Perceived Efficacy Of Marriage Counseling In Tertiary Institutions: A Case Study Of Tai Solarin University Of Education, Ijebu Ode

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INTRODUCTION

It has long been recognized that the major causes of difficulties of students are anxieties and psychological stresses (Adeyemo, 2000; Owuamanam, 2000; and Akinleye, 2003). According to Adeyemo (2000), concern over studies, unusual physical complaint and difficulties with interpersonal relationship have often led to successful or attempted suicide among students. Students in Nigeria tertiary institutions have a great need for guidance and counseling. This assertion is largely informed by the cultural conflict between the Western and African values whereby students are engaged in developing both occupational and social identities. This seems to support the view of Owuamanam (2000) who reported that the traditional values and beliefs are called to question and many students no longer know what is accepted or rejected by the society. Owuamanam (2000) attributed this cultural conflict to such factors as the rising cost of living, unemployment, urbanization and gradual disintegration of family unit which have all contributed to increased anxiety leading to mental fatigue and irritability in most students. In the educational and vocational areas, Akinleye (2003) reported that the rapid increase in the number of available occupations has made it difficult for Nigerian parents to advise their children on matters of either academic pursuit or vocational choice. In this connection, Nwadinigwe (2005) study found that educated parents are more at fault than illiterate parents on not being able to relate a child’s interest, ability, values and personality style to his success at work. The attributes of students of higher institutions towards marriage counseling in University Counseling Centers constitute a major concern for researcher and counselors. Esere & Idowu (2000) study reported favorable attitudes towards marriage counseling and the University Counseling Centers; Olagunju (1998) reported that students of University of Lagos expressed rather suspicious attitudes about marriage counseling and the Counseling Center. The gender of students has been found as an influential parameter in students towards counseling. For instance, Abasi (1995) reported that gender was a factor that influenced students’ perception of counseling services. He reported that females had more favorable perception towards the services than male. This is supported by Azariah & Reichenback (2001) study which found that females were more positive than males in their opinion of the assistance they had or would receive from their counselors with vocational and personal/social problems. In the same vein, Esere (2000) found that boys were more apt to be involved in a counseling situation than girls. Similarly, Akinleye (2003) reported that male subjects were more satisfied with the counseling process than female subjects. However, some researcher reports no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female clients of guidance experience and the counseling center. (Mallum, 1998; Sotonade, 1997). In another study, Ishidore, (1995) found that younger males and females were more apt to being involved in a marriage counseling situation than older ones. Sotonade (1999) reported that students who had favorable attitudes towards University marriage Counseling services were younger (age 18 and below). Likewise, Nwadinigwe (2006) reported that adolescent undergraduates are more willing to discuss their social and personal problems than the adult undergraduates. On the level of education, it was the conclusion of Sujit and Kavita (2006) that freshmen perceived vocational choice problem as more appropriate for discussion than did the stale
Ishidore (1995) study showed that socio-economic background has influence on students’ perception of marriage counseling since students with low estimated family income were more positive in the perception than the high estimated family incomes ones. In other study Cotton (2007) found that the socio-economic family status of students was not a significant factor affecting their perception towards marriage counseling.

Research Hypotheses From the above five null hypotheses were postulated namely: 1. There is no significant difference between the proportions of students who have favorable and unfavorable perception towards marriage counseling 2. There is no significant difference between male and female students’ perception towards counseling 3. Age will not significantly influence students perception towards marriage counseling.

4. Level of education will not significantly influence students perception towards marriage counseling.

5. Socio-economic status of students will not significantly influence students perception towards marriage counseling.

Method A sample of 420 male and female students was randomly selected for the study from Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu Ode. The sample consisted of 210 Part I students and 210 Part IV students comprising 352 male and 168 females. A research instrument designated “Students Perception Questionnaire” (SPQ) was designed and used to collect data. Questionnaire items were adapted from Grammar and Herr (1962), Denga (1982), Odebunmu (1983) and Oluwatimilehin (1986). The internal consistency coefficient of the instrument by the Cronbach Alpha was 0.83 indicating high reliability. T-test analysis the scores of respondents, except in hypothesis one where the test of the difference between two proportions was applied.

Results The data on students’ perception towards counseling is summarized in Tables 1 to 5.

