COUNSELING NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY OF TECHNICAL COLLEGE STUDENTS: AN EBONYI STATE STUDY

Dr. Tina Nweze[1] and Ugochukwu Chinonso Okolie[2]

[1]Dept. of Educational Foundations (Guidance & Counselling) Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria

[2]Dept. of Technology and Vocational Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to survey the counselling needs of technical college students in Ebonyi State. A multiple sampling design reflecting stratification by gender, class level, location and type of school ownership was applied in selecting two hundred and eighty-six participants drawn from three technical colleges randomly selected from Technical Colleges in Ebonyi State. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviations) were used to answer the six research question s asked. While inferential statistics (z-test, ANOVA) were used in testing the following hypotheses at 0.05 level of confidence: The Inventory (adapted) was a 46 item, four-point rating scale classified into four broad need areas: A- Social Relationship problems; B- Problems about the Future; C- Academic and Study problems and D- School Adjustment problems. The respondents evaluated those items in terms of the degree with which they constituted problems to them. The major findings of the work among others revealed that except in the area of social Relationship problems, there were no significant sex differences in their perceptions of the problems. Apart for problems about the Future, there were significant differences due to class level on the Social Relationship, Academic and Study and School Adjustment Problems of students. Type of school ownership has no significant effect on the counselling needs of Technical College students. Recommendations for further studies were equally made.

Keywords: Counselling, Technical College, Social Relationship, Counselling Needs

Introduction

The area covered by this study, namely the counselling needs of the students in our society, has attracted the Government's interest vis-à-vis research, conferences and seminars. In 1969, the Nigeria Educational Research and Development council organized a National Conference on Curriculum Development because of the inappropriateness of the curriculum of our educational system to our needs and aspirations after independence in 1960. This Curriculum Conference was followed by a government sponsored National seminar in 1973. The seminar was to deliberate on all aspects of National policy on Education using the report of the 1969 Curriculum Conference as one of the working documents. The National Policy on Education which was first published in 1977 and revised in 1981 was a "brain-child" of the 1973 seminar.

The new scope of the curriculum is to give students at each level of educational system an opportunity to learn to use his/her head, heart and hands in order to appreciate the dignity of labour.

Nigeria's philosophy can be said to be based on integration of individual into a sound and effective citizen; and equal educational the formal school system. The emphasis of the philosophy is on the holistic development of man and this includes: the physical, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, moral and ethical integration of the individual into a complete functioning man. Until now, the educational emphasis was lopsided. It was subject-matter-oriented which over-emphasized intellectual development (Oladele, 1987 and Nwabisi, 1992). To this effect, Nwoye (1990) asserts that since subject-matter approach paid outstanding attention to intellectual upliftment of students to the impairment of their other aspects of resources and life-tasks; and if other aspects of the students' resources and life-tasks are to be enriched by the formal educational provisions, then, the educational experiences of the school, must move beyond what goes on within the regular classroom environment. It is one thing to hold these possibilities, and quite another, to see them realized. It is to guarantee that students do not fall short of these aspirations and that efforts are made to guide them towards appreciating how each of these experiences can add meaning and direction to their personal life and development in and out of school, that the need for the presence in the Curriculum, of that specialized programme of services called Guidance and counselling was then strongly felt.

Statement of the Problems

A high quality assessment of students' needs is a fundamental prerequisite for an outstanding guidance and counselling programme. The need assessment survey should allow the programme developer-that is the school guidance counsellor – to understand the types of problems students are experiencing and the magnitude and pervasiveness of their problems. Researchers are of the view that differences exist in opinion between staff and students as regards students' problems and needs in relation to facilities the institutions make available (Ogbazi and Opala (1994).; Carney and Savit, 1980). Students have different personal and psychological needs at this stage of their life. The issue of interest therefore, is to attempt to establish that Technical College students in Ebonyi state have counselling needs. The problems for this study was to address guidance/counselling problems of Technical college students in Ebonyi state; determine how counselling problems of female Technical College students differ from their male counterparts; how the counselling problems of Technical College students differ in relation to class level; it also seek to address the differences in guidance problems of Federal Government Technical College students, state and private Government Technical College students and voluntary Agency Technical College students (Alache, 1991; Nweze and Okolie, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to survey the counselling needs of Technical College students in Ebonyi state. Specifically, the study aims at:
1.   Identifying the areas of needs of students;
2.   Placing these counselling need areas of students in a hierarchical order;
3.   Looking at the extent to which students' counselling needs depend on gender.

