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**Effective Implementation of Counselling Curriculum and  
National Policy on Education in Cross River State Public  
Secondary Schools: Implications for Counselling**

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### **Abstract**

*This study looked at the effective implementation of counselling curriculum and national policy on education in Cross River State public secondary schools. It employed the descriptive survey method. It made use of three hypotheses, 230 secondary schools as its population, 1,900 students (854 boys and 1,046 girls) as sample, randomly selected from the 18 local government areas of the state and a twenty-item questionnaire called Effective Implementation of Counselling Curriculum (EICC) as instrument. Simple count, percentage- and t-test statistics were used to analyse the data. The study revealed that there is effective implementation of the counselling curriculum in some public secondary schools in urban areas, lopsided posting of specialised personnel in some urban schools. Some public secondary schools in some local government areas do not have counsellors at all to handle the teeming population of 88,621 students in the state's public secondary schools. Moreover, it revealed that there is a dire need for counselling equipment as well as more interpersonal relationship skills to ginger the realisation of counselling curriculum goals. Counselling implications were indicated to foster adequate implementation of the secondary school counselling curriculum all over the state.*

### **Introduction**

Curriculum contains learning experiences and teaching strategies designed by the school to bring about desired outcomes in the learner (Denga, 2006: 145). In other words, it embodies all worthwhile activities geared towards all round development of the learner, physically, intellectually, morally, spiritually socially and otherwise. These activities of course have to be child-centred in order to achieve the desired results. Quality education demands that the child be developed in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. To enhance quality education, therefore, the counsellor is concerned with curriculum that will lead to the total development of the person.

Counselling curriculum is a total and comprehensive approach that integrates the programme of counselling into the education process for all students than viewing counselling in our schools as peripheral, tangential or something to be tolerated. Our understanding of the counselling curriculum is made possible by a number of principles that must serve as a guide to counselling.

The principles that guide counselling according to the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) include the following:

1. Counselling service is for all students;
2. Counselling service can be presented as an organised and planned curriculum in our Schools;
3. Counselling activities in our schools can be sequential and flexible;
4. Counselling should be treated as an integrated part of the total educational process;
5. Counselling in the schools should involve all personnel;
6. Counselling should be geared towards helping students to learn more effectively and efficiently and;
7. Counsellors in our schools should provide specialised counselling services and interventions (CASSON Curriculum for schools in Nigeria p. 4 - 5).

The counselling curriculum covers students' competencies typically developed around three domains of development namely: personal/social, career/vocation, academic/learning. This is a worthwhile part of the educational pursuit that is in agreement with the five main national objectives of Nigeria as contained in the National Policy on Education which are for the building of:

1. A free and democratic society;
2. A just and egalitarian society;
3. A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
4. A great and dynamic economy;
5. A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

In Nigeria's philosophy of education, it is believed among other things that education is an instrument for national development. To this end, the formulation of ideas, their integration for national development and the integration of persons and ideas are all aspects of education.

In consequence, the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards inculcation the following values;

- a. respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals;
- b. faith in man's ability to make rational decisions;
- c. moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations;
- d. share responsibility for the common good of society;
- e. respect for the dignity of labour;

- f. and promotion of the physical, emotional and health of all children (National Policy on Education (NPE) 2004 p7, NPE 1998p1-3).

The broad aims of secondary education within our overall national objectives are to prepare the individual for;

- a. useful living within the society; and
- b. higher education. In very specific terms, the secondary school education is expected to:
  - i. Provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with the opportunities for education of a higher equality, irrespective of sex, or social, religious or ethnic background.
  - ii. Diversify its curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary school course;
- c. Equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology;
- d. Develop and Project Nigerian culture, art and language as well as the world's cultural Heritage;
- e. Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour and appreciate those values specified under our broad national arms and live as good citizens;
- f. Foster Nigerian unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity; and
- g. Inspire its students with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both school and in later life (NPE, 2004, p. 7& 16).

These plausible national objectives/ national policy on education, secondary school broad aims/objectives and the counselling curriculum are meant to take place simultaneously all over the country in (Nigerian) secondary schools. The questions, however, are how effective has counselling curriculum been carried out in Cross River State public secondary schools? Are there adequate specialised personnel to carry out or execute the curriculum? How adequate are the students brought up in terms of interpersonal relationship skills? Are there adequate counselling equipment?

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between specialised counselling personnel and effective implementation of counselling curriculum?
2. Is there any significant difference between counselling equipment and effective implementation of counselling curriculum?
3. Is there any significant difference between girls and boys in their interpersonal relationship skills?

### **Methodology**

This study employed the descriptive survey method. The population of the study consisted of 230 public secondary schools enrolment of 88,621 and the sample consisted of 1,900 students drawn from 24 single and mixed sex public secondary schools randomly selected. The 1,900 JSS III and SS II students comprised 1,046 female and 854 male. This was so because there were more females than male students in the sampled classes, JSS III and SS II hence, the lopsided sample.

