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KNOWLEDGE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) AMONG PRACTICING COUNSELLORS IN OYO METROPOLIS.

[1]MUSTAPHA, Mulikat Ladi A. (Ph.D), [2]ADIGUN, Akeem Ayodeji, and
[3]YAKEEN, Rasaq Abiodun

[1,3]Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria

[2]Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Corresponding Author: mustapha.mla@unilorin.edu.ng

Abstract

This study investigated the knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study using purposive sampling technique to select a sample of 150 practicing counsellors in secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Oyo metropolis. A researcher-designed questionnaire on "Knowledge of Information and Communication Technology" was used to collect data. The instrument has test re-test reliability co-efficient of 0.62. The hypotheses were tested with Mann-Whitenney (U) and Kruska-Wallis (H) test statistics at 0.05 alpha level. The study found that practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis have relative knowledge of ICT. There was a significant difference in the knowledge of ICT among practicing counsellors based on gender, while no significant difference was found based on length of years in service. It was recommended therefore, among others, the female counselling practitioners should develop positive attitudes towards ICT knowledge in order to meet-up with their male counterparts, thereby, enhancing counselling services delivery in the school system.

Keywords: Knowledge, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), practicing counsellors.

Introduction

The relevance of information and communication technology in this contemporary world cannot be overemphasized. The world of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has permeated and unified the globe to the extent that nearly all activities and

occupations people engage in are computer based. People can now communicate with ease and exchange information across boarder line regardless of the distance. For example, with the use of cell phones, laptop computers, ipads and other related ICT gadgets, people can now work together, form networked world which reaches into every corner of the globe, thereby, making exchange of information and communication easy. According to Ogunkola (2008), computer can be used to access global knowledge and communicate with other people. Also, ICT as an electronic based system of information transmission, reception, processing and retrieval, has drastically changed the people's life styles and the environment in which they live.

It is observed from previous studies Saravanakumar (2018), Ashikuzzaman (2018), and Ahmadi (2018) that ICT has grown into an essential feature of teaching-learning process. Educational system has been exposed to the use of ICT and the great benefits embedded in it. In the school system, apart from the teachers' use of ICT in helping students achieve success in their academic pursuits, school counsellors whose aims are similar to that of the teachers, could also make use ICT in solving the different challenges (such as career choice, family issues, personal social concern, health related problem, psychological illness etc) besetting students in the school (Nwaokolo, 2006).

Research experts Obi, Oye, Mohd and Bernice (2012), Conde-Jimenez, Cozar and Colas-Bravo (2017) have described major favourable influence of ICT on counselling. Counsellors with knowledge of ICT, without face-to-face interaction, could counsel their clients through e-counselling channels. A counsellor can use ICT to promote awareness among students by processing programmes, the use of e-mail, YouTube, twitter to communicate and to establish rapport in conducting needs assessments and interventions (Conde-Jimenez, Cozar & Colas-Bravo, 2017). Utilisation of ICT in counselling can also promote visual, otic, kinesthetic methods of treatment which provide opportunities to reconsider errors with less or no chance for embarrassment. It could also serve as an alternative means of reaching school counsellors at any time or in situations requiring urgent assistance.

On this note, Ceinos (2008) pointed out that one of the challenges that counsellors are facing in this computer age is the employment of ICT not only in the management and information recording but also in providing services to their clients. Hence, there is need for practicing counsellors to possess adequate knowledge of ICT taking into account the

rapid dynamism that new media of information and communication have contributed to the counselling profession across the globe (Sobrado, 2006).

Counsellor's role in the integration of ICT in counselling service is very imperative. Thus, every educational reform effort should take into consideration counsellors' knowledge and skills in using ICT for effective counselling services delivery in the school system. Cuban (2000) noted however, that reform in technological efforts for integrating ICT in counselling services has failed because counsellors' beliefs, skills and attitudes were never taken into consideration. Fakeye (2010) found out in a study conducted in Ibadan that most of the schools covered in the study do not have computers, hence are not connected to the internet. The researcher added that those who have computers do not use them for counselling but solely for administrative purposes. Deficiency in required search abilities and absence of internet connections in the schools were recounted as constraints hindering the usage of internet by practicing counsellors in schools (Adomi & Kpangban, 2010). Mustapha, Abdullai and Kolo (2015) speculated that lack of awareness or low recognition of the importance of ICT could be responsible for the under utilisation of ICT by counsellors in Borno and Yobe States and the low application of ICT in delivering counselling services. Abdul-Salaam (2011) had earlier revealed insufficient knowledge of the use of ICT among teaching personnel in Oyo metropolis. Acquisition of ICT skills could vary based on the practicing counsellors' gender and the length of years they have spent in service.

