DIMENSIONS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS' EFFECTIVENESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

The study examined emotional intelligence as a predictor of counsellors' effectiveness in Secondary Schools in Imo State. The study adopted descriptive research design of correlational type. The population was 110 Registered Guidance Counsellors in 1450 public and private schools. The sample size was 85 Guidance Counsellors selected based on two stage sampling involving simple random sampling and purposive sampling. Two instruments were used in collecting the data for the study, namely, Emotional intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ) and Counsellors' effectiveness questionnaire (CEQ). The two instruments were face validated by three experts. The internal consistencies of the instruments yielded reliability coefficient indices of 0.78 (EIQ) and 0.84 (CEQ). The research question was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation while the hypothesis was tested using linear regression at 0.05 level of significance. The result indicated that emotional intelligence to a high extent predicted effectiveness of Guidance Counsellors in secondary schools among others. It was recommended among others that emotional intelligence should be considered in the hiring and training of Guidance Counsellors.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence and Guidance Counsellors' Effectiveness

Introduction

Counselling is as old as society. In every-day life we find counselling goes on at many levels in a family set up, parents counsel their children in society doctors counsel patients, lawyers counsel clients' and teachers counsel students. However, within this context, discussion of counselling will be limited to school counselling which is a broad programme of services provided by professionally trained counsellors in the secondary school. Counselling is a process in which an individual (client) is helped by an expert (counsellor) in a person-to-person or face to face relationship to resolve educational, vocational, emotional, social and moral concerns. This accounts for the reason why Schmide (as cited in Odoemelam, 2013) defines counselling as a wide selection of services and activities that are chosen to help people

prevent disabling events, focus on their overall development and remedy of existing aimed at assisting individuals to discover, accept and use their abilities, aptitudes, interests and beliefs in relation to their aspirations. Aspirations for learners include choosing school subjects, best career and vocations based on their interests, attitudes and aptitudes (Nwaoba, 2015). It is on the above bases that many reasons are adduced on the 'why' of guidance and counselling services and activities arranged for students. According to Schmide (as cited in Odemelam, 2013) they help people become more able, school counsellors provide services and opportunities ensuring that students learn and develop to their fullest potentials; they provide an array of services facilitating all students' development in three essential areas, namely, educational, career and personal-social development; these activities and services provided help students understand themselves and their world, so as to become more effective, productive and socialised; through the programmes, the students, are helped to manage their lives better, and they become more purposeful about what they want to do; through the programmes, students achieve greater awareness not only of who they are but of who they want to become.

In agreement with the above assertions, Makinde (as cited in NTI, 2008) summarised the objectives of guidance and counselling in Nigeria school to include;

I.   To assist students in making appropriate and satisfying personal, vocational and educational choices

ii. To assist students acquire a positive image of self through self-understanding the needs and problems of each person

iii. To assist teachers and school personnel in understanding the needs and problems of each student.

iv. To assist school authorities/ administrators in improving educational objectives and programmes of inter personal relationships

v.   To contribute to educational planning and

vi. To mobiles all the available resources of the school or home for satisfaction of the vocational, educational and socio-personal needs of the students.

In other to realise the above objectives, Imo State Education Management Board, the state ministry of Education and Federal Ministry of Education (as cited in Odemelam, 2013) expect the counsellors to apply their acquired skills to their jobs for better performance, to exercise their professional competence by doing academic advising of their students, career guidance and personal social counselling. They expect the counsellors who are warming up to make their invaluable contributions towards emerging problems (for example, coping with students from broken and improvised homes, unwanted teenage pregnancies, truancy, violent behaviours, examination malpractice, drug abuse and cultism) in the 21st century, to courageously face the enormous tasks they have before them. An effective counselling is expected to tackle the above problems.

On counsellors' effectiveness, Gate and Miller (2015) noted that effective counsellors have important attributes of perceiving, attractiveness, expertness and

persuasiveness. According to them, their clients should see them as attractive, trustworthy, expert and this perception influences the client positivity. Similarly, Budner (as cited in NTI, 2008) opined that effective counsellors tend to perceive ambiguous situations as desirable. Other attributes according to him include a good sense of humor and transparency. Adopting a practical approach, Chireshe (2016) explained that an effective counsellor should be organised within his/her practice, practise ethically and professionally, participate in education activities like seminars and conferences, be confident in their positions and responsibilities, be respectful and non-judgmental, understands the importance of communication and have flexible attitude. The question is how efficient have these counsellors been in achieving the stated objectives as well as possessing the required skills taking into consideration the poor performance of students in terms of behaviour, academics and possession of skills in the secondary schools?.

