COUNSELLING STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING SOCIAL VICES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENTS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The study sought to determine counselling strategies for preventing social vices among secondary school students in Rivers State. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The area of the study was Rivers State. The Population of the study was 60 practising school Counsellors in public secondary schools in Rivers State .A total of 55 questionnaires were returned by school Counsellors. There was no sampling as the total of 55 respondents was studied. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-structured questionnaire based on modified four-point scales of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The instrument contained a total of 15 items and divided into sections A and B. The questionnaire had an internal consistency reliability estimate yielded 0.72 for Cluster A; 0.66 for Cluster B; which give 0.69 in averages. The data collected were analyzed using mean, for the responses of the research questions, items with mean score of 2.50 and above were regarded as agreement while items with less than 2.50 were regarded as disagreement. Findings from the study revealed that some Secondary school students are now members of a secret cult in school, Secondary schools students now involved in online gambling and sport betting, Secondary school students engaging in pre-marital sexual relationship are the various forms of social vices exhibited by Secondary school students among others. Recommendations were made that Parents should equally make themselves available at home to train their children and stop leaving them in the hands of nannies, house boys/ maids and teachers.

Keywords: Social vices, Secondary school students, counselling, strategies, prevention

Introduction

The current dispensation has witnessed an escalating rate of moral corruption all over the world, especially in Nigeria. Many people have at various occasions expressed serious concern over the high level of immoral behaviours and juvenile delinquencies that are prevalent in our time. In many parts of our society, immoral behavours such as laxity, lack of respect for authority figures, dishonesty and general indiscipline have become so prevalent that no one seems to know the way

out (Ekoja, 2006). Secondary school students experience different crises at different stages of life. There are crises of value conflicts, sexual identity, dependency issues, conflict with constituted authority and self-discipline. This adolescence stage is a delicate period in life. Aperiod of confusion, and decision making which either make or mar one's future

Unfortunately, most individuals, groups and institutions that should offer help to these youths at this crises stage fail to play their roles. Secondary school students are left uninformed by the experienced, and misinformed by the inexperienced.Vices are common among young males and females, example include prostitution, indecent dressing, robbery, cultism, pocket picking, drug addiction, examination malpractice, hooliganism, thuggery, gambling, smoking, pre-marital sexual activities, rape, alcoholism, taking of illegal substances among others. Social vices are bad traits, unhealthy and frowned at by members of the society. Social vices simply put are behaviours which are at variance with societal expectations based on established moral codes. According to Igwe (2014), social vices are anti-social actions which breach societal norms, values and more and they range from obscene dressing to sexual harassment and promiscuity, cultism, kidnapping, examination malpractice, hooliganism, character assassination, impersonation, financial fraud, and among others. According to Omonijo, Nnedum, Fadugba, Uche and Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2013), social vices are any actions exhibited either by omission or commission on negligence which contravenes cultural values and established codes of conduct of a particular community or in a given situation or location. Social vices arise from behaviours or maladjusted people in the society. Social vices are practices, behaviours or habits generally considered immoral, sinful, rude, taboo, criminal or degrading in the associated society. Social vices are extremely bad immoral behaviours that constitute a nuisance to the society (Ariyo, 2017). Jointheir (2016) noted that social vices are forms of evil, criminal and wicked actions or behaviour in the society. These are social problems and have been thought of as social institutions that a large number of observers feel are inappropriate and need remedy. Social vices are those acts and conditions that violate societal norms and values. Social vices are practices, behaviours or habits generally considered immoral, sinful, rude, taboo, criminal or civil degrading in the associated society. The etymology of the two words social an English word which means relating to the society and vice is a Latin word which was translated to mean defect or failing.

However, social vices are bad habits or immoral activities being practiced by the people in the society. In other words, they are bad traits, unhealthy and negative behaviours that are against the morality of a society and frowned at by members of the society. Thus, social vices like prostitution, indecent dress, robbery, cultism, banditry, drug abuse, thuggery, rape, pre-marital sexual activities, gambling, smoking, are the common examples of behaviour exhibited by some secondary school students. Recently, there has been a lot of discussion aimed at pinpointing the causes of social vices in our modern society which if not addressed with dispatch will deteriorate the society. It was revealed by the writer that, among the causes and then the secondary causes which occur as a result of the primary causes. Below are the various forms of social vices in our modern day society as opined by Ariyo (2017) as follow: examination malpractice, wrong peer influence or peer pressure, experimenting with cigarettes, alcohol and other harmful substances, poverty, lack of pre-marital Counselling ,and domestic violence has a negative impact which leads to broken homes. There are some social vices that are more common in the society especially in Nigeria as identified by Abubakar, (2011), Aiyeyika, (2010) such as : drug abuse, truancy and absenteeism, sexual promiscuity, thuggery, cultism, rape, pre-marital sex which most secondary school students exhibit.

