



Influence of Guidance and Counseling Programme on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author BS design the study and performed the statistical analysis. Authors AA and MGT wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author MA managed the analysis of the study and the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the influence of guidance and counseling programme on academic performance of secondary school students in Maiduguri metropolitan council. An *ex post facto and survey* research design was adopted in this study. Data was collected through administration of questionnaires to the selected respondents. The collected data was then processed and analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage. The study established the following findings: Secondary schools in the study area differed in the number of guidance and counseling services that they had implemented. Teacher counselors 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 (89.39%). Guidance and counseling programme has a positive impact on the academic performance of students. Based on these study findings, the following recommendations were made: There is need for the teacher counselors to implement all the services required for

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guidance and counseling and improve the level of training of teacher counselors in guidance and counseling. Guidance and counseling programme should be strengthened in order to improve the academic performance of secondary schools in the area.

Keywords: Guidance and counseling; students; secondary schools; Maiduguri.

1. INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counseling are two closely interrelated concepts and each determines the availability and efficient of the other. 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 [1]. Mutie and Ndambuki [2] defines "counseling" as a learning-oriented process which usually occurs in an interactive relationship with the aim of helping the client learn more about him/herself. Guidance and counseling is therefore aimed at bringing about maximum development and self-realization of human potential for the benefit of the individual and the society [3]. 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 [4].

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 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 [5]. He noted that since 1950's, popular views of guidance and counseling have changed rapidly and that understanding youth's problems are among the functions of school guidance and counseling. A random sample of 100 counselor education programmes with evaluating the effect of counseling on students was carried out in USA [6]. The study found out that guidance and counseling significantly influence academic performance of a student [7]. This is an indication that most institutions have put emphasis on need for academic excellence and more so the intervention of guidance and counseling programmes [8]. This development made teacher counselors to 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 [9]. In Africa, the genesis of modern guidance and counseling is dated back to 1960s. For example, Makinde [10] 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 [11]. Gichinga [5] observes that guidance and counseling has had impact in the secondary school students' lives and noted that there is relationship between the programme and academic performance.

Academic performance 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 performance 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 performance. Little information was available on the extent to which guidance and counseling 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 relationship between guidance and counseling and academic performance of secondary school in the study area.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study sought to assess the influence of guidance and counseling programme on academic performance of selected public secondary school students in Maiduguri, and the specific objectives are:

- i. To examine the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programme in secondary schools in Maiduguri.
- ii. To determine the attitude of students towards educational/career counseling in their schools in Maiduguri.
- iii. To establish the relationship between the level of effectiveness of guidance and counseling and academic performance of secondary school students.

- iv. To identify the challenges facing guidance and counseling programme in the study area.

1.2 Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

- i. What is the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programme in secondary schools?
- 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 academic performance of secondary school students?
- iv. What are the challenges facing guidance and counseling programme in schools?

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey and ex post facto research design was employed for the study. Owens, [12] survey research design has the advantage of uniqueness since information gathered is not available from other sources, having unbiased representation of population of interest and standardization of measurement as same information is collected from every respondent.

This design examines the effects of a naturally occurring treatment after changes have occurred rather than creating a treatment. Survey type of research describes an existing phenomenon and is also referred to as normative or status study [13]. The independent variable which is guidance and counseling programme has already been established in schools and hence the research was interested on its influence on academic performance.

2.1 Population of Study

The target population included 66 secondary school students, 10 teacher counselors, 20 class teachers and 4 head teachers in Maiduguri metropolitan council. 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.

Primary data was collected through administration of three sets of questionnaires (students; teacher counselors; and head

teachers) and academic record schedule (from the class teachers).

The researchers proceeded to collect data from the selected respondents after receiving permission from the head teachers of the four sampled schools in the study area. The researchers visited the selected schools before hand for acquaintance with targeted respondents, especially teacher counselors and head teachers.

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.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling Programme

The first objective of this study sought to establish effectiveness of guidance and counseling programme has been realized in the sampled public secondary schools. This objective is based on the fact that in Nigeria, the Ministry of Education has directed all learning institutions to implement guidance and counseling programme. In this study, all the four schools 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 66 sampled students confirmed their realization and function of the guidance and counseling programme in their schools with 89.4 per cent (59) of them aware of the department. Effective implementation and functioning of guidance and counseling programme in any school depend on a number of 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

From Table 2, it can be observed that 89.39% of the respondents were aware of the services offered by 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 or majority of the students aware of the departments sought to know the services offered. However, the 59 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 for 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 for the assistance of guidance and counseling programme. The counselors have noted a number of common counseling issues that make majority of their students seek assistance.

Table 2. Aware of services being offered by guidance and counseling department

Aware of the services	Frequency	Percent
Yes	59	89.39
No	07	10.61
Total	66	100.0

3.2 Students' Attitude toward Career Counseling

The fourth objective aimed at determining the attitude of students towards educational/career counseling in their schools. 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 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 of the study shows 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 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 straight forward on follow-up cases of students after schools.

Table 4 indicates 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 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 firsthand experience with the counselors had been cognitively processed and influenced their attitude toward it. Kallgren and Wood [14] support this by observing that knowledge about an issue (career counseling, in this case) is another factor that seems to promote attitude that is consistent with beliefs, feelings and cognition. Knowledge ability 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 [15] add that when such knowledge has been gained from firsthand experience, it is even more apt to influence attitude.

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	115	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	8	12.1
Average	4	6.1
Positive	54	81.8
Total	66	100.0

3.3 Academic Performance of Students

This study also aimed at determining the level of academic performance among secondary school students. In this study academic performance 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 performance of the students.

In this study, 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 Durojaiye, [16]. Wanjohi, [17] 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.

3.4 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 5. Academic performance mean score

Grade	Points	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percentage
E	1	7	10.6	2.6
D	2	15	22.7	21.9
C	3	23	34.8	71.9
B	4	13	19.7	90.3
A	5	8	12.1	100.0
Total		66	100.0	

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

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 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 was sandwiched between class work 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 performance first. Mutie and Ndambuki [2] support this by observing that guidance and counseling programme has not been effective in schools in the 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.

4. 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, albeit at different levels, and some of them having 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. 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 performance mean score.
- v. Guidance and counseling programme face a number of 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.

5. CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that secondary schools in the study area differ in the number of guidance and counseling services that they have implemented. 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 low academic performance by majority of the students. Guidance and counseling programme has a positive impact on the academic performance of students. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. There is need for the teacher counselors to implement all the services required for a guidance and counseling programme.
- ii. There is need to improve the level of training of teacher counselors in guidance and counseling.
- 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 in order to improve the academic performance of secondary schools in the area.

CONSENT

As per international or university standard, consent from the Borno state Ministry of

education was collected and preserved by the authors.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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