



Implication of Staff Counselling on the Effectiveness of Public Secondary School in Nigeria

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Abstract

Staff counseling is an essential process that involves providing guidance and support to teachers to help them overcome personal and professional challenges. Staff counselling in education is a crucial component of school effectiveness that supports the well-being of teachers and staff. This paper explored staff counselling in education and its implication for school effectiveness. The review examined the benefits of staff counselling for individual teachers and staff members, as well as the positive effects on school culture and student outcomes. It also examined the various approaches to staff counselling, including individual and group counselling, as well as the importance of confidentiality and privacy in the counselling process. The paper concluded that staff counselling can have a significant positive impact on teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and retention, as well as on school culture and student outcomes. However, the paper suggested amongst others that comprehensive training and support for counsellors and other program staff should be provided, school should ensure that counselling services are confidential and accessible to all teachers and variety of counselling options should be made available to meet the diverse needs of teachers.

Keyword: Counseling, Education, Staff, Staff Counseling, School, School Effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

The success of any educational institution largely depends on the effectiveness of its staff. The staff, comprising of teachers, administrative workers, and other support staff, play a crucial role in the overall performance of a school. However, staff members, like any other human beings, may face personal and professional challenges that can adversely affect their performance and productivity. Therefore, it is essential for schools to provide staff counseling services to support

and guide staff members in overcoming these challenges. Effective staff members are essential to the success of any educational institution, and staff counseling can play a crucial role in improving staff morale, performance, and overall effectiveness.

Effective schools are characterized by a positive school climate, high-quality teaching practices, and a supportive learning environment (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2008). However, achieving school effectiveness is a complex process that requires the collaboration and commitment of all school stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents. One important factor that has been identified as contributing to school effectiveness is staff counseling in education. Staff counseling refers to the provision of psychological support and guidance to school staff members to promote their well-being, job satisfaction, and professional development.

Staff counseling has been recognized as an essential tool for addressing the stress, burnout, and emotional challenges that teachers and other school staff members may experience in their work. It has also been suggested that staff counseling can contribute to school effectiveness by improving staff performance, reducing absenteeism and staff turnover, and enhancing the overall morale and motivation of staff members.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Staff Counselling

Staff counseling in education has been recognized as an essential tool for promoting the well-being of teachers and other school staff members. According to Patton et al. (2015), school staff members who receive counseling services report increased job satisfaction, improved emotional regulation, and reduced stress levels. Staff counseling has also been found to contribute to the retention of experienced teachers and the recruitment of new teachers (García & Sánchez, 2018). The provision of counseling services signals to staff members that the school values their well-being and recognizes their contributions to the school community.

In addition to promoting staff well-being, staff counseling has also been suggested to contribute to school effectiveness. Renshaw et al. (2015) found that teachers who participated in a group counseling program reported increased collaboration with colleagues and felt more supported by their school administration. The study also found that the counseling program was associated with higher levels of student engagement and academic achievement. Similarly, Klassen and Chiu (2011) found that school staff members who participated in a mentoring program reported increased job satisfaction and reduced intention to leave their current positions.

Staff counseling can also contribute to improved communication and collaboration among staff members, which is a key factor in promoting school effectiveness. Glisson et al. (2010) opined that schools that provided counseling services for staff members had higher levels of communication and collaboration among staff members compared to schools that did not provide such services. The study also found that schools with higher levels of communication and collaboration were more effective in implementing evidence-based practices and improving student outcomes.

Furthermore, staff counseling can contribute to the development of a positive school climate, which is an important factor in promoting school effectiveness. Jennings et al. (2013) found that teachers who participated in a mindfulness-based stress reduction program reported

increased well-being and reduced burnout. The study also found that the program was associated with improved classroom management and increased student engagement.

Despite the potential benefits of staff counseling for promoting school effectiveness, there are also challenges associated with implementing counseling programs in schools. For example, schools may face financial and logistical barriers to providing counseling services, and staff members may be hesitant to seek counseling due to stigma or concerns about confidentiality (García & Sánchez, 2018). Therefore, it is important for schools to consider the needs and preferences of their staff members when designing and implementing counseling programs.

Staff counseling in education is an important aspect of school effectiveness. It refers to the process of providing guidance and support to school staff members to help them deal with personal and professional challenges that may affect their job performance and overall well-being. Through staff counseling, schools can create a positive and supportive work environment, which can ultimately lead to better student outcomes. Staff counseling also refers to a process in which an administrator meets with an employee or a group of employees to discuss various work-related issues. The purpose of staff counseling is to help employees improve their job performance, address personal or professional issues that may be affecting their work, and provide support and guidance to help them succeed in their roles (Vos & Huitema, 2016).

