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Factors that Determine Use of the Counselling Centre by Students of a Nigerian Institution of Higher Learning

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Abstract

Students of tertiary institutions are faced with diverse challenges and these range from academic to socio-economic ones. A trained counsellor should be well-equipped to help students deal with their challenges. The study investigated the factors that determine use of the Counselling Centre by students of University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The sample comprised undergraduate and postgraduate students of the University. The purposively sampling technique was used in selecting four large faculties in the University. In each of these facilities, simple random sampling technique was used in selecting one hundred students, making a total of four hundred respondents. Data were collected using a researcher designed instrument tagged 'Factors for Counselling Centre Use Questionnaire (FCCUQ)'. The questionnaire was pilot tested, validated and the reliability co-efficient of 0.78 obtained revealed that the instrument was reliable for the study. The major finding of the study revealed that "vocational needs" is the highest factor that determines the use of the Counselling Centre by respondents. Also, the findings of the study revealed that faculty, religion and course of study of the respondents significantly influenced the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre. However, no significant difference was found on the basis of gender. Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore recommended that the NUC should encourage universities to set up guidance and counselling programmes in their institutions.

Introduction

Counselling is based on the assumption that any individual in society may have, is having or will have a problem that the individual cannot solve and therefore needs the intervention of a counsellor (Makinde, 2002). In the traditional setting the parents, priest, relations provide guidance for the youth. This process causes a lot of complexity in thought and emotions. Counselling is a form of talking therapy that allows a person to discuss their problems and feelings in a confidential and dependable environment. Idowu (2004) viewed counselling as the process of helping individuals to become more fully aware of themselves and the ways in which they are responding to the influences in their environment. Ogunlade and Akoredolu (2012) defined counselling as a process in which a person is helped in a face to face relationship which is aimed at facilitating personal development.

A counsellor is a trained professional who helps the client to work through their personal challenges by resolving problems in a positive way in which the client can clarify issues, explore options, develop strategies and also increase self-awareness. Omotosho (2004) defined counselling as a process in which a counsellor assists a counselee to interpret facts relating to choice, plan or adjustment which the client needs to make. In other words, counselling helps the client to cope with their educational, vocational and personnel social needs. Oladele (2002) explained that counselling can help students with problems of depression, anxiety, stress and those with borderline personality.

Students of tertiary institutions are faced with diverse form of problems and these ranges from academic problems to socio-economic challenges. Using the tool of counselling, students can attain their academic goals. The talk therapy does not only assist students in the choice of their courses, but create

opportunities and awareness for personal social, educational and vocational growth (Oredugba, 2014). The major aim of establishing the counselling centre in higher institution is to ensure that students succeed by rendering a comprehensive range of quality services that will promote all-round development of the student. Oluremi (2008) stated that counselling services is uniquely positioned in universities to make an enduring impact on the academic and personal success of the students by empowering, challenging and supporting them. The authors also noted that the use of the counselling centre in the university community cannot be overemphasized. The researcher further noted that high school students need a lot of diverse support from the counsellor in order to gain skills and knowledge necessary for growth in their academic pursuit.

Jeffery (2007) has clearly shown how quality academic counselling can positively influence grades of students. There is need to establish counselling centres in universities because of the current influx of students into higher institution of learning, the demand for skilled workers, automation in the world of work, growing needs of youths, students unrest in the universities and problem of cultism (Idowu, 2004). The major function of counsellors in university counselling centres includes appraisal, counselling, information, placement, orientation, evaluation and referral services. It has been reported that the willingness by students to seek counselling is determined by their culturally conditioned beliefs (Schnittker, 2000).

University of Ilorin Counselling Development and Human Resources Centre (2013) explained that some of the common problems for which students seek assistance include: academic problems, career guidance, depression or

thoughts of suicide, relationship problems, alcohol or drug use, feeling of loneliness, coping with grief, lack of confidence or self-esteem and family problems. The major aims of this centre include: identification of students' innate abilities and development of their capabilities, potentials and talents, assisting students to effectively adjust to educational and institutional challenges, development of sound character, promotion of effective interpersonal relationships, acquisition of the necessary skills required for academic excellence, career success and healthy living.

Henrietta (2012) reported that poor time management was the major cause of stress among university students and recommended that counselling services should be provided in Nigerian universities with a view to guiding the students on how to effectively cope with stress and the university environment. Genhinde (2000) emphasized that educational goals can be achieved through accomplishment of the aims and objectives of guidance and counselling. The guidance services at the disposal of a counselling psychologist would help in a great measure to improve the lot of students in higher institutions of learning and also help them to be gainfully employed.

