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## **CLINICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIBLIOTHERAPY AS INTERVENTION STRATEGY AMONG STUDENTS: PERCEPTION OF LIBRARIANS, MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND SOCIOLOGISTS IN LANDMARK UNIVERSITY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Peer pressure, psychological/emotional issues, health issues and socio-economic factors are some of the challenges that could affect students in higher institutions, with adverse effects on their performances in school. Among several intervention strategies that could be used to mitigate the effects of these challenges, this study focused on the use of bibliotherapy. A survey was therefore conducted on the perception of librarians, medical personnel and sociologists in Landmark University on clinical and developmental bibliotherapy as an intervention strategy for students confronted by some of these challenges. A survey research design was adopted. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. It was found that majority (80%) of the respondents were aware of bibliotherapy. Medical personnel, librarians and sociologists perceived among others that bible, fiction and non-fiction books could be used for clinical and developmental bibliotherapy; introduction of bibliotherapy in Landmark University may reduce social vices among students; and high rate of compliance to royal laws of the University may be recorded among students.*

**Keywords:** *Bibliotherapy, Clinical, Developmental, Intervention, Students*

## **Introduction**

The 21st Century youth is encumbered with several challenges emanating from socio-economic factors, peer pressure, psychological/emotional issues and sometimes, health status. Technological advancements have also brought about negative media influence on youths who are the main population of higher institutions all over the world. Several issues with negative colorations abound on campuses which could be traced to some of the aforementioned issues. Some of these could be teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, emotional or mental health disturbances, violence/abuse, bullying, and many other issues (Flanagan, Vandenhoeck, Shelton, Kelly, Morrison, & Young, 2013; Forgan, 2002; Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006). While some students may be experiencing challenge in just an area of their lives, some of them are going through multiple challenges which are so pronounced on their academic performance and general relationship with other students. This may hinder them from properly integrating into student life on campus and adversely affect their studies which could lead to attrition or delay in the time-to-completion of their undergraduate studies.

It is obvious from the foregoing that students need intervention strategies that could ameliorate the hurdles consequential to their challenges. Intervention strategies may be hard to define since it is applicable in almost all fields of human endeavors. However, this study views intervention strategy from academic perspective with sole aim of using books to address some of the challenges confronting students in Landmark University. Clinical and Developmental Bibliotherapy will be explored as possible intervention strategies in this study. Bibliotherapy has been defined by several authors based on their disciplines as bibliotherapy is not limited to library but also used among medical personnel, psychologists, sociologists, counsellors and other groups that are aware of the therapeutic characteristics of books (Ogrenir, 2013). Furthermore, several other nomenclatures have been used to represent bibliotherapy. They include but are not limited to: bibliocounseling, biblioeducation, bibliopsychology, library therapeutics and literatherapy (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2005). One specific characteristic that is common with definition of bibliotherapy is the therapeutic intent associated with it (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012; Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000).

As defined by Russell (2012), bibliotherapy is focused on using literature to help individuals cope with emotional and psychological matters. From the perspective of some scholars however, bibliotherapy is seen as using literature to offer insight as a form of counselling and encourage emotional healing (Heath, Sheen, Leavy, Young and Money, 2005; Young & Bryan, 2012). Furner and Kenney (2017) stressed that bibliotherapy is a "sensitive and non-intrusive" method to support students in solving problems and coping with individual challenges. This

study is favorably disposed to the perspective of Furner and Kenney because it is assertive on the fact that participants should not be compelled into bibliotherapy.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Majority of students in higher institutions are struggling to overcome some character deficiencies, health, emotional and psychological issues, which may have root cause in their family backgrounds, peer pressure, addiction, stress, family problems, low academic performance and other innumerable challenges. It is however challenging that when problems facing universities in Nigeria are discussed, it is usually on facilities instead of personal challenges of students (Peretomode & Ugbomeh, 2013). Baba (2014) identified these challenges and suggested the guidance and counselling approach as intervention strategy. This study has however identified a gap in the recommendation made by Baba (2014) that it is not certain if any institution is capable of meeting the required number of manpower to efficiently meet the needs of student (take students up one-on-one) in rendering professional services and personal assistance to overcome certain habits, break addiction, to empathize in times of loss of loved ones, helping to overcome fear of sickness and other issues.

