ROLE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLLING SERVICES ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

This paper examinedrole of guidance and counselling services on national integration and enrolment among primary school pupils in Niger State, Nigeria. Two research questions were raised which among include what is the role of counselling service on national integration and enrolment among primary school pupils in Niger State? The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of22,408 with 378 sample size. Multistage sampling technique was used. Twenty-three (23) self-designed structured-items questionnaire was used. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a test re-test method. The two sets of the results were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) aimed at finding consistency of the instrument and reliability coefficient of 0.92 was obtained which implies the instrument was reliable. Mean was used as statistical tool for data analysis. The study revealed that there are inadequate counselling human and material resources coupled with inadequate training and retraining of school guidance counsellors to promote guidance and counselling services in the schools. Also, effective guidance and counselling services will enhance national integration among pupils' primary in the schools, there is inadequate facilities for guidance and counseling services in primary schools and effective counseling service will promote healthy school-community relationship among pupils in Niger State, Nigeria. It was recommended that the head-teachers should collaborate with School-Based Committee (SBMC) to provide adequate human and material resources with adequate training and retraining to promoteguidance and counselling services in the schools aimed at promoting national integration among pupils. Also, school guidance counsellor in collaboration with community through SBMC should establish healthy school-community relationship to promote positive national integration among pupils and in Niger State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Role, Guidance andCounselling Services, National Integration and Enrolment

Introduction

The role of guidance and counselling services in every nation cannot be overemphasized. This is because counselling plays a significant role in every child's development and it effective utilization can inculcate in the youths the spirit of consciousness that promote peace, conflict resolutions and national integration (Egbule, 2006).

Guidance and Counselling Services is very important in our schools coupled with the recent social problems and deviance behaviours among our youths and school children. The services also address the issue of maladaptive behaviours such as academic backwardness, personal social and vocational.

Counselling is an approach of helping which point out the intellectual and emotional experience of a client such as how a client is feeling and what they think on the issues they are seeking help for. Alebiosu, Akintoke and Oginni (2021) opined that counselling is a helping process where one explicitly and purposefully gives his or her time to assist people to explore their own situation, and act on a solution. Therefore, counselling service is apsychological specialtythat encompasses research and applied work in several broad domains: counselling process and outcome; supervision and training; career development and prevention and health.

Counselling is a learning process in which a counsellor helps an individual or individuals learn, understand themselves and their environment and be in a position to choose the right type of behaviours that will help them develop, grow, progress, ascend, mature and step up, educationally, vocationally and socio personally (Egbo, 2013). Counselling psychologists or Counsellors help people deal with problems and make difficult decisions in various aspects of their lives. It requires a deep understanding of personality, cognition (how we think and make decisions), and communication. Counselling service according to Joshua (2020) is an area of professional services with strong ties to positive outcome. Joshau added that counselling service has existed for more than a century; it is perhaps less well known and understood than other disciplines such as clinical services. According toThe Chicago School of Professional Psychology (2020),counselling service is one of the guidance services that aim to help individuals, at any stage in life, overcome mental health challenges in order to improve the quality of living and that this service focuses on how humans function in their professional and personal lives. Counselling psychology professionals can hold many different job titles depending on the type of work they pursue and the location in which they are employed (Tim, 2020.

National integration is theawareness of a common identity amongst the citizenries. It is the feeling of individuals belonging to different communities, castes, religions, cultures and regions and speaks different languages; all of them recognize the fact that they are one.National Integrationemanates from the behaviour and determination of citizens. According to Olajire (2022), National integration is a process of creating a sense of national consciousness,

uniqueness of identity, and loyalty among people with different socio-cultural identities (racial, ethnic, language, religion, etc.) into a single territorial political society.Naseer (2022) viewed national integrationas theintegrationofthepeople of a stateintoan emotionally andpsychologically integratedteam, anation committed tosecure theobjectives and development of thewholesociety. National integration, basically, a feeling, in which the community/nation of any state, assume themselves as live with one another, having the sentiments of oneness, unity, compassion, without any discrimination of race, ethnicity, regional boundaries, etc (Shamila, Ghulam& Muhammad, 2020).

