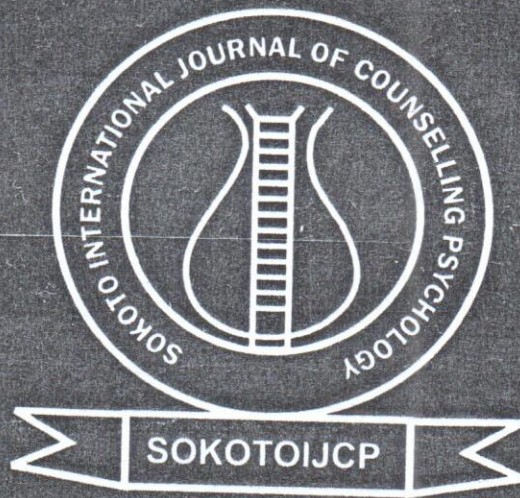




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## PROFESSIONALS' PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

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### Abstract

*This study investigated professionals' perception of role of guidance and counselling in social integration of persons with special needs in Ilorin metropolis. Descriptive research design was adopted and a simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting 100 professionals. The t-test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used in testing the hypotheses raised in the study at 0.05 alpha level. The findings showed that there were no significant differences in the role of guidance and counselling in social integration of persons with special needs based on gender, religion, years of experience and highest educational qualification. Based on the findings, it was recommended that counsellors, government, and entire members of the society should endure to work towards fostering the social integration of persons with special needs in our society.*

**Keywords:** Professionals, Social Integration, Persons with special needs

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### Introduction

People with disability had passed through several developmental stages as regards people's attitude toward them. There was the "dark age" during which they were "persona-non-grata", i.e. article of no mean value. Then, they were alienated, humiliated by their own kinsmen many of them feel thus: who would have anything to do with worthless beings, whose appearance signified bad omen while their existence constitute nuisance to the community; they were good preys for the hang man whose duty was to offer them as sacrifice to appease the gods and goddesses; they later became entertainers for nobles, kings, princes and highly places. Communities went to the extent of pitching persons with special needs against wild animals in wrestling contests to entertain dignitaries and august visitors. As time went on, these less privileged beings caught the fancy of the clergy and philosophers who thought, that their lives could be modified (Adediran, 2000).

Students with special needs are exceptional persons who need individually organized and systematically monitored arrangement of physical setting, special equipment and materials, special teaching procedures and other interventions in order to achieve their greatest possible independence, self-sufficiency, academic success and self-fulfillment. They are the students, who because of their exceptionality could not benefit from conventional classroom teaching/learning process. Mba (1991) identified various forms of exceptionality in the special need person. Among these are hearing impairment, physical impairment, visual impairment, mental retardation, learning disability, intellectually gifted and talented. Hearing impairment may include the deaf and the hard of hearing while physical impairment comprises the cerebral palsy, the epileptic, those with spina bifida, and the orthopedically handicapped. In the same vein, the visually impaired are the blind, the low-visioned and partially sighted whereas mental retardation could be mild, moderate, profound or severe.

It is evident that, students with special needs are in one way or the other different from their typical counterparts, yet, there is unavoidable need to accept and integrate these unique persons into the society.

Adediran (2000) stated that person with special need do not easily gain access to education like their typical counterparts, let alone to guidance and counselling programmes. These people had passed through turmoil and maltreatment. Nonetheless, changes are gradually being recorded in the treatment of these set of people ranging from revisiting their rights and privileges, establishment of special schools, organizing programmes of instruction reflecting nature and peculiarities of the special need persons. But, it is worthy, to point out that, one of the problems faced by these people, is the issue of social segregation. This is because the full integration of these people into the societies has not been attained. There had always been traditional ways of helping individuals and the community at large solve their various problems, be it emotional, psychological, social, economical or political problems. Throughout the ages, people had always gone to others who are believed to possess superior knowledge, insight or experiences for advice and counsel (Adeosun, 2000).

