SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES

Job Satisfaction among School Counsellors in Secondary Schools in Mid-Western Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the job satisfaction among school counsellors in secondary schools in mid-western Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design. The participants were 121 secondary school counsellors drawn from secondary schools in mid-western Nigeria. A questionnaire titled "Counsellor's Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (CJSQ)" was used to collect data for this study. The results indicated that the majority of the secondary school counselors are satisfied with their jobs. Also, promotion was the best single factorr predicting job satisfaction. In addition, job dimension variables such as promotion, job tenure, salary, social support and supervision significantly correlated with job satisfaction among school counsellors. Based on these findings, it was recommended that school counsellors' job satisfaction could be further enhanced and sustained by government and school administrators by paying adequate attention to the welfare of counsellors in terms of regular promotion, enhanced remunerations, guaranteed job security, adequate social support system and provision of well equipped counselling centres for counselling practice.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, secondary school counsellors, best counselling practices, career advancement, career counselling

INTRODUCTION

Counselling is a notable field for its diversity and dynamism. It is influenced by diverse political, economic and social forces within the society. As a result, tremendous expansion has been witnessed in the field of counselling in terms of promotion of good health, family dynamics, career assessment, school adjustments, development tasks, ethical standards, and research training.

One of the tasks of school counsellors is to educate and assist students in their overall development. In the 21st century, the job of helping students to achieve success in schools and become more productive members of the society is challenging. According to Gysbers, Lapan and Blair (1999), today's youth must confront a rapidly changing world of work and labour force, violence in the home, school and community, divorce, teenage suicide, substance abuse, and sexual experimentation. Thus, school counsellors occupy an important position within the school system to assist students to cope with these crucial issues and the normal developmental tasks adolescents face in life (Aluede, 2009).

The demand for school counsellors would continue to be on the increase. This is especially so in Nigeria in the face of increasing school enrolments with the introduction of the Universal Basic Education on September 30, 1999 (Imonikhe & Aluede, 2010). This programme has made school attendance compulsory for children aged between six and thirteen years of age. It is in realization of this fact that the Federal Government of Nigeria has devoted much time to the planning and implementation of guidance and counselling programmes in secondary schools. Hence, the Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) stated that in view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects and personality maladjustments among school children, career officers and counsellors shall be appointed to post primary institutions. Since qualified personnel in this category are scarce, government shall continue to make provisions for the training of interested teachers in guidance and counselling. The thrust of this policy is that government believes that guidance and counselling is a crucial educational service that can enhance the personal growth and psychological development of students in the school system (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004).

For counsellors to be able to provide this crucial educational service to the students, they have to be interested and willing to contribute meaningfully to the students' personal growth and psychological development. Therefore, the study of job satisfaction among school counsellors is very crucial to the improvement of productivity among school counsellors. This is because for members of a profession to discharge their duties effectively, they must be satisfied with their jobs (Eduwen, 2008).

Job satisfaction is a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job. There are a number of factors that can influence a person's level of job satisfaction. Some of these factors include the level of pay and benefits, the perceived fairness of promotion in an organization, recognition, favourable working conditions and the job itself (DeMato, 2001). The need to cater for the working conditions of school counsellors and ensure their job satisfaction in the school system becomes imperative if they are to carry out their responsibilities to the admiration of all. If they are unable to achieve their goal as counsellors, they experience feelings of inadequacy

and unhappiness that may make them vulnerable to stress and job dissatisfaction. Job dissatisfaction promotes stress, fatigue, frustration and low productivity (DeMato, 2001).

