

# Perception of Counselling Services and Social Adjustment among Primary School Pupils in Calabar, Cross River State

Jennifer Uzoamaka Duruamaku-Dim

*Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria*

**Abstract:** - The study investigated perception of counselling services among primary school pupils in Calabar, Cross River State and how it influences their social adjustment in the school. The study adopted ex-post fact research design and a sample of 366 primary six pupils was randomly selected from a population of 3,659 primary six pupils in the area for the study. Data for the study was collected using a questionnaire titled “Perception of Counselling Services and School Social Adjustment Scale” (PCSSAS). The reliability of the PCSSAS was determined using Cronbach Alpha method. Data collected were analyzed using Population t-test and One-way Analysis of Variance tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that the pupils’ perception of school counselling services was significantly low. The result further revealed that pupils’ perception of school counselling services had a significant influence on their social adjustment in the school. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that pupils should be encouraged to appreciate the counselling services in the school and always seek for the assistance of the counsellor about their problems.

**Key words:** Perception, counselling services and school social adjustment.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a comprehensive and complex process aiming at bringing about not only change in knowledge and skill but also change in attitudes, behaviour, values, needs and several other variables which are psychological and behavioural in nature. As the human beings become conscious about the things in their environment, their needs increased and with the increased needs, the problem of adjustment takes place in the society (Srivastava, 2018). Adjustment is a process by which a living organism maintains a balance between the needs and the circumstances. It is a compromise between the needs of the individual and the demands of the society in which one lives. For living a happy and prosperous life, adjustment is a pre-requisite condition. In every sphere of life, starting from birth till death, people need healthy adjustment.

Adjustment, in psychology, refers to the behavioral process by which humans and other animals maintain equilibrium among their various needs or between their needs and the obstacles of their environments adjustment (Searle & Ward, 1990). Adjustment, as a process describes and explains the ways and means of an individual’s adaptation to his/her self and his/her environment without reference to the quality

of such adjustment or its outcome in terms of success or failure. It is an organizational behaviour in life situations at home, at school, at work in growing up and in ageing. It helps one to keep out basic impulses at tolerable levels, to believe in one’s own abilities and to achieve desired goals. In present, revolutionary changes are taking place in different fields and to cope with such environment, adjustment becomes necessary.

Dhingra, Manhas and Thakur (2005) assert that adjustment is a continuous process through which one changes to be in proper adjustment with his environment, others, and himself. The basic objective to adjustment is to set a balance between one’s wishes and social expectations that affects all aspects of one’s life. As a result, the person can respond properly to all environmental stimuli to acquire his favourable stimuli and reinforcement. To keep pace with the changing society, one has to make changes in one self or his/her environment. If the individual does not keep pace with the changing time, he is thrown back in the society. So the individual has to constantly make changes to make the adjustment possible. It is often found that most of the adolescent students experience difficulty in physical, mental, emotional, social, educational and other adjustment. In this regard it is very essential to make a study on these problems of adjustment with reference to secondary school students of all community and come up with some positive solutions (Boro, 2017).

Social adjustment defined as the variation of an individual to the social environment. Adjustment may take place by adjusting the self to the situation or by fluctuating the surroundings. Social adjustment is seen as an effort made by an individual to cope with standards, values and needs of a society in order to be accepted (Packiaselvi & Malathi, 2017). It can also be defined as a psychological process which involves coping with new standards and values. In the technical language of psychology, getting along well with the members of society is best described as adjustment. In making social adjustments, they are important to maintain personal as well as social peace social adjustment and harmony. Thus adjustment maintains peace and harmony in home, school, and society and in the country. Social adjustment is a psychological process which frequently involves coping with new standards and values. In the technical language of

psychology, getting along with the members of the society as best as one can be called adjustment.

