

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF BIBLIOTHERAPY CONCEPT BY SCHOOL COUNSELORS FOR CHALLENGING STUDENTS IN SOME SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OYO STATE

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Abstract

Bibliotherapy is an old concept in library which has been used by many other professionals on different scenario to bring about a positive change or an improvement. This study investigated the knowledge, attitude, and practice of bibliotherapy concept by school counselors for challenging students in some selected secondary schools in Oyo State. Descriptive survey was used with a questionnaire titled KAPBC to collect data from school counselors of public secondary school in 20 local government area of Oyo State. The result showed a low level of school counselors' knowledge about bibliotherapy and the use of bibliotherapy. Also, findings from the study revealed poor attitude of school counselors to bibliotherapy practice in schools while storytelling and reading clubs were established as techniques of practicing bibliotherapy in schools. A negative correlation was established between knowledge of bibliotherapy and practice of bibliotherapy ($r = -0.081$) while a positive correlation was established between attitude of counselors and bibliotherapy practice (0.187). The chi-square analysis shows that knowledge, attitude and practice of bibliotherapy concept is low and insignificant. The correlation between knowledge and attitude is low and insignificant so also attitude and practices; while knowledge and practice is negative, low and insignificant. Recommendations were made as to how to improve the knowledge, attitude and practice of bibliotherapy among secondary school counselors.

Keywords: *Challenging students. School counselors, Bibliotherapy, Students' success skill, Character/attributes*

Introduction

School Counselors are introduced into the educational system in Nigeria with the aim of improving students' success skill (SSS). This students' success skill is made up mainly of three components: academic, social and personal/emotional management. For counselors to be able to discharge their functions effectively there is the need for them to look-out, develop, generate or introduce additional ideas or interventions for managing and training the challenging students with one or more form(s) of misbehavior. Kyle and Regien (2006) stated that "counselors need to develop a repertoire of strategies for helping teachers to meet the needs of all students through more effective options to create opportunities for students to learn responsible behavior. "Such strategies must be scientifically proven, research-based and practicable within context so as to be to achieve the set objectives.

There are different types of students' behavior which can be noticed and made them to be grouped as challenging students. These include Emotional Behaviour Disorder,

Antisocial Skills, Conduct Disorder, Cognitive-related problems, etc. The situation today in our secondary schools or amidst the teenagers portrays that of high rate of bullying, hooliganism, school drop-out, sexual abuse, alcoholism fighting, stealing, etc. Kyle and Rogien (2006). These and many more are calling for a redress. Ford-Martin (2012) asserted that “mental health professionals agree, and rising rates of serious school disciplinary problems, delinquency and violent crime indicate that antisocial behavior in general is increasing. This situation requires proactive approaches from the school counselors.

The idea of bibliotherapy is based on the fact that it is an intervention that has been used in various settings to treat emotional, cognitive or character related problems (Ouzt and Mastrion 1999; Furner 2004; Bern 2004; McMillen and Pehrsson 2004; Pehrson and McMillen 2005; Morrision 2008). Also, Maich and Kean (2004) stated that “bibliotherapy can help the students in the class to learn coping skills that will help them deal with the social and emotional challenges that may occur”. This was further corroborated in the work of Furner (2004) that Classroom teachers using this approach (i.e. bibliotherapy) will influence thinking and behavior. This research tends to find out the knowledge, attitude and practice of this intervention by school counselors among secondary schools students. There are references to the effectiveness of bibliotherapy on mental and health factor (Pehrsson and McMillen 2005; Morison 2008).

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. find out if school counselors are knowledgeable about bibliotherapy concept;
2. establish if school counselors are using bibliotherapy concept as a corrective intervention for, their students;
3. find out the modalities or techniques employed by school counselors in the practice of bibliotherapy concept; and
4. determine the attitude of school counselors to the practice of bibliotherapy concept.

Significance of the Study

This study is aimed at determining whether school counselors have knowledge of bibliotherapy concept and how it is being practice with the view of offering suggestions where necessary. It is also expected that this research will create and/or increase awareness among school counselors to the use of bibliotherapy and also make recommendation on what the attitude of school counselors should be to bibliotherapy concept. Suggestion will also be made as to have an effective practice of bibliotherapy. It will also be an addition to the body of knowledge on effective counseling therapies.