Extent of Job Satisfaction among School Counsellors

Among the existing studies on school counsellors' job satisfaction, is that of DeMato and Curcio (2004), which examined how elementary school counsellors in Virginia reported their job satisfaction. Results of the study indicate that a vast majority (90.4%) of Virginia elementary school counsellors surveyed in 2001 were either satisfied or mostly satisfied in their positions. Similarly, Baggerly and Osborn (2006) reported a survey of school counsellors in Florida in 2002, which revealed that majority of the respondents (39.8%) were either satisfied or somewhat satisfied (44.7%) in their positions. Baggerly and Osborn's (2006) study further asked respondents to report the frequency with which they performed appropriate and inappropriate school counsellors' roles as defined by the American School Counselling Association (ASCA). The study revealed that school counsellors who implemented appropriate duties more frequently indicated greater job satisfaction, while those who implemented inappropriate duties more frequently indicated low job satisfaction.

Facets of Job Satisfaction

Over the years, considerable time and efforts have been devoted to studies on facets of job satisfaction and the best conclusion to draw from these works is that, although there are many specific and diverse job dimensions, which have been shown to relate to job satisfaction at one time or the other, there is a set of dimensions common to most jobs that is sufficient to describe most of the predictable variances in job satisfaction (DeMato & Curcio, 2004). The specific dimensions identified represent those job characteristics typically used to assess job satisfaction for which the organizational members have some positions on a like-dislike continuum.

Job satisfaction characteristics have been classified into two namely intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions (Rose, 2001; Eduwen, 2008). Intrinsic dimension is the 'outcome' or the result of a work situation that people enjoy, because they are in charge and they have the opportunity to acquire new skills and abilities to make a different challenge, or because they are part of success team (Clark, 2005). Intrinsic motivation leads to outstanding creative productivity energy that seems to have virtually no limit. Intrinsic motivation, which has to do with the job content, then, is motivation which comes from the inside of a person. It is an emotional preference for a task that gives pleasure and enjoyment. It arises from having a strong emotional interest in an activity and a sense of freedom and autonomy relating to it (Kashel, 1994). Extrinsic dimension involves the job context, that is, the external environment in which the worker operates. This includes: the social and administrative atmosphere;

working conditions; remunerations; and other benefits (Clark, 2005). A thorough review of literature reveals that these facets of job dimension include promotion, job tenure, salary, school support and supervision (Clark, 2005; Eduwen, 2008).

Promotion has been recognized as a factor in employee's job satisfaction. Promotion constitutes an important aspect of workers' labour mobility most often carrying substantial wage increase (Kosteas, 2009; Blau & Devaro, 2007; Cobb- Clark, 2001). Accordingly, lack of promotion breeds lower staff morale resulting in frustration, resignation and premature retirement (Clark, 2005). Souza-Poza and Souza-Poza (2003) estimated the effect of promotion on workers' satisfaction, focusing on promotion satisfaction in a small sample of managers. They found that managers who received promotions were more satisfied with promotion opportunities and have greater promotion expectation for the future, than those who did not.

Job tenure correlates with job satisfaction. Kosteas (2009) asserted that there is a correlation between job tenure and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction appears to initially decline with job tenure and then rises. This finding is consistent with the dynamics that individuals with lower job satisfaction are more likely to leave their jobs, but will give it some time on a new job before doing so. Conversely, Duffy, Ganster and Shaw (1998) reported that individuals with longer tenure were more likely to experience dissonance and leave the job if they become dissatisfied.

Salary is recognized as a factor in employee's job satisfaction. Akintoye (2000) asserted that money remains the most significant motivational strategy to achieve greater productivity. Tella, Ayeni and Popoola (2007) stated that to use salaries as a motivator effectively, personnel managers must consider four major components of a salary structure. These are the job rate, which relates to the importance the organization attaches to each job; payment, which encourages workers or groups by rewarding them according to their performance; personal or special allowances, associated with factors such as scarcity of particular skills or certain categories of information, professionals, or with long service; and fringe benefits such as holidays with pay, pensions, and so on.

