

WORKPLACE COLLABORATION AND MENTORING OF COUNSELLORS AS CORRELATES OF THEIR JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Training, development and job performance are considered to be the essential elements in psychological disciplines. It is also an important aspect of workplace creativity, productivity and safety. This study examined workplace collaboration and mentoring of counsellors as correlates of their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state. Two research questions guided the study while two null hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was adopted by the researcher. A total of 221 secondary school Guidance Counsellors made up the population of the study. The whole population of the 221 Guidance Counsellors was included in the study, hence no sampling was done. Three research instruments namely; Workplace Collaboration Questionnaire (WCQ), Mentoring Questionnaire (MQ) and Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ) were used for data collection. The reliability coefficient value of the instruments are as follows; $r = 0.69$ for WCQ, 0.70 for MQ and 0.86 for JPQ . Copies of the instruments were distributed through direct delivery approach. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer research question while t-test of significance of relationship was used in testing of the hypotheses. The findings of the study showed among others, workplace collaboration of counsellors and mentoring is a significant correlate of counsellors' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. From the findings of the study, the researcher made some recommendations which include that school leaders should look for ways to create a work culture in which staff of the school are motivated and engaged in collaborative educational activities. The presence of a collaborative and mentored workforce is vital to organizational and operational success..

Keywords: Workplace, Collaboration, Mentoring, Guidance and Counsellors

Introduction

The school, apart from the home is the most important place for students to learn and develop their educational, moral and social competencies. In this, Guidance Counsellors tend to play a pivotal role in providing the needed educational support to the students. Consequently, for the attainment of quality of education, training and development of counsellors is very essential for effective job performance and the attainment of educational goals. Training and development through mentorship are considered to be the essential elements in psychological disciplines (Armstrong, Plunk & Wells, 2015), and is

believed to be beneficial to mentors and mentees in the counsellor education context. However, as mentoring as a tool for strengthening professional knowledge is not without barriers hindering its effectiveness in performing their job. As Shaughnessy (2017) opined, performance of workers is extremely crucial for any establishment as it could ultimately leads to its success.

Performance may be described as an act of accomplishing or executing a given task. It could also be described according to Taghipour and Dejbani (2013), as the ability to combine skilfully the right behaviours towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. In essence, job performance relates to how individuals perform in their job duties. In addition to training and natural ability, job performance is impacted by workplace environment factors including physically demanding tasks, employee morale, stress levels, and working extended hours. It is also an important aspect of workplace creativity, productivity and safety. As Taghipour and Dejbani noted, performance of members of any organization depends on the ability to effectively interact with their superiors, subordinates and co-workers within the organization and consumers, suppliers and general public outside. Hence, the greatest asset of any organization is its human resources that ensure the achievement of the organization's objectives. Perhaps, this could be the reason why guidance counsellors are exposed to trainings on human resource that can enhance or better their counselling and the school environment.

Counsellors tend to work in confidential settings with individuals who are experiencing personal difficulties, to help them overcome their problems and to make appropriate changes to their lives. In doing this, they listen to, empathise with, encourage and help to empower individuals. The nature of problems usually encountered may vary according to the setting and could include, for example, depression, anxiety, the need to manage harmful emotions and behaviours, or difficulties with coping with traumatic experience and events.

Saraswathi (2010) noted that through professional development strategies such as mentoring, counsellors can navigate the rapidly evolving world of education to meet the needs of today's students. Through mentoring, counsellors in schools could be assisted in acquiring and honing skills needed to fulfil different tasks consistent with their current or anticipated potential duties in a systematic and organised manner. According to Joel (2016) counsellors working in schools have to create conditions to support and encourage students' success. Notwithstanding these tremendous benefits of mentorship to the student teacher, their future learners, our society and the country as a whole, very little seem to be known of the experiences of the mentees on the field.

Mentoring is a semi-structured coaching method in which one person contributes his or her expertise, talents, and experience to help others advance in their own lives and careers. Mentoring is a collaborative learning relationship between two individuals or more that

leads to insights, decisions, planning and action and facilitates professional and personal development. Development of human resource is a systematic process of training and growth, by which individuals gain, apply knowledgeable insight and attitude to manage organization and work effectively. This could be achieved through exposure to mentoring (Bradford, 2015). Schools can use mentoring programmes to support the professional and personal development of employees and to improve workplace relationships and culture. Mentoring could also be an opportunity to provide new knowledge and experiences to employees. Its common goal is to encourage learning and personal development by using specific methods.

Mentoring is one of the most relevant ways to engage women and men employees to support their career development and to assist in the creation of respectful workplaces where women and men are treated fairly (Mohammad & Iqbal, 2015). Before embarking on a mentoring programme, it is highly important for counsellors to analyze and understand what benefits mentoring can bring to their organisation. Good quality mentoring in schools contributes significantly to the job performance and career advancement of counsellors through workplace collaboration.

