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Implementing Culturally Sensitive Counselling Approaches in Diverse Educational Settings

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Abstract	Original Research Article

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of culturally sensitive counselling approaches in diverse educational settings. This article explores the significance of implementing culturally sensitive practices and provides strategies for school counsellors to better support students from diverse cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills into counselling practices, school counsellors can enhance their effectiveness in promoting student succesee and well-being.

The article examines the impact of culture on students' academic, social, and emotional development and emphasizes the need for counsellors to understand cultural nuances and adapt their approaches accordingly. Key strategies for implementing culturally sebsitive counselling include building relationships with students and families, understanding cultural values and beliefs, utilizing culturally responsive interventions, and advocating for systemic change.

Furthermore, the article highlights the role of counsellor self-awareness and on-going professional development in fostering cultural competence. Through the implementation of culturally sensitive counselling approaches, school counsellors can better meet the needs of diverse student populations, foster a more inclusive learning environment, and contribute to overall student success.

Keywords: Culturally Sensitive Counselling, Diverse Educational Setting, Cultural Competence, Student Diversity, Inclusive Counselling Practices, Cultural Awareness

INTRODUCTION:

In today's increasingly diverse educational landscape, implementing culturally sensitive counselling approaches has become essential in promoting student success and well-being (Castro-Olivo et al., 2019; Sue & Sue, 2016). As school serve students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, school counsellors must be prepared to address the importance needs and challenges these students face (Ratts et al., 2016). This article explores the importance of culturally sensitive counselling in diverse educational settings and provides strategies for school counsellors to foster inclusive, culturally responsive practices that enhance their effectiveness in supporting all students.

School counsellors play an important role in promoting equity and access in education, and culturally sensitive counselings is fundamental to this task (Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011). By intergrating cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills into their practice, counsellors can better understand and address the diverse needs of students, including those from historically marginalized groups (Bemak & Chung, 2017). This article examines the impact of culture on students' academic, social, and emotional development and offers guidance on how school counsellors can adapt their approaches to meet the importance needs of students from various cultural background. To achieve cultural competence, school counsellors must engage in ongoing self- reflection, professional development, and collaboration with students families, and collesgues (Collins & Arthur, 2007). By doing so, they can create inclusive learning environments where all students feel valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential (Gay, 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The importance of culturally sensitive counselling approaches in diverse educational settings has been widely recognized in the literature (Sue. Et al.,2009; Ratts et al., 2015). As the student population becomes increasingly diverse, counsellors must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively address the unique needs and challenges faced by students from different cultural backgrounds (Constantine & Sue, 2005).

Cultural competence has been identified as a key component of effective counselling in diverse settings (Sue et. Al., 2009). Counsellors who are culturally competent possess knowledge about various cultural groups, awareness of their own cultural biases and assumptions, and skills to adapt counselling approaches to meet the needs of divers' students (Ratts et al., 2015). Training programs that promote cultural competence have been shown to improve counsellors' self- awareness, knowledge, and skills, ultimately enhancing their ability to provide culturally sensitive counselling services (Constantine & Sue,2005).

Moreover, the adaptation of counselling interventions to agree with the cultural values and beliefs of students has been emphasised as a critical factor in promoting positive outcomes (Benish et at.,2011; Griner & Smith, 2006). Counsellors must be aware of the cultural context in which students operate and tailor interventions accordingly to ensure their effectiveness (Sue et al., 2009).

The quality of the counsellor-student relationship has also been highlighted as a key factor in the success of culturally sensitive counselling (Liu & Ali, 2008; Ratts et al., 2015). Establishing trust, rapport, and open communication are essential for building a strong therapeutic alliance, particularly in diverse setting where students may be hesitant to seek counselling services due to cultural stigma or mistrust (Constantine & Sue, 2005).

In addition, institutional support plays a crucial role in the implementation of culturally sensitive counselling approaches (Ponce et at., 2016). Counsellors require access to professional development opportunities, culturally diverse resources, and administrative support to effectively serve diverse student populations (Constantine & Sue, 2005; Liu & Ali, 2008).

In summary, the literature emphasised the importance of cultural competence, counsellor training, adaptation of interventions, the counsellor-student relationship, and institutional support in implementing culturally sensitive counselling approaches in diverse educational settings.

Statement of Problem:

The growing cultural diversity in educational setting presents both opportunities and challenges for school counsellors, who are tasked with supporting the well-being and success of students from various backgrounds. However, many school counsellors may lack the necessary training, knowledge, and skills to effectively address the important needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This gaps in cultural competency can lead to misunderstandings, ineffective interventions, and disparities in student outcomes, ultimately hindering the overall success and well-being of students in diverse educational settings (Holcomb-McCoy &Chen-Hayes, 2011; Sue & Sue,2016).