Collins (2008) reported the relationship between social support and job satisfaction. Specifically, Collins stressed the importance of social support in an organization, asserting that the workers' support group encouraged discussion, built consensus, coalitions and networks, helped members articulate agency demands, enabled them to be clearer about explicit and implicit rules and conflict issues-encouraging movement towards resolution of these issues, while clarifying the workers' own sense of role and mission. Similarly, Coulshed and Mullender (2006) revealed that learning sets or seminars based around social workers' own agenda, work-based issues, seeking practical outcomes, are other possible means of providing mutual group support and shared problem-solving. This implies that a wide range of opportunities

for mutual group support should be available on the particular needs, wishes and wants of the staff of the organization.

DeMato and Curcio (2004) revealed that supervision is linked to job satisfaction. In other words, the supervision by a district superior and peers positively predicted school counsellors' career satisfaction (DeMato & Curcio, 2004). Evans and Hohenshil (1997, as cited in DeMato, 2001) investigated 231 substance abuse counsellors and concluded that job satisfaction could be predicted by a combination of four clinical supervision variables. The supervision variables were the numbers of hours per week, length of time the supervisor had been in clinical supervision, degree level of the supervisor, and whether the supervisor was the clinical or administrative supervisor.

Rationale for the Study

Today, the world is in dire need of development in science and technology through education. Nigeria cannot afford to be left behind in the scheme of things in which secondary education will play a key role. The counsellors in the school system need to be satisfied with their jobs if they are to play their expected role. The implication is that without improving the working conditions of counsellors and making them satisfied, the probable result is that very few of the educational aims can be properly achieved.

The role of school counsellors in the educational process has been a matter of public interest. It is in recognition of this vital service in the educational enterprise that the government has embarked on the training and re-training of school counsellors through seminars, conferences, workshop and in-service courses. School counsellors serve dual purpose by engaging in other ancillary functions, including teaching of different subjects in addition to their primary functions of counselling students (Aluede & Imonikhe, 2002). At times, there are cases of counsellors being assigned as full-time teachers in the classroom thereby relegating to the background their professional responsibilities (Aluede, Afen-Akpaida & Adomeh, 2004). The implication is that the educational structure creates strain and stress, which have given rise to the question as to whether secondary school counsellors experience job satisfaction.

A number of problems face Nigeria's educational system, which tend to have negative effects on the degree of counsellors' job satisfaction. These include current pressure from working with more challenging students, increased administrative and managerial tasks, shortage of funds, increased counsellor-student ratios, and inadequate facilities(Aluede, Afen- Akpaida & Adomeh, 2004; Aluede, McEachern & Kenny 2005).

The study of job satisfaction among teachers in Nigeria has been widely researched (e.g. Arubayi, 1981; Nwagwu, 1981; Clark, 2005). These studies have indicated that majority of teachers are satisfied with their job. Similarly, the study of job satisfaction among school counsellors has also been widely researched especially in developed countries (cf Morgan, 1977;

Kirk, 1988; Murray, 1995; DeMato, 2001; DeMato, 2004; DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Bryant & Constantine, 2006). However, little is known about job satisfaction of counsellors in Nigerian schools (Eduwen, 2008). Hence, it became imperative to survey job satisfaction among counsellors in secondary schools and to determine which of the following dimensions: promotion, job tenure, salary, social support and supervision significantly contribute to job satisfaction of school counsellors. Thus, the problem of the study is how satisfied are secondary school counsellors on their jobs? To resolve this problem, the following research questions were raised being,

1. How do secondary school counsellors in Midwestern – Nigeria express their job satisfaction?

2. Which of the job dimensions (promotion, job tenure, salary, social support and supervision) most significantly contribute to job satisfaction of secondary school counsellors in Midwestern- Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The study adopted the survey design approach. The population of the study comprised of all the 128 secondary school counsellors drawn from the existing 57 public secondary schools in Midwestern Nigeria with practicing school counsellors.

In view of the fact that the population of the study was relatively small, all the 128 secondary schools counsellors practicing in secondary schools in Midwestern- Nigeria were targeted for use in the study. At the time of data collection, only 121 secondary school counsellors duly responded. Their demographic characteristics were as follows: 53 males with an age average of 35.6 years. The number of females was 68 with age average of 33.2 years.

