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PERCEIVED TRAINING NEEDS OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLORS FOR EFFECTIVE ROLE PERFORMANCE IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN KWARA STATE

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Abstract

Education remains the bedrock and pivot of development in any nation. Nigeria educational system has been at the cross road for about ten years now. There is urgent need to build up structures that will salvage the educational system. The study examined the training needs of professional counsellors for effective role performance in the development of education in Kwara state in this 21st century. The researchers employed descriptive survey research in the study while the population comprised all the professional counselors in Kwara state. Convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample of one hundred professional counsellors that participated in the study while a researchers' designed questionnaire tagged 'Training Needs of Professional Counsellors for Effective Role Performance' (TNPCEPQ) was used to collect data. The instrument was validated; the reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained through the split-half method. One research question and four hypotheses guided the conduct of the study while a chi-square was used to test the four hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. All the hypotheses were rejected. The findings in the research question revealed that the counsellors need training mostly on how to: apply counselling techniques and collaboration during counselling; handle behavioural problems in school, among others. Findings also revealed that age, gender, years of service and place of practice counsellors differ in their training needs for effective role performance in educational development. Based on the findings the researchers recommended that there should be constant training for the counsellors, that age, gender, years of service and place of practice should be considered when planning training programmes for counsellors.

Keywords: Training, counsellors, educational development, century.

Background to the Study

Education is the bedrock of any country which assures the survival of the country's economy and every vital aspect of that nation. The importance of education cannot be overemphasized. Education is the pivot of all the nation's developmental programmes. Wealth is embedded in education and a wealthy nation is a healthy nation and vice versa. No nation can grow above its educational level.

Over the years, the Nigerian's educational sector has suffered set back and that has precipitated myriads of problems for the citizenry. This could be the reason why every sector is having problem because educational sector is the pivot of all other sectors be it health, agriculture, defence e.t.c. The federal government national goal of education which was endorsed by (National Policy on Education, 2004)

stated as follows: i. a free and democratic society ii. a just and egalitarian society iii. a united, strong and self-reliant nation iv. a great and dynamic economy and v. a land of full and bright opportunities for all citizens. These lofty education goals are yet to be achieved in Nigeria. Ogunlewe (2011) stated that over the past two decades there has been mounting dissatisfaction and criticism on the Nigerian educational system at all levels –primary, secondary and tertiary. Ogunlewe further submitted that educational reformers have noted varieties of problems which include declining standardized test scores, unimaginative teaching, passive learning, outdated and irrelevant curriculum, graduating students who can neither read nor write let alone do calculations. Ogunlewe's statement on the condition of education sector in 2011 is still what is obtainable today if not worse. In 2018 the president of the country Muhammadu Buhari was called to declare state of emergency in educational sector. Shortly after this call was made a professor in United States of America vehemently declared that Nigeria's educational system has expired. These scenarios call for serious intervention and transformation of educational sector in this 21st century.

Counselling is a vital tool that can be used to transform the educational sector in Nigeria. Counselling is a process of finding solution to problems that disturb the peaceful life of an individual who is the counsellee through the counsellor in a counselling relationship. Nwadinigwe and Makinde (1997) defined counselling as a systematic and purposive process of empowering and re-empowering individuals with requisite skill which is necessary for adjusting healthily and effectively with his environment. This definition portrays counselling as being strategic, systematic and purposive. Based on these attributes of counselling, it will be right to conclude that counselling can be used to build solid education that can stand the taste of in this 21st century. Counselling is also seen as a process of assistance through counselling interview by a counsellor who is a professional to individuals (clients) who are experiencing challenges (Prayitno & Amtidalam, 2004). Among these challenges are educational challenges. There are various educational challenges in the school setting which require the attention of the professional counsellors. Such educational challenges border on academic performance, examination malpractice, career choice, interpersonal relationships, discipline among others. Durosaro (2016) reported that there are different types and patterns of problems in the school setting, the list is in exhaustive and these problems differ from child to child. No doubt if these problems are allowed to persist they will cripple educational development in the country. Counselling is a proper channel to revitalise the falling standard of education in the 21st century.