Significance of the Study

This study is necessitated by the fact that a school counsellor cannot function effectively in the system without identifying the areas of need of the students. Ascertaining such in a hierarchical order enables him (counsellor) to know what areas students needs to have been attended to before, what remains to be tackled and the most pressing ones to attend to first and the appropriate procedure to adopt in initiating the guidance program. In addition, it is expected that the outcome of

this study would enable the technical education and the guidance and counselling unit of the Ebonyi State teaching service board to see the benefit inherent in posting professional Guidance counsellors to technical colleges in the state. Since this will go a long way to debunk the notion that technical colleges students do not need the services of professional counsellors as they are pursuing professional courses. Besides, it is wise to study the specific problem young people especially students – face, how these problems differ in relation to sex, location, class level, and type of school ownership such a study will form the basis for a student to help learn and tackle his problems in a healthy and effective way enabling him/her develop a well adjusted personality which is necessary for a holistic development of the individual. The study will form the basis for attending to students' identified problems.

Scope of the Study
This study surveyed the need areas of students and arranged them in order of magnitude the study investigated the problems in the areas of social relationship, problems about the future - career -, academic and study problems and school adjustment.

Research Questions
The following research question forms the basis of the study:
1.   What are the guidance and counselling needs of technical college's students?
2.   In what order of magnitude do these need stand?
3.   To what extent do the students' need depend on sex?

Research Hypothesis
The following research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance or probability:
1.   There is no significant difference between the counselling needs of male and female technical college students.
2.   There is no significance difference between the areas of need of technical colleges students One (Year I) and Technical College Two (Year 2) students.

Methodology

The researcher used survey research design for this study. This is because, the method of investigation employed did not involve experimentation, instead it employed describing and reporting information from subjects studied (without manipulating any variable) through the use of adapted student Problem Inventory which was in form of questionnaire. The study conducted in Ebonyi state of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of all the Technical College students in Ebonyi state numbering three thousand, four hundred and twenty one   (3,421).
Random sampling technique was used to select 8.4% of the target population to form the study sample. 8.4% of 3,421 = 236 students. Also, the population of the students in the three schools chosen were taken into consideration, as questionnaire copies were administered in a demographically representative manner. As survey research, the questionnaire employed to determine the students' perception of their problems was made up of 46 items and four-point-rating scale. The instrument was adapted from Bakare (1977)'s Student problem Inventory (SPI). Instead of adopting the instrument which was designed by the author in check-list form, the researcher adapted it to suit the research questions and hypotheses. Hence, the researcher transformed it from check-list form to a four-point-rating scale of:

Never -   1 point
Sometimes   -   2 points
Often   -   3 points
Always   -   4 points

The four-point scale (1-4), in that order, represents the degree those items as constituting problems in their school to which the students perceived the items were grouped into four broad categories of problem areas (component variables); A - social Relationship problems; B - Problems .about the Future-Career; C - Academic and Study problems and D - school Adjustment problems. The S.P.I, is a self-report inventory through which the individual student describes his personal problems according to his awareness of them and according to the extent to which he is willing to disclose them. It is essentially a precise and time saving method of providing information about the major concerns of individual students or of student groups.

The instrument was a standardized tests whose validity and the reliability was determined. The congruent and construct validities were established for the S.P.I. The congruent validity of the inventory has been established by showing that it correlates with other well-known instruments in the expected direction. It correlates .50   (N = 50 - P .01) with the Taylor Manifest Anxiety scale and .45 (N = 50 - P .01) with the Saranson Test Anxiety (Okoye, Adeyumo and Achebe,   1990). The test re-test reliability of the inventory was found to be 0.64.