Literature review

School counselors are in a unique position in the educational system of any country. To promote quality teaching and learning process, discipline, self management for students and administration of certain activities in the school. Kyle and Rogien (2006) stated it clearly that “school counselors can help teachers to motivate students through active involvement in their own learning and discipline process with the goal of acquiring

learning, responsible behaviours and self management”. Also they stated further that “school counselors have the opportunity to suggest effective teaching and behavior management strategies through multi disciplinary team meetings and through working with students in developing behavior intervention plans and positive behavior supports” Webb, Brigman, and Campbell (2005) suggested that interventions targeting specific skills associated with school success led by school counselors using research-based techniques to teach these critical skills, can improve the academic achievement and social performance of students”.

In essence school counselors serve as an intermediary between the teachers and the students on one side and between students and their achievement on the other side. They assist the teachers in achieving quality teaching and the students in quality learning-which comprises academic. Social, personal,/emotional etc. Webb, Brigman and Campbell (2005) also reported that SSS studies, reflecting student outcomes as a result of school counselor intervention, provide strong evidence of effectiveness” By virtue of the training of the counselors, they should lead in evolving strategies/interventions to mould students learning and achieving their desired goals.

School counselors, according to American School Counselor Association National Model (2005) provide individual and group counseling, large group guidance, consultation, and coordination. The involvement of school counselors in school system should be visible and pragmatic in ensuring the educational success of all students”. A school counselor is expected by virtue of his/her training to possess specialised skills to identify interventions or methods to change the attitudes and beliefs and students that work against success, identify and implement effective motivational strategies and encourage the development of critical skills needed for students success. One of such strategies/interventions is bibliotherapy. This study, therefore, investigate the application and practicability of bibliotherapy by school counselors in Oyo state.

Literature is replete on roles and functions of school counselors (Wrenn 1962; Shertzer and Stone 1980; Nwoye 1983; Idowu A. 1989). Bibliotherapy is one intervention that has been used widely for treatment and correction of character. Bibliotherapy is assumed not to be difficult to use in schools since the school system make use of books and book is the major instruments in the practice of bibliotherapy.

The Concept of Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy according to Maich and Kean, (2004) is an expressive therapy that uses an individuals’ relationship to the content of books and poetry and other written words. Katz and Watt (2000) define bibliotherapy as the guided use of reading materials with a therapeutic view in mind. At the basic form, it is the use of books to help people in solving the issues that they are facing at a particular time or selection of appropriate and relevant reading materials for an individual with the mind of addressing the person’s life situation for a positive change. Lehr (1981) defined it as a process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and literature-interaction which may be utilized for personal assessment. Adjustment and growth, Bibliotherapy can thus be seen as the interaction of a reader cognitively and/or psycho dynamically with the content of a

literature or an information medium at a depth that effect the personality/emotion positively. The concept of bibliotherapy is an old one in the library, but now it is being used by many helping professionals such as teachers, nurses, psychologist, social worker, psychiatrist and counselors. Sullivan, and Strang, (2002) stated that “literary sources can assist with the resolution of complex problems”. The complex problem here could mean cognitive, emotional, medical or social problems.

Significance of Bibliotherapy on Challenging Students

The idea that books (bibliotherapy) can make us emotionally, psychologically and even physically better back to the ancient world. The essence of an educational system is likened to the ability of bibliotherapy because it also intends to produce a man with sound cognitive, emotional and psychological mind. So using bibliotherapy in educational system by counselors is promoting the culture and value of it, and at the same time achieving more for the challenging students. Ford-Martin (2012) stated that “a variety of methods may be employed to deliver social skills training, but especially with diagnosed antisocial disorder, the most effective methods are systemic therapies which address communications skills’. Since bibliotherapy is a form of communication: where the contents of the books are being communicated to the reader. The nature and mode of organizing bibliotherapy could also be another form of communication-such as club or group discussion, team or drama, etc.

Berns (2004) captured that “bibliotherapy can give children (even adolescents) the confidence they need to deal with anything that comes their way. It attempts to normalize a child’s world by offering coping skills and reducing feelings of isolation, reinforcing creativity and problem solving. When challenging students are treated with bibliotherapy it has been proved to be a good anti-dote on different scenarios. (Alex, 1993; Johnson, et. al. 2001; and Furner, 2004; Ilogbo, 2011).