There are some differential demographic influences on ICT that cannot be ignored; such as gender and length of years counsellors have spent in services. Mahdi and Al-Dera (2013) found female teachers to be less involved in the utilisation of ICT compared to their male counterparts. However, Adenuga, Owoyele and Adenuga (2012) and Beldoglu, Dincyureck and Akintug (2015) found no significant gender difference in the school counsellors' use of ICT. Regarding the year(s) of experience in service, Mustapha, Abdullahi and Kolo (2015) found significant difference in the application of ICT among the counsellors; counsellors who have just spent between 0-10 years in service use ICT more than those who have over 10 years of counseling experience in the delivery of counseling services; while Mahdi and Al-Dera (2013) reported no significant difference in the teachers' use of ICT based on years of experience in service.

It could be observed that the knowledge of ICT is germane to effective role of counsellors in the provision of adequate counselling services to the students in the school system but few studies have been carried out in this 21st century on practicing counsellors' knowledge of ICT most especially in Oyo metropolis. The researcher therefore deemed it imperative to carry out a study on the knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis.

Towards this end, this study investigated the knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis.

Research Question

What is the level of ICT knowledge among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis?

Research Hypotheses

The study also addressed the following research hypotheses:

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the knowledge of ICT among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis based on gender.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the knowledge of ICT among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis based on length of years in service.

Methodology

This research is descriptive in nature as it attempted to explore the knowledge of ICT among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis. For the purpose of this study, descriptive research survey was considered as it concerns the collection and summarization of numerical data on counsellors' knowledge of ICT. The population for this study comprises all practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis. In selecting sample for the study, a purposive sampling method was used to select 150 practicing counsellors across secondary schools in Oyo metropolis. Purposive sampling is used in a situation where a researcher selects a more representative sample that can bring more accurate results about the sample of behaviour under study (Newman, 2011). It involves deliberate selection of individuals from the population based on the researcher's knowledge and judgment.

The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-designed questionnaire entitled "Knowledge of Information and Communication Questionnaire (KICQ)". The instrument consisted of 2 sections; Section "A" elicits information on respondents' gender and length

of years in service; while section "B" elicits information on the "Knowledge of ICT" which consisted of 15 items. Section B was rated using alternate response scale. Respondents indicated whether they agree or disagree to the items. The validity of the instrument was determined by experts in Counselling in University of Ilorin. Modification of the instrument was therefore made as suggested. The test re-test reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, that is, the degree to which all of the items on a test measure the same construct (Williams, 2019). The two set of scores correlated yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.62.

The instrument was administered with the help of two research assistants to a sample of one hundred and fifty (150) practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis. In section "A" frequency and percentage was used to presents the respondents' demographic profile. Section "B" was scored using alternate response format of Yes = 2; No = 1.

The average score any respondents can obtain is 2 x 20 = 40 and the lowest score is 1 x 20 = 20. This follows that any score between 20 and below indicated that the knowledge of ICT among counsellors is low, score between 21-30 means that the knowledge of ICT among counsellors is average or relative, while score of 31-40 implied that the knowledge of ICT among counsellors is high. Percentage and non-parametric tests were used to analyse the data collected. All hypotheses were tested using non-parametric statistics of Mann-Whitenney (U) and Kruska-Wallis (H) test.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of ICT knowledge among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis?

Table 1: Percentage distribution of level of ICT knowledge among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis

Grade Point	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Remark
20 & below	22	14.62	Low
21-30	89	59.33	Average
31 & above	39	26.00	High

Table 1 presents the level of ICT knowledge among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis. The table shows that 89 (59.33%) of the respondents have average knowledge of ICT, 39 (26.00%) have high knowledge, while 22 (14.67%) have low knowledge of

ICT. This means that majority of counsellors in Oyo metropolis have moderate knowledge of ICT. Therefore, one can conclude that the practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis have relative (insufficient) knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the knowledge of ICT among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis based on gender.

