



Evaluation of Information and Communication Technology Usage in Counselling Services in Borno and Yobe States, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study evaluated information and communication technology usage in counselling services in Borno and Yobe states, Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to find out what is the frequency of ICT usage during counselling by counsellors and what is the level of application of ICT in counselling by counsellors. The study adopted an exploratory descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised counsellors in Borno and Yobe States. Sample of one hundred counsellors were randomly selected from the two states for the study. instrument –*Counsellors Questionnaire on ICT Usage in Counselling (CQIUC)* was developed by the researchers. The questionnaire had three response key of “Always,” “Sometimes” and “Never. The questionnaire has Cronbach alpha reliability of .937. The researchers met with all the sampled counsellors in all the schools and administered the instrument. Simple percentage and ANOVA was used to analyse the data. The results revealed that there is generally low usage of ICT by Borno and Yobe States counsellors in counselling services. Only 56% responded that they always use computer to counsel the clients/ students. Although 65% claimed to sometimes use computer to record

information and distribute to students, 98% never used educational games in counselling and there is low level of application of ICT in counselling services by Borno and Yobe States counsellors. The study concludes that there is generally low use of ICT by counsellors and low level of application of ICT in counselling services by counsellors in Borno and Yobe States. Based on the findings it was recommended that Borno and Yobe states Ministry of Education should make provision of ICT facilities to counsellors and the counsellors should acquire skills on how to use ICT in counselling.

Keywords: Evaluation, Information and Communication Technology, Usage and Counselling Services

Introduction

The current trend all over the world is transformation from mechanical phase to digital phase. The significant role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in improving education, enhances quick and quality services delivery including counselling cannot be overemphasized (Adebowale, Papoola, Obisakin, & Oyaziwo, 2012). The change from teacher-centered education system to learner centered education the world over in the past few years have increasingly contributed to the use of ICT in education and counselling services. Nigeria for instance has invested

heavily in ICT by increasing the number of computers in schools and in the networking of classrooms. ICT potential is considerable for supporting counsellors in their counselling services. ICT counselling is a useful approach that will help the counsellor and the clients. The process of providing counselling services on the internet. This could be by e-mail, chat, video or even internet phone, clients living in remote or isolated areas, due to whatever reason insecurity, distance learning programme or still schooling. Who want to gain from the counsellor would benefit from ICT counselling

(Attride, 2004). However, the integration of technology in the school curriculum continues to be a complex and challenging process because the seamless integration of computers in teaching and learning has yet to be achieved (Kozma & Anderson, 2002). Counsellor's role in the integration of computers in schools especially in counselling service is obviously very important. It is against this background that Cuban (2000) observed that every educational reform effort should take into consideration counsellors' knowledge and skills in using ICT for counselling services.

Successful integration of ICT in education system especially in counselling services depends largely on the availability, competence and the attitude of counsellors towards the role of modern technologies in counselling services. A practical observation has shown that counsellors in Borno and Yobe States have either insufficient or no ICT tools to cater for the increasing population of students in the schools and where the tools are available, they are by implication a matter of out-of-bounds to counsellors and the students. Looking at the developing countries, Beukes-Amiss and Chiware (2006) reported that there is generally limited access time per month using ICT by both the teachers and students, and even less time spent with reliable internet access. This is not an exception in Borno and Yobe State where majority of the counsellors seem not to have access to ICT components which most, unfortunately do not possess a personal computer. Based on this observation therefore, it is worthwhile to note that counsellors' role in the integration of ICT in counselling services cannot be overemphasized. Hence, every educational reform effort should take into consideration knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes toward the use of ICT in education system.

Researches indicate that technology reform efforts in integrating ICT in counselling services has failed because counsellors and teachers' beliefs, skills, and attitudes were never taken into consideration (Cuban, 2000; Becker & Ravitz, 1999; Brush, 1998). A study conducted by Papanastasiou and Angeli (2008) revealed a very low frequency with which software programs were actually used in various school subjects by teachers. The average amount of use per week was found to have ranged from 0 to 0.86 times. Fakeye (2010) also found out in a study conducted in Ibadan that most of the schools covered in the study do not have computers, hence are not connected to the internet. He added

that those who have computers do not use them for teaching and counselling but solely for administrative purposes. Okwudishu (2005) found out that the unavailability of some ICT components in schools' hampers teachers' use of ICTs. Lack of adequate search skills and of access points in the schools were reported as forces inhibiting the use of internet by secondary school teachers (Adomi and Kpangban, 2010). Abdul-Salaam (2011) in her study found that most teachers used as the sample for the study were not competent in the use of ICT.

The use of ICT in counselling services by counsellors generally seems to be increasing and dramatically growing. However, while there is a great deal of knowledge about how ICT is used in counselling services in developed countries, there is not much information on how ICT is being used by counsellors in counselling services in developing countries. The mere focus of most studies from literature on what students learn from technology has left a gap in understanding why and how counsellors use or do not use technology in counselling services in schools. Based on these observations the study raised the following questions to assess the usage of ICT in counselling services by counsellors.