There is a growing rate of decline in yearly performance of students in various subjects in Senior Secondary Schools internal and external examinations. This has been attributed to laziness among students; increased anxiety level especially during examinations and poor attitudes toward learning resulting from ineffective counselling services being provided in the school (WAEC, 2016 May/June). Apart from poor performance in various subjects being currently and persistently noted, indiscipline among students has been on the increase. On this account Okoli and Asiegbu (2017) pointed out that the various forms of indiscipline in the schools include noise making in the class, fighting, examination malpractices, bullying, stealing, truancy, sexual related offences, drugs and alcohol abuse. Consequently, Egbochukwu (2018) noted that one of the causes of these forms of indiscipline in the school system is lack of professionalism on the part of the guidance counsellors. Schools and stakeholders have organized seminars and workshops for the counsellors as well as in-service training, yet the problem of counsellors' ineffectiveness still persists. Based on the persistence of the above problem, the need to examine the emotional intelligence of the counsellors and its relationship with counsellors' effectiveness has been suggested. This is why Mayer and Salovey (2007) noted that successful engagement in strong communication, problem solving and rapport building skills that are critical to counselling or advising requires emotional intelligence.

First and foremost, emotions are defined as responses to an event or situation, either internal or external, which have a positive or negative meaning for the person (Salovey & Mayer, 2010). Emotion acts as a signal which requires one of the three following responses: a change in the relationship, between individual, and the environment or an internal perception of a change in relationship while intelligence is the ability to think abstractly (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2007). On the other hand, emotional intelligence is being able to monitor ones' own and others' feelings and emotions. Emotionally intelligent person is skilled in identifying, using, understanding and regulating emotions. It is a confluence of developed abilities; to know and value self, build and maintain a variety of strong productive and healthy

relationships, get along and work well with others in achieving positive results and effectively deal with the pressures and demands of daily life and work (Maynard, 2017). This is why it is necessary to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and counsellors' effectiveness since the attributes of emotional intelligence are needed to be possessed by a counsellor for a successful career. A counsellor is expected to maintain healthy relationship with his or her clients. However, emotional intelligence has different components or dimensions as pointed out by several experts in this field. Focusing on theoretical framework of emotional intelligence by Goleman (2001), he explained that emotional intelligence is a cluster of skills and competences which are focused on four capabilities: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management and within this context, these subscales are considered as predictor of counsellors' effectiveness. According to him self-awareness is interpreted as recognising one's own emotions, strengths and weakness goals, motivation and values. In other words, it is the ability to read one's emotion and recognise their impacts while using your feelings to guide decisions that means the ability to monitor and recognise feelings as it happens. Self-management on the other hand is the ability to control one's emotions and impulses and adopting to changing circumstances that is the ability to handle one's feelings in an appropriate manner.

On social awareness, it deals with how to manage relationships with those around you to move people in the direction you want them to go. He explained that it is the ability to sense, understand and react to others' emotion while comprehending social networks. The relationship management is the ability to inspire, influence and develop others while managing conflict. It is assumed that an effective counsellor should possess these attributes of emotional intelligence enumerated. The counsellors are meant to relate well, understand the clients' emotions and manage them as well as their own, communicate very well especially to the clients, show good leadership in the school among others.

Basically, for a guidance counsellor to be effective in discharging of his or her duties, the element of possession of emotional intelligence to a certain degree should not be overlooked especially in hiring and training would be counsellors. The extent to which the practicing guidance counsellors possess those attributes in Imo State is yet to be ascertained / related to their performance on the job since there is increased decline on students' performance and other problems such as anxiety, sexuality and drug abuse among others. This accounts for the reason Guillen and Florent (2011) explained that emotional intelligence is an important predictor of performance in organizational academic and other domains. He further stressed that researchers have consistently reiterated the role of emotional intelligence as a correlate of life satisfaction, psychological well being, occupation success and job performance. Moreover, several studies have been carried out on emotional intelligence and other variables but none or few to the best of researchers' knowledge have been carried out on emotional intelligence especially when each dimension of emotional intelligence as defined in this study is considered. For examples, emotional intelligence has been strongly associated with dynamic leadership, satisfying personal life experiences and

success in work place (Abraham, 2016). On the other hand, Afolabi, Awosola and Omole (2010) noted that it has been related to academic success. According to them many business leaders agree with the basic message that success is strongly influenced by these attributes of emotional intelligence, perseverance, self-control and skills in getting along with others.