The researcher with the help of some research assistants distributed two hundred and eighty-six questionnaire copies - that is 286 S-P-I copies to two hundred and eighty-six students of Technical Colleges in Ebonyi State sampled for the study. The Inventory copies were distributed to students in their classes. The items or statements were explained to the students by the researcher. The students were required to complete the Inventory and return them immediately after completion to the researcher and her trained research assistants. Since the questionnaire forms were distributed to the students by the researcher and her research assistants on the spot and they were allowed to fill them and return immediately after completion on the spot, 100% return of the instrument was recorded.

In analyzing the data collected, the researcher used both descriptive and inferential statistics to answer the research questions; and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance respectively. For the three research questions, the researcher made frequent counts of students' problems and calculated the mean scores and standard deviations. Individual item mean were pooled and the total variable means computed. The standard deviations based on variable means were calculated.

Variable	Item	Total Ratings	Mean Ratings	Variable Means	Variable 3-D*
A to D	1 to 46	26 , 2 74	91.87	1.997	0.31

A separate analysis was conducted to test the differential effects of gender, location and class level, on students' perceptions of their counselling needs and problems at school. The means and standard deviations based on response differences between male and female T.C. I and II were equally

determined through computation. In testing Hypotheses, Z-test statistic was tested at 0.05 level of probability.

Findings/Discussion
This deals with the presentation, and analysis of data collected. Three research questions and hypotheses were answered and tested respectively to determine the Guidance and Counselling needs of Technical College students in Ebonyi State; to find out how these need areas (counselling needs) of students depend on sex, class level, location and type of ownership; also to find out the order of magnitude these counselling needs stand. In answering the research questions, a mean score of 1.5 and above was taken to mean the presence of a particular problem. Mean score below 1.5 is taken to signify the absence of that particular problem.

Research Question 1: What are the Guidance and Counselling needs of Technical College students in Ebonyi State?
In answering this question, the item scores belonging to "opponent variables (sections) A - D are summed up. Individual item means are pooled and the total variable means computed. The standard ions based on variable means are calculated as shown in table one below.

Table 1: N0. of respondents   = 286

Variables	Item	Total Ratings	Mean Ratings	Variable Means	Variable S.D.	Clustered Mean	Grand S.D.
A Social Relationship problems	1 to 6	3,509	12.26	2.04	0.25		
B Problems About the Future	7-11	2,814	9.84	1.97	0.45		
C Academic and Study problems	12-27	8,190	28.65	1.79	0.24	1.997	0.23
D School Adjustment problems	28-46	11,761	41.12	2.16	0.23		

A look at the table reveals that the Technical College students in State have the following Guidance and Counselling problem; (1) Social Relationship problems; (2) Problems about the future (Career problems) (3) Academic and Study Problems; and (4) School Adjustment Problems.

Research Question 2: In what order of magnitude do these needs stand?

Table 2: Mean Scores of Students' Guidance and Counwell.inn Needs

VARIABLES			
A Social Relationship problems	B Problems About the Future	C Academic and Study problems	D School Adjustment Problems
2.04	1.97	1.79	2,15

A close examination of table 2 shows that the Technical college students expressed the greatest problem on school Adjustment with the mean score of 2.16, followed by social relationship problems with the mean response of 2,04. Third in the hierarchy is a problem about the future with the mean score of 1.97. However, they expressed the least problem on academic and study problems whose mean response is 1.79.

Research Question 3: To what extent do the students' needs depend on sex?

Table 3: *A scores of the Guidance/Counselling Needs of students in Technical Colleges as Perceived by Females and Males*

n	Gender	Social Relationship Problems	Problems about the Future	Academic & Study Problems	School Adjustment problems	Clustered Mean
252	Male	2.06	1.97	1.73	2.16	1.996
34	Female	1.95	1.99	1.83	2.18	2.01