Collaboration is a process through which people who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible (Gray, 2001). Workplace collaboration is a structured teamwork that establishes mechanisms to ensure that team members collaborate to make decisions. Effective counsellor collaboration is described as engaging in rituals in which Counsellors talk about classroom interactions in order to improve pedagogical skills and encourage colleagues to try new things (Marzano & Toth, 2013). Collaboration is dependent on building trust among Counsellors as well as between Counsellors and school leaders. When Counsellors collaborate, it promotes faster-paced innovation and ability development, which in turn improves their success in school and, as a result, increases job performance.

Statement of the Problem

Previous research explains that satisfaction occurs when the workplace develops certain qualities that lead the workers to perform better at job. Hence, a suitable working condition could be established for the counsellors to carry out their responsibilities by fully utilizing their potential and at the same time delivering quality service to their clients. Job performance influenced by numerous factors, is realized when an individual is able to successfully achieve the task appointed to him/her under subject to less constraints at the work place. As a teacher and a counsellor, almost every year some mentees complain vehemently about various difficulties they encounter ranging from attitude of some of the heads of the schools they are sent to, attitude of some of the mentors as well as the community members they lived with. Yet, going through literatures have shown that scholars have mainly focused their researches on various

factors to enhance the performance of the employees such as training, security/safety, working hours and job redesigning (Kiazad, Kraimer & Seibert, 2019; Masadeh, Obeidat & Tarhini, 2016). However, in Anambra state, despite the perceived notion of lack of mentorship and collaboration among school staff and counsellors in Anambra state, not many studies have focused on mentoring and workplace collaboration which has the tendency to play a vital role between the counsellors and how they perform at work. This is an observed gap in literature which this study sought to fill. Hence, the study sought to examine workplace collaboration and mentoring of counsellors as correlates of their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine workplace collaboration and mentoring of counsellors as correlates of their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state. Specifically, the study sought to examine:

1. The correlation between workplace collaboration of counsellors as correlates of their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state.
2. The correlation between mentoring of counsellors as correlates of their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the correlation between workplace collaboration of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state?
2. What is the correlation between mentoring of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. The correlation between workplace collaboration of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state is not significant.
2. The correlation between mentoring of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state is not significant.

Method

Research Design

The study was conducted using a correlational research design. The design was used because it sought to establish the correlation between workplace collaboration and mentoring of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state.

Participants

A total of 221 Counsellors from both public and private secondary schools in Anambra State made up the sample for this study. In selecting the sample for the study, census involving all the 221 school counsellors was carried out.

Instrument for Data Collection

Three research instruments were used to elicit information from the school counsellors for this study. The instruments include: Workplace Collaboration Questionnaire (WCQ) and Mentoring Questionnaire (MQ). The instruments were self-constructed questionnaires from relevant literatures reviewed. The Workplace Collaboration Questionnaire has 9 items that sought to measure counsellors' disposition to collaborate at workplace. It was measured on a 4-point rating scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The mentoring questionnaire has 10 items measuring benefits of mentoring to counsellors. It was also measured on a 4-point rating scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ) is 14 item questionnaire adapted from Mildred (2016). The questionnaire measures the job performance of counsellor from the perspective of quality of work, meeting deadlines, cooperation, achievement on set targets and efficiency. The questionnaire has a 4 point response options which ranged from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree to Strongly Disagree, and has weighted values of 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The three instruments have all been subjected to internal consistency reliability test using Cronbach Alpha. The outcome yielded a coefficient Alpha of 0.69 for WCQ, 0.70 for MQ and 0.86 for JPQ.

Method of Data Collection

All the participants for the study were administered the three research instruments through direct delivery approach.

Method of Data Analysis

Research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r), while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis.

Results

In this section, the data collected from the field for this study were analysed and the summaries presented in tables to highlight the findings as follows:

Research Question 1

What is the correlation between workplace collaboration of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state?

Table 1: Pearson r of Workplace collaboration of counsellors as correlate of their job performance

Variation	N	Workplace	Counsellors' job	Remarks
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		collaboration	performance		
Workplace collaboration	219	1	0.866	Very positive correlation	High
Counsellors' job performance	219	0.866	1		

The result in Table 1 revealed that Pearson r between workplace collaboration and their job performance was 0.866. This revealed that the correlation between Workplace collaboration of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state was very high and positive.

Research Question 2

What is the correlation between mentoring of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state?

Table 2: Pearson r of mentoring of counsellors as correlate of their job performance.

Variation	N	Mentoring of counsellors	Counsellors' job performance	Remarks
Mentoring of Counsellors	219	1	.651	High positive prediction
Counsellors' job performance	219	.651*	1	

The result in Table 2 revealed that Pearson r between mentoring of counsellors and their job performance was .651. This revealed that the correlation between mentoring of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state was high and positive.

Hypotheses Testing

Null hypothesis 1

The correlation between workplace collaboration of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state will not be significant.

