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# International Journal of Educational Studies

ISSN: 2312-458X (Online), 2312-4598 (Print)

<http://www.escijournals.net/IJES>

## THE INFLUENCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENT IN MAKURDI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, BENUE STATE

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### ABSTRACT

A guidance and counselling programme in school assist students to harmonize their abilities, interests and values and thereby help them to develop their full potential. All this is geared towards improving the personality of the students in all ramifications and facilitating better achievement in academic performance. This study sought to establish the influence of guidance and counselling programme on the academic performance of secondary school students in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. This study adopted an ex-post facto research design. It targeted all the 5464 population of Form Four students, 21 teacher counsellors and 21 head teachers of the 52 available public secondary schools in the study area. A random sample of 196 students, ten teacher counsellors and ten head teachers were selected from the ten selected schools. Data were collected through the administration of questionnaires on the selected respondents. The collected data was then processed and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of mean and standard deviation. The study established the following findings: Secondary schools in the study area differed in the number of guidance and counselling services that they offer. Teacher counsellors had little training in guidance and counselling while Stakeholders adequately supported guidance and counselling programme in the schools. It is discovered that students were aware of the role and importance of career counselling in their schools and there was poor academic performance among students. Guidance and counselling programme has a positive impact on the academic performance of students. Based on these findings, it is recommended that there is need to improve the level of training of teacher counselors in guidance and counseling through further on the job training programme, further schooling for better skill development and competence as this will tell on the offering of all the services required for a focused and positive guidance and counselling programme. Teacher counsellors should also be encouraged to take advantage of the positive attitude and readiness of the students to make themselves available for guidance and counselling services in order to enhance career counselling in their schools. Above all, the concerned authority should be persuaded to see that Guidance and counselling programme in available schools is well strengthened in order to improve the academic performance of secondary schools in the area.

**Keywords:** Influence, Guidance and Counselling, Academic Performance, secondary schools.

### INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counselling are two closely interrelated concepts, and each determines the availability and effectiveness of the other. According to Okita and Odihambo (2012), "guidance" refers to an abroad area of all educational activities and services aimed at assisting individual students to understand themselves and adjust to school life. Oye, Obi, Mohd and Bernice (2012) define "counselling" as an interpersonal relationship in which

one person attempts to help another person to understand and cope with problems emanating from education, vocation and family relationship. Guidance and counselling is therefore aimed at bringing about maximum development and self-realization of human potential for the benefit of the individual and the society. Oniye and Alawane (2008) opined that guidance and counselling programme assists the student in harmonizing their abilities, interest, values and enable them to develop their full potential. It direct student on appropriate career and subject choices; solving discipline, education, social and psychological problems;

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and general adjustment to school life. Disksha and Kashyap (2016) guidance is interpreted as a specialized service to help the individual to solve certain major problems- personal, educational, and vocation. He further opined that guidance involves personal assistance which is given by an expert to an individual which is designed to assist the him or her to decide where he wants to go, what he wants to do and how best to accomplish his/her purpose.

The development of guidance and counselling originated in Europe and the United States of America in 1900"s. In 1911, Meyer Bloomfield organized a wide guidance programme in the USA that catered for students. The emphasis was on vocational information, awareness of the world of work, the location of employment and reduction of examination anxiety (Ogwokhademhe, Ajibola, Kayode, Sheu 2014). They noted that since the 1950's, opinion about guidance and counselling have changed rapidly and that understanding youth's problems are among the functions of school guidance and counselling. To buttress this assertion, a study with a random sample of 100 counsellor education programmes which evaluates the effect of counselling on students was carried out in the USA. The study found out that guidance and counselling significantly influence academic performance of a student. This is an indication that most institutions have put emphasis on the need for academic excellence and more so the intervention through guidance and counselling programmes. This development made teacher counsellors to provide guidance and counselling services at secondary schools, not only to students who are underachieving, maladjusted but also to gifted children who do not know what to do with their abilities.

