

AGE, GENDER AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION AS PREDICTORS OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS COUNSELLING SERVICES AMONG STUDENTS IN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Counselling is necessary in theological education because it helps in remediating many problems but the attitude of theological students towards counselling is not encouraging. Previous study has investigated parental and peer influences on attitude towards counselling in theological seminary but neglected socio demographic variables such as age, gender, level of education which the present study focused on. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study and 120 students (80 male and 40 female) were purposively selected to represent all the theological students in Ondo state because they possess similar characteristics. A structured questionnaire divided into two sections (demographic variable section and Attitude Towards Counselling Scale $r=0.82$ section), was used to collect data from the respondents. The results showed that there was no joint contribution of age, gender and education level to attitude towards counseling (that Gender ($\beta = -.130, P>.05$), Age ($\beta = -.092, P>.05$) and Level of education $R^2 = 0.035, F_{3,96} = 1.171$ accounted for 3.5%. Then, ($\beta = .130, P>.05$) could not independently and significantly predict Media resources utilization. It was recommended that the management of CAC Theological Seminary should promote positive attitude towards counselling more among students irrespective of age, gender and level of education.

Keywords: Age, Gender, Education, Attitude, Counselling, Theology.

Introduction

Theological education is the type of education received in the discipline of Theology. It is specifically designed to systematically know, understand, interpret and apply Christian faith in all daily activities of life. Theological education is the way in which Christian faith is transmitted from one generation to another. It involves training of people in order to acquire knowledge, attitude and skills for service of God. The fact remains that theological education centres on peaceful coexistence of people, formation of church and community leadership. Counselling is an essential component of theological education.

Makinde(1983) opined that catholic reverend sisters introduced counselling into school activities in Nigeria in 1959 at Saint Theresa College Ibadan to ensure counselling has been as part of any educational programme Nigeria. The establishment of the first Department of Guidance and Counselling in the University of Ibadan in 1976 and the introduction of counselling in the National Policy on Education, make counselling a prominent profession

(Makinde, 1983). Counselling is part of any educational establishment in governmental and non-governmental settings (Christian education inclusive). The National Policy on Counselling spelt it out that counselling centres should be established in all levels of education. The role of counselling in theological education can never be erased. counselling is a helping profession that solves human problems or challenges ranging from educational, vocational and socio-personal problems. Since theological educators and their students need to solve educational, vocational and socio-personal problems in the school or in the church, counselling as a course was included in theological curriculum and counselling unit was established as part of theological education. Pastoral or Christian counselling majorly uses biblical principles or Christian doctrines to handle problems but since human problems are not spiritual alone, Christian counselling still makes use of psychological principles to handle some other issues. counselling helps in adjusting the deviants to normal life, makes people realize their potentials and use them to the fullness. Theologically, counselling helps to reorganize body, soul and spirit together. It enlightens people on issues which they are ignorant of and promoting social responsibilities and intra and inter personal relationships.

Attitude towards counselling has been well researched which shows that there is positive and negative disposition towards counselling (Delal, Farrai, Schilsk, Goldmna& Moore, 2011). Demographic variables such as age, gender and level of education of students have been submitted to have been associated with attitude towards counselling. Age is a factor in seeking counselling (Lokoyi, 2015). It was found that men were likely to seek counselling at old age as a result of referral while young were likely to seek counselling or testing based on enlightenment. In a similar study, it was discovered that age was a strong predictor of attitude of people towards counselling.

Gender is another predictor of attitude towards counselling (Keklik, 2009). It is a determinant of voluntary counselling but varies in male and female. Male and female undergo voluntary counselling but their level of attending counselling differs. There was lower record of attendance of counselling on voluntary basis among men with low income than their women counterparts. This shows that gender determined voluntary counselling and testing in clinic.

Education level of students has been shown to promote voluntary counselling and testing. Mbego (2013) discovered that education level increases the update of providers-initiated counselling and testing among people attending sexual transmitted infection clinic. Education promotes the attitude of patients' registration for HIV treatment counselling. Education propelled attendance of voluntary counselling among adolescents either in school or outside school settings. In other studies cited on demographic factors as determinants of attitude towards counselling, it was submitted that the combination of age, gender, education level, living arrangement and presence of problem significantly associated with attitude towards seeking psychological help. Furthermore, age, gender teaching experience and training in guidance and counselling combined influenced attitude towards guidance and counselling services in school. Socio-demographic variables such as age, race, province settlement and employment were significantly correlated with voluntary counselling update. In the contrary, it was found that pscho-socio factors (age, gender, emotional intelligence and parental socio-economic status) did not jointly and relatively contribute to attitude towards counselling among secondary school students.

Statement of Problem

Students attitude towards counselling services is below expectation in theological seminary due to poor orientation and over spirituality of events or challenges encountered by students. This was premised on the fact that they believed all the challenges of life needed to be solved with spiritual attention rather than facing the realities. Many students believe that it is God they need to consult always for the solution to their problem but they have forgotten that God has deposited knowledge and skills of counselling into some personnel who were also specially trained for the purpose of solving human problems. However, a study has shown that disposition of theological seminary, towards students' counselling has been promoted by students' parental and peer factors and had also shown that age, gender, socio-economic status and emotional intelligence did not contribute to attitude towards counselling of secondary school students. Therefore, this study investigated age, gender and level of education on attitude towards counselling among theological students in Ondo State.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to investigate socio- demographic factors (age, gender and level of education) as predictors of attitude toward counselling of students in theological seminary. The specific objectives are to:

1. Find the joint contribution of demographic factors (age, gender and educational qualification) as predictors of attitude toward counselling of students in theological seminary, Ondo state.
2. Examine the relative contributions of socio demographic factors (age, gender and level of education) as predictors of attitude towards counselling of students in theological seminary, Ondo state.

