

Perception on the Impact of Psychological Counselling on out of School Children in Yorro Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper investigated the Perception of Psychological Impact of counselling on out of school children in Yorro Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives and two research questions. The population of the study included 18 principals, 36 Islamic studies teachers, 32 rescue teachers and 34 N-power beneficiaries in all the 18 public secondary schools in Yorro Local Government Area. The entire population was used for the study, as the number is manageable. Therefore, the total respondents were 120. The instrument for data collection was a Self-structured questionnaire, titled "Counselling and Out of School Children Questionnaire (COSCO)." This questionnaire was validated by two experts from Faculty of Education, Taraba State University. Reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach-alpha method which gave a reliability index of 0.75. Data collected were described and analysed using frequencies, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation. The findings indicated, among others, that family instability, peer group influence and parental income are causes for children dropout of school. It was recommended that school authorities should organize regular orientation for students and inform them about the importance of education for individual and community development.

Keywords: impact, counselling, out of school, children.

Introduction

The future of any nation depends to a large extent on what she is able to make out of her citizenry; and to achieve any meaningful development, education has been identified as a

viable instrument to bring about the desired growth in human development. It therefore requires that a nation must come up with the appropriate educational policy that will enable the nation to meet the set goals for national development. To this end, the Nigerian government prescribed a free and compulsory education for all children, from primary through the junior secondary school as prescribed in the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme.

Guidance and counselling is an important educational tool in strengthening the mind of school children to understand their potentialities in relation to their environment. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) suggests a life-long education for all, and that secondary education shall prepare students towards career selection for contribution to national development. This establishes the need for school counsellors to assist the children in moulding their future through counselling therapy. The school counsellor is seen as a role model and highly respected person by students. The counsellors by their training are expected to be friends with the school children, listen to their complaints and shortcomings to proffer guidance to the children in a quest of moulding the children on the right path to take in their life pursuit.

Counselling is the processes of interpersonal interaction between a counsellor and his/her clients to make the clients understand themselves in relation to their environment. Counselling helps in differentiating normal from abnormal, improving decision-making, modification of behaviours, improving personal effectiveness, improving achievement, and promoting mental, emotional and social health. It is also very useful in resolving various problems, and it is very important for the parents to put the child at ease and talk to him, discuss with him the problems faced in school if any, find out what they feel about their teachers, meet the teachers often and find out what disturbs the student. The behaviour of the child in school should also be discussed with the teacher.

Despite all the effort of Nigerian Government as stated in the National Policy on Education that education is an important instrument per excellence, which makes guidance and counselling as an effective tool to realize education goal, millions of school age children in Nigeria are out of school as relevant record from both foreign and national media revealed. Nigeria was also ranked high among nations where large population of children are out of the classroom (UNESCO, 2014). The incidence of school dropout has been on the increase in recent times. Many have for one reason or the other dropped out of school without acquiring the basic education needed for productive living in the society. David and Achor (2014) pointed out that Nigeria holds the world record of having the highest number of her young people out of school with approximately 10.5 million kids out of school. This statistics is quite alarming and is also a pointer to the fact that Nigerian education would be a failure if the nation's human capital development cannot match the required workforce needed for national development. Dropping out of school refers to the situation whereby a student who enrolled in school has to quit before the completion of his/her studies. UNICEF (2004) estimated that 7.3 million students annually drop out of school.

There are various reasons why an individual could decide to drop out of school. Some of the reasons could be inherent in the child; such as sudden disinterestedness in school activities, and low level of academic achievement. Some other factors could be associated with the teachers such as teachers not teaching well as a result of poor teaching method, lack of interest in teaching profession while on the other hand, the reason for dropping out of school could be in relation to environmental issues such as governmental policies, lack of adequate teaching-learning facilities and equipment. Students could also drop out of school because of lack of finance and poor home situation. If the school dropout rate continues to be on the increase and unchecked, there is the likelihood that Nigeria will face a serious problem of lack of skilled manpower and thereby resulting in low human capital strength for a society with emphasis on education and acquisition of education for national development.

Researchers have reported on different causes of school dropout. Yoon (2002) carried out a study to analyze the factors causing school drop outs of Korean High School Students. The study revealed that, impulsivity and social support account for 20.1% of the variance in school drop outs in high school girls. Hau (2015), looking at the parental variable, reported that school dropout is connected with parental supervision. Weaker parental affection and low parental control have been found to influence school dropout. More so, generally, school authority, and the parent-child connection are all associated with secondary school students' dropout (Wearmouth, 2015).