There is the need to train counsellors for them to play effective role in the development of education. Training will equip the counsellors with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform effectively. We are in a changing world and science and technology have made the world a global village. The counsellors need to update their knowledge and skill through training to match up with the new trend in counselling practice so as to compete favourably with other counsellors outside Nigeria like United States of America and Canada that enjoy advanced educational development. In planning the counselling trainings for the counsellors the gender, years of experience, place of practice and the ages of the counsellors should be put into consideration because their circumstances might vary so that each individual counsellor's needs would be met

Statement of the Problem

There are a lot of abnormalities in the educational sector that have almost relegated the sector to the background. Standard of education in Nigeria is yet to get to the level it can compete favourably with the standard of education in Europe, United States of America and Canada. Nigerian educational system has suffered a lot of set back because it has not been given the much needed attention it deserves. Various Nigerian governments have not really taken educational sector very serious particularly in terms of funding and monitoring to ensure quality assurance

A lot of problems militate against the sector such as examination malpractice, lack of dedication to duty by some teachers, poor infrastructure, poor funding, corruption, many of the Nigerian graduates cannot

defend the certificate they bagged at the end of their tertiary institution education, many schools don't have competent professional counsellors among others problems. Nigeria education sector needs to be overhauled for it to meet up with the demand of educational development in the 21st century. It is was of recent that the presidency has been called to pay attention to education sector to save it from total collapse coupled with the statement made by one professor in America that Nigerian education has expired as relayed in the Albarika FM newspaper review in 2018. In addition, a current minister of state for education in Nigeria, Prof. Gozie Onwuka earlier this year stated that Nigerian universities have failed to produce graduates who can industrialise the country. All these problems and statements lend support that Nigerian education sector is still battling for survival. Counselling practice in Nigeria has not gotten to the superb standard that can really impact positively in the education sector probably because of inadequate training to equip counsellors with pre-requisite knowledge and skills for effective role performance in the education sector.

Against this backdrop, the research is set to examine perceived training needs of the professional counsellors for effective role performance in educational development in Kwara state in 21st century.

Research Question

One research question is raised to guide the study thus:

- What are the training needs of professional counsellors for effective role performance in the development of education in the 21st century?

Research Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were formulated for the conduct of the study.

- Ho 1: There is no significant difference in the training needs of professional counsellors for effective role performance in the transformation of education in 21st century on the basis of age.
- Ho 2: There is no significant difference in the training needs of professional counsellors for effective role performance in the transformation of education in the 21st century on the basis of gender.
- Ho 3: There is no significant difference in the training needs of professional counsellors for effective role performance in the 21st century on the basis of place of practice.
- Ho 4: There is no significant difference in the training needs of counsellors for effective role performance on the basis of years of service.

Methodology

Descriptive survey was employed for the study. The population for the study consisted of the professional counsellors in Kwara state totalling two hundred who are working in schools from where the sample of one hundred professional counsellors were drawn through multistage sampling technique. Convenient sampling technique was used to select Ilorin metropolis to participate in the study. Convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample while stratified sampling technique was used to group the sample into the variables of age, gender, place of practice and years of service. Data were collected via a questionnaire entitled "Training Needs of Professional Counsellors for Effective Performance Questionnaire (TNPCEPQ)". The instrument had section A which was on demographic data and section B that contained fifteen items to be responded on "yes" or "no" options. The instrument was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation, the reliability was obtained through split half method by dividing the questionnaire forms given out to respondents who are not among the sample and the scores generated were computed using Pearsons Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) formula which yielded

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the coefficient of 0.72 showing that the instrument was reliable. The instrument was personally administered to the respondents and collected back by the researchers.