**TABLE 1** Analysis of Students Proportion Towards Marriage Counseling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Z</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Z = 17.5, P < 0.01)

**TABLE 2** Analysis of Male and Female Perception Towards Marriage Counseling Using T-test Statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>185.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the analysis of the data in Tables 1 to 5, it is discovered that:

1. There is a significant difference between the proportion of students who have favorable and unfavorable perception towards counseling services. \((Z = 17.5, P < 0.01)\)

2. There is a significant difference between male and female students perception towards counseling services. \((t = 2.15, df = 418, P < 0.05)\)
services. \( t = 2.15, \text{df} = 418, P < 0.05 \)

3. There is a significant difference between students who are under 18 years of age and those who are above 18 years of age in their perceptions towards counseling. \( t = 2.57, \text{df} = 419, P < 0.05 \)

4. There is a significant difference between the Part I and Part IV students’ perception towards guidance and counseling. \( t = 7.37, \text{df} = 418, P < 0.01 \)

5. There is no significant difference between students from high and low socio-economic background in their perception towards guidance and counseling services. \( t = 0.04, \text{df} = 418, P < 0.05 \).

Discussion

Many studies (Esere 2000; Esere & Idowu 2000, Nann, 1995) have reported that a significant proportion of students have favorable perception towards marriage counseling which is consistent with the finding of this study. In the studies, the students expressed over whelming willingness to make use of films on jobs, orientation sessions, career talks, counselors, excursions trips on the preparations for jobs interviews and examinations. The students would also like to improve their study skills and habits. The counselors’ strict adherence to his professional ethics such as confidentiality, reliability, genuine interest in students’ problems and respect of clients’ opinion are all admired by the students. The respondents also rate the counselors’ qualities and services more highly than those of a babalawo. Such a preference is in order because the babalawo usually renders his services with a tinge such as divination or tradomedicalism. Besides, clients are requested to give something, say a goat, to the babalawo for the services (mallum, 1998). The study has found that male students have more favorable perception towards marital services than female students which is against the finding of Olagunju (1998) where females have more favorable attitudes than male students. It seems that the sex-role ideology continues to affect the marital process of females. Studies on females in tradition male fields describe negative influences on females’ occupational choice such as stereotypic images of male and female roles, parental and educator discouragement of female participating in some occupations such as engineering, veterinary, medicine, architecture and armed forces (Nann, 1980). Hence the image females get of themselves through the child-rearing practices and even the school curriculum makes them end up in the same role. The present study supports the findings of Sotonade (1997) that students of age 18 or more want a lot of independence and emancipation from their parents. The students have conflicts on certain issues which can be solved with the help of a competent person other than their parents from whom they seek independence. Such students see counseling as playing the role of that competent person. On the other hand, students who are under 18 years are dependent largely on their parents hence they would not value highly formal counseling in tertiary institutions. In this study, the Part IV (final year) students have more favorable attitudes towards marital services than the Part I students. It could be that the final year students have anxieties over the approach of the transition from school to the world of works. The not-too-far rationalization exercise and the non-placement of their ‘senior’ add weight to the anxiety. On the other hand, the Part I students see the approach of the transition as being distant that they would like to procrastinate rather than make any effort to prepare for it. Some studies (Onwuamanam, 2000 & Ishidore 1995) and this study have found that students from low and high socio-economic status tend to be willing in talking their hearts out to the counselors since they have confidences in the therapy. They feel that students of higher institutions need marriage counseling for adequate adjustment within the society. More so when the trainee teachers would help in moulding others’ life hence the need to modify their (students) behaviors.
Conclusion It is a fact that most students and undergraduates of tertiary institutions opine that marriage counseling is and should be made compulsory for pupils in primary and secondary schools. It is also erroneously held that counseling services if implemented in these schools would be successful but not in colleges and universities. However, this study has nullified such notions. It is only when these perceptions are ascertained with their efforts on parameters like sex, age, level of education, and socio-economic background of respondents that appropriate steps can be taken in implementing marriage counseling services in tertiary institutions. Respondents’ reaction towards certain areas of services would help in predicting counseling services that should be provided. For now, efforts should be geared at such services that will help reduce anxieties and stresses in our tertiary institutions. Authorities of tertiary institutions need not look unto the government before implementing marriage counseling services which can be rendered within the campuses without much noise. Since the secondary school counselors receive their training from these tertiary institutions, it then behooves on these institutions to set the pace for the pace for the secondary schools.

References