Statement of problem

Professional guidance counsellors cannot be neglected in trying to accomplish the goals set for higher education in national development (Adebowale 2011). Ben, Catherine, Shelagh and Kathlee (2006) explained that mental health problems are common challenges among the students who seek for counselling in higher institution of learning. They believe that the number of students with severe psychological problems has increased in recent years. Depression is now the most frequent diagnosis, afflicting 60% of university students in America.

Lauren (2015) explained that most university students are faced with lots of challenges. The study of Adebowale (2011) revealed that there are increasing complications and complex problems among the youth in Nigeria as a result of lack of direction and the majority of them have ended up with emotional maladjustments, frustration, conflicts and failure in life. These problems can only be handled by a well trained professional counsellor. Adegoke (2004) asserted that with all the benefits derived from guidance programme most universities are yet to set up counselling centres and where they are available students do not have enough information of what they stand to gain from the centre.

Oluremi (2014) worked on functional guidance and counselling centre in tertiary institution, while Coy (2004) researched on developmental guidance and counselling in today's schools. Also Tambuwal (2010) carried out a study on organizing and administering guidance programme at elementary school level for effective programme. None of these scholars, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, conducted a study that specifically focused on the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students. Owing to the gaps identified above, the researchers investigated the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students in Kwara State. The study investigated the influence of variables such as gender, religion, age and course of study on the determinants of the use of the Counselling Centre by students at University of Ilorin. The findings of this study will be of benefit to counselling centres, counsellors, school administrators, student's affairs and educational providers. The basic research question is: What is the major determinant of the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students?

Research hypotheses

- 1) *There is no significant difference in the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students on the basis of gender.*
- 2) *There is no significant difference in the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students on the basis of Faculty.*
- 3) *There is no significant difference in the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students on the basis of age.*
- 4) *There is no significant difference in the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students on the basis of course of study.*

Methodology

The research design was the descriptive survey method. The design allows the researcher to collect data and describe it in a systematic manner (Adana, 1996). The target populations were all University of Ilorin students in Kwara State. This comprised undergraduate and postgraduate students of the University. The population of the students in the University was 26,000. They are made up of students from 100-700 levels in the various departments. Using the sample size determination table (Research Advisor, 2006), 400 respondents were selected for this study. The sample size of 26,000 will have a sample size of 378 at 99% confidence interval and 2.5 margin error. This was the justification for the sample of the study. The purposively sampling technique was used in selecting four large faculties in the University. These included: Faculties of Arts, Science, Education and Social Science. In each of the faculties, simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 100 respondents.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection was tagged "Factors for Counselling Centre Use Questionnaire (FCCUQ)". Items in the questionnaire were derived from information obtained from the review of related literature. The instrument has two major sections. Section A dealt with demographic data while section B contained items on the determinants of the use of the Counselling Centre. The 4-point Likert Type Scale response format was adopted for use on Section B as thus: Strongly Agree: 4 points; Agree: 3 points; Disagree: 2 points; and Strongly Disagree: 1 point. The questionnaire contains 25 items which the respondents were expected to respond to.

In order to ascertain the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to four experts in the related field they affirmed that the instrument covered the intended contents and therefore valid for use. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test re-test method was adopted. The researchers administered the same instrument on twenty (20) respondents at an interval of four weeks. The two scores were correlated using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The reliability index of 0.78 was obtained. Therefore, the questionnaire was statistically said to be reliable for the study.

Relevant data were collected from four hundred (400) respondents. The data collected from the respondents were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Five (4) null hypotheses were generated and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Result

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Gender, Age and School Type

No.	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender		
	Male	108	21.3
	Female	198	40.2
	Total	408	100.0
2	Religion		
	Christianity	123	30.2
	Islam	18	7.3
	Others	19	4.5
	Total	408	100.0
3	Faculty		
	Art	108	26.3
	Education	108	26.3
	Health science	108	26.3
	Science	108	26.3
	Total	408	100.0
4	Course		
	Undergraduate	100	24.3
	Postgraduate	40	11.7
	Total	408	100.0

Table 1 indicates that 108 (21.3%) of the respondents were males while 198 (48.2%) were females. Religious representation showed that 123 (30.2%) were Christians while 18 (7.3%) were Muslims. The table shows that 108 (2.3%) of the respondents came from different departments. Finally, it reveals that 100 (24.3%) of the respondents were undergraduates while 40 (11.7%) of the respondents were postgraduates.