Peterson (2018) describes several prevention efforts which include, value clarification, creating a mental health task force, raising awareness in the college community about danger of social vices, assisting students to develop meaningful life goals. Corroborating with this efforts, WHO (2016) identified important steps in social vices prevention which include; aiding students to develop the right value, and shun what is vices at all cost. Consequently, counsellors and by extension social workers need to develop school based initiatives for preventing as well as curtailing social vices among Secondary schools students.The world health Organization (2016) defined professional counselling as the application of mental health, psychological or human development principles, through cognitive, affective, behavioural or systemic intervention strategies. By using these strategies, the counsellors and the social workers address wellness, personal growth and career development issues, as well as mental health pathology. Counselling is a helping relationship that seeks to assist the individual in attaining self-understanding and self-direction in order to live a more productive, happier and satisfying life. The need for counselling cannot be over-stressed. More so, in the work of Abaa (2021), counselling strategy

like behaviour rehearsal is effective in the treatment of social vices among secondary school students. School counsellors therefore, are positioned in schools to help children adapt to the school environment, understand themselves and be able to maximize their potentials. They assist students in three broad areas – educational, personal-social and vocational. Their roles in preventing wastages such as occur in the educational sector is indispensable because all over the globe, counsellors are meant to play an integral role in the overall development of students including helping those who are at risk of exhibiting social vices and to overcome their challenges.If the trend is allowed to continue unabated, it is going to bring a serious damage to the country that is noted for honourable behaviours and high integrity. The increase in the number of youths involved in social vices in recent times calls for serious attention. If the youths of today are truly the leaders of tomorrow, it then becomes imperative to find a solution to the involvement of the youths in social vices so as not to produce a generation of vipers and corrupt society and for the future of our great nation to be sustained. Also the counsellor could assist Secondary school students by using value clarification as strategies to help students who have the tendency to exhibit social vice.It is against this backdrop that the researcher was motivated to investigate counselling strategies for prevention of social vices among secondary schools students in RiversState.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of social vices in Nigeria is highly alarming to the extent that any time one can fall victim of such situation. There are many cases, for long, of banditry, kidnapping, robbery, cultism, drug abuse, political thuggery, indecent dressing, prostitution, rape and general pre-marital sexual activities mostly in the Southern part of Nigeria, which in one way or the other affect the social, economic, educational wellbeing and health of Nigerians. These cases have started transferring from larger society to secondary schools in Nigeria. In consideration of frequent and incessant killings now particularly in most states in Nigeria and mostly people involved in such vices are secondary schools students, the researcher intends to find out how counselling strategies could be used to prevent social vices among secondary school’s students.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the counselling strategies for preventing social vices among secondary school students in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

1. The school counsellor identification of the various forms of social vices exhibited by secondary schools students.
2. The counselling strategies that could be used to curb social vice among secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for the study:

1. What are the various forms of social vices exhibited by secondary school students as identified by the school counsellor?
2. What are the counselling strategies forpreventing social vices as identified by the school counsellor?

Method

This study was primarily based on descriptive survey research design, aims to collect comprehensive information on counselling strategies for preventing social vices among secondary schools students in Nigeria. The study covers respondents from secondary school counsellors in Rivers State.Sixty (60) copies of the questionnaire were administered to school counsellors in Rivers State. A total of 55 questionnaires were returned by school counsellors. There was no sampling as the total of 55 respondents was studied. The instrument for data collection was a researcher-structured questionnaire based on modified four-point scales of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The instrument contained a total of 15 items and divided into sections A and B. The questionnaire was subjected to content validation by two experts in Department of guidance and counselling whose corrections were used to make final copies of the questionnaire. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, the scores from 20 respondents in the trial testing of the instrument were used in establishing the internal consistency using the Cronbach Alpha procedure. The internal consistency reliability estimate yielded 0.72 for Cluster A; 0.66 for Cluster B; which give 0.69 in averages. These results showed that the instrument was fairly reliable, which means it is good for the study. The data collected were analyzed using mean, for

the responses of the research questions, items with mean score of 2.50 and above were regardedas agreement while items with less than 2.50 were regarded as disagreement.

Results

Research question 1:

Table 1: item mean respondent of various forms of social vices exhibited by secondary school students as identified by the school counsellors

SN	Items	Mean	Remark
1.	I have received complaints from parents of the Secondary school students on indecent dressing	2.93	Accepted
2.	Some secondary school students are now disrespectful to constituted school authority.	2.64	Accepted
3.	I have treated cases of some secondary school students being members of secret cults in school	3.75	Accepted
4.	Some secondary school students now engage in thuggery behavior	3.01	Accepted
5.	I received reports of secondary school students caught taking hard drugs	3.25	Accepted
6.	There have been few report of secondary school students being involved in rape cases in the school settings	2.52	Accepted
7.	I have treated cases of secondary school students engaging in pre-marital sexual relationship	3.41	Accepted
8.	secondary school students have now advanced from manual examination malpractice, to electronic examination malpractice	3.27	Accepted
9.	I have received reports of secondary schools students now involved in online gambling and sport betting	3.69	Accepted
10.	I have received reports of secondary schoolstudentswanting to engage in money rituals.	2.54	Accepted
	Grand mean	3.10	Accepted