Social adjustment as a significant sign of psychology health is a subject fascinating the consideration of many psychologists. Social growth is the most significant feature of one's growth and it is assimilated through the relationship with others particularly with the parents, peers and the educators, and it is the measuring benchmark of social growth related to the person's adjustment with him/herself and others. Social adjustment is an effort made by an individual to cope with standards, values and needs of a society in order to be accepted. It can be defined as a psychological process. Social adjustment as an important indication of psychology health is a topic attracting the attention of many psychologists. Social growth is the most important aspect of one's development and it is acquired through the relationship with others especially with the parents, peers and the teachers, and it is the assessing criterion of social growth related to the person's adjustment with him/herself and others (Hartup & Rubin, 2013). On the other hand, living in a human society has stemmed from a set of values and expectations paradigm, and to meet one's expectations and value framework a person needs a sufficient amount of adjustment. Without adjustment, the person is not able to meet many of his/her basic needs. If one is incompatible with the society properly, he will feel isolated.

The school is one of the major socialization institutions for any child. It is the child's first contact with the world outside the house. For nearly 12 years a child spends 5 to 7 hours a day in the school. School is one the most important foundation pillars on which the child's personality develops. Children learn proficiencies in various abilities like, learning process and home work, social communications, handling emotion, and the management of day to day interactions at home and school. In reality, the growing child is dependent on the immediate environment i.e. the house and the school to meet his growth needs. The concern, therefore extends to how the school facilities can be enhanced and improved to meet the growth needs of the children (Raju & Rahamtulla, 2007).

It was observed that many primary schools pupils especially in Calabar Municipality found it difficult to cope with standards, values and needs of a society in order to be accepted by others which make it very difficult for them to adjust well in the school. This social problem may have come from the environment which consists of the home, the school, personal experiences, cultural influence, the peer group, and student's needs and motives. Deficient of social adjustment by students could bring a serious setback to the students in terms of relationship with others in the society. The perception towards such students by others would be negative in some aspect. Denga (2001) gave examples of psychological and social problems to include intra-personal/interpersonal relationship, family upheavals, marital in compatibility, and more. Denga (2001) opined that, such problems amount to maladaptive behaviours metamorphosing into indiscipline.

There have been series of complaint from parents, adolescents, teachers, annual reports of social welfare office, administrators and the general public about the behaviour of adolescents and their problem of social adjustment call for immediate attention. The adolescents' behaviour pattern is formed by a transaction of the past, present and future anticipation in accordance with the social setting. Also, the child behaviour may be a product of his environment over which he had no control. Specifically social adjustment is influence by lack of communication and parenting styles that include unclear expectations of behaviour, inconsistent or harsh discipline, conflict between parents or caregivers and low expectations for the child's success. Hence the adolescent child is force to fall on his/her peers who are ready to provide replacement for parents.

A greater number of students in primary schools have found it difficult to cope with standards, values and needs of a society in order to be accepted by others. This psychological problem may have come from the environment which consists: the home, the school, personal experiences, cultural influence, the peer group, and student's needs and motives. Deficient of social adjustment by students could bring a serious setback to the students in terms of relationship with others in the society. The perception towards such students by others would be negative in some aspect. Negative image and perception about a student by others may adversely affect him or her physically and mentally, in terms of socialization, academic performance and so on. Therefore, social adjustment is a very important factor to keep relationships smooth and healthy with others as it has a lot of benefits on the physical and mental health of the students. Based on this, the study seeks to investigate the level of social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar and the extent to which counselling services can influence school social adjustment among the pupils.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

Specifically, the study investigated the:

1. level pupils' perception of school counselling services in Calabar Metropolis.
2. the extent of social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis.
3. influence of perception of school counselling services on social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis.

#### *Research Questions*

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the level of perception of school counselling services among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis?
2. What is the extent of social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis?

- To what extent does perception of school counselling services influence social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis?

*Research Hypotheses*

The following hypotheses were raised to guide the study.

- The level of perception of school counselling services among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis is not significantly positive.
- The extent of social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis is not significantly high.
- There is no significant influence of perception of school counselling services on social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis.