According to Whiston (2013), Staff counseling can cover a wide range of topics, including job responsibilities, work performance, career development, communication skills, conflict resolution, personal issues, and work-life balance. During a counseling session, administrator may provide feedback, offer suggestions for improvement, and help the employee set goals and objectives. The goal of staff counseling is to create a supportive and productive work environment in which employees feel valued, engaged, and motivated to perform at their best. Effective staff counseling can lead to improved job satisfaction, higher productivity, and better overall performance for both the employee and the organization.

School Effectiveness

School effectiveness refers to the ability of a school to provide a high-quality education and achieve positive outcomes for its students. An effective school is one that is able to meet the needs of its students, provide a safe and supportive learning environment, and help students achieve academic success.

There are several factors that contribute to school effectiveness, they include:

- **Leadership:** Effective schools have strong and visionary leaders who are able to set clear goals and expectations, and provide guidance and support to teachers and staff.
- **Curriculum and instruction:** Effective schools have well-designed and rigorous curricula, and use evidence-based instructional practices that are tailored to the needs of individual students.
- **Teacher quality:** Effective schools have highly qualified and motivated teachers who are able to build positive relationships with students, provide engaging and challenging instruction, and provide ongoing support and feedback.
- **Student support:** Effective schools provide a range of support services to help students succeed, including counselling, tutoring, and academic enrichment programs.
- **Parent and community involvement:** Effective schools have strong partnerships with families and the broader community, and work collaboratively to support student learning

and success (Schmoker, 2016). School effectiveness is measured by a combination of academic achievement, student engagement, and other outcomes that are important for student success, such as attendance, graduation rates, and college readiness.

Professional and Personal Challenges Faced by Staff in Workplace

Professional Challenges can be faced by staff in various fields, including healthcare, education, social work, and business. These challenges can be related to workload, job satisfaction, interpersonal relationships, organizational culture, and personal factors, some common professional challenges that staff can face in their work include:

- **Workload:** One of the most common professional challenges that staff can face is an overwhelming workload. This can lead to stress, burnout, and poor job satisfaction. According to Shanafelt et al. (2015), workload is the most significant factor contributing to burnout among teachers. Chou et al. (2014) found that high workload was associated with lower job satisfaction among teachers. Teachers often have to juggle multiple responsibilities, including planning lessons, grading assignments, managing classroom behaviour, and meeting administrative requirements. The workload can be overwhelming, especially when combined with limited time and resources.
- **Interpersonal relationships:** Another challenge that staff can face is difficult interpersonal relationships with colleagues, supervisors, or clients. This can result in conflict, tension, and poor communication. Coyle-Shapiro et al. (2015) opined that poor relationships with supervisors were associated with lower job satisfaction among employees. Krause et al. (2016) opined that conflicts with colleagues were a significant source of stress among teachers.
- **Organizational culture:** The organizational culture can also pose challenges for staff, especially if it is unsupportive or toxic. This can lead to dissatisfaction, turnover, and poor performance. A study by Cameron and Quinn (2011) found that organizational culture was a significant predictor of job satisfaction and turnover intentions among employees. Similarly, a study by Einarsen et al. (2016) found that a toxic work environment was associated with high levels of stress and burnout among employees.

Personal challenges can significantly impact the well-being and performance of staff members in their personal lives. These challenges may include mental health issues, family problems, financial difficulties, and personal trauma. Common personal challenges that staff can face in their lives that may require staff counselling include:

- **Mental health issues:** Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can significantly impact staff members' well-being and performance. A study by Lerner et al. (2015) found that mental health disorders were associated with a decrease in work productivity and an increase in absenteeism. Similarly, Shanafelt et al. (2016) found that physicians with depression had a higher risk of medical errors and lower patient satisfaction.
- **Family problems:** Family problems such as marital conflicts, parenting issues, and elder care can affect staff members' emotional well-being and work performance. A study by Greenhaus and Powell (2018) found that work-family conflict was associated with higher

levels of burnout and lower job satisfaction among employees. Similarly, a study by Frone et al. (2017) found that employees with elder care responsibilities had higher levels of work stress and lower job performance.

- Personal trauma: Staff members may experience personal trauma such as physical or sexual abuse, domestic violence, or accidents that can significantly impact their mental health and well-being. A study by Kibler et al. (2019) found that staff members who experienced trauma had higher levels of burnout and lower job satisfaction. Similarly, a study by Brown et al. (2018) found that staff members who experienced workplace violence had higher levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms.

