

Counselling Needs of Undergraduates at University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

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Abstract. Counselling needs of undergraduates has become a major concern among undergraduates at universities in Nigeria. The study examined the counselling needs of undergraduates at University of Ilorin. Descriptive survey designed was adopted. The population comprised all undergraduates at the University of Ilorin. The sample comprised two hundred undergraduates. Five research questions were formulated and four null hypotheses were generated to guide the study. The reliability of the instrument was established using test re-test method and a co-efficient of 0.67 was obtained. Data were collected using a questionnaire tagged 'Counselling Needs of Undergraduates' Questionnaire (CNUQ). Data analysis was done using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result obtained revealed that coping with computer based test and examination is the most counselling needs of undergraduates at University of Ilorin. The findings of the study revealed that there were no significant differences in the perception of respondents on the counselling needs of undergraduates at University of Ilorin on the bases of age, gender, religious affiliation and faculty type. This signified that all hypotheses were not rejected. Based on the findings of this study it was recommended that federal government and ministry of education should make guidance and counselling course a prerequisite for all undergraduates in order to have knowledge of counseling. University administrators should organize an enlightenment programme for all undergraduates to cope with academic challenges. Religious leaders should also

encourage undergraduates on the needs for counselling on their academics and non-academic endeavour. Each faculty should have counsellor that will enable easy access for undergraduates.

Keywords: Counselling, Counselling Needs, Undergraduates, University of Ilorin.

1. Introduction

The purpose of any education system is not only to foster academic learning but also all round development of undergraduates. Besides cognitive development, schooling also involves appropriate socio-affective development (i.e., self-reliance, self-discipline, taking initiative, independence of thought, understanding relationships with people and environment, responsible action, etc.). Development of such personal-social qualities includes knowledge and understanding, abilities and skills in relation to oneself and others (National Policy on Education, 2004).

The school, besides the family, is a major influence in undergraduate's personal-social development. As undergraduates' progress through primary and secondary stages of schooling, they need an environment that is secure, warm, caring and nurturing. In order to foster personal-social competence and outstanding performance of undergraduates, school administrators need to ensure that all undergraduates are treated fairly, are valued, and are exposed to a wide range of personal and

social learning experiences. Education aims at promoting optimum development of undergraduates in all spheres of life, educational, vocational, personal social, moral, physical etc. so as to make them productive and useful citizens. Counselling in harmony with the goals of education, aims to facilitate maximum personal development of undergraduates in all spheres of life. In its attempt to meet the needs of all undergraduates; counselling makes education a meaningful and satisfying experience. Learning and understanding about self is as important as learning about various school courses. Every undergraduate has the potential to develop self-understanding which includes understanding of abilities, interests, behaviours, attitudes, values, conflicts, anxieties, likes, dislikes, impulses / emotions, goals, one's role in society etc.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) viewed counselling as part of curriculum. In this view, counselling functions can be carried out through the curriculum by integrating guidance philosophy and practices through curricular offerings thereby adopting a proactive and preventive approach. Educational, career and personal-social development of children can be promoted by creating stress-free environment for learning, encouraging undergraduates to understand themselves, relating subject matter to self and needs of undergraduates, helping undergraduates learn independently and cope with demands and challenges, facilitate development of healthy peer relationships through group activities and classroom climate (NCF, 2000).

The need for counselling for undergraduates emerges from the changes taking place in every sphere of life. Academic stress, poor academic performance, cut-throat competition, vast and varied educational and career opportunities and resulting confusion in making career choice, ever growing, changing and complex world of work, drop-out, suicide, anger, violence, drug abuse, child abuse, sex abuse, , crime, changes in lifestyle etc. are some of the concerns which require support of counselling services to school undergraduates (NCF, 2000).

To address the developmental needs and concerns of undergraduates at different stages of schooling, a professionally trained person, a counsellor or a teacher-counsellor is required to work within and with the system. The purpose of guidance and counselling services is to help each undergraduate develop as an individual in his/her own, make choices and set goals on the basis of his/her strengths. By attending to the special needs and requirements of undergraduates belonging to different social, economic and cultural backgrounds, counselling helps undergraduates engage in the educational process and, thereby, benefit from the curricular experiences. Counselling not only helps undergraduates to develop an understanding of one self and of others, it also supports undergraduates to deal with their personal-social, academic and career related concerns. It facilitates development of effective study habits, motivation, identifying learning or subject related problems, helping undergraduates to see the relevance of school years in life and for future, developing skills, right attitude and interests to help making a choice in career (NCF, 2000).

