



Influence of Guidance and Counseling on Student's Academic Achievement Secondary Schools in Jega, Kebbi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out in Jega local government to examine the influence of guidance and counselling on the academic achievement of secondary school students. An ex post facto research design was adopted in this study. Questionnaires were administered to collect data from the selected respondents. The data was processed and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The result of the study reveals that: Secondary schools in the study area differed in the number of guidance and counseling services that they had implemented. Teacher counsellors had little training in guidance and counseling. Stakeholders adequately supported guidance and counseling programme in the schools. Students were aware of the role and importance of career counseling in their schools. Guidance and counseling programme has a positive impact on the academic achievement of students. The need for the teacher counselors to implement all the services required for guidance and counseling, and improving the level of training for teacher counselors in guidance and counseling is recommended.

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INTRODUCTION

The guidance refers to a broad area of all educational activities and services aimed at assisting individual students to understand themselves and adjust to school life (Kerlinger, 2000). Mutie and Ndambuki (1999) define "counseling" as a learning-oriented process that usually occurs in an interactive relationship to help the client learn more about him/herself. Guidance and counseling are therefore aimed at bringing about maximum development and self-realization of human potential for the benefit of the individual and the society (Frankel and Wallen, 2000). In a school, the programme assists students in harmonizing their abilities, interests and values and enables them to develop their full potential. It directs students on appropriate career and subject choices; solving discipline, education, social and psychological problems; and general adjustment to school life (Gerardo, 1996).

The development of guidance and counseling originated from Europe and the United States of America in 1900's. A person named Goodwin in 1911 organized a wide guidance programme in the USA that catered for students. The emphasis was on vocational information, awareness of the world of work, location of employment and reduction of examination anxiety (Gibson and Mitchell, 2003). He noted that since the 1950's, popular views of guidance and counseling have changed rapidly and that understanding youths problems are among the functions of school guidance and counseling. A random sample of 100 counselor education programmes evaluating the effect of counseling on students was carried out in the USA (Hollis, 2000). The study found out that guidance and counseling significantly influence the academic achievement of a student (Zeran and Antony, 1962). This is an indication that most institutions have emphasized the need for academic excellence and more so the

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intervention of guidance and counseling programmes (Robert and Marianne, 2003). This development made teacher counselors provide guidance and counseling 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 (Kothari, 2004). In Africa, the genesis of modern guidance and counseling is dated back to the 1960s. For example, Makinde (1984) observes that the first organized formal careers guidance service for the students in Nigeria was held in Ibadan. The service resolved to expand counseling activities in the country by the end of 1970, and form a larger association to embrace career masters and counselors (Mutai, 2000). Gichinga (1995) observes that guidance and counseling have had an impact on secondary school students' lives and noted that there is a relationship between the programme and academic achievement.

Academic achievement of secondary schools in Maiduguri has been declining over time. This has a negative reflection on the various programmes put in place to promote academic achievement in the area. The main concern was the role of guidance and counseling programme in improving the self-image of the students and facilitating better achievement in academic achievement. Little information was available on the extent to which guidance and counseling programme has been used to assist in raising the academic achievement of secondary school students. This study sought to provide some insights into these issues and establish the relationship between guidance and counseling and academic achievement of secondary school in the study area.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to determine the influence of guidance and counseling programme on student's academic achievement in secondary schools in Jega and the specific objectives are:

- i. To examine the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programme in secondary schools in Jega.
- ii. To determine the attitude of students towards

educational/career counseling in their schools.

- iii. To establish the relationship between the level of effectiveness of guidance and counseling and the academic achievement of secondary school students in the study area.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

- i. What is the level of effectiveness of guidance and counseling programme in secondary schools in Jega?
- ii. What is the attitude of students towards educational/career counseling in their schools?
- iii. Is there any relationship between the level of effectiveness of guidance and counseling and the academic achievement of secondary school students in Jega?

METHODOLOGY

The ex post facto research design was employed for the study. This design examines the effects of a naturally occurring treatment after changes have occurred rather than creating a treatment. A survey method was employed to gather data from sampled schools. Survey type of research describes an existing phenomenon and is also referred to as normative or status study (Kathuri and Pals 1993). The independent variable which is the guidance and counseling programme has already been established in schools and hence the research was interested in its influence on academic achievement.

The target population included 132 secondary school students, 10 teacher counselors, 40 class teachers and 3 head teachers in Jega local government area. Purposive and simple random sampling procedures were used in selecting the required sample for this study. Purposive sampling was used in this study in selecting four schools in this study area.

