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TEACHERS' COUNSELLING SERVICES AS CORRELATES OF STUDENTS' DIGITAL AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ONITSHA EDUCATION ZONE

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' digital and academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools. It was a co-relational study carried out in public secondary schools in Onitsha Education zone of Anambra State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised 22,329 students in public secondary schools in Onitsha education zone. The sample for this study consisted of 5,000 students selected from the area of the study through purposive sampling technique. A researcher-developed questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts and the reliability index was determined using Cronbach alpha method. This yielded index of 0.83 for section A and 0.90 for section B respectively. Data were collected by the researcher with the help of research assistants through direct hand-delivery process. Data collected were analysed using Pearson product moment for answering the research questions while regression analysis was used for hypotheses tested at .05 level of significance. Findings indicated that there is a high and positive correlation between teachers' counselling services and students' digital and academic engagement behaviours in the public secondary schools in Onitsha Education zone. It was recommended among others that teachers should be role-models as their actions or inactions will go a long way in shaping the behaviours of their students.

Keywords: Teachers; Students; Counselling Services;' Digital Engagement; Academic Engagement; Engagement Behaviour

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Introduction

Digital technology is perceived to have massive impact on the society hence; many lives are changing to fit the mould of social media. Perhaps, with the advancement in technology, it is now easier to share information or to connect with people across the world. In this light, it is the belief of this author that education needs to change to account for the ways in which social media and technology affect young people especially students. This is because there seems to be substantial evidence that technology has become a vital component for the success of students in the educative process (Wilson, 2019).

Education and indeed the educative process need to change because it will encourage students to think-out-side of the box and create more imaginative students who will be able to advance the educative process. This has been achieved to an extent in most developed countries where digital technology is pervasive in academic institutions and people's personal lives. Of course, digital technology has penetrated every classroom, impacting students' engagement, learning, teaching, and achievement behaviours in multi-faceted ways.

With reference to developed countries, King and Newman (2018) observed that digital technology has been phenomenal in the lives of digital learners. Research evidence indicated that that 93% of teens have computers or have access to one at home; 78% have cell phones where 95% of them consistently use the Internet. This new generation of digital learners are "surrounded" with and immersed by technology, often called the "digital natives" (Mudassi, Norsuhaily& Ado, 2015). According to Wilson (2019), the digital natives naturally immerse themselves in digital technologies such as computers, cell phones, MP3 players, and video-games. Similarly, Smith (2019), referring them as the "Net Geners," states that they are the first generation to have grown up digital and "be bathed in bits" (p. 7), for whom "using the new technology is as natural as breathing" (p. 18). At the core of digital natives discourse is that their personal use, innate-like digital skills, and proclivity for using technology can be easily utilized to forge meaningful learning engagement inside the various classroom settings (Solomon & Nashat 2018). However, portraying the current students as digital learners (i.e., as digital natives or Net Geners) is overly enthusiastic because it feeds into an idea of technological determinism – a dreamy

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viewpoint that technology provides solutions to historical problems of society, education, student learning and achievement (Strawbridge & Wolfe 2019). However, this seems not to be the reality in a developing country like Nigeria.

In Nigeria as well as in other developing parts of the world, digital technology is also pervasive. According to Wilson (2019), its in-road into the education industry has not only changed the traditional pattern of social interaction through which students learn practical and basic skills of life from parents and teachers but has also created a wide gap that made it impossible for most students to acquire rudiments of complex attitudes, values and some practical skills necessary for meaningful living in society. The attention of most adolescent students has so much been drawn by digital devices so much so the parents and teachers are worried about the that future of these students. This calls for teachers to provide counselling services to students in order to reverse the trend.

Guidance and counselling services deal basically with assisting the individual to understand himself, his world and be able to live a normal, well- adjusted and fulfilling life. This basic service stems from the assumption that individuals who understand themselves and their world are more effective, more productive and happier human beings. The services according to Obikeze and Umuezulike (2008) are potentially intended for all people, not only those who have problems. Asiyai (2015) supported by saying that guidance and counselling services are those services given to individuals or groups to enable them function effectively in life. The services are aimed at helping students with concerns in various areas of adjustment.