Education has always been considered as a powerful and efficient means of molding the citizens of a nation for the overall benefits of the nation. The needs and striving of a nation are embodied in the policy of education through which the nation aims to achieve its goals. Through education, a nation desire to conserve the best part of its part, consolidate the present and prepare for the future. This led to high demand of education by the citizens especially university education. And to acquire university education an individual has to meet up with certain qualities and requirements. Probably most if not all, schools have the major goal of fostering the overall development of a healthy personality in every child. This development of the "whole child" calls for consideration of a number of dynamic factors among which are intellectual, social, emotional, physical, vocational, moral and cultural adjustment of the undergraduates.

Psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, have for a long time agreed that undergraduates have

basic needs and concerns in several areas which have to be met for optimal personal growth and development. For instance, there are needs to be met in the physical, emotional and social areas; as there are also needs to be met in educational and vocational areas. All these need areas are as important as the intellectual needs area which the school has hitherto been given over undue emphasis. If therefore, the school is expected to facilitate the all round development of the undergraduates, then it means that the school would have to get away from the fad of it being a social vacuum. Apart from intellectual matter, the school would also have to be seen as a place where lifetime social attitudes and ways of behaving are learnt. This is why today schools are consistently being called upon to be more concerned with both the cognitive and affective development of the undergraduates.

As human interaction with physical, social, cultural and economic environment, they are faced with a variety of challenges. These challenges vary from one individual to the other as influenced by such factors as age, gender, interests, social economic status, culture and educational level (Aluede, Mc Eachern & Kenny, 2005). For instance, undergraduates joining universities as an undergraduate will experience adjustment difficulties, fears and anxieties, career and academic issues (Wangeri, Kimani & Mutweleli, 2012). The undergraduates will experience problems with deciding who they are, what they are all about, and where they are going in life as they confront many roles from vocational to romantic in trying to get their real selves (Santrock, 2005). Santrock (2005) added that the undergraduate will struggle with issues of intimacy and choosing life partners while those at middle life will have midlife crises. In order to help people meet their counselling needs at various stages of life, a continuous needs assessment is important so that counselling programmes that are congruent to their needs can be developed.

Education has brought about new needs such as career choices, transitions from one academic level to another, exam anxiety, difficulties in coping with lectures, reading difficulties, time management, economic hardships, technological

issues, mental health issues, social and personal developmental issues (Nayak, 2007). When undergraduates join universities as an undergraduate, they are exposed to challenges related to transition, orientation, career choice, adjustment and disciplinary restrictions (Muola & Migosi, 2012). Rapid change in work world and labour force, violence in the hostels, homes, and schools, teenage suicide, sexual experimentation are all challenges that have great negative effects on the personal, social, career and academic development of all undergraduates (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006).

Idowu (1995) stated that higher education in Nigeria seems to pose serious challenges to undergraduates and these tends to affect the physical, social and psychological aspect of their lives. Idowu (1995) observed that during this period most undergraduates are attempting to live on their own away from their family member. They are required to choose appropriate courses, work hard in order to prepare for productive career, develop lasting friendship and relationship from roommates, course mate future partners and make adult decisions. Santrock (2007) noted that many factors have combined to make today's society complex thus causing many challenges with which youths most canted. These factors put some pressure on undergraduates in tertiary institution most of whom are youths and consequently becomes source of challenges to them.

Idowu (1995) noted that for counsellors to be sufficiently effective with undergraduates' population, they have to be well versed in undergraduates' area of challenges and must be able to relate. Idowu (1995) also noted that in counselling, important decisions about the nature of the services to be offered have to be made and the program planners would have to decide on the priorities concerning the target to select by the program interventions, the purpose of this interventions and the most effective and efficient methods of this intervention. In order to assist undergraduates in institution of higher learning to identify and prioritize the needs, this study therefore investigates counselling needs of undergraduates ta university of Ilorin. The challenges confronting this set of undergraduates

seems to include a lack of social support, inter personal and inter group conflict occasioned by unnecessary ethnic and reveries and general campus and unrest organizational responsibilities such as inadequate hostel accommodation, lecture rooms, poor teaching and learning, facilities, inadequate water and electricity supply, poor or autocratic leadership and general economic hardship with all its attendant problems, financial problems, inability to feed well, non-payment of fee and indebtedness fear of test and examination especially Computer Based Test (CBT) and Computer Based Examination (CBE) due to non-familiarity with computer system by the undergraduates.

