	Their teachers are mostly willing to help them with their difficulties	Pupils	12	-	-	03	15	3.40	1.24	A
		Teachers	07	-	02	-	09	3.56	0.88	A
12	Their teachers make fun of, them when teaching in the class	Pupils	-	02	04	09	15	1.53	0.74	D
		Teachers	-	03	01	05	09	1.78	0.97	D

13 Their parents and siblings									
does not help them do	Pupils	-	02	03	10	15	1.47	0.74	D
their homework	Teachers	-	02	03	04	09	1.78	0.83	D
Grand Mean:									
	Pupils						2.96	0.99	A
	Teachers/Counsellors						2.82	0.85	A

Data in Table 2 revealed the counselling needs of pupils with Autism in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. In the area of communication needs, respondents agreed that autistic pupils are not respected among their colleagues as they recorded mean scores of 3.27, 3.33 and 3.40 and 3.67, 3.33 and 3.22 for teachers/counsellors which are above the average mean score of 2.50. In the area of social/emotional needs, respondents agreed that autistic pupils are not respected among their colleagues as they recorded mean scores of 3.40, 3.33 and 3.53 and 3.56 for teachers/counsellors which are above the average mean score of 2.50. For teachers counsellors also indicated that in respect to their social needs that pupils with autism hardly interact with their parents and siblings at home due to the speech difficulties. They also acknowledged that the colleagues of the autistic pupils often teased them at school while the teachers disagreed with the mean scores 2.00 and 2.44 which is below the average mean score of 2.50. In the area of educational needs, respondents agreed that their teachers are mostly willing to help them with their

difficulties as they recorded mean scores of 3.53 and 3.40 for pupils which are above the average mean score of 2.50. They also affirmed that their teachers do not make fun of them when teaching in the class with a mean score 1.53 and 1.78 and that their parents and sibling help them do their homework with means scores of 1.47 and 1.78 for pupils and teachers counsellors. For teachers counsellors also indicated that in respect to their social needs that pupils with autism hardly interact with their parents and siblings at home due to the speech difficulties. They also acknowledged that the colleagues of the autistic pupils often teased them at school and that staff in school easily scolded them whenever they make least mistake while the teachers disagreed with the mean scores 2.00 and 2.44 which are below the average mean score of 2.50. The standard deviation for all the items are small signifying that there is homogeneity in the responses of the respondents. The Table also shows that the respondents grand mean score for the items raised for the pupils and the teachers counsellors are (2.96 and 2.82)

Going by the decision rule, it therefore means that the counselling needs of pupils with Autism in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State are communication needs, social/emotional needs and educational needs.

Research Questions 3: At which level of education do pupils with Autism require

guidance and counselling support in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State?

Table 3: Mean ratings of the responses of the level of education by which the pupils with Autism require guidance and counselling support in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State.

		Rating scale									
		Returned	4	3	2	1					
S/N	Items	Respondents	SA	A	D	SD	N	\bar{x}	SD	Decision	
14 Their problems started early in lower primary with guidance services to help them avoid personal problem											
		Pupils	-	02	05	08	15	1.60	0.73	D	
		Teachers	-	-	03	06	09	1.33	0.50	D	
15 They started school on time and started enjoying guidance and counselling services at upper primary											
		Pupils	09	04	-	02	15	3.33	1.05	A	
		Teachers	05	03	-	01	09	3.33	1.00	A	
16 They started school late but started counselling services at upper primary											
		Pupils	10	03	02	-	15	3.53	0.74	A	
		Teachers	04	03	02	-	09	3.22	0.83	A	
Grand Mean:		Pupils							2.82	0.84	A
		Teachers/Counsellors							2.63	0.77	A

Table 3 showed the response of pupils and teachers/counsellors on the issue of educational needs. Majority of the respondents disagreed to the statement that their problems started early on lower primary with guidance services to help them avoid their personal problems, the statistics show that 1.60 and 1.33 of the

pupils and teachers/counsellors disagreed with average mean scores below 2.50.

Majority of the respondents agreed to the statement that they started school on time and started enjoying guidance and counselling services in upper primary with mean score of 3.33 and 3.33 for

pupils and teacher/counsellors which are above the average mean score of 2.50. Also Table 3 revealed that majority of the respondents agreed to the statement that they started school late but started enjoying school guidance and counselling services in upper primary with mean scores of 3.53 for pupils and 3.22 for

teacher/counsellors mean scores above 2.50.

Going by the decision rule, it therefore means that pupils with autism started enjoying guidance and counselling support on time even when they started school late in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State.