Omoniyi (2016) state that it is generally accepted that in Nigeria the organized and formal guidance and counselling service started in 1959 at St. Theresa's College, Oke-Ado Ibadan, by a group of dedicated religious reverend sisters who had the perception of the need for proper guidance in job selection for their secondary school leavers. They invited some twenty outsiders to advise them about placing sixty of their final year female students in appropriate careers. This is about eight decades after the birth of an established and functional guidance and counselling services in America. The advisers though were not vocational guidance specialists, they later formed the core of what later became the Nigerian career council.

The Federal Ministry of Education in its efforts to encourage guidance education established a guidance counselling unit in 1961 to be supervised by an education officer in the ministry. This was temporarily suspended in 1966 as a result of the civil war but revisited in at the onset of the 6-3-3-4 system of education. By the end of the 70s, the government had already recognized the importance of guidance and counselling in the educational, economic and social life of the nation. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> national development plan (1975-1980) emphasis was geared towards achieving the manpower needs of the nation. The government then realized that for education to be complete, the beneficiary must have a good sense of fulfilment. This led to the inauguration of the Counselling Association of Nigeria in 1976 as an affiliation of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA). The Federal Government then inserted the need for guidance and counselling services and courses in our schools in its National Policy on Education by 1981. This then led the state governors to establish guidance and counselling units in their ministries of education, in addition to counselling units that are available in the universities.

It is statutorily observed that the academic performance of secondary schools in Makurdi local government area has been declining over time (Ministry of Education, Benue State Secretariat, Makurdi 2017). This has a negative reflection on the various programmes put in place to promote academic performance in the area by the education ministry of the state. The main concern of the study, therefore, was to investigate the role of guidance and counselling programme in improving the self-image of the students and facilitating better achievement in academic performance. Since all efforts of the ministry are being scrutinized. Little information was available on the extent to which the guidance and counselling programme has been used to assist in raising the academic performance of secondary school students. This study sought to provide some insights into these issues and establish the the relationship between guidance and counselling and academic performance of secondary school student.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study was based on the premise that it is important to understand the extent to which the programme is used in addressing challenges facing students in schools. Such a step will help in providing useful information that could be useful in redesigning

and giving impetus to the programme by those concerned including the Ministry of Education, administrators of the institutions, teacher counsellors and students so as to boost the academic performance and overall self-actualization of secondary school students. The outcome of the study will help teacher counsellor to be able to evaluate the impact that guidance and counselling will have on academic performance in their respective schools. The Ministry of Education will also use this study in evaluating whether guidance and counselling programme is an effective measure in addressing the challenges facing secondary school students in the country. The study will also assist school administrators in assessing their contribution to guidance and counselling programme and its influence on the academic performance of students in their schools. When guidance and counselling programme is well conceptualized by the Guidance and Counselling unit of the Ministry of Education and implemented by the teacher counsellor with the support of the school administrators, the students will benefit by improving their academic achievements and self-actualization.

Two important questions were raised in the course of this study:

- a. What is the effectiveness of the guidance and counselling programme in Makurdi Local Government Area secondary schools?
- b. What are the challenges facing guidance and counselling programme in Makurdi Local Government Area schools?

#### **METHODOLOGY**

**Population of the Study:** The exact population of this study consists of 5,464 SS2 students in the 52 secondary schools in Makurdi local government. Samples is made up of a random sample of 196 students, ten teacher counsellors and ten head teachers were selected from the ten selected schools.

**Instrumentation:** Primary data was collected through the administration of three sets of questionnaires (students; teacher counsellors; and head teachers) and academic record schedule (from the class teachers).

Each instrument aimed at collecting specific information from the targeted respondents. The student questionnaire elicited information on their level of awareness about guidance and counselling programme, and their attitudes towards education/career counselling. The teacher counsellor questionnaire

sought information on the operation of the guidance and counselling programme, his/her professional qualifications, experience, support from the administration and teachers, students' awareness about the programme, his/her attitude towards education/career counselling, and the challenges the programme is facing in the school. The headteacher questionnaire sought information on the programme, mode of selecting/appointing the counsellors, academic performance of the schools, factors affecting academic performance, support given to the programme. Class teachers provided the academic record of the selected students' respondents.