Table 2
Mean and Standard Deviation of Factors that Governed the use of Counseling Centers by University of Lagos students, Epe, Lagos State, Nigeria

CODE	ITEMS I visit the Counselling Centre when I:	MEAN	RANK
21	need information about various jobs that are available in my career	3.24	1 st
22	have emotional breakdown	3.10	2 nd
24	need information about the world of work after school	2.98	3 rd
1	have academic challenges	2.88	4 th
9	need to develop assertive skills	2.73	5 th
3	need information about the school set up	2.69	6 th
7	need to get along with others	2.65	7 th
10	need counselling on the choice of marital partner	2.63	8 th
6	have challenges about the future	2.61	9 th
25	need to secure a part time employment as a student	2.54	10 th
23	have to go for an interview	2.52	11 th
11	need acquisition of basic career skills	2.47	12 th
2	am confused about the choice of my departmental courses	2.41	13 th
8	need to reduce the rate of drug use	2.32	14 th
13	have challenges of coping with home and school stress	2.29	15 th
5	have problem during examination	2.29	15 th
14	am not happy	2.27	17 th
15	have personality disorder problem	2.27	17 th
12	develop post-traumatic stress disorder	2.21	19 th
4	have problem with any of my lecturers	2.13	20 th
20	need money for feeding	2.11	21 st
17	need money to buy some major textbook	1.94	22 nd
16	have challenges in paying my school fees	1.93	23 rd
19	need assistance to pay for my medical bill	1.85	24 th
18	need money to pay for my hostel accommodation	1.78	25 th

Table 2 presents the mean and rank order analysis of respondent's view of the determinants of the Counselling Centre usage by University of Ilorin, Kwara State. The result in the table indicated that items 21, 22, 24, 1 and 9 ranked as the top 5 items that shows respondents view on the factors that determine the use of counselling centre by University of Ilorin students in Kwara State. Item 21 which states, that "I visit the Counselling Centre when I need information about various jobs that are available in my career" ranked 1st with a mean score of 3.24. Ranked last is item 18. It can thus be concluded that the major determinants of the Counselling Centre usage by University of Ilorin students in Kwara State include the need to acquire information about various jobs opportunities that are available for students.

Table 3

Mean and Rank Order Analysis of needs of respondent's view of The Counselling Centre Use by University Student in Kwara State

CODE	ITEMS	MEAN	RANK
1	Vocational needs	14.38	1 st
2	Personal needs	12.94	2 nd
3	Educational needs	12.40	3 rd
4	Health needs	11.51	4 th
5	Financial needs	9.61	5 th

Table 3 shows the mean and rank order analysis of respondents view on determinant of the Counselling Centre use by University of Ilorin students in Kwara State. The result in the table indicated that vocational needs which ranked 1st with a mean score of 14.38 is the major determinant of the Counselling Centre use by University student in Kwara State. Personal needs ranked 2nd with a mean score of 12.94, educational needs ranked 3rd with a mean score of 12.40, health needs ranked 4th with a mean score of 11.51 and financial needs ranked as the least determinant factor for the Counselling Centre usage by University students in Kwara State.

Hypotheses Testing

In this study, five (5) null hypotheses were formulated and tested using t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical procedure. Significant differences were determined at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students on the basis of gender.

Table 3

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on the Means, Standard Deviation and

t-value of Respondents View on the Factors that Determine the Use of The Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin Students in Kwara State on the Basis of Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	p-value
Males	206	38.33	6.90	398	0.27
Females	194	39.03	5.73		

Table 3 shows a p-value of 0.27 at 0.05 level of significance. The p-value is greater than the alpha level at 0.05. The hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students on the basis of faculty

Table 4

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on the Means, Standard Deviation and t-value of Respondents View on the Factors that Determine the Use of The Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin Students in Kwara State on the Basis of Faculty

Source	df	SS	Mean Square	p-value
Between Groups	2	253.485	126.74	0.04*
Within Groups	397	15904.265	40.06	
Total	399	16157.750		

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 4 shows the p-value of 0.04 at 0.05 level of significance. The p-value is less than the alpha level at 0.05. The hypothesis is not accepted. Hence, there is a significant difference in the factors that determine the use the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students based on faculty.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students on the basis of religion

Table 5

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on the Means, Standard Deviation and t-value of Respondents View on the Factors that Determine the Use of The Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin Students in Kwara State on the Basis of Religion

Source	df	SS	Mean Square	p-value
Between Groups	2	282.971	141.48	0.03*
Within Groups	397	14892.967	37.51	
Total	399	15175.938		

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 5 shows the p-value of 0.03 at 0.05 level of significance. The p-value is less than the alpha level at 0.05. The hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference.