Measurement

A questionnaire entitled "School Counsellors' Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (SCJSQ)" was the instrument used in this study. It was adapted from the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969) and adapted by DeMato (2001). In the original JDI, five facets of job satisfaction (pay, promotion and promotion opportunities, workers' social support, supervision and the work itself) were measured. Respondents were required to answer yes, no, or can't decide in response to whether given statements accurately describes their job.

The current version was also made up of five facets of job satisfaction. Pay was modified as salary; work itself was replaced by job tenure; promotion and promotion opportunities; workers' social support; and supervision were retained. Each facet has six items. In the current instrument, the following work itself items: Repeated; Hot (Temperature); Pleasant; Useful; Tiresome; and Helpful were completely deleted and replaced with the following items on Supervision: The way my job provided for a secure future; the level of my job security; the way lay- off and transfers

are carried out in my job; the opportunity to be important in the eyes of fellow colleagues; the opportunity provided for staff development; and my present job gives me a sense of accomplishment. In addition, the sentence structure of item 15 on the original JDI which read "my pay and the amount of work I do" was modified to now read "my salary value in relation to the amount of work I do"

Both the original version of JDI and the modified version used in this study had thirty (30) items. In the modified version, the response format was modified from its original nominal scale format of yes, no and can't decide to a four point Likert- type format of very satisfied (4 points), satisfied (3 points), dissatisfied (2 points) and very dissatisfied (1 point). The modification of JDI became necessary to suit the Nigerian school system and the aims of the current study.

The instrument was content validated by three professors of counselling, and educational management in the Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma-Nigeria and the reliability of the instrument was determined using split–half method. The reliability yielded a correlation co-efficient of 0.94, which was considered adequate for this study

Procedure

Copies of the questionnaire were personally distributed by the principal author with the assistance of research assistants. The principal author sought the permission of school principals to have their school counsellors respond to the questionnaire. In each school, the questionnaire was administered and retrieved from the respondents the same day.

The data collected were collated and analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics. To answer research question as to whether school counsellors were satisfied or not on their jobs, their responses in all the five facets of job satisfaction were collapsed from the four- point response format and classified into two—satisfied and not satisfied. The second research question used the four- point response format.

RESULTS

The data generated, when analysed, yielded the following results that are presented in this section:

Research Question One

How do secondary school counsellors in Midwestern – Nigeria express their job satisfaction? Job satisfaction as expressed by secondary school counsellors in Midwestern Nigeria is presented in Table 1.

Based on the survey, the majority of the respondents (total of 88. 3 %) indicated satisfaction in all the facets of job satisfaction. Also, the survey further indicated that an insignificant percentage (11. 7%) of school counsellors expressed dissatisfaction with their job.

Research Question Two

Which of the job dimensions (promotion, job tenure, salary, social support and supervision) most significantly contribute

TABLE 1
Secondary School Counsellors' Job Satisfaction (N=121)

