

Perception of Counsellors' Location on the Suitability of Disciplinary Counselling Strategy for Curbing Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the perception of counsellors' location on the suitability of disciplinary strategy for curbing examination malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the extent to which urban counsellors and rural counsellors perceive disciplinary strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study raised one research question and one hypothesis and adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 319 Urban Counsellors and 126 rural counsellors. Data were collected from the 445 secondary school counsellors currently serving in the 445 government owned secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. All the 445 copies of the instrument were distributed and retrieved. Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the entire instrument. Data collected were used to analyze the research question using mean, grand mean and standard deviation and t-test statistic was used to test the hypothesis. The findings showed that urban and rural counselors perceived disciplinary strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent. The finding of the hypothesis also showed that there is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of Urban Counsellors' and Rural Counsellors on the suitability of systematic desensitization as strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. Hence, recommendation was made based on the findings.

Keywords: Disciplinary Counseling Strategy, Urban counselors and Rural Counselors

INTRODUCTION

Examination malpractice has been a problem affecting the quality of education worldwide and in turn has negative implications on the overall development of the Nation. Despite all efforts by professionals in the education sector and policy makers to curb the wide spread of examination malpractice, examination malpractice still prevails in most secondary schools. This could be due to the level of moral decay in the society whereby students see reasons to engage in unethical examination behaviours as the only means of attaining academic success. It is the duty of the professional counsellor to confront their own prejudices and vulnerabilities and so increase their self-awareness of their own problems by working through them. By taking this route the counsellor will be less likely to project them onto their

clients. If during the counselor's practicing, old issues that were never fully resolved are brought back to the fore then it is the duty of the counsellor to seek therapy in order that they can resolve them.

The personal and professional qualities of counsellors are very important in facilitating any helping relationship [1]. A guidance counsellor must be well equipped to assist individuals to make adjustments and live a happy and harmonious life. The adjustment can be with regard to the school and curriculum, vocation and personality. For effective counseling, the counsellor must be equipped with two kinds of data. First he must have data relating to the counsellee's background aptitudes, achievements, interests, plans etc. Further, he must have the skill to

interpret this data. Secondly, the guidance counsellor must have information about the areas in which the counsellee may seek his assistance. These areas may be educational or personal. With these two kinds of information he assists the counsellee to match his individual patterns of potentiality with appropriate opportunity. As the process of counselling develops, both the counsellor and counsellee must arrive at a common ground. Guidance Counsellors who continually develop their self awareness skills are in touch with their values, thoughts and feelings. They are likely to have a clear perception of their needs and that of their client's and accurately assess both. Such awareness can help them be honest with themselves and others. They are able to be more congruent and build trust simultaneously. Guidance Counsellors who possess this type of knowledge are most likely to communicate accurately. This is because, the guidance counsellors are concerned about what the problem is and what strategy is suitable for the particular problem in question in this case examination malpractice. A guidance counsellor is also interested in finding out the cheat and spending time to help him or her get out of the inappropriate behaviour than worry about the person's location because they believe that there are people who are naturally cheats even when a good environment is provided for him or her. Counsellors' choice of disciplinary strategy seem to be the most suitable strategy to conquer the undesirable behaviour which urging the individual to learn a new desirable behaviour is the counsellor's sole responsibility. Disciplinary strategy is a strategy to erase the unwanted behaviour through engaging in disciplinary activities such as introducing a forum whereby students will be told of the importance of self discipline and good conduct towards examination by members who are disciplined themselves for effectiveness. [2] opined that students caught in examination malpractice should be gainfully punished in accordance with section 1-10 of the examination

Ani malpractice Act No. 33 of 1999 constitution. [3] encouraged that students should be thoroughly searched before and during examination to discover students who have prepared themselves to cheat. Likewise, [4] noted that there should be adequate supervision of students during examination by a competent supervisor who should be given award to restore the credibility of qualifications given to students. [5] in his contribution suggested that a special court, just like that of robbers, be set up to try examination cheats unlike [6] who opined that students with examination malpractice record should be expelled from schools [7] assert that examination malpractice affects students' integrity irrespective of their locations. Engaging in it will deprive them a position of respect in the society and the world at large. However, students from rural areas are more prone to committing examination malpractice than students from urban areas who have all it takes to prepare for their exams yet they indulge in the menace of examination malpractice. Counseling according to [8] is a professional advice about a problem. Strategy on the other hand is a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose by the guidance counsellors whether he or she is in urban areas or rural areas. Every counselling strategy is meant to help individuals who have problems irrespective of the location of the guidance counsellors and the clients. Then location as a variable in the discourse noted that rural schools are fertile grounds for examination malpractice because of lack professional counsellors [9]. [10] calls for the need of guidance services to be instituted in both urban and rural secondary schools to systematically erase this menace of examination malpractice. For [11] ascertained that guidance and counselling services are in the Urban because the supervisors of schools from the state schools management Board visit almost schools in the urban area than they do in the rural ones. Some teachers and principals connive with students and their parents to sustain examination malpractice in rural schools. Sometimes