1. What is the frequency of ICT usage during counselling by counsellors?
2. What is the level of application of ICT in counselling by counsellors?
3. Does the usage of ICT in counselling services vary with years of counselling experience?

The third question further tested by this hypothesis:

H₀₁: The usage of ICT in counselling services does not significantly vary with years of counselling experience.

Method

The study adopted an exploratory descriptive research design. Therefore, it was not rigorous with respect to sampling. The population of the study comprised counsellors in Borno and Yobe States. Sample of one hundred counsellors were randomly selected from the two states for the study.

For the purpose of data collection, an instrument –*Counsellors Questionnaire on ICT Usage in Counselling (CQIUC)* was developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was developed based on the principle of content relevance i.e. to ensure that items reflect the content (Anastasi & Urbina, 2008). Consequently, items for the questionnaire were derived from literature and suggestions offered by experts in Guidance and Counselling unit the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri. On the basis of these suggestions thirty items were generated for the questionnaire.

The questionnaire had three response key of “Always,” “Sometimes” and “Never.” This was based on the assumption that the response to such issue is “not at all or none affair.” That is although an item may not be used; when it is used, it is Always or Sometimes and when it is not, it is never. For the purpose of estimating the Cronbach alpha reliability of the questionnaires the categories of responses were weighted – Always = 3, Sometimes = 2 and Never = 1. The questionnaire has Cronbach alpha reliability of .937. It was computed using the formula given (Allen & Yen, 1979).

A self-introductory letter was written by the researchers to the Ministry of Education seeking for permission to conduct the study and the approval was granted. The researchers met with all the sampled counsellors in all the schools and administered the instrument. The *CQIUC* was administered on 100 counsellors and 87 were successfully retrieved, which gave a return rate of 72%. It took an average of 3 hours 30 minutes in 3 days to administer the questionnaire.

To answer the questions raised in the study, the percentage of response to each of the response category was computed per item in the scale. The percentage was rounded up to the nearest whole number for brevity. To determine if the use of ICT in counselling services significantly vary with years of counselling experience, ANOVA was computed and tested for significance at the 0.05 level using SPSS version16 for all computations.

Results

The frequency of ICT usage during counselling services by counsellors is presented in Table 1.

Table 1:**Percentage of ICT Usage by Counsellors During Counselling Services**

S/N	Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
1.	I use internet to search for counselling materials	3	12	85	100
2.	I use internet for sending messages to my clients	2	8	90	100
3.	I use computer to record information and distribute to clients/students	25	65	10	100
4.	I visit the ICT centre to develop my counselling skills	0	50	50	100
5.	I use computer to present orientation service to students	56	42	2	100
6.	For effective guidance delivery I use computer	2	42	56	100
7.	I employ the use of computer in counselling students	2	38	60	100
8.	I use television to give guidance services	2	44	54	100
9.	I use radio to give guidance services	17	52	31	100
10.	For effective group counselling I use Power Point presentation	0	6	94	100
11.	I use educational CDs when interacting with clients	0	3	97	100
12.	I use educational games in my counselling	0	2	98	100
13.	I use projector for my lecture in counselling	2	15	83	100
14.	I use public address system for group counselling	6	56	38	100
15.	I use interactive Boards for presentation of guidance	3	12	85	100

Source: Research field 2022

The result from Table 1 indicated that there is generally low usage of ICT by Borno and Yobe States counsellors in counselling services. Only 56%

responded that they always use computer to counsel the clients/ students. Although 65% claimed to sometimes use computer to record information and distribute to students, 98% never used educational games in counselling. The level of application of ICT in counselling services by counsellors is presented in Table 2.

Table 2:
Level of Application of ICT in Counselling Services in Percentage

S/N	Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
1	I give my students guidance services to search on the internet	69	23	8	100
2	I consult the internet to prepare my guidance services	17	67	16	100
3	Students submit their problems to me through e-mail	0	2	98	100
4	I ask students to submit their problems to me on CD Rom	0	4	96	100
5	I ask students to submit their complain to me on floppy disk	0	4	96	100
6	For effective and quick problems delivery I use computer	2	60	38	100
7	Students complains are processed by me using excel sheet	2	44	54	100
8	I use Microsoft Word to type students' counselling records	17	52	31	100
9	I use Microsoft Excel to type students' counselling records	10	23	67	100
10	I use Microsoft Excel to study students problems	2	67	31	100
11	I use computer to analyze students problems	3	77	20	100
12	I use computer to prepare my counselling	15	83	2	100

13	I use computer to type my guidance services programme	6	56	38	100
14	I use computer to keep data base of services item bank	3	12	85	100
15	I use SMS to give information services to students	0	6	94	100
16	I use Microsoft Word to type information to students	56	24	20	100

Source: Research field 2022

Table 2 indicated that there is low level of application of ICT in counselling services by Borno and Yobe States counsellors. Those counsellors give students services/work to search on the internet always were 69% while 98% never ask students present problems through e-mail. It is interesting that 83% sometimes use computer to prepare counselling services, 85% never use computer to keep data base for counselling services item bank.