Research Questions

These research questions were raised and answered in the study.

1. What is the joint contribution of the independent variable (Gender, Age, and Level of education on attitude towards counselling of students
2. What is the relative contribution of the independent variable (gender, age, and level of education on attitude towards counselling of students?

Methodology

The study made use of descriptive research design of correlation type because it looks into the relationship that exists between the variables. The population of the study comprises all the theological students in Ondo state. Purposive sampling technique was used to select one hundred and twenty (120) full-time and part time students (80 male and 40 female) to represent the whole population because they possess similar characteristics. The ages of the students range between 21 and 50 years with average of 35.6. A structured questionnaire was used to collect necessary information for the study. The questionnaire was tagged Socio-Demographic Factors and Attitude Towards counselling Questionnaire (S-DFATCQ). The questionnaire was sub-divided into two sections. Section A: Demographic Variables. The demographic variables comprised age, gender and class. Section B: Attitude Towards counselling Scale (ATCS). The scale was constructed by the researchers and was used to collect data on students' attitude towards counseling. It consists 16 items of five- point Likert

format. The reliability coefficient is 0.82 after test-re-test for two weeks interval which made the instrument reliable for use.

The questionnaires were administered by the researchers with the assistance of the class governors. Out of the 120 questionnaires administered, 115 were retrieved but 100 questionnaires were found valid for analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was adopted to analyse the two research questions raised on the study.

Results

Research Question One: What is the joint contribution of the independent variable (Gender, Age, and Level of education on attitude towards counselling of students

Table 1: Summary of Regression analysis showing the joint contribution of Gender, Age, and Level of education on attitude towards counseling of students

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
.188	.035	.005	29.5317			
ANOVA						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	3063.962	3	1021.321	1.171	.325	Not sig.
Residual	83723.748	96	872.122			
Total	86787.710	99				

Table 1, shows the joint contribution of the three independent variables (Gender, Age and Level of education) to the dependent (attitude towards counselling of students). The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation ($R = .188$ and a multiple R^2 of .035. This means that 3.5% of the variance was accounted for by three predictor variables when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at $\alpha = 0.05$. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded F-ratio of 1.171 (not significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was not significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

Research Question Two: What is the relative contribution of the independent variable (gender, age, and level of education on attitude towards counselling of students?

Table 2: Summary of regression analysis showing the relative contribution of Gender, Age, and Level of education on attitude towards counselling of students

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta Contribution		
ko(Constant)	107.931	23.811		4.533	.000
Gender	-7.633	5.918	-.130	-1.290	.200
Age	-.308	.342	-.092	-.900	.370
Level of Education	5.846	4.590	.130	1.274	.206

Table 2, reveals the relative contribution of the three independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights, viz: Gender ($\beta = -.130$, $P > .05$), Age ($\beta = -.092$, $P > .05$) and Level of education ($\beta = .130$, $P > .05$) respectively. Hence, it could be deduced that none of the independent variables were significant i.e. could not independently and significantly predict attitude towards counselling of theological students.

Discussion

The research question which state what is the joint contribution of the independent variable (Gender, Age, and Level of education on attitude towards counselling of students showed that age, gender and level of education of the students did not contribute to students' attitude towards counselling. The finding contradicts (Keklik, 2009) who submitted that age, gender, emotional intelligence attributed to attitude towards counselling in schools. Furthermore, the findings contradict that of (Lokoyi, 2015) who indicated that age, gender, education level among other variables jointly contributed to attitude towards seeking psychological help. Coupled with this, (Mbengo, 2013) opined that age, gender among other variables contributed to attitude towards guidance and counselling services in schools.

The research question which state what is the relative contribution of the independent variable (gender, age, and level of education on attitude towards counselling of students. The study revealed that none of the socio-demographic factors: age, gender and level of education of theological students contributed individually to attitude towards counselling. This is in line with the finding of DeKoker et al (2010) which posits that age was a strong predictor of attitude of people towards counselling contradicted the present finding which showed that gender determined voluntary counselling and testing in clinic.

Conclusion

The study investigated socio-demographic factors (age, gender and level of education) as predictors of attitude towards counselling among theological students in Ondo State. The outcomes of the study showed that socio-demographic factors such as age, gender and level of education did not jointly or relatively contribute to attitude towards counselling among theological students thus makes the students to prefer consulting the pastors on any challenging issue rather than consulting guidance counsellors for counselling to find lasting solution to such challenging issues. However, it was concluded that irrespective of age, gender and level of education, theological students could consult counsellors for their educational, socio-personal and vocational challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of the study, the following the recommendation are made:

1. The management of theological seminary should promote positive attitude towards counselling more among students irrespective of age, gender and level of education.
2. Counselling courses should be infused by the theological management into the curriculum to be offered in each level of theological education of the seminary so that counselling would be encouraged.
3. Department of Counselling should be established as a distinct academic discipline in the Seminary so that counselling could be more embraced in the seminary.

4. The pastors should recognise guidance counsellors or counselling psychologists as trained individuals that can help the students to solve social – personal, psychological and emotional issues

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