

Conceptualization and Operationalization of Higher Degree Researches in Guidance and Counselling: A Second Thought

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Research Domiciles

- Higher Degree Researches
 - Masters, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral
- Individual / Group Researches
 - Usually by practicing counsellors or counsellor educators
- Institutional Researches
 - Usually commissioned by Govt./agencies or private organizations

Research Areas in G and C

- On Policy Provisions
- For the Improvement of counselling practices
- Needs assessment
- Students' reported cases
- Emerging Challenges
- Stakeholder reports

On Policy Provisions

- National Policy on Education: 1977; 1981; 2004 reads in part:

“In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects, and in view of personality maladjustment among school children career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post-primary institutions. Since qualified personnel in this category is scarce, government will continue to make provisions for the training of interested teachers in guidance and counselling. Guidance and counselling will also feature in teacher education programmes”

- This policy provision prompted researches in the following areas:
 - Whether or not only ‘young people’ are ignorant about career prospects
 - Whether or not career officers and counsellors are different
 - Whether or not only ‘school children’ have personality maladjustment
 - Whether or not only post-primary institutions need ‘career officers and counsellors’

Improvement of Counselling Practices

- Some of the research areas covered here include:
 - Effectiveness of an approach relative to a given population
 - Efficacies of two or more approaches
 - Evaluation purposes
 - Androgyny / stereotypical beliefs
 - Vocational interests / career preference
 - Needs assessment
 - Gender differences
 - Follow-ups
 - , etc

Needs Assessment (NA)

- At secondary school level the NA is usually conducted by the State MOE and summarized into a G and C curriculum
- Counsellors use the existing curriculum to mount a programme
- The counselling experiences are usually divided into:
 - Personal
 - Social
 - Educational and
 - Vocational needs
- The strategies: prevention, intervention and *post-vention*
- To cover all the 3 streams in each of the 2 levels of Sec. education

Students' Reported Cases

Cases reported by students in an individual or group sessions documented by CASSON (NW Zone), 2005- 2007

Category	Sample Cases
Educational	Coping strategies (2.14), comprehension (2.20), study skills (2.91), exam anxiety (2.04)
Vocational	Career aspirations (2.72), fear of (choice and) unemployment (2.91), what to do in future (1.91), desire to know about occupations(1.09)
Personal	Financial constraints (2.97), imposition from parents (2.13), parents quarrels (and divorce) (1.56), being made fun of (1.65)
Social	Interpersonal r/ships (1.25), so much responsibility at home (2.90), wanting to belong (1.98),
Other	Teachers attitude in the class (1.77), to self (1.77), after school engagement (2.90),

Emerging Challenges

- Challenges do emerge outside the counselling programme

Also documented by CASSON (NW Zone) 2005-2007; validated by Haruna (2008)

Category	Emerging Cases
Educational	Exam malpractice, impersonation, mass failure in promotional exam, too many school rules, teachers' attitude to work
Vocational	Total lack of r/ship between courses and vocational interests, part-time jobs, not doing well in selected subjects
Personal	STDs, peer influence, emotional changes (breakdown), evil spirits and witches, substances abuse
Social	Gangsterism, inter-communal youth clashes, inter-party youth clashes, rudeness
Other	High rate of petty stealing in class

Stakeholder Reports:

To mount an all-encompassing programme stakeholders' views must be sought; this was documented by Practicum students (206/2007) and validated by Haruna (2008)

Stakeholders	Sample Reports
Parents	Nigerian and Hausa films (Nollywood/Kannywood), romantic novels, video games, cell phone chatting, defiance, social IT media
Teachers	Absenteeism, low performance, learning disorders, teacher abuse, substance abuse, conduct disorder, destruction of school property, recurring violations of school rules, exam malpractice
Govt. Agencies	Drug abuse (NDLEA), stealing and burglary (Police), substance abuse
Community	Zance (hanging out with girls late night), disruptive behavior, substance abuse
Media	Football hooliganism, substance abuse
Counsellors	Shunning counselling

Implications to Note

- That none of the following cases featured any where:
 - Fear of bullying
 - Failure in homework
 - School phobia
 - mutism
 - Autism
 - Attention deficit
- Simply because they:
 - Are more prominent at primary school level
 - Have biological components
 - Their occurrence at other levels is abysmal

- That none of the following cases featured any where:
 - Fake results
 - Cultism
 - Rapes
 - Union rivalry
 - marriage and relationship issues
 - Homosexuality
 - Schizophrenia
 - maladjustment
- Simply because they are more prominent at tertiary levels
- Their occurrence at other levels is abysmal

- That none of the following cases featured any where:
 - Suicide
 - Eating disorders (bulimia and anorexia nervosa)
 - Sexual dysfunction
 - Sexual orientation
 - Depression
 - Bipolar disorder
- Simply because they:
 - are more prominent outside school system
 - Alien to the culture

Substance Abuse Treatment Project

- An attempt was made to make use of the existing research reports
- Garba (2003) documented some of the major reasons for substance abuse among Sec. Schl. Students:
 - Experimental curiosity
 - Peer group influence
 - Parental negligence and/or involvement
 - Socio-economic conditions
 - Need for extra energy
 - Availability of the drug
 - Lack of strict laws, etc

- Some of the consequences of substance abuse among secondary school students:
 - Self destruction
 - School dropouts, bleak future, psychiatric cases, etc
 - Increased crime
 - Disgrace to the family/society
- Project locations: Rumfa Collage and Govt. Girls College all in Kano