2. Statement of Research Problem

Counselling needs become an important tool for all undergraduates at university. Undergraduates should be well oriented in order to be able to cope with school stress and challenges, like financial problem, lack of course combination, comfortable accommodation on and off campus, intra-campus transportation to meet up with lectures and poor health and medical services. All these challenges will definitely affect the academic performance and living standard of undergraduates if not solved. A number of researchers have conducted various researches related to counselling needs of undergraduates.

Adegboye (2001) examined counselling needs of primary school pupils. The findings revealed that the cause of the concern could be traced back to their home with their parents who do not take time to mould their children behaviour so as to conform to social norms and values as they, the parent, perceive it to be. Nayak (2004) worked on assessment of counselling need of secondary school students. Nayak concluded that counselling in school involves helping students individually to deal with the concern or challenges they are experiencing, such challenges includes anxiety, depressive disorder, personality disorder and academic problem.

Adebayo (2007) examined counselling needs of sandwich students. The findings showed that sandwich students concern includes overcoming

the stress involved in the sandwich programme, ability to combine their studies with household chores and caring for babies, overcoming anxieties on financial constraints.

However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, none of the previous studies have worked on the counselling needs of undergraduates at University of Ilorin. So as to fill up the vacuum left by the past researchers; this study therefore investigates the counselling needs of undergraduates' at University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised based on the problem:

- (i) What are the counselling needs of undergraduates' at University of Ilorin?
- (ii) Is there any difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduates' at University of Ilorin based on age?
- (iii) Is there any difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduates' at University of Ilorin based on gender?
- (iv) Is there any difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduates' at University of Ilorin based on religious affiliation?
- (v) Is there any difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduates' at University of Ilorin based on faculty type?

4. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were generated to guide the conduct of this study:

- There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduates' at University of Ilorin based on age.

- There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduates' at University of Ilorin based on gender.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduates' at University of Ilorin based on religious affiliation.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of the undergraduates' at University of Ilorin based on faculty type.

5. Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Daramola (2012) viewed descriptive survey as a systematic attempt to describe the characteristics of a given population or areas of interest factually. This study, therefore, adopted descriptive survey research method as it employs the use of questionnaire forms in order to elicit information on counselling needs of undergraduates at University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

The population of the study comprised all undergraduates in University of Ilorin. Eight faculties were randomly selected as the target population for the study. Twenty five undergraduates were chosen from each of the selected faculty to make a total of two hundred respondents through the use of simple random sampling technique.

A structured questionnaire titled "Counselling Needs of Undergraduates Questionnaire" was used for data collection. Hornsby (2005) described instrument as an apparatus used in performing an action. The questionnaire is made up of two sections: section A and section B. Section A deals with the personal data of the

respondents which are age, religion, gender and faculty type. Section B contained 20 items on counselling needs of undergraduates. For each statement on the questionnaire, the respondents indicate their choice answer by ticking any of the options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

Validity of an instrument refers to degree or ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed or purported to measure. A measuring instrument is valid when it measures truly and accurately the quality or ability one wants it to measure (Awolola, 2001). To ascertain the validity of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire form were presented to five lecturers in the Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin for correction. Sequel to their suggestions, necessary amendments were made and were adjudged valid.

Reliability: according to Abiri (2006), reliability means the extent to which the result obtained from the test can be relied upon as the true score. To ensure the reliability of this instrument, test re-test method was employed. Twenty copies of the questionnaire forms were administered on a group of undergraduates who were not part of the sample for the study twice at the interval of four weeks. The two scores obtained were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) the co-efficient obtained was 0.67. This is considered reliable enough to gather information for this study.

The data collected for this study were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistical measures. Percentages were used to answer the demographic data while mean and rank order were used to answer research question 1. ANOVA was used to test hypotheses 3 and 4 while t-test statistical tool was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level.

