

Gender Preferences of Public Senior Secondary School Student in their Choices of Receiving Counselling in Ekiti State

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Abstract:- The study investigated gender preference of senior secondary students in their choice of receiving counseling in senior secondary schools in Ekiti State. Two research questions were raised and one research hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all senior secondary schools students. Two hundred respondents were sampled using simple random sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire titled: Gender Preference Counseling Questionnaire (GPCQ) was used to collect data. The questionnaire contained sections A and B. Section A dealt with bio- data of the respondents while section B dealt with items on gender preference of senior secondary students in their choice of receiving Counseling. The instrument was validated in order to ensure face and content validity. Test re-test reliability was done to ensure the consistency of the instrument. The instrument was administered twice to 20 respondents outside the sample. The two sets of data collected with the instrument were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-Efficient (PPMCC). 0.075 correlation co-efficient was gotten which was high enough to determine the reliability of the instrument. In analyzing the data, frequency counts, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. For decision making, 2.50 and above was accepted while below 2.50 was rejected. The results of the study indicated that many students prefer female counselors to male counselors. Based on this, it was recommended that schools should make provision for and avail trained counselors.

I. INTRODUCTION

The goal of education is to achieve the fullest possible realization of potentials inherent in the individual. Therefore, education fosters all aspects of an individual's personality. In Nigeria, Education is administered by the federal, state and local government. According to Igbokwe (2015), education in the generic and global context is a strategic instrument for social and economic transformation. The Federal Ministry of Education is responsible for overall policy formation and ensuring quality control, but is primarily involved with tertiary education. School education is largely the responsibility of state (secondary) and local (elementary) governments (Craddock, 2017).

One of many programmes like this is counseling which is mostly dedicated to boosting or re-establishing client's own self-awareness, decision making resources, risk taking and individual growth (Kamunyu, Ndungo & Wango, 2019). The school counselor has an important role to play in helping the students make their decisions or choice as intelligently and as wisely as possible. Be it educational choices, vocational choices, relationship choices, personal/social choices and so on.

Guidance and counseling have been recognized as the third force in education along with instruction; it is seen as an integral part of educational system. Thus, in an effort to show the relevance of Guidance and counseling in secondary schools in Nigeria, Eyo, Joshua & Esuong (2010) claimed that guidance programmes for secondary school students are designed to address the physical, emotional, social, vocational and academic difficulties of adolescent students. Such is meant to complement learning in the classroom and also enhance academic performance/achievements of students.

The development of guidance and counseling started in Nigeria for several reasons like: expansion in the enrolment of pupils in the primary and secondary schools after the independence in 1960, the growing need of youth in Nigeria, recurrent changes in the education system and conflict in tertiary institutions and the changes in home and family life. (NPE, 2013).

Counseling is the service offered to the individual who is undergoing a problem and needs professional help to overcome it (Omoniyi, 2016). These problems, challenges and difficulties are capable of hampering the development of such an individual by keeping him disturbed, easily upset and under pressure. Counselling therefore in a more specialized service requiring training in personality development and handling exceptional groups of individuals. Counseling aims at addressing and resolving problems, help in decision making, assists one to cope with crisis and work through feelings and inner conflicts so as to improve the relationship with crisis and work through feelings and inner conflicts so as to improve the relationship with oneself and others (Kanga, 2017).

“ Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. To consider such in another way: ‘Male’ and ‘female’ are sex categories, while ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ are gender categories (‘ Gender, women and health’ 2017). Most cultures use a gender binary, having two genders. According to Hyde,

Bigler, Joel Tate Van Anders (2019) pointed out that gender binary is the view that humans comprise only two type's beings, women and men.

In counseling setting, the role played by gender cannot be overemphasized. Gender has the capacity of influencing individual's willingness to disclose personal information about several issues especially intimate relationships to counselors (William, Bethany & McManus, 2020). Glasheen, Shochet & Campbell (2016) asserted that Research findings suggest that boys commonly seek help less than girls due to the fact that the former do not believe to seek help as the latter would. This point to the fact that gender affects students' interest in receiving counseling? Such question and more shall be the path that this research will follow.