they go free because committed supervisors feel very unsafe to go into rural schools following threats from potential defaulters to harm or even terminate their lives. In Enugu State, the issue of examination malpractice is on the increase in both the rural and the urban areas. Each year records students involving in examination malpractice. From observation, in Enugu State according to Post Primary School Management Board, [2], guidance counsellors are posted to schools irrespective of their location. The location difference here gives Counsellors of disciplinary strategy the necessity to curb student's undesirable behaviour since they engage in examination malpractice. The guidance counsellors by implication are also affected because they gave bribe to be retained in urban areas and those who do not have god fathers are posted to rural areas. It is on this premise that the researcher examined the perception of guidance counsellors' location on the suitability of disciplinary strategy for curbing examination malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Examination malpractice has become so widespread that there is virtually no examination anywhere at all levels and even outside the formal school system that there is no one forms of sharp practice or the other. Every examination season witnesses the emergence of new and ingenious ways of cheating. As a result, school counsellors adopted disciplinary strategy to curb the menace yet students continued to resist.

RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design for this study because it permits the collection of original data and describes the condition as they exist in their natural setting. The population for the study comprised 319 rural counsellors and 126 urban counsellors from all the 445 government owned secondary schools in Enugu State. (Source: Guidance and Counselling Unit, Education Services Department, Post Primary School Management Board (PPSMB), Enugu.

In spite of the resistant nature of perpetrators of examination malpractice against various strategies and procedures adapted to curb examination malpractice in the past, there has been a greater percentage of determination on the part of stakeholders in education industry to fight back. Institutions embark on seizing answer sheets from culprits. Some are suspended indefinitely from retaking. Some schools are shut down while some principals are suspended if found guilty. Some adopted very serious invigilation strategies including searching the students before assigning them to seats, yet, the problem of examination malpractice continued to be on the increase in Enugu State because as year goes by students continued to draft new methods of engaging in examination malpractice. This study is looking at the ways through which examination malpractice could be curbed using disciplinary strategy that will give credibility to the examination process in Enugu State. Nonetheless, disciplinary strategy could be used to curb the anomalies and how both urban counsellors and rural counsellors perceive them as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State would help to curb the peril. It is against this background that the researcher examined the perception of counsellors' location on the suitability of disciplinary strategy for curbing examination malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State.

2016/2018 Session, November, 2018). The total numbers of school counsellors therefore are 445 serving in 445 secondary schools (Educational Services Department, Guidance and Counselling Division, P.P.SM.B Enugu, 2017). The population is not necessary because the population of the study is small and manageable. The instrument for data collection is a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher called Counsellors Perception Scale (CPS). It has one cluster with 6 items

developed to assist the researcher provide clues that helped raise much needed data that were used to answer the one research question. 1 research hypothesis was tested using t-test statistic. The response format of the instrument is a 4 point scale of very great extent, great extent, little extent and very little extent. Each response option has a numerical value assigned to it as follows: Very great extent (VGE)-4 points; Great extent (GE)-3 points; Little Extent (LE)-2 points and Very little extent (VLE)-1 point. An introductory letter was attached to the instrument stating the purpose of the study for the respondents' easy reference. The instrument was validated by three experts (one in measurement and evaluation and 2 others in Guidance Counselling Departments) with the estimated overall reliability coefficient of 0.97 for the cluster using Cronbach Alpha Reliability tool. Finally the researcher and the research assistants were able to retrieve 445 signifying 100% return of dully filled copies of the administered instrument. One research question formulated that guided the study was answered using mean, grand mean and standard deviation; t-test statistic was used to analyze the one research hypothesis. The mean rating of the numerical values assigned to the response options will be added and divided by the

number of the response options. This formed the basis for the cut-off point. Thus:

$$\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$$

From this, the researcher made the required inferences based on the data that were analyzed for the study. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as great extent while any item whose mean score is below 2.50 was interpreted to mean 'little extent'. For the hypothesis, the decision rule is that if t-calculated is equal to or greater than the t-critical value at the chosen confidence level (.05) and degree of freedom (n1+n2-2) the null hypothesis of no significant difference will be rejected. If on the other hand, the calculated t-value is less than that of the t-critical from the table value, the null hypothesis will not be rejected.