| S/N | Job Satisfaction items | Response Categories | | | |
| | | Satisfied | | Not-satisfied | |
		F	%	f	%
1	The opportunity for advancement on the job	100	82.64	21	17.36
2	The opportunity of getting ahead on the job	110	90.90	11	9.10
3	The way promotions are carried out in the organization	102	84.3	19	15.7
4	The way I get promotion for the work I do	105	86.78	16	13.22
5	Am satisfied with the promotion criteria	107	88.43	14	11.57
6	The feelings of accomplishment I derive from the promotion	106	87.6	15	12.4
7	The way my job provides for a secured future	105	86.78	16	13.22
8	The level of my job security	102	84.30	19	15.70
9	The way layoff and transfer are carried out in my job	109	90.10	12	9.90
10	The opportunity to be important in the eyes of fellow colleagues	108	89.26	13	10.74
11	The opportunity provided for staff development	107	88.43	14	11.57
12	My present job gives me a sense of accomplishment	104	85.95	17	14.05
13	The opportunity to make as much money as my friends in other jobs	102	84.30	19	15.70
14	How my pay compares with that of similar positions in the school system	100	82.64	21	17.36
15	My salary value in relation to the amount of work I do	104	85.95	17	14.05
16	The level of my salary with reference to my experience	108	89.26	13	10.74
17	The way regular salaries and allowances are paid	112	92.56	09	7.43
18	The opportunity for salary advancement	109	90.10	12	9..90
19	The spirit of cooperation among my co-workers	109	90.10	12	9.90
20	The friendliness of my co-workers	112	92.56	09	7.43
21	The way my co-workers get along with each other in the organization	113	93.40	08	6.60
22	Inter-personal relationship among co-workers	101	83.47	20	16.53
23	The way I get praised from my co-workers for a job well done	110	90.90	11	9.10
24	The level of support I get from my co-workers	115	95.04	06	4.96
25	The technical know-how of my supervisor	111	91.74	10	8.26
26	The opportunity to do new things on my own	107	88.43	14	11.57
27	The way school system policies are administered	108	89.26	13	10.74
28	The opportunity to supervise other people	106	87.60	15	12.40
29	The opportunity to work alone on the job	107	88.43	14	11.57
30	The nature of supervision	107	88.43	14	11.57
Total		3206	88.3	424	11.7

to job satisfaction of secondary school counsellors in Midwestern- Nigeria? Job dimensions (promotion, job tenure, salary, social support and supervision) that significantly contribute to job satisfaction of school counsellors was determined using Regression analysis to analyze the respondents' score on each of the dependent variables as significant predictors of job satisfaction. The results of the analysis are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Tables 2 and 3 reveal that in separate stepwise regression equation, hygiene variables were presented as independent (potential predictors) variables with job satisfaction as the dependent measure. These variables which were significant predictors in the hygiene group were used in a stepwise regression to identify the best predictors of job satisfaction. Promotion was the best single factor, which accounted for a significant increment (40.6%) of variance.

Salary accounted for an increment (27.9%) of variance. Social support accounted for an increment (13.45) of variance. Job tenure accounted for an (10.5%) of variance, while supervision accounted for a significant increment (7.7%) of variance. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that promotion is the most significant predictor of job satisfaction.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study found that the majority of school counsellors in Midwestern Nigeria expressed satisfaction with their job as school counsellors. In addition, job satisfaction was significantly correlated with promotion, job tenure, social support, salary and supervision of school counsellors.

Promotion was the best single predictor of job satisfaction. This is an indication that promotion is a morale booster to counsellors and perhaps other employers in the school

TABLE 2
Regression Analysis of the Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

Mode		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2007.179	1	2007.179	81.258	.000a
	Residual	2939.449	119	24.701		
	Total	4946.628	120			
2	Regression	3384.883	2	1692.442	127.875	.000b
	Residual	1561.745	118	13.235		
	Total	4946.628	120			
3	Regression	4046.206	3	1348.735	175.254	.000c
	Residual	900.422	117	7.696		
	Total	4946.628	120			
4	Regression	4567.828	4	1141.957	349.701	.000d
	Residual	378.800	116	3.266		
	Total	4946.628	120			
5	Regression	4946.628	5	989.326	1.099	.000e
	Residual	.000	115	.000		
	Total	4946.628	120			

system. This is in line with the work of Kosteas (2009) that stressed the importance of promotion in an organization because of its social prestige. Promotion boosts staff morale and motivates them to work harder thereby increasing productivity and efficiency (Clark, 2005).

Job tenure was found to be significantly related to job satisfaction. This is an indication that once a worker has the assurance that his/ her job is guaranteed, the more likely for/ her to experience higher level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Also, the tendency to regard the present job as a stepping stone to other jobs is erased and there is the assurance of looking forward to retirement and pension. The finding is supported by the study of Kosteas (2009), which stated that workers initially have high morale when starting a job but morale decreases during the first few years of service and then increase as the number of years of service increases. However, this finding differs from the studies of Duffy et al. (1998) which concluded that individuals with longer tenure were more likely to experience dissonance and leave the job if they become dissatisfied.

