

**STUDENTS ADJUSTMENT TO COLLEGE LIFE POST COVID 19 LOCKDOWN IN
FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (TECHNICAL), ASABA, DELTA STATE:
THE ROLE OF COUNSELLING SERVICES**

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Abstract

This study investigated the role of counselling services in students' adjustment to college life post COVID 19 lockdown in Federal College of Education (Technical) Asaba in Delta State. In carrying out this research, two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a correlation research design. Population of the study was 2035 students of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba in Delta State. A sample size of 247 students was randomly determined through multistage sampling procedure. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire by Baker and Sirk (1989), adapted and modified for the study. A reliability coefficient of 0.99 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. Data collected were analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Fisher's Z statistical tools. The findings of the study revealed among others that counselling services have significant influence on students' adjustment to college life post COVID 19 lockdown. Counselling services have significant influence on students' adjustment to college life post COVID 19 lockdown based on sex. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that the government should, as a matter of urgency, equip existing counselling centres with modern equipment and psychological testing instruments to encourage continuous use of the existing centres and identify students' counselling needs post COVID 19 lockdown. Counsellors should not discriminate between male and female students in the course of carrying out their counselling services. Equal attention should be given to both sexes during counselling sessions. This will help enhance not only their adjustments but also enhance their academic performance.

Key Words: Adjustment, College, Counselling services, Students.

Introduction

Adjustment is the necessary requirement every individual need to fulfil in order to Appropriately fit into new situations, settings, or environment. It involves on-going learning Cycles which may be triggered by significant, often negative experience. This was what the world witnessed at the emergence of the deadly coronavirus disease (COVID 19). The gripped and the wide spread of the virus across several nations of the world made many countries to face lockdown including Nigeria. The intent of the lockdown was to minimise the spread of the virus. The lockdown therefore led to restriction of people's movement, interaction and social distance whenever in a crowded environment. The educational sector was among the first few sectors that faced rapid shut down of all its activities considering the vulnerable state of students. Thousands of schools and higher education institutions and millions of students were and may still be affected by lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic as the first response from the educational sector was to completely halt its operations. According to Gonzalez et al (2020) coronavirus pandemic has triggered the significant change, imposing many challenges in the higher education community globally.

Academic life was abruptly confined to the home, and the ordinary activity of the tertiary institutions, with its face-to-face teaching and learning which had to be substituted by online teaching and remote learning in schools that could afford to provide such services. The outbreak of the virus and lockdowns at the national level could thus be used as the best test for education technology interventions for distance learning. Unfortunately, few systems arrived at this point fully prepared. From the researchers' observation, it was during the pandemic and resultant lockdown certain academic institutions took it upon themselves to train their staff on e-learning using applications such as Zoom, Whatsapp, among others. How successful the implementation of distance and e-learning cannot however be ascertain in this study.

In Nigeria, during this period many students and staff were also made to adhere to the Governmental instruction by staying at home. This situation has thus posed a real challenge and a dramatic change for the institutions in general, and for lecturers and students (Kecojevisst al, 2020). With this scenario, it is reasonable to expect that college life may become even more stressful than usual for many students upon resumption of school activities. Afterabout four months in the global crisis, the government and individuals realized that the lockdown cannot be prolonged because of the adverse effect on economic and other sectors and COVID-19 is here to stay much longer than speculated upon and there is need to find solutions to move on. Lockdown was lifted but certain preventive and precautionary measures such as social distance, wearing of nose mask, use of hand sanitizers and avoidance of crowded environment, among others were required. In order to keep schools open there is need to enhance preparedness. This involves enforcing and supporting preventive actions in school; establishing protocols for schools' handling of health issues and potential cases; using the education system's infrastructure and human resources to address the spread of the virus in communities, and limiting physical contact by reducing social and extra-curricular activities.

Students were therefore encouraged to resume studies with these measures put in place by the various school management and individual effetely adhering to measures. Students returning back to school needed to be able to adjust to the restructured educational system and fine tune their ability of relating with others particularly because of the pandemic restrictions which requires continuous adherence. This may likely make it difficult for students to freely communicate of interact with other students and staff of the college adjustments may also be stressful and would then have an ongoing influence on their emotions, on how they engage in the learning process, and their psychological well-being (Capone et al, 2020; Kencojevic et al, 2020; Rodriguez-Hidalgo et al, 2020), Aristovnik et al (2020) asserted that although the impacts of COVID 19 are felt across population and especially in socially-disadvantaged

communities and individuals employed as essential workers, college students are among the most strongly affected by COVID-19 because of uncertainty regarding academic success, future careers, and social life during college, among other concerns.