Nowadays, as the society grows more complex, so also the problem facing individuals especially the special need persons become more complex and varied. Gradually the traditional procedure of counselling gave way to the more dynamic techniques, strategies, method and procedures, which aim at assisting a person having problem in any facet of life, so that he can be more effective, satisfied and

useful to himself and the society in which he lives. Omoegun (2009) described guidance as the organized attempt by the school or other institutions such as the family, church, hospitals, industries, and prisons. To help an individual (client) develop his or her potential to the maximum in order that the goals of such institutions are realized. Also, Akinade, Soka and Osarenren (1996) viewed guidance as a process of helping persons to understand themselves by discovering their needs, interests and capabilities to formulate their progress with own goals and make plans to realize them and to evaluate their progress with references not only to self-satisfaction but also, to potential contribution to their societies. Counselling on the other hand as seen by Danasy (2002), is a relationship between a professionally trained competent adult and a person seeking help to solve his/her personal, emotional, academic, career/vocational and psychological problems. In the same vein, Omoegun (2009) described counselling as the process of helping people with their problems. Omoegun went further that, it is a process in which one person (the counsellor) assists another person (client/counsee) in a person-to-person or face to face encounter.

Meanwhile, guidance and counselling has at its heart, helping people to acquire better adjustment skills. This is why this research is designed to bring to fore, the roles of those in the helping field i.e. guidance and counselling in social integration of students with special need in Ilorin metropolis by investigating from those who closely work and deal with these students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The fact that the attitude of the society towards persons with special needs has not been encouraging is evident. Persons with special needs are usually seen and treated as second class citizens. The society consciously or unconsciously places limitation on the extent to which persons with special needs can compete with their typical counterparts; this is perhaps why persons with special needs usually encounter problems in gaining employment opportunities, attaining political offices, getting married to typical persons among other barriers. These indicate the society's alienation and segregation of persons with special needs. From these explanations, it is obvious that, persons with special needs require help in order to be fully integrated into their society. The focus of this study, therefore, is to examine the role of guidance and counselling in the social integration of persons with special needs.

## **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What are the professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in the social integration of students with special needs?
2. Is there any difference in the professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in the social integration of students with special needs on the basis of gender?
3. Is there any difference in the professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in the social integration of students with special needs on the basis of religion?
4. Is there any difference in the professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in the social integration of students with special needs on the basis of years of experience?
5. Is there any difference in the professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in the social integration of students with special needs on the basis of educational qualification?

## **Research Hypothesis**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this study:

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the Professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in social integration of students with special needs on the basis of gender.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in the Professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in social integration of students with special needs on the basis of religion.
- H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant difference in the Professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in social integration of students with special needs on the basis of educational qualification.
- H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant difference in the Professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in social integration of students with special needs on the basis of years of experience.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive survey which seeks to obtain data on professionals' perception of role of guidance and counselling in social integration of students with special needs. Oke, Olosunde, and Jekayinfa (2005) stated that descriptive survey attempts to describe, find out and interpret condition and relationship that exist among people or events, the attitude of people toward events and ideas, etc. According to Daramola (2006), descriptive research is a systematic attempt to describe the characteristics of a given population or areas of interest factually. It involves large sample to ensure meaningful description, requires empirical evidences thorough data gathering processes and hypotheses testing. The appropriateness of descriptive survey design to this study stems from the fact that the study deals with finding out the professionals, perception of role of guidance and counselling in social integration of students with special needs.

### **Population, Sample and Sampling Technique**

The population for this study consists of all professionals working with students with special needs in Ilorin metropolis. One hundred professionals were drawn from school for the special needs and selected higher institutions in Ilorin metropolis using purposive and random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the school for the special needs since it is the only school for the special needs in Ilorin metropolis. Simple random sampling was used to select four higher institutions. Simple random sampling was also used to select 15 professionals in each of the selected higher institutions while 40 respondents were chosen from the school for the special needs, since they are dealing directly with students with special needs. This makes a total number of 100 respondents that participated in the study. According to Adewumi (1988), simple random sampling is a sampling technique in which all the samples in population have the probability of being selected.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument for this study is a closed ended questionnaire designed by the researchers to gather relevant information from the respondents. The questionnaire is made up of two sections.

