

**COUNSELLING SERVICES AS A COPING STRATEGY FOR INCULCATING SECURITY  
CONSCIOUSNESS IN PUPILS IN NSUKKA LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION  
AUTHORITY, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*This study focused on the role of counseling services as coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils in Nsukka Local Government Educational Authority in Enugu State. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. Three research questions were formulated by the researchers to guide the study. The proportionate random sampling technique was used in selection of 50% of 120 counselors, out of 240 counselors in the 240 primary schools within Nsukka education zone in Enugu State. A questionnaire designed on a 4 Likert type scale was used in the study. Data were analyzed using frequency distribution, mean score ( $\bar{x}$ ), grand mean and standard deviation (SD). The findings and the results revealed that counselors agreed that counseling services will inculcate in the pupils' high sense of security consciousness. From the findings of the study, recommendations were proffered which include that there should be adequate funding and support of counseling services/activities in the primary schools by the federal, state and local governments and other financial institutions; there must be sufficient funds for the provision of equipment, infrastructure and facilities for counseling services in the schools; school administrators should effectively support counseling activities in the schools and also ensure that adequate time is allocated for counselors and pupils; likewise constant and continuous staff training, retraining and development programmes should be encouraged in order to build the capacity of the counselors.*

**Keywords:** Counseling, Coping Strategy, Security, Primary School, Pupils.

## **Introduction**

The need to institute counseling programmes in primary schools cannot be overemphasized. Human mind at this level is usually in a “*tabula rasa*” form. This implies that the mind of the child, at this level is virgin and open, needing to be filled up. By virtues of good counseling and subsequent training, the child begins to develop positively. This is the task this paper explores using counseling as a prolific tool for effective human living and adjustment. Thus, counseling is remedial, preventive and developmental. It takes care of the needs of the pupils to demonstrate adjustment and maturity in relationships and cushion possible discovery of their talents, abilities, potentialities, strengths and weakness at the earliest stages for their own betterment. The need for people to live a functional, meaningful and secure life makes it imperative that early guidance and counseling programmes should be established at the primary school level. The aim is to enhance early and positive adjustment procedures for meaningful living.

Counseling services have always played a leading role in terms of child development and improvement. According to Modo; Sanni; Uwah and Mogbo (2013) counseling is one of the educational services that promotes the efficiency of the educational system for objective attainment and for guiding the learners through the learning process. This is in line with the goals of educational services as contained in the National Policy of Education (2004) which are to facilitate the implementation of the educational policy; the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of educational system; and make learning experiences more meaningful for children. Okobiah and Okorodudu (2006) highlighted that counseling is encompassed by activities of relevant services and also processes of helping persons within and outside the school, to achieve their full potentials in emotional, moral, social, academic and vocational development. Anagbogu (2002) defines counseling as a dynamic and purposeful relationship between two people in which procedures vary with the nature of the client's (child) needs, but in which there is always mutual participation by the counselor and the client with the focus of self-actualization and self-determination by the client. Counseling is a relationship characterized by mutual respect, effective communication, genuine and complete acceptance of the client by the counselor and concentration on the needs, problems and feelings of the client. It is also a relationship that facilitates growth and changes in the client to become free and fully functional. Thus, Anagbogu (2002), affirms that individuals strive to achieve optimal development of personal resources and that counseling aid the children in developing the most effective ways of identifying and achieving desired and desirable goals for better adjustment and living. That means that counseling prevents frustration, anxiety, stress and can enhance security of life and property.

Apart from controlling deviant behaviours and other delinquencies among pupils; Counseling can be utilized effectively as coping strategy to inculcate the security consciousness that assists in the enhancement of security of pupils. Security is perceived as a basic human need that contributes to effective learning. Psychologists propose that security is crucial for human survival. According to the hierarchy of Needs postulated by Abraham Maslow, the lower needs of man like food, shelter and security must be met before other higher needs like education or intellectual/cognitive needs (Ngwoke, 2010, Akintunde,2015)]. Inability to satisfy the need for security may cause stress for an individual and hinder the pursuit of higher needs.