In the present study, salary was significantly correlated with job satisfaction. This is indicative of the fact that salary is a positive motivator that a worker values and which guarantees his/ her commitment to an organization. This finding is buttressed by the postulations of Okpara (2004) and Tella et al. (2007) that workers value pay, and once they are well paid they will be satisfied and committed to their organization.

Social support was also found to be significantly correlated with job satisfaction. This is an indication that school counsellors individuals are indeed influenced by their perceptions of others' assistance and recognition. The social nature of man is also exhibited by the school counsellor as he/ she consciously or unconsciously evaluates his/her input and how this is perceived by others. This finding agrees with that of Mausner, Peterson and Capwell (1957, cited in Eduwen, 2008) that workers who identify

TABLE 3
Model Summary of Regression Analysis of Dimensions to Job Satisfaction of School Counsellors

Mode	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square	F. Change	Df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.637a	.406	.401	4.97004	.406	81.258	1	119	.000
2	.827b	.684	.679	3.63801	.279	104.095	1	118	.000
3	.904c	.818	.813	2.77415	.134	85.932	1	117	.000
4	.961d	.923	.921	1.80708	.105	159.736	1	116	.000
5	1.000e	1.000	1.000	.00000	.077	4.175	1	115	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Promotion
b. Predictors: (Constant), Promotion, Salary
c. Predictors: (Constant), Promotion, Salary, Social Support
d. Predictors: (Constant), Promotion, Salary, Social Support, Job Tenure.
e. Predictors: (Constant), Promotion, Salary, Social Support, Job tenure, Supervision.

with the group are more satisfied and are more likely to have their interpersonal and friendship needs met. This is further buttressed by the findings of Collins (2008) that individuals who had a variety of support networks such as work, family, friends, and community were better adjusted at work while those individuals with deficient social networks experience more stress and are less able to cope.

This study found a positive relationship between supervision and job satisfaction of school counsellors. This suggests adequate level of supervision by school principals over counsellors in the performance of their responsibilities. Also, it is an indication that government officials are effective in their monitoring and supervision of school counsellor. This finding buttressed those of DeMato and Curcio (2004) and Evans and Hohenshil (1997) that supervision is vital to job satisfaction and should be based on the following supervision variables: number of hours per week; length of time the supervisor had been a clinical supervisor; educational level of the supervisor; and whether the supervisor is a clinical or administrative supervisor.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, this study concludes that the majority of secondary school counsellors in Midwestern Nigeria are satisfied with their jobs; and that promotion is the most significant predictor of job satisfaction among them

IMPLICATIONS FOR BEST COUNSELLING PRACTICES

In guidance and counselling literature, there is obvious evidence suggesting that job satisfaction among school counsellors has been widely researched in few developed economies. But little is known about job satisfaction among school counsellors in developing countries, which this study and future ones hope to fill. Constant research on job satisfaction will obviously help the profession to appreciate the level of job satisfaction among counsellors, which is fundamental to quality counselling service delivery. Therefore, continuous research on job satisfaction among school counsellors must be periodically conducted if the profession is to guarantee best practices across the globe.

It is the expectation of this study that greater job performance/ productivity among school counsellors can be further sustained across the globe, if governments and school boards pay greater attention to the welfare of school counsellors especially through enhanced remunerations, guaranteed job security, adequate social support and provision of well equipped counselling centres

Since promotion is the major predictor of job satisfaction, it is therefore recommended that promotion decisions should be based on merit and performance. Managers of schools should ensure that performance evaluations are fair and bias –free. Promotion based on merit and performance will encourage better performance, and lead to greater level of job satisfaction and ultimately

higher productivity. In addition, further research should be conducted across the globe to determine the effectiveness of promotion as a mechanism for eliciting efforts and reducing turn over relative to other mechanisms such as pay increase and job tenure.

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