The Universal Basic Education introduced in Nigeria is intended to be free and compulsory yet there are teeming population of students that dropout of school. The situation is quite unhealthy and there should be a means to curb the inimical progression of school dropout through counselling intervention. Counselling, as observed by Dada (2015), is the relationship between a counsellor and his client aimed at helping the counsellee to achieve educational, vocational and personal social goals. It is therefore expected that counselling would assist the counsellee to gain self-understanding and be directed towards productive living as well as for achieving empowerment (Oyinloye & Obasoro, 2015). To this end, this article seeks to find out the psychological impact of counselling on out of school children in Yorro Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

The issues relating to school dropout varies from one place to another. It has become noticeable that the number of students facing some severe psychological difficulties is on the increase as observed. An understanding of reasons why students drop out of school may also serve as pointer to the likely steps required by stakeholders to forestall the rate of school dropout. It is also a common issue that the problem of school drop out if not nibbled in the bud, can degenerate to an extent whereby the society would end up with a group of disgruntled citizens, many of whom would become miscreants, vagabonds and social deviants in the country. Against this backdrop, the paper intends to assess the

impact of psychological counselling on out of school children in Yorro Local Government Area, Taraba State Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The objectives of this study include:

1. To examine the causes of children's dropout from school before completing the full basic education in Yorro Local Government Area of Taraba State?
2. To determine the Counselling measures to reduce the number of school dropout in Yorro LGA, Taraba State?

Research questions

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. Why do children drop out from school before completing the full basic education in Yorro Local Government Area of Taraba State?
2. What are the counselling measures to reduce the number of school dropout in Yorro Local Government Area of Taraba State?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design in examining the impact of psychological counselling on out of school children in Yorro Local Government Area (LGA), Taraba State Nigeria. Sambo (2006) asserts that survey research is a study in which a random sample is taken from a well-defined population, data is collected from the sample, a statistic is calculated from the data, and the statistics is used to estimate the true parameter in the population. Descriptive survey method involves the collection and analysis of data of small number of the population.

Descriptive survey research is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation. The choice of this design was based on the fact that the information collected is from a large population of headmasters and classroom teachers in primary schools in Yorro LGA. The design has the advantage of studying a part of the population to make generalization on the target population Emaikwu (2015) posited that this research design enables a researcher to have a keen observation and come up with facts about a sample that can be used for generalization purpose about the entire research population.

The entire population of eighteen (18) principals, thirty six (36) teachers, thirty two (32) rescue teachers and thirty-four (34) PTA teachers were used for the study as there was no sampling in the study since the number is manageable. Therefore, the total number of respondents is 120 as shown on table 1.

Table 1: Description of Respondents Bio data

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Principals	18	15%
Teachers	36	30%
PTA Teachers	34	28.4%
Rescue teachers	32	26.6%
Total	120	100%

The instrument for data collection was self-developed questionnaire titled: Counselling and Out of School Children Questionnaire (COSQC). This questionnaire is constructed on the basis of research questions on a four point ranking scale. The instrument is made up of twenty-eight (28) items on psychological impact of counselling on out of school children in Yorro Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. Section A provides demographic data of the respondents; section B provides information on students' enrolment, while section C has three clusters (A-C). Cluster 'A' contains questionnaire items which examined the causes of children's drop out from school; cluster 'B' examined effect of school dropout, cluster 'C' has item statements that sought information on the counselling measures to reduce the number of school dropout. The questionnaire is structured in form of four point rating scale coded as follows: Very High Extent (VHE) - 4, High Extent (HE) - 3, Moderate Extent (ME) - 2, Low Extent (LE) - 1.

The questionnaire was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation Unit and Guidance and Counselling Department. The validators made useful suggestions and necessary adjustment for the upgrade of the instrument. Pilot testing was done to ascertain the reliability of the instrument and the data obtained was analysed using cronbach alpha. The reliability index of 0.75 was found as coefficient reliability value. Kolo (2006) revealed that a reliability value of 0.5 and above is reliable for research in education. Therefore, the instrument is highly reliable based on the coefficient value derived.

All the sampled schools were visited at different dates to administer the questionnaire on the head-teachers and teachers. The questionnaire was administered by the researchers with the help of research assistants. The research assistants were recruited from primary school teachers in the study area. The researchers briefed the research assistants on the objective of the study. This enabled them explain certain items on the questionnaire to the respondents so that the questionnaire could be properly filled. The questionnaire was administered by the researchers and the research assistants face to face to the respondents and collected on the spot. This method ensured correct completion and high percentage of return of completed questionnaire. Data were described and analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency distribution table, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation. Frequency distribution table and simple percentage were used to describe the data in order to understand the differences on the responses made by respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions.