6. Results

Demographic Data

This section presents the results of data obtained on the respondents in percentages.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Based on Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20 years	86	43.0
21 years and above	114	57.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by age. The table shows that 43.0% (86) of the respondents were below 20 years old while 57.0% (114) of the respondents 21 years and above. This indicates that students who are above 21 years old participated more than in this study.

the respondents were male while 54.0% (108) of the respondents were female. This indicates that female respondents participated more than male respondents.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	92	46.0
Female	108	54.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents' on gender. The table reveals that 46.0% (92) of

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Based on Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
ATR	11	5.5
Christianity	97	48.5
Islam	92	46.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents by religion. The table shows that 5.5% (11) of the respondents were practicing African Traditional Religion, 48.5% (97) of the respondents practicing Christianity while 46.0% (92) of the respondents were practicing Islam. This indicates that students practicing Christianity participated more than other religion group.

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Respondents based on Faculty

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage
Arts	25	12.5
Social Science	24	12.0
Science	24	12.0
Agric	18	9.0
Engineering	32	16.0
Health Science	29	14.5
Law	18	9.0
Education	30	15.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 4 shows that 12.5% (25) of the respondents were from Faculty of Arts, 12.0% (24) of the respondents were from Social Science and same from Science, 9.0% (18) of the respondents were from Agric and 16.0% (32) of the respondents were from Engineering. Also 14.5% (29) of the respondents were from Health Sciences, 9.0% (18) of the respondents were from Law while 15.0% (30) of the

respondents were from Education. This indicates that majority of the respondents were from the Faculty of Engineering.

Research Question 1: What are the counselling needs of undergraduates at University of Ilorin?

Table 5: Mean and Rank Order of Respondents' view on the Counselling Needs

Item No.	In my view, undergraduates at the University needs counselling in:	Mean	Rank
5	coping with computer-based test and examination	3.48	1 st
3	coping with accommodation stress	3.44	2 nd
15	develop better study skills	3.41	3 rd
20	coping with transportation stress	3.40	4 th
1	understanding registration procedures	3.39	5 th
19	developing sound character	3.34	6 th
18	develop high healthy self esteem	3.32	7 th
17	overcoming emotional break down	3.32	7 th
13	overcoming social phobia	3.30	9 th
4	adjusting to new course requirements	3.27	10 th
6	adjusting to school rules and regulations	3.24	11 th
14	coping with examination problems	3.24	11 th
11	avoiding lateness to lectures	3.22	13 th
16	abstaining from joining bad gangs	3.22	13 th
9	coping with lecture times	3.18	15 th
2	adjusting to registration stress	3.17	16 th
10	abstaining from drugs	3.15	17 th
8	coping with shyness and feeling of inferiority	3.13	18 th
12	making rational decisions	3.09	19 th
7	abstaining from risking behaviours such as smoking	3.03	20 th

Table 5 indicates the mean and rank order of the respondents' view on the counselling needs of undergraduates at University of Ilorin. Item 5 which stated "coping with computer-based test and examination" ranked 1st with the mean score of 3.48. Item 3 which stated that "coping with accommodation stress" ranked 2nd with a mean score 3.44. Ranked 3rd is item 15 which stated "develop better study skills" with 3.41 mean score. Ranked least are item 8 "coping with shyness and feeling of inferiority" ranked 18th with a mean score of 3.13, Item 12 which stated "making rational decisions" ranked 19th with a mean score of 3.09, and item 7 which stated "abstaining from risking behaviours such as smoking" was ranked 20th with a mean score of 3.03. All of the items ranked above the mid-mean score of 2.50, then it can be said that undergraduates at the University of Ilorin are in need of counselling services.

Hypotheses Testing

Four null hypotheses were postulated in the course of this study, and were tested by t-test and ANOVA at 0.05 alpha level.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduate of University of Ilorin based on age.

Table 6: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test of the Respondents' Perception on Counselling Needs of Undergraduate of University of Ilorin Based on Age

Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Male	92	64.40	7.257	198	1.44	1.96	.108
Female	108	66.03	8.431				
Age	N	Mean	S.D.	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Below 20 years	86	65.49	7.480	198	0.32	1.96	.342
21 years and above	114	65.12	8.290				

Table 6 shows a calculated t- value of .32 and a critical t-value of 1.96. Since the critical t-value is greater than the calculated t-value, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduate of University of Ilorin based on age is not rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduate of University of Ilorin based on gender.

Table 7: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test of the Respondents' Perception on Counselling Needs of Undergraduates at University of Ilorin Based on Gender

Table 7 shows a calculated t- value of 1.448 and a critical t-value of 1.96. Since the critical t-value is greater than the calculated t-value, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduate of University of Ilorin based on gender.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduate of University of Ilorin based on religious Affiliation.