Data Analysis and Results

This chapter presents the results of the study in accordance with the research questions and hypothesis that guided the study. The analyzed data were presented in Table 1-2.

Research Question 1:

To what extent do urban counsellors and rural counsellors perceive disciplinary strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean (\bar{x}) Rating with Standard Deviation of the extent to which Urban Counsellors' and Rural Counsellors perceive Disciplinary Strategy as Suitable for Curbing Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	Urban Counsellors N=126		Rural Counsellors N=319		Overall		Decision
		X_1	SD_1	X_2	SD_2	X_3	SD_3	
1.	Students should face disciplinary committee	3.13	0.35	3.43	0.71	3.28	0.53	GE
2.	Students should be thoroughly searched before and during examination	2.99	0.41	3.15	0.99	3.07	0.70	GE
3.	Students caught should be gainfully punished	3.15	0.51	3.73	0.51	3.44	0.51	GE
4.	Attacking the negative emotions of students relating to examination	3.57	0.71	3.16	0.69	3.37	0.70	GE
5.	There should be adequate supervision of students during examination	2.59	0.64	2.32	0.41	2.46	0.53	LE
6.	Students with examination malpractice records should be expelled from school	3.93	0.21	3.47	0.31	3.70	0.26	GE
Grand Mean		3.23	0.47	3.21	0.60	3.22	0.54	GE

Table 1 indicated that of the 6 items on the extent to which counsellors' perceive disciplinary strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria, the respondents agreed with all the items (1, 2, 3, 4 and 6) with recorded mean scores of (3.28, 3.07, 3.44, 3.37 and 3.70) indicated to a great extent. The standard deviation for all the items raised is 0.54 which is small signifying that the responses are closely clustered around the mean. The Table also shows that the respondents' grand mean score for the overall items raised is (3.22). Following

the guideline for the interpretation of the respondents data, the answers to research question one showed that counsellors perceived disciplinary strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of urban counsellors and rural counsellors perceive disciplinary strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Mean (\bar{x}) Rating with Standard Deviation of the Extent to which Urban Counsellors' and Rural Counsellors perceive Disciplinary Strategy as Suitability for curbing Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Counsellors Location	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Urban Counsellors'	319	3.93	0.47	445	0.31	± 1.96	NS Reject H_{01}
Rural Counsellors	126	3.47	0.60				

Significant at $P < .05$, $df = 443$, critical t-value = ± 1.96

The t-test analysis of the Data in Table 2 revealed that the t-calculated value (0.31) is less than the critical t-value of ± 1.96 at degree of freedom (df) 443 and at 0.5 level of confidence. This implies that the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value. Thus, the null hypothesis is not

rejected as there is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of urban Counsellors' and rural Counsellors on the suitability of disciplinary strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

For the discussion of the findings inherent in this study, research question and hypotheses that are related were treated together.

The first research question sought to find out the extent to which urban counsellors and rural counsellors perceive disciplinary strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The result in Table 1 showed that urban counsellors and rural counsellors perceive disciplinary strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent. The first hypothesis ascertained if there is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of urban Counsellors' and rural Counsellors on the suitability of disciplinary strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary

schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The analysis of the t-test comparison according to Table 2 showed that there is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of urban Counsellors' and rural Counsellors on the suitability of disciplinary strategy for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The finding corroborates with that of [3] who found that rural schools are fertile grounds for examination malpractice because of lack of professional counsellors. This is also in agreement with [9] who stated that guidance and counselling services are in the urban because the supervisors of schools from the state schools management and that the Post Primary School Management Board visits almost all the schools in the urban area than they do in the rural ones.

CONCLUSION

The analysis and interpretations done and the information from related literature indicated that counsellors perceived disciplinary strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria to a great extent.

Educational Implication of the Finding
The finding of the study has far-reaching implications for the Nigerian educational system in general and for the growth and development of guidance and counselling in Enugu State, Nigeria. School counsellors perception of disciplinary strategy as suitable for curbing

examination malpractice may affect the way and manner they handle some of their clients in the rural areas since the rural students are perceived not to be equipped with resourceful material and

RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve this mission this, a recommendation is made based on the findings of this study.

This study strongly advocates that seminars should be organized for rural

Ani qualitative teachers that may influence them to be academically viable. The end result is that most students from rural areas become school drop-out and fall prey to examination

counsellors to enable them utilize disciplinary strategy as suitable for curbing examination malpractice in secondary schools in Enugu State.

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