Alebiosu and Olanipekun (2019) opined that counselling includes organizational assessment and consultation skills of counsellors and psychologists as this do not only contribute to the health of students but also to the health of theschool environment andthe hosts communities in general. Alebiosu and Olanipekun (2019) opined that counselling includes organizational assessment and consultation skills of counsellors and psychologists as this does not only contribute to the health of students but also to the health of the school environment and the hosts communities in general.Counselling service establish theenhanced national integration, consciousness and unity among pupils.It also enhancedmentorship programmes between counsellors, teachers and students.Alebiosu, Akintoke and Oginni (2021) revealed that counselling servicebring about socialservices andpositive implications on school children. Counselling psychologists could assist an individual to identify his or her problems so that they will be able to discoverthe causes oftheir problems and offer appropriate solution through effective counseling service. Cutts (2011) concluded that being explicit about the important and

critical nature of counselling service has flourished the integration among students. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2019)reported that schools are ideal places to reach out to childrenand youth,becausechildren's health, national integration, unityand learning arelinked.This study therefore assessed the role of Counselling Service on National Integration in Niger State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The practice of guidance and counsellingserviceshas positively impacted on the national integration. A Counselloroffers a promising possibility for deeper understanding of national integration, consciousness and value re-orientation aimed at promoting national integration. However, despite the recognized role played by school guidance counsellor in witnessing the national integration, there are wrong perception about guidance and counselling servicesby school Teachers and other members of staff, assigning counsellors to duties other than counselling service, lack of counselling office, lack of funds to purchase materials for effective counselling service and non adequate opportunities for in-service-trainingamong others are basic challenges of Counselling service in Nigerian schools. Generally, ineffectiveness of guidance and counselling services obstructs national integration.Guidance and Counselling services are required in all; the primary and post-primary Schools in the State. It was against this background that this study aimed at examining role of guidance and counselling services on national integration among primary school pupils and teachers in Niger State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were formulated to guide this study:

1. Investigating the role counselling service on national integration among primary school pupils in Niger State, Nigeria.
2. Determine the role of counselling service on national integration among primary school Teacher in Niger State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What is the role of counselling service on national integration among primary school pupils in Niger State, Nigeria?
2. What is the role of counselling service on national integration amongprimary schoolTeachersin Niger State, Nigeria?

Method

This study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of this study was twenty-two thousand, four hundred and eighty(22,408) both pupils (21058) and teachers (1350) whichwereobtained from Niger State Universal Basic Education (NSUBEB, 2020). The sample size was three hundred and seventy-eighty(378) for the primary schools pupils and three hundred and six-five (365) for the Teachers,which were determined using Research Advisor Sampling Table (2006). A multistage sampling technique was applied to select the respondents. Niger State was grouped into Education Zones to ease random selection. The instrument used for data collection was a self-designed structured questionnaire. The instrument titled “Role of Guidance

and Counselling services on National Integration among primary schools pupils". It comprises of twenty-three (20) structured items. Section "A" of the questionnaire was on demographic data of the respondents while section "B" was made up of item statements to answer the research questions. The items were structured on a four points likert scale; that is, Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). Face and context validation of the instrument was ascertained. Based on suggestions, some items were modified, some dropped while others were added.

In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted on twenty members of the population from three (3) primary schools in Niger State. A test re-test method was used to carry out the pilot study. The instrument was administered onteachers and primary schools pupilsat an interval of fourteen (14) days and the two (2) results were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance. The coefficient r value result of 0.92 was obtained which implies the instrument was reliable. Mean was used to answer the research questions.

Results

For this study, 2.5 were used as decision mean since the instrument was structured on four points likert scale. Therefore, a mean score of 2.5 and above indicated positive response to the research question and accepted while a mean score below 2.5 indicated negative answer to the research question and rejected. However, out of 378 instruments distributed, only 372 were correctly filled, returned and analysed.