Data presented in Table 3 revealed that female Technical College, students in Ebonyi State experience more guidance needs with the mean of means of 2.01 than their male counterparts whose mean of means or clustered mean is more 1.996. However, the male students experience more social relationship problems with the mean of 2.06 than the females whose mean in that section is 1.95. But the variable standard deviation of girls (0.29) on the social relationship problem is higher than the males (0.26). Therefore, the mean performance *of* males on the social relationship problems differs due to gender. On the other hand, female students expressed more problems on problem about the future with the mean score of 1.99; on Academic and study problem with the

mean response of 1.83 and on school Adjustment Problem, with the mean score of 2.13, unlike their male colleagues whose mean scores are 1.97, 1.73 and 2.16 respectively. Also, the females' standard deviation on the problem about the future (0.52) is higher than the males (0.44); arid on the Academic and, study problems, the girls (0.26) are equally higher than the males 0.24). But the standard deviation of males (0.25) on school Adjustment problems is higher than the girls (0.21). In all, the clustered mean of female (2.01) Technical College students in Ebonyi State is higher than their male counterparts whose grand mean is 1996. But the two groups have the same standard deviations of 0.31 each.

Null Hypotheses
There is no significant difference between the counselling areas of need of male and female Technical College students in Ebonyi State, To test this hypothesis, data collected from male and female technical College students in Ebonyi State on the four variables (sections) being tested are subjected to Z-test statistic.

Table 4: *Z-test of difference between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Students on social Relationship Problems*

	Variable A Social relationship problems	Mean	S.D.	n	Standard Error	z-Calculated	Z-Critical
Gender	Male Female	2.06 1.95	0.26 0.29	252 34	0.0523612	2.10	1.96

Table 4 shows means and standard deviations of responses of male and female technical College students in Ebonyi State to variable (section) A of the questionnaire comprising of six items. The boys have higher mean and lower standard deviation of 2.06 and 0.26 respectively while the girls have a mean of 1.95 and standard deviation of 0.29. The standard error is 0.0523612. The calculated and critical z at probability level of 0.05 are 2.10 and 1.96 respectively.

Decision: reject the null hypothesis since the z-calculated (2.10) is greater than the z-Critical (1.96).
Conclusion: Sex therefore has a significant influence on the social relationship problems of Technical College Students in Benue State.

Table 5: *Z-test of difference between the Mean Scores of Males and Females on Problems about the future*

	Variable B Problems about the future	**Means**	**S.D.**	**n**	**S.D.X**	**z.cal.**	**z-crit.**
Gender	Female Male	1.99 1.97	0.52 0.44	34 252	0.0934	 0.2142	1.96

From the data presented in table, calculated z value is 0.2142, while the z-critical is 1.96 at a probability level of 0.05. The means and standard deviations of responses of female and male technical college students in Ebonyi State to section B of the questionnaire comprising of five items indicate that the girls have higher mean and standard deviation of 1.99 and 0.52 respectively whereas the boys have lower mean and standard deviation of 1.97 and 0.44 respectively. The standard error here is 0.0934.

Decision: Uphold the null hypothesis since the z-calculated (0.2132) is less than the z-critical (1.96). Sex therefore has no significant influence on the problems about the future of Technical College students in Ebonyi State.

Table 6: z-test of difference between the mean scores of females and males on Academic and Study problems

	Variable C Academic & study Problem.	Mean	S.D.	n	Standard Error	z-cal.	z-Crit.
Gender	Female Male	1.83 1.78	0.26 0.24	34 252	0.0471	1.0620	1.960

Table 6 above shows the means and standard deviations of the responses of females and males to section C of the questionnaire consisting of sixteen statements. The girls have higher mean and standard deviation of 1.83 and 0.26 respectively. Unlike the boys whose mean and standard deviation read thus: 1.78 and 0.24 respectively. The standard error is 0.0471. The z-calculated and z-critical are equal to 1.0620 and 1.960 respectively.

Decision: Uphold the null hypothesis since the z-calculated (1.0620) is less than z-Critical (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance.

Conclusion: This shows that there is no significant difference in the Academic Study problems of boys and girls in Technical colleges.

Table 7: *z-test of difference between the mean scores of Males and Females on School Adjustment problems*

	Variable D School Adjustment Problems	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**n**	**Standard Error**	**Z-cal.**	**Z-Crit.**
Gender	Female Male	2.18 2.16	0.21 0.25	34 252	0.04	0.5	1.96

Table 7 shows females and males' means and standard deviations of responses to section D of the questionnaire comprising nineteen items. The girls have higher mean and lower standard deviation than boys. They are 2.18 and 0.21 respectively. Whereas the boys have a lower mean of the z-obtained is 0.5 while the table z is 1.96 at 0.05 level of probability.