On the other hand, another study on the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement was carried out by Law, Wong, Huang and Li (2018) on the relationship between the identified five dimensions of emotional intelligence, namely, self- awareness, emotional management, self-motivation, empathy, interpersonal skills and academic achievement. The study aimed at identifying whether the five dimensions of emotional intelligence have been able to contribute to academic achievement. Statistical inference of the pearson -r- and multiple regression was used to analyse the data. The results showed that the significant relationship between self-awareness ®= 0.21), emotional management (r=0.21 and empathy (r=0.21) at the level of $p<0.05$ with academic achievement. Findings from multiple regression analysis (step wise) showed that only three dimensions of emotional intelligence which is self-awareness (r=0.261), self-motivation (r=0.182) and empathy (r=0.167) accounted for 8.7% of variation in criterion (academic achievement).

From the foregoing, the present study examined emotional intelligence as a predictor of guidance counsellors' effectiveness in Imo State with emphasis on four dimensions of emotional intelligence as postulated by Goleman (2001).

Based on this, one research question and one hypothesis were formulated for the study.

Research Question
To what extent does each dimensions of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management) of Guidance Counsellors correlate with their effectiveness in Secondary School?

Hypothesis
The emotional intelligence of the Guidance Counsellors does not significantly predict their effectiveness in Secondary School.

Methodology
The study adopted a correlational survey design. It was correlational design because the study is aimed at examining and describing the nature, degree and direction of relationships between variables or using these relationships to make predictions (Uyanne, 2015). The accessible population was 800 Guidance Counsellors while the target population for the study comprised 110 registered Guidance Counsellors randomly distributed across 1,450 public and private Secondary Schools in Imo State. A sample of 85 registered counsellors was selected using a two stage sampling techniques involving purposive and simple random sampling. Purposive sampling

was used all the registered counsellors in the zone selected were involved in the study. Two instruments were used for the study namely emotional intelligence questionnaire (EIA) and Counsellors' effectiveness scale Questionnaire (CEQ). The emotional intelligence questionnaire was made up of 30 items which focused on the four dimensions of emotional intelligence which are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. The items in the scale was structured in a modified 4-point likert format of very high extent (VHE), high extent (HE), low extent (LE) and very low extent (VLE).

The counsellors' effectiveness scale questionnaire (CEQ) was also made up of 30 items with the response category- strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The instruments were face validated. The two instruments were validated by two experts from Measurement and Evaluation and one expert from Counselling Department, of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture. The internal consistency of the whole instruments using Cronbach Alpha yielded reliability coefficient of 0.78 (EIQ) and 0.84(CEQ) respectively. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Linear regression at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent does each dimensions of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management) of Guidance Counsellors correlate with their effectiveness in Secondary School?

Answer to research question one is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Matrix of Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence (DEI) and Counsellors' Effectiveness (CE)

		DEI	CE
Self-awareness	R	0.640^a	0.640^a
	R_2	0.410(41.0%)	0.410(41.0%)
	Sig(2-tailed)	0.012	0.012
	N	85	85
Self-Management	R	0.746^a	0.746^a
	R_2	0.557(55.7%)	0.557(55.7%)
	Sig(2-tailed)	0.013	0.013
	N	85	85
Social awareness	R	0.728^a	0.728^a
	R_2	0.530(53.0%)	0.530(53.0%)
	Sig(2-tailed)	0.015	0.015
	N	85	85
Relationship Management	R	$.742^a$	$.742^a$
	R_2	.550(55.0%)	.550(55.0%)
	Sig (2-tailed)	.019	.019
	N	85	85

HPR= High Positive Relationship; N=85, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 - tailed), N= Number of respondents.

