

# Constraints on Group Counseling in Mixed Secondary Schools in Ekiti North Senatorial District of Ekiti-State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The aim of the study was to find out whether our secondary schools are properly and effectively staff with trained counselors, to assess the adequacy of facilities available in our schools, whether enough facilities are available for effective group counseling, to identify the problems that may arise in grouping session and to highlight actions of school administrators that may hinder group counseling in secondary schools. The research designs employed were the survey method and questionnaire with selected secondary schools in Ekiti North Senatorial District of Ekiti State, Nigeria, between May 2011 and November 2011. The sample comprised fifty (50) secondary schools in five (5) local government areas. Five research questions were administered. The researcher designed a questionnaire with structured response items and open-ended-response items and administered on – the spot which facilitated a 100% return. The counselors of the fifty mixed secondary schools in the areas formed the population of study. The questionnaire incorporates both structure and open-ended response items. Respondents were asked to tick (✓) against the correct responses to each of the structured items and supply necessary information in the space provided for each of the open-ended items. The percentages were computed for each of the response under each item in the questionnaire. Then, Two-way ANOVA was used for the hypotheses. The results were obtained by checking the total frequency of each response ticked (✓) or written – out) under each item by the respondents, divide the calculated number by the total number of subjects (Population) and multiply the product by 100. There is paucity of trained counselors in the secondary schools, adequate facilities are not provided for counseling, principals do not encourage group counseling in their schools though they are not ignorant of its potency and some problems emanated from the idea of grouping male and female for counseling purposes in mixed secondary schools.

**Keywords:** constraints, counseling, mixed, professional, vocational, client

## 1. Introduction

There is no gainsaying in the fact that Guidance and Counseling is fast becoming a house-hold concept in the entire educational gamut of the Nigerian society. Guidance Services are multifaceted as the pivot. Much could be said to have been achieved using other services, but group counseling notwithstanding, its numerous advantages seem to be plagued by some suspected constraints, if not identified and proffer solutions, it may keep the nation far away from these benefits of group counseling. Before the late 1950's, what could be described as traditional guidance and counseling in Nigeria was a process of consultation with other people and oracles to find solutions to problems. The individuals consulted ranged from parents to grand-parents, relations, age group, community leaders and spiritual leaders. The degree of the problems determined who to consult; solutions to related problems were at times ritualized. This form of guidance is still a common phenomenon in the country despite the introduction of the Modern Western forms. The following important landmarks shown how modern western form of guidance has developed over the years in Nigeria. Guidance is an act of showing the way for some categories of people, like adolescents who cannot find the right path. It is directing, pointing, leading and accompanying people. Akerele, Olaiya and Ajayi (1991) viewed that Guidance is saying "Yes" to someone who is asking for help. It is saying "Yes" to an invitation of someone who wants a temporary long life.

Winkel (2005) described guidance as an effort to equip individuals, with knowledge 'experience and information about himself. A way to provide assistance to individuals, to understand and use efficiently and effectively all the opportunities that may lead to personal development. He went further to add that guidance is a process of

assistance or aid to individual in terms of understanding himself linking him with his environment, decide and plan in accordance with the concept itself and the demands of the environment. Guidance is giving directions to the lonely, confused, unloved, the suffering, the sick and the lost. It is pointing to some possibilities of thinking, feeling and acting. Guidance is part and parcel of the counseling profession. Higher schools even college students need guidance when they are unsure of what choices to make or what directions to take.

Akerele, Olaiya and Ajayi (1991) maintained that in 1959 at St Theresa's College, Oke-Ado Ibadan. Some Professionals invited by the Irish Rev. Sister in the school gave a career talk to the final year students. In 1963, some interested Nigerians benefited from a Harvard aids programme to study guidance and counseling. Odu (1998) explained the philosophy on which the department of guidance and counseling is based on, is the need to train Professional guidance counselors whose responsibility is to assist individuals to determine their destiny.

Guidance and counseling includes a wide range of activities, activities within school to help students, clarity career –goal and understanding the world of work, personal or group based assistance with decisions about initial course of study, courses of vocational training, further education and training initial job choice, job change, or work force re-entry. 'It included services provided to those who have not yet entered the labour force, services to job seekers and services to those who are employed.