Generally, security implies safety, freedom from danger and protection from physical harm. Human beings are instinctively driven to maximize available resources in ensuring their physical, physiological and psychological well-being. Security is not limited to protection from physical harm. Security also involves existence of environmental factors that instill peace of mind in an individual in order to empower him/her to function effectively in the society. Poor human relations between the teacher and the pupil can hamper pupil's mental health and cause a feeling of insecurity. Poor infrastructural designs in the school can expose pupils to security problems like health hazards and stress. Some female pupils may feel threatened as a result of rampant sexual abuses and rape in the school and the environs. Shuaibu 2015, therefore submitted that a safe school is one that fosters peaceful, positive or cordial relationships among pupils, teachers and administrators. Nwafor (2013) highlighted that the consciousness of security involves the absence of conflict or violence at a particular time and place which evokes the climate of freedom from fear, intimidation and

harassment, oppression and brutalization by external forces or agents. Being aware of the importance of peace and security is vital for national development and various World congresses have acknowledged this in their agreements. For instance, the resolutions endorsed during the World Congress of Education International - EI affirms the right to peace and pledges its support for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and practice of non-violence through peace education, dialogue and cooperation (Education International – EI, 1998). Similarly, in 1995, the Beijing Platform of Action also recognized peace education not only as a human right but also as an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace (Education International – EI, 1998). Umar (2013) also identified the importance of utilizing counseling services as coping strategy for inculcating the consciousness of peace, conflict resolution and national security as one that involves: helping children to deal with real-life issues that affects their lives and society in general; preparing children for adulthood; inculcating in children the spirit of unity, nationality and patriotism; preparing children for effective adult life that cherishes and promotes harmonious relationship among members of the society so that children may develop into adulthood with skills necessary to prevent conflict; instilling in children appropriate value and skills in order to enhance their moral development; equip children with the knowledge and skills that will help bring about peace through better understanding; and inculcate into children such value like compassion, integrity, hope, justice, unity, gender fairness, caring for life, sharing, reconciliation and active non-violence

There is an urgent need for counseling in the primary schools in the Nigeria as a result of high security challenges in all parts of the country, yet most public primary schools in Nsukka Local Education Authority seem to have failed to establish counseling units to help pupils handle daily security issues such as thefts in the school, bullying among pupils, kidnapping, fighting, gangsterism, rape and among others, both in rural and urban primary schools.

### **Statement of the problem**

The recent happenings in Nigerian as regards crimes and crises have drawn attention of various education stakeholders to the need to provide new means of promoting peace and national security in the society. There is no gainsaying that people are angry about the situation engendered by conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. The crises and violence that have engulfed Nigeria in the recent past, which includes the issue of Boko Haram Insurgency, Fulani herdsmen attacks, armed robbery, xenophobic strife, corruption, ethnicity, tribal conflicts, kidnapping, ritual killings, negative political/electoral tendencies, among others, constitute the major hindrance to national security and peace. It is obvious that in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority, children are also involved in perpetrating crimes and fermenting crises in the society. Such crimes and crisis include: political crises, social crimes such as; kidnapping, theft, murder, fighting among others, these pupils are also experience many attacks from the adults on their way to and fro from the school. Counseling services when introduced in school may equip the learners (pupils) skills and ability to take actions within organizational context. This therefore, calls for the need to identify the role and importance of counseling services as coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in primary school pupils in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of the study is to examine the role of counselling services as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the following:

1. To determine if counselling services are available to pupils in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority, Enugu state.
2. To determine the relevance of counselling services as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority, Enugu state.
3. To identify challenges to effective utilization of counselling services as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority, Enugu state.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the state of availability of counselling services for pupils in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority?
2. What is the relevance of counselling services as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority?
3. What are the challenges to effective utilization of counseling services as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils in Nsukka Local Government Education Authority?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all the counselors in the 240 primary schools within the Nsukka Local Government Education Authority; which constituted a total of 240 counselors according to Enugu State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB, 2015). The sample size of the study was selected using the proportionate random sampling technique in order to select 120 counselors from the entire population of the public primary schools within the Nsukka Local Government Education Authority, Enugu state. The sample represents 50% of the entire population of the study. A Questionnaire containing 15 items was the major research instrument used for data collection. This instrument was constructed/ designed by the researchers and named: Counseling Services as a coping strategy for Inculcating Security consciousness among pupils Questionnaire (CSCSISCPQ). The items on the questionnaire were structured on a modified Likert type 4-point scale weighted as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4, Agree (A) – 3, Disagree (D) – 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) - 1. The instrument was also validated by two experts in Guidance and Counseling Unit in Department of Educational Foundations and Measurement and Evaluation Department from University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu state, who collated each item in the questionnaire in line with the purpose of the study and research questions. The corrections and modifications done by the experts on some items in the instrument were effected and incorporated before distribution of the instrument.