Data in Table 1 revealed that there was a high extent of correlation between self awareness component of emotional intelligence and Guidance Counsellors' effectiveness in secondary schools (r=0.640) which is positive and within the coefficient limit of +-0.51-0.80. The coefficient of determination ($\overset{2}{R}$) 0.410 indicates that 41% of the variance observed in Counsellors' effectiveness in Secondary Schools is accountable by self awareness of emotional intelligence. It implies that self awareness of emotional intelligence of Guidance Counsellors to a high extent predicts Counsellors effectiveness in secondary schools.

The correlational coefficient of (r=0.746) also indicated a high extent and positive relationship between self management and Counsellors' effectiveness. The coefficient of determination (R_2) 0.557 indicates that 55.7% of the variance observed in self management predicted Counsellors' effectiveness in Secondary Schools. Equally, the correlation coefficient (r=0.728) is a linear correlation between the observed variables which indicated a high extent and positive relationship between social awareness and Counsellors' effectiveness. The coefficient of determination (R^2_3) 0.530 indicates that 53.0% of the variance observed in Counsellors' effectiveness is predicted by social awareness dimensions of Emotional intelligence. On the other hand, the correlation coefficient (r=0.742) is a linear correlation between the observed variables which indicated a high extent and positive relationship between relationship management and Counsellors' effectiveness. The coefficient of determination (R^2_3)0.550 indicates that 55% of the variance observed in Counsellors' effectiveness is predicted by relationship management of emotional intelligence.

In general, the results showed high extent of correlation between each dimension of emotional intelligence and Guidance Counsellors' effectiveness in Secondary Schools. However, self-management emerged as the best predictor of Guidance Counsellors effectiveness and the least was self-awareness.

Hypothesis One: The emotional intelligence of the Guidance Counsellors does not significantly predict their effectiveness in Secondary School

Table 2: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for the Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Counsellors' Effectiveness

Variables	Terms	Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F.cal	Sig.	Decision
Dimension of emotional Intelligence	Regression	101108.307	3	33702.769			
					17.092	.02	S
Counsellor Effectiveness	Residual	159672.708	81	1971.268			

R= 742[a] R^2=0.550 (value of the consistent), S=Significant at $P \leq 0.05$

The result in Table 2 shows F-calculated value of 17.092 at 0.05 level of significance. The table also shows a p-value of .02 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Thus,

the null hypothesis which states that dimension of each emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness and relationship management) of Guidance Counsellors do not significantly predict Counsellors' effectiveness in Secondary Schools is thereby rejected. This implies that the dimensions of the emotional intelligence of Guidance Counsellors significantly predict Counsellors effectiveness in secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings
The results of data analyses showed that there was high extent of correlation between each dimension of emotional intelligence of Guidance Counsellors and their effectiveness in secondary schools. The finding is in agreement with Chireshe (2016) who opined that there was a relationship between emotional intelligence and job effectiveness among the teachers. However, the present study is based on Guidance Counsellors' effectiveness and not job effectiveness among teachers.
On the other hand, the finding is also similar with the finding of Nyorere and Muraina (2014) who revealed that there was a significant relationship between the combined effect of the independent variables (dimensions of emotional intelligence) and the dependent variable (Counsellors' productivity). The result also indicated that self-management predicted Guidance Counsellors' effectiveness most while the least was self-awareness. This study is in disagreement with the finding of Singh (2012) whose result indicated that self-awareness and integrity emerged as the best predictor of counsellors' effectiveness.

Conclusion
All the dimensions of emotional intelligence – self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management do predict counsellors' effectiveness. Among all the dimension of emotional intelligence as proposed by Goleman (2001), self-management component of the emotional intelligence had the highest predictive index while the least was self-awareness. Therefore, emotional intelligence as a construct should be considered in hiring and training of the counsellors.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:
1.   Self- management components of emotional intelligence should be given more priority in the hiring of the counsellors'
2.   Emotional intelligence as a factor should be put into consideration when hiring and training counsellors.
3.   The training content of the Guidance Counsellors should have more items that measure self-management.
4.   The two instruments used in this study should be adopted by employers of Guidance Counsellors in assessing them.
5.   Workshops and seminar based on growing emotional intelligence among the counsellors should be promoted by the stakeholders

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