To brige this gap, school counsellors must adopt culturally sensitive counselling approaches that enable them to better understand and address the specific challenges faces by students from various cultural backgrounds. By doing so, they can create more inclusive and supportive learning environments that promote equitable outcomes and enable all students to thrive (Castro-Olivo et al., 2019; Ratts et al., 2016).

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to examine the importance of implementing culturally sensitive counselling approaches in diverse educational settings and to provide school counsellors with effective strategies for fostering cultural competence in their practice. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Highlight the impact of cultural factors on students' academic, social, and emotional development.
2. Identify key components of culturally sensitive counselling practice, such as building relationships with students and families, understanding cultural values nd beliefs, utilizing culturally advocating for systemic change.
3. Emphasize the role of counsellor self-awareness and ongoing professional development in fostering cultural competence.
4. Demonstrate the benefits of culturally sensitive counselling approaches in promoting student success and well-being, creating inclusive learning environments, and reducing disparities in educational outcome.

Research Questions:

The following research questions are posed to obtained the results of this study.

1. To what extent does lack of cultural factors influence students' academic, social, and emotional development in diverse educational setting in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does the key components of culturally sensitive counselling approaches relate to diverse educational settings among students in Rivers State?

3. To what extent school counsellors develop cultural competence through self-awareness among students in Rivers State?

4. To what extent does a culturally sensitive counselling approach contribute to promoting student success and well-being, creating inclusive learning environments, and reducing disparities in educational outcomes in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will guide this study.

1. There is no significant relationship between lack of cultural factors influence students' academic, social, and emotional development and diverse educational setting in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between key components of culturally sensitive counselling approaches and diverse educational settings among students in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant relationship between school counsellors develop cultural competence through self-awareness among students and diverse educational settings in Rivers State.
4. To what extent does a There is no significant relationship between culturally sensitive counselling approach contributing to promote student success and well-being, creating inclusive learning environments, and reducing disparities and diverse educational outcomes in Rivers State.

METHOD:

The study adopted the correlational research design. Creswell (2012) described correlational design as the statistical analysis used to determine the relationship or pattern that exists between two or more variables or sets of data to vary consistently. Onunkwo in Ogidi (2018) defined correlation as that statistical tool used to determine the level of relationship between two variables, and among three or more variables. Correlational studies are research concerned with determining the relationship between two or more variables and also used in testing hypothesis of significance (Kpolovie, 2011). The area of study is Rivers State. River State has 23 Local Government areas and it is sub- divided into three senatorial districts; Rivers South East, Rivers West and Rivers East. Rivers people are diverse and rich in culture which is rooted in its unique environment of lakes, creeks, rivers, forest and swamps. Some of these unique fixtures also created the difficult lifestyles

experienced by unity in diversity in Rivers State. The study area is chosen due to recent diversity violence issues and social problems that characterized the political scenes in Rivers State. The population of the study consisted of all diverse tribes in Rivers State. The population is estimated at 1,645,641 diverse students in Rivers State. The sample of the study comprised 450 diverse students. Taro Yamane statistical formula was used to determine the sample size which yielded 399. However the researcher added 51 students to increase the total number of the sample to 450 students. Disproportionate stratified sampling technique was adopted in composing the sample. Each senatorial district formed a cluster. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample of the study. In other to ensure equal representation of the senatorial district in the study 150 diverse students were selected from Rivers East Senatorial District, Rivers South-East Senatorial District and Rives West Senatorial District. Validity of the instrument was done by the experts in field. They scrutinized and assessed the suitability of the items in the instrument and made some inputs. Their expert suggestions and corrections were incorporated in the final version of the questionnaire. The instrument was administered directly on the respondents by the researcher and five research assistants. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer all research questions and test hypotheses. The analysis of the hypotheses was tested for statistical significance at 0.05 alpha levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter discussed the presentation of analyzed data based on the research questions and null hypotheses. The data and result of each research questions and hypotheses were presented in tables, discussed and summarized in accordance with research questions raised and hypotheses formulated for the study.

Research Question One

To what extent does lack of cultural factors influence students' academic, social, and emotional development in diverse educational setting in Rivers State?

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between cultural factors influence of students' academic, social, and emotional development in diverse educational setting in Rivers State

Table 1.1: PPMC Analysis on the Cultural factors influence students' academic, social, and emotional development in diverse educational setting in Rivers State

Variables	Parameters	Cultural factors influence	Diverse educational setting	Decision
Cultural factors influence	Pearson Correlation	1	.710**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	Significant
	N	450	450	
Diverse educational setting	Pearson Correlation	.710**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	450	450	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results on Table 1.1 for research question one, shows the extent to which cultural factors influence relates to diverse education among students in Rivers State. The result revealed that the extent to which cultural influence relates to the academic, social, and emotional development among students in Rivers State can be described as positive and high (r = .71). The implication of this result was that as cultural influence increase highly in score that of diverse education setting among students in Rivers State correspondingly increase also highly.