**II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted ex-post facto research design because there was therefore no manipulation of the variables since the variables have already manifested in the population before the study. The population of the study was 3,659 primary six pupils in Calabar Metropolis (2,103 in Calabar Municipality and 1,556 in Calabar South) and sample of 366 primary six pupils were randomly selected from 23 schools out of the 45 primary schools in the area. The instruments used in data collection for the study were “Perception of Counselling Services and School Social Adjustment Scale”

(PCSSSAS). The questionnaire was validated by two experts in Guidance and Counselling and one Measurement expert while the reliability was determined by trial testing the questionnaire using 30 pupils in the area that were not part of the sample. The data collected was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha reliability method which gave reliability coefficients of .75 for perception of counselling services and .73 for school social adjustment. Data collection was done in the sampled schools by the researchers and the data collected were analyzed using population t-test and One-way Analysis of Variance tested at .05 level of significance.

**III. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

*Hypothesis one*

The level of perception of school counselling services among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis is not significantly positive.

For the pupils’ perception of school counselling services to be significantly positive, the mean score on perception of school counselling services should be significantly greater than the reference mean of 25 (the midpoint between, which is 2.5 multiply by ten, the number of items measuring perception of school counselling services). This hypothesis was analyzed using population t-test analysis tested at .05 level of significance as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Population t-test analysis for perception of school counselling services among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis (N=366)

Reference mean,  $\mu = 25$

Variable	$\bar{X}$	Standard deviation	Mean difference	t-value	p-level
Perception of school counselling services	25.28	6.68	.28	.813	.417

Not Significant at .05,  $p < .05$ ;  $df = 365$ .

The result of the analysis in Table 1 revealed that the obtained mean score for perception of school counselling services among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis was 25.28 with standard deviation of 6.68 was greater than the reference mean of 25. The result further showed that the mean difference is not statistically significant since the calculated t-value of .813 with a p-value of .417 did not meet the condition for significant at .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was upheld and this implies that perception of school counselling services among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis was positive but not statistically significant.

*Hypothesis two*

The extent of social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis is not significantly high.

For the pupils’ social adjustment to be significantly high, the mean score on social adjustment should be significantly greater than the reference mean of 25 (the midpoint between, which is 2.5 multiply by ten, the number of items measuring perception of school counselling services). This hypothesis was analyzed using population t-test analysis tested at .05 level of significance as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 Population t-test analysis for social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis (N=366)

Variable	$\bar{X}$	Standard deviation	Mean difference	t-value	p-level
Social adjustment	22.57	4.96	-2.43	-9.384*	.000

\*Significant at .05,  $p < .05$ ;  $df = 365$ . Reference mean,  $\mu = 25$ .

The result of the analysis in Table 2 revealed that the obtained mean score for social adjustment behaviour exhibited by primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis was 22.57 with standard deviation of 4.96 was less than the reference mean of 25. The result further showed that the mean difference is statistically significant since the calculated t-value of -9.384 in absolute sense with a p-value of .000 met the condition for significant at .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and this implies that social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis significantly low.

*Hypothesis three*

This hypothesis states that there is no significant

TABLE 3 One-way Analysis of Variance of perception of school counselling services and social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis

Perception of school counselling services	N	Mean	SD
Low	123	19.89	4.61
Moderate	140	22.33	3.95
High	103	26.09	4.28
Total	366	22.57	4.96

Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-ratio	Sig.
Between groups	2163.067	2	1081.534	57.678*	.000
Within groups	6806.725	363	18.751		
Total	8969.792	365			

\*Significant at .05 alpha level; p<.05.