It is presumed before the pandemic, that students across the globe experienced increasing levels of anxiety, depressive moods, and lack of self-esteem, psychosomatic problems, substance abuse, and suicidality (Holm-Hadulla et al, 2015). Students may therefore need additional resources and services to deal with the physical and mental health repercussions of the disease; as they continue to adjust to several requirements to minimise the spread of the disease, and to cope with academic activities. When students start face-to-face education, they may experience emotional, academic, and relational difficulties. It is therefore, the responsibility of the college counsellors to assist students who are having adjustment difficulties by providing counselling services. This is to ensure students who are unable to adjust do not perform poorly in their academics or drop out of school.

Counselling is the assistance made available by qualified and trained persons (usually counsellor) to an individual of any age range to help him or her manage his or her own life activities and also develop his or her own points of view, make his/her own decisions and carry his/her own burden (Bark.2013). Counselling is therefore, designed to help individuals/students with their different problems and concerns, so that they grow up as well-adjusted individuals capable not only of living productive lives, but are also prepared to contribute their quota to the development of their society and other nations across the globe. According to Hunt et al (2010) counselling services have historically been underutilised by college students. In a study conducted by Al-Rabiaah et al (2020) on students during the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV). epidemic, it was emphasized that students were experiencing stress and needed psychological assistance in such epidemics. Therefore, the need for mental health professionals (e.g., professional counsellors) arises after situations, such as pandemics, natural disasters, and illnesses. Udwin et al (2000) found that students who received psychological support after the crisis were able to solve their problems in a healthy way and adjust to daily life more easily. Professional counsellors helped students and parents cope with the undesirable effects of COVID-19. In order to support students in adjustment process socially, psychologically, academically, financially, experts have to be appointed to Guidance and counselling Centres in all educational phases (primary, secondary and tertiary).

Changes in learning environments after the COVID-19 pandemic have created changes in the education process and practices. These changes affected all segments of the society as well as teachers, administrators and lecturers. Lecturers and students have tried to keep up with this new environment. At this point, school counsellors also make extraordinary efforts to help students. However, since most of the job descriptions of counsellors are formed around face-to-face contact, this new situation will be a process that needs to be explored for them as well. On the other hand, this will not be an obstacle for them, as school counsellors make it their duty to help students and overcome obstacles (Kotarski, 2020). In a study carried out by DeStefano et al (2001) comparing adaptation to college for students receiving counselling at a university counselling centre with adaptation by control counterparts. Students receiving counselling initially reported lower adaptation scores as measured by the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire. After counselling, scores no longer differentiated between the 2 groups. Results suggest that counselled students were affected positively by this experience. Gatua (2012) carried out a study to establish the impact of guidance and counselling services on students' social and emotional adjustment in selected public urban and rural secondary schools in Nakuru and UasinGishu Counties, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive cross-

sectional survey research design using 336 students, 45 school counsellors and 45 school administrators as respondents. Descriptive statistical techniques involved frequencies and percentages were employed to analyze the collected data. The findings of the study indicated that guidance and counselling services in secondary schools had high levels impact on students' social and emotional adjustments.

In a similar vein, Modo, Sanni, Uwah and Mogbo (2013) carried out a study on "Guidance and counselling services in secondary school as coping strategy for improved academic performance of students". The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of guidance and counselling services in secondary school on academic performance of students in Uyo municipality, Akwa Ibom State. The scope of the study was SSS 3 students in public secondary schools in Uyo municipality of Akwa Ibom State. The design adopted for the study was ex-post factor. A sample size of 252 students was used. Instrument for data collection was a questionnaire tagged "Guidance and counselling services and school academic performance questionnaire" and data collected were analysed using t-test. Result revealed that students who utilized the counselling services performed better than those who did not. The study is related to the present study because it examined similar variables such as guidance and counselling services.

Understanding what subpopulations may suffer from unique combinations of adjustment difficulties may therefore facilitate adjustment coping strategies for individuals at greatest risk. Enoch et al (2006) posited that female students may likely find it more difficult to socially adjust than male students. Raju et al (2007) carried out a study on adjustment problems among school children and the results indicated a significant influence of gender on adjustment; significant difference is observed between boys and girls on the financial and emotional factors of adjustment; on the financial adjustment dimension, girls have better financial adjustment than boys. Raju et al (2007) posited that girl students as compared to boy students' feel their parents' fulfil their needs easily. This could be because parents of girl students tend to give more importance to the needs of their daughters. The emotional adjustment dimension is however reversed, which indicates that boys are significantly better adjusted than girls. According to Mahmondi (2010), gender has no differential influence over adjustment in home, health, emotional and social area. Lama (2010) reported that there is a great tendency for female students to experience adjustment problems more than males. This finding implies that male students are better adjusted in overall adjustment on the campus as compared to female students. Whereas Roy, Ekka and Ara (2011) observed that female students were better adjusted than male students. A study by Enoch et al (2006) further suggests that males adjust faster than females. In addition, the study revealed that females rely on social support more than their male counterparts to adjust to the college life.