Decision: Uphold the null hypothesis since the z obtained (0.5) is less than the table z (1.96).

Conclusion: This shows that there is no significant difference in the school Adjustment Problems of male and female Technical college students in Ebonyi State.

Null Hypothesis 2:
There is no significant different between the areas of need of Technical College One (Year I) and Technical College Two (Year 2) students in Ebonyi state. To test the above hypothesis, responses from both years 1 and 2 Technical College students in Ebonyi State on the four variables (sections) being tested are subjected to z-test statistic.

Table 8: z-test of difference between the mean scores of years 1 and 2 Technical College Students Relationship Problems.

Class Level	Variable A Social Relationship Problems	Means	S.D.	n	S.D.X	Z.cal.	Z-crit.
	Year 1 Year 2	2.13 1.96	0.32 0.32	143 143	0.0378	4.4924	1.960

As indicated in Table 8, the calculated z-test for class level on social relationship problems is 4.4924 against a critical value of 1.960 at 0.05 probability level. Since the calculated z-value is more than the table value, the stated null hypothesis is rejected, thus indicating a significant difference. It can equally be deduced that the year 1 Technical College students have more problems on their social relationship area unlike their Year 2 counterparts. From the above data also, the year ones have the same standard deviation of 0.32 with the year twos.

Table 9: z-test of difference between the Mean Scores of Years 1 and 2 Technical College Students in Ebonyi State on the problems about the Future

Class Level	Variable B Problems about the Future	Means	S.D.	n	S.D.X	Z.cal.	Z-crit.
	Year 1	2.09	0.52	143	0.06	1.8333	1.960
	Year 2	1.98	0.49	143			

From the above table, it is obvious that the z-calculated (1,9333) is less than the critical-z (1.960) at a probability level of 0.05. The mean scores of Years 1 and 2 are 2.09 and 1.98 respectively.
Decision: Uphold the null hypothesis since the z-value (1.8333) is less than the z-critical (1.960). Class level therefore has no significant effect on the problems about the future of Technical college students in Ebonyi state.

Table 10: *z-test of difference between the Mean Scores of Years 1 and 2 Technical College Students on the Academic and Study Problems*

Class Level	Variable C Academic & Study Problems	Means	S.D.	n	S.D.X	Z.cal.	Z-crit.
	Year 1	1.92	0.24	143	0.03	8.6667	1.960
	Year 2	1.66	0.28	143			

The above table shows the means and standard deviations of the responses of Years 1 and 2 Technical College students to section C (Academic and Study Problems) of the questionnaire consisting of sixteen statements. The Year 2 has a higher mean of 1.92 and lower standard deviation of 0.24 than the year 1 students whose own are 1.66 and 0.28 respectively. The standard error is 0.33. The z-calculated is 8.6667 while the z-critical is 1.960.

Decision: Reject the null hypothesis since the z-calculated (8.6667) is greater than the z-table (1.960). This shows that year 2 Technical College students are more prone to Academic and study problems than the year 1 students.

Table 11: z-test of difference between the mean scores of years 2 and 1 Technical College students on the school Adjustment problems

	Variable D School Adjustment Problems	Means	S.D.	n	S.D.X	Z.cal.	z-crit.
Class Level	Year 1	2.25	0.24	143	0.03	5.6667	1.960
	Year 2	2.08	0.28	143			

The table afore presented shows years 2 and 1 Technical College students' means and standard deviations of responses to variable D (School Adjustment Problems) of the questionnaire comprising of nineteen items. The year 2's response mean (2.25) is higher than the year 1(2.08). But the year 1's response standard deviation (0.28) is higher than the year 2 (0.24). The standard error is 0.03. The z-calculated is 5.6667 while the z-critical is 1.960.

Decision: Reject null hypothesis, since data presented in Table 12 above shows that z-calculated of 5.6667 is higher than the z-critical of 1.960 at a probability level of 0.05. Year 2 Technical college students in Benue state show more school Adjustment problems than the Year 1 students.

