

Attitude of School Management Personnel towards Guidance and Counselling Services in Secondary Schools in Benin

E. John Ubah

ubah_john@yahoo.com

Osaseri Osaguoua John

¹*College of Education, Ekiadolor
Benin, Edo State*

Abstract

The study investigated the attitude of school management personnel towards secondary school guidance and counselling services in Benin. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A sample of sixty-six school management personnel in eighteen schools in three Local Government Areas were selected using the systematic random sampling method. As a survey study, the data were collected through the use of questionnaire, titled School Management Personnel Questionnaire (SMPQ), which was administered on respondents, scored, analyzed and evaluated using the Z-test. The results of the findings showed that factors such as sex, school, and type of school (public or private) affect the attitude of School Management Personnel towards guidance and counselling services, and as a result the null hypotheses were rejected. Based on the findings, it is recommended among others that government should make provision for the regular training of interested school management personnel in guidance and counselling as this will enhance their positive disposition towards guidance and counselling services.

Keywords: Guidance, Counselling, Attitudes, School, Management, Personnel

Introduction

Guidance and counselling helps the individual to discover and reconcile positively with his environment. It also forms part of the services that help the school achieve its aim and assist the students in taking full advantage of all the opportunities provided by the school. Guidance and counselling services in secondary schools depend on the cooperation of the school management personnel. A well-organized school management personnel will naturally permit the delivery of both specialized and related services. These guidance services must not only be functional, but understood by all that are involved since the guidance counsellor cannot operate in isolation. “Effective guidance and counselling services breeds good students who invariably become adjusted members of the society as well as leaders of tomorrow” (Agbajor, 2004). Putting this into consideration, it means that there is a call for effective guidance and counselling services which is a necessary compliment to instructions.

The organization, implementation as well as evaluation of guidance and counselling services depend on the attitude held by individuals, administrative staff of secondary schools and the society at large. Agbajor (2004) added that development of rightful attitude is important for the effective take off and smooth running of guidance and counselling services in schools. The school management personnel which comprises of the principal, vice principal, guidance counsellor, subject heads, teachers etc are the policy making body of a school as well as the advisory body who performs vital roles in the management and organization of the school system. Each of them has specific roles to play in actualizing the goals of guidance and counselling services in secondary schools. Olayinka (2008) noted that “if the principal is not favourably inclined to the existence of guidance and counselling services, and does not give moral and financial support to it, then the organization climate may be prejudiced to effective implementation of guidance and counselling services”.

Schools and the public in general need the fostering of correct attitudes towards guidance and counselling services. This will in turn create opportunities to flush out pernicious behaviour that hampers the furtherance of guidance services. On the issue of “behaviour” as the outward expression of attitude towards individuals or things, Agbajor (2004) added that for such behaviour to be changed, the attitude will have to be modified and to modify an attitude, one has to find out factors that influence or give rise to such attitude.

Guidance as an umbrella term includes all that is done to protect and guide the development of students through guidance and counselling services. As noted by Nwankwo (2009), it means showing the way by someone who is very familiar with the course of the way. According to Oghogho (2010), it is the process of helping individuals to solve problems and to be free and become responsible members of the community in which they live. Olayinka and Ubah (2008), in their observation, describe guidance as a profession designed to help each student adjust to his environment, develop the ability to set up realistic goals for himself and improve his total educational programme. Counselling on the other hand is an important aspect of guidance services. Osazee (2004) gave the meaning of counselling as a relationship in which one person endeavours to help the other to understand and solve adjustment problems. Agbajor (2004) sees it as person-to-person process in which one person is helped by another to develop and increase in understanding and ability to solve his or her problems. Perez was cited by Ola (2000) as defining counselling as an interactive process connecting the counselee who needs assistance and the counsellor who is trained and educated to give the assistance. Chimso (2008) in her opinion regards counselling as a form of personal help carried out mainly by means of inter-personal communication whereby the counsellor helps the counselee in achieving adaptive attitude, insights and behaviour.