The research instruments were validated in two ways. The first method involved the researcher going through the instruments in a relationship with the set objectives to make sure that they contain all the information that will provide responses regarding the set objectives. The second method involved consulting and seeking for the opinion of the experts from the Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations by allowing them to help scrutinize the prepared questionnaires. The instruments were then taken for piloting on a population that is similar to the targeted sample for this Praiseworthy academy and Makurdi international Secondary Schools in Makurdi.

The piloting included 10 students, one teacher counsellor and one head teacher from each of the two schools.

Through the use of Cronbach's alpha, a reliability coefficient of 0.795 was obtained for the student questionnaire. Such reliability coefficients were considered to be sufficient enough to confirm and reflect the internal consistency of the instruments (Osiemo 2012).

Secondary data were collected to supplement the primary data. These data were collected from documented information on guidance and counselling and academic performance. Sources of this information included government offices and libraries (books, journals, theses, periodicals, and other publications).

#### **FINDINGS**

Table 1 summarizes the academic performance. The table indicates that 80.1 percent of the student recorded a mean grade score of between 2 points (D-) and 7 points (C+). On the overall, the sampled student registered a mean grade score of 5.54 points with a mode of 6 points (c).

Table 1. Academic Performance.

Grade	Points	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percentage
E	1	5	2.6	2.6
D-	2	15	7.7	10.2
D	3	23	11.7	21.9
D+	4	27	13.8	35.7
C-	5	34	17.3	53.1
C	6	37	18.9	71.9
C+	7	21	10.7	82.7
B-	8	7	3.6	86.2
B	9	8	4.1	90.3
B+	10	6	3.1	93.4
A-	11	9	4.6	98.0
A	12	4	2.0	100.0
Total		196		100.0

Table 2 shows how the head teachers and teacher counsellors of the sampled schools also rated the level of academic performance of students in their schools. The table indicates that majority of the head teachers and teacher counsellor (60 and 70 % respectively) rated the level of academic performance of their student as average, while 10 percent each rated it very good.

Table 3 observed that 42.9 percent of the teacher counsellors and 50 percent of the head teachers

attributed the average academic performance of their student too poor concept, 28.5 percent of the teachers counsellors and 16.7 percent of the head teacher attributed the average academic performance of their student to poor reading/study habit, 14.3 percent of the of the teacher counsellor and 16.7 percent of the head teachers attributed the average academic performance to indiscipline and lack of facilities and resources.

Table 2. Academic performance of Students.

	Head teachers		Teacher counsellors	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Average	6	60.0	7	70.0
Good	3	30.0	2	20.0

Table 3. Factors Limiting Academic Performance.

	Teacher counsellor		Headteacher	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Poor self-concept	3	42.9	3	50.0
Poor reading/study habits	2	28.5	1	16.7
Indiscipline	1	14.3	1	16.7
Lack of facilities and resources	1	14.3	1	16.7
Total	7	100.0	6	100.0

Table 4 shows the factors promoting academic performance. The table indicates that the cooperation and dedication among teacher is 100 percent to 100 percent respectively by teacher counsellor and head teacher, involvement if guidance and counselling is 66.7 percent to 100 percent respectively by teacher counsellor and head teacher, determination and dedication is 100 percent to 100

percent by teacher counsellor and head teacher respectively, support of parents is 100 percent to 100 percent respectively by teacher counsellor and head teacher, availability of facilities and resources is 100 percent to 75 percent by head teacher and teacher counsellor respectively and discipline is 66.7 percent to 75 percent by teachers counsellor and head teachers respectively.

Table 4. Factors Promoting Academic Performance.