The COVID 19 lockdown and the need to adhere to precautionary measures may likely slow down students' adjustment to college life post COVID 19 lockdown. Students' inability to cope with restrictions could lead to behavioural problems and/or psychological instability such as rebellion, unrest, depression, anxiety, among others. This may further lead to the students skipping classes, performing poorly academically and dropping out of school. It is on this light this paper sought to establish the role of counselling services and students' adjustment to college life post COVID 19 lockdown in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between counselling services and students' adjustment to College life post COVID 19 lockdown?

2. There is no significant relationship between counselling services and students' adjustment to College life post COVID 19 lockdown based on sex?

Method

Correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 2,035 students from all the schools in the Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba. A sample of 247 students were selected using the multi stage cluster sampling procedure since the target population was large. The data were gathered using self-report questionnaire; Students Adjustment to College Life Questionnaire (SACLQ) developed with a guide from previously validated questionnaire, Students adaptation to college life by Baker and Sirk (1989). The instrument was adapted and modified by the researchers to suit the present study. The instrument contains three sub-scales. Section A contains five items meant to illicit responses on general information of respondents (bio-data), Section B contains seven items that identifies the availability of counsellors in the school and the mode of rendering counselling services. Section C contains 20 items that identify four adjustment process and their relative subscales made up of statement associated with behavioural traits or characteristics of adjustment. Section B and C are structured on a modified Likert scale as follows: "Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3) Disagree (2) Strongly Disagree (1)". The content validity of the research instrument was established by three experts, The reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha statistics and this yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.99 which was adjudged very high. This shows that the instrument is reliable. The reliability is high because the instrument were standardised instruments that have been improved on overtime. Initial reliability score by Baker et al (1989) ranges from 0.92 to 0.95. the questionnaire were administered on the respondents and after they have been duly completed, they were collected by the researcher with the help of two (2) trained research assistants using direct delivery and recovery method. The data obtained were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and Fisher's Z statistical tool to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. How adjusted are first year university students to university life?

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Students Level of adjustment to College Life Post COvid-19 Lockdown

Level of Adjustment	Frequency	Percent
Low	7	2.8
Moderate	202	81.8
High	38	15.4

Table 1 shows that there are 247 participants, the number of low adjusted students are 7 (2.8%). Moderate adjusted students are 202 (81.8%), while the High adjusted students are 38 (15.4%). This means that most of the college students are moderately adjusted to college life post Covid-19 lockdown.

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant relationship between counselling services and students' adjustment to College life post Covid-19 lockdown.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics Showing the Significant Relationship between Counselling Services and Students' Adjustment to College Life.

Variables	X	SD	r	r ²	p-value	Remark
Counselling Services	2.42	1.05	0.45	0.52	0.005	Reject Ho
Students' Adjustment	2.25	1.08				

The data in Table 2 showed that the mean score of students' counselling services was 2.42 with a standard deviation of 1.05 while students' adjustment was 2.25 with a standard deviation of 1.08. The table also showed that there was a high positive relationship (0.45) between level of counselling services and students' adjustment. The coefficient of determination (r^2) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.45 was 0.52. the coefficient of determination (r^2) indicates that counselling services account for 52% variation in students' adjustment and the relationship is statistically significant at 0.005 since this significant value is less than 0.05 the alpha level of significance. With this, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between counselling services and students' adjustment to College life post COVID 19 lockdown is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between of counselling services provided to students and their adjustment to college life post COVID 19 lockdown in Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between counselling services and students' adjustment to College life post COVID 19 lockdown based on sex?

Table 3: Fisher's Z table of Sex and College Students Adjustment to College Life

Sex	N	R	ZR	Z	Zcritical
Male	103	0.028	0.058	-0.187	1.96
Female	144	-0.155	0.125		

Table 3 shows a calculated Z value of -0.187 and a table value of 1.96 at alpha level of 0.05. The calculated value fall within the rejection region. So, the null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant relationship between counselling services and students' adjustment to College life post COVID 19 lockdown based on sex is rejected. Consequently, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between counselling services and students' adjustment to College life post COVID 19 lockdown based on sex.

