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Guidance and Counselling Programme as a Predictor of Students' Achievement in Secondary Schools in Edo State

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the influence of guidance and counselling programme on the achievement of students in secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria. The study was undertaken to examine the impact of students' access to study counselling, career/vocational counselling and peer counselling. Three research questions and hypotheses were raised and formulated to guide the study respectively. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study covered all the school counsellors in public secondary schools and Senior Secondary School Two (SS2) students in the two hundred and ninety nine (296) secondary schools in the eighteen (18) local government areas in Edo State. A total of 96 schools with a functional guidance counselling unit constituted the targeted population of the study. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select the 96 public schools. Hence, all the 96 schools with school counsellor personnels as at the time of survey were used as the target schools for the investigation. A researcher developed questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. Using the test-retest reliability technique, the reliability coefficients yielded a value of 0.71, 0.76 and 0.85 for the three guidance programmes which showed that the instrument was reliable. The multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result from the analysis showed that school counselling programme including students' access to study counseling has the most significant impact on students' achievement (β = 1.863, t= 6.486 $p<0.05$). This was closely followed by career/vocational counselling (β = 0.454, t = 5.664 $p<0.05$) and peer counseling (β =0.346, t = 3.934 $p<0.05$). It was recommended that guidance service units should as a matter of urgency; be established in all secondary school in Edo State in compliance with the recommendation of the Federal Government in the National Policy on Education.

Keywords: Guidance & Counselling programme, Academic, Achievement, Study Counselling

Introduction

Guidance and counselling is rapidly becoming more popular in Nigeria's educational system as more principals and teachers show an interest in helping secondary school students meet their needs in the classroom and in making informed decisions about their education, careers, and social lives. In the words of Tikolo (2024), students encounter a variety of unmet requirements in the classroom. Students between the ages of 13 and 21, which make up the majority of the secondary school stage of education, have social, intellectual, psychological, career, and emotional requirements that are covered by this. Ibrahim, Bandi, Danyaya, Sahabi, and Abubakar (2021) divided some of the variables influencing pupils at this point into smaller groups based on size. Career growth, study habits and educational preparation, family connections, financial adjustment, personal-social adaptations, and health development are some of these. Students in senior secondary school will have to deal with these particular demands. More importantly, today's secondary school children need to be assisted in recognising their emotional and social requirements if they are to grow up with a meaningful outlook on life.

Due to individual variances, senior secondary school students' guidance or counselling requirements are likely to differ (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Additionally, due to the unique characteristics of this period, when the majority of pupils are thought to be teenagers, counselling and guidance may help form strong personal relationships with both sexes and help them adjust to changes in their physical development. In order to help students with their individual transitions, the National Policy on Education (2013) promoted the hiring and training of career masters and counsellors. However, a major factor in deciding whether or not students would embrace counsellors and their services at schools is their attitude towards such services.

Experienced instructors play a crucial part in the teaching-learning process, but school counsellors also play key roles in ensuring high student accomplishment. These responsibilities include educational, personal, and vocational/career. Adegboyega (2020) pointed out that in order to achieve high student achievement, school counsellors must create a school counselling program that addresses the educational, personal, and vocational/career needs of every student in the school, taking into account their individual differences, ages, and classes. They noted that the school counselling program must be run by qualified school counsellors in order to ensure good student accomplishment.

One reason the aforementioned quality counseling programme may affect a students' achievement is because all the variables have experience, exposure, skill and knowledge acquisition as their undertone. For instance, Onyiliofor (2015) submitted that an older school counsellor is likely to have more

knowledge and exposure on how to manage students' learning difficulties and provide academic advising and counsel where necessary. The same is expected of a school counsellor with more: years of experience, schooling and membership/affiliation with professional associations. This accounts for the reason any school counselling programme is arguably as good as the quality of the school counsellors. Therefore, assessing students' attitude towards guidance and counselling in schools forms the motivation for this study.