Different counselling services exist in literature. The major areas of guidance services provided in the schools include: orientation, placement, appraisal, research, referral, evaluation/follow up and information services.

- **Orientation Service**: In orientation service, the students are made to feel at home with their new environment so that the problem of adjustment will not arise. This is mostly done for new comers, that is, those entering the secondary school newly and those newly transferred to the school (N.T.I., 2007).

- **Placement Service**: These services are aimed at helping the students to choose

and utilize the opportunities within the school to plan the future. Placement service is the admitting of students into the right class which they belong. This is concerned with adjusting school or on the job.

- **Appraisal Service**: One way to ensure that students are properly assisted in their growth is to have a store of information or data about such students. Appraisal is the means by which counsellors arrive at such data. Mudassi, Norsuhaily and Ado (2015) hold that appraisal means assessment of the value or quality of something or somebody. Appraisal service is geared towards gathering and assessing personal information regarding the students in school or clients generally.

- **Research Service**: Ifellunni, (1999), maintained that counselling service is a human oriented service and humans are by nature complex and dynamic.

- **Referral Service**: According to Asiyai (2015), in a situation where a counsellor finds out that the problems he is handling is not within his scope, the counsellor refers the cases to appropriate quarters. This goes in to explain the fact that in guidance service programmes, the counsellor alone cannot carry out all the work involved.

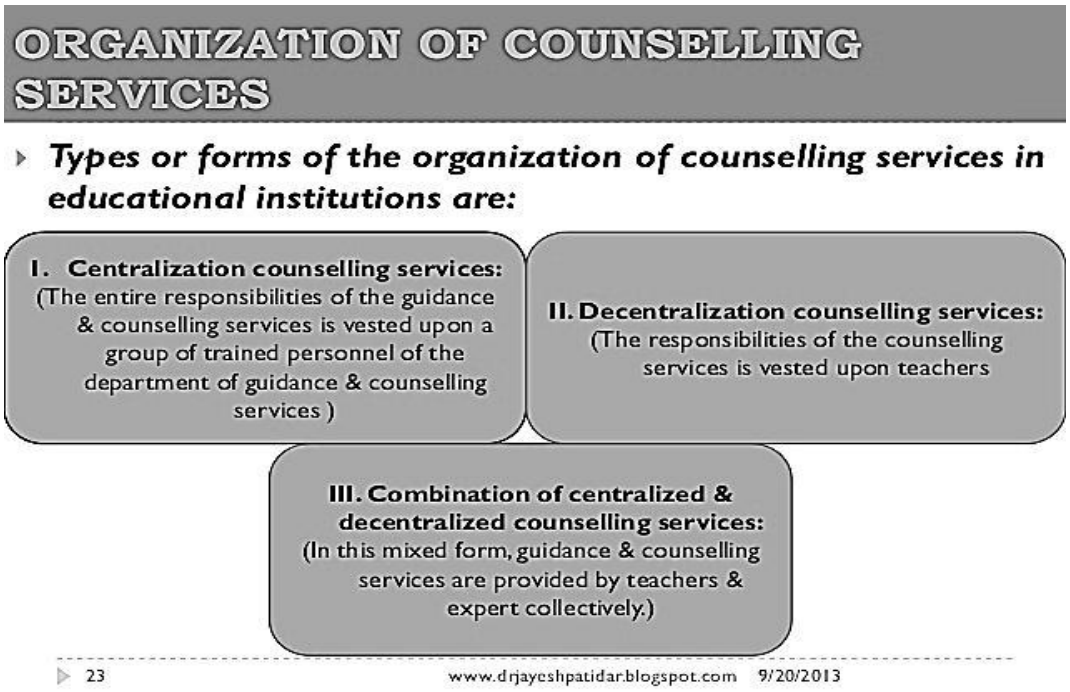
- **Evaluation and Follow-up Services**: to evaluate is to assess or to measure with a view of to passing judgment whether or not a course of action has been effective. When we evaluate, we are concerned with looking at the services that have been rendered, whether it has been effective or not. When treatment is effective, it is an indication that we consolidate such techniques and methodology used.