From the above definitions of guidance and counselling, we can say that guidance and counselling is one of the major forces in education and allied to administrations and instructions. It is an integral part of our educational system that has the capability of causing education to be functional, child centred and job oriented through the active support and cooperation of principals and staff of varied schools.

Attitudes are behaviours that can be learned and those behaviours can often be produced from attitude. They are not innate, but persistent in nature and abide with us for a long period. This is why Ben (2006) propounded that the way we behave shapes our attitude. Attitude can be inferred but not objectively observable. It can be manifested in conscious experience, verbal reports, gross behaviour and psychological symptoms. It arises from attempts to account for observable regularities in the behaviour of individual persons. Ihedioha (1999) describes it as underlying preposition and opinions which are overt in manifestation. She added that they could be referred to as what is uncertain, even using them to mean “true”, “false” and beliefs. It is this belief that impels action and knowledge, which is more intellectual and passive. We have the following as characteristics of attitude: Direction of attitudes, intensity of attitudes, Pervasiveness of attitudes, consistency of attitudes and so on.

The school guidance service is a function of every member of the school management personnel. This implies that the attitude displayed is of immense importance in relation to the development of guidance services. Agbajor (2004) noted that administrative support was ranked in the highest priority category in the establishment and development of school guidance programme. In effect, the principal, vice principal, counsellor and teachers are all very important personnel in the establishment and implementation of guidance services in our present day schools. The principal is the chief executive and administrative officer of the school. He understands the function, goals and the organization of guidance programmes. He is the most significant figure in terms of determining guidance programmes and hence his attitude could either enhance or mar the success of these programmes.

Orobato (2006), in his study on the role of principals in counselling services, stated that the physical facilities and materials for guidance programmes such as guidance personnel office are to be provided to enhance the promotion of guidance services. He opined that principals who involve teachers, parents and the public in guidance programmes in their schools are likely to have maximum cooperation. This implies that the principals’ cooperation, supervision and evaluation of guidance programmes, is essential for effective promotion of guidance services, and to achieve the general goals of education which include to prepare young Nigerians for useful living within the society.

Attitudes are influenced by factors which in turn cause them to act either negatively or positively. It is some of these factors that make people to behave in diverse ways that this study is interested in and they include: (i) Educational background (ii) Sex (iii) Public and Private schools.

The educational background of school management personnel influences their attitude to guidance and counselling services. No gain saying that school management personnel with pedagogical training tend to appreciate guidance services than those who did not, especially those who did not have qualifications in education discipline. This assertion was supported by Odemwingie (2008), when he stated in his study on “the Inspection of Organization and Administration” that the least qualification for school management staff is now N.C.E. On the contrary, school management personnel without the basic professional qualification in education naturally resist and oppose guidance and counselling services in their schools. Individuals in such category regard counsellors as parasites. The principal in this regard, according to Ihedioha (1999), sees counsellors as a professional rival. In recent times, men and women have been found to be either principal, vice principal, school counsellor and teachers. Their sex determines their disposition to the position being held and their reception and perception to guidance services in particular. Several factors account for this sex difference namely: lack of models for both sexes (ii) the sorting practices of employers during employment and (iii) social class background.

Guidance and counselling services are currently executed in both public and private secondary schools. But the school management personnel in the two schools have different dispositions towards guidance services. The nature of their services is as a result of the type of school where they practice. Daniel (2010) expatiated on this when he said that counsellors in private schools tend to be far more hardworking than those in the public schools. The hardwork was achieved as a result of supervision from school principals and cooperation as well as support from members of staff.

Research Questions

Specifically, this study attempted to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Does the educational background of school management personnel influence their attitudes to guidance and counselling services?
2. Does sex difference affect the attitude of school management personnel towards guidance and counselling?
3. Is there any significant difference between the attitude of school management personnel in public and private schools towards guidance and counselling?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated for testing at the probability level of 0.5:

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the attitude of school management personnel with and those without education discipline background towards guidance and counselling services.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female schools management personnel towards guidance and counselling services.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between the attitude of school management personnel to guidance and counselling services in public and private schools.