To determine whether the use of ICT in counselling services vary with years of counselling experience, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed and tested at the .05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 3a and b.

Table 3a

ANOVA on the Usage of ICT in Counselling Services

S/N	Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Remark
1	Experience	5562.485	4	1390.621	10.579	.000	Significant
2	Error	12750.505	97	131.449			
3	Total	1715437.000	157				
4	Corrected Total	18312.990	156				

R Squared = .304 (Adjusted R Squared = .275)

Table 3b:
Mean and Standard Deviation

S/N	Counselling Experience	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	0-5Yrs	1.3597	11.68780	39
2	6-10Yrs	1.3544	11.53377	19
3	11-15Yrs	1.2757	12.99450	21
4	16-20Yrs	1.2443	10.15809	39
5	21Yrs & above	1.1653	9.93517	39
Total		1.2899	13.46539	157

Source: Research field 2022

Results from Table 3a and b showed a significant difference in the use of ICT in counselling services in favour of counsellors that spent few years on the job than those that spent many years. Those that have spent 0 – 5 years and 6 - 10 years have higher mean score than those that have spent 21 years and above on the job. The null hypothesis in this case has been rejected. This statistically means that counsellors that spent few years on the job significantly differed from those that have spent many years on the use of ICT in counselling services.

Discussion of Findings

The study found a generally low use of ICT by counsellors in counselling services. The result is consistent with Papanastasiou and Angeli (2008) whose study revealed a very low frequency with which software programs were actually used in various school subjects by teachers. This low use of ICT by counsellors could be as a result of low awareness of the importance of ICT in counselling services. A reasonable number of them affirmed that they have not been having opportunities of attending seminars and workshops on ICT which would have increased their awareness of ICT. This finding underscore the results obtained from the study of Okwudishu (2005), Adomi and Kpangban, (2010) that unavailability of some ICT components in schools and lack of

adequate search skills and of access points in the schools hampers counsellors' use of ICTs and were viewed as forces inhibiting the use of internet by secondary school counsellors. Although the subjects of these studies were secondary school counsellors, Borno and Yobe States counsellors also reported similar trend. The implication is that, more efforts are required by the Ministry of Education to expose the counsellors to ICT facilities so that they improve their skills in ICT for counselling purpose. The counsellors on the other hand should take it as a challenge to be ICT compliant.

Borno and Yobe States counsellors reported low level of application of ICT in counselling services. This aligned with Cuban (2000), Becker and Ravitz (1999) and Brush (1998) that technology reform efforts in integrating ICT in classroom assessment have failed because teachers' beliefs, skills, and attitudes were never taken into consideration. Result obtained by Abdul-Salaam (2011) that most teachers used as the sample for her study were not competent in the use of ICT suffices here. This is because for effective integration of ICT in assessment, teachers must be competent in handling the necessary ICT software that could enhance assessment. Academic staff expressed their concern about the high cost of ICT tools which they were not capable of purchasing during the time of data collection suggesting that except the government could subsidize. In other words, counsellors in Borno and Yobe States still lag behind in modern technological modes of counselling services. For effective use of ICT for counselling services, both the counsellors and the students/clients must be cognitively and affectively prepared to embrace the innovations in Counselling, teaching and learning particularly in the use of ICT for counselling services.

Significant difference in the application of ICT in counselling services was found in favour of Counsellors that spent few years on the job than those that have spent many years. The finding aligned with the submission made by Kozma and Anderson (2002) that the integration of technology in the school curriculum continues to be a complex and challenging process and the seamless integration of computers in teaching and learning is yet to be achieved. It supports Abdul-Salaam (2011) finding that most teachers used as the sample for her study were not competent in the use of ICT. It appears that those who

spent many years of teaching might not have been familiar with the changing trend in ICT as compared to young employees who are believed to be familiar with the new trends in ICT especially the use of social media might have accounted for the difference. Effective integration of ICT in assessment required teachers to be competent in handling the necessary ICT software that could enhance assessment. Counsellor's role in the integration of computers in schools especially in assessment is obviously very important. It is against this background that Cuban (2000) observed that every educational reform effort should take into consideration counsellors' knowledge and skills in using ICT for counselling services.

Conclusion

The study concludes that there is generally low use of ICT by counsellors and low level of application of ICT in counselling services by counsellors in Borno and Yobe States. It also confirms that there is significant difference in the application of ICT in counselling services in favour of counsellors that spent few years on the job than those that have spent many years.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made;-

1. Borno and Yobe states Ministry of Education should make provision of ICT facilities to counsellors.
2. The counsellors should acquire skills on how to use ICT in counselling.
3. The counsellors should provide more time to use ICT in counselling.
4. Clients should be exposed to the use of ICT seeking for counselling by the counsellors.
5. Counsellors should have opportunities of workshop and seminars.

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