Approaches to Staff Counselling

There are various approaches to staff counseling. Here are some of the commonly used approaches:

- Individual Counseling: This involves one-on-one sessions between an employee and a counselor. Individual counseling is ideal for employees who prefer privacy or have specific personal issues they want to address.
- Group Counseling: This involves counseling sessions with a group of employees facing similar challenges. Group counseling is ideal for employees who benefit from peer support and encouragement because counseling is effective in improving employee mental health.
- Online Counseling: This involves counseling sessions conducted over the internet. Online counseling is ideal for employees who cannot attend in-person counseling sessions due to geographical or scheduling constraints because counseling is effective in reducing stress and anxiety in employees.
- Telephone Counseling: This involves counseling sessions conducted over the phone. Telephone counseling is ideal for employees who prefer to remain anonymous or have limited access to in-person counseling. For example, telephone counseling is effective in improving employee well-being and reducing stress.
- Employee assistance programs (EAPs): Programs that offer confidential counseling and support services to employees and their families.
- Wellness programs: Programs that aim to promote employee health and well-being through a variety of services, such as fitness classes, nutrition counseling, and stress management workshops.
- Coaching involves providing staff members with guidance and support to enhance their professional development.

Types of Staff Counseling

There are various types of staff counseling that schools can use to support their staff members:

- Personal counseling focuses on providing support and guidance to staff members who are facing personal challenges that may be affecting their work performance. This may include issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, or relationship problems.

- Professional counseling focuses on helping staff members to improve their skills, knowledge, and performance in their roles. This may include providing training, coaching, and mentoring to help staff members develop the necessary skills and knowledge to be effective in their roles.
- Career Counseling: Career counseling focuses on helping staff members to plan and manage their careers. This may include providing guidance on career choices, job opportunities, and professional development.
- Financial Counselling: Financial counseling focuses on helping staff members to manage their finances. This may include providing guidance on budgeting, debt management, and retirement planning.

Importance of Staff Counseling in Education for School Effectiveness

Staff counseling is an important aspect of the education system as it helps staff members deal with the challenges; they may face both personally and professionally. The benefits of staff counseling include:

- Improving Staff Morale: Staff counseling can help to improve staff morale and reduce staff turnover, leading to a more stable and effective school environment.
- Enhancing Staff Performance: Staff counseling can help to improve job performance and better outcomes for students. Staff members who receive counseling services are more likely to feel supported in their roles and to have a positive attitude towards their work. This can lead to improved job performance and better outcomes for students. According to Ololube (2007, 2019), providing support and guidance can help employees improve their skills, enhance their job satisfaction, and increase their productivity.
- Promoting Work-Life Balance: Staff counseling can help staff members manage their workload and prioritize their responsibilities, leading to a better work-life balance.
- Reducing Staff Turnover: Staff members who receive counseling services are more likely to remain in their jobs and are less likely to leave due to personal or professional challenges.
- Improving Student Outcomes: Staff members who receive counseling services are more likely to be effective in their roles, leading to better student outcomes.
- Reduced Absenteeism: Staff members facing personal or professional challenges may take more time off work, leading to increased absenteeism. Counseling can help employees address these issues and reduce the occurrence of absenteeism (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).
- Improved Employee Retention: By providing support and guidance to employees, counseling can help organizations retain their employees and reduce turnover rates. Lunsford and Coker (2015) found that counseling was positively associated with employee retention.
- Enhanced Employee Well-being: Counseling can help employees cope with stress and anxiety, leading to improved mental health and overall well-being. Shanafelt et al. (2015) and Sink and Spencer (2012) found that counseling significantly improved the mental health of employees, reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress.

CONCLUSION

Staff counseling is an essential tool for organizations that want to promote employee well-being, improve job satisfaction, and increase productivity. By providing employees with the support they need to manage personal and professional challenges, organizations can create a positive and productive workplace culture that benefits everyone. Schools that prioritize staff counseling can expect to see improved employee retention, reduced absenteeism, and increased engagement and productivity.

Suggestions

Implementing a successful staff counselling program requires careful planning and thoughtful execution. The following suggestions were made:

- Providing comprehensive training and support for counsellors and other program staff.
- Ensure that counselling services are confidential and accessible to all teachers.
- Offer a variety of counselling options to meet the diverse needs of teachers.
- Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the counselling program and adjusting as necessary.

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