DISCUSSION

Research question 1 revealed that autism exists among primary school pupils in Enugu East Local Area of Enugu State. This does not agree with Okey's (2017) which labeled autism as a white man's disorder. His view could be as a result low awareness in Nigeria, which could have led to wrong diagnosis putting autism children at risk of being neglected. The attestation of 72.9% from the respondents of the existence of autism among primary school pupils in Enugu East Government Area of Enugu State confirms the finding from centre for Disease Control and prevention (CDC), (2011) study that autism exists everywhere in the world. The attestation also confirmed CDC (2018), updated on the incidence rate of autism among eight year olds in the United States. The study further revealed that autism can occur in any family irrespective of race, social status or religion, autism differs in occurrence by age. Autism is a spectrum disorder and not a disease.

Research question 2 revealed the categories of needs expressed by pupils

with autism as communication, social/emotional and educational. These findings justified observations of child (1993) as quoted by Ocansey and Gyimah, (2016) that pupils are adversely affected by their personal - emotional, social and academic difficulties. The findings further corroborates UNESCO (2012) report that the counselling needs of pupils with autism mostly focuses on issues like withdrawal behaviour, unhappiness, annoyance, anger, anxiety, hyperactivity, poor interpersonal relationship, dependency and lack of motivation. They often express such behaviours in response to their life's frustrations.

Communication needs were also found to create challenges for pupils especially in their interaction with their parents, siblings, colleagues and teachers. Without meaningful and effective communication, pupil's studies are impeded. Communication is the only means for humans to control their social environment (Heward, 2015). A successful implementation of inclusive education

thus depends on the extent to which members of the regular school are ready to interact with each other. It will therefore imply that measures are put in place.

In respect to social /emotional needs, the findings that teachers scolded, beat and insulted pupils in some of the studied schools leaves much to be desired. Cohn and Cantor (2015) and the Council on Scientific Affairs, American Medical Association (2015), confirmed the existence of verbal abuse (insults) in elementary, middle and higher schools. Cohn and Cantor specifically reported that as many as twenty five percent teachers perceived bullying as normal in schools and would thus not intervene when they saw any such incident taking place. Reports of caning emphasized many server damaging and long-term psychological effects on its victims. The effects include guilt feelings, shame, anxiety and poor social relationships in pupils, Bacumeister, Campbell, Knieger & Vohs, (2013). All these effects of canning create a crippling

psychological environment for the development of pupils as emphasized by the client- centered theory.

Insults and ridicules from teachers, as found by the study also debunks reports by Walton, Nel, Hugo and Multer, (2019) who project teachers as the direct providers of learner support in inclusive schools. The teacher mistreatment of

pupils as found by the current study can adversely affect the relationship pupils have with their teachers in schools. It can also trigger negative academic behaviours like truancy, absenteeism and dropout Agaba, (2014). The current study findings thus portray a contrary picture of teachers and it could be useful to eradicate the unacceptable teacher behaviours through the provision of teacher support in inclusive schools.

Social/ emotional challenges like teasing, rejection, lack of advice and comfort as reported by the pupils, have also been confirmed by Heward, (2015). Study findings on pupils social/emotional needs generally have implications for their personal development and self-actualization according to Abraham Maslow's needs achievement theory (1969). In this theory the need for love, care and a sense of belonging significantly enhances the individual's personal growth, Coan, (2016). The pupil's lack of love, care and belonging thus exposes them to low self-esteem, timidity and delayed self-actualization.

In respect to educational needs, pupils also highlighted various educational needs in their interactions their colleagues, teachers, parents and siblings. Reports of rejection, denial of academic support and disrespect from colleagues put the pupils at risk of inferiority complex, low self-esteem and lack of respect. During the interview, the pupils

further request for their colleagues to help them in their studies. The pupils further highlight a lack of therapeutic environment as reflected by Roger's client-centered theory. Rogers (1959) theory was of the view that if people can fulfill their potentials and become the best in life, it will depend more on the nature of their environment. Without the right therapeutic relationship, this would be impossible.

Through such interactions, pupils will gain insights into their challenges and make meaningful adjustments to progress in life. This therapeutic relationship revolves round empathic understanding, unconditional positive regards and genuineness.

Again, the element of peer teaching could be inferred from the pupils' request for their colleagues to help them in their studies. Peer teaching in effect could be used in special and inclusive schools to enhance studies among pupil and inclusive school to enhance studies among pupils with autism and also help pupils overcome their communication and social difficulties. This is because peer teaching facilitates interaction among peers.