Methodology

The research design applied in this study is the survey technique. The population for this study consists of male and female personnel such as the principal, vice principal, teachers in Benin, with a sample of sixty-six (66) School Management Personnel from three local government areas. Instrument used in collecting data for the study was a questionnaire which was designed by the researchers, titled School Management Personnel Questionnaire (SMPQ). It has two sections, A and B. Section A of the instrument deals with the biodata of the respondents while section B consists of sixteen items dealing with the information which the researchers were out to elicit from the respondents. These items were written in the likert four-points scale, which includes Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The respondents were requested to indicate the extent of their agreement with each of the item. The instrument was validated by experts in the field of Educational Evaluation and was administered by the researchers to the respondents, while the data collected were analyzed using the Z score statistics to test the three hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In determining the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted before the administration of the questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on ten (10) members of the School Management Personnel in Western Boys High School and God's Marvel Comprehensive School in Benin. They were excluded from the main study and their responses were analyzed using the split half method.

Presentation of results

Key: (SMP stands for School Management Personnel)

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the attitude of school management personnel with and those without education discipline background towards guidance and counselling services.

The Z-Test for independent measures was used to analyze the data.

Table 1: Z-Test Analysis School Management Personnel with Education Discipline Background and those without Education discipline Background

Variables	N	Group Mean	SD	Z Calculated	Z Tabulated
SMP with education discipline background	38	53.89	6.48	1.38	0.9115
SMP without education discipline background	22	52.86	5.72		

Z = 1.35, P < .05

At .05 level of probability, Z calculated 1.35 was found to be greater than the table Z of 0.9115. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected while the alternative was upheld. It shows that there is an attitudinal difference between school management personnel with education discipline background and those without it towards secondary school guidance and counselling services.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female school management personnel towards guidance and counselling services.

Table 2: Z-Test Analysis for Independent Measures for Male and Female School's Management Personnel

Variables	N	Group Mean	SD	Z Calculated	Z Tabulated
Female school management personnel	31	56.58	7.64	1.65	0.9505
Male school management personnel	29	53.55	5.81		

Z = 1.65, P < .05

The Z – calculated of 1.65 was higher than the table Z – value of 0.9505. Consequently the null hypothesis stated above was rejected. It was concluded that there was a significant difference between the attitude of male and female school management personnel towards guidance and counselling services.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between the attitude of school management personnel in private and public schools towards guidance and counselling services.

Table 3: Z-Test Analysis for Independent Variables of School Management Personnel in Private and Public Schools

Variables	N	Group Mean	SD	Z Calculated	Z Tabulated
Private school management personnel	23	54.08	5.04		
Public school management personnel	37	50.45	8.29	1.11	0.8749

$Z = 1.11, P < .05$

The information in table 3 shows that the assessment of scores from twenty-three private and thirty-seven public school management personnel produces mean scores of 54.08 and 50.45 respectively. The SD were 5.04 and 8.29 for private and public schools respectively. There were compared using the Z – test. And since the calculated z – value 1.11 was found to be higher than the table z – value of 0.8749 at a probability level of .05, the null hypothesis was rejected for the alternative. The result shows that there is a difference between the attitude of school management personnel in private and public schools towards guidance and counselling services.

Discussion of results

The study was conducted to find out some of the factors affecting the attitude of school management personnel such as the Principal and Vice Principals towards guidance and counselling services in some secondary schools in Benin metropolis.

The first hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference between the attitude of school management personnel with education discipline background and those without towards guidance and counselling services was rejected. The research findings revealed that there is a difference in their attitude. This implies that education discipline background has significant influence on the attitude of secondary school management personnel towards guidance and counselling services. The findings also indicated that school management personnel who had TC II, NCE, B.ED and M.ED certificate training had higher scores than those with B.A and B.Sc certificates. Their knowledge of guidance and counselling while in school is an added advantage to their appreciation of guidance and counselling services and this invariably affects their behaviour positively. There is no doubt that this positive influence will go a long way to enhance and promote guidance and counselling programmes in secondary schools.