The result of the analysis in Table 3 revealed that the mean score obtained by the subjects who exhibited low level of perception of school counselling services was 19.89 which is less than the mean score of 22.33 obtained by the subjects who exhibited moderate level of perception of school counselling services and this is also less than the mean score of 26.09 obtained by the subjects who exhibited high level of perception of school counselling services. The result further revealed that the obtained F-ratio of 57.678 with a p-value of

influence of perception of school counselling services on social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis. The independent variable perception of school counselling services while the dependent variable is social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis. Pupils who scored from 10 – 19 in the ten items that measured perception of school counselling services was classified as being low while those that scored from 20 – 30 were classified as being moderate and those that scored from 31 – 40 were classified as being high. The hypothesis was analyzed using One-way Analysis of Variance tested at .05 level of significance and the result is presented in Table 3.

.000 at .05 level of significance with 2 and 363 degrees of freedom. With the obtained result, the F-ratio was statistically significant and the hypothesis was rejected. Since social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis was significantly influenced by perception of school counselling services, the source of the difference was determined using Fisher’s Least Significant Difference (LSD) Post Hoc Test multiple comparison analysis as presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4 Scheffe Post Hoc Test for perception of school counselling services and social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis

Perception of school counselling services	N	Mean	Mean difference	Sig.
Low	123	19.89	-2.43*	.000
Moderate	140	22.33		
Low	123	19.89	-6.19*	.000
High	103	26.09		
Moderate	140	22.33	-3.76*	.000
High	103	26.09		

\*Significant at .05 level; p<.05.

The result of the Fisher LSD Post Hoc Test analysis as presented in Table 4 revealed that the mean obtained by the subjects who exhibited low level of perception of school counselling services differ significantly when compared with that of those who exhibited moderate level of perception of school counselling services (MD=-2.43;  $p < .05$ ) and those who exhibited high level of perception of school counselling services (MD=-6.19;  $p < .05$ ). The result finally revealed that the mean obtained by the subjects who exhibited moderate level of perception of school counselling services differ significantly when compared with that of those who exhibited high level of perception of school counselling services (MD=-3.76;  $p < .05$ ).

#### IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result revealed that perception of school counselling services among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis was positive but not statistically significant. The result also revealed that social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis significantly low. The result further revealed that there is a significant influence of perception of school counselling services on social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis. The finding is in line with the assertion by Menon (2010) who reported that students did not consider counsellors as central in the decisions made about careers.

The finding also agreed with that of the study by Ukpogu (2017) who investigated perception of counselling services and academic performance in Social Studies among secondary school students in Anambra East Local Government Area of Anambra State and found out that the perception of counselling services among government secondary schools students in Anambra East LGA was low but not statistically significant. The finding is not in accordance with the finding by Al-Mseidin, Omar-Fauzee and Kaur (2017) who investigated the level of social and academic adjustment and the relationship between both of them in Jordan and found out that there is a high level of Social Adjustment (60%) and Medium level of Academic Adjustment (66%).

The finding also concur with that of the study by Izuchi and Obed (2017) who investigated the influence of information dissemination and personal-social adjustment on the development of entrepreneurial skills among technical college students in Rivers State and found out that counselling on personal-social adjustment will equip students for the development of entrepreneurial skills among technical college students in Rivers State. The finding also agreed with that of the study by Gatua, Sindabi and Chepchieng (2015) which established and compare the impact of guidance and counselling services on students' behaviour modification in social and emotional adjustment in the selected public urban and rural secondary schools in Rift Valley Province, Kenya and found out that guidance and counselling services in

secondary schools had statistically significant impact on the level of social and emotional adjustments.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that perception of school counselling services among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis was positive but not statistically significant. It was also concluded that social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis significantly low. The result finally revealed that there is a significant influence of perception of school counselling services on social adjustment among primary school pupils in Calabar Metropolis.

#### VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

To promote social adjustment among the pupils, it was recommended that there should be proper orientation for the pupils on the need to socialize with other pupils in the school by providing functional Guidance and Counselling units in the schools pertaining to their physical, social, educational and emotional development etc. The ministry of education should give more recognition to counselling services as essential in schools and ensure that all schools have an effective counselling service as there are students who need guidance and counselling. Pupils should be encouraged to appreciate the counselling services in the school and always seek for the assistance of the counsellor about their problems.

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