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Primary data was collected through the administration of three sets of questionnaires (students; teacher counselors; and headteachers) and academic record schedule (from the class teachers).

The researchers proceeded to collect data from the selected respondents after receiving permission from the headteachers of the three sampled schools in the study area. The researchers visited the selected schools beforehand for acquaintance with targeted respondents, especially teacher counselors and headteachers.

Data collected was processed, coded and analyzed to facilitate answering the research questions. This was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive analyses using frequencies, percentages and tables were used to summarize and organize data and to describe the characteristics of the sample population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling Programme

All the three schools examined in this study have established guidance and counseling programme and the teacher counselors reported that the department is functional. This suggests that the schools have complied with the government policy and therefore students could be assisted in addressing the challenges they face while in school. The 132 sampled students confirmed their realization and function of the guidance and counseling programme in their schools with 89.4 per cent of them aware of the department.

Effective implementation and functioning of guidance and counseling programme in any school depend on several various responsive services that it provides in addressing the challenges facing students. The teacher counselors, therefore, enumerated the services that their department is offering to students in school. Table 1 summarizes their responses. Note that guidance and counseling programme in the schools is offering more than one service and therefore the percentage of each service is out of four (the sample size).

Table 1: Services offered by Guidance and Counseling Programme

Services	Frequencies	Per cent
Orientation	3	75.0
Career/academic counseling	3	75.0
counseling	3	75.0
Placement and follow-up	2	50.0
Appraisal	1	25.0

In this study, 89.39% of the respondents were aware of the services offered by the guidance and counseling department in their school while 10.61% were not. This suggests that either the departments have created adequate awareness about the services being offered. However, the 118 students aware of the services differed in terms of their demand for assistance from the department. Approximately 48.7 per cent of them have ever sought assistance from guidance and counseling while 51.3 per cent had never. This suggests that

students" awareness of the existence of guidance and counseling department and the services offered does not necessarily translate into demand for the assistance of the teacher counselor. The ten teacher counselors confirmed that some of their students seek assistance from guidance and counseling programme. The counselors have noted several common counseling issues that make a majority of their students seek assistance.

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Table 2: Aware of Services being offered by Guidance and Counseling Department

Aware of the Services	Frequency	Per cent
Yes	59	89.39
No	07	10.61
Total	66	100.0

Students' Attitude toward Career Counseling

In this study, the level of attitude of the students toward career counseling in their schools was measured on a 5-point range Likert Scale using 11 statements 33 related to the role of career counseling in secondary schools. The sample respondents were requested to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements.

The result reveals that the students are aware of the role and importance of career counseling in their schools. This was

demonstrated by their high level of agreement in the first six statements and disagreement in the last four. This suggests adequate awareness and publicity of career counseling services in the schools. It can be attributed to the fact that students are very conscious about obtaining a high level of academic achievement and are therefore eager to know the various sources of help (including career counseling) that existed in their schools. However, they are not straightforward on follow-up cases of students after schools.

Table 3: Summarizes the Distribution of their Responses.

STATEMENT	RESPONSES (%)				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
Help students in career choices	41.0	38.8	11.5	6.5	2.2
Has made students more responsible for their academic work	38.1	35.3	15.1	6.5	5.0
Help students to adjust and cope with school life	37.4	41.0	10.1	5.8	5.8
Invites guests speakers from higher learning institutions to talk about career choices	35.3	22.3	18.0	12.2	12.2
Assist students on how to choose their subject combinations	33.8	43.9	7.9	6.5	7.9
Provides students with information on the available career opportunities	32.4	41.7	12.2	9.4	4.3
Make follow-up or trace students after secondary school to know what they are doing	16.5	18.7	22.3	16.5	25.9
Does not provide students with information on the requirements and qualifications for the available career opportunities	5.8	11.5	15.8	30.2	36.7
Does not assist students in their time management	7.2	6.5	17.3	33.8	38.3
Does not assist students to develop good study habits	2.9	8.6	10.1	26.6	51.8
Is designed for academically poor students only	0.0	2.2	10.8	23.7	63.3

Table 4: Level of Attitude toward Career Counseling

Level of attitude	Frequency	Per cent
Negative	16	12.1
Average	8	6.1
Positive	108	81.8
Total	132	100.0

Table 4 depicts that 81.8% of students had a positive level of attitude toward career

counseling in their schools. This suggests that the students understood the role and importance

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of career counseling in their schools. They knew how the programme benefited them in making academic and career decisions. These results draw very much from the cognitive theory whereby the information and knowledge that students had received about career counseling and their first-hand experience with the counselors had been cognitively processed and influenced their attitude toward it. Kallgren and Wood (1986) support this by observing that knowledge about an issue (career counseling, in this case) is another factor that seems to promote the attitude that is consistent with beliefs, feelings and cognition. Knowledgeability enhances the clarity and strength of beliefs and feelings. The more knowledgeable a person is about a topic, the clearer his opinions and the

stronger his feelings, pro or con. Thus the more likely he is to act in ways that match his views. Fazio and Zanna (1981) add that when such knowledge has been gained from firsthand experience, it is even more apt to influence attitude.