Table 3: Simple linear regression of workplace collaboration of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state

Source	N	r	t-cal	p-value	Remark
Work place	219	0.866	4.573	0.000	Significant

collaboration

Table 3 revealed a Pearson r of 0.86 and t -calculated of 4.573 at p -value of .000 which is less than .05 alpha level, hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, workplace collaboration of counsellors is a significantly correlate of counsellors' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Null hypothesis 2

The correlation between mentoring of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state will not be significant.

Table 4: Simple linear regression of workplace collaboration of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state

Source	N	r	t-cal	p-value	Remark
Mentoring	219	0.65	2.47	0.005	Significant

Table 4 revealed a Pearson r of 0.65 and t -calculated of 2.47 with p -value of 0.005 which is less than .05 alpha level, hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, mentoring of counsellors is a significantly correlate of their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion

The findings of the study are hereby discussed in line with the themes as follows:

Correlation between workplace collaboration of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state

The findings of the study revealed that the correlation between Workplace collaboration of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state is very high and positive. The findings further revealed that workplace collaboration of counsellors is a significantly correlate of counsellors' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This finding shows that when counsellors work as team at workplace that it could lead to an improvement in their job performance.

This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Marzano and Toth (2013), who defined collaboration as an organised cooperation in which Guidance Counsellors talk about counselling experiences in order to improve their counselling competence and encourage colleagues to do new things. Counsellor cooperation, according to them, aids faster-paced invention and skill growth, which always enhances production. The current study's findings are consistent with Jonesboro's (2020) belief that when counsellors collaborate, they have a good influence on one another and therefore organically contribute to school development.

Marzano and Toth also stated that regular encounters are critical in developing long-term professional support. When counsellors feel supported, they can better provide that assistance to their pupils, promoting overall performance. The current results is consistent with Jonesboro's (2020) perspective of collaboration as a professional activity in which counsellors exchange experiences, skills, and information that can improve their teaching practise and, as a result, students' performance. As a result, cooperation might be seen as a fundamental component for school quality, effectiveness, and student performance.

Correlation between workplace mentoring of counsellors and their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra state

The study's findings indicated a strong and favourable relationship between counsellor mentorship and job success in Anambra state's public secondary schools. The studies also indicated that counsellor mentorship is a strong predictor of job performance in Anambra State's public secondary schools. The study's findings are consistent with those of Alsbury and Hackmann (2016) and Mohammed and Iqbal (2015), who found that good quality mentoring in schools contributes to the professional development of junior and newly hired counsellors by sharing learning experiences for improving teaching/learning processes. Mohammed and Iqbal noted that when teaching and learning processes are effective, counsellors' job performance is noticed.

This finding might be explained by the perception of mentorship as a connection between a less experienced individual and a more experienced person in which guidance, advice, support, and feedback are offered. According to Mohammed and Iqbal, assisting a beginner counsellor in being adequately guided on the fundamentals of behaviour modification can help that counsellor's performance. Similarly, via a good mentoring strategy, mentoring might improve the personal abilities of counsellors. It could also help in overcoming skill deficits and organising internal development programmes to bridge recognised skill gaps in order to bring a change in behaviours and improving job performance in the classroom.

Furthermore, mentoring in the organisational context can be viewed as a training and development programme that can be used to increase individual potentials in carrying out specific responsibilities and familiarise with new techniques in the workplace, both of which can invariably improve organisational performance. The present finding corresponds with Arora and Rangnekar (2015) whose study noted mentoring to be a process that develops the whole person, rather than parts for effective task performance. They also considered mentorship to be one of the most effective strategies for decreasing stress in new counsellors, orienting them to techniques of behaviour modification, and fostering the development of greater career progression and collaboration. Mentoring can also offer more benefits by providing an essential role that supports, counsels, and guides a mentee in his or her personal and professional career development. Through this relationship, the mentee would likely perceive the organization as a caring place to grow and develop.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that:

Workplace collaboration is a significantly correlate of counsellors' job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The findings further revealed that mentoring of counsellors is a significantly correlate of their job performance in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Implications of the Study

Mentoring can improve employee engagement by improving employee performance. The results of the current study addressed the research gap on the association of workplace collaboration, mentoring and counsellor job performance. Also, the associations found in the present study relate to the culture of the workplace and how the effectiveness of mentoring can contribute to job performance of Guidance Counsellors working in secondary schools. Through their actions and behaviours, counsellors have the ability to influence their work culture and the work environment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School leaders should look for ways to create a work culture in which staff of the school are motivated and engaged in collaborative educational activities. The presence of a motivated and collaborative workforce is vital to organizational and operational success.
2. The school management should design an internal mentoring programme with the school's strategic objectives in mind. The mentoring programme should be directed towards supporting succession planning, knowledge management, knowledge transfer, and retention and counsellor development in the workplace.
3. The school should set up a mentoring programme group that will work closely with other management staff to determine the goals and needs of the mentoring programme and implements the programme accordingly. Throughout the process, the group coordinator keeps records of the mentoring programme's progress and reports this progress to supervisors or other groups, as agreed.

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