On statistical testing of the null hypothesis, Table 1.1 also shows that cultural influence and diverse education setting among students in Rivers State significantly relate statistically ($r_{(450)}$ = .71, p < 0.05) thus the rejection of the null hypothesis. The result was that there was significant relationship between cultural influence and diverse education setting among students in Rivers State.

Research Question Two

To what extent does the key components of culturally sensitive counselling approaches relate to diverse educational settings among students in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between the key components of culturally sensitive counselling approaches to diverse educational settings among students in Rivers State.

Table 1: 2 PPMC Analysis on the Relationship between the Key Components of Culturally Sensitive Counselling Approaches to Diverse Educational Settings among Students in Rivers State.

Variables	Parameters	Key components of culturally sensitive	Diverse Educational Settings	Decision
Key components of culturally sensitive	Pearson Correlation	1	.649**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	Significant
	N	450	450	
Diverse Educational Settings	Pearson Correlation	.649**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	450	450	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result on Table 1.2 shows the answer to research question two. Table 1.2 shows the extent to which key components of culturally sensitive counselling approaches to diverse educational settings among students in Rivers State.

The result revealed that the extent to which the key components of culturally sensitive counselling approaches to diverse educational settings among students in Rivers State was high and positive (r = .65). The implication of this result was that as

scores on key components increase that of diverse educational settings among married students in Rivers State correspondingly increase highly and vice versa.

Also, Table 1.2 shows the significant level of the relationship between key components of culturally sensitive counselling approaches to diverse educational settings among students in Rivers State. The result revealed that there was a significant ($r_{(450)}$ = .65, p < 0.05) relationship hence the corresponding null hypothesis was rejected. The result was that there was a significant relationship between key components of culturally sensitive counselling approaches to diverse educational settings among students in Rivers State

Research Question Three

To what extent school counsellors develop cultural competence through self-awareness among students in Rivers State

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between school counsellors develop cultural competence through self-awareness among students in Rivers State

Table 1.3: PPMC Analysis on the Relationship between School Counsellors Develop Cultural Competence through self-awareness among Students in Rivers State.

				Decision
		School counsellors develop cultural competence	Diverse Educational Settings	
Variables	Parameters			
school counsellors develop cultural competence	Pearson Correlation	1	.621[**]	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	Significant
	N	450	450	
Cultural Competence	Pearson Correlation	.621[**]	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	450	450	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In answering research question seven, Table 1.3 shows the extent to which school counsellors develop cultural competence through self-awareness among Students diverse educational settings in Rivers State. The result revealed that the extent to which counsellors develop cultural competence through self-awareness among diverse students in Rivers State was positive and high (r = .62). The implication of this result was that counsellors develop cultural competence scores increases highly with a corresponding high increase in cultural competence among diverse students in Rivers State and vice versa.

In testing null hypothesis seven, Table 1.3 shows the significant level of the relationship between school counsellors develop cultural and cultural competence of among students in Rivers State. The result revealed that there was a significant ($r_{(450)}$ = .62, p < 0.05) relationship, therefore the stated null hypothesis was not accepted. This means that there was significant relationships between school counselors develop cultural

competence through self-awareness and diverse students in Rivers State.

Research Question Four

To what extent does school culturally sensitive counselling approaches contribute to promoting student success and well-being, creating inclusive learning environments, and reducing disparities in educational outcomes for students from diverse cultural background in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant relationship between culturally sensitive counselling approaches contribute to promoting student success and well-being, creating inclusive learning environments, and reducing disparities in educational outcomes for students from diverse cultural background in Rivers State.

Table 1.4: PPMC Analysis on the Relationship between relationship between Culturally sensitive counselling approaches contribute to promoting student success and well-being, creating inclusive learning environments, and reducing disparities in educational outcomes for students from diverse cultural background in Rivers.

Variables	Parameters	Culturally sensitive counselling approaches	Students Success and well-being	Decision
Culturally sensitive counselling approaches	Pearson Correlation	1	.843**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	Significant
	N	450	450	
Students Success and well-being	Pearson Correlation	.843**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	450	450	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1.4 shows the extent to which school counsellor develop cultural competence through self-awareness and ongoing professional development affect diverse educational setting among students in Rivers State. The result revealed that the extent to which school counsellor develop cultural competence through self-awareness and ongoing professional development affect diverse educational setting among students in Rivers State was positive and very high (r = .84). This means that as physical abuse scores increases very highly that of school counsellor develop cultural competence through self-awareness and ongoing professional development affect diverse educational setting among students in Rivers State correspondingly increase very highly and vice versa.