Presentation of results

Research question one: Why do children drop out from school before completing the full basic education in Yorro Local Government Area of Taraba State?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation scores on why children drop out of school before completing the full Basic education in Yorro Local Government Area

S/N	Item statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Family instability is responsible for children drop out of school before completing the full Basic education in Yorro Local Government Area	3.58	0.89	A
2	Peer group influence is responsible for children drop out of school before completing the full Basic education in Yorro Local Government Area	3.38	0.99	A
3	Teacher variables is responsible for children drop out of school before completing the full Basic education in Yorro Local Government Area	2.13	0.11	D
4	Parental level of education is responsible for children drop out of school before completing the full Basic education in Yorro Local Government Area	2.37	0.91	D
5	Parental income is responsible for children drop out of school before completing the full Basic education in Yorro Local Government Area	3.50	0.99	A
Grand mean		2.97	0.57	A

Results of table 1 show the mean and standard deviation scores of the rating items on reasons for children's drop out of school before completing the full Basic education in Yorro Local Government Area. Family instability (item 1) and peer group influence (item 5) have mean rating scores above 3.50, which suggest a very large extent. Teacher variable is not responsible (item 3), parental level of education (item 4) is not responsible, which suggest low extent. On the basis of the result, the research question that states why do children dropout of school can be answered by declaring that family instability, peer group influence and parental income are factors for children's dropout from school in Yorro LGA of Taraba State.

Research question two: What are the counselling measures to reduce the number of school dropout in Yorro Local Government Area of Taraba State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation scores on the counselling measures to reduce the number of school dropout in Yorro Local Government Area

S/N	Item statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Counsellors should encourage community counselling to reduce the number of school dropout in Yorro Local Government	3.58	0.85	A
2	Counsellors should encourage group counselling of school dropout to reduce the number of children dropout in Yorro Local Government Area	3.57	0.82	A
3	Drop out children should be counselled individually	2.85	1.30	A
4	Counsellors should organize career day to assist school drop-out in Yorro Local Government Area	3.29	1.05	A
5	Orientation should be made yearly in every school with emphasis on proper school attendance and importance of education	2.69	1.37	A
Grand mean		3.20	0.41	A

Results on table 3 show the mean and standard deviation scores of the rating items on the counselling measures to reduce the number of school dropout in Yorro Local Government Area. Items 1 and 2 have mean rating scale above 3.50, which suggest a very high extent. Items 3, 4 and 5 have mean rating scales above 2.50 but less than 3.50 and this suggests high extent too. The grand mean of all the items which is 3.20, thus, suggests that the aforementioned counselling measures can reduce the number of school dropout in Yorro Local Government Area. On the basis of data, the counselling measures to control dropout of children in schools include: community counselling, group counselling of school dropout, individual counselling of dropout children, organization of career day, annual orientation of students.

Discussion of the findings

The evidence from the study shows that children drop out of school before completing the full basic education in Yorro Local Government Area of Taraba State. The finding agrees with Yoon (2002) who carried out a study to analyze the factors causing school drop outs of Korean High school Students. The study revealed that, impulsivity and social support account for 20.1% of the variance in school drop outs in high school girls. The study concluded that impulsivity and social support account for school drop out of high school students. Hau (2015) has shown that school dropout is connected with parental supervision. Weaker parental affection and low parental control have been found to influence school dropout. In general, school authority, and the parent-child connection are all associated with secondary school students' dropout (Wearmouth, 2015).

The second finding of the study shows counselling measures that can reduce the number of school dropout in Yorro Local Government Area of Taraba State. The finding agrees

with that of Oguzie, (2014) who revealed that effective utilization of Guidance and Counselling services inculcated in the youths' the spirit of consciousness that promotes peace, conflict resolutions and national security.

Conclusion

The study concludes that family instability, peer group influence and parental income are causes of children's dropout from school. Also community counselling, group counselling of school dropout, individual counselling of dropout, organization of career day, annual orientation for students are counselling measures to control children's dropout from school in Yorro Local Government Area of Taraba State. This shows that psychological counselling has positive impact on children dropout of school in Yorro Local Government Area of Taraba State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School authorities should organize regular orientation for students and inform them about the importance of education for individual and community development.
2. Both experienced and newly employed teachers should be trained on effective strategies for classroom management so that their decision on the choice of strategy is not just based on impulse.
3. Career talk should be regularly organized by school authorities to inform students about the necessity of education in their life.
4. Parents and guardians should watch the movement of their children by understanding their whereabouts most especially during school hours; they should also be up and doing in fulfillment of their parental role on their children.

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