*Professionals' Perception of the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Social Integration of  
Persons with Special Needs in Ilorin Metropolis*

The first section is designed to obtain demographical information of the respondents. These include gender, religion, years of experience and educational qualification. The second section contains questions of the research which are formulated with special reference to the earlier raised research questions and populated hypothesis. It consists of twenty (20) questions with four options (i.e. Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD) per question while the respondents were to tick the only option they consider appropriate to each question. The psychometric properties of the instrument were established by the researchers.

## Results

This section presents the analysis of data gathered with the use of an instrument titled "Role of Guidance and Counselling in Social Integration of Students with Special Needs Questionnaire (RGCSISSNQ)". The data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tools were employed to analyze the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents based on Gender, Religion, Years of Experience and Educational Qualification**

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| Male   | 62        | 62.0       |
| Female | 38        | 38.0       |
| Total  | 100       | 100.0      |

| Religion                     | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| African Traditional Religion | 2         | 2.0        |
| Christianity                 | 44        | 44.0       |
| Islam                        | 54        | 54.0       |
| Total                        | 100       | 100.0      |

| Years of Experience | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| Below 5 years       | 16        | 16.0       |
| 5 - 10 years        | 44        | 44.0       |
| 11 years and above  | 40        | 40.0       |
| Total               | 100       | 100.0      |

| Highest Educational Qualification | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| SSCE                              | 5         | 5.0        |
| NCE/ND                            | 19        | 19.0       |

|              |     |       |
|--------------|-----|-------|
| First Degree | 25  | 25.0  |
| M.Sc./M.Ed.  | 38  | 38.0  |
| Ph.D.        | 13  | 13.0  |
| Total        | 100 | 100.0 |

**Table 2: Mean and Rank Order on the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Social Integration of Students with Special Needs**

| Item No. | Provision of guidance and counselling services helps students with special needs to:          | Mean | Rank             |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------------------|
| 1        | acquire educational, vocational and personal social skills                                    | 3.54 | 1 <sup>st</sup>  |
| 4        | gain better interpersonal skill                                                               | 3.41 | 2 <sup>nd</sup>  |
| 7        | be aware of opportunities available to them in the society                                    | 3.41 | 2 <sup>nd</sup>  |
| 6        | recognize their strengths despite the physical limitations                                    | 3.40 | 4 <sup>th</sup>  |
| 11       | overcome the feeling of emotional depression                                                  | 3.39 | 5 <sup>th</sup>  |
| 20       | believe in their ability to perform effectively like their typical counterpart in the society | 3.37 | 6 <sup>th</sup>  |
| 17       | fit into their society                                                                        | 3.36 | 7 <sup>th</sup>  |
| 5        | overcome social frustration                                                                   | 3.36 | 7 <sup>th</sup>  |
| 13       | overcome negative self-concept                                                                | 3.36 | 7 <sup>th</sup>  |
| 9        | acquire problem solving skills                                                                | 3.34 | 10 <sup>th</sup> |
| 12       | feel belonged among their typical counterparts                                                | 3.33 | 11 <sup>th</sup> |
| 8        | improve their communication skills                                                            | 3.31 | 12 <sup>th</sup> |
| 16       | perform credibly in their school works                                                        | 3.30 | 13 <sup>th</sup> |
| 18       | gain acceptance from their typical counterparts                                               | 3.30 | 14 <sup>th</sup> |
| 15       | live a more fulfillment life                                                                  | 3.30 | 14 <sup>th</sup> |
| 10       | excel in the world of employment                                                              | 3.28 | 16 <sup>th</sup> |
| 14       | gain information and orientation about the norms of their society                             | 3.28 | 16 <sup>th</sup> |
| 2        | avoid experiencing social segregation                                                         | 3.26 | 18 <sup>th</sup> |
| 3        | acquire all they need to excel academically and socially                                      | 3.19 | 19 <sup>th</sup> |
| 19       | gain back their normalcy                                                                      | 2.59 | 20 <sup>th</sup> |

## Hypotheses Testing

Four null hypotheses were generated and as well tested for this study. The hypotheses were tested using t-test and ANOVA statistical methods at 0.05% level of significance.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no Significant Difference in the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Social Integration of Students with Special Needs in Ilorin Metropolis Based on Gender.

**Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Social Integration of Students with Special Needs in Ilorin Metropolis Based on Gender**

| Gender | N  | Mean  | SD    | Df | Cal.t-value | Critical t-value | Std.Err |
|--------|----|-------|-------|----|-------------|------------------|---------|
| Male   | 62 | 66.51 | 3.263 | 98 | 1.83        | 1.98             | 0.414   |
| Female | 38 | 65.36 | 2.644 |    |             |                  | 0.429   |

Table 3 shows a Calculated t-value of 1.83 and a Critical t-value is 1.98. The Calculated t-value is less than the Critical t-value. The hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the role of guidance and counselling in social integration of students with special needs in Kwara State based on gender.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no Significant Difference in the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Social Integration of Students with Special Needs in Ilorin Metropolis Based on Religion.

**Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Social Integration of Students with Special Needs in Ilorin Metropolis Based on Religion**

| Source         | Df | SS      | Mean Square | Calculated p-value | Critical p-value |
|----------------|----|---------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Between Groups | 2  | 10.129  | 5.06        | 0.59               | 0.05             |
| Within Groups  | 97 | 929.231 | 9.58        |                    |                  |
| Total          | 99 | 939.360 |             |                    |                  |

Table 4 shows a calculated p-value of 0.59 and a Critical p-value of 0.05. Since the calculated P-value is greater than the critical -value, the hypothesis was accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the role of guidance and

counselling in social integration of students with special needs in Kwara State based on religion.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no Significant Difference in the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Social Integration of Students with Special Needs in Ilorin Metropolis Based Years of Experience.

**Table 5:** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Social Integration of Students with Special Needs in Ilorin Metropolis Based on Years of Experience

| Source         | Df | SS      | Mean Square | Calculated p-value | Critical p-value |
|----------------|----|---------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Between Groups | 2  | 1.951   | 0.97        |                    |                  |
| Within Groups  | 97 | 937.409 | 9.66        | 0.94               | 0.05             |
| Total          | 99 | 939.360 |             |                    |                  |

Table 5 shows a calculated p-value of 0.94 and a Critical p-value of 0.05. Since the calculated p-value is greater than the critical p-value, the hypothesis was accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the role of guidance and counselling in social integration of students with special needs in Kwara State based on years of experience.

**Hypothesis Four:** There is no Significant Difference in the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Social Integration of Students with Special Needs in Ilorin Metropolis Based on Highest Educational Qualification.

**Table 6:** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the Role of Guidance and Counselling in Social Integration of Students with Special Needs in Ilorin Metropolis Based on Highest Educational Qualification

| Source         | Df | SS      | Mean Square | Calculated p-value | Critical p-value |
|----------------|----|---------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Between Groups | 4  | 38.031  | 9.50        |                    |                  |
| Within Groups  | 95 | 901.329 | 9.48        | 0.41               | 0.05             |
| Total          | 99 | 939.360 |             |                    |                  |

Table 6 shows a calculated p-value 0.41 and a Critical p-value of 0.05. Since the calculated p-value is greater than the critical p-value, the hypothesis was accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the role of guidance and counselling in social integration of students with special needs in Kwara State based on highest educational qualification.