School guidance counsellors occupy a very strategic position in any educational system. The Federal Government is aware of this fact; this is why the reemphasis is on the need for guidance and counseling services in all schools. It is also clear from the Federal Ministry of Education that guidance counsellors should operate on full time basis. Also most principals and teachers are aware of the counsellor's functions/services. Despite the fact, it has been observed that the programmes/services are not encouraged at the secondary school level.

Apart from academic problems of failure of dropout of students from schools, other numerous psycho–social, vocational and personal social needs abound among students in our secondary schools. Parents and significant others in recent times have been so concerned about academic problems of student. The control or resolution of these problems is always channeled to mainly school authorities and teachers while the counsellors' attentions have usually been ignored.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses formulated and tested in this study are given as follows:

1) Students' access to study counselling, career/vocational counselling and peer counselling has no significant individual influence on students' achievement in secondary schools in Edo State.

2) Students' access to study counselling, career/vocational counselling and peer counselling has no significant joint influence on students' achievement in secondary schools in Edo State.

Literature Review

The exact definition of guidance is to "guide," inform, direct, supervise, help, and support individual students in making decisions, adjusting, and resolving issues they face in teaching and learning environments. In order to fulfill his ambitions, the person is helped to recognise, embrace, and make use of his skills, interests, and aptitudes (Arfasa & Weldmeskel, 2020). Contrarily, counselling is a procedure whereby qualified counsellors provide assistance to a person in a one-on-one or one-on-many interaction. Information is shared in counselling, but it focusses more on emotional and personal problems. The person receives assistance in comprehending his thoughts, feelings, and actions, especially those that contribute to his happiness. It is more private and confidential than guidance, hence it is known as the nucleus of the guidance programmed (Adegboyega, 2020).

While counselling refers to a process that involves talking with a person in a way that helps them solve a problem or create conditions that will cause them to understand and/or improve their behaviour, character, values, or life circumstances, guidance is a systematic process of helping an individual through education and interpretative procedures to gain a better understanding of his/her own characteristics and potentialities and relate himself/herself more satisfactorily to social requirements and opportunities (Racho, Aloka, Wambiya & Raburu, 2014). Counselling is a service provided by the guidance program, and "guidance" is defined as support provided by the teacher to the student to help him or her succeed in the learning process (Parsons, 2009a). Counselling is a deliberate relationship between two people, whereas guidance is the help that the teacher provides the student to help him or her succeed in the learning process. Counselling, according to Ncheke, Enejedu, Nwosu, and Ogheneruemu (2024), is a helpful practice that involves at least two people with comparable goals. Therefore, counselling is a procedure whereby someone who needs aid connects with someone who is qualified and ready to offer such assistance.

The process of assisting people in comprehending themselves and their surroundings is known as guidance. It is a growth process that helps the person recognise, embrace, and use his skills, interests, and attitude patterns in connection to his goals (Adegboyega, 2020). Helping students understand who they are, their skills, interests, and aspirations is a crucial aspect of the educational process. However, because it is essential to the counselor's everyday work, counselling is the cornerstone of the guidance program and one of the services a counsellor provides to people of his community (Parsons, 2009b; Parsons, 2009c).

The condition of high school guidance and counselling programs in Manicaland, Zimbabwe, is assessed by Mapfumo and Nkoma (2013). One government coeducational school, one coeducational mission high school, and one females model high school were among the participating schools. They were all chosen on purpose. A questionnaire for students and two in-depth interviews for head teachers and guidance teachers were used to gather primary data from students, guidance teachers, and head teachers using qualitative approaches. Frequency tables were used to evaluate the data. According to the findings, guidance and counselling are often responsive services that offer students support for both their academic and personal/emotional needs. Regretfully, a large number of kids do not seek help from school counsellors for academic support.

In Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria, Onyiliofor (2015) looked at the usage of counselling approaches to improve the academic success of secondary school students. The study's participants were twenty counsellors who worked for seven (7) secondary schools in the Nsukka Educational Zone of Enugu State. Three research questions guided the investigation. The instrument used to collect the data was the questionnaire. A weighted mean was used to answer

the research questions. The results showed that counsellors had a multitude of skills from their training in workshops and participation in professional counselling associations, which, when used properly, might improve students' academic performance.

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Arinde (2010) investigated educational services, teacher quality and students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools, North Central Zone, Nigeria. The correlational survey design and *ex-post facto* was adopted for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 3,360 participants out of 8,800 target population, (3080 teachers and 280 principals) the respondents were selected from 280 (35%) schools out of the 800 Public Senior Secondary Schools in North Central Zone, of Nigeria as at the time of the study. Three researcher-designed instruments, namely, Availability of Educational Service Questionnaire (AESQ), Teacher Quality Assessment Questionnaire (TQAQ), and Students' Academic Performance Proforma (SAPP), were used to collect relevant data for the study. The findings revealed that the fitted Multiple Regression Model was significant at 0.05 level of significance, indicating that there was a significant relationship between educational service quality in terms of counsellor-teachers' professional qualifications and years of experience) and student' academic performance.

From the foregoing, many of the studies carried out on students' academic achievement and school counsellors in Zimbabwe and Kenya found that the lack of adequate resource provision for the Guidance and Counselling department of the school, affected school counselling programme and the academic achievement of students in the schools. However, the studies did not explain the relationship between human resources quality in the school counselling department and students' academic achievement. Hence, this constitutes a knowledge gap. In the reviewed literature carried in Nigeria, none to the best of the researchers' knowledge determined marginal effect or rate of change in students' academic achievement with respect to counsellors' personal qualities such as age, years of experience and academic quality. This constitutes another knowledge gap identified in literature. Lastly, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, the only recent studies on the effectiveness of counsellors and student achievement in Western Nigeria were conducted by Bolu-Steve and Oredugba (2017), who limited their study to Ikorodu LGA in Lagos State. As far as the researchers are aware, no current research has been done in Ondo State on the marginal impact of counsellor skills on secondary school students' academic performance.

Methods

The *ex-post facto* research design was used in the study. The population of the study covered all the school counsellors in public secondary schools and Senior Secondary School Two (SS2) students in the two hundred and ninety nine (299) secondary schools in the eighteen (18) local government areas in Edo State. A total of 96 schools with a functional guidance counselling unit constituted the targeted population of the study. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select the 96 public schools. Hence, all the 96 schools with school counsellor personnels as at the time of survey were used as the target schools for the investigation. Consequently, all the school counsellors and Senior Secondary School Two (SSS II) students in the 96 sampled schools were included in the survey.

A self-developed inventory titled: Students' Counselling Programme Access Survey (SCPAS) was used to collect data on students' access to study counseling, career/vocational counselling) and peer counseling. The extent of access to these programmes was rated: Very high access - 4, high access - 3, low access -2 and very low access -1. Data on SSS II students' average achievement in their last promotional examination were obtained from the principal of each of the 96 sampled schools. Cronbach reliability alpha on SCPAS was 0.86. The raw scores of students were collected from each of the target schools after permission was obtained from the principal of the school. Students' Counselling Programme Access Survey (SCPAS) was administered to the school counsellors to obtain their data.

The data on students' achievement collected from school principals in each of the target schools and profile of the school counseling programme in each school was averaged. This was done to ensure that the average score of Senior Secondary School II students (in percentage) was correlated with the average counselling programme access. The Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (MLRA) technique was used to test the hypotheses to determine the rate of change in students' achievement with respect to their school counselling programme. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM-SPSS™ version 23) was employed as the computer analytical package for computing the data.

Results

The results of the study are given below:

Hypothesis 1: Students' access to study counselling, career/vocational counselling and peer counselling has no significant individual influence on students' achievement in secondary schools in Edo State.