The second hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female school management personnel towards secondary school guidance and counselling services was rejected, since the z – calculated was higher than the table z. The mean of the female school management personnel was higher than that of

the male. It shows that there was indeed a difference between the attitude of male and female school management personnel. As a result, sex is another factor that influences their attitude. The result could be attributed to the fact that female school management personnel seem to have an appreciable interest for guidance activities than their male counterpart.

On the question of whether there is a difference in the attitude of public and private school management personnel such as the Principals and Vice Principals, the findings revealed that there is indeed a significant difference. As shown in table 3, school management personnel in private schools seem to participate more in guidance services than those in public schools, which although have the same facilities, yet are less active in guidance services. It therefore means that school management personnel in private schools work hard to encourage guidance programmes in order to impress the parents and the public in general than those in the public school who have nothing to lose if guidance services are not implemented. In support of this, Daniel (2010) noted that difference exists in the attitude of school management personnel (Principal, Vice Principal etc) in public and private schools despite the general failure of research to pinpoint the distinctions.

Conclusion

The research findings have shown that factors such as educational background, sex and the type of school such as public and private schools affect significantly the attitude of school management personnel towards secondary school guidance and counselling services.

Recommendations

After a careful examination of the findings, it became necessary to make the following recommendations to the Government, Ministry of Education and Principals of schools:

1. Government should make provisions for the regular training of interested school management personnel in guidance and counselling as this will enhance their positive disposition towards guidance and counselling services.
2. School management personnel with sound professional qualifications should be employed in order to encourage positive disposition towards guidance and counselling services.
3. There should be no sex discrimination with respect to employing the services of school management personnel into our schools. Both sexes are equally needed to render these services.
4. The Ministry of Education should supply public schools with competent guidance counsellors, whose teaching workload should be drastically reduced so as to feel the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in our schools. To ensure

effective guidance services in private schools, the Ministry of Education should encourage or instruct them to have at least one guidance counsellor in their school.

5. To the guidance counsellor, there is need to always act as a good catalyst to the principals and vice principals in the development of guidance services.

6. The counselling unit of the Ministry of Education should be made to carry out orientation programmes for school management personnel in secondary schools.

References

- Agbjor, A. T. (2004). Factors influencing the attitude of school management personnel towards guidance and counselling services. Unpublished M.Ed Dissertation, University of Benin, Nigeria.
- Ben, D. J. (2006). *Beliefs, Attitudes and Human Affairs*. Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole.
- Chimso, K. P. (2008). Guidance in Education: The application of the Behavioural science in secondary schools. In M. O. Durojaiye, (Ed.), *Psychological Guidance of the school child*. Ibadan; Evans Brothers Nigeria Limited.
- Daniel, L. (2010). Educational and career confidence and motivation among female and male undergraduates. *American Educational Research Journal*, 21(1), 304 – 313.
- Ihedioha, J. (1999). *Readings in Counselling Practicum*. Ibadan: Vantage publishers.
- Nwankwo, C. (2009). *Essentials of Educational Psychology*. Agbor: Central Books Limited.
- Odemwingie, E. (2008). *Guidance and Counselling for Schools: An Introduction*. Zaria: Hudahuda Publishing Company.
- Oghogho, D. (2010). *Foundations of Guidance and Counselling*. Benin City: Supreme Ideal Publishers Int. ltd.
- Ola, J. (2000). *The Development and Management of School Guidance Programmes*. Dubugua, Iowa: Willian C. Brown and Co Publishers.
- Olayinka, B. (2008). *Guidance Services in the Modern School*. Benin: Brace Publishers.
- Olayinka, B. & Ubah, J. (2008). *Fundamentals of Primary School Guidance, N.C.E. Series*. Benin: Ilupeju Press Limited.
- Orobato, C. (2006). *Educational Planning in Nigeria, Social Process Approach*. MaryLand, Lagos: Jaja Press Limited.
- Osazee, O. (2004). *Organization and Administration of Guidance*. Benin: Rana Edosa Publishing C.