Table 8: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Respondents' Perception on Counselling Needs of Undergraduate of University of Ilorin Based on Religious affiliation

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-ratio	F- ratio	Crit. F-ratio	p-value
Between Group	119.451	2	59.726	.948	3.00		.389
Within Group	12408.869	197	62.989				
Total	12528.320	199					

Table 8 shows the calculated F- ratio of .94 and the critical F- ratio of 3.00 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the critical F-ratio is greater than the calculated F-ratio, the null hypothesis which stated that that there is significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduate at University of Ilorin based on religious affiliation is therefore not rejected.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduate of University of Ilorin based on faculty type.

Table 9: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Respondents' Perception on Counselling Needs of Undergraduate at University of Ilorin Based on Faculty Type

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	p-value
Between group	1931.937	7	275.991	2.00	2.01	.059
Within group	10596.383	192	55.189			
Total	12528.320	199				

Table 9 shows the calculated F- ratio of 2.00 and the critical F- ratio of 2.01 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the critical F-ratio is greater than the calculated F-ratio, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This indicates that

there is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduates at University of Ilorin based on faculty type.

7. Discussion

The study revealed that undergraduates at University of Ilorin need counselling to cope with computer based-test and examination, cope with accommodation stress and develop better study skills for their academic survival. This is in line with the findings of Gbayisemore (1996) who stated that welfare facility should be regarded as an approximation of what every University should provide to ensure that student welfare is catered for. Also, in a study by Oniye and Alawaye (2008) who stated that development of effective study habits in relation to how one can utilize his or her asset and manage his or her abilities for optimal development is an essential area of counselling needs of undergraduates at the University of Ilorin.

Hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of undergraduates at University of Ilorin on the basis of age. This means that age group did not affect the expression of respondents. This finding is in line with the findings of Idowu (2004) who stated that organization of seminars, and workshops and symposia for youths, parents and educational policy makers by counsellor will ensure that every school child is assisted to develop his or her maximum possible potential.

Hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference in the perception of respondents on the counselling needs of undergraduates at the University of Ilorin on the basis of gender. This means that gender did not play a role or affect the expression of respondents. The finding is in line with that of Denga (2003) who stated that counselling needs is meant for all undergraduates either male or female, this is because all undergraduates face challenges which identified as academic, vocational, personal-social and psychological. This implies that undergraduates whether male or female did not express their opinions differently.

Another finding revealed that there is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduates at the University of Ilorin on the basis of religious affiliation. This implies that religious beliefs do not affect the expression of undergraduates. The findings revealed that the hypothesis was not rejected because Islam, Christianity and Traditional religion worshippers supported that undergraduates have concerns though, the way they perceive these concerns differ but they all agreed that concern do exist. The finding is in line with the finding of Adamu (2000) who stated that counselling needs will help undergraduates to develop effective study habits in relation to how one can utilise his/her assents and manage his or her abilities for optimal development no matter his or her religious affiliation.

Hypothesis four revealed that there is no significant difference in the perception of respondents in the counselling needs of undergraduates at the University of Ilorin on the basis of faculty. This means that faculty type did not affect the expression of respondents. This finding is in line with the finding of Aluede (2001) who stated that all undergraduates needs counselling to strive to achieve their goals, which varies from fear of failing examinations, which lead to worries of poor study habits, skills, financing ones education and others no matter of their faculty type.

8. Conclusion

Based on the data analysed, the following conclusions were drawn from the study:

Undergraduates at University of Ilorin need counselling to cope with computer based-test and examination, cope with accommodation stress and develop better study skills for their academic survival. There were no significant differences in the counseling needs of undergraduates at University of Ilorin based on age, gender, religious affiliation and faculty type.

Recommendations

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

Federal government and ministry of education should make guidance and counseling course as a prerequisite for all undergraduates in order to have knowledge of counselling.

University administrators should organise an enlightenment programme for all undergraduates to cope with academic challenges.

Religious leader should encourage undergraduates on the needs for counseling on their academic and non-academic endeavour.

Each faculty should have counsellor that will enable easy access for undergraduates.

Professional counsellors should ensure that, they are well acquainted with counselling techniques that can facilitate academic development of undergraduates.

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