The scoring was 2 points for "yes" and 1 point for "no". After the scoring the mean and standard deviation of the scores were obtained and the cut of mark was set at 1.5 all the items, so any item whose mean was above 1.5 and above is training need and vice versa. Mean and standard were used to analyse the research question while a chi-square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level.

Results

Research Question: *What are the training needs of professional counsellors for effective role performance in transforming education in 21st century?*

Table 1: Mean and Rank Order on the Respondents' on training needs

Item No.	Items	Mean	Rank
3	updating counselling techniques for use	1.86	1 st
6	collaborating with colleagues in counselling	1.83	2 nd
9	addressing behavioural problems in counselling setting	1.83	2 nd
5	how to apply counselling theories during counselling	1.83	2 nd
12	how to develop knowledge and skills in consulting professionals	1.81	5 th
11	how to help students and colleagues to set tangible goals	1.81	5 th
10	supporting parents in developing positive parenting	1.81	5 th
7	update in current counselling practice in schools and other settings	1.80	8 th
13	updating knowledge in ethical and legal issues in counselling	1.79	9 th
4	how to organise effective group counselling in school	1.77	10 th
15	how to access grants for further trainings, conferences etc	1.77	10 th
14	how to write papers for conferences	1.73	12 th
2	how to conduct effective counselling sessions with clients	1.73	13 th
1	how to set up guidance and counselling in any school/organization	1.73	13 th
8	how to make referral from school to outside agencies	1.62	15 th

The result in table 1 showed that the counsellors need training mostly on how to update counselling techniques to be used in the school and other settings, how to collaborate with other colleagues in counselling, how to address behavioural problems in schools, how to make effective use of counselling theories, how to develop knowledge and counselling skills, how to help learners set tangible goals among other needs because the items have high mean score. Other items also have mean scores that are above the cut of point of 1.5 indicating that the counsellors need training in all the items.

Hypothesis 1: *There is no significant difference in the perceived training needs of the professional counsellors on the basis of age.*

Table 2: Chi-square analysis on the training needs of the counsellors on the basis of age.

Variable		df	Cal. x-value	Crit. x-value	p-value
20-29 Years	Observed	12.0	27.80	5.99	.000
	Expected	32.0			
30-39 Years	Observed	30.0			
	Expected	32.0			
40 Years & Above	Observed	54.0			
	Expected	32.0			

Table 2 shows Chi-square analysis on the training needs based on age. The calculated chi-square value of 27.80 is greater than the critical value of 5.99 given 2 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the training needs of the counsellors on the basis of age is rejected. This indicates that their ages made them differ in their training needs.

Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant difference in the perceived training needs of the professional counsellors on the basis of gender.*

Table 3: Chi-square analysis on the training needs of the counsellors on the basis of gender.

Variable		df	Cal. x-value	Crit. x-value	p-value
Male	Observed	35.0	7.04	3.84	.000
	Expected	48.0			
Female	Observed	61.0			
	Expected	48.0			

Table 3 analysis shows calculated value of 7.04 and critical value of 3.84 giving 1 degree of freedom at 0.05 alpha level. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the training needs of the counsellors on the basis of gender is rejected because the calculated value is greater than the critical value. The interpretation is that gender of the counsellors made them to have different training needs.

Hypothesis 3: *There is no significant difference in the perceived training needs of the professional counsellors on the basis of place of practice.*

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Table 4: Chi-square analysis on the training needs of the counsellors on the basis of place of practice.

Variable			df	Cal. x-value	Crit. x-value	p-value
Primary	Observed	5.0	3	64.25	7.81	.000
	Expected	24.0				
Secondary	Observed	54.0				
	Expected	24.0				
Tertiary	Observed	29.0				
	Expected	24.0				
Non Education set.	Observed	8.0				
	Expected	24.0				

Table 4 shows that the calculated value of 64.25 is greater than the critical or table value of 7.81 giving 3 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the training needs of the counsellors based on the place of practice is rejected. This is to say that the counsellors have different training needs because of their places of practice.