The gender concerns in our society leads to this study, where a female gender education needs to be considered either because of the cultural factors. Also, there are cultural factors that can place restriction on women's and girls' mobility which may mean that services (for example, health and education or credit services) are under –utilized if they are located outside the immediate locality. Because of cultural and religious reasons, it may be important to establish separate groups for women and men at the community level. Training and consultation may need to occur separately with women and men, and female extension agents and community workers may be required. The present study is also an opportunity to investigate whether such restrictions might extend to counseling services within senior secondary schools in Ekiti State.

Therefore, the importance of offering guidance and counseling services to secondary school students cannot be overemphasized. Effective guidance and counseling services are needed to meet up with the rapidly increasing complexities in our society, political, social, industrial, economic and technological development. The secondary years is a period of academic, social, personal, emotional and intellectual growth for most adolescent (Alemu, 2015).

In Nigeria, Olusakin (2017) reported that a counselor can be a man or a woman, what is important is for him or her to be effective. He/she should possess those basic characteristics of a counselor. It went further by saying that when one considers what a counselor does and the counseling relationship as the type in which one person (the counselor), is all out to help another (the client) to understand himself better and to develop through this self-understanding.

There has been considerable interest in the area of how gender differences influence the counseling process in the western world. Buczek (2011) found that male counselors asked female clients more questions related to their family relationship more than they did male clients. Faldstein (2015) reported that male counselors were consistently rated higher than female counselors in term of expertise (expertness), trustworthiness and attractiveness by both male and female clients.

Therefore, the study will investigate gender preference of senior secondary schools students in their choice of receiving counseling in senior secondary schools in Ekiti State.

A. Purpose of the study

The main objective of the study is to investigate gender preference of senior secondary school students in their choice of receiving counseling in public senior secondary schools in Ekiti State.

- Identify the gender of counselors preferred by male senior secondary students in their choice of receiving counseling in senior secondary schools in Ekiti State.
- Identify the gender of counselors preferred by female secondary schools in their choice of receiving counseling in senior secondary schools in Ekiti State.

B. Research Questions

The following research questions are raised:

- What gender of counselor is preferred by male senior secondary students in their choice of receiving counseling in senior secondary schools in Ekiti State?
- What gender of counselor is preferred by female senior secondary students in their choice of receiving counseling in senior secondary schools in Ekiti State?
- How many times do students go for counseling in selected secondary schools in selected secondary schools in Ekiti State?

C. Research Hypothesis

One hypothesis is formulated to guide the study.

H01: There is no significant difference between the male and female preference of the gender of the counselor on socio-personal issues.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research design employed in this study was the descriptive survey research design. The population comprised of all public senior secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample of the study comprised of 200 students selected across the State through multi-staged sampling procedure. Ekiti State has 3 senatorial districts. One mixed school was taken from each senatorial district through simple random sampling. Also, two single schools (a boy's and girls' school) were selected through purposive random sampling techniques making total of five (5) schools. 40 students were selected through simple random sampling making a total number of two hundred (200) students for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Gender Preference Counseling Questionnaire (GPCQ). The questionnaire will contain section A and B. Section A deals with bio-data of the respondents while section B deals with items on gender preference of senior secondary students in their choice of Receiving Counseling. The instrument was validity and Test re-test reliability was done to ensure the consistency of the instrument. Frequency counts, mean scores and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test was used to analyze the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. For decision making, 2.50 will be used as the criterion

mean. Any item that attains a response of mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted while below 2.50 was rejected.

III. RESULT

• **Research Questions**

Research Question 1: How often do students go for counseling in secondary schools in Ekiti State?

s/n	Statement	Level of Agreement							
		often	100 %	sometimes	100 %	regularly	100 %	Not much	100 %
1.	I like to visit a counsellor’s office	5	2.5	23	11.3	64	32.0	108	54.0
2.	I prefer to seek the help of a counselor when I am confused and needed information	94	47.0	16	8.0	76	38.0	14	7.0
3.	I like to share my struggles with the counselor.	21	10.5	79	39.5	8	4.0	92	46.0
4.	I go for counselling because school demand it	93	46.5	24	12.0	66	33.0	17	8.5
5.	I don’t feel the need to go for counseling.	10	5.0	73	36.5	20	10.0	97	48.5

