

# Stakeholders' Perception of School Guidance and Counselling Services Effectiveness in Ekiti State Southwestern, Nigeria

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**Sehinde Akintomide Oluwatosin**

Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria  
olasehinde2006@yahoo.com

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**Abstract** - *Provision of Guidance and Counselling in schools has not assumed a desirable position in Nigeria despite the long years of its introduction. This study therefore investigated the perception of the stakeholders in education about the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools in Ekiti state Nigeria in order to ascertain the challenges facing it. The study adopted descriptive survey design with a sample of 585 education stakeholders (400 students, 100 teachers and 85 parents) selected from 10 schools in the state. Data through the use of questionnaire titled Perception of Stakeholders on Counselling Effectiveness (PSCE), were analyzed. The results indicated that all the stakeholders perceived counselling services to be adequate (students, 90%; teachers, 93%, parents, 76.5 %) and also effective (students, 89.5%; teachers, 90% and parents, 84.7%). However some challenges were identified. The study therefore concluded that though delivery of guidance and counselling services in schools in Ekiti State face some challenges yet the education stakeholders perceived it to be very effective.*

**Keywords:** *Education Stakeholders, Counselling Services, Effectiveness.*

## INTRODUCTION

Historically, guidance and counselling has been in existence in Nigeria since 1959, especially in the southwestern Nigeria. Surprisingly, school guidance and counselling has suffered so much neglect probably because of the way people perceive it. For instance in one of these southwestern states in Nigeria, an executive governor of the state misconceived counselling/counsellor to be *councilor*. He assumed it to be a political appointment thus relieving those school counselors formerly employed into the schools

by his predecessor of their appointment and sarcastically informed them to go and re-contest in their local government. This may sound incredible but that is the truth, although this opinion may not be generalized. This scenario demonstrated high degree of ignorance of some people on what counselling is, or what a counsellor does. It is logical to assume that how a programme is perceived could influence its acceptability and success. It will therefore be helpful and for the purpose of clarification that counselling as personal relationship between a counsellor and a counselee involve purposeful activities geared towards assisting the counselee to learn more satisfying behavior necessary for solving his or her problems.

The school guidance and counselling is an interactive process in which the counsellor offers students the time, attention, and respect necessary to explore, discover and clarify ways of achieving greater success in school works and ultimately fulfilling their life goals. Teno [1] asserts that counselling is the 'life-wire' of school and where this is not provided for, there is bound to be the problem of career, frustration, academic imbalance and unhealthy relationship among students in the school. Thus every school, whether private or public, is expected to have a professional counsellor. There are three areas in which individual students require counselling in the school setting. These are educational, vocational and personal social needs. The actualization of these needs depend largely on the professional skill possessed by the counsellor and availability of counselling facilities. Thus counsellors' effectiveness in helping students is a function of many variables. In a study conducted on rating counsellor's effectiveness in the school, the various stakeholders such as students (clients), counselors/teachers and the supervisors rated counsellor's effectiveness differently [2]. The difference here may be as a result of their perception

of the expectation and outcome of counselling. Whichever the case, the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services is better ascertained by those who benefit from it directly or indirectly.

Furthermore, school guidance and counselling services play vital role in preventing educational, personal, social and emotional problems among secondary school students. These services are presented by Nwachuckwu [3] as information services, placement services, orientation services, referral services, evaluation services, follow-up services and consultancy/research services. In all, the school counsellor's counselling services specifically should involve providing assistance in the improvement of student to student relationship, student to teacher relationship, student/ parent conflict resolution, students' study skill, academic adjustment as well as proper selection of school subjects to mention a few. It is important to note here that despite the essentiality of these services, many school still lack school counsellors and where they exist, they have no clear-cut roles to perform as they are subject to the principal's assigned role as well as teachers', students' and parents' acceptability [4].

The way the students who are the prospective clients perceive counselling may determine their level of patronage and subsequently determine the ways they assess the effectiveness of services they receive. New students who have benefited adequately from orientation service provided by the school counsellor would perceive counselling as effective. The parents in turn would also adjudge it as effective having observed the adjustment to the school environment by their wards with little or no stress. The same argument goes for other counselling services provided by the in the school. In many occasions it has been reported that both teachers and principals constitute the greatest obstacle to the success of counselling services in schools because of their negative perception to counseling [5]-[9]. The belief of these researchers is that teachers' perceptions of the school counsellor's role are barriers that prevent counsellor from successfully providing counselling services. For instance some principals cumber school counsellors with administrative assignments which hinder them to do their counselling responsibilities [10].

The foregoing perceptions of these stakeholders provide reasons to doubt if counselling services are provided as it should in the schools and if at all provided, how effective is it. Most of the opinion reviewed here were observation and reports from

outside Nigerian situation except for few studies [11] [12] which were also outside the present study area. Presently one is not sure of the perception of the teachers, the students and their parents on the counselling services in schools and the effectiveness of these services in relation to student's well-being as well as the challenges facing its delivery. Thus this study is aimed to determine the stakeholders' perceptions and perceived effectiveness as well as the perceived challenges facing the provision of counselling services in secondary schools in Ekiti State.