The following ----- steps were adopted
STEP ONE: Preliminaries

- Data were collected on most commonly used substances in the community as follows:
 - Socially acceptable: cough syrup*, OTC* (analgesics)
 - Socially unacceptable: alcohol*, marijuana*, cocaine
 - Improvised: **Gadagi**, sewage, frog fore-skin, solution

Asterisks indicate most commonly used by students

STEP TWO: Consultations, administration of Instruments

- Consultations with and between Project Team (PT) and school authorities
- Training of teachers and administration of Teacher's Nomination Scale (TNS) (Developed by Garba, 2000)
 - 59 students were nominated from Rumfa (1,800)
 - 13 students were nominated from Girls College (1350)
 - Total nominations 72 students
- Administration of Drug Abuse Identification Instrument (DAIS) (Developed by Garba, 2000)
 - 54 cases were identified: 46 males; 8 females
- Sharing outcome with school authorities

STEP THREE: Initial Counselling

- This was the most difficult step: interacting with the identified students
 - Major problems: denial, fear of punishment, shame
 - Finally established rapport, broke the news, sought their consent
- Interacting with parents
 - Major problems: blaming enemies, aspersions, quarrel with 'us'
 - Finally sought their consent/understanding

Outcome after initial Counselling Substance Abuse Treatment Project (2010)

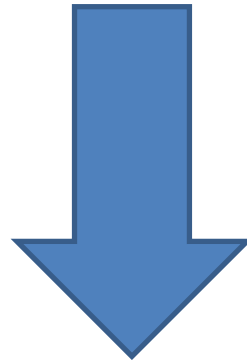
S/N	Drug Type(s)	Gender		Total
		(M)	(F)	
1	Alcohol, marijuana, analgesics	9	0	9
2	Alcohol, analgesics	6	0	6
3	Marijuana, analgesics	15	0	15
4	Cough syrup, analgesics	5	6	11
5	Analgesics only	11	2	13
Total		46	8	54

- Another Summary

Substance Type	No out of 54	%
Alcohol	15	33
Marijuana	24	51
Analgesics	54	100
Cough syrup	11	21

STEP FOUR: Clinical Assessment

- A Teaching Hospital carried out the clinical assessment
 - To determine severity and level of involvement
- The following is the outcome



Clinical Report: Substance Abuse Treatment Project (2010)

Substance Type	Chronic		Excessive		Mild		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Alcohol	0	0	7	0	8	0	15
Marijuana	9	0	11	0	4	0	24
Cough Syrup	0	5	2	1	3	0	11
Analgesics	9	0	25	0	18	2	54
	23 (42.6%)		46 (85%)		35 (64.8%)		

- Chronic: Dependence is the last stage of abuse. Chronic is closer to dependence.
 - May have signs of psychological (not physical) dependence
 - Light appearance in the blood
 - Tremendous physical symptoms
- Excessive: Substance use is enormous especially in a company.
 - May stay for days without it
 - No appearance in the blood
 - Some physical symptoms
- Mild: Substance is occasional, does not buy it
 - No traces in the blood
 - Physical symptoms appear when in the effects

STEP FIVE: Main Counselling Sessions

- The three categories were handled by three groups of counsellors
- Each of the group used different approaches depending on the nature/type of client and/or severity of the problem
- Procedure for entering into a counselling encounter was revised and stictly adhered to
- Reports indicated that one or a combination of the following three approaches were used:
 - Cognitive therapy
 - Behavioural therapy
 - Cognitive-behavioural therapy

- Treatment modality required that a significant other must be involved:
 - Such as parents (or some members of the family), friends and teachers
- Weekly meetings were held to compare notes
- School authorities were fully kept informed

STEP SIX: Measures Against Relapse

- Involvement of parents and significant others
- Some other activities were introduced for relapse prevention
 - Two Public lectures on:
 - Effects of substance abuse
 - Use of after school hours
 - Students encouraged to form Drug- Free Clubs

STEP SEVEN: EVALUATION

- Follow-ups were made to:
 - Ascertain success level
- Discussion with parents, teachers and the clients
- Clinical assessment was conducted again
 - Results were negative
- TNS administered again
 - 3 out of the 54 were nominated again

The Pros and Cons

- The pros:
 - Lives of some tomorrow's leaders has been saved
 - Many schools now requesting for intervention
 - The Association and members of the PT became popular
- The cons:
 - Substance abuse not the only school-related problem
 - No resources to extend the services to other schools
 - No resources to delve into other issues
- Ways forward:
 - continuous (re)training of the existing school counsellors to live up to expectation
 - Other branches of CASSON to continue to get involved in the society

8.0 Conclusion

- Researches in G and C heavily dependent on Quantitative approach
 - Prior to 1980: researches in counselling psychology used the Quantitative approach only (Lecomte, 1981)
 - Significant % of researches in behavioural sciences in Europe used Quant approach (Dill 1998)
 - 96% of researches in educational/counselling psychology in Nigeria (2000 – 2010) used Quant approach

- Scheel et al (2011) observed decline in research in Counselling Psychology over the years
 - Attributed the decline methodological orthodoxy
- There is the need for methodological diversification to other types such as:
 - Qualitative methods
 - Mixed method research

- Conceptualization and Operationalization not possible without
 - Determination of an approach
 - Begins with identification of concepts and assignment of meanings to them
 - Determination of dimensions
 - Decision on indicators of the presence/absence of the dimension
 - The process of creating definitions
 - Making concepts observable, measurable
 - Development of research procedure

9.0 References