Research Question One: What is the role of Guidance and counselling services on national integration among primary school pupils in Niger State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Role of Guidance and Counselling Services on National Integration among Primary School Pupils in Niger State

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	Decision
1	Counselling service influenced national integration among pupils.	372	3.8	Agreed
2	Orientation service promotes valve-reorientation among primary schools pupils.	372	1.2	Disagreed
3	Adequate information service in the schools will enhance national integration among the pupils.	372	3.7	Agreed
4	National integration will bring about national consciousness among the pupils.	372	3.5	Agreed
5	Educational service promotes national integration among the pupils.	372	1.3	Disagreed
6	Inadequate funding is one of the challenges obstructing counselling services in primary schools.	372	3.6	Agreed
7	Counsellors are trained and retrained to enhance quality service deliver to the schools system.	372	1.9	Disagreed
8	Adequate counselling facilities and materials will promote effective counselling service in the schools.	372	3.9	Agreed
9	Through effective counselling service in schools national integration are enhanced.	372	3.6	Agreed
10	Effective counselling service promotes patriotism among the pupils.	372	3.4	Agreed

Table 1 of the aboverevealed thatrole of guidance and counselling services on national integration among primary school pupils in Niger State, Nigeria. The results indicated that item 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10 were agreed by the respondents with mean score of 3.8, 3.7, 3.5, 3.6, 3.9, 3.6, 3.6 and 3.4. On the other hand, item 2, 5 and 7 were disagreed by the respondents with mean score 1.2, 1.3 and 1.9. Therefore, the guidance and counselling services played a significant role for nation integration among primary school pupils in Niger State, Nigeria

Research Question Two: What is the role of counselling service on national integration among teachers primary school in Niger State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Role of Guidance and Counselling Service on national integration among Primary School Teachersin Niger State, Nigeria?

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	Decision
1	Effective counseling service will enhance national integration among primary school teachers.	372	3.7	Agreed
2	Adequate awareness of counseling service enhance teacher' performance in the schools.	372	2.1	Disagreed
3	Orientation service will promote national development among teachers in primary school.	372	3.9	Agreed
4	Adequate informationservice bringsabout positive teacher commitment toward value-orientation.	372	1.5	Disagreed
5	Adequate facilities enhance counselling service in the schools.	372	1.2	Disagreed
6	Healthy school-community relationship promotes positive national integration among teachers in primary school.	372	3.8	Agreed
7	Counselling service can help to enhance positive school-community relationship	372	3.1	Agreed

8	Inadequate counselling service facilities affect national integration negatively.	372	3.4	Agreed
9	There is gender variation on counseling service on national integration among primary schools teachers.	372	3.8	Agreed
10	Guidance and counselling services enhance teachers's commitment toward national integration.	372	3.2	Agreed

Table 2 reveals that teachers' perception on the influence of counselling service on enrolment among primary school pupils in Niger State, Nigeria. The results indicated that item 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were agreed by the respondents with mean score of 3.7, 3.9, 3.8, 3.1, 3.4, 3.8 and 3.2. On the other hand, item 2, 4 and 5 were disagreed with mean scores 2.1, 1.5 and 1.2.

Summary of the Findings

From the analysis, the following findings were discovered:

1. There are inadequate counselling human and material resources coupled with inadequate training and retraining to promote counselling service in the schools.
2. Effective counselling service will enhance national integration among teacher in primary schools, there is inadequate awareness to enhance nation integration in the schools and effective counseling service on promoting healthy school-community relationship that will promote positive national integration in Niger State, Nigeria.

Discussion of the Findings

This study revealed that there are inadequate counselling human and material resources coupled with inadequate training and retraining to promote counselling service in the schools.