Table 6

Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT) Showing the Factors that Determine The Counselling Centre Use by University of Ilorin Students on the Basis of Religion

Duncan Groupings	N	Means	Group	Religion
A	353	40.73	1	Christianity
A	28	40.60	2	Islam
B	19	39.89	3	ATR

Table 6 shows the Duncan Multiple Range Test result indicating the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 15. Group 1 (Christian) with a mean

score of 40.73 differed slightly from Group 2 (Islam) with a mean score of 40.60; and significantly differed from Group 3 (ATR) with a mean score of 39.89. All the groups differed from one another but the significant noted in the ANOVA was as a result of the mean of Group 3 and hence the significant difference noted in the ANOVA on Table 5.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference in the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students on the basis of course of study.

Table 7

Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on the Means, Standard Deviation and t-value of Respondents View on the Factors that Determine the Use of The Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin Students in Ilorin Kwara State on the Basis of Course of Study

Religion	N	Mean	SD	df	p-value
Undergraduate	355	52.85	3.13	398	0.00*
Postgraduate	45	54.66	2.89		

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 7 shows a p-value of 0.00. The p-value is less than the alpha level of 0.05. The hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the determinant of counselling centre use by University of Ilorin students' on the basis of course of study.

Discussion

The students visit the Counselling Centre when they need information about the various jobs that are available. This might be due to scarcity of job in

Nigerian. Bolu-steve (2015) stated that youths employ different strategies when seeking for job. Omotosho (2004) revealed that a lot of students often use the counselling centre when they need to gather enough information about the world of work before entering into the job market. The search for career attainment and information about various jobs that are available are important aspect of career development. The counsellor is trained to assist and give information to students on various careers. According to Lazarus and Chinwe (2011) career development is a dynamic process that requires individuals to engage in the ongoing assessment, analysis, and synthesis of information about the world of work and self, thus necessitating a visit to the counselling centre.

In spite of gender disposition, respondents viewed the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre the same way. However, Aluede, Oyaziwo, Imhonde, Henry, Eguavoen and Agatha (2006) revealed that gender differences in counselling needs of students exist. Male students were found to express a significant greater concern for family issues while female students were more concerned about self-control and personal issues when they visit school counsellor. Tahhan & Eitah (2002) opined that, concerning vocational, social, academic and moral issues, women visiting the counselling centre often have greater needs than men.

Religious beliefs are often based on one's faith and spirituality (Schnittker, 2002). This study showed that the different religious bodies have different opinion on factors that determine the use of counselling Centre. This corroborates the findings of Oredugba (2014) who discovered that Muslims prefer to seek help from a trained Sheik or Imam when they have problems than relying on a trained counsellor. Bolu-Steve (2013) explained that most problems and challenges are often attributed to unseen spirits in most African

cultures, as such, people often visit pastors or imams who they assume have the power to deal with the unseen spirits rather than visiting a professional counsellor.

Irrespective of the course of study and the faculty of the students, Stewart (2010) emphasized that high school students need a lot of diverse support from a counsellor in order to gain skills and knowledge necessary for growth in their academic pursuit. Tanbawah (2010) noted that guidance and counselling is an important part of the educational process which enables students to adjust better and fit in the school system. Tanbawah maintained that a good relationship with the counsellor helps the students to find their way around complicated curriculum and at the same time develop positive attitude towards school.

Recommendations and conclusion

The findings of this study showed that significant differences exist in the factors that determine the use of the Counselling Centre by University of Ilorin students on the basis of faculty, religion and course of study. However, no significant difference was found on the basis of gender. As such, it was recommended that the school authority and the students affairs unit should work in harmony with the University counselling department in order to enhance the academic and emotional development of students. The Nigerian University Commission should encourage universities to set up guidance and counselling programme in their institutions. The counsellors in the institutions should assist in creating awareness on the need for students to seek assistance from a counsellor when they have challenges.

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