Hypothesis 4: *There is no significant difference in the perceived training needs of the professional counsellors on the basis of years of experience.*

Table 5: Chi-square analysis on the training needs of the counsellors on the basis of years of experience.

Variable			df	Cal. x-value	Crit. x-value	p-value
1-5 Years	Observed	27.0	2	6.81	5.99	.000
	Expected	32.0				
6-10 Years	Observed	25.0				
	Expected	32.0				
11 Years & Above	Observed	44.0				
	Expected	32.0				

The analysis on table 5 shows that the calculated chi-square value of 6.81 is greater than the critical value of 5.99 giving 2 degrees of freedom at 0.05 significant level. The calculated value is greater than the critical value; therefore the hypothesis is rejected, which means that the counsellors differed in their training needs due to their years of experience.

Discussion

The findings in research question one revealed that the professional counsellors need training on how to: apply counselling theories and techniques in counselling, work in collaboration with other counsellors, properly address behavioural problems, help learners set tangible educational goals, help parents imbibe positive parenting style, organize group counselling, among other needs. These training needs are essential for the counsellors to play their role effectively in educational development in the 21st century. In support of the training needs of the counsellors, Akinade (2010) stated that the government should encourage the growth of guidance and counselling in schools. This can be done through the provision of in-service training to the counsellors and employing more trained professional counsellors.

The finding in hypothesis one showed that the respondents deferred in their training needs due to age. The reason for this might be because age counts in experience. Guidance is a continuous process that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used. Guidance covers a range of individual and collective activities relating to information-giving, counselling, competence assessment, support, and teaching decision-making and career management skills (Council of the European Union, 2008).

Hypothesis two revealed that the gender of the respondents made them to have different training needs. This finding did not agree with Oraegbulam and Nwokolo (2007) who discovered in their finding on teachers counselling needs for effective implementation of Universal Basic Education in Anambra State that gender did not make significant difference in the counselling needs of the respondents. The reason for the difference in the two studies might be because counsellor's work is gender sensitive in the sense that female clients might prefer to see female counsellors and vice versa. Against this finding also is Badejo, Oluwemi and Anyanwu (2011) who discovered that gender did not make youths differ in their counselling needs in the study they carried out on the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation in Lagos State.

The finding in hypothesis three showed that the place of practice of the counsellors made them differ in their training needs. The finding is not surprising due to the fact that different problems exist in different educational settings, so the counsellors might need different types of trainings to enable them to solve problems in their various working places. However, Oraegbulam and Nwaokolo (2007) finding on their research on the counselling needs of teachers for effective UBE implementation contradicted the finding because they discovered no significant difference in the counselling needs of the teachers on the basis of school type.

It was discovered in hypothesis four that years of experience of the counsellors made them to have different counselling needs. The finding might be so because the counsellors that have spent many years in the job might not have the same counselling needs as the ones that are younger in the job. The main aim of lifelong guidance is to support citizens' lifelong learning, sustainable employment, empowerment, employability, social inclusion and active citizenship. Lifelong guidance is the interface between education, training and employment sectors. In a rapidly changing economy, guidance services have a key role in addressing skill shortages and inappropriate qualifications among older workers. Sustainable success may depend on a lifelong learning and lifelong guidance system as well as a qualifications framework to be in place to support progression in learning and acquisition of relevant competences for the world of work (Cedefop, 2011).

Conclusion

The study examined the perceived training needs of professional counsellors for effective role performance in educational development in Nigeria in the 21st century. It was discovered that the

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counsellors have many training needs for them to contribute effectively to educational development in the 21st century. The professional counsellors differed in their training needs due to age, gender, place of practice and years of experience.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in the research, the following recommendations were made by the researchers:

1. There should be constant trainings for the professional counsellors. Though they are professionals they still need trainings to update their knowledge in their profession.
2. It is also recommended that such trainings should be planned to cater for the need of the counsellors.
3. The age, gender, place of practice and the years of experience of the individual counsellor should be considered when planning such training programmes to avoid giving them training on what does not profit them.

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