There are namely two aspects of counselling services viz: individual and group counselling. In the former the student is examined based on some personal issues, or problems with the aim of resolving them while on the later (group counselling) refers to a situation in which more than one individual are handled. The services can be organized in several ways as shown below.

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In whichever way the services are organized, Mmaduakonam and Nwankwo (1999) enumerated the counselling services offered by teachers to include:

- Promoting counselling in support of the education of students.
- Providing personal counselling.
- Keeping and updating cumulative record cards.
- Referring students to other services and agencies according to their needs.
- Promoting staff development in the fields of counselling.
- Facilitating parenting skills programmes and delivering talks.
- Organising in-service courses and professional development sessions.

- Contacting parents regarding students' holistic development and other specific problem.
- Delivering talks and or contacting parents on personal development, educational achievements, educational issues and developments.

From the above, it could be understood that teachers are the basic ingredients in the educational advancement of any nation, so the education system must be responsible and responsive enough to ensure the recruitment, training and retention of adequate, skilled and high performing teachers for the nation's educational goals to be achieved.

There is a consensus among educationists that teacher quality has more impact on students' achievements than any other factor. Teachers undoubtedly play a substantial role in taking action to prevent students from developing further psychological problems. Of course teachers are not trained to be experts in counselling or psychological difficulties and interventions; however they are often involved in intense (personal and professional) interaction with their students; as they spend substantial amount of time with them. Teachers can provide vital information regarding their behaviour and functioning and help professionals in designing appropriate interventions (Smith, 2019). According to Wilson (2019), there is evidence that few general education classroom teachers are adequately assisted in helping students with social, emotional disorders or behavioural problems, or are trained in effective methods and strategies for engaging the students in an efficient way.

According to Solomon and Nashat (2018), students' engagement behaviour is defined as "students' simultaneous non-withdrawal of themselves and display of high activation behaviours that are characterised by physical, cognitive and emotional presence. Wilson (2019) used the following themes to discuss students' engagement behaviour: academic challenge, learning with peers, experiences with faculty and the learning environment and it is to these themes educationists should return if they must improve learning engagement through technology. In the light of the above, the problem of this study in question form is: "To what extent do teachers' counselling services relate with students' digital and academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools?".

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Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' digital and academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools.

Specifically, the study determined:

1. Relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' digital engagement behaviours in secondary schools.
2. Relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What relationship exists between teachers' counselling service scores and students' digital engagement behaviour scores in secondary schools?
2. What relationship exists between teachers' counselling service scores and students' academic engagement behaviour scores in secondary schools?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significantly relationship between the mean scores on teachers' counselling services and students' digital engagement behaviours in secondary schools.
2. There is no significantly relationship between the mean scores on teachers' counselling services and students' academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools.

Research Method

This research work is a co-relational study and was carried out in public secondary schools in Onitsha Education zone. The population of the study comprised 22329 students in public secondary schools in Onitsha education zone (**Source**: Post Primary Schools Service Commission, January, 2019). The sample for this study consisted of 5,000 students selected from the area of the study through multi-stage sampling procedure. In the first stage, ten schools were selected for the study through simple random sampling technique. From the ten schools selected, five hundred (500) students were selected from each of these schools using purposive sampling technique. Instrument for data collection was questionnaire developed by the

researcher and titled "Teachers' Counselling and Students' Digital and Academic Engagement Questionnaire" (TCSDAEQ). TCSDAEQ is a four point scale. It is structured in a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).The instrument was validated by three experts and the reliability index was determined using Cronbach alpha method. This yielded index of 0.83 for section A and 0.90 for section B respectively. Data were collected by the researcher with the help of research assistants through direct hand-delivery process. Data collected were analysed using Pearson product moment for answering the research questions. The coefficient (r) of the relationship was interpreted using the Best and Khan (2003) criterion for evaluating the magnitude of a correlation:

Coefficient (r)	Relationship
.00 to .20	Negligible
.20 to .40	Low
.40 to .60	Moderate
.60 to .80	Substantial
.80 to 1.00	High to Very high

The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using simple regression analysis. The decision rule was that wherever p-value is greater than or equal to the significant value of 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected. On the other hand, a null hypothesis was rejected wherever the p-value was less than significant value and this means that the null hypothesis was significant.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What relationship exists between teachers' counselling service scores and students' digital engagement behaviour scores in secondary schools?