Johnson, et. al. (2001) asserted that “selecting appropriate reading materials and matching them to the need of the individual students to assist them in the development of self-awareness, problem-solving skills, perspective taking skills, and understanding of problems as key in administering bibliotherapy”. If these attributes are missing in the life of an educated person, then she is not better than an illiterate. The bibliotherapy concept is not only useful for challenging students but can equally improve and assist ‘good’ students to become better.

In the work of Prater, et. al (2006) bibliotherapy has been noted for success in teaching students to solve problems, help students cope with teasing, name calling, mockery, fears, sexuality changes, anxiety and death. The same authors discovered that resistance to use of bibliotherapy is based on lack of assertiveness, negative attitudes, anxiety, depression, sexual dysfunctions and negative behaviours. These mentioned attributes are some of the breeding ground for most of the antisocial character displayed by the challenging students. The above submissions by the same authors point to the fact that bibliotherapy has a way of impacting the mind making it stronger and wiser in decision making, enabling the mind to focus on the good attributes of life, and helping such an individual in imbibing such attributes. This is due to the appropriate information being fed into the

mind, while the absence of it may produce negative outcomes in terms of character disorder or antisocial behavior.

The idea of using bibliotherapy to affect secondary school academic performance has been demonstrated in the work of Ilogbo, (2011) which stated that bibliotherapy influenced students one way or the other especially in the area of academics". This implies that as much as bibliotherapy has the tendency to affect the academic performance it may also affect their character. Therefore there is a two-in-one achievement if bibliotherapy is properly used in the secondary schools. Bibliotherapy practice according to Bern, (2004) is an invitation and permission given to children to, unveil wisdom and insight that might otherwise be squelched". This means that the students are allowed to acquire wisdom and insight that might not be mentioned in the classroom academic curriculum, thereby making such students to become a thorough breed citizen or adult. Also it helps students to make natural decisions which will last longer than those induced by rules or force. Even though the decision have been guided through the use of bibliotherapy. Inman, et. al. (2000) stated that "bibliotherapy is not intended to be a cure for all children but rather one possible way to encourage students to relate with certain aspects of his/her life". The aspect(s) or character(s) are carefully selected in the literature to be provided for the students to read or other format of bibliotherapy to be used.

Implementing Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy can be implemented in various forms or ways include:

- Reading: this involves selecting book(s) for the student(s) to read with the mind that she will get the message and imbibe the good quality/attributes in the book(s). there is also the hope that the reader will benefit from a particular character or the theme of the book(s). it is purely an independent way of affecting a students' character.
- Discussion: This is a step further from the reading, because here the therapist-counselor, librarians, or teacher is involved by asking the student how far she has gone in the reading of the book(s). in the process, the therapist try to pass the message/character/attribute desired unto the student and at the same time the student it also able to discuss his/her feelings and s/he can be guided in adopting or adjusting or adjusting his/her character appropriately.
- Story telling: This is very common in some culture, especially in Africa. It is also known as folkore and it is always targeted at, impacting certain attributes or character unto the listeners. In the typical African setting it is usually done by a respected elderly person and it intends to promote good moral, cultural value, good etiquette, discipline, etc. the school counselor or the teacher is also a person of noble character whom the students must be willing to listen to, and through that imparts their lives positively through carefully selected stories.
- Play Activity: This usually comes up after a student had read a particular recommended book(s). S/He is then asked to perform some kind of activity like drawing, memorizing, or presenting part of the book or a particular character from the book(s) as a way of allowing for deep involvement in the character and

thereby helping the student to consciously or unconsciously imbibe the character/attributes.

- Drama: in this case, the student may first of all be given the book to read or sometimes they might have never read the book before. The book is acted as a life drama by the group of the students or by another group but being watched by the students to be treated. The drama is carefully selected or tailored to depict or show the appropriate character/attributes. A video or television drama could also serve the purpose. After the drama there may be need for a short comment to convey the message more appropriately or comment can be welcome from the students to assist them in ascertaining that the right message is got from the drama.
- Role modeling: This is when the counselor or the therapist displays certain attributes/character either from a book, video, drama or life display to the student from time to time and encourages or monitors such student(s) that they display or emulate such character.
- Poetry: this is reading or listening to poems. The rhythm and rhymes together with the wordings has a way of creating an impression on the mind of the listeners. This can be coupled with writing of poems.