For reliability of the instrument, a pilot-testing was carried out using 10 counselors from 10 primary schools in Enugu North Local Government Area of Enugu state, after which the results were collated and measured using the Cronbach alpha formula. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was  $r = 0.78$  showing that the instrument was significant and its reliability guaranteed. The final copies of the instruments were distributed to the participants using three research assistants who were guided by the researchers on how to communicate on a personal, face to face, hand delivery contact with the participants. These research assistants waited for the respondents to fill the questionnaires and retrieved them on the spot. Data collected were analyzed using Frequency Distribution, Mean Score ( $\bar{x}$ ), and Standard Deviation (SD). Only the mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted while mean score below 2.50 was not accepted

## Result

**Table 1**

**Research question 1:** How available are counseling services in pupils in Nsukka Local Government Educational Authority, Enugu state?

N=120

S/N	ITEMS	4	3	2	1	MEAN	SD
1.	Counseling services are available in the primary schools	49	41	10	20	3.0	1.1
2.	Pupils are encouraged to come for counseling service	43	30	38	9	2.9	1.0
3.	There is a counselling week for primary schools in Nsukka education	20	21	58	21	2.3	1.0
4.	All the primary schools have a counselling unit	10	23	59	28	2.1	0.9
5.	Counsellors are available in all primary schools in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu state	7	20	60	33	2.0	0.8
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.49</b>	

Results in Table 1 revealed that items 1 and 2 scored above 2.50, indicating a strong agreement with the statements, while items 3, 4 and 5 on the table scored below 2.50 indicating a strong disagreement with the statements by the respondents. The grand mean of 2.46 shows that the responses were strongly rejected by the respondents, which indicated that counselling services in primary schools in Nsukka Local Education Authority, Enugu state is grossly inadequate.

**Table 2:**

**Research question 2:** What is the relevance of counseling services as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils in Nsukka Local Educational Authority, Enugu state?

N=120

S/N	ITEMS	4	3	2	1	MEAN	SD
6.	Pupils are aware of the need for counselling	5	19	62	34	1.9	0.8
7.	Security consciousness has increased due to school counseling	52	43	15	10	3.1	0.9
8.	Counselling is an effective tool for coping security challenges in primary schools in Nsukka Educational Zone	51	46	14	9	3.2	1.2
9.	Pupils are counseled on different security strategies	55	48	6	11	3.2	1.1
10.	Counselling services have been introduced to avoid and reduce security challenges in Nsukka Educational Zone	57	40	13	10	3.2	1.0
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.92</b>	

Table 2, the results revealed that only item one on the table scored below 2.50 other items on the table scored above 2.50 indicating a strong agreement with the statements of the respondents. The grand mean of 2.92 shows that the responses were strongly acceptable by the respondents, which indicated that counselling services are relevant and could be used effectively as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness among pupils in Nsukka Local Education Authority.

**Table 3:**

**Research Question 3:** What are the challenges to effective utilization of counseling services as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in primary school pupils in Nsukka Local Education Authority, Enugu State?

N=120

S/N	ITEMS	4	3	2	1	MEAN	SD
11.	Counsellors are not adequately funded	49	48	13	10	3.1	1.0
12.	Pupils do not their own come for counselling services unless when compelled	48	46	11	9	2.9	0.9
13.	Lack of infrastructural facilities is a challenge to counselling activities	42	49	9	10	2.9	0.8
14.	Lack of awareness on the benefits of counselling services is a challenge to counselling	39	56	8	17	3.0	1.0
15.	Inadequate number of counseling in primary schools limit access to counseling	46	41	19	14	3.0	0.9
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					2.98	

Results presented in table 3 showed that all the items from 11 to15 scored high and were rated highly, above 2.50, indicating a strong agreement with the statements by the participants. The grand mean of 2.98 shows the responses were strongly acceptable which revealed the challenges to effective utilization of counselling services as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in primary school pupils in Nsukka Local Education Authority, Enugu State.