Guidance and counseling according to Prayitno and Erman Amti (2004) is a process of aid committed by people who are experts on one or several individuals, both children, adolescents, and adults so that people can be guided to develop his own exists, and can be developed based on the prevailing norms. They went further to say that it is a process of providing assistance through counseling interviews by an expert called counselor, to individuals who are experiencing problems called clients. Guidance and counseling regarded as a lifelong process should recognize all clients need. Focus not only on their career development, but on the social and psychological needs and deal with them in the manner appropriate to the skill experience and individual. Okobia and Okorodu (2004) mentioned that guidance and counseling has been conceptualized as a programme of complex scientific and technological development. A common goal of guidance and counseling is to promote employability, to support career management and personal development of social skills, to reduce dropout through activation, motivation and empowerment of participants or learners. Therefore, guidance and counseling should be based on holistic approach. Akerele, Olaiya and Ajayi (1991) explained that the first set of workshops on guidance and counseling was organized in Lagos at Ayetoro town in 1964 where career masters were trained, also in 1967, the Ibadan careers council transformed into the Nigeria Careers Council. There was the publication of careers' bulletin/magazine which highlighted the works of the council and organized workshops for career masters. The University of Ibadan, in 1975 established a full-fledged Guidance and Counseling Department; the Counseling Association of Nigeria was established in 1976. The 1977 publication of the National Policy on Education formerly gave official recognition to Guidance and Counseling in our educational system, as a result of the numerous advantages the Nigerian nation stands to gain through the guidance services.

The students of today are the leaders of tomorrow, to prepare them for the demands of leadership, respect for others and their views, economic recession with all its attendant problems including unemployment require guidance and counseling in the schools. While in schools, students were ignorance of subjects for career courses, wrong selection of subjects resulted to many not achieving their life ambitions, outside school prospects were not achieved, information on further studies are beyond the knowledge of many. These resulted to frustration, and if counseling is properly implemented in schools, it would drastically reduce the problems of career choices.

Guidance is not only remedial, it is equally prevention which is better than cure and also has a place in our educational reasoning; it should be properly incorporated into our educational system. Guidance programmes according to Oladele (1987) means Professional to individuals and small groups in dealing with commonly recurring personal issues, educational and vocational needs and problems. They are often classified according to the areas of life, in which the problem occurs. These include appraisal service, information service, counseling service, orientation service, referral service and planning, placement and follow-up service. Counseling service is rendered in two forms. It can be to an individual or to a group of individuals whichever form it is rendered, the aim is to assist the client(s) to approach self-direction as much as possible to understand and improve his or her relationship with others in the community.

Since there is also acute shortage of counselors in our schools, the few available would have a lot to do if each student should be attended to all the time, even if such problems being treated are the same. To take full advantage of "grouping" which is cost effective, time-economical and result oriented, group counseling should be given proper consideration that is to say it has to be at the detriment of individual group counseling.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

The surge of interest in the introductions of guidance and counseling services in schools is explainable judging

from the growth in student population, increased crime rate and other social vices, failure of parents to discharge their traditional duties of proper child rearing, problem of choice from numerous alternatives and opportunities, that is, schools, subjects, courses, vocations, partners and the craze to get rich quick syndrome. There is much to be desired as far as group counseling is concerned, Ed Jacob, Robert, Mason, Riley, Harvill, Christine Schimmel (2011) mentioned that school counselor will decide whom to include, usually the purpose of the group and time constrains. Some of the likely impediments in mixed secondary schools could be traceable to lack of properly trained counselors to handle group counseling, lack of facilities in the schools to facilitate group counseling. Problems of having mixed groups (male and female) in mixed secondary schools. Kirungu (2011) also viewed that secondary schools admit more students, type of school and status, that is boys and girls boarding and group were assumed to be involved in implementation of the government policies. Problem of non-encouragement of group counseling in the school by the Administrator.

In this research, the following questions were raised:

- (i) to what extent are counselors presently employed in schools are adequate to meet the group counseling needs of students in mixed secondary schools?
- (ii) what are the available facilities for group counseling in the schools?
- (iii) what problems are realized or posed when boys and girls are grouped together for counseling?
- (iv) to what extent did Principals perceive the group counseling in their schools?
- (v) what are the educational qualifications of practicing counselors?

### 2.1 Research Hypotheses

Below null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

$H_{01}$ :- There is no significant interaction effect on the group counseling in mixed Secondary Schools and group counseling in single secondary school of Ekiti North Senatorial District.

$H_{02}$ :-There is no significant interaction effect on the counselors in mixed secondary schools and counselors in single secondary schools of Ekiti North Senatorial District.

### 2.2 Research Methods

In this investigation, the research design employed was the survey method, the study was carried out in Ekiti North Senatorial District of Ekiti-State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all the counselors in all the mixed secondary schools in Ekiti North Senatorial district. The research designed was questionnaire based on the five research questions meant for the purpose of this study “constraints on group counseling in mixed secondary schools”. The questionnaire incorporates both structure and open-ended response items. Respondents were asked to tick (✓) against the correct responses to each of the structured items and supply necessary information in space provided for each of the open-ended items. The researcher went to many schools for an on-the spot administration of the questionnaire. This ensured a 100% return of the questionnaire administered.