Discussion

The results obtained in this study were discussed based on the formulated hypotheses. The findings showed that majority of the students (81.8%) are moderately adjusted to college life, 2.8% are lowly adjusted and 15.4% are highly adjusted to college life post COVID 19 lockdown. This indicates that many of the students are not highly adjusted to college life and the hypothesis one goes to show that the provision of counselling services to students will enable them to be well-adjusted individuals to college life post COVID 19 lockdown. This study agrees with the findings of DeStefano et al (2001) comparing adaptation to college for students receiving counselling at a university counselling centre with adaptation by control counterparts. After counselling, results suggest chat counselled students were affected positively by this experience. The study is also in cognizance with Udwin et al (2000), they found that students who received psychological support during and after the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) epidemic crisis were able to solve their problems in a healthy way and adjust to daily life more easily. The finding further corroborated with Gatua (2012) study. He carried out a study to establish the impact of guidance and counselling services on students' social and emotional adjustment in selected public urban and rural secondary schools in Nakuru and UasinGishu Counties, Kenya. The findings of the study

indicated that guidance and counselling services in secondary schools had high level impact on students' social and emotional adjustments. In a similar vein, Modo, Sanni, Uwah and Mogbo (2013) carried out a study on "guidance and counselling services in secondary schools as coping strategy for improved academic performance of students". Result revealed that students who utilized the counselling services performed better than those who did not. This will in turn enhance their interpersonal relationship with members of staff and fellow students in the college. This finding is in cognizance with the result of Gutua (2012) which indicated that guidance and counselling services in secondary schools had high levels impact on students' social adjustments. The finding also agrees with the result of a study carried out by Duruamaku-Dim (2019) which revealed that pupils' perception of school counselling services had a significant influence on their social adjustment in the school. The finding also agrees with Chireshe (2011) and Modo, Sanni, Uwah and Mogbo (2013) studies which indicated that both school counsellors and students believed that the counselling services resulted in personal social and vocational benefits and students who utilized the counselling services performed better than those who did not. This shows that students who are maladjusted can be assisted with counselling services to enable them to be highly adjusted students to college life post COVID 19 lockdown.

The result in hypothesis two further revealed that there is a significant relationship between counselling services and students' adjustment to College life post COVID 19 lockdown based on sex. This finding is in agreement with the result of Gatua (2012) which revealed that female students expressed higher level of social adjustment than their male counterparts. It also agrees with Enoch et al (2006). They posited that female students may likely find it more difficult to socially adjust than male students and on the other hand, Raju et al (2007) opined that there is a significant influence of gender on adjustment; significant difference is observed between boys and girls on the financial and emotional factors of adjustment; on the financial adjustment dimension, girls have better financial adjustment than boys. Raju et al (2007) further posited that girl students as compared to the boy students' feel their parents' fulfil their needs easily. This could be because parents of girl students tend to give more importance to the needs of their daughters. The emotional adjustment dimension is however reversed, which indicates that boys are significantly better adjusted than girls. In the same vein, Lama (2010) reported that there is a great tendency for female students to experience adjustment problems more than males. This finding implies that male students are better adjusted in overall adjustment on the campus as compared to female students. Whereas Roy, Ekka and Ara (2011) observed that female students were better adjusted than male students. A study by Enoch et al (2006) further suggested that males adjust faster than females. In addition, the study revealed that females rely on social support more than their male counterparts to adjust to the college life. This finding is however at variance with Mahmondi (2010), who posited that gender has no differential influence over adjustment in social area among college students. This shows that the gender of a student will determine how receptive he or she will be to guidance services which could enhance their social adjustment in the college.

Conclusion

The study aimed at establishing the role of counselling services and students adjustment to college life post COVID 19 lockdown in federal college of education (technical), Asaba Delta State. The findings of the study revealed that counselling services have significant influence on students' adjustment to College life post COVID 19 lockdown and there is a significant difference in relationship between counselling services and students' adjustment

based on gender. To this end students who visit and utilize' the counselling services will be more highly adjusted to college life after COVID 19 lockdown.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. Government should as a matter of urgency, equip existing counselling centres with modern equipment and psychological testing instruments to encourage continuous use of the existing centres and identify students counselling needs.
2. Counsellors should not discriminate between male and female students in the course of carrying out their counselling services. Equal attention should be paid to both sexes during counselling session. This will help enhance not only their social and emotional adjustments, but also increase their academic performance.

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