Bibliotherapy implementation can also come in different settings or levels of operation. These settings include:

- Personalized/Individualized Therapy: describes a situation where the student is attended to on one-on-one basic with the therapist. Whether a book, poem or video drama, is being employed, it is going to be on a personal level with the student and/or probably with the therapist. This is very good when students to be attended to are not many.
- Small Group: is usually applied where students to be attended to on similar issues are more than three or four and the luxury of the time is not there, the school counselor can decide to put them in a small group and apply the same method or a very close approach. The same medium may be used for them. Character problem or issue to be treated is usually the determinant of forming the group.
- Team/Class division: may be necessary when the number of students involved is fairly large or a whole class is to be subjected to bibliotherapy. For convenience or thoroughness, there may be the need to sub-divide the population or the class into team or division based on certain parameters. This will allow for proper monitoring and evaluation of the impact and progress.
- Club: This is grouping students together for the purpose of therapy such that they now meet regularly. It can be a reading, discussion, drama, poetry or writing club. There is a high level of loyalty, commitment and readiness to participate in all the activities to be prescribed by the therapist. The students can invite and involve other students of similar character. There is the communication of the club members in addition to be bibliotherapy material.
- Large Group: This can be effective for a large number of students. The therapy can come in form of workshop, seminar or symposium. It is done with the mindset of reaching a larger population within a short period of time.

Methodology

For the purpose of this research, descriptive survey method was used. School counselors in twenty (20) local government area of the state were randomly sampled with an average of 5 copies of questionnaire per local government. The items of the questionnaire were divided into four sections: demographic information, knowledge of bibliotherapy. Attitude of schools counselors to bibliotherapy and practice of bibliotherapy by school counselors. The following local government were used of the purpose of this research: Ibadan North, Ibadan North west, Atisbo, Ogbomoso South, Ogbomoso North, Itesiwaju, Surulere, Olorunsogo, Kajola, Iseyin, Oyo East, Ona Ara, Iwajowa, Oririre, Oorelope, Atiba, Ogooluwa, Saki West, Saki East,

Data Analysis

For this research work frequency, percentages, chi square and correlation analysis were performed on the data obtained. The findings for the research is as presented below:

Table 1: School Counselors Knowledge about Bibliotherapy

Magnitude	Number	Percentage
Very High	6	5.8
High	14	13.6
Average	37	35.9
Low	22	21.4
Very low	24	23.3
Total	103	100

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of school counselors' knowledge about bibliotherapy. The knowledge level of majority of the school counselors was found to be low (72 or 69.9%). The chi-square analysis done ($X^2 = 26.18$, $df = 4$, $P < 0.05$) shows that there is a significant difference in the knowledge of bibliotherapy among school counselors. This implies that school counselors' knowledge about bibliotherapy differs significantly.

Table 2: Use of Bibliotherapy by School Counselors as Corrective Intervention for Students

Magnitude	Number	Percentage
Very High	7	6.8
High	11	10.7
Average	13	12.6
Low	35	34.0
Very low	37	35.9
Total	103	100

From table 2, the highest percentage of school counselors (72 or 69.9%) make low use of bibliotherapy as corrective intervention. The chi-square analysis done revealed $X^2 = 58.80$, $df = 4$, $P < 0.05$ indicates that there is a significant difference in the frequency of use of bibliotherapy as a corrective intervention among school counselors. This implies

that majority of the school counselors are not using bibliotherapy as a corrective intervention.

Table 3: Attitude of School Conselors to Bibliotherapy Concept and Practice

Magnitude	Number	Percentage
Very High	7	6.8
High	13	12.6
Average	17	16.5
Low	34	33.0
Very low	32	31.1
Total	103	100

From table 3, very high proportion of the school counselors attitude to bibliotherapy concept and practice was found to be low (66 or 64.1%). This may mean that majority of the school counselors has negative attitude toward bibliotherapy concept and practice. The chi-square analysis done ($X^2 = 46.86$, $df = 4$, $P < 0.05$) shows that there is significant variation in school counselors attitude to bibliotherapy concept and practice.