## **Discussion**

Table 1 indicates that 100 respondents participated in the study out of which 62 (62%) were males, while 38 (38%) of the respondents were females. The table indicates that 2 (2%) were worshippers of the African Traditional Religion, 44 (44%) were Christians, while 54 (54%) of the respondents were Muslims. The table indicates that 16 (16%) of the respondents were below 5 years, 44 (44%) were between 5 – 10 years, while 40 (40%) were 11 years and above. The table also shows that 5 (5%) of the respondents were having only SSCE result, 19 (19%) of the respondents were having NCE/ND, 25 (25%) of the respondents were having first degree, 38 (38%) of the respondents were having M.Sc/M.Ed. results, while 13 (13%) of the respondents were having a Ph.D.

Table 2 shows that item 1 ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with a mean score of 3.54 and it states that "Provision of guidance and counselling services helps students with special needs to acquire educational, vocational and personal social skills". Ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> is item 4 and 7 with mean scores of 3.41, and state that "Provision of guidance and counselling services helps students with special needs to gain better interpersonal skill" and "Provision of guidance and counselling services helps students with special needs to be aware of the opportunities available to them in the society" respectively. The second item ranked 18<sup>th</sup> with a mean score of 3.26 and it states that "provision of guidance and counselling services helps students with special needs to avoid experiencing social segregation". Item 3 ranked 19<sup>th</sup> with a mean score of 3.19 and it states that "Provision of guidance and counselling services helps students with special needs to acquire all they need to excel academically and socially". Ranked 20<sup>th</sup> is item 19 with a mean score of 2.59 and it states that "Provision of guidance and counselling services helps students with special needs to gain back their normalcy". Hence, this table answers research question 1 that all the items in the questionnaire are the role of guidance and counselling in the social integration of persons with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.

The hypothesis revealed that there is no significant difference in the professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in the social integration of

persons with special needs based on gender. This hypothesis was accepted. The implication of this is that both male and female professionals are of the opinion that guidance and counselling can help to socially integrate persons with special needs into the society. This finding agreed with the views of Gbegbin (1991) who described integration as a system in which persons with learning disabilities are absorbed, streamed, fused or assimilated into regular classes. According to the researcher, the strategy of integration or mainstreaming is a sort of educational programme in which the students with disabilities attend classes with typical children on part-time or full time basis.

The hypothesis which was accepted revealed that there is no significant difference in the professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in the social integration of persons with special needs based on religion. This implies that the professionals, irrespective of their religion, all agree that guidance and counseling plays a major role in integrating people with special needs into their community. However, this is in contrast with the findings of Olajide (2007) who stated that religion is of significance for social integration of people with special needs.

There is no significant difference in the professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counselling in the social integration of persons with special needs based on years of experience. This hypothesis was accepted which means the number of years a professional has put into service do not affect their perception. In support of this finding, Oziji (1993) stated that guidance and counselling has since time immemorial spearheaded the care and education of the disabled individuals.

There is no significant difference in professionals' perception of the role of guidance and counseling in the social integration of persons with special needs based on educational qualification. This hypothesis was accepted. This means that, based on educational qualification, the perception of the professionals, on the role of guidance and counselling in social integration of persons with special needs are the same.

### **Summary of the findings**

It was revealed in the study that the role of guidance and counselling in social integration of persons with special needs as perceived by professionals are: helping students with special needs to acquire educational, vocational and personal social skills, gain better interpersonal skills and to be aware of the

opportunities available in the society. It was also found out from the study that gender, religion, years of experience and educational qualification not significantly influence the role of guidance and counselling in the social integration of persons with special needs in Ilorin metropolis.

### **Recommendations**

Counsellors should endeavour to offer voluntary counselling services to both people with special needs, and the less informed members of the society, whereby persons with special needs will be integrated and make necessary referral when there is need for it. Government should establish well equipped counselling centers not only in schools for persons with special needs, but also in every community and place counselling profession in high esteem regarding the facilitation of social integration of persons with special needs. This can be achieved by making a clear demarcation between teachers and counsellors in all ramifications. The curriculum planners should pay serious attention to the promotion of qualitative counsellor education in Nigeria.

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