## Discussion

The results from the research questions revealed that generally counselling services could effectively be utilized as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils, owing to the recent happenings in the society where terrorism, kidnapping, suicide bombing, armed robbery and all other social vices have become the order of the day. Igbuzor (2011) further highlighted that through counselling services the values of peace, conflict resolution and national security which include among others, respect for life, sharing with others, rejection of violence, sense of justice, listening ability and solidarity would be cultivated in the early stages of educational process to enable learners to imbibe the right values that will guide them throughout lifetime. With effective counselling services in the primary schools, pupils will imbibe such consciousness that will equip them with the skills that promote tolerance, harmonious relationships, peaceful co-existence, good citizenship, environmental sustainability and staying out of danger.

Although, there are challenges to effective utilization of counselling services as a coping strategy for inculcating the security consciousness to pupils which has been highlighted in table 3. The findings of the study from table 1 also revealed the issue of unavailability of counselling services in some primary schools, the relevance and importance of counseling services as coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils in Nsukka Local Education Authority, Enugu state. This relevance and importance included that counseling services inculcated such consciousness and skills that assisted pupils to achieve peaceful negotiation and reconciliation skills; acquire the consciousness to enable them become useful members of the society; enable children understand their environment and real-life issues as they affect their lives and future; instill the consciousness that enable them stay out of danger, problem solving skills and guarantee security of lives and likewise enables learners to explore the root causes of conflicts having known humanitarian and human rights.. This agrees with the statements of Umar (2013) that counselling services as an educational service seek to provide the school child the opportunity to obtain holistic educational development that prepares him for a functional life. Kester (2009) also stated that teaching the principles of peace through counseling would also build in every learner the universal values and behaviours on which a culture of peace is predicated, including the development of non-violent conflict resolution skills and a commitment to working together to realize a shared and preferred future.

Table 2 also revealed that counsellors agree that the level of awareness among pupils on the relevance of counselling programmes as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils

was highlighted. This is in line with the statement of Egbule (2006) who goes further in identifying the imperatives of the programmes offered under counseling in the school system and this includes: helping pupils understand themselves in terms of their abilities, and security challenges. Findings from Table 3 further revealed the challenges to effective utilization of counseling services as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils. These challenges included: inadequate infrastructure or funding, facilities needed to improve counseling services; unsupportive school administrators in matters concerning counseling; inadequate time allocated to counselling services in the school; inadequate use of professionals in counselling services; poor/inadequate staff training, and retraining and development programmes for capacity building of counsellors. However, the findings of the study also revealed that the availability of counselling services is not a challenge. However, Nwabuoku and Ijeh (1999) identified the general problems of organizing counseling programmes in the Nigerian schools as: inadequate trained personnel; ineffective application of ICTs in counseling services; lack of full time counselors to develop the school guidance programmes; poor organization of counseling activities in the school as a result of inadequate allocation of time to guidance activities; lack of guidance facilities such as accommodations and equipment among others.; lack of funds for organization of counseling activities in schools by government; poor attitude of both teachers and head teachers, and Ministry/Board of Education officials towards counseling; difficulty in obtaining information and failure to implement counseling programme in schools due to the fact that staff have refused to acknowledge the usefulness of a counselor and make all efforts towards effective counseling activities thwarted. If these challenges have been tackled, then counseling services will not only serve as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils in Enugu State but throughout the Nigerian schools.

### **Conclusion**

The study has examined the role of counseling services in primary schools as a coping strategy for inculcating security consciousness in pupils in Nsukka Local Education Authority, Enugu state. Generally, indications from the discussions in the study revealed that counseling services when effectively utilized could be used to inculcate in the pupils such consciousness that may enhance peace and security. However, the relevance/importance of counselling services in both the education sector and country is essential as highlighted in the study, in the sense that, it will bring about security awareness and strategies for prevention. Therefore, the need arises for effective management of primary education in Nsukka Local Education Authority, Enugu state and to ensure that counseling units are established in all the primary schools in the area.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been proffered:

1. There should be adequate funding and support of counseling services/activities in the primary schools by the federal, state and local governments and other financial institutions.
2. The funding must be sufficient for the provision of equipment, infrastructure and facilities for counselling services in the schools.
3. School management should create awareness among the pupils about the need to seek the assistance of counsellors in times of security challenges.
4. There should be constant and continuous staff training, retraining and development programmes in order to boost the capacity of counsellors.

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