Experts in test and measurement in the Faculty of Education, Cross River University of Technology, Akamkpa campus validated the self-constructed instrument. The instrument was pilot-tested among some JSS III and SS II students in the same locality. The test-re-test method was employed in establishing reliability, of the instrument. The reliability co-efficient was 0.75; this was considered high enough for the study.

For the administration of the instrument, the researchers visited each school, discussed the purpose of the study with the principals of the schools and gave them copies of the questionnaire. In each school students were made to sit comfortably and copies of the questionnaire were administered to them and after completion, they were collected back immediately. The researchers also collected data from the secondary school board of the state to facilitate this study.

The responses of the students were collated and analysed for results. Frequency count and percentages were used. The hypotheses were tested using the t-test statistics.

### **Testing the Research Questions**

**Question 1:** *Is there any significant difference between specialised personnel and effective implementation of counselling curriculum?*

**Table 1: Secondary Schools' Board Record as at April, 2007-2009**

S/N	LGAs	No. of Secondary School	No. of Counsellors	No. of Counsellors in practice	% No. of counsellors in secondary schools in the LGA in the ratio
(1)	Abi	10	4	3	40%
(2)	Akamkpa	17	8	5	47.1%
(3)	Akpabuyo	8	4	4	50%
(4)	Bakassi	2	--	--	--
(5)	Bekwarra	5	3	3	60%
(6)	Biase	14	1	1	7.1%
(V)	Boki	27	8	8	29.6%
(8)	Calabar Mun	14	28	12	200%
(9)	Calabar South	6	11	4	183%
(10)	Etung	8	6	5	75%
(11)	Ikom	14	20	10	142.8%
(12)	Obudu	22	12	10	54.5%
(13)	Obubra	14	13	7	92.8%
(14)	Obanhiku	11	6	4	54.5%
(15)	Odukpani	12	3	3	25%
(16)	Ogoja	15	7	7	46.6%
(17)	Yakurr	13	13	8	100%
(18)	Yala	18	8	6	44.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>100</b>	

Table 1, shows the frequency counts and the percentages of specialised personnel in relation to the secondary schools in each local government area. Calabar municipality ranks first with 28 counsellors but only 12 are in actual practice, Ikom local government area ranks second with 20 counsellors but only 10 are in actual practice. Obubra and Yakurr Local Government Areas rank third with 13 counsellors each but only 7 and 8 respectively are in actual practice and so on. It is only Akpabuyo, Bellwarra, Biase and Ogoja that the counsellors in the secondary school system are all in practice.

Table 1 further shows that some LGAs are overstaffed with counsellors who probably are only assigned routine classroom work of teaching their teaching subjects. Some LGAs have just enough counsellors and are being utilised to implement the counselling curriculum and some secondary schools do not have any counsellors at all as is the case with Bakassi Local Government Area. In all, the number of counsellors does not equate with the total number of secondary schools in the state which is 230. The total number of counsellors in the state public secondary schools is 155 as shown in Table 1 as at April, 2007-2009. The table shows that a total of 100 counsellors only are in actual practice of counselling in the state public secondary schools.

**Question 2:** Is there any significant difference between counselling equipment and effective implementation of counselling curriculum?

**Table 2:** Secondary Schools' Board Record as at April, 2007-2009 Frequency

S/N	LGAs	Office Accommodation (A)		Psychological Tests (B)	Percentage	Test inventories	Percentage	File cabinet (D)	Percentage	No. Of Sec. Sch. In each L.G.A. (E)
(1)	Abi	3	30	3	30	3	30	3	30	10
(2)	Akamkpa	5	29	5	29	5	29	5	29	17
(3)	Akpabuyo	4	50	4	50	4	50	4	50	8
(4)	Bakassi	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(5)	Bekwara	3	60	3	60	3	60	3	60	5
(6)	Biase	1	7.1	1	7.1	1	7.1	1	7.1	14
(7)	Boki	8	29.6	8	29.6	8	29.6	8	29.6	27
(8)	Calabar Mun	12	85	12	85	12	85	12	85	14
(9)	Calabar South	4	66	4	66	4	66	4	66	6
(10)	Etung	5	62.5	5	62.5	5	62.5	5	62.5	8
(11)	Ikrom	10	71	10	71	10	71	10	71	14
(12)	Obudu	10	45	10	45	10	45	10	45	22
(13)	Obuba	7	50	7	50	7	50	7	50	14
(14)	Obanliku	4	36	4	36	4	36	4	36	11
(15)	Odukpani	3	25	3	25	3	25	3	25	12
(16)	Ogoja	7	46	7	46	7	46	7	46	15
(17)	Yakur	8	61.5	8	61.5	8	61.5	8	61.5	13
(18)	Yala	6	33	6	33	6	33	6	33	18

Counts and percentages

Table 2, shows the dearth of essential equipment/instructional materials that are fundamental to instruction/excution of counselling curriculum in the public secondary school system in the state. Calabar municipality ranks first with-85%, Ikom ranks second with 71%, Calabar south LGA ranks third with 66%, Etung ranks 4<sup>th</sup> with 62.5% and so on. One thing is clear, these percentages fall only to the few public secondary schools where counselling curriculum is being implemented in the various local government areas. Many other secondary schools are not yet adequately provided with these materials. Generally, this provision is inadequate in relation to the total number of secondary schools in the state as a whole as at April, 2007-2009.