In analyzing the data, percentages were used and computed for each of the responses under each item in the questionnaire. The results were obtained by checking the total frequency of each response (ticked ‘✓’) or written-out) under each item by the respondents’ divide the calculated number by the total number of subjects (Population) and multiply the product by 100

$$\text{i.e } \frac{X}{N} \times 100\%$$

N

Where X is the number of respondents that ticked (✓) a particular response under an item, and N is the total population of subject that responded to the item. Then, it implies that any scaling statement that reveals a response percentage of 50% and above would be accepted but if lower than 50%, the idea would be rejected.

The tables below have the results obtained from the questionnaire administered. The findings of each item are followed immediately by the analysis relevant to it.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of the responses on the number of counselors in each of the secondary schools

No. of Counselor(s) in each school	Number of selected mixed schools	Percentage
01	50	100
02	22	44
03 or more	18	36

Table 1 above shows that all the 50 selected mixed secondary schools have a counselor each, we have two (2) counselors in twenty-two (22) schools with forty four percent (44%). With three (3) or more counselors, there are eighteen (18) schools with thirty six percent (36%).

Table 2. Frequency distribution of responses on the availability of essential facilities for group counseling

Facilities	Responses			Percentage		
	Yes	No	Total No of the schools	Yes	No	Total
Counseling room	38	12	50	76	24	100
Furniture	20	30	50	40	60	100
Tape recorder	12	38	50	24	76	100

From the table 2 above, it can be seen that thirty eight (38) schools have seventy-six percent (76%) of counseling rooms while twelve (12) schools have none with twenty four percent (24%), twenty (20) schools with furniture and thirty (30) without furniture was forty percent (40%) and sixty percent (60%) respectively. Then, tape recorder, twelve (12) schools have while thirty eight (38) have none with twenty four (24%) and seventy six percent (76%) respectively.

Table 3. Frequency distribution of responses on problems encountered in group counseling sessions when boys and girls form the group

Problems Encountered	Responses			Percentage		
	Listed	Not Listed	Total	Listed	Not Listed	Total
1. Attention seeking clients	26	24	50	52	48	100
2. Failure of clients to open-up	34	16	50	68	32	100
3. Shyness and timidity	30	20	50	60	40	100
4. Lack of expression	38	12	50	76	24	100
5. Contending with male superiority complex and female inferiority complex	32	18	50	64	36	100
6. Poor participation/declining roles in groups	44	06	50	88	12	100

From the above table, there are fifty (50) respondents, the Groups listed were not responding while not listed Groups were responding. Under attention seeking clients, twenty six (26) respondents with fifty two per cent (52%) were found not paying attention, a little above average. While twenty four (24) respondents with forty eight per cent (48%) paid attention which was below average. Then, failure of clients to open-up, thirty four (34) with sixty eight per cent (68%) do not open-up, and sixteen (16) respondents with thirty two per cent (32%) do open-up. On shyness and timidity, thirty (30) with sixty per cent (60%) were found to be shy and timid, twenty (20) with forty per cent (40%) were not shy and timid. On lack of expression, thirty eight (38) respondents with seventy six per cent (76%) could not express very well while twelve (12) with twenty four per cent (24%) were able to express themselves. Contending with male superiority complex and female inferiority complex, thirty two (32) respondents with sixty four per cent (64%) were affected with superiority complex and eighteen (18) with thirty six per cent (36%) were not affected. In poor participation/declining roles in groups, forty four (44) with eighty eight per cent (88%) were poor and declined in roles in group while six (6) with twelve (12%) were effective. It can be seen that problems are commonly encountered in group counseling in mixed secondary schools.

Table 4. Actions of School Administrators show the extent in which the Principals perceive the group counseling in their schools

Encouragement	Number of respondent	Percentages
Yes	10	20
No	40	80

Table 4 shows that fifty (50) school Administrators were selected from fifty (50) schools, ten (10) of the school Administrators which was twenty per cent (20%) encouraged group counseling in their schools while forty (40) of them which was eighty per cent (80%) did not.

Table 5. Frequency distribution of the academic/professional qualifications of the school counselors

Qualifications	Number of Respondent	Percentage
N.C.E	24	48
Bachelor's Degree in G. Counseling	20	40
Masters Degree/ Ph.D	06	12

N.C.E- Nigerian Certificate in Education

Table 5 above shows that only twenty (20) respondents with forty per cent (40%) of the school counselors have both academic and professional qualifications in guidance and counseling, the rest 60% made up of NCE (48%) and Graduate in other degrees (12%).

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant interaction effect on group counseling in mixed secondary schools and group counseling in single secondary schools.