Table 1, presents the opinions of respondents on the various forms of social vices exhibited by secondary school students as identified by the school counsellors. From the table, the items with the highest mean are item 3: I have treated cases of some secondary school students being a members of secret cults in school with mean of 3.75, item 9: I have received reports of secondary schools students now involved in online gambling and sports betting with mean of 3.69, item 7: I have treated cases of secondary school students engaging in pre-marital sexual

relationship with mean of 3.41, item 8: secondary school student have now advanced from manual examination malpractice to electronic examination malpractice with mean of 3.27and item 5: I received reports of secondary school students caught taking hard drugs with mean of 3.25, while the item with the lowest mean is item 10 : I have received reports of secondary school students wanting to engage in money rituals with mean of 2.54. All the ten items have grand mean scores of 3.10. Therefore, all items under various forms of social vices exhibited by Secondary school students as identified by the school counsellors were considered acceptable. This is an indication that the respondents considered the items as various forms of social vices exhibited by Secondary school students as identified by the school counsellors.

Research question 2: What are the counselling strategies for the preventing social vices as identified by the school counsellors?

Table 2: item mean respondent of counselling strategies for preventing social vices as identified by the school counsellors

SN	Items	Mean	Remark
1.	Value clarification	3.80	Accepted
2.	Cognitive behaviour therapy	3.51	Accepted
3.	Behaviour rehearsal strategies	3.43	Accepted
4.	Reality counselling strategies	3.01	Accepted
5.	Systematic Desensitization	2.53	Accepted
	Grand mean	3.26	Accepted

Table 2: revealed the opinions of respondent of counselling strategies for the prevention of social vices as identified by the school counsellor. All the five items were above the acceptable bench mark of 2.5. The item with the highest mean scores is item 1: Value clarification with a mean of 3.80, while item 5:Systematic Desensitization with mean of 2.53have the lowest mean score item, all the items were strategies school counsellor could adopt in the prevention of social vices among Secondary school students.

Discussion of Findings

The finding from research question one, pinpointed the various forms of social vices exhibited by secondary schoolstudents as identified by the school counsellors. School counsellors agreed that some secondary school students are now members of secret cults in schools, secondary schools students now involved in online gambling and sport betting, secondary school students engaging in pre-marital sexual relationship, Secondary school students have now advance from

manual examination malpractice to electronic examination malpractice and Secondary school students have been caught taking hard drugs.These are the various forms of social vices exhibited by Secondary school students. The findings confirmed Ariyo, (2017) and Abubakar (2011) that social vices like prostitution, indecent dressing, robbery, cultism, banditry, drug abuse, thuggery, rape, pre-marital sexual activities, gambling and smoking, are common examples of behaviours exhibited by some secondary school students. More so, Ekoja, (2006) supported the findings that many people have at various occasions expressed serious concern over the high level of social vices that are prevalent in our time. In many parts of our society, social vices such as laxity, lack of respect for authority figures, dishonesty and general indiscipline have become so prevalent that no one seems to know the way out.

The finding from research question two identifies the counselling strategies that could be used to prevent social vices among secondary school students. Secondary school counsellors itemised that Value clarification, cognitive behaviour therapy, behaviour rehearsal strategies, reality counselling strategies, and systematic Desensitization are various strategies that could be used to prevent social vices among Secondary school students. Although, value clarification and cognitive behaviour therapy, have proven to be an effective strategy for the prevention of social vices among secondary school students. This finding is in line with Peterson (2018) that value clarification and cognitive behaviour therapy could be used to curtail social vices among secondary school students. Also, it is supported by empirical work of Abaa (2021) that counselling rehearsal strategies are effective remedy for the treatment of social vices among Secondary school students in Nigeria.

Conclusion

From the various findings of this study, the various form of social vices among secondary school students were identify as some secondary school students being members of secret cults in schools, secondary schools students now involved in online gambling and sport betting, secondary school students engaging in pre-marital sexual relationship, secondary school students have advance from manual examination malpractice to electronic examination malpractice and secondary school students caught taking hard drugs. It was also concluded that various counselling strategies such as value clarification, cognitive behaviour therapy are effective and efficient in preventingsocial vices among secondary school students.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings and discussions from the study; the following recommendations are made:

1. Secondary school students should be taught the need to arrange their life value in order of priority and shun things that have to do with social vices. This can be done by organising various workshops and seminars for them to learn counselling skills that will enable them to avoid these acts.

2. Good behaviours should be rewarded and social vices sanctioned to serve as deterrence to intending culprits, also teachers should lead by example and should be firm yet fair in dealing with deviant students.

3. Parents should equally make themselves available at home to bring up their children and not to leave them completely in the hands of nannies, house boys and maids.

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