**Question 3:** There is no significant difference between boys and girls in their interpersonal relationship skills.

**Table 3: t-test statistics on interpersonal relationship skills**

Group	No.	X	Sd	Df	t-cal	t-crit	P
Girls	1,046	62.0	71.3	1898	37.97	1.96	sig.
Boys	854	50.23	6.35				

Table 3, shows that girls are more inclined to interpersonal relationship skills than the boys, this suggests that girls are more responsible in terms of unconditional positive regard for others, cooperative, genuine, spontaneous, flexible than the boys. It also implies that more work has to be done on the boys to have a more conducive interpersonal relationship environment to make for success in academic, personal, social and vocational domains.

### Discussion

The study revealed the effectiveness or otherwise of the implementation of counselling curriculum in Cross River State public secondary schools. On the specialised personnel provision; the study showed that there are only 155 counsellors as against 230 secondary schools in the state. The 155 counsellors are not proportionally distributed to the secondary schools; say, one counsellor to a secondary school and some secondary schools do not have counsellors in them at all. The result further showed that there is ineffective implementation of counselling curriculum as most secondary schools are left out of the scheme, there is, however, success in a few urban areas. It seems the counsellors in the state have not asserted themselves to fully take on counselling as a profession nor has government deemed it fit to professionalise counselling.



This result corroborates the assertion of Denga (2006) who states that the school administrator stimulates counselling by introducing the counsellor to the school and the school community to guide the guidance programme. Thus, any school administrator who wants the system to work efficiently recruits human and material resources for all the programmes including guidance.

The relationship between counselling equipment and counselling curriculum from the study revealed that there is a dire need for counselling equipment like film slides, chairs, tables, psychological tests, test inventories, students' file folders, file cabinets, computers/typewriters, office accommodation to mention but a few. These equipment/instructional materials are necessary for the implementation of counselling curriculum in the state. This corroborates the assertion of Tilakh Raj (1978: Preface) which states that ... *a common goal of teachers everywhere is to make lesson preparation vital and alive and lasting for the students.* This goal can often be reached most effectively through the use of instructional materials. He went further to assert that we remember 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 50% of what we say and 90% of what we see and do. The implication therefore is that wherever possible, the sensory experiences concerning an object, topic, idea or event be discovered and used in the proportion that produces the most effective result.

Interpersonal relationship skills between boys and girls in the study revealed that girls are more inclined to interpersonal relationships skills than boys. Interpersonal relationship skills are necessary among secondary school students to avoid frustration, bullying, disrespect for other people's opinions and make for smooth running of the system. This starts from the counsellor. This corroborates Denga's (2006) position when he states that the counsellor needs administrative duties. The counsellor needs to combine the psychological skills with the counselling and administrative skills to harmonise interpersonal relationship among students and teachers. Rogers (1959) lays emphasis on the nature of interpersonal relationship in his discussion of the cause and treatment of psychological maladjustments. Rogers (1959) believes that man is by nature good and forward looking, he is constructive and trustful. That it is when his relationship with his fellows becomes sour and frustrating that he begins to suffer from some form of psychological disorders. Rogers believes that given an accepting and non-threatening atmosphere man can move from a state of maladjustment to a state of adjustment. The interpersonal relationship skills are fundamentally rooted in the relationship between the counsellor and his clients.

Rogers (1959) explained that we need to feel approved if we are to live meaningful lives in harmony with ourselves and with others, displaying a personality that is trusting, spontaneous and flexible. He adds that in order to achieve this state of condition we must grow up in a family and social environment that treats us with what he calls positive regard. In other words we must be valued and trusted, our opinions and behaviour must be respected.

### **Counselling Implications**

1. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that there should be training and retraining of counsellors in the state to meet the manpower needs of specialised personnel because for now, the number of counsellors (155) does not match the 230 public secondary schools in the state.
2. The counsellors on ground should be proportionally distributed to the secondary schools; say, one counsellor to a secondary school for effective implementation of the counselling curriculum.
3. Counsellors in the state should be assertive in their demand for recognition and impress on the Cross River State government to do so and provide the necessary materials for the secondary schools to properly programme for counselling services and counselling curriculum implementation.
4. The counsellor in service should be characterised by growth, change, care, love, empathy, trust, flexibility. This will translate into positive interpersonal relationship skills, in the students as they have always looked up to the counsellor(s) as their model.

### **Conclusion**

This study looked at the effective implementation of counselling curriculum and national policy on education in Cross River State public secondary school and their implications for counselling. It was revealed that counselling curriculum is implemented in a few urban public secondary schools. Some secondary schools in some local government areas are over staffed with counsellors or specialised personnel and some do not have any at all, meaning that a greater number of the public secondary schools are left out of the scheme. It was also revealed that there is inadequate supply of counselling equipment for counselling sessions.

Useful counselling implications were indicated which require urgent attention for the teeming public secondary school population of 88,621 students in the state as at April, 2007-2009 to be conscious of not only their academic, personal-social needs but also their career needs and choice.

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