Academic Achievement of Students

In this study, academic achievement among the sampled students was measured using the mean grade scores of their end third term examinations. The scores varied from a minimum of 1 point (mean grade of E) to a maximum of 5 points (mean grade of A). Table 5 summarizes the academic achievement of the students.

Table 5: Academic Achievement Mean Score

Grade	Points	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percentage
E	1	14	10.6	2.6
D	2	30	22.7	21.9
C	3	46	34.8	71.9
B	4	26	19.7	90.3
A	5	16	12.1	100.0
Total		132	100.0	

In this study, the level of attitude of students toward career counseling was used as a proxy measure of the effectiveness of guidance and counseling. This was based on the premise that career counseling is one of the services of guidance and counseling that is specially designed to assist students in making proper academic decisions in school. Therefore the level of attitude of the students toward career counseling closely reflected the effectiveness of guidance and counseling in addressing academic challenges facing students. The scores varied from a minimum of 1 point (mean grade of E) to a maximum of 5 points (mean grade of A) as shown in Table 5

Challenges Facing Guidance and Counseling Programme

The last objective sought to identify the challenges facing the guidance and counseling programme in selected public secondary schools in Maiduguri. Guidance and counseling programme in secondary schools in the area as reported by teacher counselors is facing numerous challenges in discharging their responsibilities effectively. In this study, the ten teacher counselors reported the main challenges facing guidance and counseling programme in their schools (Table 6).

Table 6: Challenges Facing Guidance and Counseling Programme.

Challenges	Frequencies	Per cent
Lack of specific time allocation	10	100.0
Inadequate resources and facilities	9	90.0
Heavy work load	8	80.0

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As indicated in Table 6 above, lack of specific time allocation to guidance and counseling activities (100.0 %), inadequate resources and facilities (90.0 %) and a heavy workload were the major challenges facing guidance and counseling programme in the study area. All the teacher counselors reported that there was no specific time allocated for guidance and counseling activities in their school. The counselors worked full-time as teachers in addition to undertaking their guidance and counseling duties and responsibilities in the school. Guidance and counseling were sandwiched between classwork and co-curricular activities. 80 per cent of the respondents added that because of lack of specific time allocation, they have a heavy workload of teaching and guidance and counseling. This has limited their dedication to guidance and counseling as the schools, students and parents are more interested in academic achievement first. Mutie and Ndambuki (1999) support this by observing that guidance and counseling programme has not been effective in schools in Kenya because the teacher providers have a heavy workload. However, 90 per cent of the respondents reported that the programme in their schools lacked adequate financial and material resources to effectively meet students' demands. This was reported to affect the operations of guidance and counseling programmes in the schools.

Summary of the Findings

The following are the findings of the study based on the objectives:

- i. All the schools have established guidance and counseling programme but varied in the services they offered.
- ii. All the teacher counselors have training in guidance and counseling at different levels, and some of them have attended seminars and workshops on the programme.
- iii. Guidance and counseling programme received various kind of support from the school administration, other teachers,

and parents in undertaking their responsibilities.

- iv. The majority of students have a positive level of attitude toward career counseling in their schools. There was a positive and significant relationship between attitude toward career counseling and academic achievement mean score.
- v. Guidance and counseling programme faces several challenges in undertaking its responsibilities in the schools. The challenges included lack of specific time allocation to guidance and counseling activities, inadequate resources and facilities and heavy workload.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the secondary schools in the study area differ in the number of guidance and counseling services that they are offering. Teacher counselors have low levels of training in guidance and counseling. Stakeholders adequately support guidance and counseling programme in the schools. Students are aware of the role and importance of career counseling in their schools. There is a low academic achievement by the majority of the students. Guidance and counseling programme has a positive impact on the academic achievement of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Teacher counselors should implement all the services required for a guidance and counseling programme.
- ii. Improvement in the level of training of teacher counselors.
- iii. Teacher counselors should take advantage of the positive attitude of the students to enhance career counseling in their schools.
- iv. Guidance and counseling programme should be strengthened to improve the

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academic achievement of secondary schools in the area.

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