Table 6. Two-way ANOVA

Source of variation	Sum of square.	DF	Mean square	F <sub>cal</sub>	F <sub>tab</sub>
School A.	1780.40	12	275.67	10.52	
School B.	828.54	3	828.52	246.30	2.10
School C.	355.515	4	115.91	3.720	
School D.	383.8	4	32.5		
School E.	438.7	1			
Total	3784.624	14			

P < 0.05 (significant Result). DF= Degree of Freedom, F<sub>cal</sub>= Frequency Calculated. F<sub>tab</sub>= Frequency Table

Table 6 shows that F<sub>cal</sub> was 3.720 which is greater than the F<sub>tab</sub> value at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the result was significant and the hypothesis was rejected.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant interaction effect on the counselors in mixed secondary schools and counselors in single secondary schools in Ekiti North senatorial district.

Table 7. Two-way ANOVA summary

Sources of variation	Sum of square	DF	Mean square	F <sub>cal</sub>	F <sub>tab</sub>
Counselors in mixed schools	42.138	3	195.02	3.12	2.10
Counselors in single schools	28.182	1	120.02		

DF= Degree of Freedom, F<sub>cal</sub>= Frequency calculated. F<sub>tab</sub>= Frequency table

Table 7 shows that the F<sub>cal</sub> of 3.12 is greater than F<sub>tab</sub> of 2.10 at 0.05 level of significance. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected.

### 3. Discussion

On the basis of analysis, all schools in Ekiti North Senatorial District have a counselor each regardless of the students' population. With the number of counselor(s) in the school and the growing population in schools, the counselors are still inadequate. Also, most of the counselors do not have the necessary professional competence let alone being adequate. There are opportunities for counselors to improve their skills and more than 52% of the students featured in group counseling programmes.

With the fact that adequate facilities for group counseling are not provided and some principals do not encourage group counseling. Some problems were discovered to be common in all mixed groups for counseling purposes, more than 50% of the respondents identified are:

- Irregular attendance of sessions.
- Contending with attention seeking clients
- Failure of clients to open-up
- Shyness and timidity

- Lack of power of expression of inner frame of reference.
- Contending with male superiority complex and female inferiority complex.

#### 4. Summary of the Findings

It is unfortunate that the counselor job in Nigeria is yet to be known to some Parents, teachers, principals and even the students. According to Nwoye (1991) ignorance of the real length and breadth of the counseling job by a good number of Nigeria counselors, public, parents, teachers and students are responsible for possible failure to embrace group counseling which is one of the avenues. In the light of the foregoing, serving counselors should keep abreast with the growing needs of their clients and public. A superfluous treatment of all important ethical requirements incapacitates even the best trained counselors.

The number of counselors employed presently in the secondary schools are not adequate to meet the group counseling needs of students especially in mixed secondary schools, for instance, in a School of 1,700 students having only two counselors, which means the number of counselor is inadequate.

Adequate facilities for effective group counseling are not provided in mixed secondary schools, (though) the counseling rooms are available but counselors have opportunities to improve their group counseling skills through conferences, seminars, workshops and in-Service training programmes. In his own view, Amadi (1991) includes in-service programme, evaluation service and public relation service. Skills featured included theory, group leadership participation as members and leaders, discussion of problems encountered in running groups and methods of maintaining groups

Secondary school principals have some knowledge of group counseling but they do not give enough encouragement to it, yet they perceive it as useful. Denga (2001) stressed that the principals who know little about counseling will not in any way appreciate the need for the counselor to be relieved of heavy teaching load and other co-curricular duties. Such principals will stifle the counselors work by withholding budgetary allocation for guidance services.

#### 5. Recommendations

Based on the findings the researcher recommends the following:

Trained counselors should be appointed to take over from the teacher counselors presently doing the job. All secondary schools in Ekiti North Senatorial District should be equipped with essential facilities to facilitate effective group counseling in schools. The government efforts can be supplemented by the parents and old students association.

The government should provide adequate funds to run guidance programmes in secondary schools in Ekiti North Senatorial District of Nigeria. In all mixed secondary schools, counseling for both sexes should be made available, to assist students who have sex preference in their choice of counselor or any sex –complex problem.

Counseling should be included in the school curriculum while circular letter should be sent to schools to have at least a period per week, per class of group counseling on their time table. The findings show that, the work would be beneficial to the public because it would have a greater general awareness which will lead to finding solutions to the identified constraints. It would correct erroneous impression that anybody can handle group counseling. Counseling training efforts would be made and more counselors employed.

The government would see the need to equip and fund the schools as well as supervise serving counselors regularly to get results; serving counselors would see the need to improve-their skills.

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