Research question 3 revealed that many pupils with autism received guidance services at the upper primary level. This discovery was found to be reassuring and timely as pupils mostly confirmed

their need for the services at the upper primary level. They further confirmed the significance of the service in helping them adjust at school. The primary school years are considered the pivot for the future personality development of the child (Egbo, 2015). Guidance and counselling is accordingly employed as a "prolific tool" to promote talent discovery, the identification of abilities potentials and weakness at the premature child's development (Egbo, 2015). The service also address the vocational and socio-personal needs of the children and it is essential to provide guidance and counselling support, early at the primary school, for the enhanced development of pupils (Egbo, 2015).

As a result of these findings there is need to intensify the creation of knowledge and awareness of autism among the citizenry. This will help stop the wrong labeling of autistic children in order to take their children for early diagnosis and interaction therapies thereby minimizing the challenges and difficulties associated with symptoms of autism. Lessons should thus be drawn from the findings to make provision and facilitate the social development of pupils with autism. It is thus imperative for social institutes like the school, church, home and work places to urgently assist in meeting the unique needs of autistic pupils to enhance their adjustment in' society.

Implications of the study findings

A number of this study finding has implications for inclusive education in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. One key means of meeting the counselling needs of pupils with autism is by institutionalizing an effective and professional counselling service centers in inclusive schools. Walton, Nel, Hugo and Muller, (2019), counselling services are necessary in inclusive schools due to the diverse needs of pupils in inclusive classrooms. Counsellors and teachers should take care of their needs in the teaching learning situation. Teachers should employ teaching materials that will accommodate autistic

pupils and their challenges. Regular seminars or workshops should be organized by counsellors to create awareness of autism disorder. Counsellors and psychologists should come up with intervention programmes for parents, siblings, teachers and administration manage autistic pupils in the home and school environments. Equally important is the finding that pupils with autism desire counselling services at the upper primary school. Essentially, pupils at the upper primary classes are considered more matured to take advantage of available school resources to meet their personal needs.

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that all the pupils in primary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State are the same. Some are autistic who need special attention and treatment in order to get along with their peers and cope with their academic work in school. The study further revealed that parents' level of awareness about autism is very low. The study also revealed some important counselling needs of pupils with autism. The findings draw the attention of educators to some relevant factors that create healthy environments and supportive schools to improve the academic achievement of pupils.

The result of the finding is consistent with the African network for the

protection against child abuse and neglect (ANPPCAN, 2017) study that ascertained, the level of knowledge and awareness on autism among workers and public in Enugu State and Okey Martins (2017) that the level of awareness about autism is low among the public. Low awareness about autism may increase the children's risk of the disorder. On the whole, the study has been beneficial in unearthing some hindrances that affects schooling for pupils with autism. With the various needs of autistic pupils identified, stakeholders must be poised to plan and address the crucial needs pupil's country wide. It is hoped that the finding of the study will be considered with all urgency to enable pupils with autism in Enugu

RECOMMENDATION

From the above study findings, the following were recommended:

Awareness levels of parents should be increased to prevent problems at home and school environments, also that more of this study should be carried out in order to create more awareness among parents and the public. Individualized education programme (IEP) for pupils with autism disorder should be established to meet their needs and challenges.

In view of the adverse effects of caning on pupils with autism it is recommended that Enugu State Ministry of education should reinforce the ban on the use of cane in both inclusive schools and special schools in Enugu State. Milder and more productive forms of punishments like the writing of lines, sweeping the classrooms, or school compound, dusting classroom furniture or the arrangement of books in cupboard could be adopted to correct their unacceptable behaviours.

Additionally, the zonal guidance and counseling unit in Enugu State Ministry of education should collaborate with appropriate stakeholders within the various zones to organize annual sensitization workshops for staff in primary schools and some family members of the autistic pupils in Enugu

East Local Government Area. These workshops should mostly involve simulation exercises and role plays on building positive relationships with autistic pupils to prepare the staff better interactions in primary schools. The ministry of education should collaborate with the special education unit to establish guidance and counselling units in all inclusive and special primary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area. Once established, the units should be adequately resourced to enable the counsellors execute their role affectively. To avoid work overload, on these counsellors, the services psychologist and a team of para-professional should be employed. This would establish a therapeutic environment as highlighted by Roger's client-centered theory in the schools to facilitate the pupils' development. Term reports on the activities of the counselling centres must be presented to the special education Units at the zonal education service offices. Personnel from these zonal education units should also monitor the activities of these centers at least once a term to ensure that work is going on efficiently.

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