It is also noted that medical doctors, librarians and sociologists have personal issues that may not allow them outside working hours to attend to students who may need their services (Verlander, 2004; Adisa, Mordi & Mordi, 2014). Students may therefore keep venomous issues to themselves until there would be no remedy. This study therefore postulates that bibliotherapy may be an alternative intervention strategy to address the issues. It is on this basis that this study investigated the perception of medical doctors, librarians and sociologists in Landmark University on clinical and developmental bibliotherapy as intervention strategies to help students overcome the identified challenges.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study is to examine the perception of librarians, medical personnel and sociologists in Landmark University on clinical and developmental bibliotherapy as an intervention strategy among students. The specific objectives are to:

1. ascertain the extent of awareness of clinical and developmental bibliotherapy among librarians, medical personnel and sociologists in Landmark University;
2. investigate the perception of librarians, medical personnel and sociologists in Landmark University on therapeutic use of books;
3. assess the perception of respondents on use of bibliotherapy for intervention programmes in Landmark University; and

4. examine their general perception on clinical and developmental bibliotherapy.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are the medical personnel, librarians and sociologists in Landmark University aware of clinical and developmental bibliotherapy?
2. What is the perception medical personnel, librarians and sociologists in Landmark University on therapeutic use of books?
3. What is the perception of respondents on use of bibliotherapy for intervention programmes in Landmark University?
4. What is their general perception on clinical and developmental bibliotherapy?

### **Scope of the Study**

The study focused on Landmark University medical personnel at the University Medical Centre, members of faculty in the Department of Sociology and the Librarians at the Centre for Learning Resources (CLR), also referred to as the University Library. It focused on the perception of 70 medical personnel, 6 librarians at CLR and 7 members of faculty in the Department of Sociology. Students and other members of staff of the university apart from the aforementioned are exempted from this study.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Bibliotherapy comes from two Greek words; *biblion*, which means book, and *therapeia*, meaning healing (McCulliss, 2012). Through a dynamic interaction between the reader and story, this intervention may assist the individual in coping with life changes, emotional issues, and behavioral challenges (Stewart & Ames, 2014; Walwyn & Rowley, 2011). Bibliotherapy has been defined by several authors based on their disciplines as bibliotherapy is not limited to library but also used among medical personnel, psychologists, sociologists, counsellors and other groups that are aware of the therapeutic characteristics of books (Prater, Johnstun, Dyches and Johnstun, 2006; Ogrenir, 2013). Furthermore, several other nomenclatures have been used to represent bibliotherapy. They include but are not limited to: bibliocounseling, biblioeducation, bibliopsychology, library therapeutics and literatherapy (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2005). One specific characteristic common to all the definitions of bibliotherapy is the therapeutic intent associated with it (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012; Sridhar & Vaughn, 2000).

#### *Awareness of Clinical and developmental bibliotherapy*

The word 'therapy' gives the idea that bibliotherapy is all about activities that

take place in the hospital. However, Tukhareli (2014) argued that bibliotherapy is an umbrella term that covers a wide variety of clinical (therapeutic) and non-clinical (developmental, creative, social) interventions involving books, reading, and communication around texts. Clinical bibliotherapy as the name suggests is mainly used by counselors, therapists, psychologists, medical personnel or assistants trained to use literature to treat individuals experiencing serious and severe problems that could require medical and professional care (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012). On the other hand, developmental bibliotherapy are instructional strategy that could be used by teachers, librarians and others working with adolescents as an intervention through guided reading to help youth cope with specific issues or learn new skills using appropriate literature (Gavigan and Kurts, 2011). Anasi (2008) found that awareness of bibliotherapy in Nigeria was very low. This was attributed to inadequate knowledge of bibliotherapy, inaccessibility of relevant materials. Magaji (2016) also confirmed that there is low awareness of bibliotherapy but recommended continuous an regular awareness.

#### *Therapeutic use of books*

Books have been used over the years for therapeutic purposes yielding commendable results. They have been used at clinical and developmental levels to attend to needs of students. Rozalski, Stewart, and Miller (2010) based on their research have found that using carefully selected thematic books, teachers can use literature to reach young people who are experiencing difficult situations whether having math anxiety or feeling like geeks at math and worry about fitting in. Floyd & Hebert (2010) also asserted that using biographical pictorial books can help to nurture the talents of youngsters. Books could also be used for therapeutic purpose among students who have experienced domestic violence (DV) and they can learn healthy conflict resolution. Likewise, their self-esteem could be restored and post trauma experinces could be resolved (Thompson & Trice-Black, 2012).