Table 4: Forms/techniques of Bibliotherapy used by School Counselors

Magnitude	Number	Percentage
Seminar/Workshop/Symposium	32	31.1
Reading Club	49	47.6
Story telling/poetry	52	50.5

From table 4 it is clear that majority of the school counselors (52 or 50.5%) 31.1%) adopts story telling as a technique of practicing bibliotherapy while 49 or 47.6% of the Counselors adopts reading club as a technique of practicing bibliotherapy. The chi-square analysis done ($X^2 = 29.06$, $df = 2$, $P < 0.05$) shows that the techniques adopted by the school counselor varies significantly. This implies that the school counselors adopt various bibliotherapy techniques. There is also an increase in the magnitude of the forms/techniques of bibliotherapy used by the school counselors because they are to indicate more than one option.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis between Knowledge, Attitude and bibliotherapy Concept and Practice

Variables	Knowledge	Attitude	Practice
Knowledge	1	0.127	-0.081
Attitude	0.127	1	0.187
Practice	-0.081	0.187	1

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

From the result above, there is low positive correlation between knowledge and attitude of school counselors about bibliotherapy ($r = 0.127$, $p > 0.05$) this shows that as the knowledge of school counselors about bibliotherapy increases, their attitude will also

increase and vice versa. The correlation is however low and insignificant, this implies that the positive relationship between knowledge and attitude of school counselors about bibliotherapy is not statistically significant.

Also there is a very low negative correlation between knowledge and practice of bibliotherapy ($r=-0.081$, $p>0.05$) this indicate that as school counselors knowledge of bibliotherapy decreases, the practice also decreases and vice versa. The correlation is low, negative and insignificant. This implies that there is no statistically significant relationship between knowledge and practice of school counselors. Then it could be deduced that school counselors' knowledge of bibliotherapy does not in any way affect their practice.

However there is low positive correlation between the practice of bibliotherapy and attitude of school counselors ($r=0.0187$, $p>0.05$) this shows that as the attitude of school counselors increases, the practice of bibliotherapy also increases, and vice versa. The correlation is low and insignificant. This implies that there is no statistically significant relationship between attitude and practice of bibliotherapy among school counselors.

Discussion

From the analysis above, it can be inferred that the knowledge of school counselors about bibliotherapy is low. This may arise from the fact that either the subject is not taught during the school days of the counselors or they have probably forgotten it because of misuse or some other environmental factors like lack of standard school libraries. Also, findings from the study show that the use of bibliotherapy by school counselors is also low. This is quite related to the fact that since level of knowledge is low then the use should not be expected to be different. The percentage of low and very low use is about seventy percent (69.9%), hence the implication is that majority of the school counselors are not using bibliotherapy as a corrective measure.

The attitude of school counselors to bibliotherapy does not differ as reflected through majority of the counselors. This also shows a significant variation in the school counselors' attitude to bibliotherapy concept and practice. For the techniques employed story telling/poet takes the highest possible score because of the setting of the local governments concern as they are more of less cities local governments. Following it is the reading club while seminar/workshop/symposium takes the rear. This can be linked to the low level of the knowledge of the counselors.

Table 5 shows us the correlation pattern and it can be deduced that school counselors that have right/positive attitude to bibliotherapy possibly have high knowledge, while those that have wrong/negative attitude have little or no knowledge. Also it can be deduced that school counselors' knowledge of bibliotherapy does not in any way affect the practice. This cannot be unconnected with the fact that most schools do not have a standard school library and also the low reading culture of Nigerians could also explained this. Also ninety percent (90.0%) of the school counselors were directly employed as school counselors but rather as a subject teacher; they only make interest in school counseling because it was there course of study at the tertiary level of education. While

as the attitude increases then the use of bibliotherapy also increases as shown by the correlation table. Where there is a will be a way, so when the school counselors put on the right attitude, definitely bibliotherapy practice will also receive a boost.

Recommendations

The following are some of the recommendations

1. Guidance and counseling department in tertiary institutions should lay more emphasis on the subject “bibliotherapy” to afford their graduates better understanding and knowledge of it.
2. Guidance and Counseling Association should organize seminar with bibliotherapy as the focus to impart, remind, reawaken, the knowledge and attitude of school counselors to it so as to enhance the practice of it.
3. Government should do more in the area of providing and stocking the school libraries and also the public libraries so as to provide ready materials for the school counselors to use.
4. School counselors should adopt various techniques in teaching bibliotherapy, such as role modeling, reading, drama, and employ individualized, class/team and club approach/forms in the practice of it.
5. School counselors should work on their attitude to bibliotherapy since this has direct impact on the practice. They should be more favourably disposed to it.
6. School counselors should increase their practices of bibliotherapy, since this will sharpen their effectiveness in the use of it.
7. School counselors should have input in school library collection development and even recommendation of literature books for students.

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