The study also revealed effective counselling service enhance national integration among pupils in the schools, there is inadequate facilities to enhance counseling service to promote healthy school-community relationship, in Niger State Nigeria. In line with this finding, Cutts (2011) discovered that there are inadequate qualified counsellors as well as limited materials and facilities for effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in the schools. Alebiosu and Ibijola (2017) found that inadequate training refreshing courses for school counsellors constitute challenge to quality counselling service delivery among the school guidance counsellor. A study by Alebiosu and Ibijola (2017)also correlate with this finding as it indicated that adequate and effective school guidance and counselling services promote positive national integration as well as enhances cordial school-community relationship. Also, Shamila, Ghulam and Muhammad (2020) opined that effective orientation service can enhance national integration which encompasses unity, compassion, without any discrimination of race, ethnicity, regional boundaries, etc among the citizens.

In Nigerian Philosophy of Education, it is believed that education is a pivot for national development and all round development of an individual. In this end, the formulation of ideas, their integration for National development and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of education (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004). The role of education in the development of an individual and the society at large cannot be overemphasized. Education is not only a veritable tool for the transmission of norms and values to the younger generations but also a tool for liberation from ignorance and high rate of docility. When teaching and learning improves, social vices shall reduce and the communities and the

larger society shall enjoy peaceful co-existence whose values cannot be overemphasized. Guidance and Counselling services such as orientation, information, appraisal and moral education has always been a perennial aim of education that enables the students in enriching their perspective and promoting attitude towards resolving educational, vocational and personal social problems. Tambawal and Tsagem (as cited in Umar 2013) opined that the goals of guidance and counselling services is to facilitating behaviour change, enhancing coping skills, promoting decision-making, improving relationships and facilitating the client's potential. It is a personalized and individualized process for helping the individual to learn and acquire habits, skills, attitudes and interests which make him a normally adjusted being. Therefore, it is evident that the process and goals of counselling is to help the student move towards a greater level of self-understanding (Egbule, 2005).

Umar (2013) sees guidance and counselling services as a strategy that involves: helping youths to deal with real life issues that affects their lives and society in general; preparing youths for adulthood; inculcating in youths the spirit of unity, nationality and patriotism; preparing youths for effective adult life that cherishes and promotes harmonious relationship among members of the society so that they will enter into adulthood with skills necessary to prevent conflict peacefully; instilling in youth appropriate core value and skills in order to enhance their moral development; equip youths with the knowledge and skills that will help bring about peace through better understanding; and inculcating into youths such value like compassion, integrity, hope, justice, unity, gender fairness, caring for life, sharing, reconciliation and active non-violence. Through effective guidance and counselling services, the values of peace, conflict resolution and national security which include among other things respect for life, sharing with

others, rejection of violence, sense of justice, listening ability and solidarity would be inculcated into early stages of educational process to enable learners imbibe the right values that will guide them throughout life time (Igbuzor, 2011). It will imbibe in the youth consciousness that will equip them with the rightful skills that promotes tolerance, harmonious relationships, peaceful co-existence, good citizenship, environmental sustainability and national security. It will further equip the primary schools pupils with the knowledge and skills that will help bring about peace through better understanding; enabling them to acquire constructive peaceful problem-solving skills that promotes national security; inculcating in them consciousness for managing conflicts without resorting to violence and develop non-violent conflict resolution skills and spirit of commitment to working to realize a shared and preferred future (Umar, 2013).

Conclusion

Based on the analysis, the study concluded that there are inadequate counsellors and material resources coupled with inadequate training and retraining to promoteguidance and counselling services in the schools. Also, effective counselling service will enhance national integration among pupils' in the schools; there are inadequate facilities for effective guidance and counselling to enhance healthy school-community relationship that will promote positive national integration among primary school pupils and teachers in Niger State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

1. The head-teachers should collaborate with School-Based Committee (SBMC) to provide adequate human and material resources coupled withadequate training and retraining for

efficient and effective guidance and counselling services in the schools aimed at promoting and strengthening national integration among pupils.

2. School guidancecounsellor in collaboration with community through SBMC should establish healthy school-community relationship to provide effective counselling service for teachers and pupils for national integration in Niger State and Nigeria through orientation programme.

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