#### *Bibliotherapy as intervention strategy*

Gualano, Bert, Voglino, Martorana, Andriolo and Siliquini (2017) did analysis of papers that have carried out intervention programmes on mental health and recorded positive long term effect of bibliotherapy application. The work of Tofaha (2012) focused on intervention strategy for self-esteem of gifted children in primary school. A total of 67 primary school children participated in the study. Findings from the study revealed efficacy of bibliotherapy as a powerful intervention for young people.

### **Methodology**

The social survey design was adopted for this study. A self-developed questionnaire by the researchers consisting sections A, B and C was used for data

collection. Total enumeration sampling was used for the study. The population of the study comprised 70 medical personnel, 6 Librarians at CLR and 7 members of faculty in the Department of Sociology, Landmark University. However, forty-seven out of the eighty copies of the questionnaire were returned constituting 58.75% return rate. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, which include frequency counts and standard deviation. SPSS was used to analyze the data.

### Data Analysis

The researchers distributed 80 copies of questionnaire of which 47 were returned, amounting to 58.7 return rate.

**Table 1: Demographics Characteristics of Respondents**

<u>Background profile of the respondents</u>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	21	44.7
Female	26	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
31 to 35	26	57.4
36 to 40	10	19
26 to 39	7	14.9
20 to 25	4	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Disciplines</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Medical Personnel	38	80.9
Librarians	6	12.8
Sociologists	3	6.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From Table 1, it is evident that majority 26 (55%) of the respondents were females. Their male counterparts were 21 (44.7%) were males. Majority of the respondents 26 (57.4%) were between the ages of 31 and 35 while 10 (19%) fall within the 36 to 40 age range. Medical personnel represent majority 38 (80.9%) of the respondents. Other results are as detailed in table 1.

RQ 1: To what extent are the librarians, medical personnel and sociologists in Landmark University aware of clinical and developmental bibliotherapy?

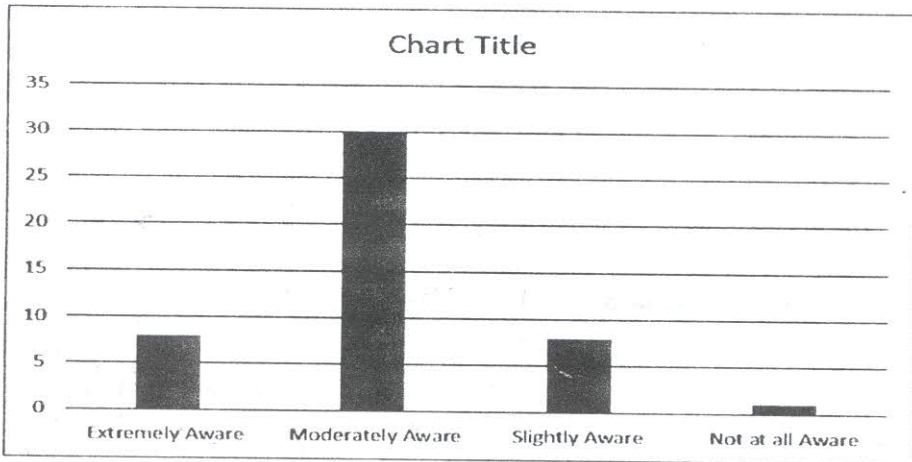


Figure 1: Awareness of Bibliotherapy

Response to the question on extent of awareness as presented on figure 1 above shows high level of awareness among medical personnel, librarians and sociologists in Landmark University as 38 (80%) are aware of clinical and developmental bibliotherapy. Only 1 (2.1%) was not at all aware. The level of awareness shows that the respondents are appropriate to be engaged for this study.

RQ 2: What is the perception of medical personnel, librarians and sociologists in Landmark University on therapeutic use of books?