	Teacher counsellor		Headteacher	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Cooperation and dedication among teachers	3	100.0	4	100.0
Involvement of guidance and counselling	2	66.7	4	100.0
Determination and dedication	3	100.0	4	100.0
Support of parents	3	100.0	4	100.0
Availability of facilities and resources	3	100.0	3	75.0
Discipline	2	66.7	3	75.0

**DISCUSSION**

The study sought to establish the influence of effective delivery of guidance and counselling services towards enhancing the academic performance of secondary school students in makurdi local Government Area of Benue State. Table 5 presents the teacher counsellors’ responses on the challenges to effective delivery of guidance and counselling services. It shows that 100% of the teacher counsellors agreed that lack of specific time allocation influences the academic performance of students. This result concurs with that of Gitonga, 1999; Mutie and Ndambuki, 2014; Stephen and Pullah, 2015; Kumundia and Thomas, 2016; Omoniyi, 2016. They all posit that lack of specific time allocation for guidance and counselling services in schools are a major factor affecting the performance of students’ academic performance and hence ineffective delivery of guidance

and counselling services. A further 90% strongly agreed that inadequate resources and facilities is another factor that influences the academic performance of students. UNESCO 2002 stated that career counselling centres should have resources that enable students to access information independently so that they can make sound decision making for better academic performance. This result is supported by Ndirangu, 2000; Manduku, 2002; Kumundia and Thomas, 2016. The table also shows that 80% strongly agreed that heavy workload is a hindrance to effective delivery of counselling services thereby leading to the poor academic performance of students in secondary schools. The study notes that shortage of personnel leads to overloading the few available, leaving guidance and counselling services in the periphery, thus rendering delivery of counselling services ineffective.

Table 5. Challenges Facing Guidance and Counselling Programme.

S/N	Challenges	Frequency	Percent
1	Lack of Specific time allocation	10	100.0
2	Inadequate resources and Facilities	9	90.0
3	Heavy workload	8	80.0

Table 6. Suggestions to Improve Guidance and Counselling Programme.

S/N	Challenges	Frequency	Percent
1	Introduce Peer Counselling	4	40.0
2	Reduce Teaching Load	3	30.0
3	Provide Adequate Resources and Facilities	3	30.0

Table 6 shows suggestions made by the teacher counsellors for the improvement of guidance and counselling services which in turn improve the academic performance of students in the secondary schools. The result shows that 40% of the respondents wanted peer counselling to be introduced in their schools as a solution to the challenges faced by guidance and

counselling services in schools, 20% preferred their teaching loads to be reduced, while 30% suggested that there should be adequate provision of resources and facilities to solve the challenges. Summarily, the findings obtained from the analysis of data shows that 100 percent lack specific time allocation to guidance and counselling activities, 90% inadequate

resources and facilities and 80 percent heavy workload. All the teachers reported that there was no specific time allocated for guidance and counselling activities in their schools. Guidance and counselling was sandwiched between class work and co-curricular activities. Schools have a heavy workload if teaching guidance and counselling. This has limited their dedication to guidance and counselling programme.

This is supported by Tina and Ugochuckwu (2014) observing that guidance and counselling programme has not been effective in the country because the teacher providers have a heavy workload. Tina and Ugochukwu added that because of the busy schedule, many student regards and perceive the teacher counsellor as a teacher first then a counsellor. Their perception about the teacher counsellor and guidance and counselling services is very much influenced greatly by how they perceive him/her as a teacher first. Therefore, student demand for guidance and counselling services will depend on how well/bad they perceive their teacher counsellor as a teacher.

This study was an attempt to find out the influence of guidance and counselling on the academic performance of area of Benue state.

Having gone into the field and collected data for the study using personal observation and questionnaire sources, the result of the study reveals the following: guidance and counselling programme face a number of challenges in undertaking its responsibilities in the schools. The challenges included lack of specific time allocation to guidance and counselling activities, inadequate resource and facilities and heavy workload.

There was a positive and significant relationship between attitude towards career counselling and academic performance mean score.

Guidance and counselling programme received various kinds of support from the school administration, other teachers and parent in undertaking their responsibilities.

All teacher counsellors have training in guidance and counselling, albeit at different levels, with four of them having attended seminars and workshops in guidance and counselling while six had certificate level of training. All the schools have established guidance and counselling programme but varied in the services they offered.

Majority of the students recorded average level of academic performance in their academic work.

## CONCLUSION

Guidance and counselling programme have a positive impact on the academic performance of secondary school students, there is low academic performance by the majority of the students, students are aware of the role and importance of career counselling in their schools, stakeholders adequately support guidance and counselling programme in schools, guidance and counselling differs in rendered services among schools and teachers have low levels of training in guidance and counselling.

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