Furthermore, on statistical testing of hypothesis four, Table 1.4 shows that the positive and very high relationship was statistically significant ($r_{(450)}$ = .84, p < 0.05). Hence, the stated corresponding null hypothesis was not accepted. The result was that there was a significant relationship between school counsellor develop cultural competence through self-awareness and ongoing professional development affect and diverse educational setting among students in Rivers State.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

1. There was a positive and significant relationship between cultural influence and diverse education setting among students in Rivers State.
2. There was a positive and significant relationship between key components of culturally sensitive counselling approaches to diverse educational settings among students in Rivers State.
3. There was a positive and significant relationships between school counselors develop cultural competence through self-awareness and diverse students in Rivers State.
4. There was a positive and significant relationship between school counsellor develop cultural competence through self-awareness and ongoing professional development affect diverse educational setting among students in Rivers State.

The findings of this study support the hypotheses that cultural factors significantly influence students' academic, social, and emotional development, and that culturally sensitive counseling approaches can play an important role in promoting student success and well-being in diverse education settings.

1. Cultural factors impacts students development; the literature highlights the importance of understanding cultural influences on student learning and development. Students from diverse background may face exceptional challenges such as language barriers, discrimination, and cultural adjustment issues than can impact their academic, social, and emotional well-being (Castro-Olivo et al., 2019; Sue & Sue, 2016).
2. Key components of culturally sensitive counseling: The study identifies several essential components of culturally sensitive counseling practices, including establishing strong relationships with students and families, understanding cultural values and baliefs, utilizing culturally responsive interventions, and advocating for system change (Bemak & Chung, 2017; Gay, 2018).
3. Developing cultural competence through self-awareness and professional development: School counselors can develop cultural competence by engaging in self-reflection, seeking out professional development opportunities, and actively engaging

with diverse communities to expand their understanding and improve their practices (Collins & Arthur; 2007; Holcomb-McCoy & Chen-Hayes, 2011).

4. Benefits of culturally sensitive counseling: The implementation of culturally sensitive counseling approaches has been shows to contribute to student success and well-being, creat more inclusive learning environments, and reduce disparities in educational outcomes (Ratts et al., 2016).

The findings of the study emphasized the importance of culturally sensitive counseling practices in diverse educational settings and provide valuable understandings and strategies for school conselors to enhance their culture competence and better serve the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

CONCLUSSION

In conclusion, the implementation of culturally sensitive counseling approaches in diverse educational settings is important for promoting student success and well-being. As school become increasingly diverse, school counsellors must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and cultural competence necessary to address the importance needs of students from various cultural backgrounds.

The findings of this study support the notion that culturally sensitive counseling approaches can lead to improved student outcomes and contribute to reducing disparities in education. By prioritizing cultural sensitivity and competence in counseling practices, school counsellors can better serve their diverse student populations and promote equitable outcomes for all students.

As field of education continue to advance, it is important for school counsellors and other educational professionals to remain committed to ongoing learning and growth in cultural competence. By doing so, they can ensure that they are providing the highest quality support and guidance to students from all backgrounds and contributing to a more inclusive and equitable educational systems not only in Rivers State but globally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Base on the findings of the study, the following recommendation were made.

1. **Rivers State Government should promote Cultural Competence:**
The counselors in Rivers State should engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their knowledge , awareness, and skills related to cultural competence (Ratts et al., (2015). This includes understanding the important needs and challenges of diverse student population in the state and learning strategies to adapt counseling approaches accordingly.

2. **Culturally Adapted Interventions:**
Counselors in Rivers State should tallor interventions to agree with the cultural values and beliefs of the students in the schools that are in the Rivers State, ensuring that they are culturally appropriate and effective (Benish et al., 2011). This may involve collaborating with students, families and community members to incorporate their perspectives and preferences into counseling services.

3.**Strengthen Counselor-Student Relationships:**
Establishing trust, rapport, and open communication is essential for building strong therapeutic alliance with students from diverse backgrounds (Constantine & Sue,2005). Counselor should prioritize creating a safe and inclusive space where students feel confortable expressing their concerns and experiences.

4, **Institutional Support:** Educational institutions in Rivers State should provide resources, protections, and administrative support to facilitate the implementation of culturally sensitive counseling approaches in schools (Ponce et al., 2016). This may include hiring diverse counseling staff, offering ongoing multicultural training, and creating policies that promote equity and inclusivity.

5. **Engaging Families and Communities:** Counselors should collaborate with families and community members, this can help them better understand students cultural context and adapt counseling approaches accordingly (Sue et al., 2009). This may involve hosting workshops, engaging in home visiting, or creating partnerships with community organizations.

Evaluation and continuous Improvement: Regularly assessing the effectiveness of culturally sensitive counseling approaches and making necessary adjustments is important for continuous improvement (Griner & Smith, 2006). This can be achieved through data collection, feedback from students and families, and collaboration with researchers and practitioners.

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