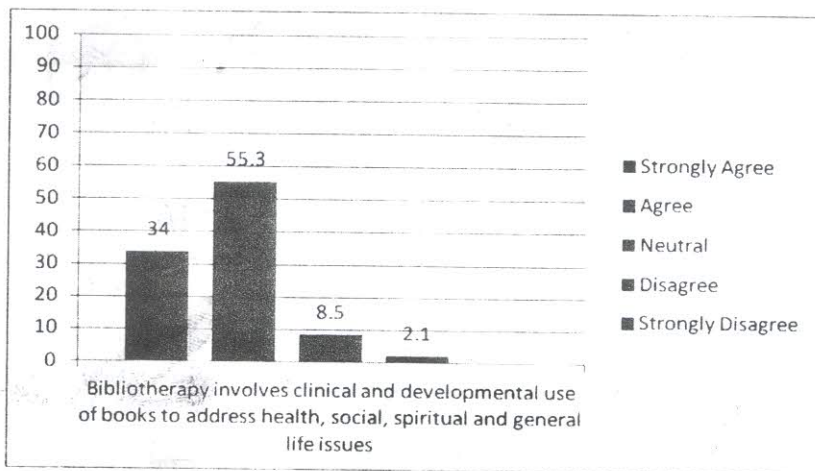


Figure 2: Perception of respondents on therapeutic use of books



Results in figure 2 show the perception of respondents on the therapeutic use of books. 16 (34%) strongly agreed and 26 (55.3%) agreed that bibliotherapy involves clinical and developmental use of books as therapy for health, social, spiritual and general life issues. Only (2.1%) of the respondents disagreed while (8.5%) were neutral in this regard.

RQ 3: What is the perception of the respondents on use of bibliotherapy for intervention programmes in Landmark University?

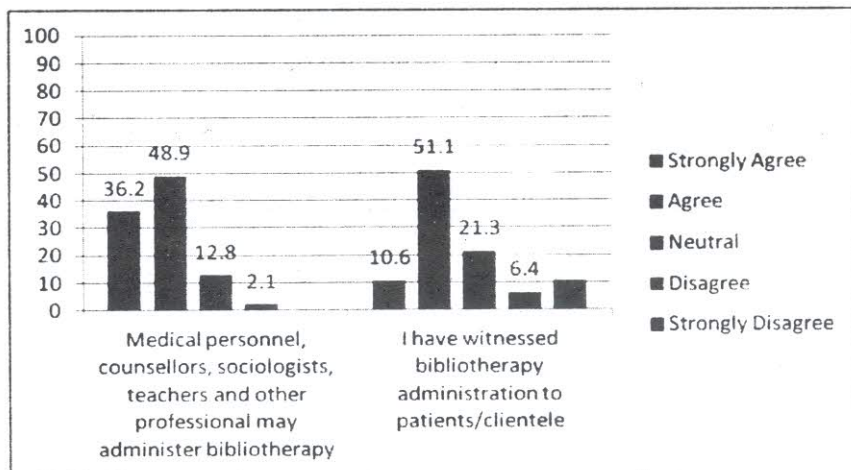


Figure 3: Perception of Respondents on Use of Bibliotherapy as Intervention Strategy

Figure 3 revealed that majority of the respondents (36.2%) and (48.9%) agreed that bibliotherapy could be used for intervention in Landmark University based on the fact that medical personnel, counselors, sociologists, teachers and other professionals do administer bibliotherapy for intervention programmes. 51.1% of the respondents also indicated that they have witnessed bibliotherapy administration to patients/clientele.

RQ 4. What is their general perception of the respondents on clinical and developmental bibliotherapy

**Table 2: Perception on Clinical and Developmental Bibliotherapy**

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		N	Mean	Std. D
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%			
Reading books to a sick person may bring some relief	15	31.9	26	55.3	4	8.5	2	4.3	0	0.0	47	4.15	.751
Persons with emotional problems resulting from loss of loved ones could be relieved through reading of books	16	34.0	23	48.9	5	10.6	2	4.3	1	2.1	47	4.06	.965
Fiction and non-fiction books could be used for bibliotherapy	4	8.5	27	57.4	14	29.8	2	4.3	0	0.0	47	3.70	.689
Bible could be readily accepted for use in bibliotherapy	26	55.3	17	36.2	4	8.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	47	4.47	.654
Students can identify with characters in books and model their lives after them	17	36.2	26	55.3	4	8.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	47	4.28	.615
Bibliotherapy could be used as an intervention strategy among students engaged in substance abuse	15	31.9	24	51.1	6	12.8	1	2.1	1	2.1	47	4.09	.855
Bibliotherapy intervention may assist students engaged in pre-marital sex	10	21.3	25	53.2	7	14.9	4	8.5	1	2.1	47	3.83	.940
Violent students could be helped through bibliotherapy	15	31.9	28	59.6	4	8.5			0	0.0	47	4.23	.598
Students contemplating suicide could be helped through bibliotherapy	16	34.0	25	53.2	5	10.6	1	2.1	0	0.0	47	4.17	.789
Repeating students with low self-esteem could be helped through bibliotherapy	18	38.3	25	53.2	4	8.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	47	4.30	.623
Administration of bibliotherapy in LMU may reduce social vices among students	13	27.7	23	48.9	9	19.1	2	4.3	0	0.0	47	4.00	.808
Landmark University may record high rate of compliance with Royal Laws	8	17.0	19	40.4	17	36.2	3	6.4	0	0.0	47	3.62	.990