Table 1: Status of students’ visitation for counseling

From Table 1 above, item 1 revealed that 2.5% of the respondents often like to visit a counsellor’s office, 11.5% of them sometimes like to visit a counsellor’s office, 32.0% of them regularly like to visit a counsellor’s office while 54.0% of them not much like to visit a counsellor’s office. Item 2 indicated that 47.0% of the respondents often prefer to seek the help of a counselor when they are confused and needed information, 38.0% of them regularly prefer to seek the help of a counselor when they are confused and needed information while 7.9% of them not much prefer to seek the help of a counselor when they are confused and needed information. Item 3 revealed that 10.5% of the respondents often love to share their struggles with the counselor, 39.0% of them sometimes love to share their struggles with the counselor, 4.0% of them regularly love to share their struggles with the counselor while 46.0% of them not much love to share their struggles with the counselor. Item 4

showed that 46.0% of the respondents often go for counseling because school demands it, 12.0% of them sometimes go for counseling because school demand it; 33.0% of them regularly go for counseling because school demands it while 8.5% of them not much go for counseling because school demands it. Item 5 revealed that 5.0% of the respondents often don’t feel the need to go for counseling, 36.5% of them sometimes don’t feel the need to go for counseling, 10.0% of them regularly don’t feel the need to go for counseling while 48.5% of them not much don’t feel the need to go for counseling.

Research Question 2: what gender of counselor is preferred by male senior secondary students in their choice of receiving counseling in senior secondary schools in Ekiti State.

S/N	STATEMENT	Level of Agreement				MEAN	SD	DECISION
		SA	A	D	SD			
1.	I go to a male counselor for enlightenment on my reading skills	12	24	76	88	1.80	0.87	Disagree
2.	I feel a male counselor will help me sort out problems of subject combinations better.	92	80	15	13	3.26	0.85	Agree
3.	I go to a male counselor when I need information about choosing a career	98	70	22	10	3.28	0.85	Agree
4.	I feel discouraged having to discuss my sexual urges with a male counselor.	10	20	71	97	1.70	0.84	Disagree
5.	I prefer to go to a male counselor to seek understanding to my body changes.	12	15	69	104	1.68	0.85	Disagree
6.	I look forward to discussing with a male counselor whenever I am under pressure.	9	25	76	90	1.77	0.84	Disagree
7.	A male counselor can help me get in touch with my mood swings	11	33	75	81	1.87	0.88	Disagree
8.	I choose to go to a male counselor when am under pressure from my family	108	63	18	11	3.34	0.86	Agree
9.	I prefer a male counselor when I have issues with submission of assignment.	93	65	22	20	3.16	0.98	Agree
10.	A male counselor is in a better position to help me understand how to handle classroom pressure	94	65	29	12	3.21	0.90	Agree
	Grand Mean					2.51	0.87	Agree

Table 2

Scale Mean 2.50

From Table 2 above, it could be observed that means scores of 3.26, 3.28, 3.34, 3.16 and 3.21 respectively were in agreement with items 2,3,8,9 and 10 while 1.80, 1.70, 1.68, 1.77 and 1.87 respectively were in disagreement with items 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7. The grand mean of 2.51 indicated that some of the respondents agreed that they feel a mate counselor will help them sort out problems of subject combinations better; go to a male counselor when they need information about choosing a career; choose to go to a male counselor when they are under pressure from my family; prefer a male counselor when they have issues with submission of

assignments and a male counselor is in a better position to help them understand how to handle classroom pressure while the remaining respondents disagreed that they go to a male counselor for enlightenment on their reading skills; feel discouraged having to discuss their sexual urges with a male counselor; prefer to go to a male counselor whenever they are under peer pressure and a male counselor can help them get in touch with my mood swings.

Research Question 3: what gender of counselor is preferred by female senior secondary students in Ekiti State?