Table 1: Analysis on Individual Influence of School Guidance Programme on students' Achievement in secondary schools in Edo State

Model	β	Std. Error	Beta	t-val.	Prob.	Remark
(Constant)	1.176	.049		23.854	.0001	Significant
Study counselling	.146	.021	.234	6.826	.0003	Significant
Career/voc. counselling	.057	.017	.102	3.336	.001	Significant
Peer counselling	.079	.016	.147	5.037	.0002	Significant

a. **Dependent variable:** Achievement

* β coefficient are statistically significant (p<0.05)

From the Table 1 coefficients for study counselling (β = .146), career/vocational counselling (β = .057) and peer counselling (β = .079) are all significant (prob. <0.05). This also shows that students' access to study counselling, career/vocational counselling and peer counselling has no significant individual influence on students' achievement in secondary schools in Edo State. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Students' access to study counselling, career/vocational counselling and peer counselling has no significant joint influence on students' achievement in secondary schools in Edo State.

Table 2: Analysis on Joint Influence of School Guidance Programme on students' Achievement in secondary schools in Edo State

Adjusted R^2 = .459

Actual R^2 = .462

Model[a]	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Regression	205.661	6	34.277		
Residual	239.210	951	.252	136.271*	.000[b]
Total	444.871	957			

a. **Dependent Variable:** Achievement

b. **Predictors:** study counselling, career/vocational counselling and peer counselling

* F-value is statistically significant (p<0.05)

From Table 2, the result showed that the F- value of 136.271 which tested for joint effect of the predictors was significant (p<0.05). This indicated that the combination of all the school counselling programmes significantly predicted achievement of students in Edo State. The adjusted R^2 and actual R^2 (.459 and .462) showed that access to the combination of the three school counselling programmes contribute 45.9 to 46.2 percent increase in students' achievement. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of Results

The analysis of the research hypothesis one shows that students' access to study counselling, career/vocational counselling and peer counselling has significant individual and joint influence on students' achievement in secondary schools in Edo State. This result agrees with the findings of Mapfumo and Nkoma (2013) who found that guidance and counselling are generally responsive services where students can receive help with personal/emotional challenges and academic needs in Zimbabwe schools. Also, the result agrees with the findings of Onyiliofor (2015) who found that counsellors are endowed with a lot of skills through their membership with professional counselling bodies and workshop training which if properly harnessed could improve academic excellence of students in Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria. This is also in alignment with the result of Ibrahim et al., (2021) who found that guidance and counseling services have positively influenced the academic performance of the students

Similarly, the result is in line with that of Racho, Aloka, Wambiya and Raburu (2014) who found a significant relationship between the quality and roles of guidance counsellors and learners' achievement in both form one/two, form three and four in Kenyan secondary schools. It was revealed by the analysis that students agreed that academic, personal and social competence were roles played by guidance and counselling in schools. Furthermore, the result is in consonance with the findings of Arinde (2010) who found that there was a significant relationship between educational service quality in terms of counsellor-teachers' professional qualifications and years of experience) and student' academic performance in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Conclusion

The need for study counselling, career/vocational counselling and peer counselling cannot be undermined in the teaching-learning process. Based on findings from the study, it can be concluded that improvement in students' achievement is possible students are given the much needed access to school guidance counselling programmes as a student support service in the school system.

Recommendations

From the findings, the following were recommended in the study:

1) School counselling service units should as a matter of urgency; be established in all secondary school in Edo State in compliance with the recommendation of the Federal Government in the National Policy on Education.

2) The school time table needs to be adjusted to give more free periods to students to enable them visit the counselling services unit for study, career/vocational counselling and peer counselling or academic challenges they are confronted with.

3) Student need to be sensitized on the values of study counselling, career/vocational counselling and peer counselling through orientation and information seminars to make them further encouraged to address.

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