## **METHODS**

The study adopted survey research design. The sample for the study was 585 stakeholders (400 students, 100 teachers and 85 parents) selected by convenience from ten schools which were selected by simple random sampling from the state. In each of the schools, ten teachers, including the principal, the vice principal and eight volunteered teachers were used. Also ten parents attending the school Parents', Teachers' Association (PTA) meeting in each school who volunteered to participate were used but all together only 85 of them were found useable because 15 of the parents did not respond to the questionnaires appropriately. 40 students in each school who have visited the school counsellor at least thrice were purposively selected for the study. An instrument titled 'Perception of Stakeholders on Counselling Effectiveness (PSCE), with four sections was used to collect data for the study. Section 'A' deals with the demographic information of the respondents. Sections 'B', 'C', and 'D' contain items on the perceptions of the school stakeholders (students, teachers and parents) respectively with respect to what counsellor does and the effectiveness of such services as evident to them. The data collected were analyzed descriptively.

## **RESULTS**

The first concern of this study was to examine school stakeholders' perception of counselling services in the schools. The data obtained were analyzed and the results were as presented in the succeeding tables.

From Table 1, it is observed that school counselling services were seen as adequate by 90% of the students while parents' and teachers' perceived the services to be adequate (76.5% and 93% respectively).

Table 1. Stakeholders' Perception of Counselling Services in Schools

Perception of services	Students		Parents		Teachers	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Adequate	360	90	65	76.5	93	93
Not Adequate	40	10	20	26.5	7	7
Total	400	100	85	100	100	100

These results showed that the various stakeholders assumed that the counselling services provided by the school counsellors were noticeable to them and their awareness of it suggest the adequacy of it to assist students in their academics and other concerns.

Table 2. Stakeholders Perception of Counselling Effectiveness.

Perception of services	Students		Parents		Teachers	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Effective	358	89.5	72	84.7	90	90
Not Effective	42	10.5	13	15.3	10	10
Total	400	100	85	100	100	100

Table 2 above showed that all the stakeholders perceived that the counselling services rendered by the school counsellors were effective. Students who had encountered counselling intervention more than twice were to assess if they had effectively benefited from the services provided by the counselling unit in their school, 89.5% of the students admitted that the services were effective. Likewise the parents were also asked if they had seen positive results of the counselling services provided by the school counsellor on their wards, 84.7% of them affirmed that the services were effective. The teachers who equally have classroom interactions with the students were asked to assess if they could attest to the effectiveness of the counselling services provided to the students in terms of observable positive changes in the students,

90% of those sampled agreed that the services were effective.

The challenges as indicated in the Table 3 were ranked in the order of priority. These challenges range from infrastructures to attitudinal factors.

## DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to examine the perception of school stakeholders on the provision and effectiveness of counselling services in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. From the results obtained, it was obvious that all the school stakeholders have positive and adequate perception of counselling which is a good development from what it used to be [4],[11], [12]. In some states in Nigeria, the awareness of relevance of counselling has been very low to the point that there are schools without counsellor and counselling programmes. Adequate awareness of a programme is an indication that it may likely be accessible. Furthermore, the results also indicate that all the stakeholders admitted that the services provided by the school counsellor were effective. Services such as improving student-student relationship, student-teacher relationship, students' academic/school adjustment, study skills, student-parent conflict resolution and proper choice of school subjects were perceived to be effective.

When students benefit from a programme, they tend to patronize such programme and parents as well as teachers who are able to see the positive impact of such programme would perceive it as being effective and provide support for the services. However the support needed for counselling services delivery is beyond human but includes infrastructure which was observed lacking as reported by both teachers and students.

Table 3. Responses of the stakeholders in terms of Challenges

Order of Ranking	Students perceived challenges	Teachers' challenges	perceived	Parents' perceived challenges
1	Problem of no stipulated time for counselling on the school subject Time-Table	Number of students more than the capacity of the available counsellor		Fear that school counsellor might take undue advantage of the student in the name of providing counselling services.
2	Lack of adequate counselling facilities in the school.	Inadequate counselling facilities in the school.		Handling of delicate student-family related issues
3	Trust in keeping student secret.	Counsellor-Teacher conflicting roles.		School counsellors rarely follow up their clients at home
4	Counsellors are too busy performing other school duties which affect their follow-up on me.	Ministry rarely monitors or supervises counselling activities.		

This is a big minus for an effective service delivery, if facilities are not provided, counsellors' optimal services cannot be guaranteed. However this observation was in contrast with what obtains in some other parts of the country such as Lagos State in which there were adequate facilities for counselling in schools as noted by Dasylyva [13]. This contradiction implied that counselling services were given more attention to by some States while others pay lip service to its adequate implementation. Thus it suggested that the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should initiate a policy through the Federal Ministry of Education, saddled with the oversight of educational activities in Nigeria, to provide minimum standard for the provision of counselling programme in schools in Nigeria.

### CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that counselling services are provided in schools in Ekiti State and that all the stakeholders perceived it to be effective but that there are challenges especially lack of adequate facilities which require the attention of Counselling Association of Nigeria, the Federal and State Ministries of Education in Nigeria. This study has clearly indicated the relevance of guidance and counselling the well being of students in secondary schools, therefore relevant sectors in the management of secondary schools education should provide the necessary support for the provision of guidance and counselling services in schools. However, caution should be taken in the generalization of the outcome of this study since private schools were not included in the study for logistic reasons. This provides grounds for further study on this subject.

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