S/N	Statement	Level of Agreement				Mean	SD	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD			
1.	I go to a female counselor for enlightenment on my reading skills	108	64	23	5	3.38	0.78	Agree
2.	I feel a female counselor will help me sort out problems of subject combinations better.	94	76	16	14	3.25	0.88	Agree
3.	I go to a female counselor when I need information about choosing a career.	92	79	21	8	3.28	0.81	Agree
4.	I feel discouraged having to discuss my sexual urges with a female counselor.	17	24	66	93	1.83	0.95	Disagree
5.	I prefer to go to a female counselor to seek understanding to my body changes	97	73	20	10	3.29	0.84	Agree
6.	I look forward to discussion with a male counselor when I am under peer pressure	90	76	25	9	3.24	0.84	Agree
7.	A female counselor can help me get in touch with my mood swings	81	75	33	11	3.13	0.88	Agree
8.	I choose to go to a female counselor when am under pressure from my family.	90	72	27	11	3.21	0.87	Agree
9.	I prefer a female counselor when I have issues with submission of assignments	97	71	18	14	3.26	0.89	Agree
10.	A female counselor is in a better position to help me understand how to handle classroom pressure.	93	65	22	20	3.16	0.98	Agree
	Grand Mean					3.10	0.87	Agree

Table 3 female students’ Preference of Counsellor

Scale Mean 2.50

From Table 3 above, it could be observed that mean scores of 3.38, 3.25, 3.28 3.2 of 3.29, 3.24, 3.13, 3.21, 3.26 and 3.16 respectively were in agreement with items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8,9 and 10 while 1.83 was in disagreement with item 4. The grand mean 3.10 indicated that some of the respondents agreed that they go to a female counselor for enlighten on their reading skills; feel a female counselor will help them sort out problems of subject combinations better, go to a female counselor they need information about choosing a career; prefer to go to a female counselor to seek understanding to their body changes; look forward to discussing with a male counselor whenever they under pressure; a female counselor can help them get in touch with my mood swings; choose to go a farmer counselor when they are under pressure from my family; prefer a female

counselor when they have issues with submission of assignments and a female counselor is in a better position to help them understand how to handle classroom pressure while the remaining respondents disagreed that feel discouraged having to discuss any sexual urges with a female counselor.

• Hypothesis Testing

The research hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance

H01: There is no significant difference between the male and female preference of the gender of the counselor on socio-personal issues.

Group	N	Mean	Std deviation	DF	t-cal	t-tab	Sig(P-cal)	Remarks
Male	200	82.86	6.674	398	0.163	1.649	0.870	Retain H01
Female	200	82.60	7.508					

Table 4: t-test analysis showing difference between male and female preference of counsellor’s on socio- personal issues

Not Significant at df=398; P>0.05.

Table 4 showed t-test analysis of difference between male and female preference of counsellor’s on socio-personal issues. The t-cal value of 0.163 is found to be less

than the t-tab value of 1.6549 given 398 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The t-cal value id not significant since is less than t-tab value, therefore the null

hypothesis is retained. It implied that there was significant difference between male and female preference of counselors. The difference mainly is on the threshold of socio-personal issues. Many students prefer female counselors to male counselors when it comes to social issues. Male students' had a mean score of 82.86 while female students had 82.60. Male student's preference is higher than female student's preference. It implied that male students also prefer female counselors to male counselors. This indicated that many students prefer female counsellors to their male counterpart.

IV. DISCUSSION

This study shown that the respondents do not go for counseling until they are confused and needed information. The findings agreed to a large extent with Glasheen, Shochet, & Campbell (2016) who concluded that though many secondary school students experience difficulties with relationships, academic demands, and mental health concerns, it is also fact that many do not seek professional support when faced with such problems.

The study revealed that the respondents prefer female counselors to their male counterparts. The corroborated Eyo, Joshua & Esuong (2010) who opined that female students are favourably disposed to school guidance and counseling services than their male counterparts. Again, it is in line with Olusakin (2017) who after investigating the effects of counselor gender. While Buczek (2011) is not in line with the study because his founding tailor that male counselors is preferable because they always ask family related questions. Results revealed that both gender and sex role orientation significantly influences help-seeking attitudes. Owing to this, the research indicated that many students prefer female.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it was concluded in the study that the students prefer female counselors to male counselors. Also, a counselor could be a male or female, the most important issue is for such a person whether male or female to be both effective and efficient in discharging his/her responsibility. The concern of preferring a particular gender is related only to certain areas and not capable of hindering a counsellor's obligation.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- Schools should make provision for adequately manpower in terms of trained counselors, as well as avail them for counseling sessions to be able to guide, direct and assist the students towards achieving their best goals in life.
- Students require serious orientation from the school counselors either male or female on the need to seek guidance and counseling services either educational, vocational, social/personal life or even all three.

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