Table 2: Mann-Whitney U test showing difference in practicing counsellors' knowledge of ICT based on gender

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	df	Cal. U	Sig.	Remark
KICT	Male	72	79.50	5724.00	1	2520.0	0.278	Rejected
	Female	78	71.81	5601.00				
	Total	150						

Effect size r = z/ $\sqrt{N}$ = -9.99/$\sqrt{150}$ = -9.99/12.247 = 0.815

Table 2 shows that male respondents (mean rank = 79.50) scored higher on knowledge of ICT than the female respondents (mean rank = 71.80). With large sample > 30, the calculated Z-test is used to determine whether to retain or reject the null hypothesis. In this regard, the Mann-Whitney U-value was found to be statistically significant U = 2520.000, p > 0.05; Z = -9.99 > 1.96 critical value and the knowledge of ICT difference between the male and female groups was very large (r = 0.815). The hypothesis is thus rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the knowledge of ICT among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis based on gender. The ranking for the male and female is in favour of the male respondents, which indicated that the male counsellors have more knowledge of ICT than their female counterparts.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the knowledge of ICT among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis based on length of years in service.

Table 3: Kruskal-Wallis H statistics showing difference in practicing counsellors' knowledge of ICT based on length of years in service

	Experience	N	Mean Rank	Df	Chi-square	Sig.	Remark
KICT	0-5 yrs	22	66.00				
	6-10 yrs	82	79.38	2	1.850	0.396	Retained
	11 yrs & above	46	73.13				
	Total	150					

Table 3 shows that there was no statistically significant difference in respondents' length of years in service on knowledge of ICT ($H(2) = 1.850$, $p = 0.396$) or ($\chi 2(2) = 1.850$, $p = 0.396$) with a mean rank of 66.00 for 0-5 years in service, 79.38 for those between 6-10 years in service and 73.13 for respondents within 11 years and above in service; hence the hypothesis is retained. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the knowledge of ICT among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis based on length of years in service.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis have relative knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This finding is an indication that counsellors still need to do more in acquiring knowledge of ICT so that they can meet up with the modern-day challenges in e-guidance and counselling services provision. The world has become so connected that one needs not go far before he/she gets the needed service; as people can now communicate with ease and exchange information across boarder line regardless of the distance. Counsellors with knowledge of ICT bring clients together for counselling without physical contact. According to Anyamene, Nwokolo and Anyachebelu (2003), information provided through counselling will help in production of professionally competent graduates, and emphasis on ICT knowledge will help in counselling, other support services necessary for effective counselling services delivery and will serve as platform for practicing counsellors to reach remote students (Shiran, 2001).

The reason for relative knowledge of ICT among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis as found in this study is supported by Beukes-Amiss and Chiware (2006), that there is not much information on how ICTs are being introduced into schools in developing countries. Fakeye (2010) found in Ibadan that most of the schools covered in the study do not have computers, hence are not connected to the internet. He added that those who have computers do not use them for counselling but solely for administrative purposes which consequently, has hampered counsellors' knowledge and use of ICTs. The finding of this study supports the finding of Anyamene, Nwokolo and Anyachebelu (2012) which revealed that information communication technology (ICT) facilities for counselling were relatively low in the Universities in South East States, Nigeria. Also, the finding of Mustapha, Abdullahi and Kolo (2015) found low use of ICT by counsellors and low level of application of ICT in counselling services by counsellors in Borno and Yobe States.

The first hypothesis revealed that there was a significant difference in the knowledge of ICT among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis based on gender. This means that both male and female practicing counsellors were different in their knowledge of ICT. This finding disagrees with that of Adenuga, Owoyele and Adenuga (2012), in which no significant gender difference was found in the attitude of respondents towards ICT education. This means that both male and female counsellors differed in their knowledge of ICT. The mean scores showed that male counsellors have more knowledge of ICT than their female counterparts.

Hypothesis two showed that no significant difference exists in the knowledge of ICT among practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis based on length of years in service. This finding contradicts the finding of Mustapha, Abdullahi and Kolo (2015) who found significant difference in the application of ICT in counselling services in favour of counsellors who have spent few years on the job than those that have spent many years. The for difference in this finding from the previous study is that counsellors with many years of experience on the job were not trained with ICT while in school, compared to the new generation of practicing counsellors who were built with ICT knowledge right from their pre and post basic education.

Conclusion

The study found that practicing counsellors in Oyo metropolis have relative knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Also, there was a significant difference in male and female knowledge of ICT among counsellors in Oyo metropolis and they were not different on the basis of length of years in service.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. The school authorities should organize on regular basis, ICT training programme for school counsellors, regardless of their length of years in service, in order to enhance guidance service provision for the students, staff and the community within which the school exists.

2. The female counselling practitioners should develop positive attitudes towards ICT knowledge in order to meet-up with their male counterparts, thereby, enhancing their service delivery in the school system.

3. The Counselling Associations in Nigeria such as CASSON and APROCON should organise ICT skill acquisition for practicing counsellors to equip them with knowledge of ICT so that they can compete favourably with other experts in the developed countries in terms of effective counselling service delivery using ICT.

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