Students participation in agriculture may be improved through bibliotherapy	4 8 5	26 55 3	15 31 9	1 2 1	1 2 1	47	3 65	766
It may be capital intensive to engage bibliotherapy as may require acquisition of books and employment of staff	3 6 4	1 2 1	9 19 1	22 46 8	12 25 5	47	2 17	1 049
It may require educating the University community on bibliotherapy so it will not be misunderstood	0 0 0	0 0 0	1 2 1	31 66 0	15 31 9	47	1 70	507
I may not want to participate in administering bibliotherapy as it may be an added workload on me	9 19 1	15 31 9	15 31 9	6 12 8	2 4 3	47	3 49	1 081
I may need training on bibliotherapy though I have some knowledge of it	0 0 0		12 25 5	27 57 4	8 17 0	47	2 09	654
Bibliotherapy may necessitate establishment of a bibliotherapy section at the Centre for Learning Resources	0 0 0	1 2 1	2 4 3	29 61 7	15 31 9	47	1 77	633

From Table 2, results showed that of 18 items listed on clinical and developmental bibliotherapy, only 14 had high mean scores which are above 3 marks on the 5-point Likert scale. The Medical Personnel, Sociologist and Librarians perceived that Bible could be readily accepted for use in bibliotherapy, fiction and non-fiction books could be used for bibliotherapy, students can identify with characters in books and model their lives after them, violent students could be helped through bibliotherapy, students contemplating suicide could be helped through bibliotherapy. reading books to a sick person may bring some relief, bibliotherapy could be used as an intervention strategy among students engaged in substance abuse, persons with emotional problems resulting from loss of loved ones could be relieved through reading of books, administration of bibliotherapy in LMU may reduce social vices among students, bibliotherapy intervention may assist students engaged in pre-marital sex, fiction and non-fiction books could be used for bibliotherapy, students' participation in agriculture may be improved through bibliotherapy, and Landmark University may record high rate of compliance with Royal Laws.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The study revealed that librarians, sociologists and medical personnel in Landmark University are very much aware of clinical and developmental bibliotherapy. Results show that majority of the respondents perceive that bibliotherapy involves clinical and developmental use of books as therapy for health, social, spiritual and general life issues. This finding corresponds with that of De Vries, Brennan, Lankin, Morse, Rix and Beck (2017) who opined that bibliotherapy is not limited to persons admitted in hospitals but could be used to address challenges that cut across several facets of human endeavours to include physical, psychological and emotional health; social and family life; and cognitive domain. The study also revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that bibliotherapy could be used as intervention strategy in Landmark University and students could comply with the Royal Laws of the University with the help of bibliotherapy. This finding conforms with the conclusions of Gualano, Bert, Voglino, Martorana, Andriolo and Siliquini (2017) and Tofaha (2012) which affirmed that bibliotherapy is a tool that could be used as intervention strategy among young people.

### **Conclusion**

The perception of Librarians, Medical Personnel and Sociologists in Landmark University could be used as the fulcrum for introduction of bibliotherapy as an alternative intervention strategy in proffering solutions to some of the challenges confronting students in Landmark University.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following are recommended:

1. A collaborative relationship among librarians, medical personnel and sociologists should be initiated to develop a bibliotherapy programme to assist students.
2. A 'Bibliotherapy Clinic' should be set up at the Centre for Learning Resources, Landmark University to assist students on various challenges.
3. Purposive acquisition of library resources should be done at CLR to favor bibliotherapy.

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