Summary of findings

Evidence from the present study abound that:

1. Technical college students in Ebonyi State have problems in the following areas:- Social Relationship, Career, Academic and Study, and in School Adjustment.
2. School adjustment problems ranked highest, followed by social relationship problems. Third in the hierarchy of magnitude of the existence of the problems is a problem about the future. The least experienced problem in the hierarchy is Academic and study problems.
3. The z-test summary on social relationship problems indicates that there is a significant difference due to gender. For variable B – Problems about the future (Career) there is no significant difference due to gender. On Academic and study problems, the z-test of difference shows that there is no significant difference due to gender. The z-test of difference on school adjustment problems equally indicates no significant difference due to gender.
4. The z-test summary on the following variables:- Social relationship problems; Career, Academic and Study problems and School Adjustment problems due to class level show that: there is no significant differences due to class level.
5. The z-test summary on the Social Relationship problems indicates that there is a significant difference due to location.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Since the students indicated experiencing problems about the future not minding that they were placed in their present schools as a result of their performance in the placement examination called the aptitude test, career information should therefore be provided for students in these schools. This can be done in several ways.

1. Setting up Bulletin Boards for students: Newspaper cuttings of such advertisements as those for entrance examinations into institutions of higher learning and advertisements for different kinds of jobs should be pasted on it.
2. Organizing a career day during which experts from different walks of life are invited to talk to students about their professions.
3. Getting experts from the Careers Division of the Education Board and from Technical Education Unit and Counselling Units of the same Board to give career talks to students periodically.
4. Organizing excursions for students to visit professionals in their places of work. Most importantly, as admittance to Technical Colleges is purely based on students' performance on the aptitude test, teachers and some examiners who think that high performance of students in aptitude examination indicates that school is up to its guts and as such assist students in some of the questions thereby encouraging examination malpractice should desist from doing so. This is because; they are doing the students more harm than good. When the students who do not quality are placed in Technical Schools, they will then find it difficult to cope.

It is really unfortunate that sometimes, government takes things for granted. Technical College students are adolescents as well. As such, they are challenged by problems facing adolescents. The importance of Guidance and Counselling Services cannot be over-emphasised. The non-challancy of government towards sending professional Counsellors to Technical Colleges should be discouraged. As there is evidence from the findings of this study that Technical College Students also have problems that require attention of the Counsellor. The fact that the Technical College students are bothered by some counselling problems shows the need for organizing guidance/counselling services in the colleges. Being concerned about these problems indicates that they would gladly welcome an assistance that can be provided for them. Their readiness to welcome any assistance that would be provided for them was observed by their questions to know why they are expected to fill the inventory which was answered orally by the researcher and their response to the open-ended question asked at the end of the 46 items – Add any other problems troubling you which are not mentioned in the list. Most of the respondents indicated not having someone to confine in; wanting someone to discuss my problems with who will not leak the information. With these, it is necessary to make an urgent call for the introduction of organized guidance and counselling services in Technical Colleges.

References

Alache, L. O. (1991). *Guidance Problems of Secondary School Students in Idoma, Benue State.* Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Bakare, C. G. M. (1977). *Student Problem Inventory (SPI).* Ibadan University Press.

Carney, C. G. and Savit, C. J. (1980). Students and Faculty Perceptions of Student Needs and Services of a University Counselling Centre: Differences that make a Difference. *Journal of Counselling Psychology,* 27. 597-694.

Nwabuisi, E. M. (1992). *Philosophy of Nigerian Education in Modern Times.* Onitsha: Etukokwu Publishers Nig. Ltd.

Nweze, T. and Okolie, U. C. (2014). Effective Guidance and Counselling Programmes in Secondary Schools: Issues and Roles in Students' Career Decision Making. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME),*4(4) 63-68

Nwoye, A. (1990). *Counselling Psychology for Africa.* Jos: Savanna Press.

Ogbazi, N. J. and Opala, J. (1994). *Writing Research Report: guide for Researchers in Education, the Social Sciences and the Humanities.* Enugu: Prime Time Limited.

Oladele, S. O. (1987). Guidance *and Counselling: A Functional Approach.* Lagos: Johns-Lad Enterprises.

Okoye, N. N., Adejumo, D. and Achebe, C. (1990). *Fundamentals of Guidance and Counselling.* Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.