Table 1: Analysis of the Relationship between Teachers' Counselling Services and Students' Digital Engagement Behaviours

Model	**N**	**r**	g. Eng. Remark	
Counselling Services	5,000	0.82	1	High and positive relationship

The results in Table 1 show that the scores of teachers' counselling services and students' digital engagement behaviour scores have high and positive relationship. This means that there is high and positive relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' digital engagement behaviours scores in secondary schools Onitsha Education zone.

Research Question 2: What relationship exists between teachers' counselling service scores and students' academic engagement behaviour scores in secondary schools?

Table 2: Analysis of the Relationship between Teachers' Counselling Services and Students' Academic Engagement Behaviours

Model	**N**	**r**	Acad. Eng.	Remarks
Counselling Services	5,000	0.8	1	High and positive relationship

Results in Table 2 indicate that the scores on teachers' counselling services and students' academic engagement behaviour in secondary schools are high and positively related. This means that there is high and positive relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools Onitsha Education zone.

Ho1: There is no significantly relationship between the mean scores on teachers' counselling services and students' digital engagement behaviours in secondary schools.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of the Relationship between Teachers' Ratings on their Counselling Services and Students' Digital Engagement Behaviours

n	**x**	**r**	**P-value**	**Remarks**
5,000	0.82	0.237	0.195	S.

*** P< 0.05; Hypo. Rejected**

The results in Table 3 indicate **r** value of 0.237 with a P-value of 0.195. The P – value is higher than the set probability value 0.05. Hence the results indicate that there is

significant relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' digital engagement behaviours in secondary schools. Thus, null hypothesis is rejected. The conclusion is that there is significant relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' digital engagement behaviours in secondary schools in Onitsha Education zone.

Ho2: There is no significantly relationship between the mean scores on teachers' counselling services and students' academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of the Relationship between Teachers' Ratings on their Counselling Services and Students' Academic Engagement Behaviours

n	x	r	P-value	Remarks
5,000	0.81	0.595	0.213	S.

*** P< 0.05; Hypo. Rejected**

The results in Table 9 indicate **r** value of 0.595 and a P-value of 0.213. These results suggest that there is significant relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools. Since the P – value is higher than the significant value (<0.05), the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The conclusion is that there is significant relationship between male and female teachers' counselling services and students' digital and academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools in Onitsha Education zone.

Discussion of Findings

This study finds that there is high and positive relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' digital and academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools Onitsha Education zone. The findings from the first null hypothesis indicated that there is significant relationship between male and female teachers' counselling services and students' digital and academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools in Onitsha Education zone.

The finding of this study is very interesting in the sense that it tends to reveal that teachers' classroom activities

may like determine engagement behaviours in the school. In schools where proper counselling services are provided for the students, the students will be more engaged positively. On the other hand, if counselling services are not properly provided for the students, it is most likely that they will not engage positively.

The findings of this study are supported by Wilson (2019) who found that there is positive relationship between teachers' classroom practices and students' engagement. In the same vein, Aseyai (2015) found that effective counselling services enhance students' positive engagement in school.

Mudassi, Norsuhaily and Ado (2015) however found a negative low relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' academic engagement behaviours. Mudassi et al (2015)also found no significant relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' academic engagement behaviours. The dissimilarity between the two research findings could be attributed to research design and area of study. The former is a descriptive study conducted in Malaysia while the current study is a correlational study conducted in public secondary schools in Onitsha Education zone.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that there is high and positive relationship between teachers' counselling services and students' digital and academic engagement behaviours in secondary schools. Teachers who provide adequate counselling services to their students are most likely to have digitally and academically engaged students.

Recommendations

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

1. Teachers should be role-models as their actions or inactions will go a long way in shaping the behaviours of their students.
2. Teachers should provide adequate counselling services to their students to enable them engage positively in school.
3. The teachers should work as a team in their schools. This will make them relate well interpersonally with one another and with students. This is because positive interpersonal relations can impact positively on students' positive engagement.

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